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# Persuasion

Jane Austen

The lower half of the image features a complex abstract design. It consists of several overlapping geometric shapes in two colors: a vibrant blue and a bright green. On the left side, there are two large, downward-pointing triangles. In the center, there are two curved, semi-circular shapes that appear to be part of a larger circular pattern. On the right side, there is a large, upward-pointing triangle. The shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall composition is dynamic and modern.

Project

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# Persuasion

by



# Jane Austen

(1818)

<a href="#">CHAPTER I</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER II</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER III</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER IV</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER V</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER VI</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER VII</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER VIII</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER IX</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER X</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XI</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XII</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER XIII</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XIV</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XV</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XVI</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER XVII</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XVIII</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XIX</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XX</a>
<a href="#">CHAPTER XXI</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XXII</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XXIII</a>	<a href="#">CHAPTER XXIV</a>

## Chapter 1

Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch Hall, in Somersetshire, was a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage; there he found occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one; there his faculties were roused into admiration and respect, by contemplating the limited remnant of the earliest patents; there any unwelcome sensations, arising from domestic affairs changed naturally into pity and contempt as he turned over the almost endless creations of the last century; and there, if every other leaf were powerless, he could read his own history with an interest which never failed. This was the page at which the favourite volume always opened:

### "ELLIOT OF KELLYNCH HALL.

"Walter Elliot, born March 1, 1760, married, July 15, 1784, Elizabeth, daughter of James Stevenson, Esq. of South Park, in the county of Gloucester, by which lady (who died 1800) he has issue Elizabeth, born

June 1, 1785; Anne, born August 9, 1787; a still-born son, November 5, 1789; Mary, born November 20, 1791."

Precisely such had the paragraph originally stood from the printer's hands; but Sir Walter had improved it by adding, for the information of himself and his family, these words, after the date of Mary's birth--"Married, December 16, 1810, Charles, son and heir of Charles Musgrove, Esq. of Uppercross, in the county of Somerset," and by inserting most accurately the day of the month on which he had lost his wife.

Then followed the history and rise of the ancient and respectable family, in the usual terms; how it had been first settled in Cheshire; how mentioned in Dugdale, serving the office of high sheriff, representing a borough in three successive parliaments, exertions of loyalty, and dignity of baronet, in the first year of Charles II, with all the Marys and Elizabeths they had married; forming altogether two handsome duodecimo pages, and concluding with the arms and motto:--"Principal seat, Kellynch Hall, in the county of Somerset," and Sir Walter's handwriting again in this finale:--

"Heir presumptive, William Walter Elliot, Esq., great grandson of the second Sir Walter."

Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character; vanity of person and of situation. He had been remarkably handsome in his youth; and, at fifty-four, was still a very fine man. Few women could think more of their personal appearance than he did, nor could the valet of any new made lord be more delighted with the place he held in society. He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only to the blessing of a baronetcy; and the Sir Walter Elliot, who united these gifts, was the constant object of his warmest respect and devotion.

His good looks and his rank had one fair claim on his attachment; since to them he must have owed a wife of very superior character to any thing deserved by his own. Lady Elliot had been an excellent woman, sensible and amiable; whose judgement and conduct, if they might be pardoned the youthful infatuation which made her Lady Elliot, had never required indulgence afterwards.--She had humoured, or softened, or concealed his failings, and promoted his real respectability for seventeen years; and

though not the very happiest being in the world herself, had found enough in her duties, her friends, and her children, to attach her to life, and make it no matter of indifference to her when she was called on to quit them.--Three girls, the two eldest sixteen and fourteen, was an awful legacy for a mother to bequeath, an awful charge rather, to confide to the authority and guidance of a conceited, silly father. She had, however, one very intimate friend, a sensible, deserving woman, who had been brought, by strong attachment to herself, to settle close by her, in the village of Kellynch; and on her kindness and advice, Lady Elliot mainly relied for the best help and maintenance of the good principles and instruction which she had been anxiously giving her daughters.

This friend, and Sir Walter, did not marry, whatever might have been anticipated on that head by their acquaintance. Thirteen years had passed away since Lady Elliot's death, and they were still near neighbours and intimate friends, and one remained a widower, the other a widow.

That Lady Russell, of steady age and character, and extremely well provided for, should have no thought of a second marriage, needs no apology to the public, which is rather apt to be unreasonably discontented when a woman does marry again, than when she does not; but Sir Walter's continuing in singleness requires explanation. Be it known then, that Sir Walter, like a good father, (having met with one or two private disappointments in very unreasonable applications), prided himself on remaining single for his dear daughters' sake. For one daughter, his eldest, he would really have given up any thing, which he had not been very much tempted to do. Elizabeth had succeeded, at sixteen, to all that was possible, of her mother's rights and consequence; and being very handsome, and very like himself, her influence had always been great, and they had gone on together most happily. His two other children were of very inferior value. Mary had acquired a little artificial importance, by becoming Mrs Charles Musgrove; but Anne, with an elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must have placed her high with any people of real understanding, was nobody with either father or sister; her word had no weight, her convenience was always to give way--she was only Anne.

To Lady Russell, indeed, she was a most dear and highly valued god-daughter, favourite, and friend. Lady Russell loved them all; but it was only in Anne that she could fancy the mother to revive again.

A few years before, Anne Elliot had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early; and as even in its height, her father had found little to admire in her, (so totally different were her delicate features and mild dark eyes from his own), there could be nothing in them, now that she was faded and thin, to excite his esteem. He had never indulged much hope, he had now none, of ever reading her name in any other page of his favourite work. All equality of alliance must rest with Elizabeth, for Mary had merely connected herself with an old country family of respectability and large fortune, and had therefore given all the honour and received none: Elizabeth would, one day or other, marry suitably.

It sometimes happens that a woman is handsomer at twenty-nine than she was ten years before; and, generally speaking, if there has been neither ill health nor anxiety, it is a time of life at which scarcely any charm is lost. It was so with Elizabeth, still the same handsome Miss Elliot that she had begun to be thirteen years ago, and Sir Walter might be excused, therefore, in forgetting her age, or, at least, be deemed only half a fool, for thinking himself and Elizabeth as blooming as ever, amidst the wreck of the good looks of everybody else; for he could plainly see how old all the rest of his family and acquaintance were growing. Anne haggard, Mary coarse, every face in the neighbourhood worsting, and the rapid increase of the crow's foot about Lady Russell's temples had long been a distress to him.

Elizabeth did not quite equal her father in personal contentment. Thirteen years had seen her mistress of Kellynch Hall, presiding and directing with a self-possession and decision which could never have given the idea of her being younger than she was. For thirteen years had she been doing the honours, and laying down the domestic law at home, and leading the way to the chaise and four, and walking immediately after Lady Russell out of all the drawing-rooms and dining-rooms in the country. Thirteen winters' revolving frosts had seen her opening every ball of credit which a scanty neighbourhood afforded, and thirteen springs shewn their blossoms, as she travelled up to London with her father, for a few weeks' annual

enjoyment of the great world. She had the remembrance of all this, she had the consciousness of being nine-and-twenty to give her some regrets and some apprehensions; she was fully satisfied of being still quite as handsome as ever, but she felt her approach to the years of danger, and would have rejoiced to be certain of being properly solicited by baronet-blood within the next twelvemonth or two. Then might she again take up the book of books with as much enjoyment as in her early youth, but now she liked it not. Always to be presented with the date of her own birth and see no marriage follow but that of a youngest sister, made the book an evil; and more than once, when her father had left it open on the table near her, had she closed it, with averted eyes, and pushed it away.

She had had a disappointment, moreover, which that book, and especially the history of her own family, must ever present the remembrance of. The heir presumptive, the very William Walter Elliot, Esq., whose rights had been so generously supported by her father, had disappointed her.

She had, while a very young girl, as soon as she had known him to be, in the event of her having no brother, the future baronet, meant to marry him, and her father had always meant that she should. He had not been known to them as a boy; but soon after Lady Elliot's death, Sir Walter had sought the acquaintance, and though his overtures had not been met with any warmth, he had persevered in seeking it, making allowance for the modest drawing-back of youth; and, in one of their spring excursions to London, when Elizabeth was in her first bloom, Mr Elliot had been forced into the introduction.

He was at that time a very young man, just engaged in the study of the law; and Elizabeth found him extremely agreeable, and every plan in his favour was confirmed. He was invited to Kellynch Hall; he was talked of and expected all the rest of the year; but he never came. The following spring he was seen again in town, found equally agreeable, again encouraged, invited, and expected, and again he did not come; and the next tidings were that he was married. Instead of pushing his fortune in the line marked out for the heir of the house of Elliot, he had purchased independence by uniting himself to a rich woman of inferior birth.

Sir Walter had resented it. As the head of the house, he felt that he ought to have been consulted, especially after taking the young man so publicly by the hand; "For they must have been seen together," he observed, "once at Tattersall's, and twice in the lobby of the House of Commons." His disapprobation was expressed, but apparently very little regarded. Mr Elliot had attempted no apology, and shewn himself as unsolicitous of being longer noticed by the family, as Sir Walter considered him unworthy of it: all acquaintance between them had ceased.

This very awkward history of Mr Elliot was still, after an interval of several years, felt with anger by Elizabeth, who had liked the man for himself, and still more for being her father's heir, and whose strong family pride could see only in him a proper match for Sir Walter Elliot's eldest daughter. There was not a baronet from A to Z whom her feelings could have so willingly acknowledged as an equal. Yet so miserably had he conducted himself, that though she was at this present time (the summer of 1814) wearing black ribbons for his wife, she could not admit him to be worth thinking of again. The disgrace of his first marriage might, perhaps, as there was no reason to suppose it perpetuated by offspring, have been got over, had he not done worse; but he had, as by the accustomed intervention of kind friends, they had been informed, spoken most disrespectfully of them all, most slightly and contemptuously of the very blood he belonged to, and the honours which were hereafter to be his own. This could not be pardoned.

Such were Elizabeth Elliot's sentiments and sensations; such the cares to alloy, the agitations to vary, the sameness and the elegance, the prosperity and the nothingness of her scene of life; such the feelings to give interest to a long, uneventful residence in one country circle, to fill the vacancies which there were no habits of utility abroad, no talents or accomplishments for home, to occupy.

But now, another occupation and solicitude of mind was beginning to be added to these. Her father was growing distressed for money. She knew, that when he now took up the Baronetage, it was to drive the heavy bills of his tradespeople, and the unwelcome hints of Mr Shepherd, his agent, from his thoughts. The Kellynch property was good, but not equal to Sir Walter's

apprehension of the state required in its possessor. While Lady Elliot lived, there had been method, moderation, and economy, which had just kept him within his income; but with her had died all such right-mindedness, and from that period he had been constantly exceeding it. It had not been possible for him to spend less; he had done nothing but what Sir Walter Elliot was imperiously called on to do; but blameless as he was, he was not only growing dreadfully in debt, but was hearing of it so often, that it became vain to attempt concealing it longer, even partially, from his daughter. He had given her some hints of it the last spring in town; he had gone so far even as to say, "Can we retrench? Does it occur to you that there is any one article in which we can retrench?" and Elizabeth, to do her justice, had, in the first ardour of female alarm, set seriously to think what could be done, and had finally proposed these two branches of economy, to cut off some unnecessary charities, and to refrain from new furnishing the drawing-room; to which expedients she afterwards added the happy thought of their taking no present down to Anne, as had been the usual yearly custom. But these measures, however good in themselves, were insufficient for the real extent of the evil, the whole of which Sir Walter found himself obliged to confess to her soon afterwards. Elizabeth had nothing to propose of deeper efficacy. She felt herself ill-used and unfortunate, as did her father; and they were neither of them able to devise any means of lessening their expenses without compromising their dignity, or relinquishing their comforts in a way not to be borne.

There was only a small part of his estate that Sir Walter could dispose of; but had every acre been alienable, it would have made no difference. He had condescended to mortgage as far as he had the power, but he would never condescend to sell. No; he would never disgrace his name so far. The Kellynch estate should be transmitted whole and entire, as he had received it.

Their two confidential friends, Mr Shepherd, who lived in the neighbouring market town, and Lady Russell, were called to advise them; and both father and daughter seemed to expect that something should be struck out by one or the other to remove their embarrassments and reduce their expenditure, without involving the loss of any indulgence of taste or pride.

## Chapter 2

Mr Shepherd, a civil, cautious lawyer, who, whatever might be his hold or his views on Sir Walter, would rather have the disagreeable prompted by anybody else, excused himself from offering the slightest hint, and only begged leave to recommend an implicit reference to the excellent judgement of Lady Russell, from whose known good sense he fully expected to have just such resolute measures advised as he meant to see finally adopted.

Lady Russell was most anxiously zealous on the subject, and gave it much serious consideration. She was a woman rather of sound than of quick abilities, whose difficulties in coming to any decision in this instance were great, from the opposition of two leading principles. She was of strict integrity herself, with a delicate sense of honour; but she was as desirous of saving Sir Walter's feelings, as solicitous for the credit of the family, as aristocratic in her ideas of what was due to them, as anybody of sense and honesty could well be. She was a benevolent, charitable, good woman, and capable of strong attachments, most correct in her conduct, strict in her notions of decorum, and with manners that were held a standard of good-breeding. She had a cultivated mind, and was, generally speaking, rational and consistent; but she had prejudices on the side of ancestry; she had a value for rank and consequence, which blinded her a little to the faults of those who possessed them. Herself the widow of only a knight, she gave the dignity of a baronet all its due; and Sir Walter, independent of his claims as an old acquaintance, an attentive neighbour, an obliging landlord, the husband of her very dear friend, the father of Anne and her sisters, was, as being Sir Walter, in her apprehension, entitled to a great deal of compassion and consideration under his present difficulties.

They must retrench; that did not admit of a doubt. But she was very anxious to have it done with the least possible pain to him and Elizabeth. She drew up plans of economy, she made exact calculations, and she did



what nobody else thought of doing: she consulted Anne, who never seemed considered by the others as having any interest in the question. She consulted, and in a degree was influenced by her in marking out the scheme of retrenchment which was at last submitted to Sir Walter. Every emendation of Anne's had been on the side of honesty against importance. She wanted more vigorous measures, a more complete reformation, a quicker release from debt, a much higher tone of indifference for everything but justice and equity.

"If we can persuade your father to all this," said Lady Russell, looking over her paper, "much may be done. If he will adopt these regulations, in seven years he will be clear; and I hope we may be able to convince him and Elizabeth, that Kellynch Hall has a respectability in itself which cannot be affected by these reductions; and that the true dignity of Sir Walter Elliot will be very far from lessened in the eyes of sensible people, by acting like a man of principle. What will he be doing, in fact, but what very many of our first families have done, or ought to do? There will be nothing singular in his case; and it is singularity which often makes the worst part of our suffering, as it always does of our conduct. I have great hope of prevailing. We must be serious and decided; for after all, the person who has contracted debts must pay them; and though a great deal is due to the feelings of the gentleman, and the head of a house, like your father, there is still more due to the character of an honest man."

This was the principle on which Anne wanted her father to be proceeding, his friends to be urging him. She considered it as an act of indispensable duty to clear away the claims of creditors with all the expedition which the most comprehensive retrenchments could secure, and saw no dignity in anything short of it. She wanted it to be prescribed, and felt as a duty. She rated Lady Russell's influence highly; and as to the severe degree of self-denial which her own conscience prompted, she believed there might be little more difficulty in persuading them to a complete, than to half a reformation. Her knowledge of her father and Elizabeth inclined her to think that the sacrifice of one pair of horses would be hardly less painful than of both, and so on, through the whole list of Lady Russell's too gentle reductions.

How Anne's more rigid requisitions might have been taken is of little consequence. Lady Russell's had no success at all: could not be put up with, were not to be borne. "What! every comfort of life knocked off! Journeys, London, servants, horses, table--contractions and restrictions every where! To live no longer with the decencies even of a private gentleman! No, he would sooner quit Kellynch Hall at once, than remain in it on such disgraceful terms."

"Quit Kellynch Hall." The hint was immediately taken up by Mr Shepherd, whose interest was involved in the reality of Sir Walter's retrenching, and who was perfectly persuaded that nothing would be done without a change of abode. "Since the idea had been started in the very quarter which ought to dictate, he had no scruple," he said, "in confessing his judgement to be entirely on that side. It did not appear to him that Sir Walter could materially alter his style of living in a house which had such a character of hospitality and ancient dignity to support. In any other place Sir Walter might judge for himself; and would be looked up to, as regulating the modes of life in whatever way he might choose to model his household."

Sir Walter would quit Kellynch Hall; and after a very few days more of doubt and indecision, the great question of whither he should go was settled, and the first outline of this important change made out.

There had been three alternatives, London, Bath, or another house in the country. All Anne's wishes had been for the latter. A small house in their own neighbourhood, where they might still have Lady Russell's society, still be near Mary, and still have the pleasure of sometimes seeing the lawns and groves of Kellynch, was the object of her ambition. But the usual fate of Anne attended her, in having something very opposite from her inclination fixed on. She disliked Bath, and did not think it agreed with her; and Bath was to be her home.

Sir Walter had at first thought more of London; but Mr Shepherd felt that he could not be trusted in London, and had been skilful enough to dissuade him from it, and make Bath preferred. It was a much safer place for a gentleman in his predicament: he might there be important at comparatively little expense. Two material advantages of Bath over London had of course

been given all their weight: its more convenient distance from Kellynch, only fifty miles, and Lady Russell's spending some part of every winter there; and to the very great satisfaction of Lady Russell, whose first views on the projected change had been for Bath, Sir Walter and Elizabeth were induced to believe that they should lose neither consequence nor enjoyment by settling there.

Lady Russell felt obliged to oppose her dear Anne's known wishes. It would be too much to expect Sir Walter to descend into a small house in his own neighbourhood. Anne herself would have found the mortifications of it more than she foresaw, and to Sir Walter's feelings they must have been dreadful. And with regard to Anne's dislike of Bath, she considered it as a prejudice and mistake arising, first, from the circumstance of her having been three years at school there, after her mother's death; and secondly, from her happening to be not in perfectly good spirits the only winter which she had afterwards spent there with herself.

Lady Russell was fond of Bath, in short, and disposed to think it must suit them all; and as to her young friend's health, by passing all the warm months with her at Kellynch Lodge, every danger would be avoided; and it was in fact, a change which must do both health and spirits good. Anne had been too little from home, too little seen. Her spirits were not high. A larger society would improve them. She wanted her to be more known.

The undesirableness of any other house in the same neighbourhood for Sir Walter was certainly much strengthened by one part, and a very material part of the scheme, which had been happily engrafted on the beginning. He was not only to quit his home, but to see it in the hands of others; a trial of fortitude, which stronger heads than Sir Walter's have found too much. Kellynch Hall was to be let. This, however, was a profound secret, not to be breathed beyond their own circle.

Sir Walter could not have borne the degradation of being known to design letting his house. Mr Shepherd had once mentioned the word "advertise," but never dared approach it again. Sir Walter spurned the idea of its being offered in any manner; forbade the slightest hint being dropped of his having such an intention; and it was only on the supposition of his

being spontaneously solicited by some most unexceptionable applicant, on his own terms, and as a great favour, that he would let it at all.

How quick come the reasons for approving what we like! Lady Russell had another excellent one at hand, for being extremely glad that Sir Walter and his family were to remove from the country. Elizabeth had been lately forming an intimacy, which she wished to see interrupted. It was with the daughter of Mr Shepherd, who had returned, after an unprosperous marriage, to her father's house, with the additional burden of two children. She was a clever young woman, who understood the art of pleasing--the art of pleasing, at least, at Kellynch Hall; and who had made herself so acceptable to Miss Elliot, as to have been already staying there more than once, in spite of all that Lady Russell, who thought it a friendship quite out of place, could hint of caution and reserve.

Lady Russell, indeed, had scarcely any influence with Elizabeth, and seemed to love her, rather because she would love her, than because Elizabeth deserved it. She had never received from her more than outward attention, nothing beyond the observances of complaisance; had never succeeded in any point which she wanted to carry, against previous inclination. She had been repeatedly very earnest in trying to get Anne included in the visit to London, sensibly open to all the injustice and all the discredit of the selfish arrangements which shut her out, and on many lesser occasions had endeavoured to give Elizabeth the advantage of her own better judgement and experience; but always in vain: Elizabeth would go her own way; and never had she pursued it in more decided opposition to Lady Russell than in this selection of Mrs Clay; turning from the society of so deserving a sister, to bestow her affection and confidence on one who ought to have been nothing to her but the object of distant civility.

From situation, Mrs Clay was, in Lady Russell's estimate, a very unequal, and in her character she believed a very dangerous companion; and a removal that would leave Mrs Clay behind, and bring a choice of more suitable intimates within Miss Elliot's reach, was therefore an object of first-rate importance.

### Chapter 3

"I must take leave to observe, Sir Walter," said Mr Shepherd one morning at Kellynch Hall, as he laid down the newspaper, "that the present juncture is much in our favour. This peace will be turning all our rich naval officers ashore. They will be all wanting a home. Could not be a better time, Sir Walter, for having a choice of tenants, very responsible tenants. Many a noble fortune has been made during the war. If a rich admiral were to come in our way, Sir Walter--"

"He would be a very lucky man, Shepherd," replied Sir Walter; "that's all I have to remark. A prize indeed would Kellynch Hall be to him; rather the greatest prize of all, let him have taken ever so many before; hey, Shepherd?"

Mr Shepherd laughed, as he knew he must, at this wit, and then added--

"I presume to observe, Sir Walter, that, in the way of business, gentlemen of the navy are well to deal with. I have had a little knowledge of their methods of doing business; and I am free to confess that they have very liberal notions, and are as likely to make desirable tenants as any set of people one should meet with. Therefore, Sir Walter, what I would take leave to suggest is, that if in consequence of any rumours getting abroad of your intention; which must be contemplated as a possible thing, because we know how difficult it is to keep the actions and designs of one part of the world from the notice and curiosity of the other; consequence has its tax; I, John Shepherd, might conceal any family-matters that I chose, for nobody would think it worth their while to observe me; but Sir Walter Elliot has eyes upon him which it may be very difficult to elude; and therefore, thus much I venture upon, that it will not greatly surprise me if, with all our caution, some rumour of the truth should get abroad; in the supposition of which, as I was going to observe, since applications will unquestionably follow, I should think any from our wealthy naval commanders particularly worth attending to; and beg leave to add, that two hours will bring me over at any time, to save you the trouble of replying."

Sir Walter only nodded. But soon afterwards, rising and pacing the room, he observed sarcastically--

"There are few among the gentlemen of the navy, I imagine, who would not be surprised to find themselves in a house of this description."

"They would look around them, no doubt, and bless their good fortune," said Mrs Clay, for Mrs Clay was present: her father had driven her over, nothing being of so much use to Mrs Clay's health as a drive to Kellynch: "but I quite agree with my father in thinking a sailor might be a very desirable tenant. I have known a good deal of the profession; and besides their liberality, they are so neat and careful in all their ways! These valuable pictures of yours, Sir Walter, if you chose to leave them, would be perfectly safe. Everything in and about the house would be taken such excellent care of! The gardens and shrubberies would be kept in almost as high order as they are now. You need not be afraid, Miss Elliot, of your own sweet flower gardens being neglected."

"As to all that," rejoined Sir Walter coolly, "supposing I were induced to let my house, I have by no means made up my mind as to the privileges to be annexed to it. I am not particularly disposed to favour a tenant. The park would be open to him of course, and few navy officers, or men of any other description, can have had such a range; but what restrictions I might impose on the use of the pleasure-grounds, is another thing. I am not fond of the idea of my shrubberies being always approachable; and I should recommend Miss Elliot to be on her guard with respect to her flower garden. I am very little disposed to grant a tenant of Kellynch Hall any extraordinary favour, I assure you, be he sailor or soldier."

After a short pause, Mr Shepherd presumed to say--

"In all these cases, there are established usages which make everything plain and easy between landlord and tenant. Your interest, Sir Walter, is in pretty safe hands. Depend upon me for taking care that no tenant has more than his just rights. I venture to hint, that Sir Walter Elliot cannot be half so jealous for his own, as John Shepherd will be for him."

Here Anne spoke--

"The navy, I think, who have done so much for us, have at least an equal claim with any other set of men, for all the comforts and all the privileges which any home can give. Sailors work hard enough for their comforts, we must all allow."

"Very true, very true. What Miss Anne says, is very true," was Mr Shepherd's rejoinder, and "Oh! certainly," was his daughter's; but Sir Walter's remark was, soon afterwards--

"The profession has its utility, but I should be sorry to see any friend of mine belonging to it."

"Indeed!" was the reply, and with a look of surprise.

"Yes; it is in two points offensive to me; I have two strong grounds of objection to it. First, as being the means of bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction, and raising men to honours which their fathers and grandfathers never dreamt of; and secondly, as it cuts up a man's youth and vigour most horribly; a sailor grows old sooner than any other man. I have observed it all my life. A man is in greater danger in the navy of being insulted by the rise of one whose father, his father might have disdained to speak to, and of becoming prematurely an object of disgust himself, than in any other line. One day last spring, in town, I was in company with two men, striking instances of what I am talking of; Lord St Ives, whose father we all know to have been a country curate, without bread to eat; I was to give place to Lord St Ives, and a certain Admiral Baldwin, the most deplorable-looking personage you can imagine; his face the colour of mahogany, rough and rugged to the last degree; all lines and wrinkles, nine grey hairs of a side, and nothing but a dab of powder at top. 'In the name of heaven, who is that old fellow?' said I to a friend of mine who was standing near, (Sir Basil Morley). 'Old fellow!' cried Sir Basil, 'it is Admiral Baldwin. What do you take his age to be?' 'Sixty,' said I, 'or perhaps sixty-two.' 'Forty,' replied Sir Basil, 'forty, and no more.' Picture to yourselves my amazement; I shall not easily forget Admiral Baldwin. I never saw quite so wretched an example of what a sea-faring life can do; but to a degree, I know it is the same with them all: they are all knocked about, and exposed to every climate, and every weather, till they are not fit to be seen. It is a

pity they are not knocked on the head at once, before they reach Admiral Baldwin's age."

"Nay, Sir Walter," cried Mrs Clay, "this is being severe indeed. Have a little mercy on the poor men. We are not all born to be handsome. The sea is no beautifier, certainly; sailors do grow old betimes; I have observed it; they soon lose the look of youth. But then, is not it the same with many other professions, perhaps most other? Soldiers, in active service, are not at all better off: and even in the quieter professions, there is a toil and a labour of the mind, if not of the body, which seldom leaves a man's looks to the natural effect of time. The lawyer plods, quite care-worn; the physician is up at all hours, and travelling in all weather; and even the clergyman--" she stopt a moment to consider what might do for the clergyman;--"and even the clergyman, you know is obliged to go into infected rooms, and expose his health and looks to all the injury of a poisonous atmosphere. In fact, as I have long been convinced, though every profession is necessary and honourable in its turn, it is only the lot of those who are not obliged to follow any, who can live in a regular way, in the country, choosing their own hours, following their own pursuits, and living on their own property, without the torment of trying for more; it is only their lot, I say, to hold the blessings of health and a good appearance to the utmost: I know no other set of men but what lose something of their personableness when they cease to be quite young."

It seemed as if Mr Shepherd, in this anxiety to bespeak Sir Walter's good will towards a naval officer as tenant, had been gifted with foresight; for the very first application for the house was from an Admiral Croft, with whom he shortly afterwards fell into company in attending the quarter sessions at Taunton; and indeed, he had received a hint of the Admiral from a London correspondent. By the report which he hastened over to Kellynch to make, Admiral Croft was a native of Somersetshire, who having acquired a very handsome fortune, was wishing to settle in his own country, and had come down to Taunton in order to look at some advertised places in that immediate neighbourhood, which, however, had not suited him; that accidentally hearing--(it was just as he had foretold, Mr Shepherd observed, Sir Walter's concerns could not be kept a secret,)--accidentally hearing of the possibility of Kellynch Hall being to let, and understanding his (Mr



Shepherd's) connection with the owner, he had introduced himself to him in order to make particular inquiries, and had, in the course of a pretty long conference, expressed as strong an inclination for the place as a man who knew it only by description could feel; and given Mr Shepherd, in his explicit account of himself, every proof of his being a most responsible, eligible tenant.

"And who is Admiral Croft?" was Sir Walter's cold suspicious inquiry.

Mr Shepherd answered for his being of a gentleman's family, and mentioned a place; and Anne, after the little pause which followed, added--

"He is a rear admiral of the white. He was in the Trafalgar action, and has been in the East Indies since; he was stationed there, I believe, several years."

"Then I take it for granted," observed Sir Walter, "that his face is about as orange as the cuffs and capes of my livery."

Mr Shepherd hastened to assure him, that Admiral Croft was a very hale, hearty, well-looking man, a little weather-beaten, to be sure, but not much, and quite the gentleman in all his notions and behaviour; not likely to make the smallest difficulty about terms, only wanted a comfortable home, and to get into it as soon as possible; knew he must pay for his convenience; knew what rent a ready-furnished house of that consequence might fetch; should not have been surprised if Sir Walter had asked more; had inquired about the manor; would be glad of the deputation, certainly, but made no great point of it; said he sometimes took out a gun, but never killed; quite the gentleman.

Mr Shepherd was eloquent on the subject; pointing out all the circumstances of the Admiral's family, which made him peculiarly desirable as a tenant. He was a married man, and without children; the very state to be wished for. A house was never taken good care of, Mr Shepherd observed, without a lady: he did not know, whether furniture might not be in danger of suffering as much where there was no lady, as where there were many children. A lady, without a family, was the very best preserver of furniture in the world. He had seen Mrs Croft, too; she was at Taunton

with the admiral, and had been present almost all the time they were talking the matter over.

"And a very well-spoken, genteel, shrewd lady, she seemed to be," continued he; "asked more questions about the house, and terms, and taxes, than the Admiral himself, and seemed more conversant with business; and moreover, Sir Walter, I found she was not quite unconnected in this country, any more than her husband; that is to say, she is sister to a gentleman who did live amongst us once; she told me so herself: sister to the gentleman who lived a few years back at Monkford. Bless me! what was his name? At this moment I cannot recollect his name, though I have heard it so lately. Penelope, my dear, can you help me to the name of the gentleman who lived at Monkford: Mrs Croft's brother?"

But Mrs Clay was talking so eagerly with Miss Elliot, that she did not hear the appeal.

"I have no conception whom you can mean, Shepherd; I remember no gentleman resident at Monkford since the time of old Governor Trent."

"Bless me! how very odd! I shall forget my own name soon, I suppose. A name that I am so very well acquainted with; knew the gentleman so well by sight; seen him a hundred times; came to consult me once, I remember, about a trespass of one of his neighbours; farmer's man breaking into his orchard; wall torn down; apples stolen; caught in the fact; and afterwards, contrary to my judgement, submitted to an amicable compromise. Very odd indeed!"

After waiting another moment--

"You mean Mr Wentworth, I suppose?" said Anne.

Mr Shepherd was all gratitude.

"Wentworth was the very name! Mr Wentworth was the very man. He had the curacy of Monkford, you know, Sir Walter, some time back, for two or three years. Came there about the year ---5, I take it. You remember him, I am sure."

"Wentworth? Oh! ay,--Mr Wentworth, the curate of Monkford. You misled me by the term gentleman. I thought you were speaking of some man of property: Mr Wentworth was nobody, I remember; quite unconnected; nothing to do with the Strafford family. One wonders how the names of many of our nobility become so common."

As Mr Shepherd perceived that this connexion of the Crofts did them no service with Sir Walter, he mentioned it no more; returning, with all his zeal, to dwell on the circumstances more indisputably in their favour; their age, and number, and fortune; the high idea they had formed of Kellynch Hall, and extreme solicitude for the advantage of renting it; making it appear as if they ranked nothing beyond the happiness of being the tenants of Sir Walter Elliot: an extraordinary taste, certainly, could they have been supposed in the secret of Sir Walter's estimate of the dues of a tenant.

It succeeded, however; and though Sir Walter must ever look with an evil eye on anyone intending to inhabit that house, and think them infinitely too well off in being permitted to rent it on the highest terms, he was talked into allowing Mr Shepherd to proceed in the treaty, and authorising him to wait on Admiral Croft, who still remained at Taunton, and fix a day for the house being seen.

Sir Walter was not very wise; but still he had experience enough of the world to feel, that a more unobjectionable tenant, in all essentials, than Admiral Croft bid fair to be, could hardly offer. So far went his understanding; and his vanity supplied a little additional soothing, in the Admiral's situation in life, which was just high enough, and not too high. "I have let my house to Admiral Croft," would sound extremely well; very much better than to any mere Mr--; a Mr (save, perhaps, some half dozen in the nation,) always needs a note of explanation. An admiral speaks his own consequence, and, at the same time, can never make a baronet look small. In all their dealings and intercourse, Sir Walter Elliot must ever have the precedence.

Nothing could be done without a reference to Elizabeth: but her inclination was growing so strong for a removal, that she was happy to have it fixed and expedited by a tenant at hand; and not a word to suspend decision was uttered by her.

Mr Shepherd was completely empowered to act; and no sooner had such an end been reached, than Anne, who had been a most attentive listener to the whole, left the room, to seek the comfort of cool air for her flushed cheeks; and as she walked along a favourite grove, said, with a gentle sigh, "A few months more, and he, perhaps, may be walking here."

## Chapter 4

He was not Mr Wentworth, the former curate of Monkford, however suspicious appearances may be, but a Captain Frederick Wentworth, his brother, who being made commander in consequence of the action off St Domingo, and not immediately employed, had come into Somersetshire, in the summer of 1806; and having no parent living, found a home for half a year at Monkford. He was, at that time, a remarkably fine young man, with a great deal of intelligence, spirit, and brilliancy; and Anne an extremely pretty girl, with gentleness, modesty, taste, and feeling. Half the sum of attraction, on either side, might have been enough, for he had nothing to do, and she had hardly anybody to love; but the encounter of such lavish recommendations could not fail. They were gradually acquainted, and when acquainted, rapidly and deeply in love. It would be difficult to say which had seen highest perfection in the other, or which had been the happiest: she, in receiving his declarations and proposals, or he in having them accepted.

A short period of exquisite felicity followed, and but a short one. Troubles soon arose. Sir Walter, on being applied to, without actually withholding his consent, or saying it should never be, gave it all the negative of great astonishment, great coldness, great silence, and a professed resolution of doing nothing for his daughter. He thought it a very degrading alliance; and Lady Russell, though with more tempered and pardonable pride, received it as a most unfortunate one.

Anne Elliot, with all her claims of birth, beauty, and mind, to throw herself away at nineteen; involve herself at nineteen in an engagement with a young man, who had nothing but himself to recommend him, and no hopes of attaining affluence, but in the chances of a most uncertain profession, and no connexions to secure even his farther rise in the profession, would be, indeed, a throwing away, which she grieved to think of! Anne Elliot, so young; known to so few, to be snatched off by a stranger without alliance or fortune; or rather sunk by him into a state of most wearing, anxious, youth-killing dependence! It must not be, if by any fair interference of friendship, any representations from one who had almost a mother's love, and mother's rights, it would be prevented.

Captain Wentworth had no fortune. He had been lucky in his profession; but spending freely, what had come freely, had realized nothing. But he was confident that he should soon be rich: full of life and ardour, he knew that he should soon have a ship, and soon be on a station that would lead to everything he wanted. He had always been lucky; he knew he should be so still. Such confidence, powerful in its own warmth, and bewitching in the wit which often expressed it, must have been enough for Anne; but Lady Russell saw it very differently. His sanguine temper, and fearlessness of mind, operated very differently on her. She saw in it but an aggravation of the evil. It only added a dangerous character to himself. He was brilliant, he was headstrong. Lady Russell had little taste for wit, and of anything approaching to imprudence a horror. She deprecated the connexion in every light.

Such opposition, as these feelings produced, was more than Anne could combat. Young and gentle as she was, it might yet have been possible to withstand her father's ill-will, though unsoftened by one kind word or look on the part of her sister; but Lady Russell, whom she had always loved and relied on, could not, with such steadiness of opinion, and such tenderness of manner, be continually advising her in vain. She was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing: indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success, and not deserving it. But it was not a merely selfish caution, under which she acted, in putting an end to it. Had she not imagined herself consulting his good, even more than her own, she could hardly have given him up. The belief of being prudent, and self-denying, principally for his

advantage, was her chief consolation, under the misery of a parting, a final parting; and every consolation was required, for she had to encounter all the additional pain of opinions, on his side, totally unconvinced and unbending, and of his feeling himself ill used by so forced a relinquishment. He had left the country in consequence.

A few months had seen the beginning and the end of their acquaintance; but not with a few months ended Anne's share of suffering from it. Her attachment and regrets had, for a long time, clouded every enjoyment of youth, and an early loss of bloom and spirits had been their lasting effect.

More than seven years were gone since this little history of sorrowful interest had reached its close; and time had softened down much, perhaps nearly all of peculiar attachment to him, but she had been too dependent on time alone; no aid had been given in change of place (except in one visit to Bath soon after the rupture), or in any novelty or enlargement of society. No one had ever come within the Kellynch circle, who could bear a comparison with Frederick Wentworth, as he stood in her memory. No second attachment, the only thoroughly natural, happy, and sufficient cure, at her time of life, had been possible to the nice tone of her mind, the fastidiousness of her taste, in the small limits of the society around them. She had been solicited, when about two-and-twenty, to change her name, by the young man, who not long afterwards found a more willing mind in her younger sister; and Lady Russell had lamented her refusal; for Charles Musgrove was the eldest son of a man, whose landed property and general importance were second in that country, only to Sir Walter's, and of good character and appearance; and however Lady Russell might have asked yet for something more, while Anne was nineteen, she would have rejoiced to see her at twenty-two so respectably removed from the partialities and injustice of her father's house, and settled so permanently near herself. But in this case, Anne had left nothing for advice to do; and though Lady Russell, as satisfied as ever with her own discretion, never wished the past undone, she began now to have the anxiety which borders on hopelessness for Anne's being tempted, by some man of talents and independence, to enter a state for which she held her to be peculiarly fitted by her warm affections and domestic habits.

They knew not each other's opinion, either its constancy or its change, on the one leading point of Anne's conduct, for the subject was never alluded to; but Anne, at seven-and-twenty, thought very differently from what she had been made to think at nineteen. She did not blame Lady Russell, she did not blame herself for having been guided by her; but she felt that were any young person, in similar circumstances, to apply to her for counsel, they would never receive any of such certain immediate wretchedness, such uncertain future good. She was persuaded that under every disadvantage of disapprobation at home, and every anxiety attending his profession, all their probable fears, delays, and disappointments, she should yet have been a happier woman in maintaining the engagement, than she had been in the sacrifice of it; and this, she fully believed, had the usual share, had even more than the usual share of all such solitudes and suspense been theirs, without reference to the actual results of their case, which, as it happened, would have bestowed earlier prosperity than could be reasonably calculated on. All his sanguine expectations, all his confidence had been justified. His genius and ardour had seemed to foresee and to command his prosperous path. He had, very soon after their engagement ceased, got employ: and all that he had told her would follow, had taken place. He had distinguished himself, and early gained the other step in rank, and must now, by successive captures, have made a handsome fortune. She had only navy lists and newspapers for her authority, but she could not doubt his being rich; and, in favour of his constancy, she had no reason to believe him married.

How eloquent could Anne Elliot have been! how eloquent, at least, were her wishes on the side of early warm attachment, and a cheerful confidence in futurity, against that over-anxious caution which seems to insult exertion and distrust Providence! She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older: the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning.

With all these circumstances, recollections and feelings, she could not hear that Captain Wentworth's sister was likely to live at Kellynch without a revival of former pain; and many a stroll, and many a sigh, were necessary to dispel the agitation of the idea. She often told herself it was folly, before she could harden her nerves sufficiently to feel the continual discussion of

the Crofts and their business no evil. She was assisted, however, by that perfect indifference and apparent unconsciousness, among the only three of her own friends in the secret of the past, which seemed almost to deny any recollection of it. She could do justice to the superiority of Lady Russell's motives in this, over those of her father and Elizabeth; she could honour all the better feelings of her calmness; but the general air of oblivion among them was highly important from whatever it sprung; and in the event of Admiral Croft's really taking Kellynch Hall, she rejoiced anew over the conviction which had always been most grateful to her, of the past being known to those three only among her connexions, by whom no syllable, she believed, would ever be whispered, and in the trust that among his, the brother only with whom he had been residing, had received any information of their short-lived engagement. That brother had been long removed from the country and being a sensible man, and, moreover, a single man at the time, she had a fond dependence on no human creature's having heard of it from him.

The sister, Mrs Croft, had then been out of England, accompanying her husband on a foreign station, and her own sister, Mary, had been at school while it all occurred; and never admitted by the pride of some, and the delicacy of others, to the smallest knowledge of it afterwards.

With these supports, she hoped that the acquaintance between herself and the Crofts, which, with Lady Russell, still resident in Kellynch, and Mary fixed only three miles off, must be anticipated, need not involve any particular awkwardness.

## **Chapter 5**

On the morning appointed for Admiral and Mrs Croft's seeing Kellynch Hall, Anne found it most natural to take her almost daily walk to Lady Russell's, and keep out of the way till all was over; when she found it most natural to be sorry that she had missed the opportunity of seeing them.



This meeting of the two parties proved highly satisfactory, and decided the whole business at once. Each lady was previously well disposed for an agreement, and saw nothing, therefore, but good manners in the other; and with regard to the gentlemen, there was such an hearty good humour, such an open, trusting liberality on the Admiral's side, as could not but influence Sir Walter, who had besides been flattered into his very best and most polished behaviour by Mr Shepherd's assurances of his being known, by report, to the Admiral, as a model of good breeding.

The house and grounds, and furniture, were approved, the Crofts were approved, terms, time, every thing, and every body, was right; and Mr Shepherd's clerks were set to work, without there having been a single preliminary difference to modify of all that "This indenture sheweth."

Sir Walter, without hesitation, declared the Admiral to be the best-looking sailor he had ever met with, and went so far as to say, that if his own man might have had the arranging of his hair, he should not be ashamed of being seen with him any where; and the Admiral, with sympathetic cordiality, observed to his wife as they drove back through the park, "I thought we should soon come to a deal, my dear, in spite of what they told us at Taunton. The Baronet will never set the Thames on fire, but there seems to be no harm in him."--reciprocal compliments, which would have been esteemed about equal.

The Crofts were to have possession at Michaelmas; and as Sir Walter proposed removing to Bath in the course of the preceding month, there was no time to be lost in making every dependent arrangement.

Lady Russell, convinced that Anne would not be allowed to be of any use, or any importance, in the choice of the house which they were going to secure, was very unwilling to have her hurried away so soon, and wanted to make it possible for her to stay behind till she might convey her to Bath herself after Christmas; but having engagements of her own which must take her from Kellynch for several weeks, she was unable to give the full invitation she wished, and Anne though dreading the possible heats of September in all the white glare of Bath, and grieving to forego all the influence so sweet and so sad of the autumnal months in the country, did not think that, everything considered, she wished to remain. It would be

most right, and most wise, and, therefore must involve least suffering to go with the others.

Something occurred, however, to give her a different duty. Mary, often a little unwell, and always thinking a great deal of her own complaints, and always in the habit of claiming Anne when anything was the matter, was indisposed; and foreseeing that she should not have a day's health all the autumn, entreated, or rather required her, for it was hardly entreaty, to come to Uppercross Cottage, and bear her company as long as she should want her, instead of going to Bath.

"I cannot possibly do without Anne," was Mary's reasoning; and Elizabeth's reply was, "Then I am sure Anne had better stay, for nobody will want her in Bath."

To be claimed as a good, though in an improper style, is at least better than being rejected as no good at all; and Anne, glad to be thought of some use, glad to have anything marked out as a duty, and certainly not sorry to have the scene of it in the country, and her own dear country, readily agreed to stay.

This invitation of Mary's removed all Lady Russell's difficulties, and it was consequently soon settled that Anne should not go to Bath till Lady Russell took her, and that all the intervening time should be divided between Uppercross Cottage and Kellynch Lodge.

So far all was perfectly right; but Lady Russell was almost startled by the wrong of one part of the Kellynch Hall plan, when it burst on her, which was, Mrs Clay's being engaged to go to Bath with Sir Walter and Elizabeth, as a most important and valuable assistant to the latter in all the business before her. Lady Russell was extremely sorry that such a measure should have been resorted to at all, wondered, grieved, and feared; and the affront it contained to Anne, in Mrs Clay's being of so much use, while Anne could be of none, was a very sore aggravation.

Anne herself was become hardened to such affronts; but she felt the imprudence of the arrangement quite as keenly as Lady Russell. With a great deal of quiet observation, and a knowledge, which she often wished

less, of her father's character, she was sensible that results the most serious to his family from the intimacy were more than possible. She did not imagine that her father had at present an idea of the kind. Mrs Clay had freckles, and a projecting tooth, and a clumsy wrist, which he was continually making severe remarks upon, in her absence; but she was young, and certainly altogether well-looking, and possessed, in an acute mind and assiduous pleasing manners, infinitely more dangerous attractions than any merely personal might have been. Anne was so impressed by the degree of their danger, that she could not excuse herself from trying to make it perceptible to her sister. She had little hope of success; but Elizabeth, who in the event of such a reverse would be so much more to be pitied than herself, should never, she thought, have reason to reproach her for giving no warning.

She spoke, and seemed only to offend. Elizabeth could not conceive how such an absurd suspicion should occur to her, and indignantly answered for each party's perfectly knowing their situation.

"Mrs Clay," said she, warmly, "never forgets who she is; and as I am rather better acquainted with her sentiments than you can be, I can assure you, that upon the subject of marriage they are particularly nice, and that she reprobates all inequality of condition and rank more strongly than most people. And as to my father, I really should not have thought that he, who has kept himself single so long for our sakes, need be suspected now. If Mrs Clay were a very beautiful woman, I grant you, it might be wrong to have her so much with me; not that anything in the world, I am sure, would induce my father to make a degrading match, but he might be rendered unhappy. But poor Mrs Clay who, with all her merits, can never have been reckoned tolerably pretty, I really think poor Mrs Clay may be staying here in perfect safety. One would imagine you had never heard my father speak of her personal misfortunes, though I know you must fifty times. That tooth of her's and those freckles. Freckles do not disgust me so very much as they do him. I have known a face not materially disfigured by a few, but he abominates them. You must have heard him notice Mrs Clay's freckles."

"There is hardly any personal defect," replied Anne, "which an agreeable manner might not gradually reconcile one to."

"I think very differently," answered Elizabeth, shortly; "an agreeable manner may set off handsome features, but can never alter plain ones. However, at any rate, as I have a great deal more at stake on this point than anybody else can have, I think it rather unnecessary in you to be advising me."

Anne had done; glad that it was over, and not absolutely hopeless of doing good. Elizabeth, though resenting the suspicion, might yet be made observant by it.

The last office of the four carriage-horses was to draw Sir Walter, Miss Elliot, and Mrs Clay to Bath. The party drove off in very good spirits; Sir Walter prepared with condescending bows for all the afflicted tenantry and cottagers who might have had a hint to show themselves, and Anne walked up at the same time, in a sort of desolate tranquillity, to the Lodge, where she was to spend the first week.

Her friend was not in better spirits than herself. Lady Russell felt this break-up of the family exceedingly. Their respectability was as dear to her as her own, and a daily intercourse had become precious by habit. It was painful to look upon their deserted grounds, and still worse to anticipate the new hands they were to fall into; and to escape the solitariness and the melancholy of so altered a village, and be out of the way when Admiral and Mrs Croft first arrived, she had determined to make her own absence from home begin when she must give up Anne. Accordingly their removal was made together, and Anne was set down at Uppercross Cottage, in the first stage of Lady Russell's journey.

Uppercross was a moderate-sized village, which a few years back had been completely in the old English style, containing only two houses superior in appearance to those of the yeomen and labourers; the mansion of the squire, with its high walls, great gates, and old trees, substantial and unmodernized, and the compact, tight parsonage, enclosed in its own neat garden, with a vine and a pear-tree trained round its casements; but upon the marriage of the young 'squire, it had received the improvement of a farmhouse elevated into a cottage, for his residence, and Uppercross Cottage, with its veranda, French windows, and other prettiness, was quite as likely

to catch the traveller's eye as the more consistent and considerable aspect and premises of the Great House, about a quarter of a mile farther on.

Here Anne had often been staying. She knew the ways of Uppercross as well as those of Kellynch. The two families were so continually meeting, so much in the habit of running in and out of each other's house at all hours, that it was rather a surprise to her to find Mary alone; but being alone, her being unwell and out of spirits was almost a matter of course. Though better endowed than the elder sister, Mary had not Anne's understanding nor temper. While well, and happy, and properly attended to, she had great good humour and excellent spirits; but any indisposition sunk her completely. She had no resources for solitude; and inheriting a considerable share of the Elliot self-importance, was very prone to add to every other distress that of fancying herself neglected and ill-used. In person, she was inferior to both sisters, and had, even in her bloom, only reached the dignity of being "a fine girl." She was now lying on the faded sofa of the pretty little drawing-room, the once elegant furniture of which had been gradually growing shabby, under the influence of four summers and two children; and, on Anne's appearing, greeted her with--

"So, you are come at last! I began to think I should never see you. I am so ill I can hardly speak. I have not seen a creature the whole morning!"

"I am sorry to find you unwell," replied Anne. "You sent me such a good account of yourself on Thursday!"

"Yes, I made the best of it; I always do: but I was very far from well at the time; and I do not think I ever was so ill in my life as I have been all this morning: very unfit to be left alone, I am sure. Suppose I were to be seized of a sudden in some dreadful way, and not able to ring the bell! So, Lady Russell would not get out. I do not think she has been in this house three times this summer."

Anne said what was proper, and enquired after her husband. "Oh! Charles is out shooting. I have not seen him since seven o'clock. He would go, though I told him how ill I was. He said he should not stay out long; but he has never come back, and now it is almost one. I assure you, I have not seen a soul this whole long morning."

"You have had your little boys with you?"

"Yes, as long as I could bear their noise; but they are so unmanageable that they do me more harm than good. Little Charles does not mind a word I say, and Walter is growing quite as bad."

"Well, you will soon be better now," replied Anne, cheerfully. "You know I always cure you when I come. How are your neighbours at the Great House?"

"I can give you no account of them. I have not seen one of them to-day, except Mr Musgrove, who just stopped and spoke through the window, but without getting off his horse; and though I told him how ill I was, not one of them have been near me. It did not happen to suit the Miss Musgroves, I suppose, and they never put themselves out of their way."

"You will see them yet, perhaps, before the morning is gone. It is early."

"I never want them, I assure you. They talk and laugh a great deal too much for me. Oh! Anne, I am so very unwell! It was quite unkind of you not to come on Thursday."

"My dear Mary, recollect what a comfortable account you sent me of yourself! You wrote in the cheerfullest manner, and said you were perfectly well, and in no hurry for me; and that being the case, you must be aware that my wish would be to remain with Lady Russell to the last: and besides what I felt on her account, I have really been so busy, have had so much to do, that I could not very conveniently have left Kellynch sooner."

"Dear me! what can you possibly have to do?"

"A great many things, I assure you. More than I can recollect in a moment; but I can tell you some. I have been making a duplicate of the catalogue of my father's books and pictures. I have been several times in the garden with Mackenzie, trying to understand, and make him understand, which of Elizabeth's plants are for Lady Russell. I have had all my own little concerns to arrange, books and music to divide, and all my trunks to repack, from not having understood in time what was intended as to the

waggon: and one thing I have had to do, Mary, of a more trying nature: going to almost every house in the parish, as a sort of take-leave. I was told that they wished it. But all these things took up a great deal of time."

"Oh! well!" and after a moment's pause, "but you have never asked me one word about our dinner at the Pooles yesterday."

"Did you go then? I have made no enquiries, because I concluded you must have been obliged to give up the party."

"Oh yes! I went. I was very well yesterday; nothing at all the matter with me till this morning. It would have been strange if I had not gone."

"I am very glad you were well enough, and I hope you had a pleasant party."

"Nothing remarkable. One always knows beforehand what the dinner will be, and who will be there; and it is so very uncomfortable not having a carriage of one's own. Mr and Mrs Musgrove took me, and we were so crowded! They are both so very large, and take up so much room; and Mr Musgrove always sits forward. So, there was I, crowded into the back seat with Henrietta and Louisa; and I think it very likely that my illness to-day may be owing to it."

A little further perseverance in patience and forced cheerfulness on Anne's side produced nearly a cure on Mary's. She could soon sit upright on the sofa, and began to hope she might be able to leave it by dinner-time. Then, forgetting to think of it, she was at the other end of the room, beautifying a nosegay; then, she ate her cold meat; and then she was well enough to propose a little walk.

"Where shall we go?" said she, when they were ready. "I suppose you will not like to call at the Great House before they have been to see you?"

"I have not the smallest objection on that account," replied Anne. "I should never think of standing on such ceremony with people I know so well as Mrs and the Miss Musgroves."

"Oh! but they ought to call upon you as soon as possible. They ought to feel what is due to you as my sister. However, we may as well go and sit with them a little while, and when we have that over, we can enjoy our walk."

Anne had always thought such a style of intercourse highly imprudent; but she had ceased to endeavour to check it, from believing that, though there were on each side continual subjects of offence, neither family could now do without it. To the Great House accordingly they went, to sit the full half hour in the old-fashioned square parlour, with a small carpet and shining floor, to which the present daughters of the house were gradually giving the proper air of confusion by a grand piano-forte and a harp, flower-stands and little tables placed in every direction. Oh! could the originals of the portraits against the wainscot, could the gentlemen in brown velvet and the ladies in blue satin have seen what was going on, have been conscious of such an overthrow of all order and neatness! The portraits themselves seemed to be staring in astonishment.

The Musgroves, like their houses, were in a state of alteration, perhaps of improvement. The father and mother were in the old English style, and the young people in the new. Mr and Mrs Musgrove were a very good sort of people; friendly and hospitable, not much educated, and not at all elegant. Their children had more modern minds and manners. There was a numerous family; but the only two grown up, excepting Charles, were Henrietta and Louisa, young ladies of nineteen and twenty, who had brought from school at Exeter all the usual stock of accomplishments, and were now like thousands of other young ladies, living to be fashionable, happy, and merry. Their dress had every advantage, their faces were rather pretty, their spirits extremely good, their manner unembarrassed and pleasant; they were of consequence at home, and favourites abroad. Anne always contemplated them as some of the happiest creatures of her acquaintance; but still, saved as we all are, by some comfortable feeling of superiority from wishing for the possibility of exchange, she would not have given up her own more elegant and cultivated mind for all their enjoyments; and envied them nothing but that seemingly perfect good understanding and agreement together, that good-humoured mutual affection, of which she had known so little herself with either of her sisters.



They were received with great cordiality. Nothing seemed amiss on the side of the Great House family, which was generally, as Anne very well knew, the least to blame. The half hour was chatted away pleasantly enough; and she was not at all surprised, at the end of it, to have their walking party joined by both the Miss Musgroves, at Mary's particular invitation.

## Chapter 6

Anne had not wanted this visit to Uppercross, to learn that a removal from one set of people to another, though at a distance of only three miles, will often include a total change of conversation, opinion, and idea. She had never been staying there before, without being struck by it, or without wishing that other Elliots could have her advantage in seeing how unknown, or unconsidered there, were the affairs which at Kellynch Hall were treated as of such general publicity and pervading interest; yet, with all this experience, she believed she must now submit to feel that another lesson, in the art of knowing our own nothingness beyond our own circle, was become necessary for her; for certainly, coming as she did, with a heart full of the subject which had been completely occupying both houses in Kellynch for many weeks, she had expected rather more curiosity and sympathy than she found in the separate but very similar remark of Mr and Mrs Musgrove: "So, Miss Anne, Sir Walter and your sister are gone; and what part of Bath do you think they will settle in?" and this, without much waiting for an answer; or in the young ladies' addition of, "I hope we shall be in Bath in the winter; but remember, papa, if we do go, we must be in a good situation: none of your Queen Squares for us!" or in the anxious supplement from Mary, of--"Upon my word, I shall be pretty well off, when you are all gone away to be happy at Bath!"

She could only resolve to avoid such self-delusion in future, and think with heightened gratitude of the extraordinary blessing of having one such

truly sympathising friend as Lady Russell.

The Mr Musgroves had their own game to guard, and to destroy, their own horses, dogs, and newspapers to engage them, and the females were fully occupied in all the other common subjects of housekeeping, neighbours, dress, dancing, and music. She acknowledged it to be very fitting, that every little social commonwealth should dictate its own matters of discourse; and hoped, ere long, to become a not unworthy member of the one she was now transplanted into. With the prospect of spending at least two months at Uppercross, it was highly incumbent on her to clothe her imagination, her memory, and all her ideas in as much of Uppercross as possible.

She had no dread of these two months. Mary was not so repulsive and unsisterly as Elizabeth, nor so inaccessible to all influence of hers; neither was there anything among the other component parts of the cottage inimical to comfort. She was always on friendly terms with her brother-in-law; and in the children, who loved her nearly as well, and respected her a great deal more than their mother, she had an object of interest, amusement, and wholesome exertion.

Charles Musgrove was civil and agreeable; in sense and temper he was undoubtedly superior to his wife, but not of powers, or conversation, or grace, to make the past, as they were connected together, at all a dangerous contemplation; though, at the same time, Anne could believe, with Lady Russell, that a more equal match might have greatly improved him; and that a woman of real understanding might have given more consequence to his character, and more usefulness, rationality, and elegance to his habits and pursuits. As it was, he did nothing with much zeal, but sport; and his time was otherwise trifled away, without benefit from books or anything else. He had very good spirits, which never seemed much affected by his wife's occasional lowness, bore with her unreasonableness sometimes to Anne's admiration, and upon the whole, though there was very often a little disagreement (in which she had sometimes more share than she wished, being appealed to by both parties), they might pass for a happy couple. They were always perfectly agreed in the want of more money, and a strong inclination for a handsome present from his father; but here, as on most

topics, he had the superiority, for while Mary thought it a great shame that such a present was not made, he always contended for his father's having many other uses for his money, and a right to spend it as he liked.

As to the management of their children, his theory was much better than his wife's, and his practice not so bad. "I could manage them very well, if it were not for Mary's interference," was what Anne often heard him say, and had a good deal of faith in; but when listening in turn to Mary's reproach of "Charles spoils the children so that I cannot get them into any order," she never had the smallest temptation to say, "Very true."

One of the least agreeable circumstances of her residence there was her being treated with too much confidence by all parties, and being too much in the secret of the complaints of each house. Known to have some influence with her sister, she was continually requested, or at least receiving hints to exert it, beyond what was practicable. "I wish you could persuade Mary not to be always fancying herself ill," was Charles's language; and, in an unhappy mood, thus spoke Mary: "I do believe if Charles were to see me dying, he would not think there was anything the matter with me. I am sure, Anne, if you would, you might persuade him that I really am very ill--a great deal worse than I ever own."

Mary's declaration was, "I hate sending the children to the Great House, though their grandmamma is always wanting to see them, for she humours and indulges them to such a degree, and gives them so much trash and sweet things, that they are sure to come back sick and cross for the rest of the day." And Mrs Musgrove took the first opportunity of being alone with Anne, to say, "Oh! Miss Anne, I cannot help wishing Mrs Charles had a little of your method with those children. They are quite different creatures with you! But to be sure, in general they are so spoilt! It is a pity you cannot put your sister in the way of managing them. They are as fine healthy children as ever were seen, poor little dears! without partiality; but Mrs Charles knows no more how they should be treated--! Bless me! how troublesome they are sometimes. I assure you, Miss Anne, it prevents my wishing to see them at our house so often as I otherwise should. I believe Mrs Charles is not quite pleased with my not inviting them oftener; but you know it is very bad to have children with one that one is obligated to be

checking every moment; "don't do this," and "don't do that;" or that one can only keep in tolerable order by more cake than is good for them."

She had this communication, moreover, from Mary. "Mrs Musgrove thinks all her servants so steady, that it would be high treason to call it in question; but I am sure, without exaggeration, that her upper house-maid and laundry-maid, instead of being in their business, are gadding about the village, all day long. I meet them wherever I go; and I declare, I never go twice into my nursery without seeing something of them. If Jemima were not the trustiest, steadiest creature in the world, it would be enough to spoil her; for she tells me, they are always tempting her to take a walk with them." And on Mrs Musgrove's side, it was, "I make a rule of never interfering in any of my daughter-in-law's concerns, for I know it would not do; but I shall tell you, Miss Anne, because you may be able to set things to rights, that I have no very good opinion of Mrs Charles's nursery-maid: I hear strange stories of her; she is always upon the gad; and from my own knowledge, I can declare, she is such a fine-dressing lady, that she is enough to ruin any servants she comes near. Mrs Charles quite swears by her, I know; but I just give you this hint, that you may be upon the watch; because, if you see anything amiss, you need not be afraid of mentioning it."

Again, it was Mary's complaint, that Mrs Musgrove was very apt not to give her the precedence that was her due, when they dined at the Great House with other families; and she did not see any reason why she was to be considered so much at home as to lose her place. And one day when Anne was walking with only the Musgroves, one of them after talking of rank, people of rank, and jealousy of rank, said, "I have no scruple of observing to you, how nonsensical some persons are about their place, because all the world knows how easy and indifferent you are about it; but I wish anybody could give Mary a hint that it would be a great deal better if she were not so very tenacious, especially if she would not be always putting herself forward to take place of mamma. Nobody doubts her right to have precedence of mamma, but it would be more becoming in her not to be always insisting on it. It is not that mamma cares about it the least in the world, but I know it is taken notice of by many persons."

How was Anne to set all these matters to rights? She could do little more than listen patiently, soften every grievance, and excuse each to the other; give them all hints of the forbearance necessary between such near neighbours, and make those hints broadest which were meant for her sister's benefit.

In all other respects, her visit began and proceeded very well. Her own spirits improved by change of place and subject, by being removed three miles from Kellynch; Mary's ailments lessened by having a constant companion, and their daily intercourse with the other family, since there was neither superior affection, confidence, nor employment in the cottage, to be interrupted by it, was rather an advantage. It was certainly carried nearly as far as possible, for they met every morning, and hardly ever spent an evening asunder; but she believed they should not have done so well without the sight of Mr and Mrs Musgrove's respectable forms in the usual places, or without the talking, laughing, and singing of their daughters.

She played a great deal better than either of the Miss Musgroves, but having no voice, no knowledge of the harp, and no fond parents, to sit by and fancy themselves delighted, her performance was little thought of, only out of civility, or to refresh the others, as she was well aware. She knew that when she played she was giving pleasure only to herself; but this was no new sensation. Excepting one short period of her life, she had never, since the age of fourteen, never since the loss of her dear mother, known the happiness of being listened to, or encouraged by any just appreciation or real taste. In music she had been always used to feel alone in the world; and Mr and Mrs Musgrove's fond partiality for their own daughters' performance, and total indifference to any other person's, gave her much more pleasure for their sakes, than mortification for her own.

The party at the Great House was sometimes increased by other company. The neighbourhood was not large, but the Musgroves were visited by everybody, and had more dinner-parties, and more callers, more visitors by invitation and by chance, than any other family. They were more completely popular.

The girls were wild for dancing; and the evenings ended, occasionally, in an unpremeditated little ball. There was a family of cousins within a walk

of Uppercross, in less affluent circumstances, who depended on the Musgroves for all their pleasures: they would come at any time, and help play at anything, or dance anywhere; and Anne, very much preferring the office of musician to a more active post, played country dances to them by the hour together; a kindness which always recommended her musical powers to the notice of Mr and Mrs Musgrove more than anything else, and often drew this compliment;--"Well done, Miss Anne! very well done indeed! Lord bless me! how those little fingers of yours fly about!"

So passed the first three weeks. Michaelmas came; and now Anne's heart must be in Kellynch again. A beloved home made over to others; all the precious rooms and furniture, groves, and prospects, beginning to own other eyes and other limbs! She could not think of much else on the 29th of September; and she had this sympathetic touch in the evening from Mary, who, on having occasion to note down the day of the month, exclaimed, "Dear me, is not this the day the Crofts were to come to Kellynch? I am glad I did not think of it before. How low it makes me!"

The Crofts took possession with true naval alertness, and were to be visited. Mary deplored the necessity for herself. "Nobody knew how much she should suffer. She should put it off as long as she could;" but was not easy till she had talked Charles into driving her over on an early day, and was in a very animated, comfortable state of imaginary agitation, when she came back. Anne had very sincerely rejoiced in there being no means of her going. She wished, however to see the Crofts, and was glad to be within when the visit was returned. They came: the master of the house was not at home, but the two sisters were together; and as it chanced that Mrs Croft fell to the share of Anne, while the Admiral sat by Mary, and made himself very agreeable by his good-humoured notice of her little boys, she was well able to watch for a likeness, and if it failed her in the features, to catch it in the voice, or in the turn of sentiment and expression.

Mrs Croft, though neither tall nor fat, had a squareness, uprightness, and vigour of form, which gave importance to her person. She had bright dark eyes, good teeth, and altogether an agreeable face; though her reddened and weather-beaten complexion, the consequence of her having been almost as much at sea as her husband, made her seem to have lived some years longer

in the world than her real eight-and-thirty. Her manners were open, easy, and decided, like one who had no distrust of herself, and no doubts of what to do; without any approach to coarseness, however, or any want of good humour. Anne gave her credit, indeed, for feelings of great consideration towards herself, in all that related to Kellynch, and it pleased her: especially, as she had satisfied herself in the very first half minute, in the instant even of introduction, that there was not the smallest symptom of any knowledge or suspicion on Mrs Croft's side, to give a bias of any sort. She was quite easy on that head, and consequently full of strength and courage, till for a moment electrified by Mrs Croft's suddenly saying,--

"It was you, and not your sister, I find, that my brother had the pleasure of being acquainted with, when he was in this country."

Anne hoped she had outlived the age of blushing; but the age of emotion she certainly had not.

"Perhaps you may not have heard that he is married?" added Mrs Croft.

She could now answer as she ought; and was happy to feel, when Mrs Croft's next words explained it to be Mr Wentworth of whom she spoke, that she had said nothing which might not do for either brother. She immediately felt how reasonable it was, that Mrs Croft should be thinking and speaking of Edward, and not of Frederick; and with shame at her own forgetfulness applied herself to the knowledge of their former neighbour's present state with proper interest.

The rest was all tranquillity; till, just as they were moving, she heard the Admiral say to Mary--

"We are expecting a brother of Mrs Croft's here soon; I dare say you know him by name."

He was cut short by the eager attacks of the little boys, clinging to him like an old friend, and declaring he should not go; and being too much engrossed by proposals of carrying them away in his coat pockets, &c., to have another moment for finishing or recollecting what he had begun, Anne was left to persuade herself, as well as she could, that the same brother must

still be in question. She could not, however, reach such a degree of certainty, as not to be anxious to hear whether anything had been said on the subject at the other house, where the Crofts had previously been calling.

The folks of the Great House were to spend the evening of this day at the Cottage; and it being now too late in the year for such visits to be made on foot, the coach was beginning to be listened for, when the youngest Miss Musgrove walked in. That she was coming to apologize, and that they should have to spend the evening by themselves, was the first black idea; and Mary was quite ready to be affronted, when Louisa made all right by saying, that she only came on foot, to leave more room for the harp, which was bringing in the carriage.

"And I will tell you our reason," she added, "and all about it. I am come on to give you notice, that papa and mamma are out of spirits this evening, especially mamma; she is thinking so much of poor Richard! And we agreed it would be best to have the harp, for it seems to amuse her more than the piano-forte. I will tell you why she is out of spirits. When the Crofts called this morning, (they called here afterwards, did not they?), they happened to say, that her brother, Captain Wentworth, is just returned to England, or paid off, or something, and is coming to see them almost directly; and most unluckily it came into mamma's head, when they were gone, that Wentworth, or something very like it, was the name of poor Richard's captain at one time; I do not know when or where, but a great while before he died, poor fellow! And upon looking over his letters and things, she found it was so, and is perfectly sure that this must be the very man, and her head is quite full of it, and of poor Richard! So we must be as merry as we can, that she may not be dwelling upon such gloomy things."

The real circumstances of this pathetic piece of family history were, that the Musgroves had had the ill fortune of a very troublesome, hopeless son; and the good fortune to lose him before he reached his twentieth year; that he had been sent to sea because he was stupid and unmanageable on shore; that he had been very little cared for at any time by his family, though quite as much as he deserved; seldom heard of, and scarcely at all regretted, when the intelligence of his death abroad had worked its way to Uppercross, two years before.



He had, in fact, though his sisters were now doing all they could for him, by calling him "poor Richard," been nothing better than a thick-headed, unfeeling, unprofitable Dick Musgrove, who had never done anything to entitle himself to more than the abbreviation of his name, living or dead.

He had been several years at sea, and had, in the course of those removals to which all midshipmen are liable, and especially such midshipmen as every captain wishes to get rid of, been six months on board Captain Frederick Wentworth's frigate, the *Laconia*; and from the *Laconia* he had, under the influence of his captain, written the only two letters which his father and mother had ever received from him during the whole of his absence; that is to say, the only two disinterested letters; all the rest had been mere applications for money.

In each letter he had spoken well of his captain; but yet, so little were they in the habit of attending to such matters, so unobservant and incurious were they as to the names of men or ships, that it had made scarcely any impression at the time; and that Mrs Musgrove should have been suddenly struck, this very day, with a recollection of the name of Wentworth, as connected with her son, seemed one of those extraordinary bursts of mind which do sometimes occur.

She had gone to her letters, and found it all as she supposed; and the re-perusal of these letters, after so long an interval, her poor son gone for ever, and all the strength of his faults forgotten, had affected her spirits exceedingly, and thrown her into greater grief for him than she had known on first hearing of his death. Mr Musgrove was, in a lesser degree, affected likewise; and when they reached the cottage, they were evidently in want, first, of being listened to anew on this subject, and afterwards, of all the relief which cheerful companions could give them.

To hear them talking so much of Captain Wentworth, repeating his name so often, puzzling over past years, and at last ascertaining that it might, that it probably would, turn out to be the very same Captain Wentworth whom they recollected meeting, once or twice, after their coming back from Clifton--a very fine young man--but they could not say whether it was seven or eight years ago, was a new sort of trial to Anne's nerves. She found, however, that it was one to which she must inure herself. Since he

actually was expected in the country, she must teach herself to be insensible on such points. And not only did it appear that he was expected, and speedily, but the Musgroves, in their warm gratitude for the kindness he had shewn poor Dick, and very high respect for his character, stamped as it was by poor Dick's having been six months under his care, and mentioning him in strong, though not perfectly well-spelt praise, as "a fine dashing fellow, only two perticular about the schoolmaster," were bent on introducing themselves, and seeking his acquaintance, as soon as they could hear of his arrival.

The resolution of doing so helped to form the comfort of their evening.

## Chapter 7

A very few days more, and Captain Wentworth was known to be at Kellynch, and Mr Musgrove had called on him, and come back warm in his praise, and he was engaged with the Crofts to dine at Uppercross, by the end of another week. It had been a great disappointment to Mr Musgrove to find that no earlier day could be fixed, so impatient was he to shew his gratitude, by seeing Captain Wentworth under his own roof, and welcoming him to all that was strongest and best in his cellars. But a week must pass; only a week, in Anne's reckoning, and then, she supposed, they must meet; and soon she began to wish that she could feel secure even for a week.

Captain Wentworth made a very early return to Mr Musgrove's civility, and she was all but calling there in the same half hour. She and Mary were actually setting forward for the Great House, where, as she afterwards learnt, they must inevitably have found him, when they were stopped by the eldest boy's being at that moment brought home in consequence of a bad fall. The child's situation put the visit entirely aside; but she could not hear of her escape with indifference, even in the midst of the serious anxiety which they afterwards felt on his account.

His collar-bone was found to be dislocated, and such injury received in the back, as roused the most alarming ideas. It was an afternoon of distress, and Anne had every thing to do at once; the apothecary to send for, the father to have pursued and informed, the mother to support and keep from hysterics, the servants to control, the youngest child to banish, and the poor suffering one to attend and soothe; besides sending, as soon as she recollected it, proper notice to the other house, which brought her an accession rather of frightened, enquiring companions, than of very useful assistants.

Her brother's return was the first comfort; he could take best care of his wife; and the second blessing was the arrival of the apothecary. Till he came and had examined the child, their apprehensions were the worse for being vague; they suspected great injury, but knew not where; but now the collar-bone was soon replaced, and though Mr Robinson felt and felt, and rubbed, and looked grave, and spoke low words both to the father and the aunt, still they were all to hope the best, and to be able to part and eat their dinner in tolerable ease of mind; and then it was, just before they parted, that the two young aunts were able so far to digress from their nephew's state, as to give the information of Captain Wentworth's visit; staying five minutes behind their father and mother, to endeavour to express how perfectly delighted they were with him, how much handsomer, how infinitely more agreeable they thought him than any individual among their male acquaintance, who had been at all a favourite before. How glad they had been to hear papa invite him to stay dinner, how sorry when he said it was quite out of his power, and how glad again when he had promised in reply to papa and mamma's farther pressing invitations to come and dine with them on the morrow--actually on the morrow; and he had promised it in so pleasant a manner, as if he felt all the motive of their attention just as he ought. And in short, he had looked and said everything with such exquisite grace, that they could assure them all, their heads were both turned by him; and off they ran, quite as full of glee as of love, and apparently more full of Captain Wentworth than of little Charles.

The same story and the same raptures were repeated, when the two girls came with their father, through the gloom of the evening, to make enquiries; and Mr Musgrove, no longer under the first uneasiness about his heir, could

add his confirmation and praise, and hope there would be now no occasion for putting Captain Wentworth off, and only be sorry to think that the cottage party, probably, would not like to leave the little boy, to give him the meeting. "Oh no; as to leaving the little boy," both father and mother were in much too strong and recent alarm to bear the thought; and Anne, in the joy of the escape, could not help adding her warm protestations to theirs.

Charles Musgrove, indeed, afterwards, shewed more of inclination; "the child was going on so well, and he wished so much to be introduced to Captain Wentworth, that, perhaps, he might join them in the evening; he would not dine from home, but he might walk in for half an hour." But in this he was eagerly opposed by his wife, with "Oh! no, indeed, Charles, I cannot bear to have you go away. Only think if anything should happen?"

The child had a good night, and was going on well the next day. It must be a work of time to ascertain that no injury had been done to the spine; but Mr Robinson found nothing to increase alarm, and Charles Musgrove began, consequently, to feel no necessity for longer confinement. The child was to be kept in bed and amused as quietly as possible; but what was there for a father to do? This was quite a female case, and it would be highly absurd in him, who could be of no use at home, to shut himself up. His father very much wished him to meet Captain Wentworth, and there being no sufficient reason against it, he ought to go; and it ended in his making a bold, public declaration, when he came in from shooting, of his meaning to dress directly, and dine at the other house.

"Nothing can be going on better than the child," said he; "so I told my father, just now, that I would come, and he thought me quite right. Your sister being with you, my love, I have no scruple at all. You would not like to leave him yourself, but you see I can be of no use. Anne will send for me if anything is the matter."

Husbands and wives generally understand when opposition will be vain. Mary knew, from Charles's manner of speaking, that he was quite determined on going, and that it would be of no use to teaze him. She said nothing, therefore, till he was out of the room, but as soon as there was only Anne to hear--

"So you and I are to be left to shift by ourselves, with this poor sick child; and not a creature coming near us all the evening! I knew how it would be. This is always my luck. If there is anything disagreeable going on men are always sure to get out of it, and Charles is as bad as any of them. Very unfeeling! I must say it is very unfeeling of him to be running away from his poor little boy. Talks of his being going on so well! How does he know that he is going on well, or that there may not be a sudden change half an hour hence? I did not think Charles would have been so unfeeling. So here he is to go away and enjoy himself, and because I am the poor mother, I am not to be allowed to stir; and yet, I am sure, I am more unfit than anybody else to be about the child. My being the mother is the very reason why my feelings should not be tried. I am not at all equal to it. You saw how hysterical I was yesterday."

"But that was only the effect of the suddenness of your alarm--of the shock. You will not be hysterical again. I dare say we shall have nothing to distress us. I perfectly understand Mr Robinson's directions, and have no fears; and indeed, Mary, I cannot wonder at your husband. Nursing does not belong to a man; it is not his province. A sick child is always the mother's property: her own feelings generally make it so."

"I hope I am as fond of my child as any mother, but I do not know that I am of any more use in the sick-room than Charles, for I cannot be always scolding and teasing the poor child when it is ill; and you saw, this morning, that if I told him to keep quiet, he was sure to begin kicking about. I have not nerves for the sort of thing."

"But, could you be comfortable yourself, to be spending the whole evening away from the poor boy?"

"Yes; you see his papa can, and why should not I? Jemima is so careful; and she could send us word every hour how he was. I really think Charles might as well have told his father we would all come. I am not more alarmed about little Charles now than he is. I was dreadfully alarmed yesterday, but the case is very different to-day."

"Well, if you do not think it too late to give notice for yourself, suppose you were to go, as well as your husband. Leave little Charles to my care."

Mr and Mrs Musgrove cannot think it wrong while I remain with him."

"Are you serious?" cried Mary, her eyes brightening. "Dear me! that's a very good thought, very good, indeed. To be sure, I may just as well go as not, for I am of no use at home--am I? and it only harasses me. You, who have not a mother's feelings, are a great deal the properest person. You can make little Charles do anything; he always minds you at a word. It will be a great deal better than leaving him only with Jemima. Oh! I shall certainly go; I am sure I ought if I can, quite as much as Charles, for they want me excessively to be acquainted with Captain Wentworth, and I know you do not mind being left alone. An excellent thought of yours, indeed, Anne. I will go and tell Charles, and get ready directly. You can send for us, you know, at a moment's notice, if anything is the matter; but I dare say there will be nothing to alarm you. I should not go, you may be sure, if I did not feel quite at ease about my dear child."

The next moment she was tapping at her husband's dressing-room door, and as Anne followed her up stairs, she was in time for the whole conversation, which began with Mary's saying, in a tone of great exultation-

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"I mean to go with you, Charles, for I am of no more use at home than you are. If I were to shut myself up for ever with the child, I should not be able to persuade him to do anything he did not like. Anne will stay; Anne undertakes to stay at home and take care of him. It is Anne's own proposal, and so I shall go with you, which will be a great deal better, for I have not dined at the other house since Tuesday."

"This is very kind of Anne," was her husband's answer, "and I should be very glad to have you go; but it seems rather hard that she should be left at home by herself, to nurse our sick child."

Anne was now at hand to take up her own cause, and the sincerity of her manner being soon sufficient to convince him, where conviction was at least very agreeable, he had no farther scruples as to her being left to dine alone, though he still wanted her to join them in the evening, when the child might be at rest for the night, and kindly urged her to let him come and fetch her, but she was quite unpersuadable; and this being the case, she had

ere long the pleasure of seeing them set off together in high spirits. They were gone, she hoped, to be happy, however oddly constructed such happiness might seem; as for herself, she was left with as many sensations of comfort, as were, perhaps, ever likely to be hers. She knew herself to be of the first utility to the child; and what was it to her if Frederick Wentworth were only half a mile distant, making himself agreeable to others?

She would have liked to know how he felt as to a meeting. Perhaps indifferent, if indifference could exist under such circumstances. He must be either indifferent or unwilling. Had he wished ever to see her again, he need not have waited till this time; he would have done what she could not but believe that in his place she should have done long ago, when events had been early giving him the independence which alone had been wanting.

Her brother and sister came back delighted with their new acquaintance, and their visit in general. There had been music, singing, talking, laughing, all that was most agreeable; charming manners in Captain Wentworth, no shyness or reserve; they seemed all to know each other perfectly, and he was coming the very next morning to shoot with Charles. He was to come to breakfast, but not at the Cottage, though that had been proposed at first; but then he had been pressed to come to the Great House instead, and he seemed afraid of being in Mrs Charles Musgrove's way, on account of the child, and therefore, somehow, they hardly knew how, it ended in Charles's being to meet him to breakfast at his father's.

Anne understood it. He wished to avoid seeing her. He had inquired after her, she found, slightly, as might suit a former slight acquaintance, seeming to acknowledge such as she had acknowledged, actuated, perhaps, by the same view of escaping introduction when they were to meet.

The morning hours of the Cottage were always later than those of the other house, and on the morrow the difference was so great that Mary and Anne were not more than beginning breakfast when Charles came in to say that they were just setting off, that he was come for his dogs, that his sisters were following with Captain Wentworth; his sisters meaning to visit Mary and the child, and Captain Wentworth proposing also to wait on her for a few minutes if not inconvenient; and though Charles had answered for the

child's being in no such state as could make it inconvenient, Captain Wentworth would not be satisfied without his running on to give notice.

Mary, very much gratified by this attention, was delighted to receive him, while a thousand feelings rushed on Anne, of which this was the most consoling, that it would soon be over. And it was soon over. In two minutes after Charles's preparation, the others appeared; they were in the drawing-room. Her eye half met Captain Wentworth's, a bow, a curtsy passed; she heard his voice; he talked to Mary, said all that was right, said something to the Miss Musgroves, enough to mark an easy footing; the room seemed full, full of persons and voices, but a few minutes ended it. Charles shewed himself at the window, all was ready, their visitor had bowed and was gone, the Miss Musgroves were gone too, suddenly resolving to walk to the end of the village with the sportsmen: the room was cleared, and Anne might finish her breakfast as she could.

"It is over! it is over!" she repeated to herself again and again, in nervous gratitude. "The worst is over!"

Mary talked, but she could not attend. She had seen him. They had met. They had been once more in the same room.

Soon, however, she began to reason with herself, and try to be feeling less. Eight years, almost eight years had passed, since all had been given up. How absurd to be resuming the agitation which such an interval had banished into distance and indistinctness! What might not eight years do? Events of every description, changes, alienations, removals--all, all must be comprised in it, and oblivion of the past-- how natural, how certain too! It included nearly a third part of her own life.

Alas! with all her reasoning, she found, that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing.

Now, how were his sentiments to be read? Was this like wishing to avoid her? And the next moment she was hating herself for the folly which asked the question.



On one other question which perhaps her utmost wisdom might not have prevented, she was soon spared all suspense; for, after the Miss Musgroves had returned and finished their visit at the Cottage she had this spontaneous information from Mary:--

"Captain Wentworth is not very gallant by you, Anne, though he was so attentive to me. Henrietta asked him what he thought of you, when they went away, and he said, 'You were so altered he should not have known you again.'"

Mary had no feelings to make her respect her sister's in a common way, but she was perfectly unsuspecting of being inflicting any peculiar wound.

"Altered beyond his knowledge." Anne fully submitted, in silent, deep mortification. Doubtless it was so, and she could take no revenge, for he was not altered, or not for the worse. She had already acknowledged it to herself, and she could not think differently, let him think of her as he would. No: the years which had destroyed her youth and bloom had only given him a more glowing, manly, open look, in no respect lessening his personal advantages. She had seen the same Frederick Wentworth.

"So altered that he should not have known her again!" These were words which could not but dwell with her. Yet she soon began to rejoice that she had heard them. They were of sobering tendency; they allayed agitation; they composed, and consequently must make her happier.

Frederick Wentworth had used such words, or something like them, but without an idea that they would be carried round to her. He had thought her wretchedly altered, and in the first moment of appeal, had spoken as he felt. He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill, deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity.

He had been most warmly attached to her, and had never seen a woman since whom he thought her equal; but, except from some natural sensation

of curiosity, he had no desire of meeting her again. Her power with him was gone for ever.

It was now his object to marry. He was rich, and being turned on shore, fully intended to settle as soon as he could be properly tempted; actually looking round, ready to fall in love with all the speed which a clear head and a quick taste could allow. He had a heart for either of the Miss Musgroves, if they could catch it; a heart, in short, for any pleasing young woman who came in his way, excepting Anne Elliot. This was his only secret exception, when he said to his sister, in answer to her suppositions:--

"Yes, here I am, Sophia, quite ready to make a foolish match. Anybody between fifteen and thirty may have me for asking. A little beauty, and a few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy, and I am a lost man. Should not this be enough for a sailor, who has had no society among women to make him nice?"

He said it, she knew, to be contradicted. His bright proud eye spoke the conviction that he was nice; and Anne Elliot was not out of his thoughts, when he more seriously described the woman he should wish to meet with. "A strong mind, with sweetness of manner," made the first and the last of the description.

"That is the woman I want," said he. "Something a little inferior I shall of course put up with, but it must not be much. If I am a fool, I shall be a fool indeed, for I have thought on the subject more than most men."

## Chapter 8

From this time Captain Wentworth and Anne Elliot were repeatedly in the same circle. They were soon dining in company together at Mr Musgrove's, for the little boy's state could no longer supply his aunt with a pretence for absenting herself; and this was but the beginning of other dinings and other meetings.

Whether former feelings were to be renewed must be brought to the proof; former times must undoubtedly be brought to the recollection of each; they could not but be reverted to; the year of their engagement could not but be named by him, in the little narratives or descriptions which conversation called forth. His profession qualified him, his disposition lead him, to talk; and "That was in the year six;" "That happened before I went to sea in the year six," occurred in the course of the first evening they spent together: and though his voice did not falter, and though she had no reason to suppose his eye wandering towards her while he spoke, Anne felt the utter impossibility, from her knowledge of his mind, that he could be unvisited by remembrance any more than herself. There must be the same immediate association of thought, though she was very far from conceiving it to be of equal pain.

They had no conversation together, no intercourse but what the commonest civility required. Once so much to each other! Now nothing! There had been a time, when of all the large party now filling the drawing-room at Uppercross, they would have found it most difficult to cease to speak to one another. With the exception, perhaps, of Admiral and Mrs Croft, who seemed particularly attached and happy, (Anne could allow no other exceptions even among the married couples), there could have been no two hearts so open, no tastes so similar, no feelings so in unison, no countenances so beloved. Now they were as strangers; nay, worse than strangers, for they could never become acquainted. It was a perpetual estrangement.

When he talked, she heard the same voice, and discerned the same mind. There was a very general ignorance of all naval matters throughout the party; and he was very much questioned, and especially by the two Miss Musgroves, who seemed hardly to have any eyes but for him, as to the manner of living on board, daily regulations, food, hours, &c., and their surprise at his accounts, at learning the degree of accommodation and arrangement which was practicable, drew from him some pleasant ridicule, which reminded Anne of the early days when she too had been ignorant, and she too had been accused of supposing sailors to be living on board without anything to eat, or any cook to dress it if there were, or any servant to wait, or any knife and fork to use.

From thus listening and thinking, she was roused by a whisper of Mrs Musgrove's who, overcome by fond regrets, could not help saying--

"Ah! Miss Anne, if it had pleased Heaven to spare my poor son, I dare say he would have been just such another by this time."

Anne suppressed a smile, and listened kindly, while Mrs Musgrove relieved her heart a little more; and for a few minutes, therefore, could not keep pace with the conversation of the others.

When she could let her attention take its natural course again, she found the Miss Musgroves just fetching the Navy List (their own navy list, the first that had ever been at Uppercross), and sitting down together to pore over it, with the professed view of finding out the ships that Captain Wentworth had commanded.

"Your first was the Asp, I remember; we will look for the Asp."

"You will not find her there. Quite worn out and broken up. I was the last man who commanded her. Hardly fit for service then. Reported fit for home service for a year or two, and so I was sent off to the West Indies."

The girls looked all amazement.

"The Admiralty," he continued, "entertain themselves now and then, with sending a few hundred men to sea, in a ship not fit to be employed. But they have a great many to provide for; and among the thousands that may just as well go to the bottom as not, it is impossible for them to distinguish the very set who may be least missed."

"Phoo! phoo!" cried the Admiral, "what stuff these young fellows talk! Never was a better sloop than the Asp in her day. For an old built sloop, you would not see her equal. Lucky fellow to get her! He knows there must have been twenty better men than himself applying for her at the same time. Lucky fellow to get anything so soon, with no more interest than his."

"I felt my luck, Admiral, I assure you;" replied Captain Wentworth, seriously. "I was as well satisfied with my appointment as you can desire. It

was a great object with me at that time to be at sea; a very great object, I wanted to be doing something."

"To be sure you did. What should a young fellow like you do ashore for half a year together? If a man had not a wife, he soon wants to be afloat again."

"But, Captain Wentworth," cried Louisa, "how vexed you must have been when you came to the *Asp*, to see what an old thing they had given you."

"I knew pretty well what she was before that day;" said he, smiling. "I had no more discoveries to make than you would have as to the fashion and strength of any old pelisse, which you had seen lent about among half your acquaintance ever since you could remember, and which at last, on some very wet day, is lent to yourself. Ah! she was a dear old *Asp* to me. She did all that I wanted. I knew she would. I knew that we should either go to the bottom together, or that she would be the making of me; and I never had two days of foul weather all the time I was at sea in her; and after taking privateers enough to be very entertaining, I had the good luck in my passage home the next autumn, to fall in with the very French frigate I wanted. I brought her into Plymouth; and here another instance of luck. We had not been six hours in the Sound, when a gale came on, which lasted four days and nights, and which would have done for poor old *Asp* in half the time; our touch with the Great Nation not having much improved our condition. Four-and-twenty hours later, and I should only have been a gallant Captain Wentworth, in a small paragraph at one corner of the newspapers; and being lost in only a sloop, nobody would have thought about me." Anne's shudderings were to herself alone; but the Miss Musgroves could be as open as they were sincere, in their exclamations of pity and horror.

"And so then, I suppose," said Mrs Musgrove, in a low voice, as if thinking aloud, "so then he went away to the *Laconia*, and there he met with our poor boy. Charles, my dear," (beckoning him to her), "do ask Captain Wentworth where it was he first met with your poor brother. I always forgot."

"It was at Gibraltar, mother, I know. Dick had been left ill at Gibraltar, with a recommendation from his former captain to Captain Wentworth."

"Oh! but, Charles, tell Captain Wentworth, he need not be afraid of mentioning poor Dick before me, for it would be rather a pleasure to hear him talked of by such a good friend."

Charles, being somewhat more mindful of the probabilities of the case, only nodded in reply, and walked away.

The girls were now hunting for the *Laconia*; and Captain Wentworth could not deny himself the pleasure of taking the precious volume into his own hands to save them the trouble, and once more read aloud the little statement of her name and rate, and present non-commissioned class, observing over it that she too had been one of the best friends man ever had.

"Ah! those were pleasant days when I had the *Laconia*! How fast I made money in her. A friend of mine and I had such a lovely cruise together off the Western Islands. Poor Harville, sister! You know how much he wanted money: worse than myself. He had a wife. Excellent fellow. I shall never forget his happiness. He felt it all, so much for her sake. I wished for him again the next summer, when I had still the same luck in the Mediterranean."

"And I am sure, Sir," said Mrs Musgrove, "it was a lucky day for us, when you were put captain into that ship. We shall never forget what you did."

Her feelings made her speak low; and Captain Wentworth, hearing only in part, and probably not having Dick Musgrove at all near his thoughts, looked rather in suspense, and as if waiting for more.

"My brother," whispered one of the girls; "mamma is thinking of poor Richard."

"Poor dear fellow!" continued Mrs Musgrove; "he was grown so steady, and such an excellent correspondent, while he was under your care! Ah! it

would have been a happy thing, if he had never left you. I assure you, Captain Wentworth, we are very sorry he ever left you."

There was a momentary expression in Captain Wentworth's face at this speech, a certain glance of his bright eye, and curl of his handsome mouth, which convinced Anne, that instead of sharing in Mrs Musgrove's kind wishes, as to her son, he had probably been at some pains to get rid of him; but it was too transient an indulgence of self-amusement to be detected by any who understood him less than herself; in another moment he was perfectly collected and serious, and almost instantly afterwards coming up to the sofa, on which she and Mrs Musgrove were sitting, took a place by the latter, and entered into conversation with her, in a low voice, about her son, doing it with so much sympathy and natural grace, as shewed the kindest consideration for all that was real and unabsurd in the parent's feelings.

They were actually on the same sofa, for Mrs Musgrove had most readily made room for him; they were divided only by Mrs Musgrove. It was no insignificant barrier, indeed. Mrs Musgrove was of a comfortable, substantial size, infinitely more fitted by nature to express good cheer and good humour, than tenderness and sentiment; and while the agitations of Anne's slender form, and pensive face, may be considered as very completely screened, Captain Wentworth should be allowed some credit for the self-command with which he attended to her large fat sighings over the destiny of a son, whom alive nobody had cared for.

Personal size and mental sorrow have certainly no necessary proportions. A large bulky figure has as good a right to be in deep affliction, as the most graceful set of limbs in the world. But, fair or not fair, there are unbecoming conjunctions, which reason will patronize in vain--which taste cannot tolerate--which ridicule will seize.

The Admiral, after taking two or three refreshing turns about the room with his hands behind him, being called to order by his wife, now came up to Captain Wentworth, and without any observation of what he might be interrupting, thinking only of his own thoughts, began with--

"If you had been a week later at Lisbon, last spring, Frederick, you would have been asked to give a passage to Lady Mary Grierson and her daughters."

"Should I? I am glad I was not a week later then."

The Admiral abused him for his want of gallantry. He defended himself; though professing that he would never willingly admit any ladies on board a ship of his, excepting for a ball, or a visit, which a few hours might comprehend.

"But, if I know myself," said he, "this is from no want of gallantry towards them. It is rather from feeling how impossible it is, with all one's efforts, and all one's sacrifices, to make the accommodations on board such as women ought to have. There can be no want of gallantry, Admiral, in rating the claims of women to every personal comfort high, and this is what I do. I hate to hear of women on board, or to see them on board; and no ship under my command shall ever convey a family of ladies anywhere, if I can help it."

This brought his sister upon him.

"Oh! Frederick! But I cannot believe it of you.--All idle refinement!--Women may be as comfortable on board, as in the best house in England. I believe I have lived as much on board as most women, and I know nothing superior to the accommodations of a man-of-war. I declare I have not a comfort or an indulgence about me, even at Kellynch Hall," (with a kind bow to Anne), "beyond what I always had in most of the ships I have lived in; and they have been five altogether."

"Nothing to the purpose," replied her brother. "You were living with your husband, and were the only woman on board."

"But you, yourself, brought Mrs Harville, her sister, her cousin, and three children, round from Portsmouth to Plymouth. Where was this superfine, extraordinary sort of gallantry of yours then?"



"All merged in my friendship, Sophia. I would assist any brother officer's wife that I could, and I would bring anything of Harville's from the world's end, if he wanted it. But do not imagine that I did not feel it an evil in itself."

"Depend upon it, they were all perfectly comfortable."

"I might not like them the better for that perhaps. Such a number of women and children have no right to be comfortable on board."

"My dear Frederick, you are talking quite idly. Pray, what would become of us poor sailors' wives, who often want to be conveyed to one port or another, after our husbands, if everybody had your feelings?"

"My feelings, you see, did not prevent my taking Mrs Harville and all her family to Plymouth."

"But I hate to hear you talking so like a fine gentleman, and as if women were all fine ladies, instead of rational creatures. We none of us expect to be in smooth water all our days."

"Ah! my dear," said the Admiral, "when he had got a wife, he will sing a different tune. When he is married, if we have the good luck to live to another war, we shall see him do as you and I, and a great many others, have done. We shall have him very thankful to anybody that will bring him his wife."

"Ay, that we shall."

"Now I have done," cried Captain Wentworth. "When once married people begin to attack me with,--'Oh! you will think very differently, when you are married.' I can only say, 'No, I shall not;' and then they say again, 'Yes, you will,' and there is an end of it."

He got up and moved away.

"What a great traveller you must have been, ma'am!" said Mrs Musgrove to Mrs Croft.

"Pretty well, ma'am in the fifteen years of my marriage; though many women have done more. I have crossed the Atlantic four times, and have been once to the East Indies, and back again, and only once; besides being in different places about home: Cork, and Lisbon, and Gibraltar. But I never went beyond the Streights, and never was in the West Indies. We do not call Bermuda or Bahama, you know, the West Indies."

Mrs Musgrove had not a word to say in dissent; she could not accuse herself of having ever called them anything in the whole course of her life.

"And I do assure you, ma'am," pursued Mrs Croft, "that nothing can exceed the accommodations of a man-of-war; I speak, you know, of the higher rates. When you come to a frigate, of course, you are more confined; though any reasonable woman may be perfectly happy in one of them; and I can safely say, that the happiest part of my life has been spent on board a ship. While we were together, you know, there was nothing to be feared. Thank God! I have always been blessed with excellent health, and no climate disagrees with me. A little disordered always the first twenty-four hours of going to sea, but never knew what sickness was afterwards. The only time I ever really suffered in body or mind, the only time that I ever fancied myself unwell, or had any ideas of danger, was the winter that I passed by myself at Deal, when the Admiral (Captain Croft then) was in the North Seas. I lived in perpetual fright at that time, and had all manner of imaginary complaints from not knowing what to do with myself, or when I should hear from him next; but as long as we could be together, nothing ever ailed me, and I never met with the smallest inconvenience."

"Aye, to be sure. Yes, indeed, oh yes! I am quite of your opinion, Mrs Croft," was Mrs Musgrove's hearty answer. "There is nothing so bad as a separation. I am quite of your opinion. I know what it is, for Mr Musgrove always attends the assizes, and I am so glad when they are over, and he is safe back again."

The evening ended with dancing. On its being proposed, Anne offered her services, as usual; and though her eyes would sometimes fill with tears as she sat at the instrument, she was extremely glad to be employed, and desired nothing in return but to be unobserved.

It was a merry, joyous party, and no one seemed in higher spirits than Captain Wentworth. She felt that he had every thing to elevate him which general attention and deference, and especially the attention of all the young women, could do. The Miss Hayters, the females of the family of cousins already mentioned, were apparently admitted to the honour of being in love with him; and as for Henrietta and Louisa, they both seemed so entirely occupied by him, that nothing but the continued appearance of the most perfect good-will between themselves could have made it credible that they were not decided rivals. If he were a little spoilt by such universal, such eager admiration, who could wonder?

These were some of the thoughts which occupied Anne, while her fingers were mechanically at work, proceeding for half an hour together, equally without error, and without consciousness. Once she felt that he was looking at herself, observing her altered features, perhaps, trying to trace in them the ruins of the face which had once charmed him; and once she knew that he must have spoken of her; she was hardly aware of it, till she heard the answer; but then she was sure of his having asked his partner whether Miss Elliot never danced? The answer was, "Oh, no; never; she has quite given up dancing. She had rather play. She is never tired of playing." Once, too, he spoke to her. She had left the instrument on the dancing being over, and he had sat down to try to make out an air which he wished to give the Miss Musgroves an idea of. Unintentionally she returned to that part of the room; he saw her, and, instantly rising, said, with studied politeness--

"I beg your pardon, madam, this is your seat;" and though she immediately drew back with a decided negative, he was not to be induced to sit down again.

Anne did not wish for more of such looks and speeches. His cold politeness, his ceremonious grace, were worse than anything.

## Chapter 9

Captain Wentworth was come to Kellynch as to a home, to stay as long as he liked, being as thoroughly the object of the Admiral's fraternal kindness as of his wife's. He had intended, on first arriving, to proceed very soon into Shropshire, and visit the brother settled in that country, but the attractions of Uppercross induced him to put this off. There was so much of friendliness, and of flattery, and of everything most bewitching in his reception there; the old were so hospitable, the young so agreeable, that he could not but resolve to remain where he was, and take all the charms and perfections of Edward's wife upon credit a little longer.

It was soon Uppercross with him almost every day. The Musgroves could hardly be more ready to invite than he to come, particularly in the morning, when he had no companion at home, for the Admiral and Mrs Croft were generally out of doors together, interesting themselves in their new possessions, their grass, and their sheep, and dawdling about in a way not endurable to a third person, or driving out in a gig, lately added to their establishment.

Hitherto there had been but one opinion of Captain Wentworth among the Musgroves and their dependencies. It was unvarying, warm admiration everywhere; but this intimate footing was not more than established, when a certain Charles Hayter returned among them, to be a good deal disturbed by it, and to think Captain Wentworth very much in the way.

Charles Hayter was the eldest of all the cousins, and a very amiable, pleasing young man, between whom and Henrietta there had been a considerable appearance of attachment previous to Captain Wentworth's introduction. He was in orders; and having a curacy in the neighbourhood, where residence was not required, lived at his father's house, only two miles from Uppercross. A short absence from home had left his fair one unguarded by his attentions at this critical period, and when he came back he had the pain of finding very altered manners, and of seeing Captain Wentworth.

Mrs Musgrove and Mrs Hayter were sisters. They had each had money, but their marriages had made a material difference in their degree of consequence. Mr Hayter had some property of his own, but it was insignificant compared with Mr Musgrove's; and while the Musgroves were

in the first class of society in the country, the young Hayters would, from their parents' inferior, retired, and unpolished way of living, and their own defective education, have been hardly in any class at all, but for their connexion with Uppercross, this eldest son of course excepted, who had chosen to be a scholar and a gentleman, and who was very superior in cultivation and manners to all the rest.

The two families had always been on excellent terms, there being no pride on one side, and no envy on the other, and only such a consciousness of superiority in the Miss Musgroves, as made them pleased to improve their cousins. Charles's attentions to Henrietta had been observed by her father and mother without any disapprobation. "It would not be a great match for her; but if Henrietta liked him,"--and Henrietta did seem to like him.

Henrietta fully thought so herself, before Captain Wentworth came; but from that time Cousin Charles had been very much forgotten.

Which of the two sisters was preferred by Captain Wentworth was as yet quite doubtful, as far as Anne's observation reached. Henrietta was perhaps the prettiest, Louisa had the higher spirits; and she knew not now, whether the more gentle or the more lively character were most likely to attract him.

Mr and Mrs Musgrove, either from seeing little, or from an entire confidence in the discretion of both their daughters, and of all the young men who came near them, seemed to leave everything to take its chance. There was not the smallest appearance of solicitude or remark about them in the Mansion-house; but it was different at the Cottage: the young couple there were more disposed to speculate and wonder; and Captain Wentworth had not been above four or five times in the Miss Musgroves' company, and Charles Hayter had but just reappeared, when Anne had to listen to the opinions of her brother and sister, as to which was the one liked best. Charles gave it for Louisa, Mary for Henrietta, but quite agreeing that to have him marry either could be extremely delightful.

Charles "had never seen a pleasanter man in his life; and from what he had once heard Captain Wentworth himself say, was very sure that he had not made less than twenty thousand pounds by the war. Here was a fortune

at once; besides which, there would be the chance of what might be done in any future war; and he was sure Captain Wentworth was as likely a man to distinguish himself as any officer in the navy. Oh! it would be a capital match for either of his sisters."

"Upon my word it would," replied Mary. "Dear me! If he should rise to any very great honours! If he should ever be made a baronet! 'Lady Wentworth' sounds very well. That would be a noble thing, indeed, for Henrietta! She would take place of me then, and Henrietta would not dislike that. Sir Frederick and Lady Wentworth! It would be but a new creation, however, and I never think much of your new creations."

It suited Mary best to think Henrietta the one preferred on the very account of Charles Hayter, whose pretensions she wished to see put an end to. She looked down very decidedly upon the Hayters, and thought it would be quite a misfortune to have the existing connection between the families renewed--very sad for herself and her children.

"You know," said she, "I cannot think him at all a fit match for Henrietta; and considering the alliances which the Musgroves have made, she has no right to throw herself away. I do not think any young woman has a right to make a choice that may be disagreeable and inconvenient to the principal part of her family, and be giving bad connections to those who have not been used to them. And, pray, who is Charles Hayter? Nothing but a country curate. A most improper match for Miss Musgrove of Uppercross."

Her husband, however, would not agree with her here; for besides having a regard for his cousin, Charles Hayter was an eldest son, and he saw things as an eldest son himself.

"Now you are talking nonsense, Mary," was therefore his answer. "It would not be a great match for Henrietta, but Charles has a very fair chance, through the Spicers, of getting something from the Bishop in the course of a year or two; and you will please to remember, that he is the eldest son; whenever my uncle dies, he steps into very pretty property. The estate at Winthrop is not less than two hundred and fifty acres, besides the farm near Taunton, which is some of the best land in the country. I grant you, that any of them but Charles would be a very shocking match for

Henrietta, and indeed it could not be; he is the only one that could be possible; but he is a very good-natured, good sort of a fellow; and whenever Winthrop comes into his hands, he will make a different sort of place of it, and live in a very different sort of way; and with that property, he will never be a contemptible man--good, freehold property. No, no; Henrietta might do worse than marry Charles Hayter; and if she has him, and Louisa can get Captain Wentworth, I shall be very well satisfied."

"Charles may say what he pleases," cried Mary to Anne, as soon as he was out of the room, "but it would be shocking to have Henrietta marry Charles Hayter; a very bad thing for her, and still worse for me; and therefore it is very much to be wished that Captain Wentworth may soon put him quite out of her head, and I have very little doubt that he has. She took hardly any notice of Charles Hayter yesterday. I wish you had been there to see her behaviour. And as to Captain Wentworth's liking Louisa as well as Henrietta, it is nonsense to say so; for he certainly does like Henrietta a great deal the best. But Charles is so positive! I wish you had been with us yesterday, for then you might have decided between us; and I am sure you would have thought as I did, unless you had been determined to give it against me."

A dinner at Mr Musgrove's had been the occasion when all these things should have been seen by Anne; but she had staid at home, under the mixed plea of a headache of her own, and some return of indisposition in little Charles. She had thought only of avoiding Captain Wentworth; but an escape from being appealed to as umpire was now added to the advantages of a quiet evening.

As to Captain Wentworth's views, she deemed it of more consequence that he should know his own mind early enough not to be endangering the happiness of either sister, or impeaching his own honour, than that he should prefer Henrietta to Louisa, or Louisa to Henrietta. Either of them would, in all probability, make him an affectionate, good-humoured wife. With regard to Charles Hayter, she had delicacy which must be pained by any lightness of conduct in a well-meaning young woman, and a heart to sympathize in any of the sufferings it occasioned; but if Henrietta found

herself mistaken in the nature of her feelings, the alteration could not be understood too soon.

Charles Hayter had met with much to disquiet and mortify him in his cousin's behaviour. She had too old a regard for him to be so wholly estranged as might in two meetings extinguish every past hope, and leave him nothing to do but to keep away from Uppercross: but there was such a change as became very alarming, when such a man as Captain Wentworth was to be regarded as the probable cause. He had been absent only two Sundays, and when they parted, had left her interested, even to the height of his wishes, in his prospect of soon quitting his present curacy, and obtaining that of Uppercross instead. It had then seemed the object nearest her heart, that Dr Shirley, the rector, who for more than forty years had been zealously discharging all the duties of his office, but was now growing too infirm for many of them, should be quite fixed on engaging a curate; should make his curacy quite as good as he could afford, and should give Charles Hayter the promise of it. The advantage of his having to come only to Uppercross, instead of going six miles another way; of his having, in every respect, a better curacy; of his belonging to their dear Dr Shirley, and of dear, good Dr Shirley's being relieved from the duty which he could no longer get through without most injurious fatigue, had been a great deal, even to Louisa, but had been almost everything to Henrietta. When he came back, alas! the zeal of the business was gone by. Louisa could not listen at all to his account of a conversation which he had just held with Dr Shirley: she was at a window, looking out for Captain Wentworth; and even Henrietta had at best only a divided attention to give, and seemed to have forgotten all the former doubt and solicitude of the negotiation.

"Well, I am very glad indeed: but I always thought you would have it; I always thought you sure. It did not appear to me that--in short, you know, Dr Shirley must have a curate, and you had secured his promise. Is he coming, Louisa?"

One morning, very soon after the dinner at the Musgroves, at which Anne had not been present, Captain Wentworth walked into the drawing-room at the Cottage, where were only herself and the little invalid Charles, who was lying on the sofa.



The surprise of finding himself almost alone with Anne Elliot, deprived his manners of their usual composure: he started, and could only say, "I thought the Miss Musgroves had been here: Mrs Musgrove told me I should find them here," before he walked to the window to recollect himself, and feel how he ought to behave.

"They are up stairs with my sister: they will be down in a few moments, I dare say," had been Anne's reply, in all the confusion that was natural; and if the child had not called her to come and do something for him, she would have been out of the room the next moment, and released Captain Wentworth as well as herself.

He continued at the window; and after calmly and politely saying, "I hope the little boy is better," was silent.

She was obliged to kneel down by the sofa, and remain there to satisfy her patient; and thus they continued a few minutes, when, to her very great satisfaction, she heard some other person crossing the little vestibule. She hoped, on turning her head, to see the master of the house; but it proved to be one much less calculated for making matters easy--Charles Hayter, probably not at all better pleased by the sight of Captain Wentworth than Captain Wentworth had been by the sight of Anne.

She only attempted to say, "How do you do? Will you not sit down? The others will be here presently."

Captain Wentworth, however, came from his window, apparently not ill-disposed for conversation; but Charles Hayter soon put an end to his attempts by seating himself near the table, and taking up the newspaper; and Captain Wentworth returned to his window.

Another minute brought another addition. The younger boy, a remarkable stout, forward child, of two years old, having got the door opened for him by some one without, made his determined appearance among them, and went straight to the sofa to see what was going on, and put in his claim to anything good that might be giving away.

There being nothing to eat, he could only have some play; and as his aunt would not let him tease his sick brother, he began to fasten himself upon her, as she knelt, in such a way that, busy as she was about Charles, she could not shake him off. She spoke to him, ordered, entreated, and insisted in vain. Once she did contrive to push him away, but the boy had the greater pleasure in getting upon her back again directly.

"Walter," said she, "get down this moment. You are extremely troublesome. I am very angry with you."

"Walter," cried Charles Hayter, "why do you not do as you are bid? Do not you hear your aunt speak? Come to me, Walter, come to cousin Charles."

But not a bit did Walter stir.

In another moment, however, she found herself in the state of being released from him; some one was taking him from her, though he had bent down her head so much, that his little sturdy hands were unfastened from around her neck, and he was resolutely borne away, before she knew that Captain Wentworth had done it.

Her sensations on the discovery made her perfectly speechless. She could not even thank him. She could only hang over little Charles, with most disordered feelings. His kindness in stepping forward to her relief, the manner, the silence in which it had passed, the little particulars of the circumstance, with the conviction soon forced on her by the noise he was studiously making with the child, that he meant to avoid hearing her thanks, and rather sought to testify that her conversation was the last of his wants, produced such a confusion of varying, but very painful agitation, as she could not recover from, till enabled by the entrance of Mary and the Miss Musgroves to make over her little patient to their cares, and leave the room. She could not stay. It might have been an opportunity of watching the loves and jealousies of the four--they were now altogether; but she could stay for none of it. It was evident that Charles Hayter was not well inclined towards Captain Wentworth. She had a strong impression of his having said, in a vext tone of voice, after Captain Wentworth's interference, "You ought to have minded me, Walter; I told you not to teaze your aunt;" and could

comprehend his regretting that Captain Wentworth should do what he ought to have done himself. But neither Charles Hayter's feelings, nor anybody's feelings, could interest her, till she had a little better arranged her own. She was ashamed of herself, quite ashamed of being so nervous, so overcome by such a trifle; but so it was, and it required a long application of solitude and reflection to recover her.

## Chapter 10

Other opportunities of making her observations could not fail to occur. Anne had soon been in company with all the four together often enough to have an opinion, though too wise to acknowledge as much at home, where she knew it would have satisfied neither husband nor wife; for while she considered Louisa to be rather the favourite, she could not but think, as far as she might dare to judge from memory and experience, that Captain Wentworth was not in love with either. They were more in love with him; yet there it was not love. It was a little fever of admiration; but it might, probably must, end in love with some. Charles Hayter seemed aware of being slighted, and yet Henrietta had sometimes the air of being divided between them. Anne longed for the power of representing to them all what they were about, and of pointing out some of the evils they were exposing themselves to. She did not attribute guile to any. It was the highest satisfaction to her to believe Captain Wentworth not in the least aware of the pain he was occasioning. There was no triumph, no pitiful triumph in his manner. He had, probably, never heard, and never thought of any claims of Charles Hayter. He was only wrong in accepting the attentions (for accepting must be the word) of two young women at once.

After a short struggle, however, Charles Hayter seemed to quit the field. Three days had passed without his coming once to Uppercross; a most decided change. He had even refused one regular invitation to dinner; and having been found on the occasion by Mr Musgrove with some large books before him, Mr and Mrs Musgrove were sure all could not be right, and talked, with grave faces, of his studying himself to death. It was Mary's hope and belief that he had received a positive dismissal from Henrietta, and her husband lived under the constant dependence of seeing him tomorrow. Anne could only feel that Charles Hayter was wise.

One morning, about this time Charles Musgrove and Captain Wentworth being gone a-shooting together, as the sisters in the Cottage were sitting quietly at work, they were visited at the window by the sisters from the Mansion-house.

It was a very fine November day, and the Miss Musgroves came through the little grounds, and stopped for no other purpose than to say, that they were going to take a long walk, and therefore concluded Mary could not like to go with them; and when Mary immediately replied, with some jealousy at not being supposed a good walker, "Oh, yes, I should like to join you very much, I am very fond of a long walk;" Anne felt persuaded, by the looks of the two girls, that it was precisely what they did not wish, and admired again the sort of necessity which the family habits seemed to produce, of everything being to be communicated, and everything being to be done together, however undesired and inconvenient. She tried to dissuade Mary from going, but in vain; and that being the case, thought it best to accept the Miss Musgroves' much more cordial invitation to herself to go likewise, as she might be useful in turning back with her sister, and lessening the interference in any plan of their own.

"I cannot imagine why they should suppose I should not like a long walk," said Mary, as she went up stairs. "Everybody is always supposing that I am not a good walker; and yet they would not have been pleased, if we had refused to join them. When people come in this manner on purpose to ask us, how can one say no?"

Just as they were setting off, the gentlemen returned. They had taken out a young dog, who had spoilt their sport, and sent them back early. Their time and strength, and spirits, were, therefore, exactly ready for this walk, and they entered into it with pleasure. Could Anne have foreseen such a junction, she would have staid at home; but, from some feelings of interest and curiosity, she fancied now that it was too late to retract, and the whole six set forward together in the direction chosen by the Miss Musgroves, who evidently considered the walk as under their guidance.

Anne's object was, not to be in the way of anybody; and where the narrow paths across the fields made many separations necessary, to keep with her brother and sister. Her pleasure in the walk must arise from the

exercise and the day, from the view of the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves, and withered hedges, and from repeating to herself some few of the thousand poetical descriptions extant of autumn, that season of peculiar and inexhaustible influence on the mind of taste and tenderness, that season which had drawn from every poet, worthy of being read, some attempt at description, or some lines of feeling. She occupied her mind as much as possible in such like musings and quotations; but it was not possible, that when within reach of Captain Wentworth's conversation with either of the Miss Musgroves, she should not try to hear it; yet she caught little very remarkable. It was mere lively chat, such as any young persons, on an intimate footing, might fall into. He was more engaged with Louisa than with Henrietta. Louisa certainly put more forward for his notice than her sister. This distinction appeared to increase, and there was one speech of Louisa's which struck her. After one of the many praises of the day, which were continually bursting forth, Captain Wentworth added:--

"What glorious weather for the Admiral and my sister! They meant to take a long drive this morning; perhaps we may hail them from some of these hills. They talked of coming into this side of the country. I wonder whereabouts they will upset to-day. Oh! it does happen very often, I assure you; but my sister makes nothing of it; she would as lieve be tossed out as not."

"Ah! You make the most of it, I know," cried Louisa, "but if it were really so, I should do just the same in her place. If I loved a man, as she loves the Admiral, I would always be with him, nothing should ever separate us, and I would rather be overturned by him, than driven safely by anybody else."

It was spoken with enthusiasm.

"Had you?" cried he, catching the same tone; "I honour you!" And there was silence between them for a little while.

Anne could not immediately fall into a quotation again. The sweet scenes of autumn were for a while put by, unless some tender sonnet, fraught with the apt analogy of the declining year, with declining happiness, and the images of youth and hope, and spring, all gone together, blessed her

memory. She roused herself to say, as they struck by order into another path, "Is not this one of the ways to Winthrop?" But nobody heard, or, at least, nobody answered her.

Winthrop, however, or its environs--for young men are, sometimes to be met with, strolling about near home--was their destination; and after another half mile of gradual ascent through large enclosures, where the ploughs at work, and the fresh made path spoke the farmer counteracting the sweets of poetical despondence, and meaning to have spring again, they gained the summit of the most considerable hill, which parted Uppercross and Winthrop, and soon commanded a full view of the latter, at the foot of the hill on the other side.

Winthrop, without beauty and without dignity, was stretched before them; an indifferent house, standing low, and hemmed in by the barns and buildings of a farm-yard.

Mary exclaimed, "Bless me! here is Winthrop. I declare I had no idea! Well now, I think we had better turn back; I am excessively tired."

Henrietta, conscious and ashamed, and seeing no cousin Charles walking along any path, or leaning against any gate, was ready to do as Mary wished; but "No!" said Charles Musgrove, and "No, no!" cried Louisa more eagerly, and taking her sister aside, seemed to be arguing the matter warmly.

Charles, in the meanwhile, was very decidedly declaring his resolution of calling on his aunt, now that he was so near; and very evidently, though more fearfully, trying to induce his wife to go too. But this was one of the points on which the lady shewed her strength; and when he recommended the advantage of resting herself a quarter of an hour at Winthrop, as she felt so tired, she resolutely answered, "Oh! no, indeed! walking up that hill again would do her more harm than any sitting down could do her good;" and, in short, her look and manner declared, that go she would not.

After a little succession of these sort of debates and consultations, it was settled between Charles and his two sisters, that he and Henrietta should just run down for a few minutes, to see their aunt and cousins, while the rest

of the party waited for them at the top of the hill. Louisa seemed the principal arranger of the plan; and, as she went a little way with them, down the hill, still talking to Henrietta, Mary took the opportunity of looking scornfully around her, and saying to Captain Wentworth--

"It is very unpleasant, having such connexions! But, I assure you, I have never been in the house above twice in my life."

She received no other answer, than an artificial, assenting smile, followed by a contemptuous glance, as he turned away, which Anne perfectly knew the meaning of.

The brow of the hill, where they remained, was a cheerful spot: Louisa returned; and Mary, finding a comfortable seat for herself on the step of a stile, was very well satisfied so long as the others all stood about her; but when Louisa drew Captain Wentworth away, to try for a gleaning of nuts in an adjoining hedge-row, and they were gone by degrees quite out of sight and sound, Mary was happy no longer; she quarrelled with her own seat, was sure Louisa had got a much better somewhere, and nothing could prevent her from going to look for a better also. She turned through the same gate, but could not see them. Anne found a nice seat for her, on a dry sunny bank, under the hedge-row, in which she had no doubt of their still being, in some spot or other. Mary sat down for a moment, but it would not do; she was sure Louisa had found a better seat somewhere else, and she would go on till she overtook her.

Anne, really tired herself, was glad to sit down; and she very soon heard Captain Wentworth and Louisa in the hedge-row, behind her, as if making their way back along the rough, wild sort of channel, down the centre. They were speaking as they drew near. Louisa's voice was the first distinguished. She seemed to be in the middle of some eager speech. What Anne first heard was--

"And so, I made her go. I could not bear that she should be frightened from the visit by such nonsense. What! would I be turned back from doing a thing that I had determined to do, and that I knew to be right, by the airs and interference of such a person, or of any person I may say? No, I have no idea of being so easily persuaded. When I have made up my mind, I have



made it; and Henrietta seemed entirely to have made up hers to call at Winthrop to-day; and yet, she was as near giving it up, out of nonsensical complaisance!"

"She would have turned back then, but for you?"

"She would indeed. I am almost ashamed to say it."

"Happy for her, to have such a mind as yours at hand! After the hints you gave just now, which did but confirm my own observations, the last time I was in company with him, I need not affect to have no comprehension of what is going on. I see that more than a mere dutiful morning visit to your aunt was in question; and woe betide him, and her too, when it comes to things of consequence, when they are placed in circumstances requiring fortitude and strength of mind, if she have not resolution enough to resist idle interference in such a trifle as this. Your sister is an amiable creature; but yours is the character of decision and firmness, I see. If you value her conduct or happiness, infuse as much of your own spirit into her as you can. But this, no doubt, you have been always doing. It is the worst evil of too yielding and indecisive a character, that no influence over it can be depended on. You are never sure of a good impression being durable; everybody may sway it. Let those who would be happy be firm. Here is a nut," said he, catching one down from an upper bough, "to exemplify: a beautiful glossy nut, which, blessed with original strength, has outlived all the storms of autumn. Not a puncture, not a weak spot anywhere. This nut," he continued, with playful solemnity, "while so many of his brethren have fallen and been trodden under foot, is still in possession of all the happiness that a hazel nut can be supposed capable of." Then returning to his former earnest tone--"My first wish for all whom I am interested in, is that they should be firm. If Louisa Musgrove would be beautiful and happy in her November of life, she will cherish all her present powers of mind."

He had done, and was unanswered. It would have surprised Anne if Louisa could have readily answered such a speech: words of such interest, spoken with such serious warmth! She could imagine what Louisa was feeling. For herself, she feared to move, lest she should be seen. While she remained, a bush of low rambling holly protected her, and they were

moving on. Before they were beyond her hearing, however, Louisa spoke again.

"Mary is good-natured enough in many respects," said she; "but she does sometimes provoke me excessively, by her nonsense and pride--the Elliot pride. She has a great deal too much of the Elliot pride. We do so wish that Charles had married Anne instead. I suppose you know he wanted to marry Anne?"

After a moment's pause, Captain Wentworth said--

"Do you mean that she refused him?"

"Oh! yes; certainly."

"When did that happen?"

"I do not exactly know, for Henrietta and I were at school at the time; but I believe about a year before he married Mary. I wish she had accepted him. We should all have liked her a great deal better; and papa and mamma always think it was her great friend Lady Russell's doing, that she did not. They think Charles might not be learned and bookish enough to please Lady Russell, and that therefore, she persuaded Anne to refuse him."

The sounds were retreating, and Anne distinguished no more. Her own emotions still kept her fixed. She had much to recover from, before she could move. The listener's proverbial fate was not absolutely hers; she had heard no evil of herself, but she had heard a great deal of very painful import. She saw how her own character was considered by Captain Wentworth, and there had been just that degree of feeling and curiosity about her in his manner which must give her extreme agitation.

As soon as she could, she went after Mary, and having found, and walked back with her to their former station, by the stile, felt some comfort in their whole party being immediately afterwards collected, and once more in motion together. Her spirits wanted the solitude and silence which only numbers could give.

Charles and Henrietta returned, bringing, as may be conjectured, Charles Hayter with them. The minutiae of the business Anne could not attempt to understand; even Captain Wentworth did not seem admitted to perfect confidence here; but that there had been a withdrawing on the gentleman's side, and a relenting on the lady's, and that they were now very glad to be together again, did not admit a doubt. Henrietta looked a little ashamed, but very well pleased;--Charles Hayter exceedingly happy: and they were devoted to each other almost from the first instant of their all setting forward for Uppercross.

Everything now marked out Louisa for Captain Wentworth; nothing could be plainer; and where many divisions were necessary, or even where they were not, they walked side by side nearly as much as the other two. In a long strip of meadow land, where there was ample space for all, they were thus divided, forming three distinct parties; and to that party of the three which boasted least animation, and least complaisance, Anne necessarily belonged. She joined Charles and Mary, and was tired enough to be very glad of Charles's other arm; but Charles, though in very good humour with her, was out of temper with his wife. Mary had shewn herself disobliging to him, and was now to reap the consequence, which consequence was his dropping her arm almost every moment to cut off the heads of some nettles in the hedge with his switch; and when Mary began to complain of it, and lament her being ill-used, according to custom, in being on the hedge side, while Anne was never incommoded on the other, he dropped the arms of both to hunt after a weasel which he had a momentary glance of, and they could hardly get him along at all.

This long meadow bordered a lane, which their footpath, at the end of it was to cross, and when the party had all reached the gate of exit, the carriage advancing in the same direction, which had been some time heard, was just coming up, and proved to be Admiral Croft's gig. He and his wife had taken their intended drive, and were returning home. Upon hearing how long a walk the young people had engaged in, they kindly offered a seat to any lady who might be particularly tired; it would save her a full mile, and they were going through Uppercross. The invitation was general, and generally declined. The Miss Musgroves were not at all tired, and Mary was either offended, by not being asked before any of the others, or what Louisa

called the Elliot pride could not endure to make a third in a one horse chaise.

The walking party had crossed the lane, and were surmounting an opposite stile, and the Admiral was putting his horse in motion again, when Captain Wentworth cleared the hedge in a moment to say something to his sister. The something might be guessed by its effects.

"Miss Elliot, I am sure you are tired," cried Mrs Croft. "Do let us have the pleasure of taking you home. Here is excellent room for three, I assure you. If we were all like you, I believe we might sit four. You must, indeed, you must."

Anne was still in the lane; and though instinctively beginning to decline, she was not allowed to proceed. The Admiral's kind urgency came in support of his wife's; they would not be refused; they compressed themselves into the smallest possible space to leave her a corner, and Captain Wentworth, without saying a word, turned to her, and quietly obliged her to be assisted into the carriage.

Yes; he had done it. She was in the carriage, and felt that he had placed her there, that his will and his hands had done it, that she owed it to his perception of her fatigue, and his resolution to give her rest. She was very much affected by the view of his disposition towards her, which all these things made apparent. This little circumstance seemed the completion of all that had gone before. She understood him. He could not forgive her, but he could not be unfeeling. Though condemning her for the past, and considering it with high and unjust resentment, though perfectly careless of her, and though becoming attached to another, still he could not see her suffer, without the desire of giving her relief. It was a remainder of former sentiment; it was an impulse of pure, though unacknowledged friendship; it was a proof of his own warm and amiable heart, which she could not contemplate without emotions so compounded of pleasure and pain, that she knew not which prevailed.

Her answers to the kindness and the remarks of her companions were at first unconsciously given. They had travelled half their way along the rough

lane, before she was quite awake to what they said. She then found them talking of "Frederick."

"He certainly means to have one or other of those two girls, Sophy," said the Admiral; "but there is no saying which. He has been running after them, too, long enough, one would think, to make up his mind. Ay, this comes of the peace. If it were war now, he would have settled it long ago. We sailors, Miss Elliot, cannot afford to make long courtships in time of war. How many days was it, my dear, between the first time of my seeing you and our sitting down together in our lodgings at North Yarmouth?"

"We had better not talk about it, my dear," replied Mrs Croft, pleasantly; "for if Miss Elliot were to hear how soon we came to an understanding, she would never be persuaded that we could be happy together. I had known you by character, however, long before."

"Well, and I had heard of you as a very pretty girl, and what were we to wait for besides? I do not like having such things so long in hand. I wish Frederick would spread a little more canvass, and bring us home one of these young ladies to Kellynch. Then there would always be company for them. And very nice young ladies they both are; I hardly know one from the other."

"Very good humoured, unaffected girls, indeed," said Mrs Croft, in a tone of calmer praise, such as made Anne suspect that her keener powers might not consider either of them as quite worthy of her brother; "and a very respectable family. One could not be connected with better people. My dear Admiral, that post! we shall certainly take that post."

But by coolly giving the reins a better direction herself they happily passed the danger; and by once afterwards judiciously putting out her hand they neither fell into a rut, nor ran foul of a dung-cart; and Anne, with some amusement at their style of driving, which she imagined no bad representation of the general guidance of their affairs, found herself safely deposited by them at the Cottage.

## Chapter 11

The time now approached for Lady Russell's return: the day was even fixed; and Anne, being engaged to join her as soon as she was resettled, was looking forward to an early removal to Kellynch, and beginning to think how her own comfort was likely to be affected by it.

It would place her in the same village with Captain Wentworth, within half a mile of him; they would have to frequent the same church, and there must be intercourse between the two families. This was against her; but on the other hand, he spent so much of his time at Uppercross, that in removing thence she might be considered rather as leaving him behind, than as going towards him; and, upon the whole, she believed she must, on this interesting question, be the gainer, almost as certainly as in her change of domestic society, in leaving poor Mary for Lady Russell.

She wished it might be possible for her to avoid ever seeing Captain Wentworth at the Hall: those rooms had witnessed former meetings which would be brought too painfully before her; but she was yet more anxious for the possibility of Lady Russell and Captain Wentworth never meeting anywhere. They did not like each other, and no renewal of acquaintance now could do any good; and were Lady Russell to see them together, she might think that he had too much self-possession, and she too little.

These points formed her chief solicitude in anticipating her removal from Uppercross, where she felt she had been stationed quite long enough. Her usefulness to little Charles would always give some sweetness to the memory of her two months' visit there, but he was gaining strength apace, and she had nothing else to stay for.

The conclusion of her visit, however, was diversified in a way which she had not at all imagined. Captain Wentworth, after being unseen and unheard of at Uppercross for two whole days, appeared again among them to justify himself by a relation of what had kept him away.

A letter from his friend, Captain Harville, having found him out at last, had brought intelligence of Captain Harville's being settled with his family at Lyme for the winter; of their being therefore, quite unknowingly, within twenty miles of each other. Captain Harville had never been in good health since a severe wound which he received two years before, and Captain Wentworth's anxiety to see him had determined him to go immediately to Lyme. He had been there for four-and-twenty hours. His acquittal was complete, his friendship warmly honoured, a lively interest excited for his friend, and his description of the fine country about Lyme so feelingly attended to by the party, that an earnest desire to see Lyme themselves, and a project for going thither was the consequence.

The young people were all wild to see Lyme. Captain Wentworth talked of going there again himself, it was only seventeen miles from Uppercross; though November, the weather was by no means bad; and, in short, Louisa, who was the most eager of the eager, having formed the resolution to go, and besides the pleasure of doing as she liked, being now armed with the idea of merit in maintaining her own way, bore down all the wishes of her father and mother for putting it off till summer; and to Lyme they were to go--Charles, Mary, Anne, Henrietta, Louisa, and Captain Wentworth.

The first heedless scheme had been to go in the morning and return at night; but to this Mr Musgrove, for the sake of his horses, would not consent; and when it came to be rationally considered, a day in the middle of November would not leave much time for seeing a new place, after deducting seven hours, as the nature of the country required, for going and returning. They were, consequently, to stay the night there, and not to be expected back till the next day's dinner. This was felt to be a considerable amendment; and though they all met at the Great House at rather an early breakfast hour, and set off very punctually, it was so much past noon before the two carriages, Mr Musgrove's coach containing the four ladies, and Charles's curricule, in which he drove Captain Wentworth, were descending the long hill into Lyme, and entering upon the still steeper street of the town itself, that it was very evident they would not have more than time for looking about them, before the light and warmth of the day were gone.

After securing accommodations, and ordering a dinner at one of the inns, the next thing to be done was unquestionably to walk directly down to the sea. They were come too late in the year for any amusement or variety which Lyme, as a public place, might offer. The rooms were shut up, the lodgers almost all gone, scarcely any family but of the residents left; and, as there is nothing to admire in the buildings themselves, the remarkable situation of the town, the principal street almost hurrying into the water, the walk to the Cobb, skirting round the pleasant little bay, which, in the season, is animated with bathing machines and company; the Cobb itself, its old wonders and new improvements, with the very beautiful line of cliffs stretching out to the east of the town, are what the stranger's eye will seek; and a very strange stranger it must be, who does not see charms in the immediate environs of Lyme, to make him wish to know it better. The scenes in its neighbourhood, Charmouth, with its high grounds and extensive sweeps of country, and still more, its sweet, retired bay, backed by dark cliffs, where fragments of low rock among the sands, make it the happiest spot for watching the flow of the tide, for sitting in unwearied contemplation; the woody varieties of the cheerful village of Up Lyme; and, above all, Pinny, with its green chasms between romantic rocks, where the scattered forest trees and orchards of luxuriant growth, declare that many a generation must have passed away since the first partial falling of the cliff prepared the ground for such a state, where a scene so wonderful and so lovely is exhibited, as may more than equal any of the resembling scenes of the far-famed Isle of Wight: these places must be visited, and visited again, to make the worth of Lyme understood.

The party from Uppercross passing down by the now deserted and melancholy looking rooms, and still descending, soon found themselves on the sea-shore; and lingering only, as all must linger and gaze on a first return to the sea, who ever deserved to look on it at all, proceeded towards the Cobb, equally their object in itself and on Captain Wentworth's account: for in a small house, near the foot of an old pier of unknown date, were the Harvilles settled. Captain Wentworth turned in to call on his friend; the others walked on, and he was to join them on the Cobb.

They were by no means tired of wondering and admiring; and not even Louisa seemed to feel that they had parted with Captain Wentworth long,



when they saw him coming after them, with three companions, all well known already, by description, to be Captain and Mrs Harville, and a Captain Benwick, who was staying with them.

Captain Benwick had some time ago been first lieutenant of the *Laconia*; and the account which Captain Wentworth had given of him, on his return from Lyme before, his warm praise of him as an excellent young man and an officer, whom he had always valued highly, which must have stamped him well in the esteem of every listener, had been followed by a little history of his private life, which rendered him perfectly interesting in the eyes of all the ladies. He had been engaged to Captain Harville's sister, and was now mourning her loss. They had been a year or two waiting for fortune and promotion. Fortune came, his prize-money as lieutenant being great; promotion, too, came at last; but Fanny Harville did not live to know it. She had died the preceding summer while he was at sea. Captain Wentworth believed it impossible for man to be more attached to woman than poor Benwick had been to Fanny Harville, or to be more deeply afflicted under the dreadful change. He considered his disposition as of the sort which must suffer heavily, uniting very strong feelings with quiet, serious, and retiring manners, and a decided taste for reading, and sedentary pursuits. To finish the interest of the story, the friendship between him and the Harvilles seemed, if possible, augmented by the event which closed all their views of alliance, and Captain Benwick was now living with them entirely. Captain Harville had taken his present house for half a year; his taste, and his health, and his fortune, all directing him to a residence inexpensive, and by the sea; and the grandeur of the country, and the retirement of Lyme in the winter, appeared exactly adapted to Captain Benwick's state of mind. The sympathy and good-will excited towards Captain Benwick was very great.

"And yet," said Anne to herself, as they now moved forward to meet the party, "he has not, perhaps, a more sorrowing heart than I have. I cannot believe his prospects so blighted for ever. He is younger than I am; younger in feeling, if not in fact; younger as a man. He will rally again, and be happy with another."

They all met, and were introduced. Captain Harville was a tall, dark man, with a sensible, benevolent countenance; a little lame; and from strong features and want of health, looking much older than Captain Wentworth. Captain Benwick looked, and was, the youngest of the three, and, compared with either of them, a little man. He had a pleasing face and a melancholy air, just as he ought to have, and drew back from conversation.

Captain Harville, though not equalling Captain Wentworth in manners, was a perfect gentleman, unaffected, warm, and obliging. Mrs Harville, a degree less polished than her husband, seemed, however, to have the same good feelings; and nothing could be more pleasant than their desire of considering the whole party as friends of their own, because the friends of Captain Wentworth, or more kindly hospitable than their entreaties for their all promising to dine with them. The dinner, already ordered at the inn, was at last, though unwillingly, accepted as a excuse; but they seemed almost hurt that Captain Wentworth should have brought any such party to Lyme, without considering it as a thing of course that they should dine with them.

There was so much attachment to Captain Wentworth in all this, and such a bewitching charm in a degree of hospitality so uncommon, so unlike the usual style of give-and-take invitations, and dinners of formality and display, that Anne felt her spirits not likely to be benefited by an increasing acquaintance among his brother-officers. "These would have been all my friends," was her thought; and she had to struggle against a great tendency to lowness.

On quitting the Cobb, they all went in-doors with their new friends, and found rooms so small as none but those who invite from the heart could think capable of accommodating so many. Anne had a moment's astonishment on the subject herself; but it was soon lost in the pleasanter feelings which sprang from the sight of all the ingenious contrivances and nice arrangements of Captain Harville, to turn the actual space to the best account, to supply the deficiencies of lodging-house furniture, and defend the windows and doors against the winter storms to be expected. The varieties in the fitting-up of the rooms, where the common necessaries provided by the owner, in the common indifferent plight, were contrasted with some few articles of a rare species of wood, excellently worked up,

and with something curious and valuable from all the distant countries Captain Harville had visited, were more than amusing to Anne; connected as it all was with his profession, the fruit of its labours, the effect of its influence on his habits, the picture of repose and domestic happiness it presented, made it to her a something more, or less, than gratification.

Captain Harville was no reader; but he had contrived excellent accommodations, and fashioned very pretty shelves, for a tolerable collection of well-bound volumes, the property of Captain Benwick. His lameness prevented him from taking much exercise; but a mind of usefulness and ingenuity seemed to furnish him with constant employment within. He drew, he varnished, he carpentered, he glued; he made toys for the children; he fashioned new netting-needles and pins with improvements; and if everything else was done, sat down to his large fishing-net at one corner of the room.

Anne thought she left great happiness behind her when they quitted the house; and Louisa, by whom she found herself walking, burst forth into raptures of admiration and delight on the character of the navy; their friendliness, their brotherliness, their openness, their uprightness; protesting that she was convinced of sailors having more worth and warmth than any other set of men in England; that they only knew how to live, and they only deserved to be respected and loved.

They went back to dress and dine; and so well had the scheme answered already, that nothing was found amiss; though its being "so entirely out of season," and the "no thoroughfare of Lyme," and the "no expectation of company," had brought many apologies from the heads of the inn.

Anne found herself by this time growing so much more hardened to being in Captain Wentworth's company than she had at first imagined could ever be, that the sitting down to the same table with him now, and the interchange of the common civilities attending on it (they never got beyond), was become a mere nothing.

The nights were too dark for the ladies to meet again till the morrow, but Captain Harville had promised them a visit in the evening; and he came, bringing his friend also, which was more than had been expected, it having

been agreed that Captain Benwick had all the appearance of being oppressed by the presence of so many strangers. He ventured among them again, however, though his spirits certainly did not seem fit for the mirth of the party in general.

While Captains Wentworth and Harville led the talk on one side of the room, and by recurring to former days, supplied anecdotes in abundance to occupy and entertain the others, it fell to Anne's lot to be placed rather apart with Captain Benwick; and a very good impulse of her nature obliged her to begin an acquaintance with him. He was shy, and disposed to abstraction; but the engaging mildness of her countenance, and gentleness of her manners, soon had their effect; and Anne was well repaid the first trouble of exertion. He was evidently a young man of considerable taste in reading, though principally in poetry; and besides the persuasion of having given him at least an evening's indulgence in the discussion of subjects, which his usual companions had probably no concern in, she had the hope of being of real use to him in some suggestions as to the duty and benefit of struggling against affliction, which had naturally grown out of their conversation. For, though shy, he did not seem reserved; it had rather the appearance of feelings glad to burst their usual restraints; and having talked of poetry, the richness of the present age, and gone through a brief comparison of opinion as to the first-rate poets, trying to ascertain whether Marmion or The Lady of the Lake were to be preferred, and how ranked the Giaour and The Bride of Abydos; and moreover, how the Giaour was to be pronounced, he showed himself so intimately acquainted with all the tenderest songs of the one poet, and all the impassioned descriptions of hopeless agony of the other; he repeated, with such tremulous feeling, the various lines which imaged a broken heart, or a mind destroyed by wretchedness, and looked so entirely as if he meant to be understood, that she ventured to hope he did not always read only poetry, and to say, that she thought it was the misfortune of poetry to be seldom safely enjoyed by those who enjoyed it completely; and that the strong feelings which alone could estimate it truly were the very feelings which ought to taste it but sparingly.

His looks shewing him not pained, but pleased with this allusion to his situation, she was emboldened to go on; and feeling in herself the right of seniority of mind, she ventured to recommend a larger allowance of prose

in his daily study; and on being requested to particularize, mentioned such works of our best moralists, such collections of the finest letters, such memoirs of characters of worth and suffering, as occurred to her at the moment as calculated to rouse and fortify the mind by the highest precepts, and the strongest examples of moral and religious endurances.

Captain Benwick listened attentively, and seemed grateful for the interest implied; and though with a shake of the head, and sighs which declared his little faith in the efficacy of any books on grief like his, noted down the names of those she recommended, and promised to procure and read them.

When the evening was over, Anne could not but be amused at the idea of her coming to Lyme to preach patience and resignation to a young man whom she had never seen before; nor could she help fearing, on more serious reflection, that, like many other great moralists and preachers, she had been eloquent on a point in which her own conduct would ill bear examination.

## Chapter 12

Anne and Henrietta, finding themselves the earliest of the party the next morning, agreed to stroll down to the sea before breakfast. They went to the sands, to watch the flowing of the tide, which a fine south-easterly breeze was bringing in with all the grandeur which so flat a shore admitted. They praised the morning; gloried in the sea; sympathized in the delight of the fresh-feeling breeze--and were silent; till Henrietta suddenly began again with--

"Oh! yes,--I am quite convinced that, with very few exceptions, the sea-air always does good. There can be no doubt of its having been of the greatest service to Dr Shirley, after his illness, last spring twelve-month. He declares himself, that coming to Lyme for a month, did him more good than all the medicine he took; and, that being by the sea, always makes him feel

young again. Now, I cannot help thinking it a pity that he does not live entirely by the sea. I do think he had better leave Uppercross entirely, and fix at Lyme. Do not you, Anne? Do not you agree with me, that it is the best thing he could do, both for himself and Mrs Shirley? She has cousins here, you know, and many acquaintance, which would make it cheerful for her, and I am sure she would be glad to get to a place where she could have medical attendance at hand, in case of his having another seizure. Indeed I think it quite melancholy to have such excellent people as Dr and Mrs Shirley, who have been doing good all their lives, wearing out their last days in a place like Uppercross, where, excepting our family, they seem shut out from all the world. I wish his friends would propose it to him. I really think they ought. And, as to procuring a dispensation, there could be no difficulty at his time of life, and with his character. My only doubt is, whether anything could persuade him to leave his parish. He is so very strict and scrupulous in his notions; over-scrupulous I must say. Do not you think, Anne, it is being over-scrupulous? Do not you think it is quite a mistaken point of conscience, when a clergyman sacrifices his health for the sake of duties, which may be just as well performed by another person? And at Lyme too, only seventeen miles off, he would be near enough to hear, if people thought there was anything to complain of."

Anne smiled more than once to herself during this speech, and entered into the subject, as ready to do good by entering into the feelings of a young lady as of a young man, though here it was good of a lower standard, for what could be offered but general acquiescence? She said all that was reasonable and proper on the business; felt the claims of Dr Shirley to repose as she ought; saw how very desirable it was that he should have some active, respectable young man, as a resident curate, and was even courteous enough to hint at the advantage of such resident curate's being married.

"I wish," said Henrietta, very well pleased with her companion, "I wish Lady Russell lived at Uppercross, and were intimate with Dr Shirley. I have always heard of Lady Russell as a woman of the greatest influence with everybody! I always look upon her as able to persuade a person to anything! I am afraid of her, as I have told you before, quite afraid of her, because she

is so very clever; but I respect her amazingly, and wish we had such a neighbour at Uppercross."

Anne was amused by Henrietta's manner of being grateful, and amused also that the course of events and the new interests of Henrietta's views should have placed her friend at all in favour with any of the Musgrove family; she had only time, however, for a general answer, and a wish that such another woman were at Uppercross, before all subjects suddenly ceased, on seeing Louisa and Captain Wentworth coming towards them. They came also for a stroll till breakfast was likely to be ready; but Louisa recollecting, immediately afterwards that she had something to procure at a shop, invited them all to go back with her into the town. They were all at her disposal.

When they came to the steps, leading upwards from the beach, a gentleman, at the same moment preparing to come down, politely drew back, and stopped to give them way. They ascended and passed him; and as they passed, Anne's face caught his eye, and he looked at her with a degree of earnest admiration, which she could not be insensible of. She was looking remarkably well; her very regular, very pretty features, having the bloom and freshness of youth restored by the fine wind which had been blowing on her complexion, and by the animation of eye which it had also produced. It was evident that the gentleman, (completely a gentleman in manner) admired her exceedingly. Captain Wentworth looked round at her instantly in a way which shewed his noticing of it. He gave her a momentary glance, a glance of brightness, which seemed to say, "That man is struck with you, and even I, at this moment, see something like Anne Elliot again."

After attending Louisa through her business, and loitering about a little longer, they returned to the inn; and Anne, in passing afterwards quickly from her own chamber to their dining-room, had nearly run against the very same gentleman, as he came out of an adjoining apartment. She had before conjectured him to be a stranger like themselves, and determined that a well-looking groom, who was strolling about near the two inns as they came back, should be his servant. Both master and man being in mourning assisted the idea. It was now proved that he belonged to the same inn as

themselves; and this second meeting, short as it was, also proved again by the gentleman's looks, that he thought hers very lovely, and by the readiness and propriety of his apologies, that he was a man of exceedingly good manners. He seemed about thirty, and though not handsome, had an agreeable person. Anne felt that she should like to know who he was.

They had nearly done breakfast, when the sound of a carriage, (almost the first they had heard since entering Lyme) drew half the party to the window. It was a gentleman's carriage, a curricle, but only coming round from the stable-yard to the front door; somebody must be going away. It was driven by a servant in mourning.

The word curricle made Charles Musgrove jump up that he might compare it with his own; the servant in mourning roused Anne's curiosity, and the whole six were collected to look, by the time the owner of the curricle was to be seen issuing from the door amidst the bows and civilities of the household, and taking his seat, to drive off.

"Ah!" cried Captain Wentworth, instantly, and with half a glance at Anne, "it is the very man we passed."

The Miss Musgroves agreed to it; and having all kindly watched him as far up the hill as they could, they returned to the breakfast table. The waiter came into the room soon afterwards.

"Pray," said Captain Wentworth, immediately, "can you tell us the name of the gentleman who is just gone away?"

"Yes, Sir, a Mr Elliot, a gentleman of large fortune, came in last night from Sidmouth. Dare say you heard the carriage, sir, while you were at dinner; and going on now for Crewkerne, in his way to Bath and London."

"Elliot!" Many had looked on each other, and many had repeated the name, before all this had been got through, even by the smart rapidity of a waiter.

"Bless me!" cried Mary; "it must be our cousin; it must be our Mr Elliot, it must, indeed! Charles, Anne, must not it? In mourning, you see, just as



our Mr Elliot must be. How very extraordinary! In the very same inn with us! Anne, must not it be our Mr Elliot? my father's next heir? Pray sir," turning to the waiter, "did not you hear, did not his servant say whether he belonged to the Kellynch family?"

"No, ma'am, he did not mention no particular family; but he said his master was a very rich gentleman, and would be a baronight some day."

"There! you see!" cried Mary in an ecstasy, "just as I said! Heir to Sir Walter Elliot! I was sure that would come out, if it was so. Depend upon it, that is a circumstance which his servants take care to publish, wherever he goes. But, Anne, only conceive how extraordinary! I wish I had looked at him more. I wish we had been aware in time, who it was, that he might have been introduced to us. What a pity that we should not have been introduced to each other! Do you think he had the Elliot countenance? I hardly looked at him, I was looking at the horses; but I think he had something of the Elliot countenance, I wonder the arms did not strike me! Oh! the great-coat was hanging over the panel, and hid the arms, so it did; otherwise, I am sure, I should have observed them, and the livery too; if the servant had not been in mourning, one should have known him by the livery."

"Putting all these very extraordinary circumstances together," said Captain Wentworth, "we must consider it to be the arrangement of Providence, that you should not be introduced to your cousin."

When she could command Mary's attention, Anne quietly tried to convince her that their father and Mr Elliot had not, for many years, been on such terms as to make the power of attempting an introduction at all desirable.

At the same time, however, it was a secret gratification to herself to have seen her cousin, and to know that the future owner of Kellynch was undoubtedly a gentleman, and had an air of good sense. She would not, upon any account, mention her having met with him the second time; luckily Mary did not much attend to their having passed close by him in their earlier walk, but she would have felt quite ill-used by Anne's having actually run against him in the passage, and received his very polite

excuses, while she had never been near him at all; no, that cousinly little interview must remain a perfect secret.

"Of course," said Mary, "you will mention our seeing Mr Elliot, the next time you write to Bath. I think my father certainly ought to hear of it; do mention all about him."

Anne avoided a direct reply, but it was just the circumstance which she considered as not merely unnecessary to be communicated, but as what ought to be suppressed. The offence which had been given her father, many years back, she knew; Elizabeth's particular share in it she suspected; and that Mr Elliot's idea always produced irritation in both was beyond a doubt. Mary never wrote to Bath herself; all the toil of keeping up a slow and unsatisfactory correspondence with Elizabeth fell on Anne.

Breakfast had not been long over, when they were joined by Captain and Mrs Harville and Captain Benwick; with whom they had appointed to take their last walk about Lyme. They ought to be setting off for Uppercross by one, and in the meanwhile were to be all together, and out of doors as long as they could.

Anne found Captain Benwick getting near her, as soon as they were all fairly in the street. Their conversation the preceding evening did not disincline him to seek her again; and they walked together some time, talking as before of Mr Scott and Lord Byron, and still as unable as before, and as unable as any other two readers, to think exactly alike of the merits of either, till something occasioned an almost general change amongst their party, and instead of Captain Benwick, she had Captain Harville by her side.

"Miss Elliot," said he, speaking rather low, "you have done a good deed in making that poor fellow talk so much. I wish he could have such company oftener. It is bad for him, I know, to be shut up as he is; but what can we do? We cannot part."

"No," said Anne, "that I can easily believe to be impossible; but in time, perhaps--we know what time does in every case of affliction, and you must

remember, Captain Harville, that your friend may yet be called a young mourner--only last summer, I understand."

"Ay, true enough," (with a deep sigh) "only June."

"And not known to him, perhaps, so soon."

"Not till the first week of August, when he came home from the Cape, just made into the Grappler. I was at Plymouth dreading to hear of him; he sent in letters, but the Grappler was under orders for Portsmouth. There the news must follow him, but who was to tell it? not I. I would as soon have been run up to the yard-arm. Nobody could do it, but that good fellow" (pointing to Captain Wentworth.) "The Laconia had come into Plymouth the week before; no danger of her being sent to sea again. He stood his chance for the rest; wrote up for leave of absence, but without waiting the return, travelled night and day till he got to Portsmouth, rowed off to the Grappler that instant, and never left the poor fellow for a week. That's what he did, and nobody else could have saved poor James. You may think, Miss Elliot, whether he is dear to us!"

Anne did think on the question with perfect decision, and said as much in reply as her own feeling could accomplish, or as his seemed able to bear, for he was too much affected to renew the subject, and when he spoke again, it was of something totally different.

Mrs Harville's giving it as her opinion that her husband would have quite walking enough by the time he reached home, determined the direction of all the party in what was to be their last walk; they would accompany them to their door, and then return and set off themselves. By all their calculations there was just time for this; but as they drew near the Cobb, there was such a general wish to walk along it once more, all were so inclined, and Louisa soon grew so determined, that the difference of a quarter of an hour, it was found, would be no difference at all; so with all the kind leave-taking, and all the kind interchange of invitations and promises which may be imagined, they parted from Captain and Mrs Harville at their own door, and still accompanied by Captain Benwick, who seemed to cling to them to the last, proceeded to make the proper adieus to the Cobb.

Anne found Captain Benwick again drawing near her. Lord Byron's "dark blue seas" could not fail of being brought forward by their present view, and she gladly gave him all her attention as long as attention was possible. It was soon drawn, perforce another way.

There was too much wind to make the high part of the new Cobb pleasant for the ladies, and they agreed to get down the steps to the lower, and all were contented to pass quietly and carefully down the steep flight, excepting Louisa; she must be jumped down them by Captain Wentworth. In all their walks, he had had to jump her from the stiles; the sensation was delightful to her. The hardness of the pavement for her feet, made him less willing upon the present occasion; he did it, however. She was safely down, and instantly, to show her enjoyment, ran up the steps to be jumped down again. He advised her against it, thought the jar too great; but no, he reasoned and talked in vain, she smiled and said, "I am determined I will:" he put out his hands; she was too precipitate by half a second, she fell on the pavement on the Lower Cobb, and was taken up lifeless! There was no wound, no blood, no visible bruise; but her eyes were closed, she breathed not, her face was like death. The horror of the moment to all who stood around!

Captain Wentworth, who had caught her up, knelt with her in his arms, looking on her with a face as pallid as her own, in an agony of silence. "She is dead! she is dead!" screamed Mary, catching hold of her husband, and contributing with his own horror to make him immovable; and in another moment, Henrietta, sinking under the conviction, lost her senses too, and would have fallen on the steps, but for Captain Benwick and Anne, who caught and supported her between them.

"Is there no one to help me?" were the first words which burst from Captain Wentworth, in a tone of despair, and as if all his own strength were gone.

"Go to him, go to him," cried Anne, "for heaven's sake go to him. I can support her myself. Leave me, and go to him. Rub her hands, rub her temples; here are salts; take them, take them."

Captain Benwick obeyed, and Charles at the same moment, disengaging himself from his wife, they were both with him; and Louisa was raised up and supported more firmly between them, and everything was done that Anne had prompted, but in vain; while Captain Wentworth, staggering against the wall for his support, exclaimed in the bitterest agony--

"Oh God! her father and mother!"

"A surgeon!" said Anne.

He caught the word; it seemed to rouse him at once, and saying only-- "True, true, a surgeon this instant," was darting away, when Anne eagerly suggested--

"Captain Benwick, would not it be better for Captain Benwick? He knows where a surgeon is to be found."

Every one capable of thinking felt the advantage of the idea, and in a moment (it was all done in rapid moments) Captain Benwick had resigned the poor corpse-like figure entirely to the brother's care, and was off for the town with the utmost rapidity.

As to the wretched party left behind, it could scarcely be said which of the three, who were completely rational, was suffering most: Captain Wentworth, Anne, or Charles, who, really a very affectionate brother, hung over Louisa with sobs of grief, and could only turn his eyes from one sister, to see the other in a state as insensible, or to witness the hysterical agitations of his wife, calling on him for help which he could not give.

Anne, attending with all the strength and zeal, and thought, which instinct supplied, to Henrietta, still tried, at intervals, to suggest comfort to the others, tried to quiet Mary, to animate Charles, to assuage the feelings of Captain Wentworth. Both seemed to look to her for directions.

"Anne, Anne," cried Charles, "What is to be done next? What, in heaven's name, is to be done next?"

Captain Wentworth's eyes were also turned towards her.

"Had not she better be carried to the inn? Yes, I am sure: carry her gently to the inn."

"Yes, yes, to the inn," repeated Captain Wentworth, comparatively collected, and eager to be doing something. "I will carry her myself. Musgrove, take care of the others."

By this time the report of the accident had spread among the workmen and boatmen about the Cobb, and many were collected near them, to be useful if wanted, at any rate, to enjoy the sight of a dead young lady, nay, two dead young ladies, for it proved twice as fine as the first report. To some of the best-looking of these good people Henrietta was consigned, for, though partially revived, she was quite helpless; and in this manner, Anne walking by her side, and Charles attending to his wife, they set forward, treading back with feelings unutterable, the ground, which so lately, so very lately, and so light of heart, they had passed along.

They were not off the Cobb, before the Harvilles met them. Captain Benwick had been seen flying by their house, with a countenance which showed something to be wrong; and they had set off immediately, informed and directed as they passed, towards the spot. Shocked as Captain Harville was, he brought senses and nerves that could be instantly useful; and a look between him and his wife decided what was to be done. She must be taken to their house; all must go to their house; and await the surgeon's arrival there. They would not listen to scruples: he was obeyed; they were all beneath his roof; and while Louisa, under Mrs Harville's direction, was conveyed up stairs, and given possession of her own bed, assistance, cordials, restoratives were supplied by her husband to all who needed them.

Louisa had once opened her eyes, but soon closed them again, without apparent consciousness. This had been a proof of life, however, of service to her sister; and Henrietta, though perfectly incapable of being in the same room with Louisa, was kept, by the agitation of hope and fear, from a return of her own insensibility. Mary, too, was growing calmer.

The surgeon was with them almost before it had seemed possible. They were sick with horror, while he examined; but he was not hopeless. The

head had received a severe contusion, but he had seen greater injuries recovered from: he was by no means hopeless; he spoke cheerfully.

That he did not regard it as a desperate case, that he did not say a few hours must end it, was at first felt, beyond the hope of most; and the ecstasy of such a reprieve, the rejoicing, deep and silent, after a few fervent ejaculations of gratitude to Heaven had been offered, may be conceived.

The tone, the look, with which "Thank God!" was uttered by Captain Wentworth, Anne was sure could never be forgotten by her; nor the sight of him afterwards, as he sat near a table, leaning over it with folded arms and face concealed, as if overpowered by the various feelings of his soul, and trying by prayer and reflection to calm them.

Louisa's limbs had escaped. There was no injury but to the head.

It now became necessary for the party to consider what was best to be done, as to their general situation. They were now able to speak to each other and consult. That Louisa must remain where she was, however distressing to her friends to be involving the Harvilles in such trouble, did not admit a doubt. Her removal was impossible. The Harvilles silenced all scruples; and, as much as they could, all gratitude. They had looked forward and arranged everything before the others began to reflect. Captain Benwick must give up his room to them, and get another bed elsewhere; and the whole was settled. They were only concerned that the house could accommodate no more; and yet perhaps, by "putting the children away in the maid's room, or swinging a cot somewhere," they could hardly bear to think of not finding room for two or three besides, supposing they might wish to stay; though, with regard to any attendance on Miss Musgrove, there need not be the least uneasiness in leaving her to Mrs Harville's care entirely. Mrs Harville was a very experienced nurse, and her nursery-maid, who had lived with her long, and gone about with her everywhere, was just such another. Between these two, she could want no possible attendance by day or night. And all this was said with a truth and sincerity of feeling irresistible.

Charles, Henrietta, and Captain Wentworth were the three in consultation, and for a little while it was only an interchange of perplexity

and terror. "Uppercross, the necessity of some one's going to Uppercross; the news to be conveyed; how it could be broken to Mr and Mrs Musgrove; the lateness of the morning; an hour already gone since they ought to have been off; the impossibility of being in tolerable time." At first, they were capable of nothing more to the purpose than such exclamations; but, after a while, Captain Wentworth, exerting himself, said--

"We must be decided, and without the loss of another minute. Every minute is valuable. Some one must resolve on being off for Uppercross instantly. Musgrove, either you or I must go."

Charles agreed, but declared his resolution of not going away. He would be as little incumbrance as possible to Captain and Mrs Harville; but as to leaving his sister in such a state, he neither ought, nor would. So far it was decided; and Henrietta at first declared the same. She, however, was soon persuaded to think differently. The usefulness of her staying! She who had not been able to remain in Louisa's room, or to look at her, without sufferings which made her worse than helpless! She was forced to acknowledge that she could do no good, yet was still unwilling to be away, till, touched by the thought of her father and mother, she gave it up; she consented, she was anxious to be at home.

The plan had reached this point, when Anne, coming quietly down from Louisa's room, could not but hear what followed, for the parlour door was open.

"Then it is settled, Musgrove," cried Captain Wentworth, "that you stay, and that I take care of your sister home. But as to the rest, as to the others, if one stays to assist Mrs Harville, I think it need be only one. Mrs Charles Musgrove will, of course, wish to get back to her children; but if Anne will stay, no one so proper, so capable as Anne."

She paused a moment to recover from the emotion of hearing herself so spoken of. The other two warmly agreed with what he said, and she then appeared.

"You will stay, I am sure; you will stay and nurse her;" cried he, turning to her and speaking with a glow, and yet a gentleness, which seemed almost



restoring the past. She coloured deeply, and he recollected himself and moved away. She expressed herself most willing, ready, happy to remain. "It was what she had been thinking of, and wishing to be allowed to do. A bed on the floor in Louisa's room would be sufficient for her, if Mrs Harville would but think so."

One thing more, and all seemed arranged. Though it was rather desirable that Mr and Mrs Musgrove should be previously alarmed by some share of delay; yet the time required by the Uppercross horses to take them back, would be a dreadful extension of suspense; and Captain Wentworth proposed, and Charles Musgrove agreed, that it would be much better for him to take a chaise from the inn, and leave Mr Musgrove's carriage and horses to be sent home the next morning early, when there would be the farther advantage of sending an account of Louisa's night.

Captain Wentworth now hurried off to get everything ready on his part, and to be soon followed by the two ladies. When the plan was made known to Mary, however, there was an end of all peace in it. She was so wretched and so vehement, complained so much of injustice in being expected to go away instead of Anne; Anne, who was nothing to Louisa, while she was her sister, and had the best right to stay in Henrietta's stead! Why was not she to be as useful as Anne? And to go home without Charles, too, without her husband! No, it was too unkind. And in short, she said more than her husband could long withstand, and as none of the others could oppose when he gave way, there was no help for it; the change of Mary for Anne was inevitable.

Anne had never submitted more reluctantly to the jealous and ill-judging claims of Mary; but so it must be, and they set off for the town, Charles taking care of his sister, and Captain Benwick attending to her. She gave a moment's recollection, as they hurried along, to the little circumstances which the same spots had witnessed earlier in the morning. There she had listened to Henrietta's schemes for Dr Shirley's leaving Uppercross; farther on, she had first seen Mr Elliot; a moment seemed all that could now be given to any one but Louisa, or those who were wrapt up in her welfare.

Captain Benwick was most considerately attentive to her; and, united as they all seemed by the distress of the day, she felt an increasing degree of

good-will towards him, and a pleasure even in thinking that it might, perhaps, be the occasion of continuing their acquaintance.

Captain Wentworth was on the watch for them, and a chaise and four in waiting, stationed for their convenience in the lowest part of the street; but his evident surprise and vexation at the substitution of one sister for the other, the change in his countenance, the astonishment, the expressions begun and suppressed, with which Charles was listened to, made but a mortifying reception of Anne; or must at least convince her that she was valued only as she could be useful to Louisa.

She endeavoured to be composed, and to be just. Without emulating the feelings of an Emma towards her Henry, she would have attended on Louisa with a zeal above the common claims of regard, for his sake; and she hoped he would not long be so unjust as to suppose she would shrink unnecessarily from the office of a friend.

In the meanwhile she was in the carriage. He had handed them both in, and placed himself between them; and in this manner, under these circumstances, full of astonishment and emotion to Anne, she quitted Lyme. How the long stage would pass; how it was to affect their manners; what was to be their sort of intercourse, she could not foresee. It was all quite natural, however. He was devoted to Henrietta; always turning towards her; and when he spoke at all, always with the view of supporting her hopes and raising her spirits. In general, his voice and manner were studiously calm. To spare Henrietta from agitation seemed the governing principle. Once only, when she had been grieving over the last ill-judged, ill-fated walk to the Cobb, bitterly lamenting that it ever had been thought of, he burst forth, as if wholly overcome--

"Don't talk of it, don't talk of it," he cried. "Oh God! that I had not given way to her at the fatal moment! Had I done as I ought! But so eager and so resolute! Dear, sweet Louisa!"

Anne wondered whether it ever occurred to him now, to question the justness of his own previous opinion as to the universal felicity and advantage of firmness of character; and whether it might not strike him that, like all other qualities of the mind, it should have its proportions and limits.

She thought it could scarcely escape him to feel that a persuadable temper might sometimes be as much in favour of happiness as a very resolute character.

They got on fast. Anne was astonished to recognise the same hills and the same objects so soon. Their actual speed, heightened by some dread of the conclusion, made the road appear but half as long as on the day before. It was growing quite dusk, however, before they were in the neighbourhood of Uppercross, and there had been total silence among them for some time, Henrietta leaning back in the corner, with a shawl over her face, giving the hope of her having cried herself to sleep; when, as they were going up their last hill, Anne found herself all at once addressed by Captain Wentworth. In a low, cautious voice, he said:--

"I have been considering what we had best do. She must not appear at first. She could not stand it. I have been thinking whether you had not better remain in the carriage with her, while I go in and break it to Mr and Mrs Musgrove. Do you think this is a good plan?"

She did: he was satisfied, and said no more. But the remembrance of the appeal remained a pleasure to her, as a proof of friendship, and of deference for her judgement, a great pleasure; and when it became a sort of parting proof, its value did not lessen.

When the distressing communication at Uppercross was over, and he had seen the father and mother quite as composed as could be hoped, and the daughter all the better for being with them, he announced his intention of returning in the same carriage to Lyme; and when the horses were baited, he was off.

**(End of volume one.)**

## **Chapter 13**

The remainder of Anne's time at Uppercross, comprehending only two days, was spent entirely at the Mansion House; and she had the satisfaction of knowing herself extremely useful there, both as an immediate companion, and as assisting in all those arrangements for the future, which, in Mr and Mrs Musgrove's distressed state of spirits, would have been difficulties.

They had an early account from Lyme the next morning. Louisa was much the same. No symptoms worse than before had appeared. Charles came a few hours afterwards, to bring a later and more particular account. He was tolerably cheerful. A speedy cure must not be hoped, but everything was going on as well as the nature of the case admitted. In speaking of the Harvilles, he seemed unable to satisfy his own sense of their kindness, especially of Mrs Harville's exertions as a nurse. "She really left nothing for Mary to do. He and Mary had been persuaded to go early to their inn last night. Mary had been hysterical again this morning. When he came away, she was going to walk out with Captain Benwick, which, he hoped, would do her good. He almost wished she had been prevailed on to come home the day before; but the truth was, that Mrs Harville left nothing for anybody to do."

Charles was to return to Lyme the same afternoon, and his father had at first half a mind to go with him, but the ladies could not consent. It would be going only to multiply trouble to the others, and increase his own distress; and a much better scheme followed and was acted upon. A chaise was sent for from Crewkerne, and Charles conveyed back a far more useful person in the old nursery-maid of the family, one who having brought up all the children, and seen the very last, the lingering and long-

petted Master Harry, sent to school after his brothers, was now living in her deserted nursery to mend stockings and dress all the blains and bruises she could get near her, and who, consequently, was only too happy in being allowed to go and help nurse dear Miss Louisa. Vague wishes of getting Sarah thither, had occurred before to Mrs Musgrove and Henrietta; but without Anne, it would hardly have been resolved on, and found practicable so soon.

They were indebted, the next day, to Charles Hayter, for all the minute knowledge of Louisa, which it was so essential to obtain every twenty-four hours. He made it his business to go to Lyme, and his account was still encouraging. The intervals of sense and consciousness were believed to be stronger. Every report agreed in Captain Wentworth's appearing fixed in Lyme.

Anne was to leave them on the morrow, an event which they all dreaded. "What should they do without her? They were wretched comforters for one another." And so much was said in this way, that Anne thought she could not do better than impart among them the general inclination to which she was privy, and persuaded them all to go to Lyme at once. She had little difficulty; it was soon determined that they would go; go to-morrow, fix themselves at the inn, or get into lodgings, as it suited, and there remain till dear Louisa could be moved. They must be taking off some trouble from the good people she was with; they might at least relieve Mrs Harville from the care of her own children; and in short, they were so happy in the decision, that Anne was delighted with what she had done, and felt that she could not spend her last morning at Uppercross better than in assisting their preparations, and sending them off at an early hour, though her being left to the solitary range of the house was the consequence.

She was the last, excepting the little boys at the cottage, she was the very last, the only remaining one of all that had filled and animated both houses, of all that had given Uppercross its cheerful character. A few days had made a change indeed!

If Louisa recovered, it would all be well again. More than former happiness would be restored. There could not be a doubt, to her mind there was none, of what would follow her recovery. A few months hence, and the

room now so deserted, occupied but by her silent, pensive self, might be filled again with all that was happy and gay, all that was glowing and bright in prosperous love, all that was most unlike Anne Elliot!

An hour's complete leisure for such reflections as these, on a dark November day, a small thick rain almost blotting out the very few objects ever to be discerned from the windows, was enough to make the sound of Lady Russell's carriage exceedingly welcome; and yet, though desirous to be gone, she could not quit the Mansion House, or look an adieu to the Cottage, with its black, dripping and comfortless veranda, or even notice through the misty glasses the last humble tenements of the village, without a saddened heart. Scenes had passed in Uppercross which made it precious. It stood the record of many sensations of pain, once severe, but now softened; and of some instances of relenting feeling, some breathings of friendship and reconciliation, which could never be looked for again, and which could never cease to be dear. She left it all behind her, all but the recollection that such things had been.

Anne had never entered Kellynch since her quitting Lady Russell's house in September. It had not been necessary, and the few occasions of its being possible for her to go to the Hall she had contrived to evade and escape from. Her first return was to resume her place in the modern and elegant apartments of the Lodge, and to gladden the eyes of its mistress.

There was some anxiety mixed with Lady Russell's joy in meeting her. She knew who had been frequenting Uppercross. But happily, either Anne was improved in plumpness and looks, or Lady Russell fancied her so; and Anne, in receiving her compliments on the occasion, had the amusement of connecting them with the silent admiration of her cousin, and of hoping that she was to be blessed with a second spring of youth and beauty.

When they came to converse, she was soon sensible of some mental change. The subjects of which her heart had been full on leaving Kellynch, and which she had felt slighted, and been compelled to smother among the Musgroves, were now become but of secondary interest. She had lately lost sight even of her father and sister and Bath. Their concerns had been sunk under those of Uppercross; and when Lady Russell reverted to their former hopes and fears, and spoke her satisfaction in the house in Camden Place,

which had been taken, and her regret that Mrs Clay should still be with them, Anne would have been ashamed to have it known how much more she was thinking of Lyme and Louisa Musgrove, and all her acquaintance there; how much more interesting to her was the home and the friendship of the Harvilles and Captain Benwick, than her own father's house in Camden Place, or her own sister's intimacy with Mrs Clay. She was actually forced to exert herself to meet Lady Russell with anything like the appearance of equal solicitude, on topics which had by nature the first claim on her.

There was a little awkwardness at first in their discourse on another subject. They must speak of the accident at Lyme. Lady Russell had not been arrived five minutes the day before, when a full account of the whole had burst on her; but still it must be talked of, she must make enquiries, she must regret the imprudence, lament the result, and Captain Wentworth's name must be mentioned by both. Anne was conscious of not doing it so well as Lady Russell. She could not speak the name, and look straight forward to Lady Russell's eye, till she had adopted the expedient of telling her briefly what she thought of the attachment between him and Louisa. When this was told, his name distressed her no longer.

Lady Russell had only to listen composedly, and wish them happy, but internally her heart revelled in angry pleasure, in pleased contempt, that the man who at twenty-three had seemed to understand somewhat of the value of an Anne Elliot, should, eight years afterwards, be charmed by a Louisa Musgrove.

The first three or four days passed most quietly, with no circumstance to mark them excepting the receipt of a note or two from Lyme, which found their way to Anne, she could not tell how, and brought a rather improving account of Louisa. At the end of that period, Lady Russell's politeness could repose no longer, and the fainter self-threatenings of the past became in a decided tone, "I must call on Mrs Croft; I really must call upon her soon. Anne, have you courage to go with me, and pay a visit in that house? It will be some trial to us both."

Anne did not shrink from it; on the contrary, she truly felt as she said, in observing--

"I think you are very likely to suffer the most of the two; your feelings are less reconciled to the change than mine. By remaining in the neighbourhood, I am become inured to it."

She could have said more on the subject; for she had in fact so high an opinion of the Crofts, and considered her father so very fortunate in his tenants, felt the parish to be so sure of a good example, and the poor of the best attention and relief, that however sorry and ashamed for the necessity of the removal, she could not but in conscience feel that they were gone who deserved not to stay, and that Kellynch Hall had passed into better hands than its owners'. These convictions must unquestionably have their own pain, and severe was its kind; but they precluded that pain which Lady Russell would suffer in entering the house again, and returning through the well-known apartments.

In such moments Anne had no power of saying to herself, "These rooms ought to belong only to us. Oh, how fallen in their destination! How unworthily occupied! An ancient family to be so driven away! Strangers filling their place!" No, except when she thought of her mother, and remembered where she had been used to sit and preside, she had no sigh of that description to heave.

Mrs Croft always met her with a kindness which gave her the pleasure of fancying herself a favourite, and on the present occasion, receiving her in that house, there was particular attention.

The sad accident at Lyme was soon the prevailing topic, and on comparing their latest accounts of the invalid, it appeared that each lady dated her intelligence from the same hour of yesternorn; that Captain Wentworth had been in Kellynch yesterday (the first time since the accident), had brought Anne the last note, which she had not been able to trace the exact steps of; had staid a few hours and then returned again to Lyme, and without any present intention of quitting it any more. He had enquired after her, she found, particularly; had expressed his hope of Miss Elliot's not being the worse for her exertions, and had spoken of those exertions as great. This was handsome, and gave her more pleasure than almost anything else could have done.



As to the sad catastrophe itself, it could be canvassed only in one style by a couple of steady, sensible women, whose judgements had to work on ascertained events; and it was perfectly decided that it had been the consequence of much thoughtlessness and much imprudence; that its effects were most alarming, and that it was frightful to think, how long Miss Musgrove's recovery might yet be doubtful, and how liable she would still remain to suffer from the concussion hereafter! The Admiral wound it up summarily by exclaiming--

"Ay, a very bad business indeed. A new sort of way this, for a young fellow to be making love, by breaking his mistress's head, is not it, Miss Elliot? This is breaking a head and giving a plaster, truly!"

Admiral Croft's manners were not quite of the tone to suit Lady Russell, but they delighted Anne. His goodness of heart and simplicity of character were irresistible.

"Now, this must be very bad for you," said he, suddenly rousing from a little reverie, "to be coming and finding us here. I had not recollected it before, I declare, but it must be very bad. But now, do not stand upon ceremony. Get up and go over all the rooms in the house if you like it."

"Another time, Sir, I thank you, not now."

"Well, whenever it suits you. You can slip in from the shrubbery at any time; and there you will find we keep our umbrellas hanging up by that door. A good place is not it? But," (checking himself), "you will not think it a good place, for yours were always kept in the butler's room. Ay, so it always is, I believe. One man's ways may be as good as another's, but we all like our own best. And so you must judge for yourself, whether it would be better for you to go about the house or not."

Anne, finding she might decline it, did so, very gratefully.

"We have made very few changes either," continued the Admiral, after thinking a moment. "Very few. We told you about the laundry-door, at Uppercross. That has been a very great improvement. The wonder was, how any family upon earth could bear with the inconvenience of its opening as it

did, so long! You will tell Sir Walter what we have done, and that Mr Shepherd thinks it the greatest improvement the house ever had. Indeed, I must do ourselves the justice to say, that the few alterations we have made have been all very much for the better. My wife should have the credit of them, however. I have done very little besides sending away some of the large looking-glasses from my dressing-room, which was your father's. A very good man, and very much the gentleman I am sure: but I should think, Miss Elliot," (looking with serious reflection), "I should think he must be rather a dressy man for his time of life. Such a number of looking-glasses! oh Lord! there was no getting away from one's self. So I got Sophy to lend me a hand, and we soon shifted their quarters; and now I am quite snug, with my little shaving glass in one corner, and another great thing that I never go near."

Anne, amused in spite of herself, was rather distressed for an answer, and the Admiral, fearing he might not have been civil enough, took up the subject again, to say--

"The next time you write to your good father, Miss Elliot, pray give him my compliments and Mrs Croft's, and say that we are settled here quite to our liking, and have no fault at all to find with the place. The breakfast-room chimney smokes a little, I grant you, but it is only when the wind is due north and blows hard, which may not happen three times a winter. And take it altogether, now that we have been into most of the houses hereabouts and can judge, there is not one that we like better than this. Pray say so, with my compliments. He will be glad to hear it."

Lady Russell and Mrs Croft were very well pleased with each other: but the acquaintance which this visit began was fated not to proceed far at present; for when it was returned, the Crofts announced themselves to be going away for a few weeks, to visit their connexions in the north of the county, and probably might not be at home again before Lady Russell would be removing to Bath.

So ended all danger to Anne of meeting Captain Wentworth at Kellynch Hall, or of seeing him in company with her friend. Everything was safe enough, and she smiled over the many anxious feelings she had wasted on the subject.

## Chapter 14

Though Charles and Mary had remained at Lyme much longer after Mr and Mrs Musgrove's going than Anne conceived they could have been at all wanted, they were yet the first of the family to be at home again; and as soon as possible after their return to Uppercross they drove over to the Lodge. They had left Louisa beginning to sit up; but her head, though clear, was exceedingly weak, and her nerves susceptible to the highest extreme of tenderness; and though she might be pronounced to be altogether doing very well, it was still impossible to say when she might be able to bear the removal home; and her father and mother, who must return in time to receive their younger children for the Christmas holidays, had hardly a hope of being allowed to bring her with them.

They had been all in lodgings together. Mrs Musgrove had got Mrs Harville's children away as much as she could, every possible supply from Uppercross had been furnished, to lighten the inconvenience to the Harvilles, while the Harvilles had been wanting them to come to dinner every day; and in short, it seemed to have been only a struggle on each side as to which should be most disinterested and hospitable.

Mary had had her evils; but upon the whole, as was evident by her staying so long, she had found more to enjoy than to suffer. Charles Hayter had been at Lyme oftener than suited her; and when they dined with the Harvilles there had been only a maid-servant to wait, and at first Mrs Harville had always given Mrs Musgrove precedence; but then, she had received so very handsome an apology from her on finding out whose daughter she was, and there had been so much going on every day, there had been so many walks between their lodgings and the Harvilles, and she had got books from the library, and changed them so often, that the balance had certainly been much in favour of Lyme. She had been taken to Charmouth too, and she had bathed, and she had gone to church, and there were a great many more people to look at in the church at Lyme than at

Uppercross; and all this, joined to the sense of being so very useful, had made really an agreeable fortnight.

Anne enquired after Captain Benwick. Mary's face was clouded directly. Charles laughed.

"Oh! Captain Benwick is very well, I believe, but he is a very odd young man. I do not know what he would be at. We asked him to come home with us for a day or two: Charles undertook to give him some shooting, and he seemed quite delighted, and, for my part, I thought it was all settled; when behold! on Tuesday night, he made a very awkward sort of excuse; 'he never shot' and he had 'been quite misunderstood,' and he had promised this and he had promised that, and the end of it was, I found, that he did not mean to come. I suppose he was afraid of finding it dull; but upon my word I should have thought we were lively enough at the Cottage for such a heart-broken man as Captain Benwick."

Charles laughed again and said, "Now Mary, you know very well how it really was. It was all your doing," (turning to Anne.) "He fancied that if he went with us, he should find you close by: he fancied everybody to be living in Uppercross; and when he discovered that Lady Russell lived three miles off, his heart failed him, and he had not courage to come. That is the fact, upon my honour. Mary knows it is."

But Mary did not give into it very graciously, whether from not considering Captain Benwick entitled by birth and situation to be in love with an Elliot, or from not wanting to believe Anne a greater attraction to Uppercross than herself, must be left to be guessed. Anne's good-will, however, was not to be lessened by what she heard. She boldly acknowledged herself flattered, and continued her enquiries.

"Oh! he talks of you," cried Charles, "in such terms--" Mary interrupted him. "I declare, Charles, I never heard him mention Anne twice all the time I was there. I declare, Anne, he never talks of you at all."

"No," admitted Charles, "I do not know that he ever does, in a general way; but however, it is a very clear thing that he admires you exceedingly. His head is full of some books that he is reading upon your

recommendation, and he wants to talk to you about them; he has found out something or other in one of them which he thinks--oh! I cannot pretend to remember it, but it was something very fine--I overheard him telling Henrietta all about it; and then 'Miss Elliot' was spoken of in the highest terms! Now Mary, I declare it was so, I heard it myself, and you were in the other room. 'Elegance, sweetness, beauty.' Oh! there was no end of Miss Elliot's charms."

"And I am sure," cried Mary, warmly, "it was a very little to his credit, if he did. Miss Harville only died last June. Such a heart is very little worth having; is it, Lady Russell? I am sure you will agree with me."

"I must see Captain Benwick before I decide," said Lady Russell, smiling.

"And that you are very likely to do very soon, I can tell you, ma'am," said Charles. "Though he had not nerves for coming away with us, and setting off again afterwards to pay a formal visit here, he will make his way over to Kellynch one day by himself, you may depend on it. I told him the distance and the road, and I told him of the church's being so very well worth seeing; for as he has a taste for those sort of things, I thought that would be a good excuse, and he listened with all his understanding and soul; and I am sure from his manner that you will have him calling here soon. So, I give you notice, Lady Russell."

"Any acquaintance of Anne's will always be welcome to me," was Lady Russell's kind answer.

"Oh! as to being Anne's acquaintance," said Mary, "I think he is rather my acquaintance, for I have been seeing him every day this last fortnight."

"Well, as your joint acquaintance, then, I shall be very happy to see Captain Benwick."

"You will not find anything very agreeable in him, I assure you, ma'am. He is one of the dullest young men that ever lived. He has walked with me, sometimes, from one end of the sands to the other, without saying a word. He is not at all a well-bred young man. I am sure you will not like him."

"There we differ, Mary," said Anne. "I think Lady Russell would like him. I think she would be so much pleased with his mind, that she would very soon see no deficiency in his manner."

"So do I, Anne," said Charles. "I am sure Lady Russell would like him. He is just Lady Russell's sort. Give him a book, and he will read all day long."

"Yes, that he will!" exclaimed Mary, tauntingly. "He will sit poring over his book, and not know when a person speaks to him, or when one drops one's scissors, or anything that happens. Do you think Lady Russell would like that?"

Lady Russell could not help laughing. "Upon my word," said she, "I should not have supposed that my opinion of any one could have admitted of such difference of conjecture, steady and matter of fact as I may call myself. I have really a curiosity to see the person who can give occasion to such directly opposite notions. I wish he may be induced to call here. And when he does, Mary, you may depend upon hearing my opinion; but I am determined not to judge him beforehand."

"You will not like him, I will answer for it."

Lady Russell began talking of something else. Mary spoke with animation of their meeting with, or rather missing, Mr Elliot so extraordinarily.

"He is a man," said Lady Russell, "whom I have no wish to see. His declining to be on cordial terms with the head of his family, has left a very strong impression in his disfavour with me."

This decision checked Mary's eagerness, and stopped her short in the midst of the Elliot countenance.

With regard to Captain Wentworth, though Anne hazarded no enquiries, there was voluntary communication sufficient. His spirits had been greatly recovering lately as might be expected. As Louisa improved, he had improved, and he was now quite a different creature from what he had been

the first week. He had not seen Louisa; and was so extremely fearful of any ill consequence to her from an interview, that he did not press for it at all; and, on the contrary, seemed to have a plan of going away for a week or ten days, till her head was stronger. He had talked of going down to Plymouth for a week, and wanted to persuade Captain Benwick to go with him; but, as Charles maintained to the last, Captain Benwick seemed much more disposed to ride over to Kellynch.

There can be no doubt that Lady Russell and Anne were both occasionally thinking of Captain Benwick, from this time. Lady Russell could not hear the door-bell without feeling that it might be his herald; nor could Anne return from any stroll of solitary indulgence in her father's grounds, or any visit of charity in the village, without wondering whether she might see him or hear of him. Captain Benwick came not, however. He was either less disposed for it than Charles had imagined, or he was too shy; and after giving him a week's indulgence, Lady Russell determined him to be unworthy of the interest which he had been beginning to excite.

The Musgroves came back to receive their happy boys and girls from school, bringing with them Mrs Harville's little children, to improve the noise of Uppercross, and lessen that of Lyme. Henrietta remained with Louisa; but all the rest of the family were again in their usual quarters.

Lady Russell and Anne paid their compliments to them once, when Anne could not but feel that Uppercross was already quite alive again. Though neither Henrietta, nor Louisa, nor Charles Hayter, nor Captain Wentworth were there, the room presented as strong a contrast as could be wished to the last state she had seen it in.

Immediately surrounding Mrs Musgrove were the little Harvilles, whom she was sedulously guarding from the tyranny of the two children from the Cottage, expressly arrived to amuse them. On one side was a table occupied by some chattering girls, cutting up silk and gold paper; and on the other were tressels and trays, bending under the weight of brawn and cold pies, where riotous boys were holding high revel; the whole completed by a roaring Christmas fire, which seemed determined to be heard, in spite of all the noise of the others. Charles and Mary also came in, of course, during their visit, and Mr Musgrove made a point of paying his respects to Lady

Russell, and sat down close to her for ten minutes, talking with a very raised voice, but from the clamour of the children on his knees, generally in vain. It was a fine family-piece.

Anne, judging from her own temperament, would have deemed such a domestic hurricane a bad restorative of the nerves, which Louisa's illness must have so greatly shaken. But Mrs Musgrove, who got Anne near her on purpose to thank her most cordially, again and again, for all her attentions to them, concluded a short recapitulation of what she had suffered herself by observing, with a happy glance round the room, that after all she had gone through, nothing was so likely to do her good as a little quiet cheerfulness at home.

Louisa was now recovering apace. Her mother could even think of her being able to join their party at home, before her brothers and sisters went to school again. The Harvilles had promised to come with her and stay at Uppercross, whenever she returned. Captain Wentworth was gone, for the present, to see his brother in Shropshire.

"I hope I shall remember, in future," said Lady Russell, as soon as they were reseated in the carriage, "not to call at Uppercross in the Christmas holidays."

Everybody has their taste in noises as well as in other matters; and sounds are quite innoxious, or most distressing, by their sort rather than their quantity. When Lady Russell not long afterwards, was entering Bath on a wet afternoon, and driving through the long course of streets from the Old Bridge to Camden Place, amidst the dash of other carriages, the heavy rumble of carts and drays, the bawling of newspapermen, muffin-men and milkmen, and the ceaseless clink of pattens, she made no complaint. No, these were noises which belonged to the winter pleasures; her spirits rose under their influence; and like Mrs Musgrove, she was feeling, though not saying, that after being long in the country, nothing could be so good for her as a little quiet cheerfulness.

Anne did not share these feelings. She persisted in a very determined, though very silent disinclination for Bath; caught the first dim view of the extensive buildings, smoking in rain, without any wish of seeing them



better; felt their progress through the streets to be, however disagreeable, yet too rapid; for who would be glad to see her when she arrived? And looked back, with fond regret, to the bustles of Uppercross and the seclusion of Kellynch.

Elizabeth's last letter had communicated a piece of news of some interest. Mr Elliot was in Bath. He had called in Camden Place; had called a second time, a third; had been pointedly attentive. If Elizabeth and her father did not deceive themselves, had been taking much pains to seek the acquaintance, and proclaim the value of the connection, as he had formerly taken pains to shew neglect. This was very wonderful if it were true; and Lady Russell was in a state of very agreeable curiosity and perplexity about Mr Elliot, already recanting the sentiment she had so lately expressed to Mary, of his being "a man whom she had no wish to see." She had a great wish to see him. If he really sought to reconcile himself like a dutiful branch, he must be forgiven for having dismembered himself from the paternal tree.

Anne was not animated to an equal pitch by the circumstance, but she felt that she would rather see Mr Elliot again than not, which was more than she could say for many other persons in Bath.

She was put down in Camden Place; and Lady Russell then drove to her own lodgings, in Rivers Street.

## Chapter 15

Sir Walter had taken a very good house in Camden Place, a lofty dignified situation, such as becomes a man of consequence; and both he and Elizabeth were settled there, much to their satisfaction.

Anne entered it with a sinking heart, anticipating an imprisonment of many months, and anxiously saying to herself, "Oh! when shall I leave you again?" A degree of unexpected cordiality, however, in the welcome she

received, did her good. Her father and sister were glad to see her, for the sake of shewing her the house and furniture, and met her with kindness. Her making a fourth, when they sat down to dinner, was noticed as an advantage.

Mrs Clay was very pleasant, and very smiling, but her courtesies and smiles were more a matter of course. Anne had always felt that she would pretend what was proper on her arrival, but the complaisance of the others was unlooked for. They were evidently in excellent spirits, and she was soon to listen to the causes. They had no inclination to listen to her. After laying out for some compliments of being deeply regretted in their old neighbourhood, which Anne could not pay, they had only a few faint enquiries to make, before the talk must be all their own. Uppercross excited no interest, Kellynch very little: it was all Bath.

They had the pleasure of assuring her that Bath more than answered their expectations in every respect. Their house was undoubtedly the best in Camden Place; their drawing-rooms had many decided advantages over all the others which they had either seen or heard of, and the superiority was not less in the style of the fitting-up, or the taste of the furniture. Their acquaintance was exceedingly sought after. Everybody was wanting to visit them. They had drawn back from many introductions, and still were perpetually having cards left by people of whom they knew nothing.

Here were funds of enjoyment. Could Anne wonder that her father and sister were happy? She might not wonder, but she must sigh that her father should feel no degradation in his change, should see nothing to regret in the duties and dignity of the resident landholder, should find so much to be vain of in the littlenesses of a town; and she must sigh, and smile, and wonder too, as Elizabeth threw open the folding-doors and walked with exultation from one drawing-room to the other, boasting of their space; at the possibility of that woman, who had been mistress of Kellynch Hall, finding extent to be proud of between two walls, perhaps thirty feet asunder.

But this was not all which they had to make them happy. They had Mr Elliot too. Anne had a great deal to hear of Mr Elliot. He was not only pardoned, they were delighted with him. He had been in Bath about a fortnight; (he had passed through Bath in November, in his way to London,

when the intelligence of Sir Walter's being settled there had of course reached him, though only twenty-four hours in the place, but he had not been able to avail himself of it;) but he had now been a fortnight in Bath, and his first object on arriving, had been to leave his card in Camden Place, following it up by such assiduous endeavours to meet, and when they did meet, by such great openness of conduct, such readiness to apologize for the past, such solicitude to be received as a relation again, that their former good understanding was completely re-established.

They had not a fault to find in him. He had explained away all the appearance of neglect on his own side. It had originated in misapprehension entirely. He had never had an idea of throwing himself off; he had feared that he was thrown off, but knew not why, and delicacy had kept him silent. Upon the hint of having spoken disrespectfully or carelessly of the family and the family honours, he was quite indignant. He, who had ever boasted of being an Elliot, and whose feelings, as to connection, were only too strict to suit the unfeudal tone of the present day. He was astonished, indeed, but his character and general conduct must refute it. He could refer Sir Walter to all who knew him; and certainly, the pains he had been taking on this, the first opportunity of reconciliation, to be restored to the footing of a relation and heir-presumptive, was a strong proof of his opinions on the subject.

The circumstances of his marriage, too, were found to admit of much extenuation. This was an article not to be entered on by himself; but a very intimate friend of his, a Colonel Wallis, a highly respectable man, perfectly the gentleman, (and not an ill-looking man, Sir Walter added), who was living in very good style in Marlborough Buildings, and had, at his own particular request, been admitted to their acquaintance through Mr Elliot, had mentioned one or two things relative to the marriage, which made a material difference in the discredit of it.

Colonel Wallis had known Mr Elliot long, had been well acquainted also with his wife, had perfectly understood the whole story. She was certainly not a woman of family, but well educated, accomplished, rich, and excessively in love with his friend. There had been the charm. She had sought him. Without that attraction, not all her money would have tempted Elliot, and Sir Walter was, moreover, assured of her having been a very fine

woman. Here was a great deal to soften the business. A very fine woman with a large fortune, in love with him! Sir Walter seemed to admit it as complete apology; and though Elizabeth could not see the circumstance in quite so favourable a light, she allowed it be a great extenuation.

Mr Elliot had called repeatedly, had dined with them once, evidently delighted by the distinction of being asked, for they gave no dinners in general; delighted, in short, by every proof of cousinly notice, and placing his whole happiness in being on intimate terms in Camden Place.

Anne listened, but without quite understanding it. Allowances, large allowances, she knew, must be made for the ideas of those who spoke. She heard it all under embellishment. All that sounded extravagant or irrational in the progress of the reconciliation might have no origin but in the language of the relators. Still, however, she had the sensation of there being something more than immediately appeared, in Mr Elliot's wishing, after an interval of so many years, to be well received by them. In a worldly view, he had nothing to gain by being on terms with Sir Walter; nothing to risk by a state of variance. In all probability he was already the richer of the two, and the Kellynch estate would as surely be his hereafter as the title. A sensible man, and he had looked like a very sensible man, why should it be an object to him? She could only offer one solution; it was, perhaps, for Elizabeth's sake. There might really have been a liking formerly, though convenience and accident had drawn him a different way; and now that he could afford to please himself, he might mean to pay his addresses to her. Elizabeth was certainly very handsome, with well-bred, elegant manners, and her character might never have been penetrated by Mr Elliot, knowing her but in public, and when very young himself. How her temper and understanding might bear the investigation of his present keener time of life was another concern and rather a fearful one. Most earnestly did she wish that he might not be too nice, or too observant if Elizabeth were his object; and that Elizabeth was disposed to believe herself so, and that her friend Mrs Clay was encouraging the idea, seemed apparent by a glance or two between them, while Mr Elliot's frequent visits were talked of.

Anne mentioned the glimpses she had had of him at Lyme, but without being much attended to. "Oh! yes, perhaps, it had been Mr Elliot. They did

not know. It might be him, perhaps." They could not listen to her description of him. They were describing him themselves; Sir Walter especially. He did justice to his very gentlemanlike appearance, his air of elegance and fashion, his good shaped face, his sensible eye; but, at the same time, "must lament his being very much under-hung, a defect which time seemed to have increased; nor could he pretend to say that ten years had not altered almost every feature for the worse. Mr Elliot appeared to think that he (Sir Walter) was looking exactly as he had done when they last parted;" but Sir Walter had "not been able to return the compliment entirely, which had embarrassed him. He did not mean to complain, however. Mr Elliot was better to look at than most men, and he had no objection to being seen with him anywhere."

Mr Elliot, and his friends in Marlborough Buildings, were talked of the whole evening. "Colonel Wallis had been so impatient to be introduced to them! and Mr Elliot so anxious that he should!" and there was a Mrs Wallis, at present known only to them by description, as she was in daily expectation of her confinement; but Mr Elliot spoke of her as "a most charming woman, quite worthy of being known in Camden Place," and as soon as she recovered they were to be acquainted. Sir Walter thought much of Mrs Wallis; she was said to be an excessively pretty woman, beautiful. "He longed to see her. He hoped she might make some amends for the many very plain faces he was continually passing in the streets. The worst of Bath was the number of its plain women. He did not mean to say that there were no pretty women, but the number of the plain was out of all proportion. He had frequently observed, as he walked, that one handsome face would be followed by thirty, or five-and-thirty frights; and once, as he had stood in a shop on Bond Street, he had counted eighty-seven women go by, one after another, without there being a tolerable face among them. It had been a frosty morning, to be sure, a sharp frost, which hardly one woman in a thousand could stand the test of. But still, there certainly were a dreadful multitude of ugly women in Bath; and as for the men! they were infinitely worse. Such scarecrows as the streets were full of! It was evident how little the women were used to the sight of anything tolerable, by the effect which a man of decent appearance produced. He had never walked anywhere arm-in-arm with Colonel Wallis (who was a fine military figure, though sandy-haired) without observing that every woman's eye was upon

him; every woman's eye was sure to be upon Colonel Wallis." Modest Sir Walter! He was not allowed to escape, however. His daughter and Mrs Clay united in hinting that Colonel Wallis's companion might have as good a figure as Colonel Wallis, and certainly was not sandy-haired.

"How is Mary looking?" said Sir Walter, in the height of his good humour. "The last time I saw her she had a red nose, but I hope that may not happen every day."

"Oh! no, that must have been quite accidental. In general she has been in very good health and very good looks since Michaelmas."

"If I thought it would not tempt her to go out in sharp winds, and grow coarse, I would send her a new hat and pelisse."

Anne was considering whether she should venture to suggest that a gown, or a cap, would not be liable to any such misuse, when a knock at the door suspended everything. "A knock at the door! and so late! It was ten o'clock. Could it be Mr Elliot? They knew he was to dine in Lansdown Crescent. It was possible that he might stop in his way home to ask them how they did. They could think of no one else. Mrs Clay decidedly thought it Mr Elliot's knock." Mrs Clay was right. With all the state which a butler and foot-boy could give, Mr Elliot was ushered into the room.

It was the same, the very same man, with no difference but of dress. Anne drew a little back, while the others received his compliments, and her sister his apologies for calling at so unusual an hour, but "he could not be so near without wishing to know that neither she nor her friend had taken cold the day before," &c. &c; which was all as politely done, and as politely taken, as possible, but her part must follow then. Sir Walter talked of his youngest daughter; "Mr Elliot must give him leave to present him to his youngest daughter" (there was no occasion for remembering Mary); and Anne, smiling and blushing, very becomingly shewed to Mr Elliot the pretty features which he had by no means forgotten, and instantly saw, with amusement at his little start of surprise, that he had not been at all aware of who she was. He looked completely astonished, but not more astonished than pleased; his eyes brightened! and with the most perfect alacrity he welcomed the relationship, alluded to the past, and entreated to be received

as an acquaintance already. He was quite as good-looking as he had appeared at Lyme, his countenance improved by speaking, and his manners were so exactly what they ought to be, so polished, so easy, so particularly agreeable, that she could compare them in excellence to only one person's manners. They were not the same, but they were, perhaps, equally good.

He sat down with them, and improved their conversation very much. There could be no doubt of his being a sensible man. Ten minutes were enough to certify that. His tone, his expressions, his choice of subject, his knowing where to stop; it was all the operation of a sensible, discerning mind. As soon as he could, he began to talk to her of Lyme, wanting to compare opinions respecting the place, but especially wanting to speak of the circumstance of their happening to be guests in the same inn at the same time; to give his own route, understand something of hers, and regret that he should have lost such an opportunity of paying his respects to her. She gave him a short account of her party and business at Lyme. His regret increased as he listened. He had spent his whole solitary evening in the room adjoining theirs; had heard voices, mirth continually; thought they must be a most delightful set of people, longed to be with them, but certainly without the smallest suspicion of his possessing the shadow of a right to introduce himself. If he had but asked who the party were! The name of Musgrove would have told him enough. "Well, it would serve to cure him of an absurd practice of never asking a question at an inn, which he had adopted, when quite a young man, on the principal of its being very ungentle to be curious.

"The notions of a young man of one or two and twenty," said he, "as to what is necessary in manners to make him quite the thing, are more absurd, I believe, than those of any other set of beings in the world. The folly of the means they often employ is only to be equalled by the folly of what they have in view."

But he must not be addressing his reflections to Anne alone: he knew it; he was soon diffused again among the others, and it was only at intervals that he could return to Lyme.

His enquiries, however, produced at length an account of the scene she had been engaged in there, soon after his leaving the place. Having alluded

to "an accident," he must hear the whole. When he questioned, Sir Walter and Elizabeth began to question also, but the difference in their manner of doing it could not be unfelt. She could only compare Mr Elliot to Lady Russell, in the wish of really comprehending what had passed, and in the degree of concern for what she must have suffered in witnessing it.

He staid an hour with them. The elegant little clock on the mantel-piece had struck "eleven with its silver sounds," and the watchman was beginning to be heard at a distance telling the same tale, before Mr Elliot or any of them seemed to feel that he had been there long.

Anne could not have supposed it possible that her first evening in Camden Place could have passed so well!

## Chapter 16

There was one point which Anne, on returning to her family, would have been more thankful to ascertain even than Mr Elliot's being in love with Elizabeth, which was, her father's not being in love with Mrs Clay; and she was very far from easy about it, when she had been at home a few hours. On going down to breakfast the next morning, she found there had just been a decent pretence on the lady's side of meaning to leave them. She could imagine Mrs Clay to have said, that "now Miss Anne was come, she could not suppose herself at all wanted;" for Elizabeth was replying in a sort of whisper, "That must not be any reason, indeed. I assure you I feel it none. She is nothing to me, compared with you;" and she was in full time to hear her father say, "My dear madam, this must not be. As yet, you have seen nothing of Bath. You have been here only to be useful. You must not run away from us now. You must stay to be acquainted with Mrs Wallis, the beautiful Mrs Wallis. To your fine mind, I well know the sight of beauty is a real gratification."



He spoke and looked so much in earnest, that Anne was not surprised to see Mrs Clay stealing a glance at Elizabeth and herself. Her countenance, perhaps, might express some watchfulness; but the praise of the fine mind did not appear to excite a thought in her sister. The lady could not but yield to such joint entreaties, and promise to stay.

In the course of the same morning, Anne and her father chancing to be alone together, he began to compliment her on her improved looks; he thought her "less thin in her person, in her cheeks; her skin, her complexion, greatly improved; clearer, fresher. Had she been using any thing in particular?" "No, nothing." "Merely Gowland," he supposed. "No, nothing at all." "Ha! he was surprised at that;" and added, "certainly you cannot do better than to continue as you are; you cannot be better than well; or I should recommend Gowland, the constant use of Gowland, during the spring months. Mrs Clay has been using it at my recommendation, and you see what it has done for her. You see how it has carried away her freckles."

If Elizabeth could but have heard this! Such personal praise might have struck her, especially as it did not appear to Anne that the freckles were at all lessened. But everything must take its chance. The evil of a marriage would be much diminished, if Elizabeth were also to marry. As for herself, she might always command a home with Lady Russell.

Lady Russell's composed mind and polite manners were put to some trial on this point, in her intercourse in Camden Place. The sight of Mrs Clay in such favour, and of Anne so overlooked, was a perpetual provocation to her there; and vexed her as much when she was away, as a person in Bath who drinks the water, gets all the new publications, and has a very large acquaintance, has time to be vexed.

As Mr Elliot became known to her, she grew more charitable, or more indifferent, towards the others. His manners were an immediate recommendation; and on conversing with him she found the solid so fully supporting the superficial, that she was at first, as she told Anne, almost ready to exclaim, "Can this be Mr Elliot?" and could not seriously picture to herself a more agreeable or estimable man. Everything united in him; good understanding, correct opinions, knowledge of the world, and a warm heart. He had strong feelings of family attachment and family honour, without

pride or weakness; he lived with the liberality of a man of fortune, without display; he judged for himself in everything essential, without defying public opinion in any point of worldly decorum. He was steady, observant, moderate, candid; never run away with by spirits or by selfishness, which fancied itself strong feeling; and yet, with a sensibility to what was amiable and lovely, and a value for all the felicities of domestic life, which characters of fancied enthusiasm and violent agitation seldom really possess. She was sure that he had not been happy in marriage. Colonel Wallis said it, and Lady Russell saw it; but it had been no unhappiness to sour his mind, nor (she began pretty soon to suspect) to prevent his thinking of a second choice. Her satisfaction in Mr Elliot outweighed all the plague of Mrs Clay.

It was now some years since Anne had begun to learn that she and her excellent friend could sometimes think differently; and it did not surprise her, therefore, that Lady Russell should see nothing suspicious or inconsistent, nothing to require more motives than appeared, in Mr Elliot's great desire of a reconciliation. In Lady Russell's view, it was perfectly natural that Mr Elliot, at a mature time of life, should feel it a most desirable object, and what would very generally recommend him among all sensible people, to be on good terms with the head of his family; the simplest process in the world of time upon a head naturally clear, and only erring in the heyday of youth. Anne presumed, however, still to smile about it, and at last to mention "Elizabeth." Lady Russell listened, and looked, and made only this cautious reply:--"Elizabeth! very well; time will explain."

It was a reference to the future, which Anne, after a little observation, felt she must submit to. She could determine nothing at present. In that house Elizabeth must be first; and she was in the habit of such general observance as "Miss Elliot," that any particularity of attention seemed almost impossible. Mr Elliot, too, it must be remembered, had not been a widower seven months. A little delay on his side might be very excusable. In fact, Anne could never see the crape round his hat, without fearing that she was the inexcusable one, in attributing to him such imaginations; for though his marriage had not been very happy, still it had existed so many years that she could not comprehend a very rapid recovery from the awful impression of its being dissolved.

However it might end, he was without any question their pleasantest acquaintance in Bath: she saw nobody equal to him; and it was a great indulgence now and then to talk to him about Lyme, which he seemed to have as lively a wish to see again, and to see more of, as herself. They went through the particulars of their first meeting a great many times. He gave her to understand that he had looked at her with some earnestness. She knew it well; and she remembered another person's look also.

They did not always think alike. His value for rank and connexion she perceived was greater than hers. It was not merely complaisance, it must be a liking to the cause, which made him enter warmly into her father and sister's solitudes on a subject which she thought unworthy to excite them. The Bath paper one morning announced the arrival of the Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple, and her daughter, the Honourable Miss Carteret; and all the comfort of No. --, Camden Place, was swept away for many days; for the Dalrymples (in Anne's opinion, most unfortunately) were cousins of the Elliots; and the agony was how to introduce themselves properly.

Anne had never seen her father and sister before in contact with nobility, and she must acknowledge herself disappointed. She had hoped better things from their high ideas of their own situation in life, and was reduced to form a wish which she had never foreseen; a wish that they had more pride; for "our cousins Lady Dalrymple and Miss Carteret;" "our cousins, the Dalrymples," sounded in her ears all day long.

Sir Walter had once been in company with the late viscount, but had never seen any of the rest of the family; and the difficulties of the case arose from there having been a suspension of all intercourse by letters of ceremony, ever since the death of that said late viscount, when, in consequence of a dangerous illness of Sir Walter's at the same time, there had been an unlucky omission at Kellynch. No letter of condolence had been sent to Ireland. The neglect had been visited on the head of the sinner; for when poor Lady Elliot died herself, no letter of condolence was received at Kellynch, and, consequently, there was but too much reason to apprehend that the Dalrymples considered the relationship as closed. How to have this anxious business set to rights, and be admitted as cousins again, was the

question: and it was a question which, in a more rational manner, neither Lady Russell nor Mr Elliot thought unimportant. "Family connexions were always worth preserving, good company always worth seeking; Lady Dalrymple had taken a house, for three months, in Laura Place, and would be living in style. She had been at Bath the year before, and Lady Russell had heard her spoken of as a charming woman. It was very desirable that the connexion should be renewed, if it could be done, without any compromise of propriety on the side of the Elliots."

Sir Walter, however, would choose his own means, and at last wrote a very fine letter of ample explanation, regret, and entreaty, to his right honourable cousin. Neither Lady Russell nor Mr Elliot could admire the letter; but it did all that was wanted, in bringing three lines of scrawl from the Dowager Viscountess. "She was very much honoured, and should be happy in their acquaintance." The toils of the business were over, the sweets began. They visited in Laura Place, they had the cards of Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple, and the Honourable Miss Carteret, to be arranged wherever they might be most visible: and "Our cousins in Laura Place,"--"Our cousin, Lady Dalrymple and Miss Carteret," were talked of to everybody.

Anne was ashamed. Had Lady Dalrymple and her daughter even been very agreeable, she would still have been ashamed of the agitation they created, but they were nothing. There was no superiority of manner, accomplishment, or understanding. Lady Dalrymple had acquired the name of "a charming woman," because she had a smile and a civil answer for everybody. Miss Carteret, with still less to say, was so plain and so awkward, that she would never have been tolerated in Camden Place but for her birth.

Lady Russell confessed she had expected something better; but yet "it was an acquaintance worth having;" and when Anne ventured to speak her opinion of them to Mr Elliot, he agreed to their being nothing in themselves, but still maintained that, as a family connexion, as good company, as those who would collect good company around them, they had their value. Anne smiled and said,

"My idea of good company, Mr Elliot, is the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation; that is what I call good company."

"You are mistaken," said he gently, "that is not good company; that is the best. Good company requires only birth, education, and manners, and with regard to education is not very nice. Birth and good manners are essential; but a little learning is by no means a dangerous thing in good company; on the contrary, it will do very well. My cousin Anne shakes her head. She is not satisfied. She is fastidious. My dear cousin" (sitting down by her), "you have a better right to be fastidious than almost any other woman I know; but will it answer? Will it make you happy? Will it not be wiser to accept the society of those good ladies in Laura Place, and enjoy all the advantages of the connexion as far as possible? You may depend upon it, that they will move in the first set in Bath this winter, and as rank is rank, your being known to be related to them will have its use in fixing your family (our family let me say) in that degree of consideration which we must all wish for."

"Yes," sighed Anne, "we shall, indeed, be known to be related to them!" then recollecting herself, and not wishing to be answered, she added, "I certainly do think there has been by far too much trouble taken to procure the acquaintance. I suppose" (smiling) "I have more pride than any of you; but I confess it does vex me, that we should be so solicitous to have the relationship acknowledged, which we may be very sure is a matter of perfect indifference to them."

"Pardon me, dear cousin, you are unjust in your own claims. In London, perhaps, in your present quiet style of living, it might be as you say: but in Bath; Sir Walter Elliot and his family will always be worth knowing: always acceptable as acquaintance."

"Well," said Anne, "I certainly am proud, too proud to enjoy a welcome which depends so entirely upon place."

"I love your indignation," said he; "it is very natural. But here you are in Bath, and the object is to be established here with all the credit and dignity which ought to belong to Sir Walter Elliot. You talk of being proud; I am

called proud, I know, and I shall not wish to believe myself otherwise; for our pride, if investigated, would have the same object, I have no doubt, though the kind may seem a little different. In one point, I am sure, my dear cousin," (he continued, speaking lower, though there was no one else in the room) "in one point, I am sure, we must feel alike. We must feel that every addition to your father's society, among his equals or superiors, may be of use in diverting his thoughts from those who are beneath him."

He looked, as he spoke, to the seat which Mrs Clay had been lately occupying: a sufficient explanation of what he particularly meant; and though Anne could not believe in their having the same sort of pride, she was pleased with him for not liking Mrs Clay; and her conscience admitted that his wishing to promote her father's getting great acquaintance was more than excusable in the view of defeating her.

## Chapter 17

While Sir Walter and Elizabeth were assiduously pushing their good fortune in Laura Place, Anne was renewing an acquaintance of a very different description.

She had called on her former governess, and had heard from her of there being an old school-fellow in Bath, who had the two strong claims on her attention of past kindness and present suffering. Miss Hamilton, now Mrs Smith, had shewn her kindness in one of those periods of her life when it had been most valuable. Anne had gone unhappy to school, grieving for the loss of a mother whom she had dearly loved, feeling her separation from home, and suffering as a girl of fourteen, of strong sensibility and not high spirits, must suffer at such a time; and Miss Hamilton, three years older than herself, but still from the want of near relations and a settled home, remaining another year at school, had been useful and good to her in a way which had considerably lessened her misery, and could never be remembered with indifference.

Miss Hamilton had left school, had married not long afterwards, was said to have married a man of fortune, and this was all that Anne had known of her, till now that their governess's account brought her situation forward in a more decided but very different form.

She was a widow and poor. Her husband had been extravagant; and at his death, about two years before, had left his affairs dreadfully involved. She had had difficulties of every sort to contend with, and in addition to these distresses had been afflicted with a severe rheumatic fever, which, finally settling in her legs, had made her for the present a cripple. She had come to Bath on that account, and was now in lodgings near the hot baths, living in a very humble way, unable even to afford herself the comfort of a servant, and of course almost excluded from society.

Their mutual friend answered for the satisfaction which a visit from Miss Elliot would give Mrs Smith, and Anne therefore lost no time in going. She mentioned nothing of what she had heard, or what she intended, at home. It would excite no proper interest there. She only consulted Lady Russell, who entered thoroughly into her sentiments, and was most happy to convey her as near to Mrs Smith's lodgings in Westgate Buildings, as Anne chose to be taken.

The visit was paid, their acquaintance re-established, their interest in each other more than re-kindled. The first ten minutes had its awkwardness and its emotion. Twelve years were gone since they had parted, and each presented a somewhat different person from what the other had imagined. Twelve years had changed Anne from the blooming, silent, unformed girl of fifteen, to the elegant little woman of seven-and-twenty, with every beauty except bloom, and with manners as consciously right as they were invariably gentle; and twelve years had transformed the fine-looking, well-grown Miss Hamilton, in all the glow of health and confidence of superiority, into a poor, infirm, helpless widow, receiving the visit of her former protegee as a favour; but all that was uncomfortable in the meeting had soon passed away, and left only the interesting charm of remembering former partialities and talking over old times.

Anne found in Mrs Smith the good sense and agreeable manners which she had almost ventured to depend on, and a disposition to converse and be

cheerful beyond her expectation. Neither the dissipations of the past--and she had lived very much in the world--nor the restrictions of the present, neither sickness nor sorrow seemed to have closed her heart or ruined her spirits.

In the course of a second visit she talked with great openness, and Anne's astonishment increased. She could scarcely imagine a more cheerless situation in itself than Mrs Smith's. She had been very fond of her husband: she had buried him. She had been used to affluence: it was gone. She had no child to connect her with life and happiness again, no relations to assist in the arrangement of perplexed affairs, no health to make all the rest supportable. Her accommodations were limited to a noisy parlour, and a dark bedroom behind, with no possibility of moving from one to the other without assistance, which there was only one servant in the house to afford, and she never quitted the house but to be conveyed into the warm bath. Yet, in spite of all this, Anne had reason to believe that she had moments only of languor and depression, to hours of occupation and enjoyment. How could it be? She watched, observed, reflected, and finally determined that this was not a case of fortitude or of resignation only. A submissive spirit might be patient, a strong understanding would supply resolution, but here was something more; here was that elasticity of mind, that disposition to be comforted, that power of turning readily from evil to good, and of finding employment which carried her out of herself, which was from nature alone. It was the choicest gift of Heaven; and Anne viewed her friend as one of those instances in which, by a merciful appointment, it seems designed to counterbalance almost every other want.

There had been a time, Mrs Smith told her, when her spirits had nearly failed. She could not call herself an invalid now, compared with her state on first reaching Bath. Then she had, indeed, been a pitiable object; for she had caught cold on the journey, and had hardly taken possession of her lodgings before she was again confined to her bed and suffering under severe and constant pain; and all this among strangers, with the absolute necessity of having a regular nurse, and finances at that moment particularly unfit to meet any extraordinary expense. She had weathered it, however, and could truly say that it had done her good. It had increased her comforts by making her feel herself to be in good hands. She had seen too much of the world, to



expect sudden or disinterested attachment anywhere, but her illness had proved to her that her landlady had a character to preserve, and would not use her ill; and she had been particularly fortunate in her nurse, as a sister of her landlady, a nurse by profession, and who had always a home in that house when unemployed, chanced to be at liberty just in time to attend her. "And she," said Mrs Smith, "besides nursing me most admirably, has really proved an invaluable acquaintance. As soon as I could use my hands she taught me to knit, which has been a great amusement; and she put me in the way of making these little thread-cases, pin-cushions and card-racks, which you always find me so busy about, and which supply me with the means of doing a little good to one or two very poor families in this neighbourhood. She had a large acquaintance, of course professionally, among those who can afford to buy, and she disposes of my merchandise. She always takes the right time for applying. Everybody's heart is open, you know, when they have recently escaped from severe pain, or are recovering the blessing of health, and Nurse Rooke thoroughly understands when to speak. She is a shrewd, intelligent, sensible woman. Hers is a line for seeing human nature; and she has a fund of good sense and observation, which, as a companion, make her infinitely superior to thousands of those who having only received 'the best education in the world,' know nothing worth attending to. Call it gossip, if you will, but when Nurse Rooke has half an hour's leisure to bestow on me, she is sure to have something to relate that is entertaining and profitable: something that makes one know one's species better. One likes to hear what is going on, to be au fait as to the newest modes of being trifling and silly. To me, who live so much alone, her conversation, I assure you, is a treat."

Anne, far from wishing to cavil at the pleasure, replied, "I can easily believe it. Women of that class have great opportunities, and if they are intelligent may be well worth listening to. Such varieties of human nature as they are in the habit of witnessing! And it is not merely in its follies, that they are well read; for they see it occasionally under every circumstance that can be most interesting or affecting. What instances must pass before them of ardent, disinterested, self-denying attachment, of heroism, fortitude, patience, resignation: of all the conflicts and all the sacrifices that ennoble us most. A sick chamber may often furnish the worth of volumes."

"Yes," said Mrs Smith more doubtingly, "sometimes it may, though I fear its lessons are not often in the elevated style you describe. Here and there, human nature may be great in times of trial; but generally speaking, it is its weakness and not its strength that appears in a sick chamber: it is selfishness and impatience rather than generosity and fortitude, that one hears of. There is so little real friendship in the world! and unfortunately" (speaking low and tremulously) "there are so many who forget to think seriously till it is almost too late."

Anne saw the misery of such feelings. The husband had not been what he ought, and the wife had been led among that part of mankind which made her think worse of the world than she hoped it deserved. It was but a passing emotion however with Mrs Smith; she shook it off, and soon added in a different tone--

"I do not suppose the situation my friend Mrs Rooke is in at present, will furnish much either to interest or edify me. She is only nursing Mrs Wallis of Marlborough Buildings; a mere pretty, silly, expensive, fashionable woman, I believe; and of course will have nothing to report but of lace and finery. I mean to make my profit of Mrs Wallis, however. She has plenty of money, and I intend she shall buy all the high-priced things I have in hand now."

Anne had called several times on her friend, before the existence of such a person was known in Camden Place. At last, it became necessary to speak of her. Sir Walter, Elizabeth and Mrs Clay, returned one morning from Laura Place, with a sudden invitation from Lady Dalrymple for the same evening, and Anne was already engaged, to spend that evening in Westgate Buildings. She was not sorry for the excuse. They were only asked, she was sure, because Lady Dalrymple being kept at home by a bad cold, was glad to make use of the relationship which had been so pressed on her; and she declined on her own account with great alacrity--"She was engaged to spend the evening with an old schoolfellow." They were not much interested in anything relative to Anne; but still there were questions enough asked, to make it understood what this old schoolfellow was; and Elizabeth was disdainful, and Sir Walter severe.

"Westgate Buildings!" said he, "and who is Miss Anne Elliot to be visiting in Westgate Buildings? A Mrs Smith. A widow Mrs Smith; and who was her husband? One of five thousand Mr Smiths whose names are to be met with everywhere. And what is her attraction? That she is old and sickly. Upon my word, Miss Anne Elliot, you have the most extraordinary taste! Everything that revolts other people, low company, paltry rooms, foul air, disgusting associations are inviting to you. But surely you may put off this old lady till to-morrow: she is not so near her end, I presume, but that she may hope to see another day. What is her age? Forty?"

"No, sir, she is not one-and-thirty; but I do not think I can put off my engagement, because it is the only evening for some time which will at once suit her and myself. She goes into the warm bath to-morrow, and for the rest of the week, you know, we are engaged."

"But what does Lady Russell think of this acquaintance?" asked Elizabeth.

"She sees nothing to blame in it," replied Anne; "on the contrary, she approves it, and has generally taken me when I have called on Mrs Smith."

"Westgate Buildings must have been rather surprised by the appearance of a carriage drawn up near its pavement," observed Sir Walter. "Sir Henry Russell's widow, indeed, has no honours to distinguish her arms, but still it is a handsome equipage, and no doubt is well known to convey a Miss Elliot. A widow Mrs Smith lodging in Westgate Buildings! A poor widow barely able to live, between thirty and forty; a mere Mrs Smith, an every-day Mrs Smith, of all people and all names in the world, to be the chosen friend of Miss Anne Elliot, and to be preferred by her to her own family connections among the nobility of England and Ireland! Mrs Smith! Such a name!"

Mrs Clay, who had been present while all this passed, now thought it advisable to leave the room, and Anne could have said much, and did long to say a little in defence of her friend's not very dissimilar claims to theirs, but her sense of personal respect to her father prevented her. She made no reply. She left it to himself to recollect, that Mrs Smith was not the only

widow in Bath between thirty and forty, with little to live on, and no surname of dignity.

Anne kept her appointment; the others kept theirs, and of course she heard the next morning that they had had a delightful evening. She had been the only one of the set absent, for Sir Walter and Elizabeth had not only been quite at her ladyship's service themselves, but had actually been happy to be employed by her in collecting others, and had been at the trouble of inviting both Lady Russell and Mr Elliot; and Mr Elliot had made a point of leaving Colonel Wallis early, and Lady Russell had fresh arranged all her evening engagements in order to wait on her. Anne had the whole history of all that such an evening could supply from Lady Russell. To her, its greatest interest must be, in having been very much talked of between her friend and Mr Elliot; in having been wished for, regretted, and at the same time honoured for staying away in such a cause. Her kind, compassionate visits to this old schoolfellow, sick and reduced, seemed to have quite delighted Mr Elliot. He thought her a most extraordinary young woman; in her temper, manners, mind, a model of female excellence. He could meet even Lady Russell in a discussion of her merits; and Anne could not be given to understand so much by her friend, could not know herself to be so highly rated by a sensible man, without many of those agreeable sensations which her friend meant to create.

Lady Russell was now perfectly decided in her opinion of Mr Elliot. She was as much convinced of his meaning to gain Anne in time as of his deserving her, and was beginning to calculate the number of weeks which would free him from all the remaining restraints of widowhood, and leave him at liberty to exert his most open powers of pleasing. She would not speak to Anne with half the certainty she felt on the subject, she would venture on little more than hints of what might be hereafter, of a possible attachment on his side, of the desirableness of the alliance, supposing such attachment to be real and returned. Anne heard her, and made no violent exclamations; she only smiled, blushed, and gently shook her head.

"I am no match-maker, as you well know," said Lady Russell, "being much too well aware of the uncertainty of all human events and calculations. I only mean that if Mr Elliot should some time hence pay his

addresses to you, and if you should be disposed to accept him, I think there would be every possibility of your being happy together. A most suitable connection everybody must consider it, but I think it might be a very happy one."

"Mr Elliot is an exceedingly agreeable man, and in many respects I think highly of him," said Anne; "but we should not suit."

Lady Russell let this pass, and only said in rejoinder, "I own that to be able to regard you as the future mistress of Kellynch, the future Lady Elliot, to look forward and see you occupying your dear mother's place, succeeding to all her rights, and all her popularity, as well as to all her virtues, would be the highest possible gratification to me. You are your mother's self in countenance and disposition; and if I might be allowed to fancy you such as she was, in situation and name, and home, presiding and blessing in the same spot, and only superior to her in being more highly valued! My dearest Anne, it would give me more delight than is often felt at my time of life!"

Anne was obliged to turn away, to rise, to walk to a distant table, and, leaning there in pretended employment, try to subdue the feelings this picture excited. For a few moments her imagination and her heart were bewitched. The idea of becoming what her mother had been; of having the precious name of "Lady Elliot" first revived in herself; of being restored to Kellynch, calling it her home again, her home for ever, was a charm which she could not immediately resist. Lady Russell said not another word, willing to leave the matter to its own operation; and believing that, could Mr Elliot at that moment with propriety have spoken for himself!--she believed, in short, what Anne did not believe. The same image of Mr Elliot speaking for himself brought Anne to composure again. The charm of Kellynch and of "Lady Elliot" all faded away. She never could accept him. And it was not only that her feelings were still adverse to any man save one; her judgement, on a serious consideration of the possibilities of such a case, was against Mr Elliot.

Though they had now been acquainted a month, she could not be satisfied that she really knew his character. That he was a sensible man, an agreeable man, that he talked well, professed good opinions, seemed to judge properly and as a man of principle, this was all clear enough. He certainly knew what was right, nor could she fix on any one article of moral duty evidently transgressed; but yet she would have been afraid to answer for his conduct. She distrusted the past, if not the present. The names which occasionally dropt of former associates, the allusions to former practices and pursuits, suggested suspicions not favourable of what he had been. She saw that there had been bad habits; that Sunday travelling had been a common thing; that there had been a period of his life (and probably not a short one) when he had been, at least, careless in all serious matters; and, though he might now think very differently, who could answer for the true sentiments of a clever, cautious man, grown old enough to appreciate a fair character? How could it ever be ascertained that his mind was truly cleansed?

Mr Elliot was rational, discreet, polished, but he was not open. There was never any burst of feeling, any warmth of indignation or delight, at the evil or good of others. This, to Anne, was a decided imperfection. Her early

impressions were incurable. She prized the frank, the open-hearted, the eager character beyond all others. Warmth and enthusiasm did captivate her still. She felt that she could so much more depend upon the sincerity of those who sometimes looked or said a careless or a hasty thing, than of those whose presence of mind never varied, whose tongue never slipped.

Mr Elliot was too generally agreeable. Various as were the tempers in her father's house, he pleased them all. He endured too well, stood too well with every body. He had spoken to her with some degree of openness of Mrs Clay; had appeared completely to see what Mrs Clay was about, and to hold her in contempt; and yet Mrs Clay found him as agreeable as any body.

Lady Russell saw either less or more than her young friend, for she saw nothing to excite distrust. She could not imagine a man more exactly what he ought to be than Mr Elliot; nor did she ever enjoy a sweeter feeling than the hope of seeing him receive the hand of her beloved Anne in Kellynch church, in the course of the following autumn.

## Chapter 18

It was the beginning of February; and Anne, having been a month in Bath, was growing very eager for news from Uppercross and Lyme. She wanted to hear much more than Mary had communicated. It was three weeks since she had heard at all. She only knew that Henrietta was at home again; and that Louisa, though considered to be recovering fast, was still in Lyme; and she was thinking of them all very intently one evening, when a thicker letter than usual from Mary was delivered to her; and, to quicken the pleasure and surprise, with Admiral and Mrs Croft's compliments.

The Crofts must be in Bath! A circumstance to interest her. They were people whom her heart turned to very naturally.

"What is this?" cried Sir Walter. "The Crofts have arrived in Bath? The Crofts who rent Kellynch? What have they brought you?"

"A letter from Uppercross Cottage, Sir."

"Oh! those letters are convenient passports. They secure an introduction. I should have visited Admiral Croft, however, at any rate. I know what is due to my tenant."

Anne could listen no longer; she could not even have told how the poor Admiral's complexion escaped; her letter engrossed her. It had been begun several days back.

"February 1st.

"My dear Anne,--I make no apology for my silence, because I know how little people think of letters in such a place as Bath. You must be a great deal too happy to care for Uppercross, which, as you well know, affords little to write about. We have had a very dull Christmas; Mr and Mrs Musgrove have not had one dinner party all the holidays. I do not reckon the Hayters as anybody. The holidays, however, are over at last: I believe no children ever had such long ones. I am sure I had not. The house was cleared yesterday, except of the little Harvilles; but you will be surprised to hear they have never gone home. Mrs Harville must be an odd mother to part with them so long. I do not understand it. They are not at all nice children, in my opinion; but Mrs Musgrove seems to like them quite as well, if not better, than her grandchildren. What dreadful weather we have had! It may not be felt in Bath, with your nice pavements; but in the country it is of some consequence. I have not had a creature call on me since the second week in January, except Charles Hayter, who had been calling much oftener than was welcome. Between ourselves, I think it a great pity Henrietta did not remain at Lyme as long as Louisa; it would have kept her a little out of his way. The carriage is gone to-day, to bring Louisa and the Harvilles to-morrow. We are not asked to dine with them, however, till the day after, Mrs Musgrove is so afraid of her being fatigued by the journey, which is not very likely, considering the care that will be taken of her; and it would be much more convenient to me to dine there to-morrow. I am glad you find Mr Elliot so agreeable, and wish I could be acquainted with him too; but I have my usual luck: I am always out of the way when any thing



desirable is going on; always the last of my family to be noticed. What an immense time Mrs Clay has been staying with Elizabeth! Does she never mean to go away? But perhaps if she were to leave the room vacant, we might not be invited. Let me know what you think of this. I do not expect my children to be asked, you know. I can leave them at the Great House very well, for a month or six weeks. I have this moment heard that the Crofts are going to Bath almost immediately; they think the Admiral gouty. Charles heard it quite by chance; they have not had the civility to give me any notice, or of offering to take anything. I do not think they improve at all as neighbours. We see nothing of them, and this is really an instance of gross inattention. Charles joins me in love, and everything proper. Yours affectionately,

"Mary M---.

"I am sorry to say that I am very far from well; and Jemima has just told me that the butcher says there is a bad sore-throat very much about. I dare say I shall catch it; and my sore-throats, you know, are always worse than anybody's."

So ended the first part, which had been afterwards put into an envelope, containing nearly as much more.

"I kept my letter open, that I might send you word how Louisa bore her journey, and now I am extremely glad I did, having a great deal to add. In the first place, I had a note from Mrs Croft yesterday, offering to convey anything to you; a very kind, friendly note indeed, addressed to me, just as it ought; I shall therefore be able to make my letter as long as I like. The Admiral does not seem very ill, and I sincerely hope Bath will do him all the good he wants. I shall be truly glad to have them back again. Our neighbourhood cannot spare such a pleasant family. But now for Louisa. I have something to communicate that will astonish you not a little. She and the Harvilles came on Tuesday very safely, and in the evening we went to ask her how she did, when we were rather surprised not to find Captain

Benwick of the party, for he had been invited as well as the Harvilles; and what do you think was the reason? Neither more nor less than his being in love with Louisa, and not choosing to venture to Uppercross till he had had an answer from Mr Musgrove; for it was all settled between him and her before she came away, and he had written to her father by Captain Harville. True, upon my honour! Are not you astonished? I shall be surprised at least if you ever received a hint of it, for I never did. Mrs Musgrove protests solemnly that she knew nothing of the matter. We are all very well pleased, however, for though it is not equal to her marrying Captain Wentworth, it is infinitely better than Charles Hayter; and Mr Musgrove has written his consent, and Captain Benwick is expected to-day. Mrs Harville says her husband feels a good deal on his poor sister's account; but, however, Louisa is a great favourite with both. Indeed, Mrs Harville and I quite agree that we love her the better for having nursed her. Charles wonders what Captain Wentworth will say; but if you remember, I never thought him attached to Louisa; I never could see anything of it. And this is the end, you see, of Captain Benwick's being supposed to be an admirer of yours. How Charles could take such a thing into his head was always incomprehensible to me. I hope he will be more agreeable now. Certainly not a great match for Louisa Musgrove, but a million times better than marrying among the Hayters."

Mary need not have feared her sister's being in any degree prepared for the news. She had never in her life been more astonished. Captain Benwick and Louisa Musgrove! It was almost too wonderful for belief, and it was with the greatest effort that she could remain in the room, preserve an air of calmness, and answer the common questions of the moment. Happily for her, they were not many. Sir Walter wanted to know whether the Crofts travelled with four horses, and whether they were likely to be situated in such a part of Bath as it might suit Miss Elliot and himself to visit in; but had little curiosity beyond.

"How is Mary?" said Elizabeth; and without waiting for an answer, "And pray what brings the Crofts to Bath?"

"They come on the Admiral's account. He is thought to be gouty."

"Gout and decrepitude!" said Sir Walter. "Poor old gentleman."

"Have they any acquaintance here?" asked Elizabeth.

"I do not know; but I can hardly suppose that, at Admiral Croft's time of life, and in his profession, he should not have many acquaintance in such a place as this."

"I suspect," said Sir Walter coolly, "that Admiral Croft will be best known in Bath as the renter of Kellynch Hall. Elizabeth, may we venture to present him and his wife in Laura Place?"

"Oh, no! I think not. Situated as we are with Lady Dalrymple, cousins, we ought to be very careful not to embarrass her with acquaintance she might not approve. If we were not related, it would not signify; but as cousins, she would feel scrupulous as to any proposal of ours. We had better leave the Crofts to find their own level. There are several odd-looking men walking about here, who, I am told, are sailors. The Crofts will associate with them."

This was Sir Walter and Elizabeth's share of interest in the letter; when Mrs Clay had paid her tribute of more decent attention, in an enquiry after Mrs Charles Musgrove, and her fine little boys, Anne was at liberty.

In her own room, she tried to comprehend it. Well might Charles wonder how Captain Wentworth would feel! Perhaps he had quitted the field, had given Louisa up, had ceased to love, had found he did not love her. She could not endure the idea of treachery or levity, or anything akin to ill usage between him and his friend. She could not endure that such a friendship as theirs should be severed unfairly.

Captain Benwick and Louisa Musgrove! The high-spirited, joyous-talking Louisa Musgrove, and the dejected, thinking, feeling, reading, Captain Benwick, seemed each of them everything that would not suit the other. Their minds most dissimilar! Where could have been the attraction? The answer soon presented itself. It had been in situation. They had been thrown together several weeks; they had been living in the same small family party: since Henrietta's coming away, they must have been

depending almost entirely on each other, and Louisa, just recovering from illness, had been in an interesting state, and Captain Benwick was not inconsolable. That was a point which Anne had not been able to avoid suspecting before; and instead of drawing the same conclusion as Mary, from the present course of events, they served only to confirm the idea of his having felt some dawning of tenderness toward herself. She did not mean, however, to derive much more from it to gratify her vanity, than Mary might have allowed. She was persuaded that any tolerably pleasing young woman who had listened and seemed to feel for him would have received the same compliment. He had an affectionate heart. He must love somebody.

She saw no reason against their being happy. Louisa had fine naval fervour to begin with, and they would soon grow more alike. He would gain cheerfulness, and she would learn to be an enthusiast for Scott and Lord Byron; nay, that was probably learnt already; of course they had fallen in love over poetry. The idea of Louisa Musgrove turned into a person of literary taste, and sentimental reflection was amusing, but she had no doubt of its being so. The day at Lyme, the fall from the Cobb, might influence her health, her nerves, her courage, her character to the end of her life, as thoroughly as it appeared to have influenced her fate.

The conclusion of the whole was, that if the woman who had been sensible of Captain Wentworth's merits could be allowed to prefer another man, there was nothing in the engagement to excite lasting wonder; and if Captain Wentworth lost no friend by it, certainly nothing to be regretted. No, it was not regret which made Anne's heart beat in spite of herself, and brought the colour into her cheeks when she thought of Captain Wentworth unshackled and free. She had some feelings which she was ashamed to investigate. They were too much like joy, senseless joy!

She longed to see the Crofts; but when the meeting took place, it was evident that no rumour of the news had yet reached them. The visit of ceremony was paid and returned; and Louisa Musgrove was mentioned, and Captain Benwick, too, without even half a smile.

The Crofts had placed themselves in lodgings in Gay Street, perfectly to Sir Walter's satisfaction. He was not at all ashamed of the acquaintance, and

did, in fact, think and talk a great deal more about the Admiral, than the Admiral ever thought or talked about him.

The Crofts knew quite as many people in Bath as they wished for, and considered their intercourse with the Elliots as a mere matter of form, and not in the least likely to afford them any pleasure. They brought with them their country habit of being almost always together. He was ordered to walk to keep off the gout, and Mrs Croft seemed to go shares with him in everything, and to walk for her life to do him good. Anne saw them wherever she went. Lady Russell took her out in her carriage almost every morning, and she never failed to think of them, and never failed to see them. Knowing their feelings as she did, it was a most attractive picture of happiness to her. She always watched them as long as she could, delighted to fancy she understood what they might be talking of, as they walked along in happy independence, or equally delighted to see the Admiral's hearty shake of the hand when he encountered an old friend, and observe their eagerness of conversation when occasionally forming into a little knot of the navy, Mrs Croft looking as intelligent and keen as any of the officers around her.

Anne was too much engaged with Lady Russell to be often walking herself; but it so happened that one morning, about a week or ten days after the Croft's arrival, it suited her best to leave her friend, or her friend's carriage, in the lower part of the town, and return alone to Camden Place, and in walking up Milsom Street she had the good fortune to meet with the Admiral. He was standing by himself at a printshop window, with his hands behind him, in earnest contemplation of some print, and she not only might have passed him unseen, but was obliged to touch as well as address him before she could catch his notice. When he did perceive and acknowledge her, however, it was done with all his usual frankness and good humour. "Ha! is it you? Thank you, thank you. This is treating me like a friend. Here I am, you see, staring at a picture. I can never get by this shop without stopping. But what a thing here is, by way of a boat! Do look at it. Did you ever see the like? What queer fellows your fine painters must be, to think that anybody would venture their lives in such a shapeless old cockleshell as that? And yet here are two gentlemen stuck up in it mightily at their ease, and looking about them at the rocks and mountains, as if they were not to

be upset the next moment, which they certainly must be. I wonder where that boat was built!" (laughing heartily); "I would not venture over a horsepond in it. Well," (turning away), "now, where are you bound? Can I go anywhere for you, or with you? Can I be of any use?"

"None, I thank you, unless you will give me the pleasure of your company the little way our road lies together. I am going home."

"That I will, with all my heart, and farther, too. Yes, yes we will have a snug walk together, and I have something to tell you as we go along. There, take my arm; that's right; I do not feel comfortable if I have not a woman there. Lord! what a boat it is!" taking a last look at the picture, as they began to be in motion.

"Did you say that you had something to tell me, sir?"

"Yes, I have, presently. But here comes a friend, Captain Brigden; I shall only say, 'How d'ye do?' as we pass, however. I shall not stop. 'How d'ye do?' Brigden stares to see anybody with me but my wife. She, poor soul, is tied by the leg. She has a blister on one of her heels, as large as a three-shilling piece. If you look across the street, you will see Admiral Brand coming down and his brother. Shabby fellows, both of them! I am glad they are not on this side of the way. Sophy cannot bear them. They played me a pitiful trick once: got away with some of my best men. I will tell you the whole story another time. There comes old Sir Archibald Drew and his grandson. Look, he sees us; he kisses his hand to you; he takes you for my wife. Ah! the peace has come too soon for that youngster. Poor old Sir Archibald! How do you like Bath, Miss Elliot? It suits us very well. We are always meeting with some old friend or other; the streets full of them every morning; sure to have plenty of chat; and then we get away from them all, and shut ourselves in our lodgings, and draw in our chairs, and are as snug as if we were at Kellynch, ay, or as we used to be even at North Yarmouth and Deal. We do not like our lodgings here the worse, I can tell you, for putting us in mind of those we first had at North Yarmouth. The wind blows through one of the cupboards just in the same way."

When they were got a little farther, Anne ventured to press again for what he had to communicate. She hoped when clear of Milsom Street to have her curiosity gratified; but she was still obliged to wait, for the Admiral had made up his mind not to begin till they had gained the greater space and quiet of Belmont; and as she was not really Mrs Croft, she must let him have his own way. As soon as they were fairly ascending Belmont, he began--

"Well, now you shall hear something that will surprise you. But first of all, you must tell me the name of the young lady I am going to talk about. That young lady, you know, that we have all been so concerned for. The Miss Musgrove, that all this has been happening to. Her Christian name: I always forget her Christian name."

Anne had been ashamed to appear to comprehend so soon as she really did; but now she could safely suggest the name of "Louisa."

"Ay, ay, Miss Louisa Musgrove, that is the name. I wish young ladies had not such a number of fine Christian names. I should never be out if they were all Sophys, or something of that sort. Well, this Miss Louisa, we all thought, you know, was to marry Frederick. He was courting her week after week. The only wonder was, what they could be waiting for, till the business at Lyme came; then, indeed, it was clear enough that they must wait till her brain was set to right. But even then there was something odd in their way of going on. Instead of staying at Lyme, he went off to Plymouth, and then he went off to see Edward. When we came back from Minehead he was gone down to Edward's, and there he has been ever since. We have seen nothing of him since November. Even Sophy could not understand it. But now, the matter has taken the strangest turn of all; for this young lady, the same Miss Musgrove, instead of being to marry Frederick, is to marry James Benwick. You know James Benwick."

"A little. I am a little acquainted with Captain Benwick."

"Well, she is to marry him. Nay, most likely they are married already, for I do not know what they should wait for."

"I thought Captain Benwick a very pleasing young man," said Anne, "and I understand that he bears an excellent character."

"Oh! yes, yes, there is not a word to be said against James Benwick. He is only a commander, it is true, made last summer, and these are bad times for getting on, but he has not another fault that I know of. An excellent, good-hearted fellow, I assure you; a very active, zealous officer too, which is more than you would think for, perhaps, for that soft sort of manner does not do him justice."

"Indeed you are mistaken there, sir; I should never augur want of spirit from Captain Benwick's manners. I thought them particularly pleasing, and I will answer for it, they would generally please."

"Well, well, ladies are the best judges; but James Benwick is rather too piano for me; and though very likely it is all our partiality, Sophy and I cannot help thinking Frederick's manners better than his. There is something about Frederick more to our taste."

Anne was caught. She had only meant to oppose the too common idea of spirit and gentleness being incompatible with each other, not at all to represent Captain Benwick's manners as the very best that could possibly be; and, after a little hesitation, she was beginning to say, "I was not entering into any comparison of the two friends," but the Admiral interrupted her with--

"And the thing is certainly true. It is not a mere bit of gossip. We have it from Frederick himself. His sister had a letter from him yesterday, in which he tells us of it, and he had just had it in a letter from Harville, written upon the spot, from Uppercross. I fancy they are all at Uppercross."

This was an opportunity which Anne could not resist; she said, therefore, "I hope, Admiral, I hope there is nothing in the style of Captain Wentworth's letter to make you and Mrs Croft particularly uneasy. It did seem, last autumn, as if there were an attachment between him and Louisa Musgrove; but I hope it may be understood to have worn out on each side equally, and without violence. I hope his letter does not breathe the spirit of an ill-used man."



"Not at all, not at all; there is not an oath or a murmur from beginning to end."

Anne looked down to hide her smile.

"No, no; Frederick is not a man to whine and complain; he has too much spirit for that. If the girl likes another man better, it is very fit she should have him."

"Certainly. But what I mean is, that I hope there is nothing in Captain Wentworth's manner of writing to make you suppose he thinks himself ill-used by his friend, which might appear, you know, without its being absolutely said. I should be very sorry that such a friendship as has subsisted between him and Captain Benwick should be destroyed, or even wounded, by a circumstance of this sort."

"Yes, yes, I understand you. But there is nothing at all of that nature in the letter. He does not give the least fling at Benwick; does not so much as say, 'I wonder at it, I have a reason of my own for wondering at it.' No, you would not guess, from his way of writing, that he had ever thought of this Miss (what's her name?) for himself. He very handsomely hopes they will be happy together; and there is nothing very unforgiving in that, I think."

Anne did not receive the perfect conviction which the Admiral meant to convey, but it would have been useless to press the enquiry farther. She therefore satisfied herself with common-place remarks or quiet attention, and the Admiral had it all his own way.

"Poor Frederick!" said he at last. "Now he must begin all over again with somebody else. I think we must get him to Bath. Sophy must write, and beg him to come to Bath. Here are pretty girls enough, I am sure. It would be of no use to go to Uppercross again, for that other Miss Musgrove, I find, is bespoke by her cousin, the young parson. Do not you think, Miss Elliot, we had better try to get him to Bath?"

## Chapter 19

While Admiral Croft was taking this walk with Anne, and expressing his wish of getting Captain Wentworth to Bath, Captain Wentworth was already on his way thither. Before Mrs Croft had written, he was arrived, and the very next time Anne walked out, she saw him.

Mr Elliot was attending his two cousins and Mrs Clay. They were in Milsom Street. It began to rain, not much, but enough to make shelter desirable for women, and quite enough to make it very desirable for Miss Elliot to have the advantage of being conveyed home in Lady Dalrymple's carriage, which was seen waiting at a little distance; she, Anne, and Mrs Clay, therefore, turned into Molland's, while Mr Elliot stepped to Lady Dalrymple, to request her assistance. He soon joined them again, successful, of course; Lady Dalrymple would be most happy to take them home, and would call for them in a few minutes.

Her ladyship's carriage was a barouche, and did not hold more than four with any comfort. Miss Carteret was with her mother; consequently it was not reasonable to expect accommodation for all the three Camden Place ladies. There could be no doubt as to Miss Elliot. Whoever suffered inconvenience, she must suffer none, but it occupied a little time to settle the point of civility between the other two. The rain was a mere trifle, and Anne was most sincere in preferring a walk with Mr Elliot. But the rain was also a mere trifle to Mrs Clay; she would hardly allow it even to drop at all, and her boots were so thick! much thicker than Miss Anne's; and, in short, her civility rendered her quite as anxious to be left to walk with Mr Elliot as Anne could be, and it was discussed between them with a generosity so polite and so determined, that the others were obliged to settle it for them; Miss Elliot maintaining that Mrs Clay had a little cold already, and Mr Elliot deciding on appeal, that his cousin Anne's boots were rather the thickest.

It was fixed accordingly, that Mrs Clay should be of the party in the carriage; and they had just reached this point, when Anne, as she sat near the window, descried, most decidedly and distinctly, Captain Wentworth walking down the street.

Her start was perceptible only to herself; but she instantly felt that she was the greatest simpleton in the world, the most unaccountable and absurd! For a few minutes she saw nothing before her; it was all confusion. She was lost, and when she had scolded back her senses, she found the others still waiting for the carriage, and Mr Elliot (always obliging) just setting off for Union Street on a commission of Mrs Clay's.

She now felt a great inclination to go to the outer door; she wanted to see if it rained. Why was she to suspect herself of another motive? Captain Wentworth must be out of sight. She left her seat, she would go; one half of her should not be always so much wiser than the other half, or always suspecting the other of being worse than it was. She would see if it rained. She was sent back, however, in a moment by the entrance of Captain Wentworth himself, among a party of gentlemen and ladies, evidently his acquaintance, and whom he must have joined a little below Milsom Street. He was more obviously struck and confused by the sight of her than she had ever observed before; he looked quite red. For the first time, since their renewed acquaintance, she felt that she was betraying the least sensibility of the two. She had the advantage of him in the preparation of the last few moments. All the overpowering, blinding, bewildering, first effects of strong surprise were over with her. Still, however, she had enough to feel! It was agitation, pain, pleasure, a something between delight and misery.

He spoke to her, and then turned away. The character of his manner was embarrassment. She could not have called it either cold or friendly, or anything so certainly as embarrassed.

After a short interval, however, he came towards her, and spoke again. Mutual enquiries on common subjects passed: neither of them, probably, much the wiser for what they heard, and Anne continuing fully sensible of his being less at ease than formerly. They had by dint of being so very much together, got to speak to each other with a considerable portion of apparent indifference and calmness; but he could not do it now. Time had changed him, or Louisa had changed him. There was consciousness of some sort or other. He looked very well, not as if he had been suffering in health or spirits, and he talked of Uppercross, of the Musgroves, nay, even of Louisa, and had even a momentary look of his own arch significance as he named

her; but yet it was Captain Wentworth not comfortable, not easy, not able to feign that he was.

It did not surprise, but it grieved Anne to observe that Elizabeth would not know him. She saw that he saw Elizabeth, that Elizabeth saw him, that there was complete internal recognition on each side; she was convinced that he was ready to be acknowledged as an acquaintance, expecting it, and she had the pain of seeing her sister turn away with unalterable coldness.

Lady Dalrymple's carriage, for which Miss Elliot was growing very impatient, now drew up; the servant came in to announce it. It was beginning to rain again, and altogether there was a delay, and a bustle, and a talking, which must make all the little crowd in the shop understand that Lady Dalrymple was calling to convey Miss Elliot. At last Miss Elliot and her friend, unattended but by the servant, (for there was no cousin returned), were walking off; and Captain Wentworth, watching them, turned again to Anne, and by manner, rather than words, was offering his services to her.

"I am much obliged to you," was her answer, "but I am not going with them. The carriage would not accommodate so many. I walk: I prefer walking."

"But it rains."

"Oh! very little, Nothing that I regard."

After a moment's pause he said: "Though I came only yesterday, I have equipped myself properly for Bath already, you see," (pointing to a new umbrella); "I wish you would make use of it, if you are determined to walk; though I think it would be more prudent to let me get you a chair."

She was very much obliged to him, but declined it all, repeating her conviction, that the rain would come to nothing at present, and adding, "I am only waiting for Mr Elliot. He will be here in a moment, I am sure."

She had hardly spoken the words when Mr Elliot walked in. Captain Wentworth recollected him perfectly. There was no difference between him and the man who had stood on the steps at Lyme, admiring Anne as she

passed, except in the air and look and manner of the privileged relation and friend. He came in with eagerness, appeared to see and think only of her, apologised for his stay, was grieved to have kept her waiting, and anxious to get her away without further loss of time and before the rain increased; and in another moment they walked off together, her arm under his, a gentle and embarrassed glance, and a "Good morning to you!" being all that she had time for, as she passed away.

As soon as they were out of sight, the ladies of Captain Wentworth's party began talking of them.

"Mr Elliot does not dislike his cousin, I fancy?"

"Oh! no, that is clear enough. One can guess what will happen there. He is always with them; half lives in the family, I believe. What a very good-looking man!"

"Yes, and Miss Atkinson, who dined with him once at the Wallises, says he is the most agreeable man she ever was in company with."

"She is pretty, I think; Anne Elliot; very pretty, when one comes to look at her. It is not the fashion to say so, but I confess I admire her more than her sister."

"Oh! so do I."

"And so do I. No comparison. But the men are all wild after Miss Elliot. Anne is too delicate for them."

Anne would have been particularly obliged to her cousin, if he would have walked by her side all the way to Camden Place, without saying a word. She had never found it so difficult to listen to him, though nothing could exceed his solicitude and care, and though his subjects were principally such as were wont to be always interesting: praise, warm, just, and discriminating, of Lady Russell, and insinuations highly rational against Mrs Clay. But just now she could think only of Captain Wentworth. She could not understand his present feelings, whether he were really suffering

much from disappointment or not; and till that point were settled, she could not be quite herself.

She hoped to be wise and reasonable in time; but alas! alas! she must confess to herself that she was not wise yet.

Another circumstance very essential for her to know, was how long he meant to be in Bath; he had not mentioned it, or she could not recollect it. He might be only passing through. But it was more probable that he should be come to stay. In that case, so liable as every body was to meet every body in Bath, Lady Russell would in all likelihood see him somewhere. Would she recollect him? How would it all be?

She had already been obliged to tell Lady Russell that Louisa Musgrove was to marry Captain Benwick. It had cost her something to encounter Lady Russell's surprise; and now, if she were by any chance to be thrown into company with Captain Wentworth, her imperfect knowledge of the matter might add another shade of prejudice against him.

The following morning Anne was out with her friend, and for the first hour, in an incessant and fearful sort of watch for him in vain; but at last, in returning down Pulteney Street, she distinguished him on the right hand pavement at such a distance as to have him in view the greater part of the street. There were many other men about him, many groups walking the same way, but there was no mistaking him. She looked instinctively at Lady Russell; but not from any mad idea of her recognising him so soon as she did herself. No, it was not to be supposed that Lady Russell would perceive him till they were nearly opposite. She looked at her however, from time to time, anxiously; and when the moment approached which must point him out, though not daring to look again (for her own countenance she knew was unfit to be seen), she was yet perfectly conscious of Lady Russell's eyes being turned exactly in the direction for him--of her being, in short, intently observing him. She could thoroughly comprehend the sort of fascination he must possess over Lady Russell's mind, the difficulty it must be for her to withdraw her eyes, the astonishment she must be feeling that eight or nine years should have passed over him, and in foreign climes and in active service too, without robbing him of one personal grace!

At last, Lady Russell drew back her head. "Now, how would she speak of him?"

"You will wonder," said she, "what has been fixing my eye so long; but I was looking after some window-curtains, which Lady Alicia and Mrs Frankland were telling me of last night. They described the drawing-room window-curtains of one of the houses on this side of the way, and this part of the street, as being the handsomest and best hung of any in Bath, but could not recollect the exact number, and I have been trying to find out which it could be; but I confess I can see no curtains hereabouts that answer their description."

Anne sighed and blushed and smiled, in pity and disdain, either at her friend or herself. The part which provoked her most, was that in all this waste of foresight and caution, she should have lost the right moment for seeing whether he saw them.

A day or two passed without producing anything. The theatre or the rooms, where he was most likely to be, were not fashionable enough for the Elliots, whose evening amusements were solely in the elegant stupidity of private parties, in which they were getting more and more engaged; and Anne, wearied of such a state of stagnation, sick of knowing nothing, and fancying herself stronger because her strength was not tried, was quite impatient for the concert evening. It was a concert for the benefit of a person patronised by Lady Dalrymple. Of course they must attend. It was really expected to be a good one, and Captain Wentworth was very fond of music. If she could only have a few minutes conversation with him again, she fancied she should be satisfied; and as to the power of addressing him, she felt all over courage if the opportunity occurred. Elizabeth had turned from him, Lady Russell overlooked him; her nerves were strengthened by these circumstances; she felt that she owed him attention.

She had once partly promised Mrs Smith to spend the evening with her; but in a short hurried call she excused herself and put it off, with the more decided promise of a longer visit on the morrow. Mrs Smith gave a most good-humoured acquiescence.

"By all means," said she; "only tell me all about it, when you do come. Who is your party?"

Anne named them all. Mrs Smith made no reply; but when she was leaving her said, and with an expression half serious, half arch, "Well, I heartily wish your concert may answer; and do not fail me to-morrow if you can come; for I begin to have a foreboding that I may not have many more visits from you."

Anne was startled and confused; but after standing in a moment's suspense, was obliged, and not sorry to be obliged, to hurry away.

## Chapter 20

Sir Walter, his two daughters, and Mrs Clay, were the earliest of all their party at the rooms in the evening; and as Lady Dalrymple must be waited for, they took their station by one of the fires in the Octagon Room. But hardly were they so settled, when the door opened again, and Captain Wentworth walked in alone. Anne was the nearest to him, and making yet a little advance, she instantly spoke. He was preparing only to bow and pass on, but her gentle "How do you do?" brought him out of the straight line to stand near her, and make enquiries in return, in spite of the formidable father and sister in the back ground. Their being in the back ground was a support to Anne; she knew nothing of their looks, and felt equal to everything which she believed right to be done.

While they were speaking, a whispering between her father and Elizabeth caught her ear. She could not distinguish, but she must guess the subject; and on Captain Wentworth's making a distant bow, she comprehended that her father had judged so well as to give him that simple acknowledgement of acquaintance, and she was just in time by a side glance to see a slight curtsey from Elizabeth herself. This, though late, and



reluctant, and ungracious, was yet better than nothing, and her spirits improved.

After talking, however, of the weather, and Bath, and the concert, their conversation began to flag, and so little was said at last, that she was expecting him to go every moment, but he did not; he seemed in no hurry to leave her; and presently with renewed spirit, with a little smile, a little glow, he said--

"I have hardly seen you since our day at Lyme. I am afraid you must have suffered from the shock, and the more from its not overpowering you at the time."

She assured him that she had not.

"It was a frightful hour," said he, "a frightful day!" and he passed his hand across his eyes, as if the remembrance were still too painful, but in a moment, half smiling again, added, "The day has produced some effects however; has had some consequences which must be considered as the very reverse of frightful. When you had the presence of mind to suggest that Benwick would be the properest person to fetch a surgeon, you could have little idea of his being eventually one of those most concerned in her recovery."

"Certainly I could have none. But it appears--I should hope it would be a very happy match. There are on both sides good principles and good temper."

"Yes," said he, looking not exactly forward; "but there, I think, ends the resemblance. With all my soul I wish them happy, and rejoice over every circumstance in favour of it. They have no difficulties to contend with at home, no opposition, no caprice, no delays. The Musgroves are behaving like themselves, most honourably and kindly, only anxious with true parental hearts to promote their daughter's comfort. All this is much, very much in favour of their happiness; more than perhaps--"

He stopped. A sudden recollection seemed to occur, and to give him some taste of that emotion which was reddening Anne's cheeks and fixing

her eyes on the ground. After clearing his throat, however, he proceeded thus--

"I confess that I do think there is a disparity, too great a disparity, and in a point no less essential than mind. I regard Louisa Musgrove as a very amiable, sweet-tempered girl, and not deficient in understanding, but Benwick is something more. He is a clever man, a reading man; and I confess, that I do consider his attaching himself to her with some surprise. Had it been the effect of gratitude, had he learnt to love her, because he believed her to be preferring him, it would have been another thing. But I have no reason to suppose it so. It seems, on the contrary, to have been a perfectly spontaneous, untaught feeling on his side, and this surprises me. A man like him, in his situation! with a heart pierced, wounded, almost broken! Fanny Harville was a very superior creature, and his attachment to her was indeed attachment. A man does not recover from such a devotion of the heart to such a woman. He ought not; he does not."

Either from the consciousness, however, that his friend had recovered, or from other consciousness, he went no farther; and Anne who, in spite of the agitated voice in which the latter part had been uttered, and in spite of all the various noises of the room, the almost ceaseless slam of the door, and ceaseless buzz of persons walking through, had distinguished every word, was struck, gratified, confused, and beginning to breathe very quick, and feel an hundred things in a moment. It was impossible for her to enter on such a subject; and yet, after a pause, feeling the necessity of speaking, and having not the smallest wish for a total change, she only deviated so far as to say--

"You were a good while at Lyme, I think?"

"About a fortnight. I could not leave it till Louisa's doing well was quite ascertained. I had been too deeply concerned in the mischief to be soon at peace. It had been my doing, solely mine. She would not have been obstinate if I had not been weak. The country round Lyme is very fine. I walked and rode a great deal; and the more I saw, the more I found to admire."

"I should very much like to see Lyme again," said Anne.

"Indeed! I should not have supposed that you could have found anything in Lyme to inspire such a feeling. The horror and distress you were involved in, the stretch of mind, the wear of spirits! I should have thought your last impressions of Lyme must have been strong disgust."

"The last hours were certainly very painful," replied Anne; "but when pain is over, the remembrance of it often becomes a pleasure. One does not love a place the less for having suffered in it, unless it has been all suffering, nothing but suffering, which was by no means the case at Lyme. We were only in anxiety and distress during the last two hours, and previously there had been a great deal of enjoyment. So much novelty and beauty! I have travelled so little, that every fresh place would be interesting to me; but there is real beauty at Lyme; and in short" (with a faint blush at some recollections), "altogether my impressions of the place are very agreeable."

As she ceased, the entrance door opened again, and the very party appeared for whom they were waiting. "Lady Dalrymple, Lady Dalrymple," was the rejoicing sound; and with all the eagerness compatible with anxious elegance, Sir Walter and his two ladies stepped forward to meet her. Lady Dalrymple and Miss Carteret, escorted by Mr Elliot and Colonel Wallis, who had happened to arrive nearly at the same instant, advanced into the room. The others joined them, and it was a group in which Anne found herself also necessarily included. She was divided from Captain Wentworth. Their interesting, almost too interesting conversation must be broken up for a time, but slight was the penance compared with the happiness which brought it on! She had learnt, in the last ten minutes, more of his feelings towards Louisa, more of all his feelings than she dared to think of; and she gave herself up to the demands of the party, to the needful civilities of the moment, with exquisite, though agitated sensations. She was in good humour with all. She had received ideas which disposed her to be courteous and kind to all, and to pity every one, as being less happy than herself.

The delightful emotions were a little subdued, when on stepping back from the group, to be joined again by Captain Wentworth, she saw that he was gone. She was just in time to see him turn into the Concert Room. He was gone; he had disappeared, she felt a moment's regret. But "they should

meet again. He would look for her, he would find her out before the evening were over, and at present, perhaps, it was as well to be asunder. She was in need of a little interval for recollection."

Upon Lady Russell's appearance soon afterwards, the whole party was collected, and all that remained was to marshal themselves, and proceed into the Concert Room; and be of all the consequence in their power, draw as many eyes, excite as many whispers, and disturb as many people as they could.

Very, very happy were both Elizabeth and Anne Elliot as they walked in. Elizabeth arm in arm with Miss Carteret, and looking on the broad back of the dowager Viscountess Dalrymple before her, had nothing to wish for which did not seem within her reach; and Anne--but it would be an insult to the nature of Anne's felicity, to draw any comparison between it and her sister's; the origin of one all selfish vanity, of the other all generous attachment.

Anne saw nothing, thought nothing of the brilliancy of the room. Her happiness was from within. Her eyes were bright and her cheeks glowed; but she knew nothing about it. She was thinking only of the last half hour, and as they passed to their seats, her mind took a hasty range over it. His choice of subjects, his expressions, and still more his manner and look, had been such as she could see in only one light. His opinion of Louisa Musgrove's inferiority, an opinion which he had seemed solicitous to give, his wonder at Captain Benwick, his feelings as to a first, strong attachment; sentences begun which he could not finish, his half averted eyes and more than half expressive glance, all, all declared that he had a heart returning to her at least; that anger, resentment, avoidance, were no more; and that they were succeeded, not merely by friendship and regard, but by the tenderness of the past. Yes, some share of the tenderness of the past. She could not contemplate the change as implying less. He must love her.

These were thoughts, with their attendant visions, which occupied and flurried her too much to leave her any power of observation; and she passed along the room without having a glimpse of him, without even trying to discern him. When their places were determined on, and they were all properly arranged, she looked round to see if he should happen to be in the

same part of the room, but he was not; her eye could not reach him; and the concert being just opening, she must consent for a time to be happy in a humbler way.

The party was divided and disposed of on two contiguous benches: Anne was among those on the foremost, and Mr Elliot had manoeuvred so well, with the assistance of his friend Colonel Wallis, as to have a seat by her. Miss Elliot, surrounded by her cousins, and the principal object of Colonel Wallis's gallantry, was quite contented.

Anne's mind was in a most favourable state for the entertainment of the evening; it was just occupation enough: she had feelings for the tender, spirits for the gay, attention for the scientific, and patience for the wearisome; and had never liked a concert better, at least during the first act. Towards the close of it, in the interval succeeding an Italian song, she explained the words of the song to Mr Elliot. They had a concert bill between them.

"This," said she, "is nearly the sense, or rather the meaning of the words, for certainly the sense of an Italian love-song must not be talked of, but it is as nearly the meaning as I can give; for I do not pretend to understand the language. I am a very poor Italian scholar."

"Yes, yes, I see you are. I see you know nothing of the matter. You have only knowledge enough of the language to translate at sight these inverted, transposed, curtailed Italian lines, into clear, comprehensible, elegant English. You need not say anything more of your ignorance. Here is complete proof."

"I will not oppose such kind politeness; but I should be sorry to be examined by a real proficient."

"I have not had the pleasure of visiting in Camden Place so long," replied he, "without knowing something of Miss Anne Elliot; and I do regard her as one who is too modest for the world in general to be aware of half her accomplishments, and too highly accomplished for modesty to be natural in any other woman."

"For shame! for shame! this is too much flattery. I forget what we are to have next," turning to the bill.

"Perhaps," said Mr Elliot, speaking low, "I have had a longer acquaintance with your character than you are aware of."

"Indeed! How so? You can have been acquainted with it only since I came to Bath, excepting as you might hear me previously spoken of in my own family."

"I knew you by report long before you came to Bath. I had heard you described by those who knew you intimately. I have been acquainted with you by character many years. Your person, your disposition, accomplishments, manner; they were all present to me."

Mr Elliot was not disappointed in the interest he hoped to raise. No one can withstand the charm of such a mystery. To have been described long ago to a recent acquaintance, by nameless people, is irresistible; and Anne was all curiosity. She wondered, and questioned him eagerly; but in vain. He delighted in being asked, but he would not tell.

"No, no, some time or other, perhaps, but not now. He would mention no names now; but such, he could assure her, had been the fact. He had many years ago received such a description of Miss Anne Elliot as had inspired him with the highest idea of her merit, and excited the warmest curiosity to know her."

Anne could think of no one so likely to have spoken with partiality of her many years ago as the Mr Wentworth of Monkford, Captain Wentworth's brother. He might have been in Mr Elliot's company, but she had not courage to ask the question.

"The name of Anne Elliot," said he, "has long had an interesting sound to me. Very long has it possessed a charm over my fancy; and, if I dared, I would breathe my wishes that the name might never change."

Such, she believed, were his words; but scarcely had she received their sound, than her attention was caught by other sounds immediately behind

her, which rendered every thing else trivial. Her father and Lady Dalrymple were speaking.

"A well-looking man," said Sir Walter, "a very well-looking man."

"A very fine young man indeed!" said Lady Dalrymple. "More air than one often sees in Bath. Irish, I dare say."

"No, I just know his name. A bowing acquaintance. Wentworth; Captain Wentworth of the navy. His sister married my tenant in Somersetshire, the Croft, who rents Kellynch."

Before Sir Walter had reached this point, Anne's eyes had caught the right direction, and distinguished Captain Wentworth standing among a cluster of men at a little distance. As her eyes fell on him, he seemed to be withdrawn from her. It had that appearance. It seemed as if she had been one moment too late; and as long as she dared observe, he did not look again: but the performance was recommencing, and she was forced to seem to restore her attention to the orchestra and look straight forward.

When she could give another glance, he had moved away. He could not have come nearer to her if he would; she was so surrounded and shut in: but she would rather have caught his eye.

Mr Elliot's speech, too, distressed her. She had no longer any inclination to talk to him. She wished him not so near her.

The first act was over. Now she hoped for some beneficial change; and, after a period of nothing-saying amongst the party, some of them did decide on going in quest of tea. Anne was one of the few who did not choose to move. She remained in her seat, and so did Lady Russell; but she had the pleasure of getting rid of Mr Elliot; and she did not mean, whatever she might feel on Lady Russell's account, to shrink from conversation with Captain Wentworth, if he gave her the opportunity. She was persuaded by Lady Russell's countenance that she had seen him.

He did not come however. Anne sometimes fancied she discerned him at a distance, but he never came. The anxious interval wore away

unproductively. The others returned, the room filled again, benches were reclaimed and repossessed, and another hour of pleasure or of penance was to be sat out, another hour of music was to give delight or the gapes, as real or affected taste for it prevailed. To Anne, it chiefly wore the prospect of an hour of agitation. She could not quit that room in peace without seeing Captain Wentworth once more, without the interchange of one friendly look.

In re-settling themselves there were now many changes, the result of which was favourable for her. Colonel Wallis declined sitting down again, and Mr Elliot was invited by Elizabeth and Miss Carteret, in a manner not to be refused, to sit between them; and by some other removals, and a little scheming of her own, Anne was enabled to place herself much nearer the end of the bench than she had been before, much more within reach of a passer-by. She could not do so, without comparing herself with Miss Larolles, the inimitable Miss Larolles; but still she did it, and not with much happier effect; though by what seemed prosperity in the shape of an early abdication in her next neighbours, she found herself at the very end of the bench before the concert closed.

Such was her situation, with a vacant space at hand, when Captain Wentworth was again in sight. She saw him not far off. He saw her too; yet he looked grave, and seemed irresolute, and only by very slow degrees came at last near enough to speak to her. She felt that something must be the matter. The change was indubitable. The difference between his present air and what it had been in the Octagon Room was strikingly great. Why was it? She thought of her father, of Lady Russell. Could there have been any unpleasant glances? He began by speaking of the concert gravely, more like the Captain Wentworth of Uppercross; owned himself disappointed, had expected singing; and in short, must confess that he should not be sorry when it was over. Anne replied, and spoke in defence of the performance so well, and yet in allowance for his feelings so pleasantly, that his countenance improved, and he replied again with almost a smile. They talked for a few minutes more; the improvement held; he even looked down towards the bench, as if he saw a place on it well worth occupying; when at that moment a touch on her shoulder obliged Anne to turn round. It came from Mr Elliot. He begged her pardon, but she must be applied to, to



explain Italian again. Miss Carteret was very anxious to have a general idea of what was next to be sung. Anne could not refuse; but never had she sacrificed to politeness with a more suffering spirit.

A few minutes, though as few as possible, were inevitably consumed; and when her own mistress again, when able to turn and look as she had done before, she found herself accosted by Captain Wentworth, in a reserved yet hurried sort of farewell. "He must wish her good night; he was going; he should get home as fast as he could."

"Is not this song worth staying for?" said Anne, suddenly struck by an idea which made her yet more anxious to be encouraging.

"No!" he replied impressively, "there is nothing worth my staying for;" and he was gone directly.

Jealousy of Mr Elliot! It was the only intelligible motive. Captain Wentworth jealous of her affection! Could she have believed it a week ago; three hours ago! For a moment the gratification was exquisite. But, alas! there were very different thoughts to succeed. How was such jealousy to be quieted? How was the truth to reach him? How, in all the peculiar disadvantages of their respective situations, would he ever learn of her real sentiments? It was misery to think of Mr Elliot's attentions. Their evil was incalculable.

## Chapter 21

Anne recollected with pleasure the next morning her promise of going to Mrs Smith, meaning that it should engage her from home at the time when Mr Elliot would be most likely to call; for to avoid Mr Elliot was almost a first object.

She felt a great deal of good-will towards him. In spite of the mischief of his attentions, she owed him gratitude and regard, perhaps compassion. She

could not help thinking much of the extraordinary circumstances attending their acquaintance, of the right which he seemed to have to interest her, by everything in situation, by his own sentiments, by his early prepossession. It was altogether very extraordinary; flattering, but painful. There was much to regret. How she might have felt had there been no Captain Wentworth in the case, was not worth enquiry; for there was a Captain Wentworth; and be the conclusion of the present suspense good or bad, her affection would be his for ever. Their union, she believed, could not divide her more from other men, than their final separation.

Prettier musings of high-wrought love and eternal constancy, could never have passed along the streets of Bath, than Anne was sporting with from Camden Place to Westgate Buildings. It was almost enough to spread purification and perfume all the way.

She was sure of a pleasant reception; and her friend seemed this morning particularly obliged to her for coming, seemed hardly to have expected her, though it had been an appointment.

An account of the concert was immediately claimed; and Anne's recollections of the concert were quite happy enough to animate her features and make her rejoice to talk of it. All that she could tell she told most gladly, but the all was little for one who had been there, and unsatisfactory for such an enquirer as Mrs Smith, who had already heard, through the short cut of a laundress and a waiter, rather more of the general success and produce of the evening than Anne could relate, and who now asked in vain for several particulars of the company. Everybody of any consequence or notoriety in Bath was well known by name to Mrs Smith.

"The little Durands were there, I conclude," said she, "with their mouths open to catch the music, like unfledged sparrows ready to be fed. They never miss a concert."

"Yes; I did not see them myself, but I heard Mr Elliot say they were in the room."

"The Ibbotsons, were they there? and the two new beauties, with the tall Irish officer, who is talked of for one of them."

"I do not know. I do not think they were."

"Old Lady Mary Maclean? I need not ask after her. She never misses, I know; and you must have seen her. She must have been in your own circle; for as you went with Lady Dalrymple, you were in the seats of grandeur, round the orchestra, of course."

"No, that was what I dreaded. It would have been very unpleasant to me in every respect. But happily Lady Dalrymple always chooses to be farther off; and we were exceedingly well placed, that is, for hearing; I must not say for seeing, because I appear to have seen very little."

"Oh! you saw enough for your own amusement. I can understand. There is a sort of domestic enjoyment to be known even in a crowd, and this you had. You were a large party in yourselves, and you wanted nothing beyond."

"But I ought to have looked about me more," said Anne, conscious while she spoke that there had in fact been no want of looking about, that the object only had been deficient.

"No, no; you were better employed. You need not tell me that you had a pleasant evening. I see it in your eye. I perfectly see how the hours passed: that you had always something agreeable to listen to. In the intervals of the concert it was conversation."

Anne half smiled and said, "Do you see that in my eye?"

"Yes, I do. Your countenance perfectly informs me that you were in company last night with the person whom you think the most agreeable in the world, the person who interests you at this present time more than all the rest of the world put together."

A blush overspread Anne's cheeks. She could say nothing.

"And such being the case," continued Mrs Smith, after a short pause, "I hope you believe that I do know how to value your kindness in coming to me this morning. It is really very good of you to come and sit with me, when you must have so many pleasanter demands upon your time."

Anne heard nothing of this. She was still in the astonishment and confusion excited by her friend's penetration, unable to imagine how any report of Captain Wentworth could have reached her. After another short silence--

"Pray," said Mrs Smith, "is Mr Elliot aware of your acquaintance with me? Does he know that I am in Bath?"

"Mr Elliot!" repeated Anne, looking up surprised. A moment's reflection shewed her the mistake she had been under. She caught it instantaneously; and recovering her courage with the feeling of safety, soon added, more composedly, "Are you acquainted with Mr Elliot?"

"I have been a good deal acquainted with him," replied Mrs Smith, gravely, "but it seems worn out now. It is a great while since we met."

"I was not at all aware of this. You never mentioned it before. Had I known it, I would have had the pleasure of talking to him about you."

"To confess the truth," said Mrs Smith, assuming her usual air of cheerfulness, "that is exactly the pleasure I want you to have. I want you to talk about me to Mr Elliot. I want your interest with him. He can be of essential service to me; and if you would have the goodness, my dear Miss Elliot, to make it an object to yourself, of course it is done."

"I should be extremely happy; I hope you cannot doubt my willingness to be of even the slightest use to you," replied Anne; "but I suspect that you are considering me as having a higher claim on Mr Elliot, a greater right to influence him, than is really the case. I am sure you have, somehow or other, imbibed such a notion. You must consider me only as Mr Elliot's relation. If in that light there is anything which you suppose his cousin might fairly ask of him, I beg you would not hesitate to employ me."

Mrs Smith gave her a penetrating glance, and then, smiling, said--

"I have been a little premature, I perceive; I beg your pardon. I ought to have waited for official information. But now, my dear Miss Elliot, as an old friend, do give me a hint as to when I may speak. Next week? To be

sure by next week I may be allowed to think it all settled, and build my own selfish schemes on Mr Elliot's good fortune."

"No," replied Anne, "nor next week, nor next, nor next. I assure you that nothing of the sort you are thinking of will be settled any week. I am not going to marry Mr Elliot. I should like to know why you imagine I am?"

Mrs Smith looked at her again, looked earnestly, smiled, shook her head, and exclaimed--

"Now, how I do wish I understood you! How I do wish I knew what you were at! I have a great idea that you do not design to be cruel, when the right moment occurs. Till it does come, you know, we women never mean to have anybody. It is a thing of course among us, that every man is refused, till he offers. But why should you be cruel? Let me plead for my--present friend I cannot call him, but for my former friend. Where can you look for a more suitable match? Where could you expect a more gentlemanlike, agreeable man? Let me recommend Mr Elliot. I am sure you hear nothing but good of him from Colonel Wallis; and who can know him better than Colonel Wallis?"

"My dear Mrs Smith, Mr Elliot's wife has not been dead much above half a year. He ought not to be supposed to be paying his addresses to any one."

"Oh! if these are your only objections," cried Mrs Smith, archly, "Mr Elliot is safe, and I shall give myself no more trouble about him. Do not forget me when you are married, that's all. Let him know me to be a friend of yours, and then he will think little of the trouble required, which it is very natural for him now, with so many affairs and engagements of his own, to avoid and get rid of as he can; very natural, perhaps. Ninety-nine out of a hundred would do the same. Of course, he cannot be aware of the importance to me. Well, my dear Miss Elliot, I hope and trust you will be very happy. Mr Elliot has sense to understand the value of such a woman. Your peace will not be shipwrecked as mine has been. You are safe in all worldly matters, and safe in his character. He will not be led astray; he will not be misled by others to his ruin."

"No," said Anne, "I can readily believe all that of my cousin. He seems to have a calm decided temper, not at all open to dangerous impressions. I consider him with great respect. I have no reason, from any thing that has fallen within my observation, to do otherwise. But I have not known him long; and he is not a man, I think, to be known intimately soon. Will not this manner of speaking of him, Mrs Smith, convince you that he is nothing to me? Surely this must be calm enough. And, upon my word, he is nothing to me. Should he ever propose to me (which I have very little reason to imagine he has any thought of doing), I shall not accept him. I assure you I shall not. I assure you, Mr Elliot had not the share which you have been supposing, in whatever pleasure the concert of last night might afford: not Mr Elliot; it is not Mr Elliot that--"

She stopped, regretting with a deep blush that she had implied so much; but less would hardly have been sufficient. Mrs Smith would hardly have believed so soon in Mr Elliot's failure, but from the perception of there being a somebody else. As it was, she instantly submitted, and with all the semblance of seeing nothing beyond; and Anne, eager to escape farther notice, was impatient to know why Mrs Smith should have fancied she was to marry Mr Elliot; where she could have received the idea, or from whom she could have heard it.

"Do tell me how it first came into your head."

"It first came into my head," replied Mrs Smith, "upon finding how much you were together, and feeling it to be the most probable thing in the world to be wished for by everybody belonging to either of you; and you may depend upon it that all your acquaintance have disposed of you in the same way. But I never heard it spoken of till two days ago."

"And has it indeed been spoken of?"

"Did you observe the woman who opened the door to you when you called yesterday?"

"No. Was not it Mrs Speed, as usual, or the maid? I observed no one in particular."

"It was my friend Mrs Rooke; Nurse Rooke; who, by-the-bye, had a great curiosity to see you, and was delighted to be in the way to let you in. She came away from Marlborough Buildings only on Sunday; and she it was who told me you were to marry Mr Elliot. She had had it from Mrs Wallis herself, which did not seem bad authority. She sat an hour with me on Monday evening, and gave me the whole history." "The whole history," repeated Anne, laughing. "She could not make a very long history, I think, of one such little article of unfounded news."

Mrs Smith said nothing.

"But," continued Anne, presently, "though there is no truth in my having this claim on Mr Elliot, I should be extremely happy to be of use to you in any way that I could. Shall I mention to him your being in Bath? Shall I take any message?"

"No, I thank you: no, certainly not. In the warmth of the moment, and under a mistaken impression, I might, perhaps, have endeavoured to interest you in some circumstances; but not now. No, I thank you, I have nothing to trouble you with."

"I think you spoke of having known Mr Elliot many years?"

"I did."

"Not before he was married, I suppose?"

"Yes; he was not married when I knew him first."

"And--were you much acquainted?"

"Intimately."

"Indeed! Then do tell me what he was at that time of life. I have a great curiosity to know what Mr Elliot was as a very young man. Was he at all such as he appears now?"

"I have not seen Mr Elliot these three years," was Mrs Smith's answer, given so gravely that it was impossible to pursue the subject farther; and

Anne felt that she had gained nothing but an increase of curiosity. They were both silent: Mrs Smith very thoughtful. At last--

"I beg your pardon, my dear Miss Elliot," she cried, in her natural tone of cordiality, "I beg your pardon for the short answers I have been giving you, but I have been uncertain what I ought to do. I have been doubting and considering as to what I ought to tell you. There were many things to be taken into the account. One hates to be officious, to be giving bad impressions, making mischief. Even the smooth surface of family-union seems worth preserving, though there may be nothing durable beneath. However, I have determined; I think I am right; I think you ought to be made acquainted with Mr Elliot's real character. Though I fully believe that, at present, you have not the smallest intention of accepting him, there is no saying what may happen. You might, some time or other, be differently affected towards him. Hear the truth, therefore, now, while you are unprejudiced. Mr Elliot is a man without heart or conscience; a designing, wary, cold-blooded being, who thinks only of himself; whom for his own interest or ease, would be guilty of any cruelty, or any treachery, that could be perpetrated without risk of his general character. He has no feeling for others. Those whom he has been the chief cause of leading into ruin, he can neglect and desert without the smallest compunction. He is totally beyond the reach of any sentiment of justice or compassion. Oh! he is black at heart, hollow and black!"



Anne's astonished air, and exclamation of wonder, made her pause, and in a calmer manner, she added,

"My expressions startle you. You must allow for an injured, angry woman. But I will try to command myself. I will not abuse him. I will only tell you what I have found him. Facts shall speak. He was the intimate friend of my dear husband, who trusted and loved him, and thought him as good as himself. The intimacy had been formed before our marriage. I found them most intimate friends; and I, too, became excessively pleased with Mr Elliot, and entertained the highest opinion of him. At nineteen, you know, one does not think very seriously; but Mr Elliot appeared to me quite as good as others, and much more agreeable than most others, and we were almost always together. We were principally in town, living in very good style. He was then the inferior in circumstances; he was then the poor one; he had chambers in the Temple, and it was as much as he could do to support the appearance of a gentleman. He had always a home with us whenever he chose it; he was always welcome; he was like a brother. My poor Charles, who had the finest, most generous spirit in the world, would have divided his last farthing with him; and I know that his purse was open to him; I know that he often assisted him."

"This must have been about that very period of Mr Elliot's life," said Anne, "which has always excited my particular curiosity. It must have been about the same time that he became known to my father and sister. I never knew him myself; I only heard of him; but there was a something in his conduct then, with regard to my father and sister, and afterwards in the circumstances of his marriage, which I never could quite reconcile with present times. It seemed to announce a different sort of man."

"I know it all, I know it all," cried Mrs Smith. "He had been introduced to Sir Walter and your sister before I was acquainted with him, but I heard him speak of them for ever. I know he was invited and encouraged, and I know he did not choose to go. I can satisfy you, perhaps, on points which you would little expect; and as to his marriage, I knew all about it at the time. I was privy to all the fors and againts; I was the friend to whom he confided his hopes and plans; and though I did not know his wife previously, her inferior situation in society, indeed, rendered that

impossible, yet I knew her all her life afterwards, or at least till within the last two years of her life, and can answer any question you may wish to put."

"Nay," said Anne, "I have no particular enquiry to make about her. I have always understood they were not a happy couple. But I should like to know why, at that time of his life, he should slight my father's acquaintance as he did. My father was certainly disposed to take very kind and proper notice of him. Why did Mr Elliot draw back?"

"Mr Elliot," replied Mrs Smith, "at that period of his life, had one object in view: to make his fortune, and by a rather quicker process than the law. He was determined to make it by marriage. He was determined, at least, not to mar it by an imprudent marriage; and I know it was his belief (whether justly or not, of course I cannot decide), that your father and sister, in their civilities and invitations, were designing a match between the heir and the young lady, and it was impossible that such a match should have answered his ideas of wealth and independence. That was his motive for drawing back, I can assure you. He told me the whole story. He had no concealments with me. It was curious, that having just left you behind me in Bath, my first and principal acquaintance on marrying should be your cousin; and that, through him, I should be continually hearing of your father and sister. He described one Miss Elliot, and I thought very affectionately of the other."

"Perhaps," cried Anne, struck by a sudden idea, "you sometimes spoke of me to Mr Elliot?"

"To be sure I did; very often. I used to boast of my own Anne Elliot, and vouch for your being a very different creature from--"

She checked herself just in time.

"This accounts for something which Mr Elliot said last night," cried Anne. "This explains it. I found he had been used to hear of me. I could not comprehend how. What wild imaginations one forms where dear self is concerned! How sure to be mistaken! But I beg your pardon; I have

interrupted you. Mr Elliot married then completely for money? The circumstances, probably, which first opened your eyes to his character."

Mrs Smith hesitated a little here. "Oh! those things are too common. When one lives in the world, a man or woman's marrying for money is too common to strike one as it ought. I was very young, and associated only with the young, and we were a thoughtless, gay set, without any strict rules of conduct. We lived for enjoyment. I think differently now; time and sickness and sorrow have given me other notions; but at that period I must own I saw nothing reprehensible in what Mr Elliot was doing. 'To do the best for himself,' passed as a duty."

"But was not she a very low woman?"

"Yes; which I objected to, but he would not regard. Money, money, was all that he wanted. Her father was a grazier, her grandfather had been a butcher, but that was all nothing. She was a fine woman, had had a decent education, was brought forward by some cousins, thrown by chance into Mr Elliot's company, and fell in love with him; and not a difficulty or a scruple was there on his side, with respect to her birth. All his caution was spent in being secured of the real amount of her fortune, before he committed himself. Depend upon it, whatever esteem Mr Elliot may have for his own situation in life now, as a young man he had not the smallest value for it. His chance for the Kellynch estate was something, but all the honour of the family he held as cheap as dirt. I have often heard him declare, that if baronetcies were saleable, anybody should have his for fifty pounds, arms and motto, name and livery included; but I will not pretend to repeat half that I used to hear him say on that subject. It would not be fair; and yet you ought to have proof, for what is all this but assertion, and you shall have proof."

"Indeed, my dear Mrs Smith, I want none," cried Anne. "You have asserted nothing contradictory to what Mr Elliot appeared to be some years ago. This is all in confirmation, rather, of what we used to hear and believe. I am more curious to know why he should be so different now."

"But for my satisfaction, if you will have the goodness to ring for Mary; stay: I am sure you will have the still greater goodness of going yourself

into my bedroom, and bringing me the small inlaid box which you will find on the upper shelf of the closet."

Anne, seeing her friend to be earnestly bent on it, did as she was desired. The box was brought and placed before her, and Mrs Smith, sighing over it as she unlocked it, said--

"This is full of papers belonging to him, to my husband; a small portion only of what I had to look over when I lost him. The letter I am looking for was one written by Mr Elliot to him before our marriage, and happened to be saved; why, one can hardly imagine. But he was careless and immethodical, like other men, about those things; and when I came to examine his papers, I found it with others still more trivial, from different people scattered here and there, while many letters and memorandums of real importance had been destroyed. Here it is; I would not burn it, because being even then very little satisfied with Mr Elliot, I was determined to preserve every document of former intimacy. I have now another motive for being glad that I can produce it."

This was the letter, directed to "Charles Smith, Esq. Tunbridge Wells," and dated from London, as far back as July, 1803:--

"Dear Smith,--I have received yours. Your kindness almost overpowers me. I wish nature had made such hearts as yours more common, but I have lived three-and-twenty years in the world, and have seen none like it. At present, believe me, I have no need of your services, being in cash again. Give me joy: I have got rid of Sir Walter and Miss. They are gone back to Kellynch, and almost made me swear to visit them this summer; but my first visit to Kellynch will be with a surveyor, to tell me how to bring it with best advantage to the hammer. The baronet, nevertheless, is not unlikely to marry again; he is quite fool enough. If he does, however, they will leave me in peace, which may be a decent equivalent for the reversion. He is worse than last year.

"I wish I had any name but Elliot. I am sick of it. The name of Walter I can drop, thank God! and I desire you will never insult me with my second W. again, meaning, for the rest of my life, to be only yours truly,--Wm. Elliot."

Such a letter could not be read without putting Anne in a glow; and Mrs Smith, observing the high colour in her face, said--

"The language, I know, is highly disrespectful. Though I have forgot the exact terms, I have a perfect impression of the general meaning. But it shows you the man. Mark his professions to my poor husband. Can any thing be stronger?"

Anne could not immediately get over the shock and mortification of finding such words applied to her father. She was obliged to recollect that her seeing the letter was a violation of the laws of honour, that no one ought to be judged or to be known by such testimonies, that no private correspondence could bear the eye of others, before she could recover calmness enough to return the letter which she had been meditating over, and say--

"Thank you. This is full proof undoubtedly; proof of every thing you were saying. But why be acquainted with us now?"

"I can explain this too," cried Mrs Smith, smiling.

"Can you really?"

"Yes. I have shewn you Mr Elliot as he was a dozen years ago, and I will shew him as he is now. I cannot produce written proof again, but I can give as authentic oral testimony as you can desire, of what he is now wanting, and what he is now doing. He is no hypocrite now. He truly wants to marry you. His present attentions to your family are very sincere: quite from the heart. I will give you my authority: his friend Colonel Wallis."

"Colonel Wallis! you are acquainted with him?"

"No. It does not come to me in quite so direct a line as that; it takes a bend or two, but nothing of consequence. The stream is as good as at first; the little rubbish it collects in the turnings is easily moved away. Mr Elliot talks unreservedly to Colonel Wallis of his views on you, which said Colonel Wallis, I imagine to be, in himself, a sensible, careful, discerning sort of character; but Colonel Wallis has a very pretty silly wife, to whom

he tells things which he had better not, and he repeats it all to her. She in the overflowing spirits of her recovery, repeats it all to her nurse; and the nurse knowing my acquaintance with you, very naturally brings it all to me. On Monday evening, my good friend Mrs Rooke let me thus much into the secrets of Marlborough Buildings. When I talked of a whole history, therefore, you see I was not romancing so much as you supposed."

"My dear Mrs Smith, your authority is deficient. This will not do. Mr Elliot's having any views on me will not in the least account for the efforts he made towards a reconciliation with my father. That was all prior to my coming to Bath. I found them on the most friendly terms when I arrived."

"I know you did; I know it all perfectly, but--"

"Indeed, Mrs Smith, we must not expect to get real information in such a line. Facts or opinions which are to pass through the hands of so many, to be misconceived by folly in one, and ignorance in another, can hardly have much truth left."

"Only give me a hearing. You will soon be able to judge of the general credit due, by listening to some particulars which you can yourself immediately contradict or confirm. Nobody supposes that you were his first inducement. He had seen you indeed, before he came to Bath, and admired you, but without knowing it to be you. So says my historian, at least. Is this true? Did he see you last summer or autumn, 'somewhere down in the west,' to use her own words, without knowing it to be you?"

"He certainly did. So far it is very true. At Lyme. I happened to be at Lyme."

"Well," continued Mrs Smith, triumphantly, "grant my friend the credit due to the establishment of the first point asserted. He saw you then at Lyme, and liked you so well as to be exceedingly pleased to meet with you again in Camden Place, as Miss Anne Elliot, and from that moment, I have no doubt, had a double motive in his visits there. But there was another, and an earlier, which I will now explain. If there is anything in my story which you know to be either false or improbable, stop me. My account states, that your sister's friend, the lady now staying with you, whom I have heard you

mention, came to Bath with Miss Elliot and Sir Walter as long ago as September (in short when they first came themselves), and has been staying there ever since; that she is a clever, insinuating, handsome woman, poor and plausible, and altogether such in situation and manner, as to give a general idea, among Sir Walter's acquaintance, of her meaning to be Lady Elliot, and as general a surprise that Miss Elliot should be apparently, blind to the danger."

Here Mrs Smith paused a moment; but Anne had not a word to say, and she continued--

"This was the light in which it appeared to those who knew the family, long before you returned to it; and Colonel Wallis had his eye upon your father enough to be sensible of it, though he did not then visit in Camden Place; but his regard for Mr Elliot gave him an interest in watching all that was going on there, and when Mr Elliot came to Bath for a day or two, as he happened to do a little before Christmas, Colonel Wallis made him acquainted with the appearance of things, and the reports beginning to prevail. Now you are to understand, that time had worked a very material change in Mr Elliot's opinions as to the value of a baronetcy. Upon all points of blood and connexion he is a completely altered man. Having long had as much money as he could spend, nothing to wish for on the side of avarice or indulgence, he has been gradually learning to pin his happiness upon the consequence he is heir to. I thought it coming on before our acquaintance ceased, but it is now a confirmed feeling. He cannot bear the idea of not being Sir William. You may guess, therefore, that the news he heard from his friend could not be very agreeable, and you may guess what it produced; the resolution of coming back to Bath as soon as possible, and of fixing himself here for a time, with the view of renewing his former acquaintance, and recovering such a footing in the family as might give him the means of ascertaining the degree of his danger, and of circumventing the lady if he found it material. This was agreed upon between the two friends as the only thing to be done; and Colonel Wallis was to assist in every way that he could. He was to be introduced, and Mrs Wallis was to be introduced, and everybody was to be introduced. Mr Elliot came back accordingly; and on application was forgiven, as you know, and re-admitted into the family; and there it was his constant object, and his only object (till

your arrival added another motive), to watch Sir Walter and Mrs Clay. He omitted no opportunity of being with them, threw himself in their way, called at all hours; but I need not be particular on this subject. You can imagine what an artful man would do; and with this guide, perhaps, may recollect what you have seen him do."

"Yes," said Anne, "you tell me nothing which does not accord with what I have known, or could imagine. There is always something offensive in the details of cunning. The manoeuvres of selfishness and duplicity must ever be revolting, but I have heard nothing which really surprises me. I know those who would be shocked by such a representation of Mr Elliot, who would have difficulty in believing it; but I have never been satisfied. I have always wanted some other motive for his conduct than appeared. I should like to know his present opinion, as to the probability of the event he has been in dread of; whether he considers the danger to be lessening or not."

"Lessening, I understand," replied Mrs Smith. "He thinks Mrs Clay afraid of him, aware that he sees through her, and not daring to proceed as she might do in his absence. But since he must be absent some time or other, I do not perceive how he can ever be secure while she holds her present influence. Mrs Wallis has an amusing idea, as nurse tells me, that it is to be put into the marriage articles when you and Mr Elliot marry, that your father is not to marry Mrs Clay. A scheme, worthy of Mrs Wallis's understanding, by all accounts; but my sensible nurse Rooke sees the absurdity of it. 'Why, to be sure, ma'am,' said she, 'it would not prevent his marrying anybody else.' And, indeed, to own the truth, I do not think nurse, in her heart, is a very strenuous opposer of Sir Walter's making a second match. She must be allowed to be a favourer of matrimony, you know; and (since self will intrude) who can say that she may not have some flying visions of attending the next Lady Elliot, through Mrs Wallis's recommendation?"

"I am very glad to know all this," said Anne, after a little thoughtfulness. "It will be more painful to me in some respects to be in company with him, but I shall know better what to do. My line of conduct will be more direct. Mr Elliot is evidently a disingenuous, artificial, worldly man, who has never had any better principle to guide him than selfishness."



But Mr Elliot was not done with. Mrs Smith had been carried away from her first direction, and Anne had forgotten, in the interest of her own family concerns, how much had been originally implied against him; but her attention was now called to the explanation of those first hints, and she listened to a recital which, if it did not perfectly justify the unqualified bitterness of Mrs Smith, proved him to have been very unfeeling in his conduct towards her; very deficient both in justice and compassion.

She learned that (the intimacy between them continuing unimpaired by Mr Elliot's marriage) they had been as before always together, and Mr Elliot had led his friend into expenses much beyond his fortune. Mrs Smith did not want to take blame to herself, and was most tender of throwing any on her husband; but Anne could collect that their income had never been equal to their style of living, and that from the first there had been a great deal of general and joint extravagance. From his wife's account of him she could discern Mr Smith to have been a man of warm feelings, easy temper, careless habits, and not strong understanding, much more amiable than his friend, and very unlike him, led by him, and probably despised by him. Mr Elliot, raised by his marriage to great affluence, and disposed to every gratification of pleasure and vanity which could be commanded without involving himself, (for with all his self-indulgence he had become a prudent man), and beginning to be rich, just as his friend ought to have found himself to be poor, seemed to have had no concern at all for that friend's probable finances, but, on the contrary, had been prompting and encouraging expenses which could end only in ruin; and the Smiths accordingly had been ruined.

The husband had died just in time to be spared the full knowledge of it. They had previously known embarrassments enough to try the friendship of their friends, and to prove that Mr Elliot's had better not be tried; but it was not till his death that the wretched state of his affairs was fully known. With a confidence in Mr Elliot's regard, more creditable to his feelings than his judgement, Mr Smith had appointed him the executor of his will; but Mr Elliot would not act, and the difficulties and distress which this refusal had heaped on her, in addition to the inevitable sufferings of her situation, had been such as could not be related without anguish of spirit, or listened to without corresponding indignation.

Anne was shewn some letters of his on the occasion, answers to urgent applications from Mrs Smith, which all breathed the same stern resolution of not engaging in a fruitless trouble, and, under a cold civility, the same hard-hearted indifference to any of the evils it might bring on her. It was a dreadful picture of ingratitude and inhumanity; and Anne felt, at some moments, that no flagrant open crime could have been worse. She had a great deal to listen to; all the particulars of past sad scenes, all the minutiae of distress upon distress, which in former conversations had been merely hinted at, were dwelt on now with a natural indulgence. Anne could perfectly comprehend the exquisite relief, and was only the more inclined to wonder at the composure of her friend's usual state of mind.

There was one circumstance in the history of her grievances of particular irritation. She had good reason to believe that some property of her husband in the West Indies, which had been for many years under a sort of sequestration for the payment of its own incumbrances, might be recoverable by proper measures; and this property, though not large, would be enough to make her comparatively rich. But there was nobody to stir in it. Mr Elliot would do nothing, and she could do nothing herself, equally disabled from personal exertion by her state of bodily weakness, and from employing others by her want of money. She had no natural connexions to assist her even with their counsel, and she could not afford to purchase the assistance of the law. This was a cruel aggravation of actually straitened means. To feel that she ought to be in better circumstances, that a little trouble in the right place might do it, and to fear that delay might be even weakening her claims, was hard to bear.

It was on this point that she had hoped to engage Anne's good offices with Mr Elliot. She had previously, in the anticipation of their marriage, been very apprehensive of losing her friend by it; but on being assured that he could have made no attempt of that nature, since he did not even know her to be in Bath, it immediately occurred, that something might be done in her favour by the influence of the woman he loved, and she had been hastily preparing to interest Anne's feelings, as far as the observances due to Mr Elliot's character would allow, when Anne's refutation of the supposed engagement changed the face of everything; and while it took from her the

new-formed hope of succeeding in the object of her first anxiety, left her at least the comfort of telling the whole story her own way.

After listening to this full description of Mr Elliot, Anne could not but express some surprise at Mrs Smith's having spoken of him so favourably in the beginning of their conversation. "She had seemed to recommend and praise him!"

"My dear," was Mrs Smith's reply, "there was nothing else to be done. I considered your marrying him as certain, though he might not yet have made the offer, and I could no more speak the truth of him, than if he had been your husband. My heart bled for you, as I talked of happiness; and yet he is sensible, he is agreeable, and with such a woman as you, it was not absolutely hopeless. He was very unkind to his first wife. They were wretched together. But she was too ignorant and giddy for respect, and he had never loved her. I was willing to hope that you must fare better."

Anne could just acknowledge within herself such a possibility of having been induced to marry him, as made her shudder at the idea of the misery which must have followed. It was just possible that she might have been persuaded by Lady Russell! And under such a supposition, which would have been most miserable, when time had disclosed all, too late?

It was very desirable that Lady Russell should be no longer deceived; and one of the concluding arrangements of this important conference, which carried them through the greater part of the morning, was, that Anne had full liberty to communicate to her friend everything relative to Mrs Smith, in which his conduct was involved.

## Chapter 22

Anne went home to think over all that she had heard. In one point, her feelings were relieved by this knowledge of Mr Elliot. There was no longer anything of tenderness due to him. He stood as opposed to Captain

Wentworth, in all his own unwelcome obtrusiveness; and the evil of his attentions last night, the irremediable mischief he might have done, was considered with sensations unqualified, unperplexed. Pity for him was all over. But this was the only point of relief. In every other respect, in looking around her, or penetrating forward, she saw more to distrust and to apprehend. She was concerned for the disappointment and pain Lady Russell would be feeling; for the mortifications which must be hanging over her father and sister, and had all the distress of foreseeing many evils, without knowing how to avert any one of them. She was most thankful for her own knowledge of him. She had never considered herself as entitled to reward for not slighting an old friend like Mrs Smith, but here was a reward indeed springing from it! Mrs Smith had been able to tell her what no one else could have done. Could the knowledge have been extended through her family? But this was a vain idea. She must talk to Lady Russell, tell her, consult with her, and having done her best, wait the event with as much composure as possible; and after all, her greatest want of composure would be in that quarter of the mind which could not be opened to Lady Russell; in that flow of anxieties and fears which must be all to herself.

She found, on reaching home, that she had, as she intended, escaped seeing Mr Elliot; that he had called and paid them a long morning visit; but hardly had she congratulated herself, and felt safe, when she heard that he was coming again in the evening.

"I had not the smallest intention of asking him," said Elizabeth, with affected carelessness, "but he gave so many hints; so Mrs Clay says, at least."

"Indeed, I do say it. I never saw anybody in my life spell harder for an invitation. Poor man! I was really in pain for him; for your hard-hearted sister, Miss Anne, seems bent on cruelty."

"Oh!" cried Elizabeth, "I have been rather too much used to the game to be soon overcome by a gentleman's hints. However, when I found how excessively he was regretting that he should miss my father this morning, I gave way immediately, for I would never really omit an opportunity of

bringing him and Sir Walter together. They appear to so much advantage in company with each other. Each behaving so pleasantly. Mr Elliot looking up with so much respect."

"Quite delightful!" cried Mrs Clay, not daring, however, to turn her eyes towards Anne. "Exactly like father and son! Dear Miss Elliot, may I not say father and son?"

"Oh! I lay no embargo on any body's words. If you will have such ideas! But, upon my word, I am scarcely sensible of his attentions being beyond those of other men."

"My dear Miss Elliot!" exclaimed Mrs Clay, lifting her hands and eyes, and sinking all the rest of her astonishment in a convenient silence.

"Well, my dear Penelope, you need not be so alarmed about him. I did invite him, you know. I sent him away with smiles. When I found he was really going to his friends at Thornberry Park for the whole day to-morrow, I had compassion on him."

Anne admired the good acting of the friend, in being able to shew such pleasure as she did, in the expectation and in the actual arrival of the very person whose presence must really be interfering with her prime object. It was impossible but that Mrs Clay must hate the sight of Mr Elliot; and yet she could assume a most obliging, placid look, and appear quite satisfied with the curtailed license of devoting herself only half as much to Sir Walter as she would have done otherwise.

To Anne herself it was most distressing to see Mr Elliot enter the room; and quite painful to have him approach and speak to her. She had been used before to feel that he could not be always quite sincere, but now she saw insincerity in everything. His attentive deference to her father, contrasted with his former language, was odious; and when she thought of his cruel conduct towards Mrs Smith, she could hardly bear the sight of his present smiles and mildness, or the sound of his artificial good sentiments.

She meant to avoid any such alteration of manners as might provoke a remonstrance on his side. It was a great object to her to escape all enquiry

or eclat; but it was her intention to be as decidedly cool to him as might be compatible with their relationship; and to retrace, as quietly as she could, the few steps of unnecessary intimacy she had been gradually led along. She was accordingly more guarded, and more cool, than she had been the night before.

He wanted to animate her curiosity again as to how and where he could have heard her formerly praised; wanted very much to be gratified by more solicitation; but the charm was broken: he found that the heat and animation of a public room was necessary to kindle his modest cousin's vanity; he found, at least, that it was not to be done now, by any of those attempts which he could hazard among the too-commanding claims of the others. He little surmised that it was a subject acting now exactly against his interest, bringing immediately to her thoughts all those parts of his conduct which were least excusable.

She had some satisfaction in finding that he was really going out of Bath the next morning, going early, and that he would be gone the greater part of two days. He was invited again to Camden Place the very evening of his return; but from Thursday to Saturday evening his absence was certain. It was bad enough that a Mrs Clay should be always before her; but that a deeper hypocrite should be added to their party, seemed the destruction of everything like peace and comfort. It was so humiliating to reflect on the constant deception practised on her father and Elizabeth; to consider the various sources of mortification preparing for them! Mrs Clay's selfishness was not so complicate nor so revolting as his; and Anne would have compounded for the marriage at once, with all its evils, to be clear of Mr Elliot's subtleties in endeavouring to prevent it.

On Friday morning she meant to go very early to Lady Russell, and accomplish the necessary communication; and she would have gone directly after breakfast, but that Mrs Clay was also going out on some obliging purpose of saving her sister trouble, which determined her to wait till she might be safe from such a companion. She saw Mrs Clay fairly off, therefore, before she began to talk of spending the morning in Rivers Street.

"Very well," said Elizabeth, "I have nothing to send but my love. Oh! you may as well take back that tiresome book she would lend me, and

pretend I have read it through. I really cannot be plaguing myself for ever with all the new poems and states of the nation that come out. Lady Russell quite bores one with her new publications. You need not tell her so, but I thought her dress hideous the other night. I used to think she had some taste in dress, but I was ashamed of her at the concert. Something so formal and *arrangé* in her air! and she sits so upright! My best love, of course."

"And mine," added Sir Walter. "Kindest regards. And you may say, that I mean to call upon her soon. Make a civil message; but I shall only leave my card. Morning visits are never fair by women at her time of life, who make themselves up so little. If she would only wear rouge she would not be afraid of being seen; but last time I called, I observed the blinds were let down immediately."

While her father spoke, there was a knock at the door. Who could it be? Anne, remembering the preconcerted visits, at all hours, of Mr Elliot, would have expected him, but for his known engagement seven miles off. After the usual period of suspense, the usual sounds of approach were heard, and "Mr and Mrs Charles Musgrove" were ushered into the room.

Surprise was the strongest emotion raised by their appearance; but Anne was really glad to see them; and the others were not so sorry but that they could put on a decent air of welcome; and as soon as it became clear that these, their nearest relations, were not arrived with any views of accommodation in that house, Sir Walter and Elizabeth were able to rise in cordiality, and do the honours of it very well. They were come to Bath for a few days with Mrs Musgrove, and were at the White Hart. So much was pretty soon understood; but till Sir Walter and Elizabeth were walking Mary into the other drawing-room, and regaling themselves with her admiration, Anne could not draw upon Charles's brain for a regular history of their coming, or an explanation of some smiling hints of particular business, which had been ostentatiously dropped by Mary, as well as of some apparent confusion as to whom their party consisted of.

She then found that it consisted of Mrs Musgrove, Henrietta, and Captain Harville, beside their two selves. He gave her a very plain, intelligible account of the whole; a narration in which she saw a great deal of most characteristic proceeding. The scheme had received its first impulse

by Captain Harville's wanting to come to Bath on business. He had begun to talk of it a week ago; and by way of doing something, as shooting was over, Charles had proposed coming with him, and Mrs Harville had seemed to like the idea of it very much, as an advantage to her husband; but Mary could not bear to be left, and had made herself so unhappy about it, that for a day or two everything seemed to be in suspense, or at an end. But then, it had been taken up by his father and mother. His mother had some old friends in Bath whom she wanted to see; it was thought a good opportunity for Henrietta to come and buy wedding-clothes for herself and her sister; and, in short, it ended in being his mother's party, that everything might be comfortable and easy to Captain Harville; and he and Mary were included in it by way of general convenience. They had arrived late the night before. Mrs Harville, her children, and Captain Benwick, remained with Mr Musgrove and Louisa at Uppercross.

Anne's only surprise was, that affairs should be in forwardness enough for Henrietta's wedding-clothes to be talked of. She had imagined such difficulties of fortune to exist there as must prevent the marriage from being near at hand; but she learned from Charles that, very recently, (since Mary's last letter to herself), Charles Hayter had been applied to by a friend to hold a living for a youth who could not possibly claim it under many years; and that on the strength of his present income, with almost a certainty of something more permanent long before the term in question, the two families had consented to the young people's wishes, and that their marriage was likely to take place in a few months, quite as soon as Louisa's. "And a very good living it was," Charles added: "only five-and-twenty miles from Uppercross, and in a very fine country: fine part of Dorsetshire. In the centre of some of the best preserves in the kingdom, surrounded by three great proprietors, each more careful and jealous than the other; and to two of the three at least, Charles Hayter might get a special recommendation. Not that he will value it as he ought," he observed, "Charles is too cool about sporting. That's the worst of him."

"I am extremely glad, indeed," cried Anne, "particularly glad that this should happen; and that of two sisters, who both deserve equally well, and who have always been such good friends, the pleasant prospect of one should not be dimming those of the other--that they should be so equal in



their prosperity and comfort. I hope your father and mother are quite happy with regard to both."

"Oh! yes. My father would be well pleased if the gentlemen were richer, but he has no other fault to find. Money, you know, coming down with money--two daughters at once--it cannot be a very agreeable operation, and it strenghtens him as to many things. However, I do not mean to say they have not a right to it. It is very fit they should have daughters' shares; and I am sure he has always been a very kind, liberal father to me. Mary does not above half like Henrietta's match. She never did, you know. But she does not do him justice, nor think enough about Winthrop. I cannot make her attend to the value of the property. It is a very fair match, as times go; and I have liked Charles Hayter all my life, and I shall not leave off now."

"Such excellent parents as Mr and Mrs Musgrove," exclaimed Anne, "should be happy in their children's marriages. They do everything to confer happiness, I am sure. What a blessing to young people to be in such hands! Your father and mother seem so totally free from all those ambitious feelings which have led to so much misconduct and misery, both in young and old. I hope you think Louisa perfectly recovered now?"

He answered rather hesitatingly, "Yes, I believe I do; very much recovered; but she is altered; there is no running or jumping about, no laughing or dancing; it is quite different. If one happens only to shut the door a little hard, she starts and wriggles like a young dab-chick in the water; and Benwick sits at her elbow, reading verses, or whispering to her, all day long."

Anne could not help laughing. "That cannot be much to your taste, I know," said she; "but I do believe him to be an excellent young man."

"To be sure he is. Nobody doubts it; and I hope you do not think I am so illiberal as to want every man to have the same objects and pleasures as myself. I have a great value for Benwick; and when one can but get him to talk, he has plenty to say. His reading has done him no harm, for he has fought as well as read. He is a brave fellow. I got more acquainted with him last Monday than ever I did before. We had a famous set-to at rat-hunting

all the morning in my father's great barns; and he played his part so well that I have liked him the better ever since."

Here they were interrupted by the absolute necessity of Charles's following the others to admire mirrors and china; but Anne had heard enough to understand the present state of Uppercross, and rejoice in its happiness; and though she sighed as she rejoiced, her sigh had none of the ill-will of envy in it. She would certainly have risen to their blessings if she could, but she did not want to lessen theirs.

The visit passed off altogether in high good humour. Mary was in excellent spirits, enjoying the gaiety and the change, and so well satisfied with the journey in her mother-in-law's carriage with four horses, and with her own complete independence of Camden Place, that she was exactly in a temper to admire everything as she ought, and enter most readily into all the superiorities of the house, as they were detailed to her. She had no demands on her father or sister, and her consequence was just enough increased by their handsome drawing-rooms.

Elizabeth was, for a short time, suffering a good deal. She felt that Mrs Musgrove and all her party ought to be asked to dine with them; but she could not bear to have the difference of style, the reduction of servants, which a dinner must betray, witnessed by those who had been always so inferior to the Elliots of Kellynch. It was a struggle between propriety and vanity; but vanity got the better, and then Elizabeth was happy again. These were her internal persuasions: "Old fashioned notions; country hospitality; we do not profess to give dinners; few people in Bath do; Lady Alicia never does; did not even ask her own sister's family, though they were here a month: and I dare say it would be very inconvenient to Mrs Musgrove; put her quite out of her way. I am sure she would rather not come; she cannot feel easy with us. I will ask them all for an evening; that will be much better; that will be a novelty and a treat. They have not seen two such drawing rooms before. They will be delighted to come to-morrow evening. It shall be a regular party, small, but most elegant." And this satisfied Elizabeth: and when the invitation was given to the two present, and promised for the absent, Mary was as completely satisfied. She was particularly asked to meet Mr Elliot, and be introduced to Lady Dalrymple

and Miss Carteret, who were fortunately already engaged to come; and she could not have received a more gratifying attention. Miss Elliot was to have the honour of calling on Mrs Musgrove in the course of the morning; and Anne walked off with Charles and Mary, to go and see her and Henrietta directly.

Her plan of sitting with Lady Russell must give way for the present. They all three called in Rivers Street for a couple of minutes; but Anne convinced herself that a day's delay of the intended communication could be of no consequence, and hastened forward to the White Hart, to see again the friends and companions of the last autumn, with an eagerness of goodwill which many associations contributed to form.

They found Mrs Musgrove and her daughter within, and by themselves, and Anne had the kindest welcome from each. Henrietta was exactly in that state of recently-improved views, of fresh-formed happiness, which made her full of regard and interest for everybody she had ever liked before at all; and Mrs Musgrove's real affection had been won by her usefulness when they were in distress. It was a heartiness, and a warmth, and a sincerity which Anne delighted in the more, from the sad want of such blessings at home. She was entreated to give them as much of her time as possible, invited for every day and all day long, or rather claimed as part of the family; and, in return, she naturally fell into all her wonted ways of attention and assistance, and on Charles's leaving them together, was listening to Mrs Musgrove's history of Louisa, and to Henrietta's of herself, giving opinions on business, and recommendations to shops; with intervals of every help which Mary required, from altering her ribbon to settling her accounts; from finding her keys, and assorting her trinkets, to trying to convince her that she was not ill-used by anybody; which Mary, well amused as she generally was, in her station at a window overlooking the entrance to the Pump Room, could not but have her moments of imagining.

A morning of thorough confusion was to be expected. A large party in an hotel ensured a quick-changing, unsettled scene. One five minutes brought a note, the next a parcel; and Anne had not been there half an hour, when their dining-room, spacious as it was, seemed more than half filled: a party of steady old friends were seated around Mrs Musgrove, and Charles came

back with Captains Harville and Wentworth. The appearance of the latter could not be more than the surprise of the moment. It was impossible for her to have forgotten to feel that this arrival of their common friends must be soon bringing them together again. Their last meeting had been most important in opening his feelings; she had derived from it a delightful conviction; but she feared from his looks, that the same unfortunate persuasion, which had hastened him away from the Concert Room, still governed. He did not seem to want to be near enough for conversation.

She tried to be calm, and leave things to take their course, and tried to dwell much on this argument of rational dependence:--"Surely, if there be constant attachment on each side, our hearts must understand each other ere long. We are not boy and girl, to be captiously irritable, misled by every moment's inadvertence, and wantonly playing with our own happiness." And yet, a few minutes afterwards, she felt as if their being in company with each other, under their present circumstances, could only be exposing them to inadvertencies and misconstructions of the most mischievous kind.

"Anne," cried Mary, still at her window, "there is Mrs Clay, I am sure, standing under the colonnade, and a gentleman with her. I saw them turn the corner from Bath Street just now. They seemed deep in talk. Who is it? Come, and tell me. Good heavens! I recollect. It is Mr Elliot himself."

"No," cried Anne, quickly, "it cannot be Mr Elliot, I assure you. He was to leave Bath at nine this morning, and does not come back till to-morrow."

As she spoke, she felt that Captain Wentworth was looking at her, the consciousness of which vexed and embarrassed her, and made her regret that she had said so much, simple as it was.

Mary, resenting that she should be supposed not to know her own cousin, began talking very warmly about the family features, and protesting still more positively that it was Mr Elliot, calling again upon Anne to come and look for herself, but Anne did not mean to stir, and tried to be cool and unconcerned. Her distress returned, however, on perceiving smiles and intelligent glances pass between two or three of the lady visitors, as if they believed themselves quite in the secret. It was evident that the report

concerning her had spread, and a short pause succeeded, which seemed to ensure that it would now spread farther.

"Do come, Anne," cried Mary, "come and look yourself. You will be too late if you do not make haste. They are parting; they are shaking hands. He is turning away. Not know Mr Elliot, indeed! You seem to have forgot all about Lyme."

To pacify Mary, and perhaps screen her own embarrassment, Anne did move quietly to the window. She was just in time to ascertain that it really was Mr Elliot, which she had never believed, before he disappeared on one side, as Mrs Clay walked quickly off on the other; and checking the surprise which she could not but feel at such an appearance of friendly conference between two persons of totally opposite interest, she calmly said, "Yes, it is Mr Elliot, certainly. He has changed his hour of going, I suppose, that is all, or I may be mistaken, I might not attend;" and walked back to her chair, recomposed, and with the comfortable hope of having acquitted herself well.

The visitors took their leave; and Charles, having civilly seen them off, and then made a face at them, and abused them for coming, began with--

"Well, mother, I have done something for you that you will like. I have been to the theatre, and secured a box for to-morrow night. A'n't I a good boy? I know you love a play; and there is room for us all. It holds nine. I have engaged Captain Wentworth. Anne will not be sorry to join us, I am sure. We all like a play. Have not I done well, mother?"

Mrs Musgrove was good humouredly beginning to express her perfect readiness for the play, if Henrietta and all the others liked it, when Mary eagerly interrupted her by exclaiming--

"Good heavens, Charles! how can you think of such a thing? Take a box for to-morrow night! Have you forgot that we are engaged to Camden Place to-morrow night? and that we were most particularly asked to meet Lady Dalrymple and her daughter, and Mr Elliot, and all the principal family connexions, on purpose to be introduced to them? How can you be so forgetful?"

"Phoo! phoo!" replied Charles, "what's an evening party? Never worth remembering. Your father might have asked us to dinner, I think, if he had wanted to see us. You may do as you like, but I shall go to the play."

"Oh! Charles, I declare it will be too abominable if you do, when you promised to go."

"No, I did not promise. I only smirked and bowed, and said the word 'happy.' There was no promise."

"But you must go, Charles. It would be unpardonable to fail. We were asked on purpose to be introduced. There was always such a great connexion between the Dalrymples and ourselves. Nothing ever happened on either side that was not announced immediately. We are quite near relations, you know; and Mr Elliot too, whom you ought so particularly to be acquainted with! Every attention is due to Mr Elliot. Consider, my father's heir: the future representative of the family."

"Don't talk to me about heirs and representatives," cried Charles. "I am not one of those who neglect the reigning power to bow to the rising sun. If I would not go for the sake of your father, I should think it scandalous to go for the sake of his heir. What is Mr Elliot to me?" The careless expression was life to Anne, who saw that Captain Wentworth was all attention, looking and listening with his whole soul; and that the last words brought his enquiring eyes from Charles to herself.

Charles and Mary still talked on in the same style; he, half serious and half jesting, maintaining the scheme for the play, and she, invariably serious, most warmly opposing it, and not omitting to make it known that, however determined to go to Camden Place herself, she should not think herself very well used, if they went to the play without her. Mrs Musgrove interposed.

"We had better put it off. Charles, you had much better go back and change the box for Tuesday. It would be a pity to be divided, and we should be losing Miss Anne, too, if there is a party at her father's; and I am sure neither Henrietta nor I should care at all for the play, if Miss Anne could not be with us."

Anne felt truly obliged to her for such kindness; and quite as much so for the opportunity it gave her of decidedly saying--

"If it depended only on my inclination, ma'am, the party at home (excepting on Mary's account) would not be the smallest impediment. I have no pleasure in the sort of meeting, and should be too happy to change it for a play, and with you. But, it had better not be attempted, perhaps." She had spoken it; but she trembled when it was done, conscious that her words were listened to, and daring not even to try to observe their effect.

It was soon generally agreed that Tuesday should be the day; Charles only reserving the advantage of still teasing his wife, by persisting that he would go to the play to-morrow if nobody else would.

Captain Wentworth left his seat, and walked to the fire-place; probably for the sake of walking away from it soon afterwards, and taking a station, with less bare-faced design, by Anne.

"You have not been long enough in Bath," said he, "to enjoy the evening parties of the place."

"Oh! no. The usual character of them has nothing for me. I am no card-player."

"You were not formerly, I know. You did not use to like cards; but time makes many changes."

"I am not yet so much changed," cried Anne, and stopped, fearing she hardly knew what misconstruction. After waiting a few moments he said, and as if it were the result of immediate feeling, "It is a period, indeed! Eight years and a half is a period."

Whether he would have proceeded farther was left to Anne's imagination to ponder over in a calmer hour; for while still hearing the sounds he had uttered, she was startled to other subjects by Henrietta, eager to make use of the present leisure for getting out, and calling on her companions to lose no time, lest somebody else should come in.

They were obliged to move. Anne talked of being perfectly ready, and tried to look it; but she felt that could Henrietta have known the regret and reluctance of her heart in quitting that chair, in preparing to quit the room, she would have found, in all her own sensations for her cousin, in the very security of his affection, wherewith to pity her.

Their preparations, however, were stopped short. Alarming sounds were heard; other visitors approached, and the door was thrown open for Sir Walter and Miss Elliot, whose entrance seemed to give a general chill. Anne felt an instant oppression, and wherever she looked saw symptoms of the same. The comfort, the freedom, the gaiety of the room was over, hushed into cold composure, determined silence, or insipid talk, to meet the heartless elegance of her father and sister. How mortifying to feel that it was so!

Her jealous eye was satisfied in one particular. Captain Wentworth was acknowledged again by each, by Elizabeth more graciously than before. She even addressed him once, and looked at him more than once. Elizabeth was, in fact, revolving a great measure. The sequel explained it. After the waste of a few minutes in saying the proper nothings, she began to give the invitation which was to comprise all the remaining dues of the Musgroves. "To-morrow evening, to meet a few friends: no formal party." It was all said very gracefully, and the cards with which she had provided herself, the "Miss Elliot at home," were laid on the table, with a courteous, comprehensive smile to all, and one smile and one card more decidedly for Captain Wentworth. The truth was, that Elizabeth had been long enough in Bath to understand the importance of a man of such an air and appearance as his. The past was nothing. The present was that Captain Wentworth would move about well in her drawing-room. The card was pointedly given, and Sir Walter and Elizabeth arose and disappeared.

The interruption had been short, though severe, and ease and animation returned to most of those they left as the door shut them out, but not to Anne. She could think only of the invitation she had with such astonishment witnessed, and of the manner in which it had been received; a manner of doubtful meaning, of surprise rather than gratification, of polite acknowledgement rather than acceptance. She knew him; she saw disdain in



his eye, and could not venture to believe that he had determined to accept such an offering, as an atonement for all the insolence of the past. Her spirits sank. He held the card in his hand after they were gone, as if deeply considering it.

"Only think of Elizabeth's including everybody!" whispered Mary very audibly. "I do not wonder Captain Wentworth is delighted! You see he cannot put the card out of his hand."

Anne caught his eye, saw his cheeks glow, and his mouth form itself into a momentary expression of contempt, and turned away, that she might neither see nor hear more to vex her.

The party separated. The gentlemen had their own pursuits, the ladies proceeded on their own business, and they met no more while Anne belonged to them. She was earnestly begged to return and dine, and give them all the rest of the day, but her spirits had been so long exerted that at present she felt unequal to more, and fit only for home, where she might be sure of being as silent as she chose.

Promising to be with them the whole of the following morning, therefore, she closed the fatigues of the present by a toilsome walk to Camden Place, there to spend the evening chiefly in listening to the busy arrangements of Elizabeth and Mrs Clay for the morrow's party, the frequent enumeration of the persons invited, and the continually improving detail of all the embellishments which were to make it the most completely elegant of its kind in Bath, while harassing herself with the never-ending question, of whether Captain Wentworth would come or not? They were reckoning him as certain, but with her it was a gnawing solicitude never appeased for five minutes together. She generally thought he would come, because she generally thought he ought; but it was a case which she could not so shape into any positive act of duty or discretion, as inevitably to defy the suggestions of very opposite feelings.

She only roused herself from the broodings of this restless agitation, to let Mrs Clay know that she had been seen with Mr Elliot three hours after his being supposed to be out of Bath, for having watched in vain for some intimation of the interview from the lady herself, she determined to mention

it, and it seemed to her there was guilt in Mrs Clay's face as she listened. It was transient: cleared away in an instant; but Anne could imagine she read there the consciousness of having, by some complication of mutual trick, or some overbearing authority of his, been obliged to attend (perhaps for half an hour) to his lectures and restrictions on her designs on Sir Walter. She exclaimed, however, with a very tolerable imitation of nature:--

"Oh! dear! very true. Only think, Miss Elliot, to my great surprise I met with Mr Elliot in Bath Street. I was never more astonished. He turned back and walked with me to the Pump Yard. He had been prevented setting off for Thornberry, but I really forget by what; for I was in a hurry, and could not much attend, and I can only answer for his being determined not to be delayed in his return. He wanted to know how early he might be admitted to-morrow. He was full of 'to-morrow,' and it is very evident that I have been full of it too, ever since I entered the house, and learnt the extension of your plan and all that had happened, or my seeing him could never have gone so entirely out of my head."

## Chapter 23

One day only had passed since Anne's conversation with Mrs Smith; but a keener interest had succeeded, and she was now so little touched by Mr Elliot's conduct, except by its effects in one quarter, that it became a matter of course the next morning, still to defer her explanatory visit in Rivers Street. She had promised to be with the Musgroves from breakfast to dinner. Her faith was plighted, and Mr Elliot's character, like the Sultanness Scheherazade's head, must live another day.

She could not keep her appointment punctually, however; the weather was unfavourable, and she had grieved over the rain on her friends' account, and felt it very much on her own, before she was able to attempt the walk. When she reached the White Hart, and made her way to the proper apartment, she found herself neither arriving quite in time, nor the first to

arrive. The party before her were, Mrs Musgrove, talking to Mrs Croft, and Captain Harville to Captain Wentworth; and she immediately heard that Mary and Henrietta, too impatient to wait, had gone out the moment it had cleared, but would be back again soon, and that the strictest injunctions had been left with Mrs Musgrove to keep her there till they returned. She had only to submit, sit down, be outwardly composed, and feel herself plunged at once in all the agitations which she had merely laid her account of tasting a little before the morning closed. There was no delay, no waste of time. She was deep in the happiness of such misery, or the misery of such happiness, instantly. Two minutes after her entering the room, Captain Wentworth said--

"We will write the letter we were talking of, Harville, now, if you will give me materials."

Materials were at hand, on a separate table; he went to it, and nearly turning his back to them all, was engrossed by writing.

Mrs Musgrove was giving Mrs Croft the history of her eldest daughter's engagement, and just in that inconvenient tone of voice which was perfectly audible while it pretended to be a whisper. Anne felt that she did not belong to the conversation, and yet, as Captain Harville seemed thoughtful and not disposed to talk, she could not avoid hearing many undesirable particulars; such as, "how Mr Musgrove and my brother Hayter had met again and again to talk it over; what my brother Hayter had said one day, and what Mr Musgrove had proposed the next, and what had occurred to my sister Hayter, and what the young people had wished, and what I said at first I never could consent to, but was afterwards persuaded to think might do very well," and a great deal in the same style of open-hearted communication: minutiae which, even with every advantage of taste and delicacy, which good Mrs Musgrove could not give, could be properly interesting only to the principals. Mrs Croft was attending with great good-humour, and whenever she spoke at all, it was very sensibly. Anne hoped the gentlemen might each be too much self-occupied to hear.

"And so, ma'am, all these thing considered," said Mrs Musgrove, in her powerful whisper, "though we could have wished it different, yet, altogether, we did not think it fair to stand out any longer, for Charles

Hayter was quite wild about it, and Henrietta was pretty near as bad; and so we thought they had better marry at once, and make the best of it, as many others have done before them. At any rate, said I, it will be better than a long engagement."

"That is precisely what I was going to observe," cried Mrs Croft. "I would rather have young people settle on a small income at once, and have to struggle with a few difficulties together, than be involved in a long engagement. I always think that no mutual--"

"Oh! dear Mrs Croft," cried Mrs Musgrove, unable to let her finish her speech, "there is nothing I so abominate for young people as a long engagement. It is what I always protested against for my children. It is all very well, I used to say, for young people to be engaged, if there is a certainty of their being able to marry in six months, or even in twelve; but a long engagement--"

"Yes, dear ma'am," said Mrs Croft, "or an uncertain engagement, an engagement which may be long. To begin without knowing that at such a time there will be the means of marrying, I hold to be very unsafe and unwise, and what I think all parents should prevent as far as they can."

Anne found an unexpected interest here. She felt its application to herself, felt it in a nervous thrill all over her; and at the same moment that her eyes instinctively glanced towards the distant table, Captain Wentworth's pen ceased to move, his head was raised, pausing, listening, and he turned round the next instant to give a look, one quick, conscious look at her.

The two ladies continued to talk, to re-urge the same admitted truths, and enforce them with such examples of the ill effect of a contrary practice as had fallen within their observation, but Anne heard nothing distinctly; it was only a buzz of words in her ear, her mind was in confusion.

Captain Harville, who had in truth been hearing none of it, now left his seat, and moved to a window, and Anne seeming to watch him, though it was from thorough absence of mind, became gradually sensible that he was inviting her to join him where he stood. He looked at her with a smile, and a

little motion of the head, which expressed, "Come to me, I have something to say;" and the unaffected, easy kindness of manner which denoted the feelings of an older acquaintance than he really was, strongly enforced the invitation. She roused herself and went to him. The window at which he stood was at the other end of the room from where the two ladies were sitting, and though nearer to Captain Wentworth's table, not very near. As she joined him, Captain Harville's countenance re-assumed the serious, thoughtful expression which seemed its natural character.

"Look here," said he, unfolding a parcel in his hand, and displaying a small miniature painting, "do you know who that is?"

"Certainly: Captain Benwick."

"Yes, and you may guess who it is for. But," (in a deep tone,) "it was not done for her. Miss Elliot, do you remember our walking together at Lyme, and grieving for him? I little thought then--but no matter. This was drawn at the Cape. He met with a clever young German artist at the Cape, and in compliance with a promise to my poor sister, sat to him, and was bringing it home for her; and I have now the charge of getting it properly set for another! It was a commission to me! But who else was there to employ? I hope I can allow for him. I am not sorry, indeed, to make it over to another. He undertakes it;" (looking towards Captain Wentworth,) "he is writing about it now." And with a quivering lip he wound up the whole by adding, "Poor Fanny! she would not have forgotten him so soon!"

"No," replied Anne, in a low, feeling voice. "That I can easily believe."

"It was not in her nature. She doted on him."

"It would not be the nature of any woman who truly loved."

Captain Harville smiled, as much as to say, "Do you claim that for your sex?" and she answered the question, smiling also, "Yes. We certainly do not forget you as soon as you forget us. It is, perhaps, our fate rather than our merit. We cannot help ourselves. We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us. You are forced on exertion. You have always a profession, pursuits, business of some sort or other, to take you back into

the world immediately, and continual occupation and change soon weaken impressions."

"Granting your assertion that the world does all this so soon for men (which, however, I do not think I shall grant), it does not apply to Benwick. He has not been forced upon any exertion. The peace turned him on shore at the very moment, and he has been living with us, in our little family circle, ever since."

"True," said Anne, "very true; I did not recollect; but what shall we say now, Captain Harville? If the change be not from outward circumstances, it must be from within; it must be nature, man's nature, which has done the business for Captain Benwick."

"No, no, it is not man's nature. I will not allow it to be more man's nature than woman's to be inconstant and forget those they do love, or have loved. I believe the reverse. I believe in a true analogy between our bodily frames and our mental; and that as our bodies are the strongest, so are our feelings; capable of bearing most rough usage, and riding out the heaviest weather."

"Your feelings may be the strongest," replied Anne, "but the same spirit of analogy will authorise me to assert that ours are the most tender. Man is more robust than woman, but he is not longer lived; which exactly explains my view of the nature of their attachments. Nay, it would be too hard upon you, if it were otherwise. You have difficulties, and privations, and dangers enough to struggle with. You are always labouring and toiling, exposed to every risk and hardship. Your home, country, friends, all quitted. Neither time, nor health, nor life, to be called your own. It would be hard, indeed" (with a faltering voice), "if woman's feelings were to be added to all this."

"We shall never agree upon this question," Captain Harville was beginning to say, when a slight noise called their attention to Captain Wentworth's hitherto perfectly quiet division of the room. It was nothing more than that his pen had fallen down; but Anne was startled at finding him nearer than she had supposed, and half inclined to suspect that the pen had only fallen because he had been occupied by them, striving to catch sounds, which yet she did not think he could have caught.

"Have you finished your letter?" said Captain Harville.

"Not quite, a few lines more. I shall have done in five minutes."

"There is no hurry on my side. I am only ready whenever you are. I am in very good anchorage here," (smiling at Anne,) "well supplied, and want for nothing. No hurry for a signal at all. Well, Miss Elliot," (lowering his voice,) "as I was saying we shall never agree, I suppose, upon this point. No man and woman, would, probably. But let me observe that all histories are against you--all stories, prose and verse. If I had such a memory as Benwick, I could bring you fifty quotations in a moment on my side the argument, and I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs, all talk of woman's fickleness. But perhaps you will say, these were all written by men."

"Perhaps I shall. Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything."

"But how shall we prove anything?"

"We never shall. We never can expect to prove any thing upon such a point. It is a difference of opinion which does not admit of proof. We each begin, probably, with a little bias towards our own sex; and upon that bias build every circumstance in favour of it which has occurred within our own circle; many of which circumstances (perhaps those very cases which strike us the most) may be precisely such as cannot be brought forward without betraying a confidence, or in some respect saying what should not be said."

"Ah!" cried Captain Harville, in a tone of strong feeling, "if I could but make you comprehend what a man suffers when he takes a last look at his wife and children, and watches the boat that he has sent them off in, as long as it is in sight, and then turns away and says, 'God knows whether we ever meet again!' And then, if I could convey to you the glow of his soul when he does see them again; when, coming back after a twelvemonth's absence, perhaps, and obliged to put into another port, he calculates how soon it be

possible to get them there, pretending to deceive himself, and saying, 'They cannot be here till such a day,' but all the while hoping for them twelve hours sooner, and seeing them arrive at last, as if Heaven had given them wings, by many hours sooner still! If I could explain to you all this, and all that a man can bear and do, and glories to do, for the sake of these treasures of his existence! I speak, you know, only of such men as have hearts!" pressing his own with emotion.

"Oh!" cried Anne eagerly, "I hope I do justice to all that is felt by you, and by those who resemble you. God forbid that I should undervalue the warm and faithful feelings of any of my fellow-creatures! I should deserve utter contempt if I dared to suppose that true attachment and constancy were known only by woman. No, I believe you capable of everything great and good in your married lives. I believe you equal to every important exertion, and to every domestic forbearance, so long as--if I may be allowed the expression--so long as you have an object. I mean while the woman you love lives, and lives for you. All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one; you need not covet it), is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone."

She could not immediately have uttered another sentence; her heart was too full, her breath too much oppressed.

"You are a good soul," cried Captain Harville, putting his hand on her arm, quite affectionately. "There is no quarrelling with you. And when I think of Benwick, my tongue is tied."

Their attention was called towards the others. Mrs Croft was taking leave.

"Here, Frederick, you and I part company, I believe," said she. "I am going home, and you have an engagement with your friend. To-night we may have the pleasure of all meeting again at your party," (turning to Anne.) "We had your sister's card yesterday, and I understood Frederick had a card too, though I did not see it; and you are disengaged, Frederick, are you not, as well as ourselves?"



Captain Wentworth was folding up a letter in great haste, and either could not or would not answer fully.

"Yes," said he, "very true; here we separate, but Harville and I shall soon be after you; that is, Harville, if you are ready, I am in half a minute. I know you will not be sorry to be off. I shall be at your service in half a minute."

Mrs Croft left them, and Captain Wentworth, having sealed his letter with great rapidity, was indeed ready, and had even a hurried, agitated air, which shewed impatience to be gone. Anne knew not how to understand it. She had the kindest "Good morning, God bless you!" from Captain Harville, but from him not a word, nor a look! He had passed out of the room without a look!

She had only time, however, to move closer to the table where he had been writing, when footsteps were heard returning; the door opened, it was himself. He begged their pardon, but he had forgotten his gloves, and instantly crossing the room to the writing table, he drew out a letter from under the scattered paper, placed it before Anne with eyes of glowing entreaty fixed on her for a time, and hastily collecting his gloves, was again out of the room, almost before Mrs Musgrove was aware of his being in it: the work of an instant!

The revolution which one instant had made in Anne, was almost beyond expression. The letter, with a direction hardly legible, to "Miss A. E.--," was evidently the one which he had been folding so hastily. While supposed to be writing only to Captain Benwick, he had been also addressing her! On the contents of that letter depended all which this world could do for her. Anything was possible, anything might be defied rather than suspense. Mrs Musgrove had little arrangements of her own at her own table; to their protection she must trust, and sinking into the chair which he had occupied, succeeding to the very spot where he had leaned and written, her eyes devoured the following words:

"I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell

me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own than when you almost broke it, eight years and a half ago. Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant. You alone have brought me to Bath. For you alone, I think and plan. Have you not seen this? Can you fail to have understood my wishes? I had not waited even these ten days, could I have read your feelings, as I think you must have penetrated mine. I can hardly write. I am every instant hearing something which overpowers me. You sink your voice, but I can distinguish the tones of that voice when they would be lost on others. Too good, too excellent creature! You do us justice, indeed. You do believe that there is true attachment and constancy among men. Believe it to be most fervent, most undeviating, in F. W.

"I must go, uncertain of my fate; but I shall return hither, or follow your party, as soon as possible. A word, a look, will be enough to decide whether I enter your father's house this evening or never."

Such a letter was not to be soon recovered from. Half an hour's solitude and reflection might have tranquillized her; but the ten minutes only which now passed before she was interrupted, with all the restraints of her situation, could do nothing towards tranquillity. Every moment rather brought fresh agitation. It was overpowering happiness. And before she was beyond the first stage of full sensation, Charles, Mary, and Henrietta all came in.

The absolute necessity of seeming like herself produced then an immediate struggle; but after a while she could do no more. She began not to understand a word they said, and was obliged to plead indisposition and excuse herself. They could then see that she looked very ill, were shocked and concerned, and would not stir without her for the world. This was dreadful. Would they only have gone away, and left her in the quiet possession of that room it would have been her cure; but to have them all standing or waiting around her was distracting, and in desperation, she said she would go home.

"By all means, my dear," cried Mrs Musgrove, "go home directly, and take care of yourself, that you may be fit for the evening. I wish Sarah was here to doctor you, but I am no doctor myself. Charles, ring and order a chair. She must not walk."

But the chair would never do. Worse than all! To lose the possibility of speaking two words to Captain Wentworth in the course of her quiet, solitary progress up the town (and she felt almost certain of meeting him) could not be borne. The chair was earnestly protested against, and Mrs Musgrove, who thought only of one sort of illness, having assured herself with some anxiety, that there had been no fall in the case; that Anne had not at any time lately slipped down, and got a blow on her head; that she was

perfectly convinced of having had no fall; could part with her cheerfully, and depend on finding her better at night.

Anxious to omit no possible precaution, Anne struggled, and said--

"I am afraid, ma'am, that it is not perfectly understood. Pray be so good as to mention to the other gentlemen that we hope to see your whole party this evening. I am afraid there had been some mistake; and I wish you particularly to assure Captain Harville and Captain Wentworth, that we hope to see them both."

"Oh! my dear, it is quite understood, I give you my word. Captain Harville has no thought but of going."

"Do you think so? But I am afraid; and I should be so very sorry. Will you promise me to mention it, when you see them again? You will see them both this morning, I dare say. Do promise me."

"To be sure I will, if you wish it. Charles, if you see Captain Harville anywhere, remember to give Miss Anne's message. But indeed, my dear, you need not be uneasy. Captain Harville holds himself quite engaged, I'll answer for it; and Captain Wentworth the same, I dare say."

Anne could do no more; but her heart prophesied some mischance to damp the perfection of her felicity. It could not be very lasting, however. Even if he did not come to Camden Place himself, it would be in her power to send an intelligible sentence by Captain Harville. Another momentary vexation occurred. Charles, in his real concern and good nature, would go home with her; there was no preventing him. This was almost cruel. But she could not be long ungrateful; he was sacrificing an engagement at a gunsmith's, to be of use to her; and she set off with him, with no feeling but gratitude apparent.

They were on Union Street, when a quicker step behind, a something of familiar sound, gave her two moments' preparation for the sight of Captain Wentworth. He joined them; but, as if irresolute whether to join or to pass on, said nothing, only looked. Anne could command herself enough to receive that look, and not repulsively. The cheeks which had been pale now

glowed, and the movements which had hesitated were decided. He walked by her side. Presently, struck by a sudden thought, Charles said--

"Captain Wentworth, which way are you going? Only to Gay Street, or farther up the town?"

"I hardly know," replied Captain Wentworth, surprised.

"Are you going as high as Belmont? Are you going near Camden Place? Because, if you are, I shall have no scruple in asking you to take my place, and give Anne your arm to her father's door. She is rather done for this morning, and must not go so far without help, and I ought to be at that fellow's in the Market Place. He promised me the sight of a capital gun he is just going to send off; said he would keep it unpacked to the last possible moment, that I might see it; and if I do not turn back now, I have no chance. By his description, a good deal like the second size double-barrel of mine, which you shot with one day round Winthrop."

There could not be an objection. There could be only the most proper alacrity, a most obliging compliance for public view; and smiles reined in and spirits dancing in private rapture. In half a minute Charles was at the bottom of Union Street again, and the other two proceeding together: and soon words enough had passed between them to decide their direction towards the comparatively quiet and retired gravel walk, where the power of conversation would make the present hour a blessing indeed, and prepare it for all the immortality which the happiest recollections of their own future lives could bestow. There they exchanged again those feelings and those promises which had once before seemed to secure everything, but which had been followed by so many, many years of division and estrangement. There they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their re-union, than when it had been first projected; more tender, more tried, more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment; more equal to act, more justified in acting. And there, as they slowly paced the gradual ascent, heedless of every group around them, seeing neither sauntering politicians, bustling housekeepers, flirting girls, nor nursery-maids and children, they could indulge in those retrospections and acknowledgements, and especially in those explanations of what had directly preceded the present moment, which were so poignant

and so ceaseless in interest. All the little variations of the last week were gone through; and of yesterday and today there could scarcely be an end.

She had not mistaken him. Jealousy of Mr Elliot had been the retarding weight, the doubt, the torment. That had begun to operate in the very hour of first meeting her in Bath; that had returned, after a short suspension, to ruin the concert; and that had influenced him in everything he had said and done, or omitted to say and do, in the last four-and-twenty hours. It had been gradually yielding to the better hopes which her looks, or words, or actions occasionally encouraged; it had been vanquished at last by those sentiments and those tones which had reached him while she talked with Captain Harville; and under the irresistible governance of which he had seized a sheet of paper, and poured out his feelings.

Of what he had then written, nothing was to be retracted or qualified. He persisted in having loved none but her. She had never been supplanted. He never even believed himself to see her equal. Thus much indeed he was obliged to acknowledge: that he had been constant unconsciously, nay unintentionally; that he had meant to forget her, and believed it to be done. He had imagined himself indifferent, when he had only been angry; and he had been unjust to her merits, because he had been a sufferer from them. Her character was now fixed on his mind as perfection itself, maintaining the loveliest medium of fortitude and gentleness; but he was obliged to acknowledge that only at Uppercross had he learnt to do her justice, and only at Lyme had he begun to understand himself. At Lyme, he had received lessons of more than one sort. The passing admiration of Mr Elliot had at least roused him, and the scenes on the Cobb and at Captain Harville's had fixed her superiority.

In his preceding attempts to attach himself to Louisa Musgrove (the attempts of angry pride), he protested that he had for ever felt it to be impossible; that he had not cared, could not care, for Louisa; though till that day, till the leisure for reflection which followed it, he had not understood the perfect excellence of the mind with which Louisa's could so ill bear a comparison, or the perfect unrivalled hold it possessed over his own. There, he had learnt to distinguish between the steadiness of principle and the obstinacy of self-will, between the darings of heedlessness and the

resolution of a collected mind. There he had seen everything to exalt in his estimation the woman he had lost; and there begun to deplore the pride, the folly, the madness of resentment, which had kept him from trying to regain her when thrown in his way.

From that period his penance had become severe. He had no sooner been free from the horror and remorse attending the first few days of Louisa's accident, no sooner begun to feel himself alive again, than he had begun to feel himself, though alive, not at liberty.

"I found," said he, "that I was considered by Harville an engaged man! That neither Harville nor his wife entertained a doubt of our mutual attachment. I was startled and shocked. To a degree, I could contradict this instantly; but, when I began to reflect that others might have felt the same--her own family, nay, perhaps herself--I was no longer at my own disposal. I was hers in honour if she wished it. I had been unguarded. I had not thought seriously on this subject before. I had not considered that my excessive intimacy must have its danger of ill consequence in many ways; and that I had no right to be trying whether I could attach myself to either of the girls, at the risk of raising even an unpleasant report, were there no other ill effects. I had been grossly wrong, and must abide the consequences."

He found too late, in short, that he had entangled himself; and that precisely as he became fully satisfied of his not caring for Louisa at all, he must regard himself as bound to her, if her sentiments for him were what the Harvilles supposed. It determined him to leave Lyme, and await her complete recovery elsewhere. He would gladly weaken, by any fair means, whatever feelings or speculations concerning him might exist; and he went, therefore, to his brother's, meaning after a while to return to Kellynch, and act as circumstances might require.

"I was six weeks with Edward," said he, "and saw him happy. I could have no other pleasure. I deserved none. He enquired after you very particularly; asked even if you were personally altered, little suspecting that to my eye you could never alter."

Anne smiled, and let it pass. It was too pleasing a blunder for a reproach. It is something for a woman to be assured, in her eight-and-twentieth year,

that she has not lost one charm of earlier youth; but the value of such homage was inexpressibly increased to Anne, by comparing it with former words, and feeling it to be the result, not the cause of a revival of his warm attachment.

He had remained in Shropshire, lamenting the blindness of his own pride, and the blunders of his own calculations, till at once released from Louisa by the astonishing and felicitous intelligence of her engagement with Benwick.

"Here," said he, "ended the worst of my state; for now I could at least put myself in the way of happiness; I could exert myself; I could do something. But to be waiting so long in inaction, and waiting only for evil, had been dreadful. Within the first five minutes I said, 'I will be at Bath on Wednesday,' and I was. Was it unpardonable to think it worth my while to come? and to arrive with some degree of hope? You were single. It was possible that you might retain the feelings of the past, as I did; and one encouragement happened to be mine. I could never doubt that you would be loved and sought by others, but I knew to a certainty that you had refused one man, at least, of better pretensions than myself; and I could not help often saying, 'Was this for me?'"

Their first meeting in Milsom Street afforded much to be said, but the concert still more. That evening seemed to be made up of exquisite moments. The moment of her stepping forward in the Octagon Room to speak to him: the moment of Mr Elliot's appearing and tearing her away, and one or two subsequent moments, marked by returning hope or increasing despondency, were dwelt on with energy.

"To see you," cried he, "in the midst of those who could not be my well-wishers; to see your cousin close by you, conversing and smiling, and feel all the horrible eligibilities and proprieties of the match! To consider it as the certain wish of every being who could hope to influence you! Even if your own feelings were reluctant or indifferent, to consider what powerful supports would be his! Was it not enough to make the fool of me which I appeared? How could I look on without agony? Was not the very sight of the friend who sat behind you, was not the recollection of what had been,



the knowledge of her influence, the indelible, immovable impression of what persuasion had once done--was it not all against me?"

"You should have distinguished," replied Anne. "You should not have suspected me now; the case is so different, and my age is so different. If I was wrong in yielding to persuasion once, remember that it was to persuasion exerted on the side of safety, not of risk. When I yielded, I thought it was to duty, but no duty could be called in aid here. In marrying a man indifferent to me, all risk would have been incurred, and all duty violated."

"Perhaps I ought to have reasoned thus," he replied, "but I could not. I could not derive benefit from the late knowledge I had acquired of your character. I could not bring it into play; it was overwhelmed, buried, lost in those earlier feelings which I had been smarting under year after year. I could think of you only as one who had yielded, who had given me up, who had been influenced by any one rather than by me. I saw you with the very person who had guided you in that year of misery. I had no reason to believe her of less authority now. The force of habit was to be added."

"I should have thought," said Anne, "that my manner to yourself might have spared you much or all of this."

"No, no! your manner might be only the ease which your engagement to another man would give. I left you in this belief; and yet, I was determined to see you again. My spirits rallied with the morning, and I felt that I had still a motive for remaining here."

At last Anne was at home again, and happier than any one in that house could have conceived. All the surprise and suspense, and every other painful part of the morning dissipated by this conversation, she re-entered the house so happy as to be obliged to find an alloy in some momentary apprehensions of its being impossible to last. An interval of meditation, serious and grateful, was the best corrective of everything dangerous in such high-wrought felicity; and she went to her room, and grew steadfast and fearless in the thankfulness of her enjoyment.

The evening came, the drawing-rooms were lighted up, the company assembled. It was but a card party, it was but a mixture of those who had never met before, and those who met too often; a commonplace business, too numerous for intimacy, too small for variety; but Anne had never found an evening shorter. Glowing and lovely in sensibility and happiness, and more generally admired than she thought about or cared for, she had cheerful or forbearing feelings for every creature around her. Mr Elliot was there; she avoided, but she could pity him. The Wallises, she had amusement in understanding them. Lady Dalrymple and Miss Carteret--they would soon be innoxious cousins to her. She cared not for Mrs Clay, and had nothing to blush for in the public manners of her father and sister. With the Musgroves, there was the happy chat of perfect ease; with Captain Harville, the kind-hearted intercourse of brother and sister; with Lady Russell, attempts at conversation, which a delicious consciousness cut short; with Admiral and Mrs Croft, everything of peculiar cordiality and fervent interest, which the same consciousness sought to conceal; and with Captain Wentworth, some moments of communications continually occurring, and always the hope of more, and always the knowledge of his being there.

It was in one of these short meetings, each apparently occupied in admiring a fine display of greenhouse plants, that she said--

"I have been thinking over the past, and trying impartially to judge of the right and wrong, I mean with regard to myself; and I must believe that I was right, much as I suffered from it, that I was perfectly right in being guided by the friend whom you will love better than you do now. To me, she was in the place of a parent. Do not mistake me, however. I am not saying that she did not err in her advice. It was, perhaps, one of those cases in which advice is good or bad only as the event decides; and for myself, I certainly never should, in any circumstance of tolerable similarity, give such advice. But I mean, that I was right in submitting to her, and that if I had done otherwise, I should have suffered more in continuing the engagement than I did even in giving it up, because I should have suffered in my conscience. I have now, as far as such a sentiment is allowable in human nature, nothing to reproach myself with; and if I mistake not, a strong sense of duty is no bad part of a woman's portion."

He looked at her, looked at Lady Russell, and looking again at her, replied, as if in cool deliberation--

"Not yet. But there are hopes of her being forgiven in time. I trust to being in charity with her soon. But I too have been thinking over the past, and a question has suggested itself, whether there may not have been one person more my enemy even than that lady? My own self. Tell me if, when I returned to England in the year eight, with a few thousand pounds, and was posted into the Laconia, if I had then written to you, would you have answered my letter? Would you, in short, have renewed the engagement then?"

"Would I!" was all her answer; but the accent was decisive enough.

"Good God!" he cried, "you would! It is not that I did not think of it, or desire it, as what could alone crown all my other success; but I was proud, too proud to ask again. I did not understand you. I shut my eyes, and would not understand you, or do you justice. This is a recollection which ought to make me forgive every one sooner than myself. Six years of separation and suffering might have been spared. It is a sort of pain, too, which is new to me. I have been used to the gratification of believing myself to earn every blessing that I enjoyed. I have valued myself on honourable toils and just rewards. Like other great men under reverses," he added, with a smile. "I must endeavour to subdue my mind to my fortune. I must learn to brook being happier than I deserve."

## Chapter 24

Who can be in doubt of what followed? When any two young people take it into their heads to marry, they are pretty sure by perseverance to carry their point, be they ever so poor, or ever so imprudent, or ever so little likely to be necessary to each other's ultimate comfort. This may be bad morality to conclude with, but I believe it to be truth; and if such parties

succeed, how should a Captain Wentworth and an Anne Elliot, with the advantage of maturity of mind, consciousness of right, and one independent fortune between them, fail of bearing down every opposition? They might in fact, have borne down a great deal more than they met with, for there was little to distress them beyond the want of graciousness and warmth. Sir Walter made no objection, and Elizabeth did nothing worse than look cold and unconcerned. Captain Wentworth, with five-and-twenty thousand pounds, and as high in his profession as merit and activity could place him, was no longer nobody. He was now esteemed quite worthy to address the daughter of a foolish, spendthrift baronet, who had not had principle or sense enough to maintain himself in the situation in which Providence had placed him, and who could give his daughter at present but a small part of the share of ten thousand pounds which must be hers hereafter.

Sir Walter, indeed, though he had no affection for Anne, and no vanity flattered, to make him really happy on the occasion, was very far from thinking it a bad match for her. On the contrary, when he saw more of Captain Wentworth, saw him repeatedly by daylight, and eyed him well, he was very much struck by his personal claims, and felt that his superiority of appearance might be not unfairly balanced against her superiority of rank; and all this, assisted by his well-sounding name, enabled Sir Walter at last to prepare his pen, with a very good grace, for the insertion of the marriage in the volume of honour.

The only one among them, whose opposition of feeling could excite any serious anxiety was Lady Russell. Anne knew that Lady Russell must be suffering some pain in understanding and relinquishing Mr Elliot, and be making some struggles to become truly acquainted with, and do justice to Captain Wentworth. This however was what Lady Russell had now to do. She must learn to feel that she had been mistaken with regard to both; that she had been unfairly influenced by appearances in each; that because Captain Wentworth's manners had not suited her own ideas, she had been too quick in suspecting them to indicate a character of dangerous impetuosity; and that because Mr Elliot's manners had precisely pleased her in their propriety and correctness, their general politeness and suavity, she had been too quick in receiving them as the certain result of the most correct opinions and well-regulated mind. There was nothing less for Lady

Russell to do, than to admit that she had been pretty completely wrong, and to take up a new set of opinions and of hopes.

There is a quickness of perception in some, a nicety in the discernment of character, a natural penetration, in short, which no experience in others can equal, and Lady Russell had been less gifted in this part of understanding than her young friend. But she was a very good woman, and if her second object was to be sensible and well-judging, her first was to see Anne happy. She loved Anne better than she loved her own abilities; and when the awkwardness of the beginning was over, found little hardship in attaching herself as a mother to the man who was securing the happiness of her other child.

Of all the family, Mary was probably the one most immediately gratified by the circumstance. It was creditable to have a sister married, and she might flatter herself with having been greatly instrumental to the connexion, by keeping Anne with her in the autumn; and as her own sister must be better than her husband's sisters, it was very agreeable that Captain Wentworth should be a richer man than either Captain Benwick or Charles Hayter. She had something to suffer, perhaps, when they came into contact again, in seeing Anne restored to the rights of seniority, and the mistress of a very pretty landaulette; but she had a future to look forward to, of powerful consolation. Anne had no Uppercross Hall before her, no landed estate, no headship of a family; and if they could but keep Captain Wentworth from being made a baronet, she would not change situations with Anne.

It would be well for the eldest sister if she were equally satisfied with her situation, for a change is not very probable there. She had soon the mortification of seeing Mr Elliot withdraw, and no one of proper condition has since presented himself to raise even the unfounded hopes which sunk with him.

The news of his cousin Anne's engagement burst on Mr Elliot most unexpectedly. It deranged his best plan of domestic happiness, his best hope of keeping Sir Walter single by the watchfulness which a son-in-law's rights would have given. But, though discomfited and disappointed, he could still do something for his own interest and his own enjoyment. He soon quitted

Bath; and on Mrs Clay's quitting it soon afterwards, and being next heard of as established under his protection in London, it was evident how double a game he had been playing, and how determined he was to save himself from being cut out by one artful woman, at least.

Mrs Clay's affections had overpowered her interest, and she had sacrificed, for the young man's sake, the possibility of scheming longer for Sir Walter. She has abilities, however, as well as affections; and it is now a doubtful point whether his cunning, or hers, may finally carry the day; whether, after preventing her from being the wife of Sir Walter, he may not be wheedled and caressed at last into making her the wife of Sir William.

It cannot be doubted that Sir Walter and Elizabeth were shocked and mortified by the loss of their companion, and the discovery of their deception in her. They had their great cousins, to be sure, to resort to for comfort; but they must long feel that to flatter and follow others, without being flattered and followed in turn, is but a state of half enjoyment.

Anne, satisfied at a very early period of Lady Russell's meaning to love Captain Wentworth as she ought, had no other alloy to the happiness of her prospects than what arose from the consciousness of having no relations to bestow on him which a man of sense could value. There she felt her own inferiority very keenly. The disproportion in their fortune was nothing; it did not give her a moment's regret; but to have no family to receive and estimate him properly, nothing of respectability, of harmony, of good will to offer in return for all the worth and all the prompt welcome which met her in his brothers and sisters, was a source of as lively pain as her mind could well be sensible of under circumstances of otherwise strong felicity. She had but two friends in the world to add to his list, Lady Russell and Mrs Smith. To those, however, he was very well disposed to attach himself. Lady Russell, in spite of all her former transgressions, he could now value from his heart. While he was not obliged to say that he believed her to have been right in originally dividing them, he was ready to say almost everything else in her favour, and as for Mrs Smith, she had claims of various kinds to recommend her quickly and permanently.

Her recent good offices by Anne had been enough in themselves, and their marriage, instead of depriving her of one friend, secured her two. She

was their earliest visitor in their settled life; and Captain Wentworth, by putting her in the way of recovering her husband's property in the West Indies, by writing for her, acting for her, and seeing her through all the petty difficulties of the case with the activity and exertion of a fearless man and a determined friend, fully requited the services which she had rendered, or ever meant to render, to his wife.

Mrs Smith's enjoyments were not spoiled by this improvement of income, with some improvement of health, and the acquisition of such friends to be often with, for her cheerfulness and mental alacrity did not fail her; and while these prime supplies of good remained, she might have bid defiance even to greater accessions of worldly prosperity. She might have been absolutely rich and perfectly healthy, and yet be happy. Her spring of felicity was in the glow of her spirits, as her friend Anne's was in the warmth of her heart. Anne was tenderness itself, and she had the full worth of it in Captain Wentworth's affection. His profession was all that could ever make her friends wish that tenderness less, the dread of a future war all that could dim her sunshine. She gloried in being a sailor's wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance.

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# Wuthering Heights



by Emily Brontë

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## CHAPTER I

1801—I have just returned from a visit to my landlord—the solitary neighbour that I shall be troubled with. This is certainly a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist’s Heaven—and Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us. A capital fellow! He little imagined how my heart warmed towards him when I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows, as I rode up, and when his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat, as I announced my name.

“Mr. Heathcliff?” I said.

A nod was the answer.

“Mr. Lockwood, your new tenant, sir. I do myself the honour of calling as soon as possible after my arrival, to express the hope that I have not inconvenienced you by my perseverance in soliciting the occupation of Thrushcross Grange: I heard yesterday you had had some thoughts—”

“Thrushcross Grange is my own, sir,” he interrupted, wincing. “I should not allow any one to inconvenience me, if I could hinder it—walk in!”

The “walk in” was uttered with closed teeth, and expressed the sentiment, “Go to the Deuce!” even the gate over which he leant manifested no sympathising movement to the words; and I think that circumstance determined me to accept the invitation: I felt interested in a man who seemed more exaggeratedly reserved than myself.

When he saw my horse’s breast fairly pushing the barrier, he did put out his hand to unchain it, and then sullenly preceded me up the causeway, calling, as we entered the court,—“Joseph, take Mr. Lockwood’s horse; and bring up some wine.”

“Here we have the whole establishment of domestics, I suppose,” was the reflection suggested by this compound order. “No wonder the grass grows up between the flags, and cattle are the only hedge-cutters.”

Joseph was an elderly, nay, an old man, very old, perhaps, though hale and sinewy. “The Lord help us!” he soliloquised in an undertone of peevish displeasure, while relieving me of my horse: looking, meantime, in my face so sourly that I charitably conjectured he must have need of divine aid to digest his dinner, and his pious ejaculation had no reference to my unexpected advent.

Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff’s dwelling. “Wuthering” being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones.

Before passing the threshold, I paused to admire a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front, and especially about the principal door; above which, among a wilderness of crumbling griffins and shameless little boys, I detected the date “1500,” and the name “Hareton Earnshaw.” I would have made a few comments, and requested a short history of the place from the surly owner; but his attitude at the door appeared to demand my speedy entrance, or complete departure, and I had no desire to aggravate his impatience previous to inspecting the penetralium.

One stop brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby or passage: they call it here “the house” pre-eminently. It includes kitchen and parlour, generally; but I believe at Wuthering Heights the kitchen is forced to retreat altogether into another quarter: at least I distinguished a chatter of tongues, and a clatter of culinary utensils, deep within; and I observed no signs of roasting, boiling, or baking, about the huge fireplace; nor any glitter of copper saucepans and tin cullenders on the walls. One end, indeed, reflected splendidly both light and heat from ranks of immense pewter dishes, interspersed with silver jugs and tankards, towering row after row, on a vast oak dresser, to the very roof. The latter

had never been under-drawn: its entire anatomy lay bare to an inquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes and clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham, concealed it. Above the chimney were sundry villainous old guns, and a couple of horse-pistols: and, by way of ornament, three gaudily-painted canisters disposed along its ledge. The floor was of smooth, white stone; the chairs, high-backed, primitive structures, painted green: one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade. In an arch under the dresser reposed a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies; and other dogs haunted other recesses.

The apartment and furniture would have been nothing extraordinary as belonging to a homely, northern farmer, with a stubborn countenance, and stalwart limbs set out to advantage in knee-breeches and gaiters. Such an individual seated in his arm-chair, his mug of ale frothing on the round table before him, is to be seen in any circuit of five or six miles among these hills, if you go at the right time after dinner. But Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire: rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss with his negligence, because he has an erect and handsome figure; and rather morose. Possibly, some people might suspect him of a degree of under-bred pride; I have a sympathetic chord within that tells me it is nothing of the sort: I know, by instinct, his reserve springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling—to manifestations of mutual kindness. He'll love and hate equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence to be loved or hated again. No, I'm running on too fast: I bestow my own attributes over-liberally on him. Mr. Heathcliff may have entirely dissimilar reasons for keeping his hand out of the way when he meets a would-be acquaintance, to those which actuate me. Let me hope my constitution is almost peculiar: my dear mother used to say I should never have a comfortable home; and only last summer I proved myself perfectly unworthy of one.

While enjoying a month of fine weather at the sea-coast, I was thrown into the company of a most fascinating creature: a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me. I "never told my love" vocally; still, if looks have language, the merest idiot might have guessed I was over head and ears: she understood me at last, and looked a return—the sweetest of all imaginable looks. And what did I do? I confess it with shame—shrunk icily

into myself, like a snail; at every glance retired colder and farther; till finally the poor innocent was led to doubt her own senses, and, overwhelmed with confusion at her supposed mistake, persuaded her mamma to decamp.

By this curious turn of disposition I have gained the reputation of deliberate heartlessness; how undeserved, I alone can appreciate.

I took a seat at the end of the hearthstone opposite that towards which my landlord advanced, and filled up an interval of silence by attempting to caress the canine mother, who had left her nursery, and was sneaking wolfishly to the back of my legs, her lip curled up, and her white teeth watering for a snatch. My caress provoked a long, guttural gnarl.

“You’d better let the dog alone,” growled Mr. Heathcliff in unison, checking fiercer demonstrations with a punch of his foot. “She’s not accustomed to be spoiled—not kept for a pet.” Then, striding to a side door, he shouted again, “Joseph!”

Joseph mumbled indistinctly in the depths of the cellar, but gave no intimation of ascending; so his master dived down to him, leaving me *vis-à-vis* the ruffianly bitch and a pair of grim shaggy sheep-dogs, who shared with her a jealous guardianship over all my movements. Not anxious to come in contact with their fangs, I sat still; but, imagining they would scarcely understand tacit insults, I unfortunately indulged in winking and making faces at the trio, and some turn of my physiognomy so irritated madam, that she suddenly broke into a fury and leapt on my knees. I flung her back, and hastened to interpose the table between us. This proceeding aroused the whole hive: half-a-dozen four-footed fiends, of various sizes and ages, issued from hidden dens to the common centre. I felt my heels and coat-laps peculiar subjects of assault; and parrying off the larger combatants as effectually as I could with the poker, I was constrained to demand, aloud, assistance from some of the household in re-establishing peace.

Mr. Heathcliff and his man climbed the cellar steps with vexatious phlegm: I don’t think they moved one second faster than usual, though the hearth was an absolute tempest of worrying and yelping. Happily, an inhabitant of the kitchen made more dispatch; a lusty dame, with tucked-up gown, bare arms, and fire-flushed cheeks, rushed into the midst of us flourishing a frying-pan: and used that weapon, and her tongue, to such

purpose, that the storm subsided magically, and she only remained, heaving like a sea after a high wind, when her master entered on the scene.

“What the devil is the matter?” he asked, eyeing me in a manner that I could ill endure, after this inhospitable treatment.

“What the devil, indeed!” I muttered. “The herd of possessed swine could have had no worse spirits in them than those animals of yours, sir. You might as well leave a stranger with a brood of tigers!”

“They won’t meddle with persons who touch nothing,” he remarked, putting the bottle before me, and restoring the displaced table. “The dogs do right to be vigilant. Take a glass of wine?”

“No, thank you.”

“Not bitten, are you?”

“If I had been, I would have set my signet on the biter.” Heathcliff’s countenance relaxed into a grin.

“Come, come,” he said, “you are flurried, Mr. Lockwood. Here, take a little wine. Guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know how to receive them. Your health, sir?”

I bowed and returned the pledge; beginning to perceive that it would be foolish to sit sulking for the misbehaviour of a pack of curs; besides, I felt loth to yield the fellow further amusement at my expense; since his humour took that turn. He—probably swayed by prudential consideration of the folly of offending a good tenant—relaxed a little in the laconic style of chipping off his pronouns and auxiliary verbs, and introduced what he supposed would be a subject of interest to me,—a discourse on the advantages and disadvantages of my present place of retirement. I found him very intelligent on the topics we touched; and before I went home, I was encouraged so far as to volunteer another visit to-morrow. He evidently wished no repetition of my intrusion. I shall go, notwithstanding. It is astonishing how sociable I feel myself compared with him.

## CHAPTER II

Yesterday afternoon set in misty and cold. I had half a mind to spend it by my study fire, instead of wading through heath and mud to Wuthering Heights. On coming up from dinner, however, (N.B.—I dine between twelve and one o'clock; the housekeeper, a matronly lady, taken as a fixture along with the house, could not, or would not, comprehend my request that I might be served at five)—on mounting the stairs with this lazy intention, and stepping into the room, I saw a servant-girl on her knees surrounded by brushes and coal-scuttles, and raising an infernal dust as she extinguished the flames with heaps of cinders. This spectacle drove me back immediately; I took my hat, and, after a four-miles' walk, arrived at Heathcliff's garden-gate just in time to escape the first feathery flakes of a snow shower.

On that bleak hill top the earth was hard with a black frost, and the air made me shiver through every limb. Being unable to remove the chain, I jumped over, and, running up the flagged causeway bordered with straggling gooseberry-bushes, knocked vainly for admittance, till my knuckles tingled and the dogs howled.

"Wretched inmates!" I ejaculated, mentally, "you deserve perpetual isolation from your species for your churlish inhospitality. At least, I would not keep my doors barred in the day-time. I don't care—I will get in!" So resolved, I grasped the latch and shook it vehemently. Vinegar-faced Joseph projected his head from a round window of the barn.

"What are ye for?" he shouted. "T' maister's down i' t' fowld. Go round by th' end o' t' laith, if ye went to spake to him."

"Is there nobody inside to open the door?" I hallooed, responsively.

"There's nobbut t' missis; and shoo'll not oppen 't an ye mak' yer flaysome dins till neeght."

"Why? Cannot you tell her whom I am, eh, Joseph?"

“Nor-ne me! I’ll hae no hend wi’t,” muttered the head, vanishing.

The snow began to drive thickly. I seized the handle to essay another trial; when a young man without coat, and shouldering a pitchfork, appeared in the yard behind. He hailed me to follow him, and, after marching through a wash-house, and a paved area containing a coal-shed, pump, and pigeon-cot, we at length arrived in the huge, warm, cheerful apartment where I was formerly received. It glowed delightfully in the radiance of an immense fire, compounded of coal, peat, and wood; and near the table, laid for a plentiful evening meal, I was pleased to observe the “missis,” an individual whose existence I had never previously suspected. I bowed and waited, thinking she would bid me take a seat. She looked at me, leaning back in her chair, and remained motionless and mute.

“Rough weather!” I remarked. “I’m afraid, Mrs. Heathcliff, the door must bear the consequence of your servants’ leisure attendance: I had hard work to make them hear me.”

She never opened her mouth. I stared—she stared also: at any rate, she kept her eyes on me in a cool, regardless manner, exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable.

“Sit down,” said the young man, gruffly. “He’ll be in soon.”

I obeyed; and hemmed, and called the villain Juno, who deigned, at this second interview, to move the extreme tip of her tail, in token of owning my acquaintance.

“A beautiful animal!” I commenced again. “Do you intend parting with the little ones, madam?”

“They are not mine,” said the amiable hostess, more repellingly than Heathcliff himself could have replied.

“Ah, your favourites are among these?” I continued, turning to an obscure cushion full of something like cats.

“A strange choice of favourites!” she observed scornfully.

Unluckily, it was a heap of dead rabbits. I hemmed once more, and drew closer to the hearth, repeating my comment on the wildness of the evening.

“You should not have come out,” she said, rising and reaching from the chimney-piece two of the painted canisters.



Her position before was sheltered from the light; now, I had a distinct view of her whole figure and countenance. She was slender, and apparently scarcely past girlhood: an admirable form, and the most exquisite little face that I have ever had the pleasure of beholding; small features, very fair; flaxen ringlets, or rather golden, hanging loose on her delicate neck; and eyes, had they been agreeable in expression, that would have been irresistible: fortunately for my susceptible heart, the only sentiment they evinced hovered between scorn and a kind of desperation, singularly unnatural to be detected there. The canisters were almost out of her reach; I made a motion to aid her; she turned upon me as a miser might turn if any one attempted to assist him in counting his gold.

“I don’t want your help,” she snapped; “I can get them for myself.”

“I beg your pardon!” I hastened to reply.

“Were you asked to tea?” she demanded, tying an apron over her neat black frock, and standing with a spoonful of the leaf poised over the pot.

“I shall be glad to have a cup,” I answered.

“Were you asked?” she repeated.

“No,” I said, half smiling. “You are the proper person to ask me.”

She flung the tea back, spoon and all, and resumed her chair in a pet; her forehead corrugated, and her red under-lip pushed out, like a child’s ready to cry.

Meanwhile, the young man had slung on to his person a decidedly shabby upper garment, and, erecting himself before the blaze, looked down on me from the corner of his eyes, for all the world as if there were some mortal feud unavenged between us. I began to doubt whether he were a servant or not: his dress and speech were both rude, entirely devoid of the superiority observable in Mr. and Mrs. Heathcliff; his thick brown curls were rough and uncultivated, his whiskers encroached bearishly over his cheeks, and his hands were embrowned like those of a common labourer: still his bearing was free, almost haughty, and he showed none of a domestic’s assiduity in attending on the lady of the house. In the absence of clear proofs of his condition, I deemed it best to abstain from noticing his curious conduct; and, five minutes afterwards, the entrance of Heathcliff relieved me, in some measure, from my uncomfortable state.

“You see, sir, I am come, according to promise!” I exclaimed, assuming the cheerful; “and I fear I shall be weather-bound for half an hour, if you can afford me shelter during that space.”

“Half an hour?” he said, shaking the white flakes from his clothes; “I wonder you should select the thick of a snow-storm to ramble about in. Do you know that you run a risk of being lost in the marshes? People familiar with these moors often miss their road on such evenings; and I can tell you there is no chance of a change at present.”

“Perhaps I can get a guide among your lads, and he might stay at the Grange till morning—could you spare me one?”

“No, I could not.”

“Oh, indeed! Well, then, I must trust to my own sagacity.”

“Umph!”

“Are you going to mak’ the tea?” demanded he of the shabby coat, shifting his ferocious gaze from me to the young lady.

“Is *he* to have any?” she asked, appealing to Heathcliff.

“Get it ready, will you?” was the answer, uttered so savagely that I started. The tone in which the words were said revealed a genuine bad nature. I no longer felt inclined to call Heathcliff a capital fellow. When the preparations were finished, he invited me with—“Now, sir, bring forward your chair.” And we all, including the rustic youth, drew round the table: an austere silence prevailing while we discussed our meal.

I thought, if I had caused the cloud, it was my duty to make an effort to dispel it. They could not every day sit so grim and taciturn; and it was impossible, however ill-tempered they might be, that the universal scowl they wore was their every-day countenance.

“It is strange,” I began, in the interval of swallowing one cup of tea and receiving another—“it is strange how custom can mould our tastes and ideas: many could not imagine the existence of happiness in a life of such complete exile from the world as you spend, Mr. Heathcliff; yet, I’ll venture to say, that, surrounded by your family, and with your amiable lady as the presiding genius over your home and heart—”

“My amiable lady!” he interrupted, with an almost diabolical sneer on his face. “Where is she—my amiable lady?”

“Mrs. Heathcliff, your wife, I mean.”

“Well, yes—oh, you would intimate that her spirit has taken the post of ministering angel, and guards the fortunes of Wuthering Heights, even when her body is gone. Is that it?”

Perceiving myself in a blunder, I attempted to correct it. I might have seen there was too great a disparity between the ages of the parties to make it likely that they were man and wife. One was about forty: a period of mental vigour at which men seldom cherish the delusion of being married for love by girls: that dream is reserved for the solace of our declining years. The other did not look seventeen.

Then it flashed upon me—“The clown at my elbow, who is drinking his tea out of a basin and eating his bread with unwashed hands, may be her husband: Heathcliff junior, of course. Here is the consequence of being buried alive: she has thrown herself away upon that boor from sheer ignorance that better individuals existed! A sad pity—I must beware how I cause her to regret her choice.” The last reflection may seem conceited; it was not. My neighbour struck me as bordering on repulsive; I knew, through experience, that I was tolerably attractive.

“Mrs. Heathcliff is my daughter-in-law,” said Heathcliff, corroborating my surmise. He turned, as he spoke, a peculiar look in her direction: a look of hatred; unless he has a most perverse set of facial muscles that will not, like those of other people, interpret the language of his soul.

“Ah, certainly—I see now: you are the favoured possessor of the beneficent fairy,” I remarked, turning to my neighbour.

This was worse than before: the youth grew crimson, and clenched his fist, with every appearance of a meditated assault. But he seemed to recollect himself presently, and smothered the storm in a brutal curse, muttered on my behalf: which, however, I took care not to notice.

“Unhappy in your conjectures, sir,” observed my host; “we neither of us have the privilege of owning your good fairy; her mate is dead. I said she was my daughter-in-law: therefore, she must have married my son.”

“And this young man is—”

“Not my son, assuredly.”

Heathcliff smiled again, as if it were rather too bold a jest to attribute the paternity of that bear to him.

“My name is Hareton Earnshaw,” growled the other; “and I’d counsel you to respect it!”

“I’ve shown no disrespect,” was my reply, laughing internally at the dignity with which he announced himself.

He fixed his eye on me longer than I cared to return the stare, for fear I might be tempted either to box his ears or render my hilarity audible. I began to feel unmistakably out of place in that pleasant family circle. The dismal spiritual atmosphere overcame, and more than neutralised, the glowing physical comforts round me; and I resolved to be cautious how I ventured under those rafters a third time.

The business of eating being concluded, and no one uttering a word of sociable conversation, I approached a window to examine the weather. A sorrowful sight I saw: dark night coming down prematurely, and sky and hills mingled in one bitter whirl of wind and suffocating snow.

“I don’t think it possible for me to get home now without a guide,” I could not help exclaiming. “The roads will be buried already; and, if they were bare, I could scarcely distinguish a foot in advance.”

“Hareton, drive those dozen sheep into the barn porch. They’ll be covered if left in the fold all night: and put a plank before them,” said Heathcliff.

“How must I do?” I continued, with rising irritation.

There was no reply to my question; and on looking round I saw only Joseph bringing in a pail of porridge for the dogs, and Mrs. Heathcliff leaning over the fire, diverting herself with burning a bundle of matches which had fallen from the chimney-piece as she restored the tea-canister to its place. The former, when he had deposited his burden, took a critical survey of the room, and in cracked tones grated out—“Aw wonder how yah can faishion to stand thear i’ idleness un war, when all on ’ems goan out! Bud yah’re a nowt, and it’s no use talking—yah’ll niver mend o’yer ill ways, but goa raight to t’ divil, like yer mother afore ye!”

I imagined, for a moment, that this piece of eloquence was addressed to me; and, sufficiently enraged, stepped towards the aged rascal with an intention of kicking him out of the door. Mrs. Heathcliff, however, checked me by her answer.

“You scandalous old hypocrite!” she replied. “Are you not afraid of being carried away bodily, whenever you mention the devil’s name? I warn you to refrain from provoking me, or I’ll ask your abduction as a special favour! Stop! look here, Joseph,” she continued, taking a long, dark book from a shelf; “I’ll show you how far I’ve progressed in the Black Art: I shall soon be competent to make a clear house of it. The red cow didn’t die by chance; and your rheumatism can hardly be reckoned among providential visitations!”

“Oh, wicked, wicked!” gasped the elder; “may the Lord deliver us from evil!”

“No, reprobate! you are a castaway—be off, or I’ll hurt you seriously! I’ll have you all modelled in wax and clay! and the first who passes the limits I fix shall—I’ll not say what he shall be done to—but, you’ll see! Go, I’m looking at you!”

The little witch put a mock malignity into her beautiful eyes, and Joseph, trembling with sincere horror, hurried out, praying, and ejaculating “wicked” as he went. I thought her conduct must be prompted by a species of dreary fun; and, now that we were alone, I endeavoured to interest her in my distress.

“Mrs. Heathcliff,” I said earnestly, “you must excuse me for troubling you. I presume, because, with that face, I’m sure you cannot help being good-hearted. Do point out some landmarks by which I may know my way home: I have no more idea how to get there than you would have how to get to London!”

“Take the road you came,” she answered, ensconcing herself in a chair, with a candle, and the long book open before her. “It is brief advice, but as sound as I can give.”

“Then, if you hear of me being discovered dead in a bog or a pit full of snow, your conscience won’t whisper that it is partly your fault?”

“How so? I cannot escort you. They wouldn’t let me go to the end of the garden wall.”

“*You!* I should be sorry to ask you to cross the threshold, for my convenience, on such a night,” I cried. “I want you to tell me my way, not to *show* it: or else to persuade Mr. Heathcliff to give me a guide.”

“Who? There is himself, Earnshaw, Zillah, Joseph and I. Which would you have?”

“Are there no boys at the farm?”

“No; those are all.”

“Then, it follows that I am compelled to stay.”

“That you may settle with your host. I have nothing to do with it.”

“I hope it will be a lesson to you to make no more rash journeys on these hills,” cried Heathcliff’s stern voice from the kitchen entrance. “As to staying here, I don’t keep accommodations for visitors: you must share a bed with Hareton or Joseph, if you do.”

“I can sleep on a chair in this room,” I replied.

“No, no! A stranger is a stranger, be he rich or poor: it will not suit me to permit any one the range of the place while I am off guard!” said the unmannerly wretch.

With this insult my patience was at an end. I uttered an expression of disgust, and pushed past him into the yard, running against Earnshaw in my haste. It was so dark that I could not see the means of exit; and, as I wandered round, I heard another specimen of their civil behaviour amongst each other. At first the young man appeared about to befriend me.

“I’ll go with him as far as the park,” he said.

“You’ll go with him to hell!” exclaimed his master, or whatever relation he bore. “And who is to look after the horses, eh?”

“A man’s life is of more consequence than one evening’s neglect of the horses: somebody must go,” murmured Mrs. Heathcliff, more kindly than I expected.

“Not at your command!” retorted Hareton. “If you set store on him, you’d better be quiet.”

“Then I hope his ghost will haunt you; and I hope Mr. Heathcliff will never get another tenant till the Grange is a ruin,” she answered, sharply.

“Hearken, hearken, shoo’s cursing on ’em!” muttered Joseph, towards whom I had been steering.

He sat within earshot, milking the cows by the light of a lantern, which I seized unceremoniously, and, calling out that I would send it back on the morrow, rushed to the nearest postern.

“Maister, maister, he’s staling t’ lantern!” shouted the ancient, pursuing my retreat. “Hey, Gnasher! Hey, dog! Hey Wolf, holld him, holld him!”

On opening the little door, two hairy monsters flew at my throat, bearing me down, and extinguishing the light; while a mingled guffaw from Heathcliff and Hareton put the copestone on my rage and humiliation. Fortunately, the beasts seemed more bent on stretching their paws, and yawning, and flourishing their tails, than devouring me alive; but they would suffer no resurrection, and I was forced to lie till their malignant masters pleased to deliver me: then, hatless and trembling with wrath, I ordered the miscreants to let me out—on their peril to keep me one minute longer—with several incoherent threats of retaliation that, in their indefinite depth of virulency, smacked of King Lear.

The vehemence of my agitation brought on a copious bleeding at the nose, and still Heathcliff laughed, and still I scolded. I don’t know what would have concluded the scene, had there not been one person at hand rather more rational than myself, and more benevolent than my entertainer. This was Zillah, the stout housewife; who at length issued forth to inquire into the nature of the uproar. She thought that some of them had been laying violent hands on me; and, not daring to attack her master, she turned her vocal artillery against the younger scoundrel.

“Well, Mr. Earnshaw,” she cried, “I wonder what you’ll have agait next? Are we going to murder folk on our very door-stones? I see this house will never do for me—look at t’ poor lad, he’s fair choking! Wisht, wisht; you mun’n’t go on so. Come in, and I’ll cure that: there now, hold ye still.”

With these words she suddenly splashed a pint of icy water down my neck, and pulled me into the kitchen. Mr. Heathcliff followed, his accidental merriment expiring quickly in his habitual moroseness.

I was sick exceedingly, and dizzy, and faint; and thus compelled perforce to accept lodgings under his roof. He told Zillah to give me a glass of brandy, and then passed on to the inner room; while she condoled with me on my sorry predicament, and having obeyed his orders, whereby I was somewhat revived, ushered me to bed.

## CHAPTER III

While leading the way upstairs, she recommended that I should hide the candle, and not make a noise; for her master had an odd notion about the chamber she would put me in, and never let anybody lodge there willingly. I asked the reason. She did not know, she answered: she had only lived there a year or two; and they had so many queer goings on, she could not begin to be curious.

Too stupefied to be curious myself, I fastened my door and glanced round for the bed. The whole furniture consisted of a chair, a clothes-press, and a large oak case, with squares cut out near the top resembling coach windows. Having approached this structure, I looked inside, and perceived it to be a singular sort of old-fashioned couch, very conveniently designed to obviate the necessity for every member of the family having a room to himself. In fact, it formed a little closet, and the ledge of a window, which it enclosed, served as a table.

I slid back the panelled sides, got in with my light, pulled them together again, and felt secure against the vigilance of Heathcliff, and every one else.

The ledge, where I placed my candle, had a few mildewed books piled up in one corner; and it was covered with writing scratched on the paint. This writing, however, was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small—*Catherine Earnshaw*, here and there varied to *Catherine Heathcliff*, and then again to *Catherine Linton*.

In vapid listlessness I leant my head against the window, and continued spelling over Catherine Earnshaw—Heathcliff—Linton, till my eyes closed; but they had not rested five minutes when a glare of white letters started from the dark, as vivid as spectres—the air swarmed with Catherines; and rousing myself to dispel the obtrusive name, I discovered my candle-wick reclining on one of the antique volumes, and perfuming the place with an odour of roasted calf-skin.



I snuffed it off, and, very ill at ease under the influence of cold and lingering nausea, sat up and spread open the injured tome on my knee. It was a Testament, in lean type, and smelling dreadfully musty: a fly-leaf bore the inscription—"Catherine Earnshaw, her book," and a date some quarter of a century back.

I shut it, and took up another and another, till I had examined all. Catherine's library was select, and its state of dilapidation proved it to have been well used, though not altogether for a legitimate purpose: scarcely one chapter had escaped, a pen-and-ink commentary—at least the appearance of one—covering every morsel of blank that the printer had left. Some were detached sentences; other parts took the form of a regular diary, scrawled in an unformed, childish hand. At the top of an extra page (quite a treasure, probably, when first lighted on) I was greatly amused to behold an excellent caricature of my friend Joseph,—rudely, yet powerfully sketched. An immediate interest kindled within me for the unknown Catherine, and I began forthwith to decipher her faded hieroglyphics.

"An awful Sunday," commenced the paragraph beneath. "I wish my father were back again. Hindley is a detestable substitute—his conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious—H. and I are going to rebel—we took our initiatory step this evening.

"All day had been flooding with rain; we could not go to church, so Joseph must needs get up a congregation in the garret; and, while Hindley and his wife basked downstairs before a comfortable fire—doing anything but reading their Bibles, I'll answer for it—Heathcliff, myself, and the unhappy ploughboy were commanded to take our prayer-books, and mount: we were ranged in a row, on a sack of corn, groaning and shivering, and hoping that Joseph would shiver too, so that he might give us a short homily for his own sake. A vain idea! The service lasted precisely three hours; and yet my brother had the face to exclaim, when he saw us descending, 'What, done already?' On Sunday evenings we used to be permitted to play, if we did not make much noise; now a mere titter is sufficient to send us into corners.

"'You forget you have a master here,' says the tyrant. 'I'll demolish the first who puts me out of temper! I insist on perfect sobriety and silence. Oh, boy! was that you? Frances darling, pull his hair as you go by: I heard him snap his fingers.' Frances pulled his hair heartily, and then went and seated

herself on her husband's knee, and there they were, like two babies, kissing and talking nonsense by the hour—foolish palaver that we should be ashamed of. We made ourselves as snug as our means allowed in the arch of the dresser. I had just fastened our pinafores together, and hung them up for a curtain, when in comes Joseph, on an errand from the stables. He tears down my handiwork, boxes my ears, and croaks:

“‘T’ maister nobbut just buried, and Sabbath not o’ered, und t’ sound o’ t’ gospel still i’ yer lugs, and ye darr be laiking! Shame on ye! sit ye down, ill childer! there’s good books enugh if ye’ll read ’em: sit ye down, and think o’ yer sowls!’

“Saying this, he compelled us so to square our positions that we might receive from the far-off fire a dull ray to show us the text of the lumber he thrust upon us. I could not bear the employment. I took my dingy volume by the scroop, and hurled it into the dog-kennel, vowing I hated a good book. Heathcliff kicked his to the same place. Then there was a hubbub!

“‘Maister Hindley!’ shouted our chaplain. ‘Maister, coom hither! Miss Cathy’s riven th’ back off “Th’ Helmet o’ Salvation,” un’ Heathcliff’s pawsed his fit into t’ first part o’ “T’ Brooad Way to Destruction!” It’s fair flaysome that ye let ’em go on this gait. Ech! th’ owd man wad ha’ laced ’em properly—but he’s goan!’

“Hindley hurried up from his paradise on the hearth, and seizing one of us by the collar, and the other by the arm, hurled both into the back-kitchen; where, Joseph asseverated, ‘owd Nick’ would fetch us as sure as we were living: and, so comforted, we each sought a separate nook to await his advent. I reached this book, and a pot of ink from a shelf, and pushed the house-door ajar to give me light, and I have got the time on with writing for twenty minutes; but my companion is impatient, and proposes that we should appropriate the dairywoman’s cloak, and have a scamper on the moors, under its shelter. A pleasant suggestion—and then, if the surly old man come in, he may believe his prophecy verified—we cannot be damper, or colder, in the rain than we are here.”

\* \* \* \* \*

I suppose Catherine fulfilled her project, for the next sentence took up another subject: she waxed lachrymose.

“How little did I dream that Hindley would ever make me cry so!” she wrote. “My head aches, till I cannot keep it on the pillow; and still I can’t give over. Poor Heathcliff! Hindley calls him a vagabond, and won’t let him sit with us, nor eat with us any more; and, he says, he and I must not play together, and threatens to turn him out of the house if we break his orders. He has been blaming our father (how dared he?) for treating H. too liberally; and swears he will reduce him to his right place—”

\* \* \* \* \*

I began to nod drowsily over the dim page: my eye wandered from manuscript to print. I saw a red ornamented title—“Seventy Times Seven, and the First of the Seventy-First. A Pious Discourse delivered by the Reverend Jabez Branderham, in the Chapel of Gimmerden Sough.” And while I was, half-consciously, worrying my brain to guess what Jabez Branderham would make of his subject, I sank back in bed, and fell asleep. Alas, for the effects of bad tea and bad temper! What else could it be that made me pass such a terrible night? I don’t remember another that I can at all compare with it since I was capable of suffering.

I began to dream, almost before I ceased to be sensible of my locality. I thought it was morning; and I had set out on my way home, with Joseph for a guide. The snow lay yards deep in our road; and, as we floundered on, my companion wearied me with constant reproaches that I had not brought a pilgrim’s staff: telling me that I could never get into the house without one, and boastfully flourishing a heavy-headed cudgel, which I understood to be so denominated. For a moment I considered it absurd that I should need such a weapon to gain admittance into my own residence. Then a new idea flashed across me. I was not going there: we were journeying to hear the famous Jabez Branderham preach, from the text—“Seventy Times Seven;” and either Joseph, the preacher, or I had committed the “First of the Seventy-First,” and were to be publicly exposed and excommunicated.

We came to the chapel. I have passed it really in my walks, twice or thrice; it lies in a hollow, between two hills: an elevated hollow, near a swamp, whose peaty moisture is said to answer all the purposes of embalming on the few corpses deposited there. The roof has been kept whole hitherto; but as the clergyman’s stipend is only twenty pounds per annum, and a house with two rooms, threatening speedily to determine into

one, no clergyman will undertake the duties of pastor: especially as it is currently reported that his flock would rather let him starve than increase the living by one penny from their own pockets. However, in my dream, Jabez had a full and attentive congregation; and he preached—good God! what a sermon; divided into *four hundred and ninety* parts, each fully equal to an ordinary address from the pulpit, and each discussing a separate sin! Where he searched for them, I cannot tell. He had his private manner of interpreting the phrase, and it seemed necessary the brother should sin different sins on every occasion. They were of the most curious character: odd transgressions that I never imagined previously.

Oh, how weary I grow. How I writhed, and yawned, and nodded, and revived! How I pinched and pricked myself, and rubbed my eyes, and stood up, and sat down again, and nudged Joseph to inform me if he would *ever* have done. I was condemned to hear all out: finally, he reached the “*First of the Seventy-First*.” At that crisis, a sudden inspiration descended on me; I was moved to rise and denounce Jabez Branderham as the sinner of the sin that no Christian need pardon.

“Sir,” I exclaimed, “sitting here within these four walls, at one stretch, I have endured and forgiven the four hundred and ninety heads of your discourse. Seventy times seven times have I plucked up my hat and been about to depart—Seventy times seven times have you preposterously forced me to resume my seat. The four hundred and ninety-first is too much. Fellow-martyrs, have at him! Drag him down, and crush him to atoms, that the place which knows him may know him no more!”

“*Thou art the Man!*” cried Jabez, after a solemn pause, leaning over his cushion. “Seventy times seven times didst thou gapingly contort thy visage—seventy times seven did I take counsel with my soul—Lo, this is human weakness: this also may be absolved! The First of the Seventy-First is come. Brethren, execute upon him the judgment written. Such honour have all His saints!”

With that concluding word, the whole assembly, exalting their pilgrim’s staves, rushed round me in a body; and I, having no weapon to raise in self-defence, commenced grappling with Joseph, my nearest and most ferocious assailant, for his. In the confluence of the multitude, several clubs crossed; blows, aimed at me, fell on other sconces. Presently the whole chapel resounded with rappings and counter rappings: every man’s hand was

against his neighbour; and Branderham, unwilling to remain idle, poured forth his zeal in a shower of loud taps on the boards of the pulpit, which responded so smartly that, at last, to my unspeakable relief, they woke me. And what was it that had suggested the tremendous tumult? What had played Jabez's part in the row? Merely the branch of a fir-tree that touched my lattice as the blast wailed by, and rattled its dry cones against the panes! I listened doubtingly an instant; detected the disturber, then turned and dozed, and dreamt again: if possible, still more disagreeably than before.

This time, I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten. "I must stop it, nevertheless!" I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!

The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed,

"Let me in—let me in!"

"Who are you?" I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself.

"Catherine Linton," it replied, shiveringly (why did I think of *Linton*? I had read *Earnshaw* twenty times for Linton)—"I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!"

As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, "Let me in!" and maintained its tenacious grip, almost maddening me with fear.

"How can I!" I said at length. "Let *me* go, if you want me to let you in!"

The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer.

I seemed to keep them closed above a quarter of an hour; yet, the instant I listened again, there was the doleful cry moaning on!

“Begone!” I shouted. “I’ll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years.”

“It is twenty years,” mourned the voice: “twenty years. I’ve been a waif for twenty years!”

Thereat began a feeble scratching outside, and the pile of books moved as if thrust forward.

I tried to jump up; but could not stir a limb; and so yelled aloud, in a frenzy of fright.

To my confusion, I discovered the yell was not ideal: hasty footsteps approached my chamber door; somebody pushed it open, with a vigorous hand, and a light glimmered through the squares at the top of the bed. I sat shuddering, yet, and wiping the perspiration from my forehead: the intruder appeared to hesitate, and muttered to himself.

At last, he said, in a half-whisper, plainly not expecting an answer,

“Is any one here?”

I considered it best to confess my presence; for I knew Heathcliff’s accents, and feared he might search further, if I kept quiet.

With this intention, I turned and opened the panels. I shall not soon forget the effect my action produced.

Heathcliff stood near the entrance, in his shirt and trousers; with a candle dripping over his fingers, and his face as white as the wall behind him. The first creak of the oak startled him like an electric shock: the light leaped from his hold to a distance of some feet, and his agitation was so extreme, that he could hardly pick it up.

“It is only your guest, sir,” I called out, desirous to spare him the humiliation of exposing his cowardice further. “I had the misfortune to scream in my sleep, owing to a frightful nightmare. I’m sorry I disturbed you.”

“Oh, God confound you, Mr. Lockwood! I wish you were at the—” commenced my host, setting the candle on a chair, because he found it impossible to hold it steady. “And who showed you up into this room?” he continued, crushing his nails into his palms, and grinding his teeth to

subdue the maxillary convulsions. “Who was it? I’ve a good mind to turn them out of the house this moment?”

“It was your servant Zillah,” I replied, flinging myself on to the floor, and rapidly resuming my garments. “I should not care if you did, Mr. Heathcliff; she richly deserves it. I suppose that she wanted to get another proof that the place was haunted, at my expense. Well, it is—swarming with ghosts and goblins! You have reason in shutting it up, I assure you. No one will thank you for a doze in such a den!”

“What do you mean?” asked Heathcliff, “and what are you doing? Lie down and finish out the night, since you *are* here; but, for Heaven’s sake! don’t repeat that horrid noise: nothing could excuse it, unless you were having your throat cut!”

“If the little fiend had got in at the window, she probably would have strangled me!” I returned. “I’m not going to endure the persecutions of your hospitable ancestors again. Was not the Reverend Jabez Branderham akin to you on the mother’s side? And that minx, Catherine Linton, or Earnshaw, or however she was called—she must have been a changeling—wicked little soul! She told me she had been walking the earth these twenty years: a just punishment for her mortal transgressions, I’ve no doubt!”

Scarcely were these words uttered when I recollected the association of Heathcliff’s with Catherine’s name in the book, which had completely slipped from my memory, till thus awakened. I blushed at my inconsideration: but, without showing further consciousness of the offence, I hastened to add—“The truth is, sir, I passed the first part of the night in—” Here I stopped afresh—I was about to say “perusing those old volumes,” then it would have revealed my knowledge of their written, as well as their printed, contents; so, correcting myself, I went on—“in spelling over the name scratched on that window-ledge. A monotonous occupation, calculated to set me asleep, like counting, or—”

“What *can* you mean by talking in this way to *me!*” thundered Heathcliff with savage vehemence. “How—how *dare* you, under my roof?—God! he’s mad to speak so!” And he struck his forehead with rage.

I did not know whether to resent this language or pursue my explanation; but he seemed so powerfully affected that I took pity and proceeded with my dreams; affirming I had never heard the appellation of “Catherine Linton” before, but reading it often over produced an impression which

personified itself when I had no longer my imagination under control. Heathcliff gradually fell back into the shelter of the bed, as I spoke; finally sitting down almost concealed behind it. I guessed, however, by his irregular and intercepted breathing, that he struggled to vanquish an excess of violent emotion. Not liking to show him that I had heard the conflict, I continued my toilette rather noisily, looked at my watch, and soliloquised on the length of the night: "Not three o'clock yet! I could have taken oath it had been six. Time stagnates here: we must surely have retired to rest at eight!"

"Always at nine in winter, and rise at four," said my host, suppressing a groan: and, as I fancied, by the motion of his arm's shadow, dashing a tear from his eyes. "Mr. Lockwood," he added, "you may go into my room: you'll only be in the way, coming downstairs so early: and your childish outcry has sent sleep to the devil for me."

"And for me, too," I replied. "I'll walk in the yard till daylight, and then I'll be off; and you need not dread a repetition of my intrusion. I'm now quite cured of seeking pleasure in society, be it country or town. A sensible man ought to find sufficient company in himself."

"Delightful company!" muttered Heathcliff. "Take the candle, and go where you please. I shall join you directly. Keep out of the yard, though, the dogs are unchained; and the house—Juno mounts sentinel there, and—nay, you can only ramble about the steps and passages. But, away with you! I'll come in two minutes!"

I obeyed, so far as to quit the chamber; when, ignorant where the narrow lobbies led, I stood still, and was witness, involuntarily, to a piece of superstition on the part of my landlord which belied, oddly, his apparent sense. He got on to the bed, and wrenched open the lattice, bursting, as he pulled at it, into an uncontrollable passion of tears. "Come in! come in!" he sobbed. "Cathy, do come. Oh, do—*once* more! Oh! my heart's darling! hear me *this* time, Catherine, at last!" The spectre showed a spectre's ordinary caprice: it gave no sign of being; but the snow and wind whirled wildly through, even reaching my station, and blowing out the light.

There was such anguish in the gush of grief that accompanied this raving, that my compassion made me overlook its folly, and I drew off, half angry to have listened at all, and vexed at having related my ridiculous nightmare, since it produced that agony; though *why* was beyond my comprehension. I



descended cautiously to the lower regions, and landed in the back-kitchen, where a gleam of fire, raked compactly together, enabled me to rekindle my candle. Nothing was stirring except a brindled, grey cat, which crept from the ashes, and saluted me with a querulous mew.

Two benches, shaped in sections of a circle, nearly enclosed the hearth; on one of these I stretched myself, and Grimalkin mounted the other. We were both of us nodding ere any one invaded our retreat, and then it was Joseph, shuffling down a wooden ladder that vanished in the roof, through a trap: the ascent to his garret, I suppose. He cast a sinister look at the little flame which I had enticed to play between the ribs, swept the cat from its elevation, and bestowing himself in the vacancy, commenced the operation of stuffing a three-inch pipe with tobacco. My presence in his sanctum was evidently esteemed a piece of impudence too shameful for remark: he silently applied the tube to his lips, folded his arms, and puffed away. I let him enjoy the luxury unannoyed; and after sucking out his last wreath, and heaving a profound sigh, he got up, and departed as solemnly as he came.

A more elastic footstep entered next; and now I opened my mouth for a "good-morning," but closed it again, the salutation unachieved; for Hareton Earnshaw was performing his orison *sotto voce*, in a series of curses directed against every object he touched, while he rummaged a corner for a spade or shovel to dig through the drifts. He glanced over the back of the bench, dilating his nostrils, and thought as little of exchanging civilities with me as with my companion the cat. I guessed, by his preparations, that egress was allowed, and, leaving my hard couch, made a movement to follow him. He noticed this, and thrust at an inner door with the end of his spade, intimating by an inarticulate sound that there was the place where I must go, if I changed my locality.

It opened into the house, where the females were already astir; Zillah urging flakes of flame up the chimney with a colossal bellows; and Mrs. Heathcliff, kneeling on the hearth, reading a book by the aid of the blaze. She held her hand interposed between the furnace-heat and her eyes, and seemed absorbed in her occupation; desisting from it only to chide the servant for covering her with sparks, or to push away a dog, now and then, that snoozled its nose overforwardly into her face. I was surprised to see Heathcliff there also. He stood by the fire, his back towards me, just finishing a stormy scene with poor Zillah; who ever and anon interrupted

her labour to pluck up the corner of her apron, and heave an indignant groan.

“And you, you worthless—” he broke out as I entered, turning to his daughter-in-law, and employing an epithet as harmless as duck, or sheep, but generally represented by a dash—. “There you are, at your idle tricks again! The rest of them do earn their bread—you live on my charity! Put your trash away, and find something to do. You shall pay me for the plague of having you eternally in my sight—do you hear, damnable jade?”

“I’ll put my trash away, because you can make me if I refuse,” answered the young lady, closing her book, and throwing it on a chair. “But I’ll not do anything, though you should swear your tongue out, except what I please!”

Heathcliff lifted his hand, and the speaker sprang to a safer distance, obviously acquainted with its weight. Having no desire to be entertained by a cat-and-dog combat, I stepped forward briskly, as if eager to partake the warmth of the hearth, and innocent of any knowledge of the interrupted dispute. Each had enough decorum to suspend further hostilities: Heathcliff placed his fists, out of temptation, in his pockets; Mrs. Heathcliff curled her lip, and walked to a seat far off, where she kept her word by playing the part of a statue during the remainder of my stay. That was not long. I declined joining their breakfast, and, at the first gleam of dawn, took an opportunity of escaping into the free air, now clear, and still, and cold as impalpable ice.

My landlord halloed for me to stop ere I reached the bottom of the garden, and offered to accompany me across the moor. It was well he did, for the whole hill-back was one billowy, white ocean; the swells and falls not indicating corresponding rises and depressions in the ground: many pits, at least, were filled to a level; and entire ranges of mounds, the refuse of the quarries, blotted from the chart which my yesterday’s walk left pictured in my mind. I had remarked on one side of the road, at intervals of six or seven yards, a line of upright stones, continued through the whole length of the barren: these were erected and daubed with lime on purpose to serve as guides in the dark, and also when a fall, like the present, confounded the deep swamps on either hand with the firmer path: but, excepting a dirty dot pointing up here and there, all traces of their existence had vanished: and my companion found it necessary to warn me frequently to steer to the right or left, when I imagined I was following, correctly, the windings of the road.

We exchanged little conversation, and he halted at the entrance of Thrushcross Park, saying, I could make no error there. Our adieux were limited to a hasty bow, and then I pushed forward, trusting to my own resources; for the porter's lodge is untenanted as yet. The distance from the gate to the grange is two miles; I believe I managed to make it four, what with losing myself among the trees, and sinking up to the neck in snow: a predicament which only those who have experienced it can appreciate. At any rate, whatever were my wanderings, the clock chimed twelve as I entered the house; and that gave exactly an hour for every mile of the usual way from Wuthering Heights.

My human fixture and her satellites rushed to welcome me; exclaiming, tumultuously, they had completely given me up: everybody conjectured that I perished last night; and they were wondering how they must set about the search for my remains. I bid them be quiet, now that they saw me returned, and, benumbed to my very heart, I dragged upstairs; whence, after putting on dry clothes, and pacing to and fro thirty or forty minutes, to restore the animal heat, I adjourned to my study, feeble as a kitten: almost too much so to enjoy the cheerful fire and smoking coffee which the servant had prepared for my refreshment.

## CHAPTER IV

What vain weathercocks we are! I, who had determined to hold myself independent of all social intercourse, and thanked my stars that, at length, I had lighted on a spot where it was next to impracticable—I, weak wretch, after maintaining till dusk a struggle with low spirits and solitude, was finally compelled to strike my colours; and under pretence of gaining information concerning the necessities of my establishment, I desired Mrs. Dean, when she brought in supper, to sit down while I ate it; hoping sincerely she would prove a regular gossip, and either rouse me to animation or lull me to sleep by her talk.

“You have lived here a considerable time,” I commenced; “did you not say sixteen years?”

“Eighteen, sir: I came when the mistress was married, to wait on her; after she died, the master retained me for his housekeeper.”

“Indeed.”

There ensued a pause. She was not a gossip, I feared; unless about her own affairs, and those could hardly interest me. However, having studied for an interval, with a fist on either knee, and a cloud of meditation over her ruddy countenance, she ejaculated—“Ah, times are greatly changed since then!”

“Yes,” I remarked, “you’ve seen a good many alterations, I suppose?”

“I have: and troubles too,” she said.

“Oh, I’ll turn the talk on my landlord’s family!” I thought to myself. “A good subject to start! And that pretty girl-widow, I should like to know her history: whether she be a native of the country, or, as is more probable, an exotic that the surly *indigenae* will not recognise for kin.” With this intention I asked Mrs. Dean why Heathcliff let Thrushcross Grange, and preferred living in a situation and residence so much inferior. “Is he not rich enough to keep the estate in good order?” I inquired.

“Rich, sir!” she returned. “He has nobody knows what money, and every year it increases. Yes, yes, he’s rich enough to live in a finer house than this: but he’s very near—close-handed; and, if he had meant to flit to Thrushcross Grange, as soon as he heard of a good tenant he could not have borne to miss the chance of getting a few hundreds more. It is strange people should be so greedy, when they are alone in the world!”

“He had a son, it seems?”

“Yes, he had one—he is dead.”

“And that young lady, Mrs. Heathcliff, is his widow?”

“Yes.”

“Where did she come from originally?”

“Why, sir, she is my late master’s daughter: Catherine Linton was her maiden name. I nursed her, poor thing! I did wish Mr. Heathcliff would remove here, and then we might have been together again.”

“What! Catherine Linton?” I exclaimed, astonished. But a minute’s reflection convinced me it was not my ghostly Catherine. “Then,” I continued, “my predecessor’s name was Linton?”

“It was.”

“And who is that Earnshaw: Hareton Earnshaw, who lives with Mr. Heathcliff? Are they relations?”

“No; he is the late Mrs. Linton’s nephew.”

“The young lady’s cousin, then?”

“Yes; and her husband was her cousin also: one on the mother’s, the other on the father’s side: Heathcliff married Mr. Linton’s sister.”

“I see the house at Wuthering Heights has ‘Earnshaw’ carved over the front door. Are they an old family?”

“Very old, sir; and Hareton is the last of them, as our Miss Cathy is of us—I mean, of the Lintons. Have you been to Wuthering Heights? I beg pardon for asking; but I should like to hear how she is!”

“Mrs. Heathcliff? she looked very well, and very handsome; yet, I think, not very happy.”

“Oh dear, I don’t wonder! And how did you like the master?”

“A rough fellow, rather, Mrs. Dean. Is not that his character?”

“Rough as a saw-edge, and hard as whinstone! The less you meddle with him the better.”

“He must have had some ups and downs in life to make him such a churl. Do you know anything of his history?”

“It’s a cuckoo’s, sir—I know all about it: except where he was born, and who were his parents, and how he got his money at first. And Hareton has been cast out like an unfledged dunnock! The unfortunate lad is the only one in all this parish that does not guess how he has been cheated.”

“Well, Mrs. Dean, it will be a charitable deed to tell me something of my neighbours: I feel I shall not rest if I go to bed; so be good enough to sit and chat an hour.”

“Oh, certainly, sir! I’ll just fetch a little sewing, and then I’ll sit as long as you please. But you’ve caught cold: I saw you shivering, and you must have some gruel to drive it out.”

The worthy woman bustled off, and I crouched nearer the fire; my head felt hot, and the rest of me chill: moreover, I was excited, almost to a pitch of foolishness, through my nerves and brain. This caused me to feel, not uncomfortable, but rather fearful (as I am still) of serious effects from the incidents of to-day and yesterday. She returned presently, bringing a smoking basin and a basket of work; and, having placed the former on the hob, drew in her seat, evidently pleased to find me so companionable.

Before I came to live here, she commenced—waiting no farther invitation to her story—I was almost always at Wuthering Heights; because my mother had nursed Mr. Hindley Earnshaw, that was Hareton’s father, and I got used to playing with the children: I ran errands too, and helped to make hay, and hung about the farm ready for anything that anybody would set me to. One fine summer morning—it was the beginning of harvest, I remember—Mr. Earnshaw, the old master, came downstairs, dressed for a journey; and, after he had told Joseph what was to be done during the day, he turned to Hindley, and Cathy, and me—for I sat eating my porridge with them—and he said, speaking to his son, “Now, my bonny man, I’m going to Liverpool to-day, what shall I bring you? You may choose what you like: only let it be little, for I shall walk there and back: sixty miles each way, that is a long spell!” Hindley named a fiddle, and then he asked Miss Cathy; she was hardly six years old, but she could ride any horse in the stable, and she chose a whip. He did not forget me; for he had a kind heart, though he

was rather severe sometimes. He promised to bring me a pocketful of apples and pears, and then he kissed his children, said good-bye, and set off.

It seemed a long while to us all—the three days of his absence—and often did little Cathy ask when he would be home. Mrs. Earnshaw expected him by supper-time on the third evening, and she put the meal off hour after hour; there were no signs of his coming, however, and at last the children got tired of running down to the gate to look. Then it grew dark; she would have had them to bed, but they begged sadly to be allowed to stay up; and, just about eleven o'clock, the door-latch was raised quietly, and in stepped the master. He threw himself into a chair, laughing and groaning, and bid them all stand off, for he was nearly killed—he would not have such another walk for the three kingdoms.

“And at the end of it to be flighted to death!” he said, opening his great-coat, which he held bundled up in his arms. “See here, wife! I was never so beaten with anything in my life: but you must e'en take it as a gift of God; though it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil.”

We crowded round, and over Miss Cathy's head I had a peep at a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk: indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's; yet when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand. I was frightened, and Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors: she did fly up, asking how he could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad? The master tried to explain the matter; but he was really half dead with fatigue, and all that I could make out, amongst her scolding, was a tale of his seeing it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb, in the streets of Liverpool, where he picked it up and inquired for its owner. Not a soul knew to whom it belonged, he said; and his money and time being both limited, he thought it better to take it home with him at once, than run into vain expenses there: because he was determined he would not leave it as he found it. Well, the conclusion was, that my mistress grumbled herself calm; and Mr. Earnshaw told me to wash it, and give it clean things, and let it sleep with the children.

Hindley and Cathy contented themselves with looking and listening till peace was restored: then, both began searching their father's pockets for the presents he had promised them. The former was a boy of fourteen, but when

he drew out what had been a fiddle, crushed to morsels in the great-coat, he blubbered aloud; and Cathy, when she learned the master had lost her whip in attending on the stranger, showed her humour by grinning and spitting at the stupid little thing; earning for her pains a sound blow from her father, to teach her cleaner manners. They entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room; and I had no more sense, so I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it might be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house.

This was Heathcliff's first introduction to the family. On coming back a few days afterwards (for I did not consider my banishment perpetual), I found they had christened him "Heathcliff": it was the name of a son who died in childhood, and it has served him ever since, both for Christian and surname. Miss Cathy and he were now very thick; but Hindley hated him: and to say the truth I did the same; and we plagued and went on with him shamefully: for I wasn't reasonable enough to feel my injustice, and the mistress never put in a word on his behalf when she saw him wronged.

He seemed a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment: he would stand Hindley's blows without winking or shedding a tear, and my pinches moved him only to draw in a breath and open his eyes, as if he had hurt himself by accident, and nobody was to blame. This endurance made old Earnshaw furious, when he discovered his son persecuting the poor fatherless child, as he called him. He took to Heathcliff strangely, believing all he said (for that matter, he said precious little, and generally the truth), and petting him up far above Cathy, who was too mischievous and wayward for a favourite.

So, from the very beginning, he bred bad feeling in the house; and at Mrs. Earnshaw's death, which happened in less than two years after, the young master had learned to regard his father as an oppressor rather than a friend, and Heathcliff as a usurper of his parent's affections and his privileges; and he grew bitter with brooding over these injuries. I sympathised a while; but when the children fell ill of the measles, and I had to tend them, and take on me the cares of a woman at once, I changed my idea. Heathcliff was dangerously sick; and while he lay at the worst he



would have me constantly by his pillow: I suppose he felt I did a good deal for him, and he hadn't wit to guess that I was compelled to do it. However, I will say this, he was the quietest child that ever nurse watched over. The difference between him and the others forced me to be less partial. Cathy and her brother harassed me terribly: he was as uncomplaining as a lamb; though hardness, not gentleness, made him give little trouble.

He got through, and the doctor affirmed it was in a great measure owing to me, and praised me for my care. I was vain of his commendations, and softened towards the being by whose means I earned them, and thus Hindley lost his last ally: still I couldn't dote on Heathcliff, and I wondered often what my master saw to admire so much in the sullen boy; who never, to my recollection, repaid his indulgence by any sign of gratitude. He was not insolent to his benefactor, he was simply insensible; though knowing perfectly the hold he had on his heart, and conscious he had only to speak and all the house would be obliged to bend to his wishes. As an instance, I remember Mr. Earnshaw once bought a couple of colts at the parish fair, and gave the lads each one. Heathcliff took the handsomest, but it soon fell lame, and when he discovered it, he said to Hindley—

“You must exchange horses with me: I don't like mine; and if you won't I shall tell your father of the three thrashings you've given me this week, and show him my arm, which is black to the shoulder.” Hindley put out his tongue, and cuffed him over the ears. “You'd better do it at once,” he persisted, escaping to the porch (they were in the stable): “you will have to: and if I speak of these blows, you'll get them again with interest.” “Off, dog!” cried Hindley, threatening him with an iron weight used for weighing potatoes and hay. “Throw it,” he replied, standing still, “and then I'll tell how you boasted that you would turn me out of doors as soon as he died, and see whether he will not turn you out directly.” Hindley threw it, hitting him on the breast, and down he fell, but staggered up immediately, breathless and white; and, had not I prevented it, he would have gone just so to the master, and got full revenge by letting his condition plead for him, intimating who had caused it. “Take my colt, Gipsy, then!” said young Earnshaw. “And I pray that he may break your neck: take him, and be damned, you beggarly interloper! and wheedle my father out of all he has: only afterwards show him what you are, imp of Satan.—And take that, I hope he'll kick out your brains!”

Heathcliff had gone to loose the beast, and shift it to his own stall; he was passing behind it, when Hindley finished his speech by knocking him under its feet, and without stopping to examine whether his hopes were fulfilled, ran away as fast as he could. I was surprised to witness how coolly the child gathered himself up, and went on with his intention; exchanging saddles and all, and then sitting down on a bundle of hay to overcome the qualm which the violent blow occasioned, before he entered the house. I persuaded him easily to let me lay the blame of his bruises on the horse: he minded little what tale was told since he had what he wanted. He complained so seldom, indeed, of such stirs as these, that I really thought him not vindictive: I was deceived completely, as you will hear.

## CHAPTER V

In the course of time Mr. Earnshaw began to fail. He had been active and healthy, yet his strength left him suddenly; and when he was confined to the chimney-corner he grew grievously irritable. A nothing vexed him; and suspected slights of his authority nearly threw him into fits. This was especially to be remarked if any one attempted to impose upon, or domineer over, his favourite: he was painfully jealous lest a word should be spoken amiss to him; seeming to have got into his head the notion that, because he liked Heathcliff, all hated, and longed to do him an ill-turn. It was a disadvantage to the lad; for the kinder among us did not wish to fret the master, so we humoured his partiality; and that humouring was rich nourishment to the child's pride and black tempers. Still it became in a manner necessary; twice, or thrice, Hindley's manifestation of scorn, while his father was near, roused the old man to a fury: he seized his stick to strike him, and shook with rage that he could not do it.

At last, our curate (we had a curate then who made the living answer by teaching the little Lintons and Earnshaws, and farming his bit of land himself) advised that the young man should be sent to college; and Mr. Earnshaw agreed, though with a heavy spirit, for he said—"Hindley was nought, and would never thrive as where he wandered."

I hoped heartily we should have peace now. It hurt me to think the master should be made uncomfortable by his own good deed. I fancied the discontent of age and disease arose from his family disagreements; as he would have it that it did: really, you know, sir, it was in his sinking frame. We might have got on tolerably, notwithstanding, but for two people—Miss Cathy, and Joseph, the servant: you saw him, I daresay, up yonder. He was, and is yet most likely, the wearisomest self-righteous Pharisee that ever ransacked a Bible to rake the promises to himself and fling the curses to his neighbours. By his knack of sermonising and pious discoursing, he contrived to make a great impression on Mr. Earnshaw; and the more feeble

the master became, the more influence he gained. He was relentless in worrying him about his soul's concerns, and about ruling his children rigidly. He encouraged him to regard Hindley as a reprobate; and, night after night, he regularly grumbled out a long string of tales against Heathcliff and Catherine: always minding to flatter Earnshaw's weakness by heaping the heaviest blame on the latter.

Certainly she had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up before; and she put all of us past our patience fifty times and oftener in a day: from the hour she came downstairs till the hour she went to bed, we had not a minute's security that she wouldn't be in mischief. Her spirits were always at high-water mark, her tongue always going—singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same. A wild, wicked slip she was—but she had the bonniest eye, the sweetest smile, and lightest foot in the parish: and, after all, I believe she meant no harm; for when once she made you cry in good earnest, it seldom happened that she would not keep you company, and oblige you to be quiet that you might comfort her. She was much too fond of Heathcliff. The greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her separate from him: yet she got chided more than any of us on his account. In play, she liked exceedingly to act the little mistress; using her hands freely, and commanding her companions: she did so to me, but I would not bear slapping and ordering; and so I let her know.

Now, Mr. Earnshaw did not understand jokes from his children: he had always been strict and grave with them; and Catherine, on her part, had no idea why her father should be crosser and less patient in his ailing condition than he was in his prime. His peevish reproofs wakened in her a naughty delight to provoke him: she was never so happy as when we were all scolding her at once, and she defying us with her bold, saucy look, and her ready words; turning Joseph's religious curses into ridicule, baiting me, and doing just what her father hated most—showing how her pretended insolence, which he thought real, had more power over Heathcliff than his kindness: how the boy would do *her* bidding in anything, and *his* only when it suited his own inclination. After behaving as badly as possible all day, she sometimes came fondling to make it up at night. "Nay, Cathy," the old man would say, "I cannot love thee, thou'rt worse than thy brother. Go, say thy prayers, child, and ask God's pardon. I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!" That made her cry, at first; and then being repulsed

continually hardened her, and she laughed if I told her to say she was sorry for her faults, and beg to be forgiven.

But the hour came, at last, that ended Mr. Earnshaw's troubles on earth. He died quietly in his chair one October evening, seated by the fire-side. A high wind blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney: it sounded wild and stormy, yet it was not cold, and we were all together—I, a little removed from the hearth, busy at my knitting, and Joseph reading his Bible near the table (for the servants generally sat in the house then, after their work was done). Miss Cathy had been sick, and that made her still; she leant against her father's knee, and Heathcliff was lying on the floor with his head in her lap. I remember the master, before he fell into a doze, stroking her bonny hair—it pleased him rarely to see her gentle—and saying, "Why canst thou not always be a good lass, Cathy?" And she turned her face up to his, and laughed, and answered, "Why cannot you always be a good man, father?" But as soon as she saw him vexed again, she kissed his hand, and said she would sing him to sleep. She began singing very low, till his fingers dropped from hers, and his head sank on his breast. Then I told her to hush, and not stir, for fear she should wake him. We all kept as mute as mice a full half-hour, and should have done so longer, only Joseph, having finished his chapter, got up and said that he must rouse the master for prayers and bed. He stepped forward, and called him by name, and touched his shoulder; but he would not move: so he took the candle and looked at him. I thought there was something wrong as he set down the light; and seizing the children each by an arm, whispered them to "frame upstairs, and make little din—they might pray alone that evening—he had summut to do."

"I shall bid father good-night first," said Catherine, putting her arms round his neck, before we could hinder her. The poor thing discovered her loss directly—she screamed out—"Oh, he's dead, Heathcliff! he's dead!" And they both set up a heart-breaking cry.

I joined my wail to theirs, loud and bitter; but Joseph asked what we could be thinking of to roar in that way over a saint in heaven. He told me to put on my cloak and run to Gimmerton for the doctor and the parson. I could not guess the use that either would be of, then. However, I went, through wind and rain, and brought one, the doctor, back with me; the other said he would come in the morning. Leaving Joseph to explain matters, I

ran to the children's room: their door was ajar, I saw they had never lain down, though it was past midnight; but they were calmer, and did not need me to console them. The little souls were comforting each other with better thoughts than I could have hit on: no parson in the world ever pictured heaven so beautifully as they did, in their innocent talk; and, while I sobbed and listened, I could not help wishing we were all there safe together.

## CHAPTER VI

Mr. Hindley came home to the funeral; and—a thing that amazed us, and set the neighbours gossiping right and left—he brought a wife with him. What she was, and where she was born, he never informed us: probably, she had neither money nor name to recommend her, or he would scarcely have kept the union from his father.

She was not one that would have disturbed the house much on her own account. Every object she saw, the moment she crossed the threshold, appeared to delight her; and every circumstance that took place about her: except the preparing for the burial, and the presence of the mourners. I thought she was half silly, from her behaviour while that went on: she ran into her chamber, and made me come with her, though I should have been dressing the children: and there she sat shivering and clasping her hands, and asking repeatedly—“Are they gone yet?” Then she began describing with hysterical emotion the effect it produced on her to see black; and started, and trembled, and, at last, fell a-weeping—and when I asked what was the matter, answered, she didn’t know; but she felt so afraid of dying! I imagined her as little likely to die as myself. She was rather thin, but young, and fresh-complexioned, and her eyes sparkled as bright as diamonds. I did remark, to be sure, that mounting the stairs made her breathe very quick; that the least sudden noise set her all in a quiver, and that she coughed troublesomely sometimes: but I knew nothing of what these symptoms portended, and had no impulse to sympathise with her. We don’t in general take to foreigners here, Mr. Lockwood, unless they take to us first.

Young Earnshaw was altered considerably in the three years of his absence. He had grown sparer, and lost his colour, and spoke and dressed quite differently; and, on the very day of his return, he told Joseph and me we must thenceforth quarter ourselves in the back-kitchen, and leave the house for him. Indeed, he would have carpeted and papered a small spare room for a parlour; but his wife expressed such pleasure at the white floor

and huge glowing fireplace, at the pewter dishes and delf-case, and dog-kennel, and the wide space there was to move about in where they usually sat, that he thought it unnecessary to her comfort, and so dropped the intention.

She expressed pleasure, too, at finding a sister among her new acquaintance; and she prattled to Catherine, and kissed her, and ran about with her, and gave her quantities of presents, at the beginning. Her affection tired very soon, however, and when she grew peevish, Hindley became tyrannical. A few words from her, evincing a dislike to Heathcliff, were enough to rouse in him all his old hatred of the boy. He drove him from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead; compelling him to do so as hard as any other lad on the farm.

Heathcliff bore his degradation pretty well at first, because Cathy taught him what she learnt, and worked or played with him in the fields. They both promised fair to grow up as rude as savages; the young master being entirely negligent how they behaved, and what they did, so they kept clear of him. He would not even have seen after their going to church on Sundays, only Joseph and the curate reprimanded his carelessness when they absented themselves; and that reminded him to order Heathcliff a flogging, and Catherine a fast from dinner or supper. But it was one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day, and the after punishment grew a mere thing to laugh at. The curate might set as many chapters as he pleased for Catherine to get by heart, and Joseph might thrash Heathcliff till his arm ached; they forgot everything the minute they were together again: at least the minute they had contrived some naughty plan of revenge; and many a time I've cried to myself to watch them growing more reckless daily, and I not daring to speak a syllable, for fear of losing the small power I still retained over the unfriended creatures. One Sunday evening, it chanced that they were banished from the sitting-room, for making a noise, or a light offence of the kind; and when I went to call them to supper, I could discover them nowhere. We searched the house, above and below, and the yard and stables; they were invisible: and, at last, Hindley in a passion told us to bolt the doors, and swore nobody should let them in that night. The household went to bed; and I, too, anxious to lie down, opened my lattice and put my head out to hearken, though it rained: determined to admit them in spite of



the prohibition, should they return. In a while, I distinguished steps coming up the road, and the light of a lantern glimmered through the gate. I threw a shawl over my head and ran to prevent them from waking Mr. Earnshaw by knocking. There was Heathcliff, by himself: it gave me a start to see him alone.

“Where is Miss Catherine?” I cried hurriedly. “No accident, I hope?” “At Thrushcross Grange,” he answered; “and I would have been there too, but they had not the manners to ask me to stay.” “Well, you will catch it!” I said: “you’ll never be content till you’re sent about your business. What in the world led you wandering to Thrushcross Grange?” “Let me get off my wet clothes, and I’ll tell you all about it, Nelly,” he replied. I bid him beware of rousing the master, and while he undressed and I waited to put out the candle, he continued—“Cathy and I escaped from the wash-house to have a ramble at liberty, and getting a glimpse of the Grange lights, we thought we would just go and see whether the Lintons passed their Sunday evenings standing shivering in corners, while their father and mother sat eating and drinking, and singing and laughing, and burning their eyes out before the fire. Do you think they do? Or reading sermons, and being catechised by their manservant, and set to learn a column of Scripture names, if they don’t answer properly?” “Probably not,” I responded. “They are good children, no doubt, and don’t deserve the treatment you receive, for your bad conduct.” “Don’t cant, Nelly,” he said: “nonsense! We ran from the top of the Heights to the park, without stopping—Catherine completely beaten in the race, because she was barefoot. You’ll have to seek for her shoes in the bog to-morrow. We crept through a broken hedge, groped our way up the path, and planted ourselves on a flower-plot under the drawing-room window. The light came from thence; they had not put up the shutters, and the curtains were only half closed. Both of us were able to look in by standing on the basement, and clinging to the ledge, and we saw—ah! it was beautiful—a splendid place carpeted with crimson, and crimson-covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers. Old Mr. and Mrs. Linton were not there; Edgar and his sisters had it entirely to themselves. Shouldn’t they have been happy? We should have thought ourselves in heaven! And now, guess what your good children were doing? Isabella—I believe she is eleven, a year younger than Cathy—lay screaming at the farther end of the room,

shrieking as if witches were running red-hot needles into her. Edgar stood on the hearth weeping silently, and in the middle of the table sat a little dog, shaking its paw and yelping; which, from their mutual accusations, we understood they had nearly pulled in two between them. The idiots! That was their pleasure! to quarrel who should hold a heap of warm hair, and each begin to cry because both, after struggling to get it, refused to take it. We laughed outright at the petted things; we did despise them! When would you catch me wishing to have what Catherine wanted? or find us by ourselves, seeking entertainment in yelling, and sobbing, and rolling on the ground, divided by the whole room? I'd not exchange, for a thousand lives, my condition here, for Edgar Linton's at Thrushcross Grange—not if I might have the privilege of flinging Joseph off the highest gable, and painting the house-front with Hindley's blood!"

"Hush, hush!" I interrupted. "Still you have not told me, Heathcliff, how Catherine is left behind?"

"I told you we laughed," he answered. "The Lintons heard us, and with one accord they shot like arrows to the door; there was silence, and then a cry, 'Oh, mamma, mamma! Oh, papa! Oh, mamma, come here. Oh, papa, oh!' They really did howl out something in that way. We made frightful noises to terrify them still more, and then we dropped off the ledge, because somebody was drawing the bars, and we felt we had better flee. I had Cathy by the hand, and was urging her on, when all at once she fell down. 'Run, Heathcliff, run!' she whispered. 'They have let the bull-dog loose, and he holds me!' The devil had seized her ankle, Nelly: I heard his abominable snorting. She did not yell out—no! she would have scorned to do it, if she had been spitted on the horns of a mad cow. I did, though: I vociferated curses enough to annihilate any fiend in Christendom; and I got a stone and thrust it between his jaws, and tried with all my might to cram it down his throat. A beast of a servant came up with a lantern, at last, shouting—'Keep fast, Skulker, keep fast!' He changed his note, however, when he saw Skulker's game. The dog was throttled off; his huge, purple tongue hanging half a foot out of his mouth, and his pendent lips streaming with bloody slaver. The man took Cathy up; she was sick: not from fear, I'm certain, but from pain. He carried her in; I followed, grumbling execrations and vengeance. 'What prey, Robert?' hallooed Linton from the entrance. 'Skulker has caught a little girl, sir,' he replied; 'and there's a lad here,' he added, making a clutch at me, 'who looks an out-and-outer! Very like the

robbers were for putting them through the window to open the doors to the gang after all were asleep, that they might murder us at their ease. Hold your tongue, you foul-mouthed thief, you! you shall go to the gallows for this. Mr. Linton, sir, don't lay by your gun.' 'No, no, Robert,' said the old fool. 'The rascals knew that yesterday was my rent-day: they thought to have me cleverly. Come in; I'll furnish them a reception. There, John, fasten the chain. Give Skulker some water, Jenny. To beard a magistrate in his stronghold, and on the Sabbath, too! Where will their insolence stop? Oh, my dear Mary, look here! Don't be afraid, it is but a boy—yet the villain scowls so plainly in his face; would it not be a kindness to the country to hang him at once, before he shows his nature in acts as well as features?' He pulled me under the chandelier, and Mrs. Linton placed her spectacles on her nose and raised her hands in horror. The cowardly children crept nearer also, Isabella lisping—'Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar, papa. He's exactly like the son of the fortune-teller that stole my tame pheasant. Isn't he, Edgar?'

"While they examined me, Cathy came round; she heard the last speech, and laughed. Edgar Linton, after an inquisitive stare, collected sufficient wit to recognise her. They see us at church, you know, though we seldom meet them elsewhere. 'That's Miss Earnshaw?' he whispered to his mother, 'and look how Skulker has bitten her—how her foot bleeds!'

"'Miss Earnshaw? Nonsense!' cried the dame; 'Miss Earnshaw scouring the country with a gipsy! And yet, my dear, the child is in mourning—surely it is—and she may be lamed for life!'

"'What culpable carelessness in her brother!' exclaimed Mr. Linton, turning from me to Catherine. 'I've understood from Shielders'" (that was the curate, sir) "'that he lets her grow up in absolute heathenism. But who is this? Where did she pick up this companion? Oho! I declare he is that strange acquisition my late neighbour made, in his journey to Liverpool—a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway.'

"'A wicked boy, at all events,' remarked the old lady, 'and quite unfit for a decent house! Did you notice his language, Linton? I'm shocked that my children should have heard it.'

"I recommenced cursing—don't be angry, Nelly—and so Robert was ordered to take me off. I refused to go without Cathy; he dragged me into the garden, pushed the lantern into my hand, assured me that Mr. Earnshaw

should be informed of my behaviour, and, bidding me march directly, secured the door again. The curtains were still looped up at one corner, and I resumed my station as spy; because, if Catherine had wished to return, I intended shattering their great glass panes to a million of fragments, unless they let her out. She sat on the sofa quietly. Mrs. Linton took off the grey cloak of the dairy-maid which we had borrowed for our excursion, shaking her head and expostulating with her, I suppose: she was a young lady, and they made a distinction between her treatment and mine. Then the woman-servant brought a basin of warm water, and washed her feet; and Mr. Linton mixed a tumbler of negus, and Isabella emptied a plateful of cakes into her lap, and Edgar stood gaping at a distance. Afterwards, they dried and combed her beautiful hair, and gave her a pair of enormous slippers, and wheeled her to the fire; and I left her, as merry as she could be, dividing her food between the little dog and Skulker, whose nose she pinched as he ate; and kindling a spark of spirit in the vacant blue eyes of the Lintons—a dim reflection from her own enchanting face. I saw they were full of stupid admiration; she is so immeasurably superior to them—to everybody on earth, is she not, Nelly?”

“There will more come of this business than you reckon on,” I answered, covering him up and extinguishing the light. “You are incurable, Heathcliff; and Mr. Hindley will have to proceed to extremities, see if he won’t.” My words came truer than I desired. The luckless adventure made Earnshaw furious. And then Mr. Linton, to mend matters, paid us a visit himself on the morrow, and read the young master such a lecture on the road he guided his family, that he was stirred to look about him, in earnest. Heathcliff received no flogging, but he was told that the first word he spoke to Miss Catherine should ensure a dismissal; and Mrs. Earnshaw undertook to keep her sister-in-law in due restraint when she returned home; employing art, not force: with force she would have found it impossible.

## CHAPTER VII

Cathy stayed at Thrushcross Grange five weeks: till Christmas. By that time her ankle was thoroughly cured, and her manners much improved. The mistress visited her often in the interval, and commenced her plan of reform by trying to raise her self-respect with fine clothes and flattery, which she took readily; so that, instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house, and rushing to squeeze us all breathless, there “lighted from a handsome black pony a very dignified person, with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a feathered beaver, and a long cloth habit, which she was obliged to hold up with both hands that she might sail in. Hindley lifted her from her horse, exclaiming delightedly, “Why, Cathy, you are quite a beauty! I should scarcely have known you: you look like a lady now. Isabella Linton is not to be compared with her, is she, Frances?” “Isabella has not her natural advantages,” replied his wife: “but she must mind and not grow wild again here. Ellen, help Miss Catherine off with her things—Stay, dear, you will disarrange your curls—let me untie your hat.”

I removed the habit, and there shone forth beneath a grand plaid silk frock, white trousers, and burnished shoes; and, while her eyes sparkled joyfully when the dogs came bounding up to welcome her, she dared hardly touch them lest they should fawn upon her splendid garments. She kissed me gently: I was all flour making the Christmas cake, and it would not have done to give me a hug; and then she looked round for Heathcliff. Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw watched anxiously their meeting; thinking it would enable them to judge, in some measure, what grounds they had for hoping to succeed in separating the two friends.

Heathcliff was hard to discover, at first. If he were careless, and uncared for, before Catherine’s absence, he had been ten times more so since. Nobody but I even did him the kindness to call him a dirty boy, and bid him wash himself, once a week; and children of his age seldom have a natural pleasure in soap and water. Therefore, not to mention his clothes, which had

seen three months' service in mire and dust, and his thick uncombed hair, the surface of his face and hands was dismally beclouded. He might well skulk behind the settle, on beholding such a bright, graceful damsel enter the house, instead of a rough-headed counterpart of himself, as he expected. "Is Heathcliff not here?" she demanded, pulling off her gloves, and displaying fingers wonderfully whitened with doing nothing and staying indoors.

"Heathcliff, you may come forward," cried Mr. Hindley, enjoying his discomfiture, and gratified to see what a forbidding young blackguard he would be compelled to present himself. "You may come and wish Miss Catherine welcome, like the other servants."

Cathy, catching a glimpse of her friend in his concealment, flew to embrace him; she bestowed seven or eight kisses on his cheek within the second, and then stopped, and drawing back, burst into a laugh, exclaiming, "Why, how very black and cross you look! and how—how funny and grim! But that's because I'm used to Edgar and Isabella Linton. Well, Heathcliff, have you forgotten me?"

She had some reason to put the question, for shame and pride threw double gloom over his countenance, and kept him immovable.

"Shake hands, Heathcliff," said Mr. Earnshaw, condescendingly; "once in a way that is permitted."

"I shall not," replied the boy, finding his tongue at last; "I shall not stand to be laughed at. I shall not bear it!" And he would have broken from the circle, but Miss Cathy seized him again.

"I did not mean to laugh at you," she said; "I could not hinder myself: Heathcliff, shake hands at least! What are you sulky for? It was only that you looked odd. If you wash your face and brush your hair, it will be all right: but you are so dirty!"

She gazed concernedly at the dusky fingers she held in her own, and also at her dress; which she feared had gained no embellishment from its contact with his.

"You needn't have touched me!" he answered, following her eye and snatching away his hand. "I shall be as dirty as I please: and I like to be dirty, and I will be dirty."

With that he dashed headforemost out of the room, amid the merriment of the master and mistress, and to the serious disturbance of Catherine; who could not comprehend how her remarks should have produced such an exhibition of bad temper.

After playing lady's-maid to the new-comer, and putting my cakes in the oven, and making the house and kitchen cheerful with great fires, befitting Christmas-eve, I prepared to sit down and amuse myself by singing carols, all alone; regardless of Joseph's affirmations that he considered the merry tunes I chose as next door to songs. He had retired to private prayer in his chamber, and Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw were engaging Missy's attention by sundry gay trifles bought for her to present to the little Lintons, as an acknowledgment of their kindness. They had invited them to spend the morrow at Wuthering Heights, and the invitation had been accepted, on one condition: Mrs. Linton begged that her darlings might be kept carefully apart from that "naughty swearing boy."

Under these circumstances I remained solitary. I smelt the rich scent of the heating spices; and admired the shining kitchen utensils, the polished clock, decked in holly, the silver mugs ranged on a tray ready to be filled with mulled ale for supper; and above all, the speckless purity of my particular care—the scoured and well-swept floor. I gave due inward applause to every object, and then I remembered how old Earnshaw used to come in when all was tidied, and call me a cant lass, and slip a shilling into my hand as a Christmas-box; and from that I went on to think of his fondness for Heathcliff, and his dread lest he should suffer neglect after death had removed him: and that naturally led me to consider the poor lad's situation now, and from singing I changed my mind to crying. It struck me soon, however, there would be more sense in endeavouring to repair some of his wrongs than shedding tears over them: I got up and walked into the court to seek him. He was not far; I found him smoothing the glossy coat of the new pony in the stable, and feeding the other beasts, according to custom.

"Make haste, Heathcliff!" I said, "the kitchen is so comfortable; and Joseph is upstairs: make haste, and let me dress you smart before Miss Cathy comes out, and then you can sit together, with the whole hearth to yourselves, and have a long chatter till bedtime."

He proceeded with his task, and never turned his head towards me.

“Come—are you coming?” I continued. “There’s a little cake for each of you, nearly enough; and you’ll need half-an-hour’s donning.”

I waited five minutes, but getting no answer left him. Catherine supped with her brother and sister-in-law: Joseph and I joined at an unsociable meal, seasoned with reproofs on one side and sauciness on the other. His cake and cheese remained on the table all night for the fairies. He managed to continue work till nine o’clock, and then marched dumb and dour to his chamber. Cathy sat up late, having a world of things to order for the reception of her new friends: she came into the kitchen once to speak to her old one; but he was gone, and she only stayed to ask what was the matter with him, and then went back. In the morning he rose early; and, as it was a holiday, carried his ill-humour on to the moors; not re-appearing till the family were departed for church. Fasting and reflection seemed to have brought him to a better spirit. He hung about me for a while, and having screwed up his courage, exclaimed abruptly—“Nelly, make me decent, I’m going to be good.”

“High time, Heathcliff,” I said; “you *have* grieved Catherine: she’s sorry she ever came home, I daresay! It looks as if you envied her, because she is more thought of than you.”

The notion of *envying* Catherine was incomprehensible to him, but the notion of grieving her he understood clearly enough.

“Did she say she was grieved?” he inquired, looking very serious.

“She cried when I told her you were off again this morning.”

“Well, *I* cried last night,” he returned, “and I had more reason to cry than she.”

“Yes: you had the reason of going to bed with a proud heart and an empty stomach,” said I. “Proud people breed sad sorrows for themselves. But, if you be ashamed of your touchiness, you must ask pardon, mind, when she comes in. You must go up and offer to kiss her, and say—you know best what to say; only do it heartily, and not as if you thought her converted into a stranger by her grand dress. And now, though I have dinner to get ready, I’ll steal time to arrange you so that Edgar Linton shall look quite a doll beside you: and that he does. You are younger, and yet, I’ll be bound, you are taller and twice as broad across the shoulders; you could knock him down in a twinkling; don’t you feel that you could?”



Heathcliff's face brightened a moment; then it was overcast afresh, and he sighed.

"But, Nelly, if I knocked him down twenty times, that wouldn't make him less handsome or me more so. I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!"

"And cried for mamma at every turn," I added, "and trembled if a country lad heaved his fist against you, and sat at home all day for a shower of rain. Oh, Heathcliff, you are showing a poor spirit! Come to the glass, and I'll let you see what you should wish. Do you mark those two lines between your eyes; and those thick brows, that, instead of rising arched, sink in the middle; and that couple of black fiends, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly, but lurk glinting under them, like devil's spies? Wish and learn to smooth away the surly wrinkles, to raise your lids frankly, and change the fiends to confident, innocent angels, suspecting and doubting nothing, and always seeing friends where they are not sure of foes. Don't get the expression of a vicious cur that appears to know the kicks it gets are its dessert, and yet hates all the world, as well as the kicker, for what it suffers."

"In other words, I must wish for Edgar Linton's great blue eyes and even forehead," he replied. "I do—and that won't help me to them."

"A good heart will help you to a bonny face, my lad," I continued, "if you were a regular black; and a bad one will turn the bonniest into something worse than ugly. And now that we've done washing, and combing, and sulking—tell me whether you don't think yourself rather handsome? I'll tell you, I do. You're fit for a prince in disguise. Who knows but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together? And you were kidnapped by wicked sailors and brought to England. Were I in your place, I would frame high notions of my birth; and the thoughts of what I was should give me courage and dignity to support the oppressions of a little farmer!"

So I chattered on; and Heathcliff gradually lost his frown and began to look quite pleasant, when all at once our conversation was interrupted by a rumbling sound moving up the road and entering the court. He ran to the window and I to the door, just in time to behold the two Lintons descend

from the family carriage, smothered in cloaks and furs, and the Earnshaws dismount from their horses: they often rode to church in winter. Catherine took a hand of each of the children, and brought them into the house and set them before the fire, which quickly put colour into their white faces.

I urged my companion to hasten now and show his amiable humour, and he willingly obeyed; but ill luck would have it that, as he opened the door leading from the kitchen on one side, Hindley opened it on the other. They met, and the master, irritated at seeing him clean and cheerful, or, perhaps, eager to keep his promise to Mrs. Linton, shoved him back with a sudden thrust, and angrily bade Joseph “keep the fellow out of the room—send him into the garret till dinner is over. He’ll be cramming his fingers in the tarts and stealing the fruit, if left alone with them a minute.”

“Nay, sir,” I could not avoid answering, “he’ll touch nothing, not he: and I suppose he must have his share of the dainties as well as we.”

“He shall have his share of my hand, if I catch him downstairs till dark,” cried Hindley. “Begone, you vagabond! What! you are attempting the coxcomb, are you? Wait till I get hold of those elegant locks—see if I won’t pull them a bit longer!”

“They are long enough already,” observed Master Linton, peeping from the doorway; “I wonder they don’t make his head ache. It’s like a colt’s mane over his eyes!”

He ventured this remark without any intention to insult; but Heathcliff’s violent nature was not prepared to endure the appearance of impertinence from one whom he seemed to hate, even then, as a rival. He seized a tureen of hot apple sauce (the first thing that came under his grip) and dashed it full against the speaker’s face and neck; who instantly commenced a lament that brought Isabella and Catherine hurrying to the place. Mr. Earnshaw snatched up the culprit directly and conveyed him to his chamber; where, doubtless, he administered a rough remedy to cool the fit of passion, for he appeared red and breathless. I got the dishcloth, and rather spitefully scrubbed Edgar’s nose and mouth, affirming it served him right for meddling. His sister began weeping to go home, and Cathy stood by confounded, blushing for all.

“You should not have spoken to him!” she expostulated with Master Linton. “He was in a bad temper, and now you’ve spoilt your visit; and he’ll

be flogged: I hate him to be flogged! I can't eat my dinner. Why did you speak to him, Edgar?"

"I didn't," sobbed the youth, escaping from my hands, and finishing the remainder of the purification with his cambric pocket-handkerchief. "I promised mamma that I wouldn't say one word to him, and I didn't."

"Well, don't cry," replied Catherine, contemptuously; "you're not killed. Don't make more mischief; my brother is coming: be quiet! Hush, Isabella! Has anybody hurt you?"

"There, there, children—to your seats!" cried Hindley, bustling in. "That brute of a lad has warmed me nicely. Next time, Master Edgar, take the law into your own fists—it will give you an appetite!"

The little party recovered its equanimity at sight of the fragrant feast. They were hungry after their ride, and easily consoled, since no real harm had befallen them. Mr. Earnshaw carved bountiful platefuls, and the mistress made them merry with lively talk. I waited behind her chair, and was pained to behold Catherine, with dry eyes and an indifferent air, commence cutting up the wing of a goose before her. "An unfeeling child," I thought to myself; "how lightly she dismisses her old playmate's troubles. I could not have imagined her to be so selfish." She lifted a mouthful to her lips: then she set it down again: her cheeks flushed, and the tears gushed over them. She slipped her fork to the floor, and hastily dived under the cloth to conceal her emotion. I did not call her unfeeling long; for I perceived she was in purgatory throughout the day, and wearying to find an opportunity of getting by herself, or paying a visit to Heathcliff, who had been locked up by the master: as I discovered, on endeavouring to introduce to him a private mess of victuals.

In the evening we had a dance. Cathy begged that he might be liberated then, as Isabella Linton had no partner: her entreaties were vain, and I was appointed to supply the deficiency. We got rid of all gloom in the excitement of the exercise, and our pleasure was increased by the arrival of the Gimmerton band, mustering fifteen strong: a trumpet, a trombone, clarionets, bassoons, French horns, and a bass viol, besides singers. They go the rounds of all the respectable houses, and receive contributions every Christmas, and we esteemed it a first-rate treat to hear them. After the usual carols had been sung, we set them to songs and glees. Mrs. Earnshaw loved the music, and so they gave us plenty.

Catherine loved it too: but she said it sounded sweetest at the top of the steps, and she went up in the dark: I followed. They shut the house door below, never noting our absence, it was so full of people. She made no stay at the stairs' -head, but mounted farther, to the garret where Heathcliff was confined, and called him. He stubbornly declined answering for a while: she persevered, and finally persuaded him to hold communion with her through the boards. I let the poor things converse unmolested, till I supposed the songs were going to cease, and the singers to get some refreshment: then I clambered up the ladder to warn her. Instead of finding her outside, I heard her voice within. The little monkey had crept by the skylight of one garret, along the roof, into the skylight of the other, and it was with the utmost difficulty I could coax her out again. When she did come, Heathcliff came with her, and she insisted that I should take him into the kitchen, as my fellow-servant had gone to a neighbour's, to be removed from the sound of our "devil's psalmody," as it pleased him to call it. I told them I intended by no means to encourage their tricks: but as the prisoner had never broken his fast since yesterday's dinner, I would wink at his cheating Mr. Hindley that once. He went down: I set him a stool by the fire, and offered him a quantity of good things: but he was sick and could eat little, and my attempts to entertain him were thrown away. He leant his two elbows on his knees, and his chin on his hands and remained rapt in dumb meditation. On my inquiring the subject of his thoughts, he answered gravely—"I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do!"

"For shame, Heathcliff!" said I. "It is for God to punish wicked people; we should learn to forgive."

"No, God won't have the satisfaction that I shall," he returned. "I only wish I knew the best way! Let me alone, and I'll plan it out: while I'm thinking of that I don't feel pain."

"But, Mr. Lockwood, I forget these tales cannot divert you. I'm annoyed how I should dream of chattering on at such a rate; and your gruel cold, and you nodding for bed! I could have told Heathcliff's history, all that you need hear, in half a dozen words."

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Thus interrupting herself, the housekeeper rose, and proceeded to lay aside her sewing; but I felt incapable of moving from the hearth, and I was very far from nodding. "Sit still, Mrs. Dean," I cried; "do sit still another half-hour. You've done just right to tell the story leisurely. That is the method I like; and you must finish it in the same style. I am interested in every character you have mentioned, more or less."

"The clock is on the stroke of eleven, sir."

"No matter—I'm not accustomed to go to bed in the long hours. One or two is early enough for a person who lies till ten."

"You shouldn't lie till ten. There's the very prime of the morning gone long before that time. A person who has not done one-half his day's work by ten o'clock, runs a chance of leaving the other half undone."

"Nevertheless, Mrs. Dean, resume your chair; because to-morrow I intend lengthening the night till afternoon. I prognosticate for myself an obstinate cold, at least."

"I hope not, sir. Well, you must allow me to leap over some three years; during that space Mrs. Earnshaw—"

"No, no, I'll allow nothing of the sort! Are you acquainted with the mood of mind in which, if you were seated alone, and the cat licking its kitten on the rug before you, you would watch the operation so intently that puss's neglect of one ear would put you seriously out of temper?"

"A terribly lazy mood, I should say."

"On the contrary, a tiresomely active one. It is mine, at present; and, therefore, continue minutely. I perceive that people in these regions acquire over people in towns the value that a spider in a dungeon does over a spider in a cottage, to their various occupants; and yet the deepened attraction is not entirely owing to the situation of the looker-on. They *do* live more in earnest, more in themselves, and less in surface, change, and frivolous external things. I could fancy a love for life here almost possible; and I was a fixed unbeliever in any love of a year's standing. One state resembles setting a hungry man down to a single dish, on which he may concentrate his entire appetite and do it justice; the other, introducing him to a table laid out by French cooks: he can perhaps extract as much enjoyment from the whole; but each part is a mere atom in his regard and remembrance."

“Oh! here we are the same as anywhere else, when you get to know us,” observed Mrs. Dean, somewhat puzzled at my speech.

“Excuse me,” I responded; “you, my good friend, are a striking evidence against that assertion. Excepting a few provincialisms of slight consequence, you have no marks of the manners which I am habituated to consider as peculiar to your class. I am sure you have thought a great deal more than the generality of servants think. You have been compelled to cultivate your reflective faculties for want of occasions for frittering your life away in silly trifles.”

Mrs. Dean laughed.

“I certainly esteem myself a steady, reasonable kind of body,” she said; “not exactly from living among the hills and seeing one set of faces, and one series of actions, from year’s end to year’s end; but I have undergone sharp discipline, which has taught me wisdom; and then, I have read more than you would fancy, Mr. Lockwood. You could not open a book in this library that I have not looked into, and got something out of also: unless it be that range of Greek and Latin, and that of French; and those I know one from another: it is as much as you can expect of a poor man’s daughter. However, if I am to follow my story in true gossip’s fashion, I had better go on; and instead of leaping three years, I will be content to pass to the next summer—the summer of 1778, that is nearly twenty-three years ago.”

## CHAPTER VIII

On the morning of a fine June day my first bonny little nursling, and the last of the ancient Earnshaw stock, was born. We were busy with the hay in a far-away field, when the girl that usually brought our breakfasts came running an hour too soon across the meadow and up the lane, calling me as she ran.

“Oh, such a grand bairn!” she panted out. “The finest lad that ever breathed! But the doctor says missis must go: he says she’s been in a consumption these many months. I heard him tell Mr. Hindley: and now she has nothing to keep her, and she’ll be dead before winter. You must come home directly. You’re to nurse it, Nelly: to feed it with sugar and milk, and take care of it day and night. I wish I were you, because it will be all yours when there is no missis!”

“But is she very ill?” I asked, flinging down my rake and tying my bonnet.

“I guess she is; yet she looks bravely,” replied the girl, “and she talks as if she thought of living to see it grow a man. She’s out of her head for joy, it’s such a beauty! If I were her I’m certain I should not die: I should get better at the bare sight of it, in spite of Kenneth. I was fairly mad at him. Dame Archer brought the cherub down to master, in the house, and his face just began to light up, when the old croaker steps forward, and says he — ‘Earnshaw, it’s a blessing your wife has been spared to leave you this son. When she came, I felt convinced we shouldn’t keep her long; and now, I must tell you, the winter will probably finish her. Don’t take on, and fret about it too much: it can’t be helped. And besides, you should have known better than to choose such a rush of a lass!’”

“And what did the master answer?” I inquired.

“I think he swore: but I didn’t mind him, I was straining to see the bairn,” and she began again to describe it rapturously. I, as zealous as herself,

hurried eagerly home to admire, on my part; though I was very sad for Hindley's sake. He had room in his heart only for two idols—his wife and himself: he doted on both, and adored one, and I couldn't conceive how he would bear the loss.

When we got to Wuthering Heights, there he stood at the front door; and, as I passed in, I asked, "how was the baby?"

"Nearly ready to run about, Nell!" he replied, putting on a cheerful smile.

"And the mistress?" I ventured to inquire; "the doctor says she's—"

"Damn the doctor!" he interrupted, reddening. "Frances is quite right: she'll be perfectly well by this time next week. Are you going upstairs? will you tell her that I'll come, if she'll promise not to talk. I left her because she would not hold her tongue; and she must—tell her Mr. Kenneth says she must be quiet."

I delivered this message to Mrs. Earnshaw; she seemed in flighty spirits, and replied merrily, "I hardly spoke a word, Ellen, and there he has gone out twice, crying. Well, say I promise I won't speak: but that does not bind me not to laugh at him!"

Poor soul! Till within a week of her death that gay heart never failed her; and her husband persisted doggedly, nay, furiously, in affirming her health improved every day. When Kenneth warned him that his medicines were useless at that stage of the malady, and he needn't put him to further expense by attending her, he retorted, "I know you need not—she's well—she does not want any more attendance from you! She never was in a consumption. It was a fever; and it is gone: her pulse is as slow as mine now, and her cheek as cool."

He told his wife the same story, and she seemed to believe him; but one night, while leaning on his shoulder, in the act of saying she thought she should be able to get up to-morrow, a fit of coughing took her—a very slight one—he raised her in his arms; she put her two hands about his neck, her face changed, and she was dead.

As the girl had anticipated, the child Hareton fell wholly into my hands. Mr. Earnshaw, provided he saw him healthy and never heard him cry, was contented, as far as regarded him. For himself, he grew desperate: his sorrow was of that kind that will not lament. He neither wept nor prayed; he cursed and defied: execrated God and man, and gave himself up to reckless



dissipation. The servants could not bear his tyrannical and evil conduct long: Joseph and I were the only two that would stay. I had not the heart to leave my charge; and besides, you know, I had been his foster-sister, and excused his behaviour more readily than a stranger would. Joseph remained to hector over tenants and labourers; and because it was his vocation to be where he had plenty of wickedness to reprove.

The master's bad ways and bad companions formed a pretty example for Catherine and Heathcliff. His treatment of the latter was enough to make a fiend of a saint. And, truly, it appeared as if the lad *were* possessed of something diabolical at that period. He delighted to witness Hindley degrading himself past redemption; and became daily more notable for savage sullenness and ferocity. I could not half tell what an infernal house we had. The curate dropped calling, and nobody decent came near us, at last; unless Edgar Linton's visits to Miss Cathy might be an exception. At fifteen she was the queen of the country-side; she had no peer; and she did turn out a haughty, headstrong creature! I own I did not like her, after infancy was past; and I vexed her frequently by trying to bring down her arrogance: she never took an aversion to me, though. She had a wondrous constancy to old attachments: even Heathcliff kept his hold on her affections unalterably; and young Linton, with all his superiority, found it difficult to make an equally deep impression. He was my late master: that is his portrait over the fireplace. It used to hang on one side, and his wife's on the other; but hers has been removed, or else you might see something of what she was. Can you make that out?

Mrs. Dean raised the candle, and I discerned a soft-featured face, exceedingly resembling the young lady at the Heights, but more pensive and amiable in expression. It formed a sweet picture. The long light hair curled slightly on the temples; the eyes were large and serious; the figure almost too graceful. I did not marvel how Catherine Earnshaw could forget her first friend for such an individual. I marvelled much how he, with a mind to correspond with his person, could fancy my idea of Catherine Earnshaw.

"A very agreeable portrait," I observed to the house-keeper. "Is it like?"

"Yes," she answered; "but he looked better when he was animated; that is his everyday countenance: he wanted spirit in general."

Catherine had kept up her acquaintance with the Lintons since her five-weeks' residence among them; and as she had no temptation to show her rough side in their company, and had the sense to be ashamed of being rude where she experienced such invariable courtesy, she imposed unwittingly on the old lady and gentleman by her ingenious cordiality; gained the admiration of Isabella, and the heart and soul of her brother: acquisitions that flattered her from the first—for she was full of ambition—and led her to adopt a double character without exactly intending to deceive any one. In the place where she heard Heathcliff termed a “vulgar young ruffian,” and “worse than a brute,” she took care not to act like him; but at home she had small inclination to practise politeness that would only be laughed at, and restrain an unruly nature when it would bring her neither credit nor praise.

Mr. Edgar seldom mustered courage to visit Wuthering Heights openly. He had a terror of Earnshaw's reputation, and shrunk from encountering him; and yet he was always received with our best attempts at civility: the master himself avoided offending him, knowing why he came; and if he could not be gracious, kept out of the way. I rather think his appearance there was distasteful to Catherine; she was not artful, never played the coquette, and had evidently an objection to her two friends meeting at all; for when Heathcliff expressed contempt of Linton in his presence, she could not half coincide, as she did in his absence; and when Linton evinced disgust and antipathy to Heathcliff, she dared not treat his sentiments with indifference, as if depreciation of her playmate were of scarcely any consequence to her. I've had many a laugh at her perplexities and untold troubles, which she vainly strove to hide from my mockery. That sounds ill-natured: but she was so proud it became really impossible to pity her distresses, till she should be chastened into more humility. She did bring herself, finally, to confess, and to confide in me: there was not a soul else that she might fashion into an adviser.

Mr. Hindley had gone from home one afternoon, and Heathcliff presumed to give himself a holiday on the strength of it. He had reached the age of sixteen then, I think, and without having bad features, or being deficient in intellect, he contrived to convey an impression of inward and outward repulsiveness that his present aspect retains no traces of. In the first place, he had by that time lost the benefit of his early education: continual hard work, begun soon and concluded late, had extinguished any curiosity he once possessed in pursuit of knowledge, and any love for books or

learning. His childhood's sense of superiority, instilled into him by the favours of old Mr. Earnshaw, was faded away. He struggled long to keep up an equality with Catherine in her studies, and yielded with poignant though silent regret: but he yielded completely; and there was no prevailing on him to take a step in the way of moving upward, when he found he must, necessarily, sink beneath his former level. Then personal appearance sympathised with mental deterioration: he acquired a slouching gait and ignoble look; his naturally reserved disposition was exaggerated into an almost idiotic excess of unsociable moroseness; and he took a grim pleasure, apparently, in exciting the aversion rather than the esteem of his few acquaintances.

Catherine and he were constant companions still at his seasons of respite from labour; but he had ceased to express his fondness for her in words, and recoiled with angry suspicion from her girlish caresses, as if conscious there could be no gratification in lavishing such marks of affection on him. On the before-named occasion he came into the house to announce his intention of doing nothing, while I was assisting Miss Cathy to arrange her dress: she had not reckoned on his taking it into his head to be idle; and imagining she would have the whole place to herself, she managed, by some means, to inform Mr. Edgar of her brother's absence, and was then preparing to receive him.

"Cathy, are you busy this afternoon?" asked Heathcliff. "Are you going anywhere?"

"No, it is raining," she answered.

"Why have you that silk frock on, then?" he said. "Nobody coming here, I hope?"

"Not that I know of," stammered Miss: "but you should be in the field now, Heathcliff. It is an hour past dinnertime: I thought you were gone."

"Hindley does not often free us from his accursed presence," observed the boy. "I'll not work any more to-day: I'll stay with you."

"Oh, but Joseph will tell," she suggested; "you'd better go!"

"Joseph is loading lime on the further side of Penistone Crag; it will take him till dark, and he'll never know."

So, saying, he lounged to the fire, and sat down. Catherine reflected an instant, with knitted brows—she found it needful to smooth the way for an

intrusion. "Isabella and Edgar Linton talked of calling this afternoon," she said, at the conclusion of a minute's silence. "As it rains, I hardly expect them; but they may come, and if they do, you run the risk of being scolded for no good."

"Order Ellen to say you are engaged, Cathy," he persisted; "don't turn me out for those pitiful, silly friends of yours! I'm on the point, sometimes, of complaining that they—but I'll not—"

"That they what?" cried Catherine, gazing at him with a troubled countenance. "Oh, Nelly!" she added petulantly, jerking her head away from my hands, "you've combed my hair quite out of curl! That's enough; let me alone. What are you on the point of complaining about, Heathcliff?"

"Nothing—only look at the almanack on that wall;" he pointed to a framed sheet hanging near the window, and continued, "The crosses are for the evenings you have spent with the Lintons, the dots for those spent with me. Do you see? I've marked every day."

"Yes—very foolish: as if I took notice!" replied Catherine, in a peevish tone. "And where is the sense of that?"

"To show that I *do* take notice," said Heathcliff.

"And should I always be sitting with you?" she demanded, growing more irritated. "What good do I get? What do you talk about? You might be dumb, or a baby, for anything you say to amuse me, or for anything you do, either!"

"You never told me before that I talked too little, or that you disliked my company, Cathy!" exclaimed Heathcliff, in much agitation.

"It's no company at all, when people know nothing and say nothing," she muttered.

Her companion rose up, but he hadn't time to express his feelings further, for a horse's feet were heard on the flags, and having knocked gently, young Linton entered, his face brilliant with delight at the unexpected summon she had received. Doubtless Catherine marked the difference between her friends, as one came in and the other went out. The contrast resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly, coal country for a beautiful fertile valley; and his voice and greeting were as opposite as his aspect. He had a sweet, low manner of speaking, and pronounced his words as you do: that's less gruff than we talk here, and softer.

“I’m not come too soon, am I?” he said, casting a look at me: I had begun to wipe the plate, and tidy some drawers at the far end in the dresser.

“No,” answered Catherine. “What are you doing there, Nelly?”

“My work, Miss,” I replied. (Mr. Hindley had given me directions to make a third party in any private visits Linton chose to pay.)

She stepped behind me and whispered crossly, “Take yourself and your dusters off; when company are in the house, servants don’t commence scouring and cleaning in the room where they are!”

“It’s a good opportunity, now that master is away,” I answered aloud: “he hates me to be fidgeting over these things in his presence. I’m sure Mr. Edgar will excuse me.”

“I hate you to be fidgeting in *my* presence,” exclaimed the young lady imperiously, not allowing her guest time to speak: she had failed to recover her equanimity since the little dispute with Heathcliff.

“I’m sorry for it, Miss Catherine,” was my response; and I proceeded assiduously with my occupation.

She, supposing Edgar could not see her, snatched the cloth from my hand, and pinched me, with a prolonged wrench, very spitefully on the arm. I’ve said I did not love her, and rather relished mortifying her vanity now and then: besides, she hurt me extremely; so I started up from my knees, and screamed out, “Oh, Miss, that’s a nasty trick! You have no right to nip me, and I’m not going to bear it.”

“I didn’t touch you, you lying creature!” cried she, her fingers tingling to repeat the act, and her ears red with rage. She never had power to conceal her passion, it always set her whole complexion in a blaze.

“What’s that, then?” I retorted, showing a decided purple witness to refute her.

She stamped her foot, wavered a moment, and then, irresistibly impelled by the naughty spirit within her, slapped me on the cheek: a stinging blow that filled both eyes with water.

“Catherine, love! Catherine!” interposed Linton, greatly shocked at the double fault of falsehood and violence which his idol had committed.

“Leave the room, Ellen!” she repeated, trembling all over.

Little Hareton, who followed me everywhere, and was sitting near me on the floor, at seeing my tears commenced crying himself, and sobbed out complaints against “wicked aunt Cathy,” which drew her fury on to his unlucky head: she seized his shoulders, and shook him till the poor child waxed livid, and Edgar thoughtlessly laid hold of her hands to deliver him. In an instant one was wrung free, and the astonished young man felt it applied over his own ear in a way that could not be mistaken for jest. He drew back in consternation. I lifted Hareton in my arms, and walked off to the kitchen with him, leaving the door of communication open, for I was curious to watch how they would settle their disagreement. The insulted visitor moved to the spot where he had laid his hat, pale and with a quivering lip.

“That’s right!” I said to myself. “Take warning and begone! It’s a kindness to let you have a glimpse of her genuine disposition.”

“Where are you going?” demanded Catherine, advancing to the door.

He swerved aside, and attempted to pass.

“You must not go!” she exclaimed, energetically.

“I must and shall!” he replied in a subdued voice.

“No,” she persisted, grasping the handle; “not yet, Edgar Linton: sit down; you shall not leave me in that temper. I should be miserable all night, and I won’t be miserable for you!”

“Can I stay after you have struck me?” asked Linton.

Catherine was mute.

“You’ve made me afraid and ashamed of you,” he continued; “I’ll not come here again!”

Her eyes began to glisten and her lids to twinkle.

“And you told a deliberate untruth!” he said.

“I didn’t!” she cried, recovering her speech; “I did nothing deliberately. Well, go, if you please—get away! And now I’ll cry—I’ll cry myself sick!”

She dropped down on her knees by a chair, and set to weeping in serious earnest. Edgar persevered in his resolution as far as the court; there he lingered. I resolved to encourage him.

“Miss is dreadfully wayward, sir,” I called out. “As bad as any marred child: you’d better be riding home, or else she will be sick, only to grieve

us.”

The soft thing looked askance through the window: he possessed the power to depart as much as a cat possesses the power to leave a mouse half killed, or a bird half eaten. Ah, I thought, there will be no saving him: he’s doomed, and flies to his fate! And so it was: he turned abruptly, hastened into the house again, shut the door behind him; and when I went in a while after to inform them that Earnshaw had come home rabid drunk, ready to pull the whole place about our ears (his ordinary frame of mind in that condition), I saw the quarrel had merely effected a closer intimacy—had broken the outworks of youthful timidity, and enabled them to forsake the disguise of friendship, and confess themselves lovers.

Intelligence of Mr. Hindley’s arrival drove Linton speedily to his horse, and Catherine to her chamber. I went to hide little Hareton, and to take the shot out of the master’s fowling-piece, which he was fond of playing with in his insane excitement, to the hazard of the lives of any who provoked, or even attracted his notice too much; and I had hit upon the plan of removing it, that he might do less mischief if he did go the length of firing the gun.

## CHAPTER IX

He entered, vociferating oaths dreadful to hear; and caught me in the act of stowing his son away in the kitchen cupboard. Hareton was impressed with a wholesome terror of encountering either his wild beast's fondness or his madman's rage; for in one he ran a chance of being squeezed and kissed to death, and in the other of being flung into the fire, or dashed against the wall; and the poor thing remained perfectly quiet wherever I chose to put him.

"There, I've found it out at last!" cried Hindley, pulling me back by the skin of my neck, like a dog. "By heaven and hell, you've sworn between you to murder that child! I know how it is, now, that he is always out of my way. But, with the help of Satan, I shall make you swallow the carving-knife, Nelly! You needn't laugh; for I've just crammed Kenneth, head-downmost, in the Black-horse marsh; and two is the same as one—and I want to kill some of you: I shall have no rest till I do!"

"But I don't like the carving-knife, Mr. Hindley," I answered; "it has been cutting red herrings. I'd rather be shot, if you please."

"You'd rather be damned!" he said; "and so you shall. No law in England can hinder a man from keeping his house decent, and mine's abominable! Open your mouth." He held the knife in his hand, and pushed its point between my teeth: but, for my part, I was never much afraid of his vagaries. I spat out, and affirmed it tasted detestably—I would not take it on any account.

"Oh!" said he, releasing me, "I see that hideous little villain is not Hareton: I beg your pardon, Nell. If it be, he deserves flaying alive for not running to welcome me, and for screaming as if I were a goblin. Unnatural cub, come hither! I'll teach thee to impose on a good-hearted, deluded father. Now, don't you think the lad would be handsomer cropped? It makes a dog fiercer, and I love something fierce—get me a scissors—something



fierce and trim! Besides, it's infernal affectation—devilish conceit it is, to cherish our ears—we're asses enough without them. Hush, child, hush! Well then, it is my darling! wist, dry thy eyes—there's a joy; kiss me. What! it won't? Kiss me, Hareton! Damn thee, kiss me! By God, as if I would rear such a monster! As sure as I'm living, I'll break the brat's neck."

Poor Hareton was squalling and kicking in his father's arms with all his might, and redoubled his yells when he carried him upstairs and lifted him over the banister. I cried out that he would frighten the child into fits, and ran to rescue him. As I reached them, Hindley leant forward on the rails to listen to a noise below; almost forgetting what he had in his hands. "Who is that?" he asked, hearing some one approaching the stairs'-foot. I leant forward also, for the purpose of signing to Heathcliff, whose step I recognised, not to come further; and, at the instant when my eye quitted Hareton, he gave a sudden spring, delivered himself from the careless grasp that held him, and fell.

There was scarcely time to experience a thrill of horror before we saw that the little wretch was safe. Heathcliff arrived underneath just at the critical moment; by a natural impulse he arrested his descent, and setting him on his feet, looked up to discover the author of the accident. A miser who has parted with a lucky lottery ticket for five shillings, and finds next day he has lost in the bargain five thousand pounds, could not show a blanker countenance than he did on beholding the figure of Mr. Earnshaw above. It expressed, plainer than words could do, the intensest anguish at having made himself the instrument of thwarting his own revenge. Had it been dark, I daresay he would have tried to remedy the mistake by smashing Hareton's skull on the steps; but, we witnessed his salvation; and I was presently below with my precious charge pressed to my heart. Hindley descended more leisurely, sobered and abashed.

"It is your fault, Ellen," he said; "you should have kept him out of sight: you should have taken him from me! Is he injured anywhere?"

"Injured!" I cried angrily; "if he is not killed, he'll be an idiot! Oh! I wonder his mother does not rise from her grave to see how you use him. You're worse than a heathen—treating your own flesh and blood in that manner!" He attempted to touch the child, who, on finding himself with me, sobbed off his terror directly. At the first finger his father laid on him,

however, he shrieked again louder than before, and struggled as if he would go into convulsions.

“You shall not meddle with him!” I continued. “He hates you—they all hate you—that’s the truth! A happy family you have; and a pretty state you’re come to!”

“I shall come to a prettier, yet, Nelly,” laughed the misguided man, recovering his hardness. “At present, convey yourself and him away. And hark you, Heathcliff! clear you too quite from my reach and hearing. I wouldn’t murder you to-night; unless, perhaps, I set the house on fire: but that’s as my fancy goes.”

While saying this he took a pint bottle of brandy from the dresser, and poured some into a tumbler.

“Nay, don’t!” I entreated. “Mr. Hindley, do take warning. Have mercy on this unfortunate boy, if you care nothing for yourself!”

“Any one will do better for him than I shall,” he answered.

“Have mercy on your own soul!” I said, endeavouring to snatch the glass from his hand.

“Not I! On the contrary, I shall have great pleasure in sending it to perdition to punish its Maker,” exclaimed the blasphemer. “Here’s to its hearty damnation!”

He drank the spirits and impatiently bade us go; terminating his command with a sequel of horrid imprecations too bad to repeat or remember.

“It’s a pity he cannot kill himself with drink,” observed Heathcliff, muttering an echo of curses back when the door was shut. “He’s doing his very utmost; but his constitution defies him. Mr. Kenneth says he would wager his mare that he’ll outlive any man on this side Gimmerton, and go to the grave a hoary sinner; unless some happy chance out of the common course befall him.”

I went into the kitchen, and sat down to lull my little lamb to sleep. Heathcliff, as I thought, walked through to the barn. It turned out afterwards that he only got as far as the other side the settle, when he flung himself on a bench by the wall, removed from the fire and remained silent.

I was rocking Hareton on my knee, and humming a song that began,—

It was far in the night, and the bairnies grat,  
The mither beneath the mools heard that,

when Miss Cathy, who had listened to the hubbub from her room, put her head in, and whispered,—“Are you alone, Nelly?”

“Yes, Miss,” I replied.

She entered and approached the hearth. I, supposing she was going to say something, looked up. The expression of her face seemed disturbed and anxious. Her lips were half asunder, as if she meant to speak, and she drew a breath; but it escaped in a sigh instead of a sentence. I resumed my song; not having forgotten her recent behaviour.

“Where’s Heathcliff?” she said, interrupting me.

“About his work in the stable,” was my answer.

He did not contradict me; perhaps he had fallen into a doze. There followed another long pause, during which I perceived a drop or two trickle from Catherine’s cheek to the flags. Is she sorry for her shameful conduct?—I asked myself. That will be a novelty: but she may come to the point—as she will—I sha’n’t help her! No, she felt small trouble regarding any subject, save her own concerns.

“Oh, dear!” she cried at last. “I’m very unhappy!”

“A pity,” observed I. “You’re hard to please; so many friends and so few cares, and can’t make yourself content!”

“Nelly, will you keep a secret for me?” she pursued, kneeling down by me, and lifting her winsome eyes to my face with that sort of look which turns off bad temper, even when one has all the right in the world to indulge it.

“Is it worth keeping?” I inquired, less sulkily.

“Yes, and it worries me, and I must let it out! I want to know what I should do. To-day, Edgar Linton has asked me to marry him, and I’ve given him an answer. Now, before I tell you whether it was a consent or denial, you tell me which it ought to have been.”

“Really, Miss Catherine, how can I know?” I replied. “To be sure, considering the exhibition you performed in his presence this afternoon, I might say it would be wise to refuse him: since he asked you after that, he must either be hopelessly stupid or a venturesome fool.”

“If you talk so, I won’t tell you any more,” she returned, peevishly rising to her feet. “I accepted him, Nelly. Be quick, and say whether I was wrong!”

“You accepted him! Then what good is it discussing the matter? You have pledged your word, and cannot retract.”

“But say whether I should have done so—do!” she exclaimed in an irritated tone; chafing her hands together, and frowning.

“There are many things to be considered before that question can be answered properly,” I said, sententiously. “First and foremost, do you love Mr. Edgar?”

“Who can help it? Of course I do,” she answered.

Then I put her through the following catechism: for a girl of twenty-two it was not injudicious.

“Why do you love him, Miss Cathy?”

“Nonsense, I do—that’s sufficient.”

“By no means; you must say why?”

“Well, because he is handsome, and pleasant to be with.”

“Bad!” was my commentary.

“And because he is young and cheerful.”

“Bad, still.”

“And because he loves me.”

“Indifferent, coming there.”

“And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband.”

“Worst of all. And now, say how you love him?”

“As everybody loves—You’re silly, Nelly.”

“Not at all—Answer.”

“I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says. I love all his looks, and all his actions, and him entirely and altogether. There now!”

“And why?”

“Nay; you are making a jest of it: it is exceedingly ill-natured! It’s no jest to me!” said the young lady, scowling, and turning her face to the fire.

“I’m very far from jesting, Miss Catherine,” I replied. “You love Mr. Edgar because he is handsome, and young, and cheerful, and rich, and loves you. The last, however, goes for nothing: you would love him without that, probably; and with it you wouldn’t, unless he possessed the four former attractions.”

“No, to be sure not: I should only pity him—hate him, perhaps, if he were ugly, and a clown.”

“But there are several other handsome, rich young men in the world: handsomer, possibly, and richer than he is. What should hinder you from loving them?”

“If there be any, they are out of my way: I’ve seen none like Edgar.”

“You may see some; and he won’t always be handsome, and young, and may not always be rich.”

“He is now; and I have only to do with the present. I wish you would speak rationally.”

“Well, that settles it: if you have only to do with the present, marry Mr. Linton.”

“I don’t want your permission for that—I *shall* marry him: and yet you have not told me whether I’m right.”

“Perfectly right; if people be right to marry only for the present. And now, let us hear what you are unhappy about. Your brother will be pleased; the old lady and gentleman will not object, I think; you will escape from a disorderly, comfortless home into a wealthy, respectable one; and you love Edgar, and Edgar loves you. All seems smooth and easy: where is the obstacle?”

“*Here!* and *here!*” replied Catherine, striking one hand on her forehead, and the other on her breast: “in whichever place the soul lives. In my soul and in my heart, I’m convinced I’m wrong!”

“That’s very strange! I cannot make it out.”

“It’s my secret. But if you will not mock at me, I’ll explain it: I can’t do it distinctly; but I’ll give you a feeling of how I feel.”

She seated herself by me again: her countenance grew sadder and graver, and her clasped hands trembled.

“Nelly, do you never dream queer dreams?” she said, suddenly, after some minutes’ reflection.

“Yes, now and then,” I answered.

“And so do I. I’ve dreamt in my life dreams that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas: they’ve gone through and through me, like wine through water, and altered the colour of my mind. And this is one: I’m going to tell it—but take care not to smile at any part of it.”

“Oh! don’t, Miss Catherine!” I cried. “We’re dismal enough without conjuring up ghosts and visions to perplex us. Come, come, be merry and like yourself! Look at little Hareton! *he’s* dreaming nothing dreary. How sweetly he smiles in his sleep!”

“Yes; and how sweetly his father curses in his solitude! You remember him, I daresay, when he was just such another as that chubby thing: nearly as young and innocent. However, Nelly, I shall oblige you to listen: it’s not long; and I’ve no power to be merry to-night.”

“I won’t hear it, I won’t hear it!” I repeated, hastily.

I was superstitious about dreams then, and am still; and Catherine had an unusual gloom in her aspect, that made me dread something from which I might shape a prophecy, and foresee a fearful catastrophe. She was vexed, but she did not proceed. Apparently taking up another subject, she recommenced in a short time.

“If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable.”

“Because you are not fit to go there,” I answered. “All sinners would be miserable in heaven.”

“But it is not for that. I dreamt once that I was there.”

“I tell you I won’t hearken to your dreams, Miss Catherine! I’ll go to bed,” I interrupted again.

She laughed, and held me down; for I made a motion to leave my chair.

“This is nothing,” cried she: “I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy. That will do to explain my secret, as well as the other. I’ve no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the

wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire."

Ere this speech ended I became sensible of Heathcliff's presence. Having noticed a slight movement, I turned my head, and saw him rise from the bench, and steal out noiselessly. He had listened till he heard Catherine say it would degrade her to marry him, and then he stayed to hear no further. My companion, sitting on the ground, was prevented by the back of the settle from remarking his presence or departure; but I started, and bade her hush!

"Why?" she asked, gazing nervously round.

"Joseph is here," I answered, catching opportunely the roll of his cartwheels up the road; "and Heathcliff will come in with him. I'm not sure whether he were not at the door this moment."

"Oh, he couldn't overhear me at the door!" said she. "Give me Hareton, while you get the supper, and when it is ready ask me to sup with you. I want to cheat my uncomfortable conscience, and be convinced that Heathcliff has no notion of these things. He has not, has he? He does not know what being in love is!"

"I see no reason that he should not know, as well as you," I returned; "and if you are his choice, he'll be the most unfortunate creature that ever was born! As soon as you become Mrs. Linton, he loses friend, and love, and all! Have you considered how you'll bear the separation, and how he'll bear to be quite deserted in the world? Because, Miss Catherine—"

"He quite deserted! we separated!" she exclaimed, with an accent of indignation. "Who is to separate us, pray? They'll meet the fate of Milo! Not as long as I live, Ellen: for no mortal creature. Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff. Oh, that's not what I intend—that's not what I mean! I shouldn't be Mrs. Linton were such a price demanded! He'll be as much to me as he has been all his lifetime. Edgar must shake off his antipathy, and tolerate him, at least. He will, when he learns my true feelings towards him. Nelly, I see now you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if

Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? whereas, if I marry Linton I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power."

"With your husband's money, Miss Catherine?" I asked. "You'll find him not so pliable as you calculate upon: and, though I'm hardly a judge, I think that's the worst motive you've given yet for being the wife of young Linton."

"It is not," retorted she; "it is the best! The others were the satisfaction of my whims: and for Edgar's sake, too, to satisfy him. This is for the sake of one who comprehends in his person my feelings to Edgar and myself. I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation, if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and *he* remained, *I* should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it.—My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable; and—"

She paused, and hid her face in the folds of my gown; but I jerked it forcibly away. I was out of patience with her folly!

"If I can make any sense of your nonsense, Miss," I said, "it only goes to convince me that you are ignorant of the duties you undertake in marrying; or else that you are a wicked, unprincipled girl. But trouble me with no more secrets: I'll not promise to keep them."

"You'll keep that?" she asked, eagerly.

"No, I'll not promise," I repeated.

She was about to insist, when the entrance of Joseph finished our conversation; and Catherine removed her seat to a corner, and nursed Hareton, while I made the supper. After it was cooked, my fellow-servant and I began to quarrel who should carry some to Mr. Hindley; and we didn't settle it till all was nearly cold. Then we came to the agreement that we



would let him ask, if he wanted any; for we feared particularly to go into his presence when he had been some time alone.

“And how isn’t that nowt comed in fro’ th’ field, be this time? What is he about? girt idle seeght!” demanded the old man, looking round for Heathcliff.

“I’ll call him,” I replied. “He’s in the barn, I’ve no doubt.”

I went and called, but got no answer. On returning, I whispered to Catherine that he had heard a good part of what she said, I was sure; and told how I saw him quit the kitchen just as she complained of her brother’s conduct regarding him. She jumped up in a fine fright, flung Hareton on to the settle, and ran to seek for her friend herself; not taking leisure to consider why she was so flurried, or how her talk would have affected him. She was absent such a while that Joseph proposed we should wait no longer. He cunningly conjectured they were staying away in order to avoid hearing his protracted blessing. They were “ill enough for ony fahl manners,” he affirmed. And on their behalf he added that night a special prayer to the usual quarter-of-an-hour’s supplication before meat, and would have tacked another to the end of the grace, had not his young mistress broken in upon him with a hurried command that he must run down the road, and, wherever Heathcliff had rambled, find and make him re-enter directly!

“I want to speak to him, and I *must*, before I go upstairs,” she said. “And the gate is open: he is somewhere out of hearing; for he would not reply, though I shouted at the top of the fold as loud as I could.”

Joseph objected at first; she was too much in earnest, however, to suffer contradiction; and at last he placed his hat on his head, and walked grumbling forth. Meantime, Catherine paced up and down the floor, exclaiming—“I wonder where he is—I wonder where he can be! What did I say, Nelly? I’ve forgotten. Was he vexed at my bad humour this afternoon? Dear! tell me what I’ve said to grieve him? I do wish he’d come. I do wish he would!”

“What a noise for nothing!” I cried, though rather uneasy myself. “What a trifle scares you! It’s surely no great cause of alarm that Heathcliff should take a moonlight saunter on the moors, or even lie too sulky to speak to us in the hay-loft. I’ll engage he’s lurking there. See if I don’t ferret him out!”

I departed to renew my search; its result was disappointment, and Joseph's quest ended in the same.

"Yon lad gets war und war!" observed he on re-entering. "He's left th' gate at t' full swing, and Miss's pony has trodden dahn two rigs o' corn, and plottered through, raight o'er into t' meadow! Hahsomdiver, t' maister "ull play t' devil to-morn, and he'll do weel. He's patience ittsehn wi' sich careless, offald craters—patience ittsehn he is! Bud he'll not be soa allus—yah's see, all on ye! Yah mun'n't drive him out of his heead for nowt!"

"Have you found Heathcliff, you ass?" interrupted Catherine. "Have you been looking for him, as I ordered?"

"I sud more likker look for th' horse," he replied. "It 'ud be to more sense. Bud I can look for norther horse nur man of a neeght loike this—as black as t' chimbley! und Heathcliff's noan t' chap to coom at *my* whistle—happen he'll be less hard o' hearing wi' *ye*!"

It *was* a very dark evening for summer: the clouds appeared inclined to thunder, and I said we had better all sit down; the approaching rain would be certain to bring him home without further trouble. However, Catherine would not be persuaded into tranquillity. She kept wandering to and fro, from the gate to the door, in a state of agitation which permitted no repose; and at length took up a permanent situation on one side of the wall, near the road: where, heedless of my expostulations and the growling thunder, and the great drops that began to plash around her, she remained, calling at intervals, and then listening, and then crying outright. She beat Hareton, or any child, at a good passionate fit of crying.

About midnight, while we still sat up, the storm came rattling over the Heights in full fury. There was a violent wind, as well as thunder, and either one or the other split a tree off at the corner of the building: a huge bough fell across the roof, and knocked down a portion of the east chimney-stack, sending a clatter of stones and soot into the kitchen-fire. We thought a bolt had fallen in the middle of us; and Joseph swung on to his knees, beseeching the Lord to remember the patriarchs Noah and Lot, and, as in former times, spare the righteous, though he smote the ungodly. I felt some sentiment that it must be a judgment on us also. The Jonah, in my mind, was Mr. Earnshaw; and I shook the handle of his den that I might ascertain if he were yet living. He replied audibly enough, in a fashion which made my companion vociferate, more clamorously than before, that a wide

distinction might be drawn between saints like himself and sinners like his master. But the uproar passed away in twenty minutes, leaving us all unharmed; excepting Cathy, who got thoroughly drenched for her obstinacy in refusing to take shelter, and standing bonnetless and shawlless to catch as much water as she could with her hair and clothes. She came in and lay down on the settle, all soaked as she was, turning her face to the back, and putting her hands before it.

“Well, Miss!” I exclaimed, touching her shoulder; “you are not bent on getting your death, are you? Do you know what o’clock it is? Half-past twelve. Come, come to bed! there’s no use waiting any longer on that foolish boy: he’ll be gone to Gimmerton, and he’ll stay there now. He guesses we shouldn’t wait for him till this late hour: at least, he guesses that only Mr. Hindley would be up; and he’d rather avoid having the door opened by the master.”

“Nay, nay, he’s noan at Gimmerton,” said Joseph. “I’s niver wonder but he’s at t’ bothom of a bog-hoile. This visitation worn’t for nowt, and I wod hev’ ye to look out, Miss—yah muh be t’ next. Thank Hivin for all! All warks together for gooid to them as is choozen, and piked out fro’ th’ rubbidge! Yah knaw whet t’ Scripture ses.” And he began quoting several texts, referring us to chapters and verses where we might find them.

I, having vainly begged the wilful girl to rise and remove her wet things, left him preaching and her shivering, and betook myself to bed with little Hareton, who slept as fast as if everyone had been sleeping round him. I heard Joseph read on a while afterwards; then I distinguished his slow step on the ladder, and then I dropped asleep.

Coming down somewhat later than usual, I saw, by the sunbeams piercing the chinks of the shutters, Miss Catherine still seated near the fireplace. The house-door was ajar, too; light entered from its unclosed windows; Hindley had come out, and stood on the kitchen hearth, haggard and drowsy.

“What ails you, Cathy?” he was saying when I entered: “you look as dismal as a drowned whelp. Why are you so damp and pale, child?”

“I’ve been wet,” she answered reluctantly, “and I’m cold, that’s all.”

“Oh, she is naughty!” I cried, perceiving the master to be tolerably sober. “She got steeped in the shower of yesterday evening, and there she has sat the night through, and I couldn’t prevail on her to stir.”

Mr. Earnshaw stared at us in surprise. "The night through," he repeated. "What kept her up? not fear of the thunder, surely? That was over hours since."

Neither of us wished to mention Heathcliff's absence, as long as we could conceal it; so I replied, I didn't know how she took it into her head to sit up; and she said nothing. The morning was fresh and cool; I threw back the lattice, and presently the room filled with sweet scents from the garden; but Catherine called peevishly to me, "Ellen, shut the window. I'm starving!" And her teeth chattered as she shrank closer to the almost extinguished embers.

"She's ill," said Hindley, taking her wrist; "I suppose that's the reason she would not go to bed. Damn it! I don't want to be troubled with more sickness here. What took you into the rain?"

"Running after t' lads, as usual!" croaked Joseph, catching an opportunity from our hesitation to thrust in his evil tongue. "If I war yah, maister, I'd just slam t' boards i' their faces all on 'em, gentle and simple! Never a day ut yah're off, but yon cat o' Linton comes sneaking hither; and Miss Nelly, shoo's a fine lass! shoo sits watching for ye i' t' kitchen; and as yah're in at one door, he's out at t'other; and, then, wer grand lady goes a-courting of her side! It's bonny behaviour, lurking amang t' fields, after twelve o' t' night, wi' that fahl, flaysome divil of a gipsy, Heathcliff! They think *I'm* blind; but I'm noan: nowt ut t' soart!—I seed young Linton boath coming and going, and I seed *yah*" (directing his discourse to me), "yah gooid fur nowt, slattenly witch! nip up and bolt into th' house, t' minute yah heard t' maister's horse-fit clatter up t' road."

"Silence, eavesdropper!" cried Catherine; "none of your insolence before me! Edgar Linton came yesterday by chance, Hindley; and it was *I* who told him to be off: because I knew you would not like to have met him as you were."

"You lie, Cathy, no doubt," answered her brother, "and you are a confounded simpleton! But never mind Linton at present: tell me, were you not with Heathcliff last night? Speak the truth, now. You need not be afraid of harming him: though I hate him as much as ever, he did me a good turn a short time since that will make my conscience tender of breaking his neck. To prevent it, I shall send him about his business this very morning; and

after he's gone, I'd advise you all to look sharp: I shall only have the more humour for you."

"I never saw Heathcliff last night," answered Catherine, beginning to sob bitterly: "and if you do turn him out of doors, I'll go with him. But, perhaps, you'll never have an opportunity: perhaps, he's gone." Here she burst into uncontrollable grief, and the remainder of her words were inarticulate.

Hindley lavished on her a torrent of scornful abuse, and bade her get to her room immediately, or she shouldn't cry for nothing! I obliged her to obey; and I shall never forget what a scene she acted when we reached her chamber: it terrified me. I thought she was going mad, and I begged Joseph to run for the doctor. It proved the commencement of delirium: Mr. Kenneth, as soon as he saw her, pronounced her dangerously ill; she had a fever. He bled her, and he told me to let her live on whey and water-gruel, and take care she did not throw herself downstairs or out of the window; and then he left: for he had enough to do in the parish, where two or three miles was the ordinary distance between cottage and cottage.

Though I cannot say I made a gentle nurse, and Joseph and the master were no better, and though our patient was as wearisome and headstrong as a patient could be, she weathered it through. Old Mrs. Linton paid us several visits, to be sure, and set things to rights, and scolded and ordered us all; and when Catherine was convalescent, she insisted on conveying her to Thrushcross Grange: for which deliverance we were very grateful. But the poor dame had reason to repent of her kindness: she and her husband both took the fever, and died within a few days of each other.

Our young lady returned to us saucier and more passionate, and haughtier than ever. Heathcliff had never been heard of since the evening of the thunder-storm; and, one day, I had the misfortune, when she had provoked me exceedingly, to lay the blame of his disappearance on her: where indeed it belonged, as she well knew. From that period, for several months, she ceased to hold any communication with me, save in the relation of a mere servant. Joseph fell under a ban also: he would speak his mind, and lecture her all the same as if she were a little girl; and she esteemed herself a woman, and our mistress, and thought that her recent illness gave her a claim to be treated with consideration. Then the doctor had said that she would not bear crossing much; she ought to have her own way; and it was nothing less than murder in her eyes for any one to presume to stand up and

contradict her. From Mr. Earnshaw and his companions she kept aloof; and tutored by Kenneth, and serious threats of a fit that often attended her rages, her brother allowed her whatever she pleased to demand, and generally avoided aggravating her fiery temper. He was rather too indulgent in humouring her caprices; not from affection, but from pride: he wished earnestly to see her bring honour to the family by an alliance with the Lintons, and as long as she let him alone she might trample on us like slaves, for aught he cared! Edgar Linton, as multitudes have been before and will be after him, was infatuated: and believed himself the happiest man alive on the day he led her to Gimmerton Chapel, three years subsequent to his father's death.

Much against my inclination, I was persuaded to leave Wuthering Heights and accompany her here. Little Hareton was nearly five years old, and I had just begun to teach him his letters. We made a sad parting; but Catherine's tears were more powerful than ours. When I refused to go, and when she found her entreaties did not move me, she went lamenting to her husband and brother. The former offered me munificent wages; the latter ordered me to pack up: he wanted no women in the house, he said, now that there was no mistress; and as to Hareton, the curate should take him in hand, by-and-by. And so I had but one choice left: to do as I was ordered. I told the master he got rid of all decent people only to run to ruin a little faster; I kissed Hareton, said good-by; and since then he has been a stranger: and it's very queer to think it, but I've no doubt he has completely forgotten all about Ellen Dean, and that he was ever more than all the world to her and she to him!

\* \* \* \* \*

At this point of the housekeeper's story she chanced to glance towards the time-piece over the chimney; and was in amazement on seeing the minute-hand measure half-past one. She would not hear of staying a second longer: in truth, I felt rather disposed to defer the sequel of her narrative myself. And now that she is vanished to her rest, and I have meditated for another hour or two, I shall summon courage to go also, in spite of aching laziness of head and limbs.

## CHAPTER X

A charming introduction to a hermit's life! Four weeks' torture, tossing, and sickness! Oh, these bleak winds and bitter northern skies, and impassable roads, and dilatory country surgeons! And oh, this dearth of the human physiognomy! and, worse than all, the terrible intimation of Kenneth that I need not expect to be out of doors till spring!

Mr. Heathcliff has just honoured me with a call. About seven days ago he sent me a brace of grouse—the last of the season. Scoundrel! He is not altogether guiltless in this illness of mine; and that I had a great mind to tell him. But, alas! how could I offend a man who was charitable enough to sit at my bedside a good hour, and talk on some other subject than pills and draughts, blisters and leeches? This is quite an easy interval. I am too weak to read; yet I feel as if I could enjoy something interesting. Why not have up Mrs. Dean to finish her tale? I can recollect its chief incidents, as far as she had gone. Yes: I remember her hero had run off, and never been heard of for three years; and the heroine was married. I'll ring: she'll be delighted to find me capable of talking cheerfully. Mrs. Dean came.

“It wants twenty minutes, sir, to taking the medicine,” she commenced.

“Away, away with it!” I replied; “I desire to have—”

“The doctor says you must drop the powders.”

“With all my heart! Don't interrupt me. Come and take your seat here. Keep your fingers from that bitter phalanx of vials. Draw your knitting out of your pocket—that will do—now continue the history of Mr. Heathcliff, from where you left off, to the present day. Did he finish his education on the Continent, and come back a gentleman? or did he get a sizar's place at college, or escape to America, and earn honours by drawing blood from his foster-country? or make a fortune more promptly on the English highways?”

“He may have done a little in all these vocations, Mr. Lockwood; but I couldn’t give my word for any. I stated before that I didn’t know how he gained his money; neither am I aware of the means he took to raise his mind from the savage ignorance into which it was sunk: but, with your leave, I’ll proceed in my own fashion, if you think it will amuse and not weary you. Are you feeling better this morning?”

“Much.”

“That’s good news.”

\* \* \* \* \*

I got Miss Catherine and myself to Thrushcross Grange; and, to my agreeable disappointment, she behaved infinitely better than I dared to expect. She seemed almost over-fond of Mr. Linton; and even to his sister she showed plenty of affection. They were both very attentive to her comfort, certainly. It was not the thorn bending to the honeysuckles, but the honeysuckles embracing the thorn. There were no mutual concessions: one stood erect, and the others yielded: and who can be ill-natured and bad-tempered when they encounter neither opposition nor indifference? I observed that Mr. Edgar had a deep-rooted fear of ruffling her humour. He concealed it from her; but if ever he heard me answer sharply, or saw any other servant grow cloudy at some imperious order of hers, he would show his trouble by a frown of displeasure that never darkened on his own account. He many a time spoke sternly to me about my pertness; and averred that the stab of a knife could not inflict a worse pang than he suffered at seeing his lady vexed. Not to grieve a kind master, I learned to be less touchy; and, for the space of half a year, the gunpowder lay as harmless as sand, because no fire came near to explode it. Catherine had seasons of gloom and silence now and then: they were respected with sympathising silence by her husband, who ascribed them to an alteration in her constitution, produced by her perilous illness; as she was never subject to depression of spirits before. The return of sunshine was welcomed by answering sunshine from him. I believe I may assert that they were really in possession of deep and growing happiness.

It ended. Well, we *must* be for ourselves in the long run; the mild and generous are only more justly selfish than the domineering; and it ended when circumstances caused each to feel that the one’s interest was not the



chief consideration in the other's thoughts. On a mellow evening in September, I was coming from the garden with a heavy basket of apples which I had been gathering. It had got dusk, and the moon looked over the high wall of the court, causing undefined shadows to lurk in the corners of the numerous projecting portions of the building. I set my burden on the house-steps by the kitchen-door, and lingered to rest, and drew in a few more breaths of the soft, sweet air; my eyes were on the moon, and my back to the entrance, when I heard a voice behind me say,—“Nelly, is that you?”

It was a deep voice, and foreign in tone; yet there was something in the manner of pronouncing my name which made it sound familiar. I turned about to discover who spoke, fearfully; for the doors were shut, and I had seen nobody on approaching the steps. Something stirred in the porch; and, moving nearer, I distinguished a tall man dressed in dark clothes, with dark face and hair. He leant against the side, and held his fingers on the latch as if intending to open for himself. “Who can it be?” I thought. “Mr. Earnshaw? Oh, no! The voice has no resemblance to his.”

“I have waited here an hour,” he resumed, while I continued staring; “and the whole of that time all round has been as still as death. I dared not enter. You do not know me? Look, I'm not a stranger!”

A ray fell on his features; the cheeks were sallow, and half covered with black whiskers; the brows lowering, the eyes deep-set and singular. I remembered the eyes.

“What!” I cried, uncertain whether to regard him as a worldly visitor, and I raised my hands in amazement. “What! you come back? Is it really you? Is it?”

“Yes, Heathcliff,” he replied, glancing from me up to the windows, which reflected a score of glittering moons, but showed no lights from within. “Are they at home? where is she? Nelly, you are not glad! you needn't be so disturbed. Is she here? Speak! I want to have one word with her—your mistress. Go, and say some person from Gimmerton desires to see her.”

“How will she take it?” I exclaimed. “What will she do? The surprise bewilders me—it will put her out of her head! And you *are* Heathcliff! But altered! Nay, there's no comprehending it. Have you been for a soldier?”

“Go and carry my message,” he interrupted, impatiently. “I'm in hell till you do!”

He lifted the latch, and I entered; but when I got to the parlour where Mr. and Mrs. Linton were, I could not persuade myself to proceed. At length I resolved on making an excuse to ask if they would have the candles lighted, and I opened the door.

They sat together in a window whose lattice lay back against the wall, and displayed, beyond the garden trees, and the wild green park, the valley of Gimmerton, with a long line of mist winding nearly to its top (for very soon after you pass the chapel, as you may have noticed, the sough that runs from the marshes joins a beck which follows the bend of the glen). Wuthering Heights rose above this silvery vapour; but our old house was invisible; it rather dips down on the other side. Both the room and its occupants, and the scene they gazed on, looked wondrously peaceful. I shrank reluctantly from performing my errand; and was actually going away leaving it unsaid, after having put my question about the candles, when a sense of my folly compelled me to return, and mutter, "A person from Gimmerton wishes to see you ma'am."

"What does he want?" asked Mrs. Linton.

"I did not question him," I answered.

"Well, close the curtains, Nelly," she said; "and bring up tea. I'll be back again directly."

She quitted the apartment; Mr. Edgar inquired, carelessly, who it was.

"Some one mistress does not expect," I replied. "That Heathcliff—you recollect him, sir—who used to live at Mr. Earnshaw's."

"What! the gipsy—the ploughboy?" he cried. "Why did you not say so to Catherine?"

"Hush! you must not call him by those names, master," I said. "She'd be sadly grieved to hear you. She was nearly heartbroken when he ran off. I guess his return will make a jubilee to her."

Mr. Linton walked to a window on the other side of the room that overlooked the court. He unfastened it, and leant out. I suppose they were below, for he exclaimed quickly: "Don't stand there, love! Bring the person in, if it be anyone particular." Ere long, I heard the click of the latch, and Catherine flew upstairs, breathless and wild; too excited to show gladness: indeed, by her face, you would rather have surmised an awful calamity.

“Oh, Edgar, Edgar!” she panted, flinging her arms round his neck. “Oh, Edgar darling! Heathcliff’s come back—he is!” And she tightened her embrace to a squeeze.

“Well, well,” cried her husband, crossly, “don’t strangle me for that! He never struck me as such a marvellous treasure. There is no need to be frantic!”

“I know you didn’t like him,” she answered, repressing a little the intensity of her delight. “Yet, for my sake, you must be friends now. Shall I tell him to come up?”

“Here,” he said, “into the parlour?”

“Where else?” she asked.

He looked vexed, and suggested the kitchen as a more suitable place for him. Mrs. Linton eyed him with a droll expression—half angry, half laughing at his fastidiousness.

“No,” she added, after a while; “I cannot sit in the kitchen. Set two tables here, Ellen: one for your master and Miss Isabella, being gentry; the other for Heathcliff and myself, being of the lower orders. Will that please you, dear? Or must I have a fire lighted elsewhere? If so, give directions. I’ll run down and secure my guest. I’m afraid the joy is too great to be real!”

She was about to dart off again; but Edgar arrested her.

“*You* bid him step up,” he said, addressing me; “and, Catherine, try to be glad, without being absurd. The whole household need not witness the sight of your welcoming a runaway servant as a brother.”

I descended, and found Heathcliff waiting under the porch, evidently anticipating an invitation to enter. He followed my guidance without waste of words, and I ushered him into the presence of the master and mistress, whose flushed cheeks betrayed signs of warm talking. But the lady’s glowed with another feeling when her friend appeared at the door: she sprang forward, took both his hands, and led him to Linton; and then she seized Linton’s reluctant fingers and crushed them into his. Now, fully revealed by the fire and candlelight, I was amazed, more than ever, to behold the transformation of Heathcliff. He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man; beside whom my master seemed quite slender and youth-like. His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army. His countenance was much older in expression and decision of feature than Mr.

Linton's; it looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation. A half-civilised ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified: quite divested of roughness, though stern for grace. My master's surprise equalled or exceeded mine: he remained for a minute at a loss how to address the ploughboy, as he had called him. Heathcliff dropped his slight hand, and stood looking at him coolly till he chose to speak.

"Sit down, sir," he said, at length. "Mrs. Linton, recalling old times, would have me give you a cordial reception; and, of course, I am gratified when anything occurs to please her."

"And I also," answered Heathcliff, "especially if it be anything in which I have a part. I shall stay an hour or two willingly."

He took a seat opposite Catherine, who kept her gaze fixed on him as if she feared he would vanish were she to remove it. He did not raise his to her often: a quick glance now and then sufficed; but it flashed back, each time more confidently, the undisguised delight he drank from hers. They were too much absorbed in their mutual joy to suffer embarrassment. Not so Mr. Edgar: he grew pale with pure annoyance: a feeling that reached its climax when his lady rose, and stepping across the rug, seized Heathcliff's hands again, and laughed like one beside herself.

"I shall think it a dream to-morrow!" she cried. "I shall not be able to believe that I have seen, and touched, and spoken to you once more. And yet, cruel Heathcliff! you don't deserve this welcome. To be absent and silent for three years, and never to think of me!"

"A little more than you have thought of me," he murmured. "I heard of your marriage, Cathy, not long since; and, while waiting in the yard below, I meditated this plan—just to have one glimpse of your face, a stare of surprise, perhaps, and pretended pleasure; afterwards settle my score with Hindley; and then prevent the law by doing execution on myself. Your welcome has put these ideas out of my mind; but beware of meeting me with another aspect next time! Nay, you'll not drive me off again. You were really sorry for me, were you? Well, there was cause. I've fought through a bitter life since I last heard your voice; and you must forgive me, for I struggled only for you!"

"Catherine, unless we are to have cold tea, please to come to the table," interrupted Linton, striving to preserve his ordinary tone, and a due measure

of politeness. "Mr. Heathcliff will have a long walk, wherever he may lodge to-night; and I'm thirsty."

She took her post before the urn; and Miss Isabella came, summoned by the bell; then, having handed their chairs forward, I left the room. The meal hardly endured ten minutes. Catherine's cup was never filled: she could neither eat nor drink. Edgar had made a slop in his saucer, and scarcely swallowed a mouthful. Their guest did not protract his stay that evening above an hour longer. I asked, as he departed, if he went to Gimmerton?

"No, to Wuthering Heights," he answered: "Mr. Earnshaw invited me, when I called this morning."

Mr. Earnshaw invited *him!* and *he* called on Mr. Earnshaw! I pondered this sentence painfully, after he was gone. Is he turning out a bit of a hypocrite, and coming into the country to work mischief under a cloak? I mused: I had a presentiment in the bottom of my heart that he had better have remained away.

About the middle of the night, I was wakened from my first nap by Mrs. Linton gliding into my chamber, taking a seat on my bedside, and pulling me by the hair to rouse me.

"I cannot rest, Ellen," she said, by way of apology. "And I want some living creature to keep me company in my happiness! Edgar is sulky, because I'm glad of a thing that does not interest him: he refuses to open his mouth, except to utter pettish, silly speeches; and he affirmed I was cruel and selfish for wishing to talk when he was so sick and sleepy. He always contrives to be sick at the least cross! I gave a few sentences of commendation to Heathcliff, and he, either for a headache or a pang of envy, began to cry: so I got up and left him."

"What use is it praising Heathcliff to him?" I answered. "As lads they had an aversion to each other, and Heathcliff would hate just as much to hear him praised: it's human nature. Let Mr. Linton alone about him, unless you would like an open quarrel between them."

"But does it not show great weakness?" pursued she. "I'm not envious: I never feel hurt at the brightness of Isabella's yellow hair and the whiteness of her skin, at her dainty elegance, and the fondness all the family exhibit for her. Even you, Nelly, if we have a dispute sometimes, you back Isabella at once; and I yield like a foolish mother: I call her a darling, and flatter her into a good temper. It pleases her brother to see us cordial, and that pleases

me. But they are very much alike: they are spoiled children, and fancy the world was made for their accommodation; and though I humour both, I think a smart chastisement might improve them all the same.”

“You’re mistaken, Mrs. Linton,” said I. “They humour you: I know what there would be to do if they did not. You can well afford to indulge their passing whims as long as their business is to anticipate all your desires. You may, however, fall out, at last, over something of equal consequence to both sides; and then those you term weak are very capable of being as obstinate as you.”

“And then we shall fight to the death, sha’n’t we, Nelly?” she returned, laughing. “No! I tell you, I have such faith in Linton’s love, that I believe I might kill him, and he wouldn’t wish to retaliate.”

I advised her to value him the more for his affection.

“I do,” she answered, “but he needn’t resort to whining for trifles. It is childish and, instead of melting into tears because I said that Heathcliff was now worthy of anyone’s regard, and it would honour the first gentleman in the country to be his friend, he ought to have said it for me, and been delighted from sympathy. He must get accustomed to him, and he may as well like him: considering how Heathcliff has reason to object to him, I’m sure he behaved excellently!”

“What do you think of his going to Wuthering Heights?” I inquired. “He is reformed in every respect, apparently: quite a Christian: offering the right hand of fellowship to his enemies all around!”

“He explained it,” she replied. “I wonder as much as you. He said he called to gather information concerning me from you, supposing you resided there still; and Joseph told Hindley, who came out and fell to questioning him of what he had been doing, and how he had been living; and finally, desired him to walk in. There were some persons sitting at cards; Heathcliff joined them; my brother lost some money to him, and, finding him plentifully supplied, he requested that he would come again in the evening: to which he consented. Hindley is too reckless to select his acquaintance prudently: he doesn’t trouble himself to reflect on the causes he might have for mistrusting one whom he has basely injured. But Heathcliff affirms his principal reason for resuming a connection with his ancient persecutor is a wish to install himself in quarters at walking distance from the Grange, and an attachment to the house where we lived together;

and likewise a hope that I shall have more opportunities of seeing him there than I could have if he settled in Gimmerton. He means to offer liberal payment for permission to lodge at the Heights; and doubtless my brother's covetousness will prompt him to accept the terms: he was always greedy; though what he grasps with one hand he flings away with the other."

"It's a nice place for a young man to fix his dwelling in!" said I. "Have you no fear of the consequences, Mrs. Linton?"

"None for my friend," she replied: "his strong head will keep him from danger; a little for Hindley: but he can't be made morally worse than he is; and I stand between him and bodily harm. The event of this evening has reconciled me to God and humanity! I had risen in angry rebellion against Providence. Oh, I've endured very, very bitter misery, Nelly! If that creature knew how bitter, he'd be ashamed to cloud its removal with idle petulance. It was kindness for him which induced me to bear it alone: had I expressed the agony I frequently felt, he would have been taught to long for its alleviation as ardently as I. However, it's over, and I'll take no revenge on his folly; I can afford to suffer anything hereafter! Should the meanest thing alive slap me on the cheek, I'd not only turn the other, but I'd ask pardon for provoking it; and, as a proof, I'll go make my peace with Edgar instantly. Good-night! I'm an angel!"

In this self-complacent conviction she departed; and the success of her fulfilled resolution was obvious on the morrow: Mr. Linton had not only abjured his peevishness (though his spirits seemed still subdued by Catherine's exuberance of vivacity), but he ventured no objection to her taking Isabella with her to Wuthering Heights in the afternoon; and she rewarded him with such a summer of sweetness and affection in return as made the house a paradise for several days; both master and servants profiting from the perpetual sunshine.

Heathcliff—Mr. Heathcliff I should say in future—used the liberty of visiting at Thrushcross Grange cautiously, at first: he seemed estimating how far its owner would bear his intrusion. Catherine, also, deemed it judicious to moderate her expressions of pleasure in receiving him; and he gradually established his right to be expected. He retained a great deal of the reserve for which his boyhood was remarkable; and that served to repress all startling demonstrations of feeling. My master's uneasiness

experienced a lull, and further circumstances diverted it into another channel for a space.

His new source of trouble sprang from the not anticipated misfortune of Isabella Linton evincing a sudden and irresistible attraction towards the tolerated guest. She was at that time a charming young lady of eighteen; infantile in manners, though possessed of keen wit, keen feelings, and a keen temper, too, if irritated. Her brother, who loved her tenderly, was appalled at this fantastic preference. Leaving aside the degradation of an alliance with a nameless man, and the possible fact that his property, in default of heirs male, might pass into such a one's power, he had sense to comprehend Heathcliff's disposition: to know that, though his exterior was altered, his mind was unchangeable and unchanged. And he dreaded that mind: it revolted him: he shrank forebodingly from the idea of committing Isabella to its keeping. He would have recoiled still more had he been aware that her attachment rose unsolicited, and was bestowed where it awakened no reciprocation of sentiment; for the minute he discovered its existence he laid the blame on Heathcliff's deliberate designing.

We had all remarked, during some time, that Miss Linton fretted and pined over something. She grew cross and wearisome; snapping at and teasing Catherine continually, at the imminent risk of exhausting her limited patience. We excused her, to a certain extent, on the plea of ill-health: she was dwindling and fading before our eyes. But one day, when she had been peculiarly wayward, rejecting her breakfast, complaining that the servants did not do what she told them; that the mistress would allow her to be nothing in the house, and Edgar neglected her; that she had caught a cold with the doors being left open, and we let the parlour fire go out on purpose to vex her, with a hundred yet more frivolous accusations, Mrs. Linton peremptorily insisted that she should get to bed; and, having scolded her heartily, threatened to send for the doctor. Mention of Kenneth caused her to exclaim, instantly, that her health was perfect, and it was only Catherine's harshness which made her unhappy.

"How can you say I am harsh, you naughty fondling?" cried the mistress, amazed at the unreasonable assertion. "You are surely losing your reason. When have I been harsh, tell me?"

"Yesterday," sobbed Isabella, "and now!"

"Yesterday!" said her sister-in-law. "On what occasion?"



“In our walk along the moor: you told me to ramble where I pleased, while you sauntered on with Mr. Heathcliff!”

“And that’s your notion of harshness?” said Catherine, laughing. “It was no hint that your company was superfluous? We didn’t care whether you kept with us or not; I merely thought Heathcliff’s talk would have nothing entertaining for your ears.”

“Oh, no,” wept the young lady; “you wished me away, because you knew I liked to be there!”

“Is she sane?” asked Mrs. Linton, appealing to me. “I’ll repeat our conversation, word for word, Isabella; and you point out any charm it could have had for you.”

“I don’t mind the conversation,” she answered: “I wanted to be with—”

“Well?” said Catherine, perceiving her hesitate to complete the sentence.

“With him: and I won’t be always sent off!” she continued, kindling up. “You are a dog in the manger, Cathy, and desire no one to be loved but yourself!”

“You are an impertinent little monkey!” exclaimed Mrs. Linton, in surprise. “But I’ll not believe this idiocy! It is impossible that you can covet the admiration of Heathcliff—that you consider him an agreeable person! I hope I have misunderstood you, Isabella?”

“No, you have not,” said the infatuated girl. “I love him more than ever you loved Edgar, and he might love me, if you would let him!”

“I wouldn’t be you for a kingdom, then!” Catherine declared, emphatically: and she seemed to speak sincerely. “Nelly, help me to convince her of her madness. Tell her what Heathcliff is: an unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone. I’d as soon put that little canary into the park on a winter’s day, as recommend you to bestow your heart on him! It is deplorable ignorance of his character, child, and nothing else, which makes that dream enter your head. Pray, don’t imagine that he conceals depths of benevolence and affection beneath a stern exterior! He’s not a rough diamond—a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic: he’s a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man. I never say to him, ‘Let this or that enemy alone, because it would be ungenerous or cruel to harm them;’ I say, ‘Let them alone, because *I* should hate them to be wronged:’ and he’d crush you like a

sparrow's egg, Isabella, if he found you a troublesome charge. I know he couldn't love a Linton; and yet he'd be quite capable of marrying your fortune and expectations: avarice is growing with him a besetting sin. There's my picture: and I'm his friend—so much so, that had he thought seriously to catch you, I should, perhaps, have held my tongue, and let you fall into his trap.”

Miss Linton regarded her sister-in-law with indignation.

“For shame! for shame!” she repeated, angrily. “You are worse than twenty foes, you poisonous friend!”

“Ah! you won't believe me, then?” said Catherine. “You think I speak from wicked selfishness?”

“I'm certain you do,” retorted Isabella; “and I shudder at you!”

“Good!” cried the other. “Try for yourself, if that be your spirit: I have done, and yield the argument to your saucy insolence.”—

“And I must suffer for her egotism!” she sobbed, as Mrs. Linton left the room. “All, all is against me: she has blighted my single consolation. But she uttered falsehoods, didn't she? Mr. Heathcliff is not a fiend: he has an honourable soul, and a true one, or how could he remember her?”

“Banish him from your thoughts, Miss,” I said. “He's a bird of bad omen: no mate for you. Mrs. Linton spoke strongly, and yet I can't contradict her. She is better acquainted with his heart than I, or any one besides; and she never would represent him as worse than he is. Honest people don't hide their deeds. How has he been living? how has he got rich? why is he staying at Wuthering Heights, the house of a man whom he abhors? They say Mr. Earnshaw is worse and worse since he came. They sit up all night together continually, and Hindley has been borrowing money on his land, and does nothing but play and drink: I heard only a week ago—it was Joseph who told me—I met him at Gimmerton: ‘Nelly,’ he said, ‘we's hae a crowner's 'quest enow, at ahr folks'. One on 'em 's a'most gotten his finger cut off wi' hauding t' other fro' stickin' hisseln loike a cawlf. That's maister, yeah knaw, 'at 's soa up o' going tuh t' grand 'sizes. He's noan feared o' t' bench o' judges, norther Paul, nur Peter, nur John, nur Matthew, nor noan on 'em, not he! He fair likes—he lang's to set his brazened face agean 'em! And yon bonny lad Heathcliff, yah mind, he's a rare 'un. He can girn a laugh as well 's onybody at a raight divil's jest. Does he niver say nowt of his fine living amang us, when he goes to t' Grange? This is t' way on 't:—up at sun-

down: dice, brandy, cloised shutters, und can'le-light till next day at noon: then, t'fooil gangs banning und raving to his cham'er, makking dacent fowks dig thur fingers i' thur lugs fur varry shame; un' the knave, why he can caint his brass, un' ate, un' sleep, un' off to his neighbour's to gossip wi' t' wife. I' course, he tells Dame Catherine how her fathur's goold runs into his pocket, and her fathur's son gallops down t' broad road, while he flees afore to oppen t' pikes! Now, Miss Linton, Joseph is an old rascal, but no liar; and, if his account of Heathcliff's conduct be true, you would never think of desiring such a husband, would you?"

"You are leagued with the rest, Ellen!" she replied. "I'll not listen to your slanders. What malevolence you must have to wish to convince me that there is no happiness in the world!"

Whether she would have got over this fancy if left to herself, or persevered in nursing it perpetually, I cannot say: she had little time to reflect. The day after, there was a justice-meeting at the next town; my master was obliged to attend; and Mr. Heathcliff, aware of his absence, called rather earlier than usual. Catherine and Isabella were sitting in the library, on hostile terms, but silent: the latter alarmed at her recent indiscretion, and the disclosure she had made of her secret feelings in a transient fit of passion; the former, on mature consideration, really offended with her companion; and, if she laughed again at her pertness, inclined to make it no laughing matter to her. She did laugh as she saw Heathcliff pass the window. I was sweeping the hearth, and I noticed a mischievous smile on her lips. Isabella, absorbed in her meditations, or a book, remained till the door opened; and it was too late to attempt an escape, which she would gladly have done had it been practicable.

"Come in, that's right!" exclaimed the mistress, gaily, pulling a chair to the fire. "Here are two people sadly in need of a third to thaw the ice between them; and you are the very one we should both of us choose. Heathcliff, I'm proud to show you, at last, somebody that dotes on you more than myself. I expect you to feel flattered. Nay, it's not Nelly; don't look at her! My poor little sister-in-law is breaking her heart by mere contemplation of your physical and moral beauty. It lies in your own power to be Edgar's brother! No, no, Isabella, you sha'n't run off," she continued, arresting, with feigned playfulness, the confounded girl, who had risen indignantly. "We were quarrelling like cats about you, Heathcliff; and I was

fairly beaten in protestations of devotion and admiration: and, moreover, I was informed that if I would but have the manners to stand aside, my rival, as she will have herself to be, would shoot a shaft into your soul that would fix you for ever, and send my image into eternal oblivion!”

“Catherine!” said Isabella, calling up her dignity, and disdaining to struggle from the tight grasp that held her, “I’d thank you to adhere to the truth and not slander me, even in joke! Mr. Heathcliff, be kind enough to bid this friend of yours release me: she forgets that you and I are not intimate acquaintances; and what amuses her is painful to me beyond expression.”

As the guest answered nothing, but took his seat, and looked thoroughly indifferent what sentiments she cherished concerning him, she turned and whispered an earnest appeal for liberty to her tormentor.

“By no means!” cried Mrs. Linton in answer. “I won’t be named a dog in the manger again. You *shall* stay: now then! Heathcliff, why don’t you evince satisfaction at my pleasant news? Isabella swears that the love Edgar has for me is nothing to that she entertains for you. I’m sure she made some speech of the kind; did she not, Ellen? And she has fasted ever since the day before yesterday’s walk, from sorrow and rage that I despatched her out of your society under the idea of its being unacceptable.”

“I think you belie her,” said Heathcliff, twisting his chair to face them. “She wishes to be out of my society now, at any rate!”

And he stared hard at the object of discourse, as one might do at a strange repulsive animal: a centipede from the Indies, for instance, which curiosity leads one to examine in spite of the aversion it raises. The poor thing couldn’t bear that; she grew white and red in rapid succession, and, while tears beaded her lashes, bent the strength of her small fingers to loosen the firm clutch of Catherine; and perceiving that as fast as she raised one finger off her arm another closed down, and she could not remove the whole together, she began to make use of her nails; and their sharpness presently ornamented the detainer’s with crescents of red.

“There’s a tigress!” exclaimed Mrs. Linton, setting her free, and shaking her hand with pain. “Begone, for God’s sake, and hide your vixen face! How foolish to reveal those talons to him. Can’t you fancy the conclusions he’ll draw? Look, Heathcliff! they are instruments that will do execution—you must beware of your eyes.”

“I’d wrench them off her fingers, if they ever menaced me,” he answered, brutally, when the door had closed after her. “But what did you mean by teasing the creature in that manner, Cathy? You were not speaking the truth, were you?”

“I assure you I was,” she returned. “She has been dying for your sake several weeks, and raving about you this morning, and pouring forth a deluge of abuse, because I represented your failings in a plain light, for the purpose of mitigating her adoration. But don’t notice it further: I wished to punish her sauciness, that’s all. I like her too well, my dear Heathcliff, to let you absolutely seize and devour her up.”

“And I like her too ill to attempt it,” said he, “except in a very ghoulis fashion. You’d hear of odd things if I lived alone with that mawkish, waxen face: the most ordinary would be painting on its white the colours of the rainbow, and turning the blue eyes black, every day or two: they detestably resemble Linton’s.”

“Delectably!” observed Catherine. “They are dove’s eyes—angel’s!”

“She’s her brother’s heir, is she not?” he asked, after a brief silence.

“I should be sorry to think so,” returned his companion. “Half a dozen nephews shall erase her title, please heaven! Abstract your mind from the subject at present: you are too prone to covet your neighbour’s goods; remember *this* neighbour’s goods are mine.”

“If they were *mine*, they would be none the less that,” said Heathcliff; “but though Isabella Linton may be silly, she is scarcely mad; and, in short, we’ll dismiss the matter, as you advise.”

From their tongues they did dismiss it; and Catherine, probably, from her thoughts. The other, I felt certain, recalled it often in the course of the evening. I saw him smile to himself—grin rather—and lapse into ominous musing whenever Mrs. Linton had occasion to be absent from the apartment.

I determined to watch his movements. My heart invariably cleaved to the master’s, in preference to Catherine’s side: with reason I imagined, for he was kind, and trustful, and honourable; and she—she could not be called *opposite*, yet she seemed to allow herself such wide latitude, that I had little faith in her principles, and still less sympathy for her feelings. I wanted something to happen which might have the effect of freeing both Wuthering

Heights and the Grange of Mr. Heathcliff quietly; leaving us as we had been prior to his advent. His visits were a continual nightmare to me; and, I suspected, to my master also. His abode at the Heights was an oppression past explaining. I felt that God had forsaken the stray sheep there to its own wicked wanderings, and an evil beast prowled between it and the fold, waiting his time to spring and destroy.

## CHAPTER XI

Sometimes, while meditating on these things in solitude, I've got up in a sudden terror, and put on my bonnet to go see how all was at the farm. I've persuaded my conscience that it was a duty to warn him how people talked regarding his ways; and then I've recollected his confirmed bad habits, and, hopeless of benefiting him, have flinched from re-entering the dismal house, doubting if I could bear to be taken at my word.

One time I passed the old gate, going out of my way, on a journey to Gimmerton. It was about the period that my narrative has reached: a bright frosty afternoon; the ground bare, and the road hard and dry. I came to a stone where the highway branches off on to the moor at your left hand; a rough sand-pillar, with the letters W. H. cut on its north side, on the east, G., and on the south-west, T. G. It serves as a guide-post to the Grange, the Heights, and village. The sun shone yellow on its grey head, reminding me of summer; and I cannot say why, but all at once a gush of child's sensations flowed into my heart. Hindley and I held it a favourite spot twenty years before. I gazed long at the weather-worn block; and, stooping down, perceived a hole near the bottom still full of snail-shells and pebbles, which we were fond of storing there with more perishable things; and, as fresh as reality, it appeared that I beheld my early playmate seated on the withered turf: his dark, square head bent forward, and his little hand scooping out the earth with a piece of slate. "Poor Hindley!" I exclaimed, involuntarily. I started: my bodily eye was cheated into a momentary belief that the child lifted its face and stared straight into mine! It vanished in a twinkling; but immediately I felt an irresistible yearning to be at the Heights. Superstition urged me to comply with this impulse: supposing he should be dead! I thought—or should die soon!—supposing it were a sign of death! The nearer I got to the house the more agitated I grew; and on catching sight of it I trembled in every limb. The apparition had outstripped me: it stood looking through the gate. That was my first idea on observing

an elf-locked, brown-eyed boy setting his ruddy countenance against the bars. Further reflection suggested this must be Hareton, *my* Hareton, not altered greatly since I left him, ten months since.

“God bless thee, darling!” I cried, forgetting instantaneously my foolish fears. “Hareton, it’s Nelly! Nelly, thy nurse.”

He retreated out of arm’s length, and picked up a large flint.

“I am come to see thy father, Hareton,” I added, guessing from the action that Nelly, if she lived in his memory at all, was not recognised as one with me.

He raised his missile to hurl it; I commenced a soothing speech, but could not stay his hand: the stone struck my bonnet; and then ensued, from the stammering lips of the little fellow, a string of curses, which, whether he comprehended them or not, were delivered with practised emphasis, and distorted his baby features into a shocking expression of malignity. You may be certain this grieved more than angered me. Fit to cry, I took an orange from my pocket, and offered it to propitiate him. He hesitated, and then snatched it from my hold; as if he fancied I only intended to tempt and disappoint him. I showed another, keeping it out of his reach.

“Who has taught you those fine words, my bairn?” I inquired. “The curate?”

“Damn the curate, and thee! Gie me that,” he replied.

“Tell us where you got your lessons, and you shall have it,” said I. “Who’s your master?”

“Devil daddy,” was his answer.

“And what do you learn from daddy?” I continued.

He jumped at the fruit; I raised it higher. “What does he teach you?” I asked.

“Naught,” said he, “but to keep out of his gait. Daddy cannot bide me, because I swear at him.”

“Ah! and the devil teaches you to swear at daddy?” I observed.

“Ay—nay,” he drawled.

“Who, then?”

“Heathcliff.”

“I asked if he liked Mr. Heathcliff.”



“Ay!” he answered again.

Desiring to have his reasons for liking him, I could only gather the sentences—“I know’t: he pays dad back what he gies to me—he curses daddy for cursing me. He says I mun do as I will.”

“And the curate does not teach you to read and write, then?” I pursued.

“No, I was told the curate should have his —— teeth dashed down his —— throat, if he stepped over the threshold—Heathcliff had promised that!”

I put the orange in his hand, and bade him tell his father that a woman called Nelly Dean was waiting to speak with him, by the garden gate. He went up the walk, and entered the house; but, instead of Hindley, Heathcliff appeared on the door-stones; and I turned directly and ran down the road as hard as ever I could race, making no halt till I gained the guide-post, and feeling as scared as if I had raised a goblin. This is not much connected with Miss Isabella’s affair: except that it urged me to resolve further on mounting vigilant guard, and doing my utmost to check the spread of such bad influence at the Grange: even though I should wake a domestic storm, by thwarting Mrs. Linton’s pleasure.

The next time Heathcliff came my young lady chanced to be feeding some pigeons in the court. She had never spoken a word to her sister-in-law for three days; but she had likewise dropped her fretful complaining, and we found it a great comfort. Heathcliff had not the habit of bestowing a single unnecessary civility on Miss Linton, I knew. Now, as soon as he beheld her, his first precaution was to take a sweeping survey of the house-front. I was standing by the kitchen-window, but I drew out of sight. He then stepped across the pavement to her, and said something: she seemed embarrassed, and desirous of getting away; to prevent it, he laid his hand on her arm. She averted her face: he apparently put some question which she had no mind to answer. There was another rapid glance at the house, and supposing himself unseen, the scoundrel had the impudence to embrace her.

“Judas! Traitor!” I ejaculated. “You are a hypocrite, too, are you? A deliberate deceiver.”

“Who is, Nelly?” said Catherine’s voice at my elbow: I had been over-intent on watching the pair outside to mark her entrance.

“Your worthless friend!” I answered, warmly: “the sneaking rascal yonder. Ah, he has caught a glimpse of us—he is coming in! I wonder will he have the heart to find a plausible excuse for making love to Miss, when he told you he hated her?”

Mrs. Linton saw Isabella tear herself free, and run into the garden; and a minute after, Heathcliff opened the door. I couldn’t withhold giving some loose to my indignation; but Catherine angrily insisted on silence, and threatened to order me out of the kitchen, if I dared to be so presumptuous as to put in my insolent tongue.

“To hear you, people might think you were the mistress!” she cried. “You want setting down in your right place! Heathcliff, what are you about, raising this stir? I said you must let Isabella alone!—I beg you will, unless you are tired of being received here, and wish Linton to draw the bolts against you!”

“God forbid that he should try!” answered the black villain. I detested him just then. “God keep him meek and patient! Every day I grow madder after sending him to heaven!”

“Hush!” said Catherine, shutting the inner door! “Don’t vex me. Why have you disregarded my request? Did she come across you on purpose?”

“What is it to you?” he growled. “I have a right to kiss her, if she chooses; and you have no right to object. I am not *your* husband: *you* needn’t be jealous of me!”

“I’m not jealous of you,” replied the mistress; “I’m jealous for you. Clear your face: you sha’n’t scowl at me! If you like Isabella, you shall marry her. But do you like her? Tell the truth, Heathcliff! There, you won’t answer. I’m certain you don’t.”

“And would Mr. Linton approve of his sister marrying that man?” I inquired.

“Mr. Linton should approve,” returned my lady, decisively.

“He might spare himself the trouble,” said Heathcliff: “I could do as well without his approbation. And as to you, Catherine, I have a mind to speak a few words now, while we are at it. I want you to be aware that I *know* you have treated me infernally—infernally! Do you hear? And if you flatter yourself that I don’t perceive it, you are a fool; and if you think I can be consoled by sweet words, you are an idiot: and if you fancy I’ll suffer

unrevenged, I'll convince you of the contrary, in a very little while! Meantime, thank you for telling me your sister-in-law's secret: I swear I'll make the most of it. And stand you aside!"

"What new phase of his character is this?" exclaimed Mrs. Linton, in amazement. "I've treated you infernally—and you'll take your revenge! How will you take it, ungrateful brute? How have I treated you infernally?"

"I seek no revenge on you," replied Heathcliff, less vehemently. "That's not the plan. The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him; they crush those beneath them. You are welcome to torture me to death for your amusement, only allow me to amuse myself a little in the same style, and refrain from insult as much as you are able. Having levelled my palace, don't erect a hovel and complacently admire your own charity in giving me that for a home. If I imagined you really wished me to marry Isabel, I'd cut my throat!"

"Oh, the evil is that I am *not* jealous, is it?" cried Catherine. "Well, I won't repeat my offer of a wife: it is as bad as offering Satan a lost soul. Your bliss lies, like his, in inflicting misery. You prove it. Edgar is restored from the ill-temper he gave way to at your coming; I begin to be secure and tranquil; and you, restless to know us at peace, appear resolved on exciting a quarrel. Quarrel with Edgar, if you please, Heathcliff, and deceive his sister: you'll hit on exactly the most efficient method of revenging yourself on me."

The conversation ceased. Mrs. Linton sat down by the fire, flushed and gloomy. The spirit which served her was growing intractable: she could neither lay nor control it. He stood on the hearth with folded arms, brooding on his evil thoughts; and in this position I left them to seek the master, who was wondering what kept Catherine below so long.

"Ellen," said he, when I entered, "have you seen your mistress?"

"Yes; she's in the kitchen, sir," I answered. "She's sadly put out by Mr. Heathcliff's behaviour: and, indeed, I do think it's time to arrange his visits on another footing. There's harm in being too soft, and now it's come to this —." And I related the scene in the court, and, as near as I dared, the whole subsequent dispute. I fancied it could not be very prejudicial to Mrs. Linton; unless she made it so afterwards, by assuming the defensive for her guest. Edgar Linton had difficulty in hearing me to the close. His first words revealed that he did not clear his wife of blame.

“This is insufferable!” he exclaimed. “It is disgraceful that she should own him for a friend, and force his company on me! Call me two men out of the hall, Ellen. Catherine shall linger no longer to argue with the low ruffian—I have humoured her enough.”

He descended, and bidding the servants wait in the passage, went, followed by me, to the kitchen. Its occupants had recommenced their angry discussion: Mrs. Linton, at least, was scolding with renewed vigour; Heathcliff had moved to the window, and hung his head, somewhat cowed by her violent rating apparently. He saw the master first, and made a hasty motion that she should be silent; which she obeyed, abruptly, on discovering the reason of his intimation.

“How is this?” said Linton, addressing her; “what notion of propriety must you have to remain here, after the language which has been held to you by that blackguard? I suppose, because it is his ordinary talk you think nothing of it: you are habituated to his baseness, and, perhaps, imagine I can get used to it too!”

“Have you been listening at the door, Edgar?” asked the mistress, in a tone particularly calculated to provoke her husband, implying both carelessness and contempt of his irritation. Heathcliff, who had raised his eyes at the former speech, gave a sneering laugh at the latter; on purpose, it seemed, to draw Mr. Linton’s attention to him. He succeeded; but Edgar did not mean to entertain him with any high flights of passion.

“I’ve been so far forbearing with you, sir,” he said quietly; “not that I was ignorant of your miserable, degraded character, but I felt you were only partly responsible for that; and Catherine wishing to keep up your acquaintance, I acquiesced—foolishly. Your presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous: for that cause, and to prevent worse consequences, I shall deny you hereafter admission into this house, and give notice now that I require your instant departure. Three minutes’ delay will render it involuntary and ignominious.”

Heathcliff measured the height and breadth of the speaker with an eye full of derision.

“Cathy, this lamb of yours threatens like a bull!” he said. “It is in danger of splitting its skull against my knuckles. By God! Mr. Linton, I’m mortally sorry that you are not worth knocking down!”

My master glanced towards the passage, and signed me to fetch the men: he had no intention of hazarding a personal encounter. I obeyed the hint; but Mrs. Linton, suspecting something, followed; and when I attempted to call them, she pulled me back, slammed the door to, and locked it.

“Fair means!” she said, in answer to her husband’s look of angry surprise. “If you have not courage to attack him, make an apology, or allow yourself to be beaten. It will correct you of feigning more valour than you possess. No, I’ll swallow the key before you shall get it! I’m delightfully rewarded for my kindness to each! After constant indulgence of one’s weak nature, and the other’s bad one, I earn for thanks two samples of blind ingratitude, stupid to absurdity! Edgar, I was defending you and yours; and I wish Heathcliff may flog you sick, for daring to think an evil thought of me!”

It did not need the medium of a flogging to produce that effect on the master. He tried to wrest the key from Catherine’s grasp, and for safety she flung it into the hottest part of the fire; whereupon Mr. Edgar was taken with a nervous trembling, and his countenance grew deadly pale. For his life he could not avert that excess of emotion: mingled anguish and humiliation overcame him completely. He leant on the back of a chair, and covered his face.

“Oh, heavens! In old days this would win you knighthood!” exclaimed Mrs. Linton. “We are vanquished! we are vanquished! Heathcliff would as soon lift a finger at you as the king would march his army against a colony of mice. Cheer up! you sha’n’t be hurt! Your type is not a lamb, it’s a sucking leveret.”

“I wish you joy of the milk-blooded coward, Cathy!” said her friend. “I compliment you on your taste. And that is the slavering, shivering thing you preferred to me! I would not strike him with my fist, but I’d kick him with my foot, and experience considerable satisfaction. Is he weeping, or is he going to faint for fear?”

The fellow approached and gave the chair on which Linton rested a push. He’d better have kept his distance: my master quickly sprang erect, and struck him full on the throat a blow that would have levelled a slighter man. It took his breath for a minute; and while he choked, Mr. Linton walked out by the back door into the yard, and from thence to the front entrance.

“There! you’ve done with coming here,” cried Catherine. “Get away, now; he’ll return with a brace of pistols and half-a-dozen assistants. If he did overhear us, of course he’d never forgive you. You’ve played me an ill turn, Heathcliff! But go—make haste! I’d rather see Edgar at bay than you.”

“Do you suppose I’m going with that blow burning in my gullet?” he thundered. “By hell, no! I’ll crush his ribs in like a rotten hazel-nut before I cross the threshold! If I don’t floor him now, I shall murder him some time; so, as you value his existence, let me get at him!”

“He is not coming,” I interposed, framing a bit of a lie. “There’s the coachman and the two gardeners; you’ll surely not wait to be thrust into the road by them! Each has a bludgeon; and master will, very likely, be watching from the parlour-windows to see that they fulfil his orders.”

The gardeners and coachman were there: but Linton was with them. They had already entered the court. Heathcliff, on the second thoughts, resolved to avoid a struggle against three underlings: he seized the poker, smashed the lock from the inner door, and made his escape as they tramped in.

Mrs. Linton, who was very much excited, bade me accompany her upstairs. She did not know my share in contributing to the disturbance, and I was anxious to keep her in ignorance.

“I’m nearly distracted, Nelly!” she exclaimed, throwing herself on the sofa. “A thousand smiths’ hammers are beating in my head! Tell Isabella to shun me; this uproar is owing to her; and should she or any one else aggravate my anger at present, I shall get wild. And, Nelly, say to Edgar, if you see him again to-night, that I’m in danger of being seriously ill. I wish it may prove true. He has startled and distressed me shockingly! I want to frighten him. Besides, he might come and begin a string of abuse or complainings; I’m certain I should recriminate, and God knows where we should end! Will you do so, my good Nelly? You are aware that I am no way blamable in this matter. What possessed him to turn listener? Heathcliff’s talk was outrageous, after you left us; but I could soon have diverted him from Isabella, and the rest meant nothing. Now all is dashed wrong; by the fool’s craving to hear evil of self, that haunts some people like a demon! Had Edgar never gathered our conversation, he would never have been the worse for it. Really, when he opened on me in that unreasonable tone of displeasure after I had scolded Heathcliff till I was hoarse for him, I did not care hardly what they did to each other; especially

as I felt that, however the scene closed, we should all be driven asunder for nobody knows how long! Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend—if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own. That will be a prompt way of finishing all, when I am pushed to extremity! But it's a deed to be reserved for a forlorn hope; I'd not take Linton by surprise with it. To this point he has been discreet in dreading to provoke me; you must represent the peril of quitting that policy, and remind him of my passionate temper, verging, when kindled, on frenzy. I wish you could dismiss that apathy out of that countenance, and look rather more anxious about me."

The stolidity with which I received these instructions was, no doubt, rather exasperating: for they were delivered in perfect sincerity; but I believed a person who could plan the turning of her fits of passion to account, beforehand, might, by exerting her will, manage to control herself tolerably, even while under their influence; and I did not wish to "frighten" her husband, as she said, and multiply his annoyances for the purpose of serving her selfishness. Therefore I said nothing when I met the master coming towards the parlour; but I took the liberty of turning back to listen whether they would resume their quarrel together. He began to speak first.

"Remain where you are, Catherine," he said; without any anger in his voice, but with much sorrowful despondency. "I shall not stay. I am neither come to wrangle nor be reconciled; but I wish just to learn whether, after this evening's events, you intend to continue your intimacy with—"

"Oh, for mercy's sake," interrupted the mistress, stamping her foot, "for mercy's sake, let us hear no more of it now! Your cold blood cannot be worked into a fever: your veins are full of ice-water; but mine are boiling, and the sight of such chillness makes them dance."

"To get rid of me, answer my question," persevered Mr. Linton. "You must answer it; and that violence does not alarm me. I have found that you can be as stoical as anyone, when you please. Will you give up Heathcliff hereafter, or will you give up me? It is impossible for you to be *my* friend and *his* at the same time; and I absolutely *require* to know which you choose."

"I require to be let alone!" exclaimed Catherine, furiously. "I demand it! Don't you see I can scarcely stand? Edgar, you—you leave me!"

She rang the bell till it broke with a twang; I entered leisurely. It was enough to try the temper of a saint, such senseless, wicked rages! There she lay dashing her head against the arm of the sofa, and grinding her teeth, so that you might fancy she would crash them to splinters! Mr. Linton stood looking at her in sudden compunction and fear. He told me to fetch some water. She had no breath for speaking. I brought a glass full; and as she would not drink, I sprinkled it on her face. In a few seconds she stretched herself out stiff, and turned up her eyes, while her cheeks, at once blanched and livid, assumed the aspect of death. Linton looked terrified.

“There is nothing in the world the matter,” I whispered. I did not want him to yield, though I could not help being afraid in my heart.

“She has blood on her lips!” he said, shuddering.

“Never mind!” I answered, tartly. And I told him how she had resolved, previous to his coming, on exhibiting a fit of frenzy. I incautiously gave the account aloud, and she heard me; for she started up—her hair flying over her shoulders, her eyes flashing, the muscles of her neck and arms standing out preternaturally. I made up my mind for broken bones, at least; but she only glared about her for an instant, and then rushed from the room. The master directed me to follow; I did, to her chamber-door: she hindered me from going further by securing it against me.

As she never offered to descend to breakfast next morning, I went to ask whether she would have some carried up. “No!” she replied, peremptorily. The same question was repeated at dinner and tea; and again on the morrow after, and received the same answer. Mr. Linton, on his part, spent his time in the library, and did not inquire concerning his wife’s occupations. Isabella and he had had an hour’s interview, during which he tried to elicit from her some sentiment of proper horror for Heathcliff’s advances: but he could make nothing of her evasive replies, and was obliged to close the examination unsatisfactorily; adding, however, a solemn warning, that if she were so insane as to encourage that worthless suitor, it would dissolve all bonds of relationship between herself and him.



## CHAPTER XII

While Miss Linton moped about the park and garden, always silent, and almost always in tears; and her brother shut himself up among books that he never opened—wearying, I guessed, with a continual vague expectation that Catherine, repenting her conduct, would come of her own accord to ask pardon, and seek a reconciliation—and *she* fasted pertinaciously, under the idea, probably, that at every meal Edgar was ready to choke for her absence, and pride alone held him from running to cast himself at her feet; I went about my household duties, convinced that the Grange had but one sensible soul in its walls, and that lodged in my body. I wasted no condolences on Miss, nor any expostulations on my mistress; nor did I pay much attention to the sighs of my master, who yearned to hear his lady's name, since he might not hear her voice. I determined they should come about as they pleased for me; and though it was a tiresomely slow process, I began to rejoice at length in a faint dawn of its progress: as I thought at first.

Mrs. Linton, on the third day, unbarred her door, and having finished the water in her pitcher and decanter, desired a renewed supply, and a basin of gruel, for she believed she was dying. That I set down as a speech meant for Edgar's ears; I believed no such thing, so I kept it to myself and brought her some tea and dry toast. She ate and drank eagerly, and sank back on her pillow again, clenching her hands and groaning. "Oh, I will die," she exclaimed, "since no one cares anything about me. I wish I had not taken that." Then a good while after I heard her murmur, "No, I'll not die—he'd be glad—he does not love me at all—he would never miss me!"

"Did you want anything, ma'am?" I inquired, still preserving my external composure, in spite of her ghastly countenance and strange, exaggerated manner.

"What is that apathetic being doing?" she demanded, pushing the thick entangled locks from her wasted face. "Has he fallen into a lethargy, or is he dead?"

“Neither,” replied I; “if you mean Mr. Linton. He’s tolerably well, I think, though his studies occupy him rather more than they ought: he is continually among his books, since he has no other society.”

I should not have spoken so if I had known her true condition, but I could not get rid of the notion that she acted a part of her disorder.

“Among his books!” she cried, confounded. “And I dying! I on the brink of the grave! My God! does he know how I’m altered?” continued she, staring at her reflection in a mirror hanging against the opposite wall. “Is that Catherine Linton? He imagines me in a pet—in play, perhaps. Cannot you inform him that it is frightful earnest? Nelly, if it be not too late, as soon as I learn how he feels, I’ll choose between these two: either to starve at once—that would be no punishment unless he had a heart—or to recover, and leave the country. Are you speaking the truth about him now? Take care. Is he actually so utterly indifferent for my life?”

“Why, ma’am,” I answered, “the master has no idea of your being deranged; and of course he does not fear that you will let yourself die of hunger.”

“You think not? Cannot you tell him I will?” she returned. “Persuade him! speak of your own mind: say you are certain I will!”

“No, you forget, Mrs. Linton,” I suggested, “that you have eaten some food with a relish this evening, and to-morrow you will perceive its good effects.”

“If I were only sure it would kill him,” she interrupted, “I’d kill myself directly! These three awful nights I’ve never closed my lids—and oh, I’ve been tormented! I’ve been haunted, Nelly! But I begin to fancy you don’t like me. How strange! I thought, though everybody hated and despised each other, they could not avoid loving me. And they have all turned to enemies in a few hours: they have, I’m positive; the people here. How dreary to meet death, surrounded by their cold faces! Isabella, terrified and repelled, afraid to enter the room, it would be so dreadful to watch Catherine go. And Edgar standing solemnly by to see it over; then offering prayers of thanks to God for restoring peace to his house, and going back to his *books*! What in the name of all that feels has he to do with *books*, when I am dying?”

She could not bear the notion which I had put into her head of Mr. Linton’s philosophical resignation. Tossing about, she increased her feverish bewilderment to madness, and tore the pillow with her teeth; then

raising herself up all burning, desired that I would open the window. We were in the middle of winter, the wind blew strong from the north-east, and I objected. Both the expressions flitting over her face, and the changes of her moods, began to alarm me terribly; and brought to my recollection her former illness, and the doctor's injunction that she should not be crossed. A minute previously she was violent; now, supported on one arm, and not noticing my refusal to obey her, she seemed to find childish diversion in pulling the feathers from the rents she had just made, and ranging them on the sheet according to their different species: her mind had strayed to other associations.

"That's a turkey's," she murmured to herself; "and this is a wild duck's; and this is a pigeon's. Ah, they put pigeons' feathers in the pillows—no wonder I couldn't die! Let me take care to throw it on the floor when I lie down. And here is a moor-cock's; and this—I should know it among a thousand—it's a lapwing's. Bonny bird; wheeling over our heads in the middle of the moor. It wanted to get to its nest, for the clouds had touched the swells, and it felt rain coming. This feather was picked up from the heath, the bird was not shot: we saw its nest in the winter, full of little skeletons. Heathcliff set a trap over it, and the old ones dared not come. I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing after that, and he didn't. Yes, here are more! Did he shoot my lapwings, Nelly? Are they red, any of them? Let me look."

"Give over with that baby-work!" I interrupted, dragging the pillow away, and turning the holes towards the mattress, for she was removing its contents by handfuls. "Lie down and shut your eyes: you're wandering. There's a mess! The down is flying about like snow."

I went here and there collecting it.

"I see in you, Nelly," she continued dreamily, "an aged woman: you have grey hair and bent shoulders. This bed is the fairy cave under Penistone crags, and you are gathering elf-bolts to hurt our heifers; pretending, while I am near, that they are only locks of wool. That's what you'll come to fifty years hence: I know you are not so now. I'm not wandering: you're mistaken, or else I should believe you really *were* that withered hag, and I should think I *was* under Penistone Crags; and I'm conscious it's night, and there are two candles on the table making the black press shine like jet."

“The black press? where is that?” I asked. “You are talking in your sleep!”

“It’s against the wall, as it always is,” she replied. “It *does* appear odd—I see a face in it!”

“There’s no press in the room, and never was,” said I, resuming my seat, and looping up the curtain that I might watch her.

“Don’t *you* see that face?” she inquired, gazing earnestly at the mirror.

And say what I could, I was incapable of making her comprehend it to be her own; so I rose and covered it with a shawl.

“It’s behind there still!” she pursued, anxiously. “And it stirred. Who is it? I hope it will not come out when you are gone! Oh! Nelly, the room is haunted! I’m afraid of being alone!”

I took her hand in mine, and bid her be composed; for a succession of shudders convulsed her frame, and she would keep straining her gaze towards the glass.

“There’s nobody here!” I insisted. “It was *yourself*, Mrs. Linton: you knew it a while since.”

“Myself!” she gasped, “and the clock is striking twelve! It’s true, then! that’s dreadful!”

Her fingers clutched the clothes, and gathered them over her eyes. I attempted to steal to the door with an intention of calling her husband; but I was summoned back by a piercing shriek—the shawl had dropped from the frame.

“Why, what is the matter?” cried I. “Who is coward now? Wake up! That is the glass—the mirror, Mrs. Linton; and you see yourself in it, and there am I too by your side.”

Trembling and bewildered, she held me fast, but the horror gradually passed from her countenance; its paleness gave place to a glow of shame.

“Oh, dear! I thought I was at home,” she sighed. “I thought I was lying in my chamber at Wuthering Heights. Because I’m weak, my brain got confused, and I screamed unconsciously. Don’t say anything; but stay with me. I dread sleeping: my dreams appal me.”

“A sound sleep would do you good, ma’am,” I answered: “and I hope this suffering will prevent your trying starving again.”

“Oh, if I were but in my own bed in the old house!” she went on bitterly, wringing her hands. “And that wind sounding in the firs by the lattice. Do let me feel it—it comes straight down the moor—do let me have one breath!” To pacify her I held the casement ajar a few seconds. A cold blast rushed through; I closed it, and returned to my post. She lay still now, her face bathed in tears. Exhaustion of body had entirely subdued her spirit: our fiery Catherine was no better than a wailing child.

“How long is it since I shut myself in here?” she asked, suddenly reviving.

“It was Monday evening,” I replied, “and this is Thursday night, or rather Friday morning, at present.”

“What! of the same week?” she exclaimed. “Only that brief time?”

“Long enough to live on nothing but cold water and ill-temper,” observed I.

“Well, it seems a weary number of hours,” she muttered doubtfully: “it must be more. I remember being in the parlour after they had quarrelled, and Edgar being cruelly provoking, and me running into this room desperate. As soon as ever I had barred the door, utter blackness overwhelmed me, and I fell on the floor. I couldn’t explain to Edgar how certain I felt of having a fit, or going raging mad, if he persisted in teasing me! I had no command of tongue, or brain, and he did not guess my agony, perhaps: it barely left me sense to try to escape from him and his voice. Before I recovered sufficiently to see and hear, it began to be dawn, and, Nelly, I’ll tell you what I thought, and what has kept recurring and recurring till I feared for my reason. I thought as I lay there, with my head against that table leg, and my eyes dimly discerning the grey square of the window, that I was enclosed in the oak-panelled bed at home; and my heart ached with some great grief which, just waking, I could not recollect. I pondered, and worried myself to discover what it could be, and, most strangely, the whole last seven years of my life grew a blank! I did not recall that they had been at all. I was a child; my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff. I was laid alone, for the first time; and, rousing from a dismal doze after a night of weeping, I lifted my hand to push the panels aside: it struck the table-top! I swept it along the carpet, and then memory burst in: my late anguish was swallowed in a paroxysm of despair. I cannot say why I felt so

wildly wretched: it must have been temporary derangement; for there is scarcely cause. But, supposing at twelve years old I had been wrenched from the Heights, and every early association, and my all in all, as Heathcliff was at that time, and been converted at a stroke into Mrs. Linton, the lady of Thrushcross Grange, and the wife of a stranger: an exile, and outcast, thenceforth, from what had been my world. You may fancy a glimpse of the abyss where I grovelled! Shake your head as you will, Nelly, you have helped to unsettle me! You should have spoken to Edgar, indeed you should, and compelled him to leave me quiet! Oh, I'm burning! I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! Why am I so changed? why does my blood rush into a hell of tumult at a few words? I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills. Open the window again wide: fasten it open! Quick, why don't you move?"

"Because I won't give you your death of cold," I answered.

"You won't give me a chance of life, you mean," she said, sullenly. "However, I'm not helpless yet; I'll open it myself."

And sliding from the bed before I could hinder her, she crossed the room, walking very uncertainly, threw it back, and bent out, careless of the frosty air that cut about her shoulders as keen as a knife. I entreated, and finally attempted to force her to retire. But I soon found her delirious strength much surpassed mine (she was delirious, I became convinced by her subsequent actions and ravings). There was no moon, and everything beneath lay in misty darkness: not a light gleamed from any house, far or near all had been extinguished long ago: and those at Wuthering Heights were never visible—still she asserted she caught their shining.

"Look!" she cried eagerly, "that's my room with the candle in it, and the trees swaying before it; and the other candle is in Joseph's garret. Joseph sits up late, doesn't he? He's waiting till I come home that he may lock the gate. Well, he'll wait a while yet. It's a rough journey, and a sad heart to travel it; and we must pass by Gimmerton Kirk to go that journey! We've braved its ghosts often together, and dared each other to stand among the graves and ask them to come. But, Heathcliff, if I dare you now, will you venture? If you do, I'll keep you. I'll not lie there by myself: they may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me, but I won't rest till you are with me. I never will!"

She paused, and resumed with a strange smile. "He's considering—he'd rather I'd come to him! Find a way, then! not through that kirkyard. You are slow! Be content, you always followed me!"

Perceiving it vain to argue against her insanity, I was planning how I could reach something to wrap about her, without quitting my hold of herself (for I could not trust her alone by the gaping lattice), when, to my consternation, I heard the rattle of the door-handle, and Mr. Linton entered. He had only then come from the library; and, in passing through the lobby, had noticed our talking and been attracted by curiosity, or fear, to examine what it signified, at that late hour.

"Oh, sir!" I cried, checking the exclamation risen to his lips at the sight which met him, and the bleak atmosphere of the chamber. "My poor mistress is ill, and she quite masters me: I cannot manage her at all; pray, come and persuade her to go to bed. Forget your anger, for she's hard to guide any way but her own."

"Catherine ill?" he said, hastening to us. "Shut the window, Ellen! Catherine! why—"

He was silent. The haggardness of Mrs. Linton's appearance smote him speechless, and he could only glance from her to me in horrified astonishment.

"She's been fretting here," I continued, "and eating scarcely anything, and never complaining: she would admit none of us till this evening, and so we couldn't inform you of her state, as we were not aware of it ourselves; but it is nothing."

I felt I uttered my explanations awkwardly; the master frowned. "It is nothing, is it, Ellen Dean?" he said sternly. "You shall account more clearly for keeping me ignorant of this!" And he took his wife in his arms, and looked at her with anguish.

At first she gave him no glance of recognition: he was invisible to her abstracted gaze. The delirium was not fixed, however; having weaned her eyes from contemplating the outer darkness, by degrees she centred her attention on him, and discovered who it was that held her.

"Ah! you are come, are you, Edgar Linton?" she said, with angry animation. "You are one of those things that are ever found when least wanted, and when you are wanted, never! I suppose we shall have plenty of

lamentations now—I see we shall—but they can't keep me from my narrow home out yonder: my resting-place, where I'm bound before spring is over! There it is: not among the Lintons, mind, under the chapel-roof, but in the open air, with a head-stone; and you may please yourself whether you go to them or come to me!"

"Catherine, what have you done?" commenced the master. "Am I nothing to you any more? Do you love that wretch Heath—"

"Hush!" cried Mrs. Linton. "Hush, this moment! You mention that name and I end the matter instantly by a spring from the window! What you touch at present you may have; but my soul will be on that hill top before you lay hands on me again. I don't want you, Edgar: I'm past wanting you. Return to your books. I'm glad you possess a consolation, for all you had in me is gone."

"Her mind wanders, sir," I interposed. "She has been talking nonsense the whole evening; but let her have quiet, and proper attendance, and she'll rally. Hereafter, we must be cautious how we vex her."

"I desire no further advice from you," answered Mr. Linton. "You knew your mistress's nature, and you encouraged me to harass her. And not to give me one hint of how she has been these three days! It was heartless! Months of sickness could not cause such a change!"

I began to defend myself, thinking it too bad to be blamed for another's wicked waywardness. "I knew Mrs. Linton's nature to be headstrong and domineering," cried I: "but I didn't know that you wished to foster her fierce temper! I didn't know that, to humour her, I should wink at Mr. Heathcliff. I performed the duty of a faithful servant in telling you, and I have got a faithful servant's wages! Well, it will teach me to be careful next time. Next time you may gather intelligence for yourself!"

"The next time you bring a tale to me you shall quit my service, Ellen Dean," he replied.

"You'd rather hear nothing about it, I suppose, then, Mr. Linton?" said I. "Heathcliff has your permission to come a-courting to Miss, and to drop in at every opportunity your absence offers, on purpose to poison the mistress against you?"

Confused as Catherine was, her wits were alert at applying our conversation.



“Ah! Nelly has played traitor,” she exclaimed, passionately. “Nelly is my hidden enemy. You witch! So you do seek elf-bolts to hurt us! Let me go, and I’ll make her rue! I’ll make her howl a recantation!”

A maniac’s fury kindled under her brows; she struggled desperately to disengage herself from Linton’s arms. I felt no inclination to tarry the event; and, resolving to seek medical aid on my own responsibility, I quitted the chamber.

In passing the garden to reach the road, at a place where a bridle hook is driven into the wall, I saw something white moved irregularly, evidently by another agent than the wind. Notwithstanding my hurry, I stayed to examine it, lest ever after I should have the conviction impressed on my imagination that it was a creature of the other world. My surprise and perplexity were great on discovering, by touch more than vision, Miss Isabella’s springer, Fanny, suspended by a handkerchief, and nearly at its last gasp. I quickly released the animal, and lifted it into the garden. I had seen it follow its mistress upstairs when she went to bed; and wondered much how it could have got out there, and what mischievous person had treated it so. While untying the knot round the hook, it seemed to me that I repeatedly caught the beat of horses’ feet galloping at some distance; but there were such a number of things to occupy my reflections that I hardly gave the circumstance a thought: though it was a strange sound, in that place, at two o’clock in the morning.

Mr. Kenneth was fortunately just issuing from his house to see a patient in the village as I came up the street; and my account of Catherine Linton’s malady induced him to accompany me back immediately. He was a plain rough man; and he made no scruple to speak his doubts of her surviving this second attack; unless she were more submissive to his directions than she had shown herself before.

“Nelly Dean,” said he, “I can’t help fancying there’s an extra cause for this. What has there been to do at the Grange? We’ve odd reports up here. A stout, hearty lass like Catherine does not fall ill for a trifle; and that sort of people should not either. It’s hard work bringing them through fevers, and such things. How did it begin?”

“The master will inform you,” I answered; “but you are acquainted with the Earnshaws’ violent dispositions, and Mrs. Linton caps them all. I may say this; it commenced in a quarrel. She was struck during a tempest of

passion with a kind of fit. That's her account, at least: for she flew off in the height of it, and locked herself up. Afterwards, she refused to eat, and now she alternately raves and remains in a half dream; knowing those about her, but having her mind filled with all sorts of strange ideas and illusions."

"Mr. Linton will be sorry?" observed Kenneth, interrogatively.

"Sorry? he'll break his heart should anything happen!" I replied. "Don't alarm him more than necessary."

"Well, I told him to beware," said my companion; "and he must bide the consequences of neglecting my warning! Hasn't he been intimate with Mr. Heathcliff lately?"

"Heathcliff frequently visits at the Grange," answered I, "though more on the strength of the mistress having known him when a boy, than because the master likes his company. At present he's discharged from the trouble of calling; owing to some presumptuous aspirations after Miss Linton which he manifested. I hardly think he'll be taken in again."

"And does Miss Linton turn a cold shoulder on him?" was the doctor's next question.

"I'm not in her confidence," returned I, reluctant to continue the subject.

"No, she's a sly one," he remarked, shaking his head. "She keeps her own counsel! But she's a real little fool. I have it from good authority that last night (and a pretty night it was!) she and Heathcliff were walking in the plantation at the back of your house above two hours; and he pressed her not to go in again, but just mount his horse and away with him! My informant said she could only put him off by pledging her word of honour to be prepared on their first meeting after that: when it was to be he didn't hear; but you urge Mr. Linton to look sharp!"

This news filled me with fresh fears; I outstripped Kenneth, and ran most of the way back. The little dog was yelping in the garden yet. I spared a minute to open the gate for it, but instead of going to the house door, it coursed up and down snuffing the grass, and would have escaped to the road, had I not seized it and conveyed it in with me. On ascending to Isabella's room, my suspicions were confirmed: it was empty. Had I been a few hours sooner Mrs. Linton's illness might have arrested her rash step. But what could be done now? There was a bare possibility of overtaking them if pursued instantly. *I* could not pursue them, however; and I dared not

rouse the family, and fill the place with confusion; still less unfold the business to my master, absorbed as he was in his present calamity, and having no heart to spare for a second grief! I saw nothing for it but to hold my tongue, and suffer matters to take their course; and Kenneth being arrived, I went with a badly composed countenance to announce him. Catherine lay in a troubled sleep: her husband had succeeded in soothing the excess of frenzy; he now hung over her pillow, watching every shade and every change of her painfully expressive features.

The doctor, on examining the case for himself, spoke hopefully to him of its having a favourable termination, if we could only preserve around her perfect and constant tranquillity. To me, he signified the threatening danger was not so much death, as permanent alienation of intellect.

I did not close my eyes that night, nor did Mr. Linton: indeed, we never went to bed; and the servants were all up long before the usual hour, moving through the house with stealthy tread, and exchanging whispers as they encountered each other in their vocations. Every one was active but Miss Isabella; and they began to remark how sound she slept: her brother, too, asked if she had risen, and seemed impatient for her presence, and hurt that she showed so little anxiety for her sister-in-law. I trembled lest he should send me to call her; but I was spared the pain of being the first proclaimant of her flight. One of the maids, a thoughtless girl, who had been on an early errand to Gimmerton, came panting upstairs, open-mouthed, and dashed into the chamber, crying: "Oh, dear, dear! What mun we have next? Master, master, our young lady—"

"Hold your noise!" cried, I hastily, enraged at her clamorous manner.

"Speak lower, Mary—What is the matter?" said Mr. Linton. "What ails your young lady?"

"She's gone, she's gone! Yon' Heathcliff's run off wi' her!" gasped the girl.

"That is not true!" exclaimed Linton, rising in agitation. "It cannot be: how has the idea entered your head? Ellen Dean, go and seek her. It is incredible: it cannot be."

As he spoke he took the servant to the door, and then repeated his demand to know her reasons for such an assertion.

“Why, I met on the road a lad that fetches milk here,” she stammered, “and he asked whether we weren’t in trouble at the Grange. I thought he meant for missis’s sickness, so I answered, yes. Then says he, ‘There’s somebody gone after ’em, I guess?’ I stared. He saw I knew nought about it, and he told how a gentleman and lady had stopped to have a horse’s shoe fastened at a blacksmith’s shop, two miles out of Gimmerton, not very long after midnight! and how the blacksmith’s lass had got up to spy who they were: she knew them both directly. And she noticed the man—Heathcliff it was, she felt certain: nob’dy could mistake him, besides—put a sovereign in her father’s hand for payment. The lady had a cloak about her face; but having desired a sup of water, while she drank it fell back, and she saw her very plain. Heathcliff held both bridles as they rode on, and they set their faces from the village, and went as fast as the rough roads would let them. The lass said nothing to her father, but she told it all over Gimmerton this morning.”

I ran and peeped, for form’s sake, into Isabella’s room; confirming, when I returned, the servant’s statement. Mr. Linton had resumed his seat by the bed; on my re-entrance, he raised his eyes, read the meaning of my blank aspect, and dropped them without giving an order, or uttering a word.

“Are we to try any measures for overtaking and bringing her back,” I inquired. “How should we do?”

“She went of her own accord,” answered the master; “she had a right to go if she pleased. Trouble me no more about her. Hereafter she is only my sister in name: not because I disown her, but because she has disowned me.”

And that was all he said on the subject: he did not make single inquiry further, or mention her in any way, except directing me to send what property she had in the house to her fresh home, wherever it was, when I knew it.

## CHAPTER XIII

For two months the fugitives remained absent; in those two months, Mrs. Linton encountered and conquered the worst shock of what was denominated a brain fever. No mother could have nursed an only child more devotedly than Edgar tended her. Day and night he was watching, and patiently enduring all the annoyances that irritable nerves and a shaken reason could inflict; and, though Kenneth remarked that what he saved from the grave would only recompense his care by forming the source of constant future anxiety—in fact, that his health and strength were being sacrificed to preserve a mere ruin of humanity—he knew no limits in gratitude and joy when Catherine’s life was declared out of danger; and hour after hour he would sit beside her, tracing the gradual return to bodily health, and flattering his too sanguine hopes with the illusion that her mind would settle back to its right balance also, and she would soon be entirely her former self.

The first time she left her chamber was at the commencement of the following March. Mr. Linton had put on her pillow, in the morning, a handful of golden crocuses; her eye, long stranger to any gleam of pleasure, caught them in waking, and shone delighted as she gathered them eagerly together.

“These are the earliest flowers at the Heights,” she exclaimed. “They remind me of soft thaw winds, and warm sunshine, and nearly melted snow. Edgar, is there not a south wind, and is not the snow almost gone?”

“The snow is quite gone down here, darling,” replied her husband; “and I only see two white spots on the whole range of moors: the sky is blue, and the larks are singing, and the beck and brooks are all brim full. Catherine, last spring at this time, I was longing to have you under this roof; now, I wish you were a mile or two up those hills: the air blows so sweetly, I feel that it would cure you.”

“I shall never be there but once more,” said the invalid; “and then you’ll leave me, and I shall remain for ever. Next spring you’ll long again to have me under this roof, and you’ll look back and think you were happy to-day.”

Linton lavished on her the kindest caresses, and tried to cheer her by the fondest words; but, vaguely regarding the flowers, she let the tears collect on her lashes and stream down her cheeks unheeding. We knew she was really better, and, therefore, decided that long confinement to a single place produced much of this despondency, and it might be partially removed by a change of scene. The master told me to light a fire in the many-weeks’ deserted parlour, and to set an easy-chair in the sunshine by the window; and then he brought her down, and she sat a long while enjoying the genial heat, and, as we expected, revived by the objects round her: which, though familiar, were free from the dreary associations investing her hated sick chamber. By evening she seemed greatly exhausted; yet no arguments could persuade her to return to that apartment, and I had to arrange the parlour sofa for her bed, till another room could be prepared. To obviate the fatigue of mounting and descending the stairs, we fitted up this, where you lie at present—on the same floor with the parlour; and she was soon strong enough to move from one to the other, leaning on Edgar’s arm. Ah, I thought myself, she might recover, so waited on as she was. And there was double cause to desire it, for on her existence depended that of another: we cherished the hope that in a little while Mr. Linton’s heart would be gladdened, and his lands secured from a stranger’s grip, by the birth of an heir.

I should mention that Isabella sent to her brother, some six weeks from her departure, a short note, announcing her marriage with Heathcliff. It appeared dry and cold; but at the bottom was dotted in with pencil an obscure apology, and an entreaty for kind remembrance and reconciliation, if her proceeding had offended him: asserting that she could not help it then, and being done, she had now no power to repeal it. Linton did not reply to this, I believe; and, in a fortnight more, I got a long letter, which I considered odd, coming from the pen of a bride just out of the honeymoon. I’ll read it: for I keep it yet. Any relic of the dead is precious, if they were valued living.

\* \* \* \* \*

DEAR ELLEN, it begins,—I came last night to Wuthering Heights, and heard, for the first time, that Catherine has been, and is yet, very ill. I must not write to her, I suppose, and my brother is either too angry or too distressed to answer what I sent him. Still, I must write to somebody, and the only choice left me is you.

Inform Edgar that I'd give the world to see his face again—that my heart returned to Thrushcross Grange in twenty-four hours after I left it, and is there at this moment, full of warm feelings for him, and Catherine! *I can't follow it though*—(these words are underlined)—they need not expect me, and they may draw what conclusions they please; taking care, however, to lay nothing at the door of my weak will or deficient affection.

The remainder of the letter is for yourself alone. I want to ask you two questions: the first is,—How did you contrive to preserve the common sympathies of human nature when you resided here? I cannot recognise any sentiment which those around share with me.

The second question I have great interest in; it is this—Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil? I sha'n't tell my reasons for making this inquiry; but I beseech you to explain, if you can, what I have married: that is, when you call to see me; and you must call, Ellen, very soon. Don't write, but come, and bring me something from Edgar.

Now, you shall hear how I have been received in my new home, as I am led to imagine the Heights will be. It is to amuse myself that I dwell on such subjects as the lack of external comforts: they never occupy my thoughts, except at the moment when I miss them. I should laugh and dance for joy, if I found their absence was the total of my miseries, and the rest was an unnatural dream!

The sun set behind the Grange as we turned on to the moors; by that, I judged it to be six o'clock; and my companion halted half an hour, to inspect the park, and the gardens, and, probably, the place itself, as well as he could; so it was dark when we dismounted in the paved yard of the farmhouse, and your old fellow-servant, Joseph, issued out to receive us by the light of a dip candle. He did it with a courtesy that redounded to his credit. His first act was to elevate his torch to a level with my face, squint malignantly, project his under-lip, and turn away. Then he took the two horses, and led them into the stables; reappearing for the purpose of locking the outer gate, as if we lived in an ancient castle.

Heathcliff stayed to speak to him, and I entered the kitchen—a dingy, untidy hole; I daresay you would not know it, it is so changed since it was in your charge. By the fire stood a ruffianly child, strong in limb and dirty in garb, with a look of Catherine in his eyes and about his mouth.

“This is Edgar’s legal nephew,” I reflected—“mine in a manner; I must shake hands, and—yes—I must kiss him. It is right to establish a good understanding at the beginning.”

I approached, and, attempting to take his chubby fist, said—“How do you do, my dear?”

He replied in a jargon I did not comprehend.

“Shall you and I be friends, Hareton?” was my next essay at conversation.

An oath, and a threat to set Throtter on me if I did not “frame off” rewarded my perseverance.

“Hey, Throtter, lad!” whispered the little wretch, rousing a half-bred bull-dog from its lair in a corner. “Now, wilt thou be ganging?” he asked authoritatively.

Love for my life urged a compliance; I stepped over the threshold to wait till the others should enter. Mr. Heathcliff was nowhere visible; and Joseph, whom I followed to the stables, and requested to accompany me in, after staring and muttering to himself, screwed up his nose and replied—“Mim! mim! mim! Did iver Christian body hear aught like it? Mincing un’ munching! How can I tell whet ye say?”

“I say, I wish you to come with me into the house!” I cried, thinking him deaf, yet highly disgusted at his rudeness.

“None o’ me! I getten summut else to do,” he answered, and continued his work; moving his lantern jaws meanwhile, and surveying my dress and countenance (the former a great deal too fine, but the latter, I’m sure, as sad as he could desire) with sovereign contempt.

I walked round the yard, and through a wicket, to another door, at which I took the liberty of knocking, in hopes some more civil servant might show himself. After a short suspense, it was opened by a tall, gaunt man, without neckerchief, and otherwise extremely slovenly; his features were lost in masses of shaggy hair that hung on his shoulders; and *his* eyes, too, were like a ghostly Catherine’s with all their beauty annihilated.



“What’s your business here?” he demanded, grimly. “Who are you?”

“My name was Isabella Linton,” I replied. “You’ve seen me before, sir. I’m lately married to Mr. Heathcliff, and he has brought me here—I suppose, by your permission.”

“Is he come back, then?” asked the hermit, glaring like a hungry wolf.

“Yes—we came just now,” I said; “but he left me by the kitchen door; and when I would have gone in, your little boy played sentinel over the place, and frightened me off by the help of a bull-dog.”

“It’s well the hellish villain has kept his word!” growled my future host, searching the darkness beyond me in expectation of discovering Heathcliff; and then he indulged in a soliloquy of execrations, and threats of what he would have done had the “fiend” deceived him.

I repented having tried this second entrance, and was almost inclined to slip away before he finished cursing, but ere I could execute that intention, he ordered me in, and shut and re-fastened the door. There was a great fire, and that was all the light in the huge apartment, whose floor had grown a uniform grey; and the once brilliant pewter-dishes, which used to attract my gaze when I was a girl, partook of a similar obscurity, created by tarnish and dust. I inquired whether I might call the maid, and be conducted to a bedroom! Mr. Earnshaw vouchsafed no answer. He walked up and down, with his hands in his pockets, apparently quite forgetting my presence; and his abstraction was evidently so deep, and his whole aspect so misanthropical, that I shrank from disturbing him again.

You’ll not be surprised, Ellen, at my feeling particularly cheerless, seated in worse than solitude on that inhospitable hearth, and remembering that four miles distant lay my delightful home, containing the only people I loved on earth; and there might as well be the Atlantic to part us, instead of those four miles: I could not overpass them! I questioned with myself—where must I turn for comfort? and—mind you don’t tell Edgar, or Catherine—above every sorrow beside, this rose pre-eminent: despair at finding nobody who could or would be my ally against Heathcliff! I had sought shelter at Wuthering Heights, almost gladly, because I was secured by that arrangement from living alone with him; but he knew the people we were coming amongst, and he did not fear their intermeddling.

I sat and thought a doleful time: the clock struck eight, and nine, and still my companion paced to and fro, his head bent on his breast, and perfectly

silent, unless a groan or a bitter ejaculation forced itself out at intervals. I listened to detect a woman's voice in the house, and filled the interim with wild regrets and dismal anticipations, which, at last, spoke audibly in irrepressible sighing and weeping. I was not aware how openly I grieved, till Earnshaw halted opposite, in his measured walk, and gave me a stare of newly-awakened surprise. Taking advantage of his recovered attention, I exclaimed—"I'm tired with my journey, and I want to go to bed! Where is the maid-servant? Direct me to her, as she won't come to me!"

"We have none," he answered; "you must wait on yourself!"

"Where must I sleep, then?" I sobbed; I was beyond regarding self-respect, weighed down by fatigue and wretchedness.

"Joseph will show you Heathcliff's chamber," said he; "open that door—he's in there."

I was going to obey, but he suddenly arrested me, and added in the strangest tone—"Be so good as to turn your lock, and draw your bolt—don't omit it!"

"Well!" I said. "But why, Mr. Earnshaw?" I did not relish the notion of deliberately fastening myself in with Heathcliff.

"Look here!" he replied, pulling from his waistcoat a curiously-constructed pistol, having a double-edged spring knife attached to the barrel. "That's a great tempter to a desperate man, is it not? I cannot resist going up with this every night, and trying his door. If once I find it open he's done for; I do it invariably, even though the minute before I have been recalling a hundred reasons that should make me refrain: it is some devil that urges me to thwart my own schemes by killing him. You fight against that devil for love as long as you may; when the time comes, not all the angels in heaven shall save him!"

I surveyed the weapon inquisitively. A hideous notion struck me: how powerful I should be possessing such an instrument! I took it from his hand, and touched the blade. He looked astonished at the expression my face assumed during a brief second: it was not horror, it was covetousness. He snatched the pistol back, jealously; shut the knife, and returned it to its concealment.

"I don't care if you tell him," said he. "Put him on his guard, and watch for him. You know the terms we are on, I see: his danger does not shock

you.”

“What has Heathcliff done to you?” I asked. “In what has he wronged you, to warrant this appalling hatred? Wouldn’t it be wiser to bid him quit the house?”

“No!” thundered Earnshaw; “should he offer to leave me, he’s a dead man: persuade him to attempt it, and you are a murderess! Am I to lose *all*, without a chance of retrieval? Is Hareton to be a beggar? Oh, damnation! I *will* have it back; and I’ll have *his* gold too; and then his blood; and hell shall have his soul! It will be ten times blacker with that guest than ever it was before!”

You’ve acquainted me, Ellen, with your old master’s habits. He is clearly on the verge of madness: he was so last night at least. I shuddered to be near him, and thought on the servant’s ill-bred moroseness as comparatively agreeable. He now recommenced his moody walk, and I raised the latch, and escaped into the kitchen. Joseph was bending over the fire, peering into a large pan that swung above it; and a wooden bowl of oatmeal stood on the settle close by. The contents of the pan began to boil, and he turned to plunge his hand into the bowl; I conjectured that this preparation was probably for our supper, and, being hungry, I resolved it should be eatable; so, crying out sharply, “*I’ll* make the porridge!” I removed the vessel out of his reach, and proceeded to take off my hat and riding-habit. “Mr. Earnshaw,” I continued, “directs me to wait on myself: I will. I’m not going to act the lady among you, for fear I should starve.”

“Gooid Lord!” he muttered, sitting down, and stroking his ribbed stockings from the knee to the ankle. “If there’s to be fresh ortherings—just when I getten used to two maisters, if I mun hev’ a *mistress* set o’er my heead, it’s like time to be flitting. I niver *did* think to see t’ day that I mud lave th’ owld place—but I doubt it’s nigh at hand!”

This lamentation drew no notice from me: I went briskly to work, sighing to remember a period when it would have been all merry fun; but compelled speedily to drive off the remembrance. It racked me to recall past happiness and the greater peril there was of conjuring up its apparition, the quicker the thible ran round, and the faster the handfuls of meal fell into the water. Joseph beheld my style of cookery with growing indignation.

“Thear!” he ejaculated. “Hareton, thou willn’t sup thy porridge to-neeght; they’ll be naught but lumps as big as my neive. Thear, agean! I’d fling in

bowl un' all, if I wer ye! There, pale t' guilp off, un' then ye'll hae done wi't. Bang, bang. It's a mercy t' bothom isn't deaved out!"

It *was* rather a rough mess, I own, when poured into the basins; four had been provided, and a gallon pitcher of new milk was brought from the dairy, which Hareton seized and commenced drinking and spilling from the expansive lip. I expostulated, and desired that he should have his in a mug; affirming that I could not taste the liquid treated so dirtily. The old cynic chose to be vastly offended at this nicety; assuring me, repeatedly, that "the barn was every bit as good" as I, "and every bit as wollsome," and wondering how I could fashion to be so conceited. Meanwhile, the infant ruffian continued sucking; and glowered up at me defyingly, as he slavered into the jug.

"I shall have my supper in another room," I said. "Have you no place you call a parlour?"

"*Parlour!*" he echoed, sneeringly, "*parlour!* Nay, we've noa *parlours*. If yah dunnut loike wer company, there's maister's; un' if yah dunnut loike maister, there's us."

"Then I shall go upstairs," I answered; "show me a chamber."

I put my basin on a tray, and went myself to fetch some more milk. With great grumblings, the fellow rose, and preceded me in my ascent: we mounted to the garrets; he opened a door, now and then, to look into the apartments we passed.

"Here's a rahm," he said, at last, flinging back a cranky board on hinges. "It's weel enough to ate a few porridge in. There's a pack o' corn i' t' corner, thear, meeterly clane; if ye're feared o' muckying yer grand silk cloes, spread yer hankerchir o' t' top on't."

The "rahm" was a kind of lumber-hole smelling strong of malt and grain; various sacks of which articles were piled around, leaving a wide, bare space in the middle.

"Why, man," I exclaimed, facing him angrily, "this is not a place to sleep in. I wish to see my bed-room."

"*Bed-rume!*" he repeated, in a tone of mockery. "Yah's see all t' *bed-rumes* thear is—yon's mine."

He pointed into the second garret, only differing from the first in being more naked about the walls, and having a large, low, curtainless bed, with

an indigo-coloured quilt, at one end.

“What do I want with yours?” I retorted. “I suppose Mr. Heathcliff does not lodge at the top of the house, does he?”

“Oh! it’s Maister *Hathecliff’s* ye’re wanting?” cried he, as if making a new discovery. “Couldn’t ye ha’ said soa, at onst? un’ then, I mud ha’ telled ye, baht all this wark, that that’s just one ye cannut see—he allas keeps it locked, un’ nob’dy iver mells on’t but hisseln.”

“You’ve a nice house, Joseph,” I could not refrain from observing, “and pleasant inmates; and I think the concentrated essence of all the madness in the world took up its abode in my brain the day I linked my fate with theirs! However, that is not to the present purpose—there are other rooms. For heaven’s sake be quick, and let me settle somewhere!”

He made no reply to this adjuration; only plodding doggedly down the wooden steps, and halting, before an apartment which, from that halt and the superior quality of its furniture, I conjectured to be the best one. There was a carpet—a good one, but the pattern was obliterated by dust; a fireplace hung with cut-paper, dropping to pieces; a handsome oak-bedstead with ample crimson curtains of rather expensive material and modern make; but they had evidently experienced rough usage: the vallances hung in festoons, wrenched from their rings, and the iron rod supporting them was bent in an arc on one side, causing the drapery to trail upon the floor. The chairs were also damaged, many of them severely; and deep indentations deformed the panels of the walls. I was endeavouring to gather resolution for entering and taking possession, when my fool of a guide announced, —“This here is t’ maister’s.” My supper by this time was cold, my appetite gone, and my patience exhausted. I insisted on being provided instantly with a place of refuge, and means of repose.

“Whear the divil?” began the religious elder. “The Lord bless us! The Lord forgie us! Whear the *hell* wold ye gang? ye marred, wearisome nowt! Ye’ve seen all but Hareton’s bit of a cham’er. There’s not another hoile to lig down in i’ th’ hahse!”

I was so vexed, I flung my tray and its contents on the ground; and then seated myself at the stairs’-head, hid my face in my hands, and cried.

“Ech! ech!” exclaimed Joseph. “Weel done, Miss Cathy! weel done, Miss Cathy! Howsiver, t’ maister sall just tum’le o’er them brooken pots; un’ then we’s hear summut; we’s hear how it’s to be. Gooid-for-naught

madling! ye desearve pining fro' this to Chrustmas, flinging t' precious gifts o'God under foot i' yer flaysome rages! But I'm mista'en if ye shew yer sperrit lang. Will Hathecliff bide sich bonny ways, think ye? I nobbut wish he may catch ye i' that plisky. I nobbut wish he may."

And so he went on scolding to his den beneath, taking the candle with him; and I remained in the dark. The period of reflection succeeding this silly action compelled me to admit the necessity of smothering my pride and choking my wrath, and bestirring myself to remove its effects. An unexpected aid presently appeared in the shape of Throttler, whom I now recognised as a son of our old Skulker: it had spent its whelphood at the Grange, and was given by my father to Mr. Hindley. I fancy it knew me: it pushed its nose against mine by way of salute, and then hastened to devour the porridge; while I groped from step to step, collecting the shattered earthenware, and drying the spatters of milk from the banister with my pocket-handkerchief. Our labours were scarcely over when I heard Earnshaw's tread in the passage; my assistant tucked in his tail, and pressed to the wall; I stole into the nearest doorway. The dog's endeavour to avoid him was unsuccessful; as I guessed by a scutter downstairs, and a prolonged, piteous yelping. I had better luck: he passed on, entered his chamber, and shut the door. Directly after Joseph came up with Hareton, to put him to bed. I had found shelter in Hareton's room, and the old man, on seeing me, said,—“They's rahm for boath ye un' yer pride, now, I sud think i' the hahse. It's empty; ye may hev' it all to yerseln, un' Him as allus maks a third, i' sich ill company!”

Gladly did I take advantage of this intimation; and the minute I flung myself into a chair, by the fire, I nodded, and slept. My slumber was deep and sweet, though over far too soon. Mr. Heathcliff awoke me; he had just come in, and demanded, in his loving manner, what I was doing there? I told him the cause of my staying up so late—that he had the key of our room in his pocket. The adjective *our* gave mortal offence. He swore it was not, nor ever should be, mine; and he'd—but I'll not repeat his language, nor describe his habitual conduct: he is ingenious and unresting in seeking to gain my abhorrence! I sometimes wonder at him with an intensity that deadens my fear: yet, I assure you, a tiger or a venomous serpent could not rouse terror in me equal to that which he wakens. He told me of Catherine's illness, and accused my brother of causing it promising that I should be Edgar's proxy in suffering, till he could get hold of him.

I do hate him—I am wretched—I have been a fool! Beware of uttering one breath of this to any one at the Grange. I shall expect you every day—don't disappoint me!—ISABELLA.

## CHAPTER XIV

As soon as I had perused this epistle I went to the master, and informed him that his sister had arrived at the Heights, and sent me a letter expressing her sorrow for Mrs. Linton's situation, and her ardent desire to see him; with a wish that he would transmit to her, as early as possible, some token of forgiveness by me.

"Forgiveness!" said Linton. "I have nothing to forgive her, Ellen. You may call at Wuthering Heights this afternoon, if you like, and say that I am not angry, but I'm sorry to have lost her; especially as I can never think she'll be happy. It is out of the question my going to see her, however: we are eternally divided; and should she really wish to oblige me, let her persuade the villain she has married to leave the country."

"And you won't write her a little note, sir?" I asked, imploringly.

"No," he answered. "It is needless. My communication with Heathcliff's family shall be as sparing as his with mine. It shall not exist!"

Mr. Edgar's coldness depressed me exceedingly; and all the way from the Grange I puzzled my brains how to put more heart into what he said, when I repeated it; and how to soften his refusal of even a few lines to console Isabella. I daresay she had been on the watch for me since morning: I saw her looking through the lattice as I came up the garden causeway, and I nodded to her; but she drew back, as if afraid of being observed. I entered without knocking. There never was such a dreary, dismal scene as the formerly cheerful house presented! I must confess, that if I had been in the young lady's place, I would, at least, have swept the hearth, and wiped the tables with a duster. But she already partook of the pervading spirit of neglect which encompassed her. Her pretty face was wan and listless; her hair uncurled: some locks hanging lankly down, and some carelessly twisted round her head. Probably she had not touched her dress since yester evening. Hindley was not there. Mr. Heathcliff sat at a table, turning over



some papers in his pocket-book; but he rose when I appeared, asked me how I did, quite friendly, and offered me a chair. He was the only thing there that seemed decent; and I thought he never looked better. So much had circumstances altered their positions, that he would certainly have struck a stranger as a born and bred gentleman; and his wife as a thorough little slattern! She came forward eagerly to greet me, and held out one hand to take the expected letter. I shook my head. She wouldn't understand the hint, but followed me to a sideboard, where I went to lay my bonnet, and importuned me in a whisper to give her directly what I had brought. Heathcliff guessed the meaning of her manoeuvres, and said—"If you have got anything for Isabella (as no doubt you have, Nelly), give it to her. You needn't make a secret of it: we have no secrets between us."

"Oh, I have nothing," I replied, thinking it best to speak the truth at once. "My master bid me tell his sister that she must not expect either a letter or a visit from him at present. He sends his love, ma'am, and his wishes for your happiness, and his pardon for the grief you have occasioned; but he thinks that after this time his household and the household here should drop intercommunication, as nothing could come of keeping it up."

Mrs. Heathcliff's lip quivered slightly, and she returned to her seat in the window. Her husband took his stand on the hearthstone, near me, and began to put questions concerning Catherine. I told him as much as I thought proper of her illness, and he extorted from me, by cross-examination, most of the facts connected with its origin. I blamed her, as she deserved, for bringing it all on herself; and ended by hoping that he would follow Mr. Linton's example and avoid future interference with his family, for good or evil.

"Mrs. Linton is now just recovering," I said; "she'll never be like she was, but her life is spared; and if you really have a regard for her, you'll shun crossing her way again: nay, you'll move out of this country entirely; and that you may not regret it, I'll inform you Catherine Linton is as different now from your old friend Catherine Earnshaw, as that young lady is different from me. Her appearance is changed greatly, her character much more so; and the person who is compelled, of necessity, to be her companion, will only sustain his affection hereafter by the remembrance of what she once was, by common humanity, and a sense of duty!"

“That is quite possible,” remarked Heathcliff, forcing himself to seem calm: “quite possible that your master should have nothing but common humanity and a sense of duty to fall back upon. But do you imagine that I shall leave Catherine to his *duty* and *humanity*? and can you compare my feelings respecting Catherine to his? Before you leave this house, I must exact a promise from you that you’ll get me an interview with her: consent, or refuse, I *will* see her! What do you say?”

“I say, Mr. Heathcliff,” I replied, “you must not: you never shall, through my means. Another encounter between you and the master would kill her altogether.”

“With your aid that may be avoided,” he continued; “and should there be danger of such an event—should he be the cause of adding a single trouble more to her existence—why, I think I shall be justified in going to extremes! I wish you had sincerity enough to tell me whether Catherine would suffer greatly from his loss: the fear that she would restrains me. And there you see the distinction between our feelings: had he been in my place, and I in his, though I hated him with a hatred that turned my life to gall, I never would have raised a hand against him. You may look incredulous, if you please! I never would have banished him from her society as long as she desired his. The moment her regard ceased, I would have torn his heart out, and drunk his blood! But, till then—if you don’t believe me, you don’t know me—till then, I would have died by inches before I touched a single hair of his head!”

“And yet,” I interrupted, “you have no scruples in completely ruining all hopes of her perfect restoration, by thrusting yourself into her remembrance now, when she has nearly forgotten you, and involving her in a new tumult of discord and distress.”

“You suppose she has nearly forgotten me?” he said. “Oh, Nelly! you know she has not! You know as well as I do, that for every thought she spends on Linton she spends a thousand on me! At a most miserable period of my life, I had a notion of the kind: it haunted me on my return to the neighbourhood last summer; but only her own assurance could make me admit the horrible idea again. And then, Linton would be nothing, nor Hindley, nor all the dreams that ever I dreamt. Two words would comprehend my future—*death* and *hell*: existence, after losing her, would be hell. Yet I was a fool to fancy for a moment that she valued Edgar

Linton's attachment more than mine. If he loved with all the powers of his puny being, he couldn't love as much in eighty years as I could in a day. And Catherine has a heart as deep as I have: the sea could be as readily contained in that horse-trough as her whole affection be monopolised by him. Tush! He is scarcely a degree dearer to her than her dog, or her horse. It is not in him to be loved like me: how can she love in him what he has not?"

"Catherine and Edgar are as fond of each other as any two people can be," cried Isabella, with sudden vivacity. "No one has a right to talk in that manner, and I won't hear my brother depreciated in silence!"

"Your brother is wondrous fond of you too, isn't he?" observed Heathcliff, scornfully. "He turns you adrift on the world with surprising alacrity."

"He is not aware of what I suffer," she replied. "I didn't tell him that."

"You have been telling him something, then: you have written, have you?"

"To say that I was married, I did write—you saw the note."

"And nothing since?"

"No."

"My young lady is looking sadly the worse for her change of condition," I remarked. "Somebody's love comes short in her case, obviously; whose, I may guess; but, perhaps, I shouldn't say."

"I should guess it was her own," said Heathcliff. "She degenerates into a mere slut! She is tired of trying to please me uncommonly early. You'd hardly credit it, but the very morrow of our wedding she was weeping to go home. However, she'll suit this house so much the better for not being over nice, and I'll take care she does not disgrace me by rambling abroad."

"Well, sir," returned I, "I hope you'll consider that Mrs. Heathcliff is accustomed to be looked after and waited on; and that she has been brought up like an only daughter, whom every one was ready to serve. You must let her have a maid to keep things tidy about her, and you must treat her kindly. Whatever be your notion of Mr. Edgar, you cannot doubt that she has a capacity for strong attachments, or she wouldn't have abandoned the elegancies, and comforts, and friends of her former home, to fix contentedly, in such a wilderness as this, with you."

“She abandoned them under a delusion,” he answered; “picturing in me a hero of romance, and expecting unlimited indulgences from my chivalrous devotion. I can hardly regard her in the light of a rational creature, so obstinately has she persisted in forming a fabulous notion of my character and acting on the false impressions she cherished. But, at last, I think she begins to know me: I don’t perceive the silly smiles and grimaces that provoked me at first; and the senseless incapability of discerning that I was in earnest when I gave her my opinion of her infatuation and herself. It was a marvellous effort of perspicacity to discover that I did not love her. I believed, at one time, no lessons could teach her that! And yet it is poorly learnt; for this morning she announced, as a piece of appalling intelligence, that I had actually succeeded in making her hate me! A positive labour of Hercules, I assure you! If it be achieved, I have cause to return thanks. Can I trust your assertion, Isabella? Are you sure you hate me? If I let you alone for half a day, won’t you come sighing and wheedling to me again? I daresay she would rather I had seemed all tenderness before you: it wounds her vanity to have the truth exposed. But I don’t care who knows that the passion was wholly on one side: and I never told her a lie about it. She cannot accuse me of showing one bit of deceitful softness. The first thing she saw me do, on coming out of the Grange, was to hang up her little dog; and when she pleaded for it, the first words I uttered were a wish that I had the hanging of every being belonging to her, except one: possibly she took that exception for herself. But no brutality disgusted her: I suppose she has an innate admiration of it, if only her precious person were secure from injury! Now, was it not the depth of absurdity—of genuine idiocy, for that pitiful, slavish, mean-minded brach to dream that I could love her? Tell your master, Nelly, that I never, in all my life, met with such an abject thing as she is. She even disgraces the name of Linton; and I’ve sometimes relented, from pure lack of invention, in my experiments on what she could endure, and still creep shamefully cringing back! But tell him, also, to set his fraternal and magisterial heart at ease: that I keep strictly within the limits of the law. I have avoided, up to this period, giving her the slightest right to claim a separation; and, what’s more, she’d thank nobody for dividing us. If she desired to go, she might: the nuisance of her presence outweighs the gratification to be derived from tormenting her!”

“Mr. Heathcliff,” said I, “this is the talk of a madman; your wife, most likely, is convinced you are mad; and, for that reason, she has borne with

you hitherto: but now that you say she may go, she'll doubtless avail herself of the permission. You are not so bewitched, ma'am, are you, as to remain with him of your own accord?"

"Take care, Ellen!" answered Isabella, her eyes sparkling irefully; there was no misdoubting by their expression the full success of her partner's endeavours to make himself detested. "Don't put faith in a single word he speaks. He's a lying fiend! a monster, and not a human being! I've been told I might leave him before; and I've made the attempt, but I dare not repeat it! Only, Ellen, promise you'll not mention a syllable of his infamous conversation to my brother or Catherine. Whatever he may pretend, he wishes to provoke Edgar to desperation: he says he has married me on purpose to obtain power over him; and he sha'n't obtain it—I'll die first! I just hope, I pray, that he may forget his diabolical prudence and kill me! The single pleasure I can imagine is to die, or to see him dead!"

"There—that will do for the present!" said Heathcliff. "If you are called upon in a court of law, you'll remember her language, Nelly! And take a good look at that countenance: she's near the point which would suit me. No; you're not fit to be your own guardian, Isabella, now; and I, being your legal protector, must retain you in my custody, however distasteful the obligation may be. Go upstairs; I have something to say to Ellen Dean in private. That's not the way: upstairs, I tell you! Why, this is the road upstairs, child!"

He seized, and thrust her from the room; and returned muttering—"I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething; and I grind with greater energy in proportion to the increase of pain."

"Do you understand what the word pity means?" I said, hastening to resume my bonnet. "Did you ever feel a touch of it in your life?"

"Put that down!" he interrupted, perceiving my intention to depart. "You are not going yet. Come here now, Nelly: I must either persuade or compel you to aid me in fulfilling my determination to see Catherine, and that without delay. I swear that I meditate no harm: I don't desire to cause any disturbance, or to exasperate or insult Mr. Linton; I only wish to hear from herself how she is, and why she has been ill; and to ask if anything that I could do would be of use to her. Last night I was in the Grange garden six hours, and I'll return there to-night; and every night I'll haunt the place, and

every day, till I find an opportunity of entering. If Edgar Linton meets me, I shall not hesitate to knock him down, and give him enough to insure his quiescence while I stay. If his servants oppose me, I shall threaten them off with these pistols. But wouldn't it be better to prevent my coming in contact with them, or their master? And you could do it so easily. I'd warn you when I came, and then you might let me in unobserved, as soon as she was alone, and watch till I departed, your conscience quite calm: you would be hindering mischief."

I protested against playing that treacherous part in my employer's house: and, besides, I urged the cruelty and selfishness of his destroying Mrs. Linton's tranquillity for his satisfaction. "The commonest occurrence startles her painfully," I said. "She's all nerves, and she couldn't bear the surprise, I'm positive. Don't persist, sir! or else I shall be obliged to inform my master of your designs; and he'll take measures to secure his house and its inmates from any such unwarrantable intrusions!"

"In that case I'll take measures to secure you, woman!" exclaimed Heathcliff; "you shall not leave Wuthering Heights till to-morrow morning. It is a foolish story to assert that Catherine could not bear to see me; and as to surprising her, I don't desire it: you must prepare her—ask her if I may come. You say she never mentions my name, and that I am never mentioned to her. To whom should she mention me if I am a forbidden topic in the house? She thinks you are all spies for her husband. Oh, I've no doubt she's in hell among you! I guess by her silence, as much as anything, what she feels. You say she is often restless, and anxious-looking: is that a proof of tranquillity? You talk of her mind being unsettled. How the devil could it be otherwise in her frightful isolation? And that insipid, paltry creature attending her from *duty* and *humanity*! From *pity* and *charity*! He might as well plant an oak in a flower-pot, and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to vigour in the soil of his shallow cares? Let us settle it at once: will you stay here, and am I to fight my way to Catherine over Linton and his footman? Or will you be my friend, as you have been hitherto, and do what I request? Decide! because there is no reason for my lingering another minute, if you persist in your stubborn ill-nature!"

Well, Mr. Lockwood, I argued and complained, and flatly refused him fifty times; but in the long run he forced me to an agreement. I engaged to carry a letter from him to my mistress; and should she consent, I promised

to let him have intelligence of Linton's next absence from home, when he might come, and get in as he was able: I wouldn't be there, and my fellow-servants should be equally out of the way. Was it right or wrong? I fear it was wrong, though expedient. I thought I prevented another explosion by my compliance; and I thought, too, it might create a favourable crisis in Catherine's mental illness: and then I remembered Mr. Edgar's stern rebuke of my carrying tales; and I tried to smooth away all disquietude on the subject, by affirming, with frequent iteration, that that betrayal of trust, if it merited so harsh an appellation, should be the last. Notwithstanding, my journey homeward was sadder than my journey thither; and many misgivings I had, ere I could prevail on myself to put the missive into Mrs. Linton's hand.

But here is Kenneth; I'll go down, and tell him how much better you are. My history is *dree*, as we say, and will serve to while away another morning.

Dree, and dreary! I reflected as the good woman descended to receive the doctor: and not exactly of the kind which I should have chosen to amuse me. But never mind! I'll extract wholesome medicines from Mrs. Dean's bitter herbs; and firstly, let me beware of the fascination that lurks in Catherine Heathcliff's brilliant eyes. I should be in a curious taking if I surrendered my heart to that young person, and the daughter turned out a second edition of the mother.

## CHAPTER XV

Another week over—and I am so many days nearer health, and spring! I have now heard all my neighbour's history, at different sittings, as the housekeeper could spare time from more important occupations. I'll continue it in her own words, only a little condensed. She is, on the whole, a very fair narrator, and I don't think I could improve her style.

In the evening, she said, the evening of my visit to the Heights, I knew, as well as if I saw him, that Mr. Heathcliff was about the place; and I shunned going out, because I still carried his letter in my pocket, and didn't want to be threatened or teased any more. I had made up my mind not to give it till my master went somewhere, as I could not guess how its receipt would affect Catherine. The consequence was, that it did not reach her before the lapse of three days. The fourth was Sunday, and I brought it into her room after the family were gone to church. There was a manservant left to keep the house with me, and we generally made a practice of locking the doors during the hours of service; but on that occasion the weather was so warm and pleasant that I set them wide open, and, to fulfil my engagement, as I knew who would be coming, I told my companion that the mistress wished very much for some oranges, and he must run over to the village and get a few, to be paid for on the morrow. He departed, and I went upstairs.

Mrs. Linton sat in a loose white dress, with a light shawl over her shoulders, in the recess of the open window, as usual. Her thick, long hair had been partly removed at the beginning of her illness, and now she wore it simply combed in its natural tresses over her temples and neck. Her appearance was altered, as I had told Heathcliff; but when she was calm, there seemed unearthly beauty in the change. The flash of her eyes had been succeeded by a dreamy and melancholy softness; they no longer gave the impression of looking at the objects around her: they appeared always to gaze beyond, and far beyond—you would have said out of this world. Then, the paleness of her face—its haggard aspect having vanished as she



recovered flesh—and the peculiar expression arising from her mental state, though painfully suggestive of their causes, added to the touching interest which she awakened; and—invariably to me, I know, and to any person who saw her, I should think—refuted more tangible proofs of convalescence, and stamped her as one doomed to decay.

A book lay spread on the sill before her, and the scarcely perceptible wind fluttered its leaves at intervals. I believe Linton had laid it there: for she never endeavoured to divert herself with reading, or occupation of any kind, and he would spend many an hour in trying to entice her attention to some subject which had formerly been her amusement. She was conscious of his aim, and in her better moods endured his efforts placidly, only showing their uselessness by now and then suppressing a wearied sigh, and checking him at last with the saddest of smiles and kisses. At other times, she would turn petulantly away, and hide her face in her hands, or even push him off angrily; and then he took care to let her alone, for he was certain of doing no good.

Gimmerton chapel bells were still ringing; and the full, mellow flow of the beck in the valley came soothingly on the ear. It was a sweet substitute for the yet absent murmur of the summer foliage, which drowned that music about the Grange when the trees were in leaf. At Wuthering Heights it always sounded on quiet days following a great thaw or a season of steady rain. And of Wuthering Heights Catherine was thinking as she listened: that is, if she thought or listened at all; but she had the vague, distant look I mentioned before, which expressed no recognition of material things either by ear or eye.

“There’s a letter for you, Mrs. Linton,” I said, gently inserting it in one hand that rested on her knee. “You must read it immediately, because it wants an answer. Shall I break the seal?” “Yes,” she answered, without altering the direction of her eyes. I opened it—it was very short. “Now,” I continued, “read it.” She drew away her hand, and let it fall. I replaced it in her lap, and stood waiting till it should please her to glance down; but that movement was so long delayed that at last I resumed—“Must I read it, ma’am? It is from Mr. Heathcliff.”

There was a start and a troubled gleam of recollection, and a struggle to arrange her ideas. She lifted the letter, and seemed to peruse it; and when she came to the signature she sighed: yet still I found she had not gathered

its import, for, upon my desiring to hear her reply, she merely pointed to the name, and gazed at me with mournful and questioning eagerness.

“Well, he wishes to see you,” said I, guessing her need of an interpreter. “He’s in the garden by this time, and impatient to know what answer I shall bring.”

As I spoke, I observed a large dog lying on the sunny grass beneath raise its ears as if about to bark, and then smoothing them back, announce, by a wag of the tail, that some one approached whom it did not consider a stranger. Mrs. Linton bent forward, and listened breathlessly. The minute after a step traversed the hall; the open house was too tempting for Heathcliff to resist walking in: most likely he supposed that I was inclined to shirk my promise, and so resolved to trust to his own audacity. With straining eagerness Catherine gazed towards the entrance of her chamber. He did not hit the right room directly: she motioned me to admit him, but he found it out ere I could reach the door, and in a stride or two was at her side, and had her grasped in his arms.

He neither spoke nor loosed his hold for some five minutes, during which period he bestowed more kisses than ever he gave in his life before, I daresay: but then my mistress had kissed him first, and I plainly saw that he could hardly bear, for downright agony, to look into her face! The same conviction had stricken him as me, from the instant he beheld her, that there was no prospect of ultimate recovery there—she was fated, sure to die.

“Oh, Cathy! Oh, my life! how can I bear it?” was the first sentence he uttered, in a tone that did not seek to disguise his despair. And now he stared at her so earnestly that I thought the very intensity of his gaze would bring tears into his eyes; but they burned with anguish: they did not melt.

“What now?” said Catherine, leaning back, and returning his look with a suddenly clouded brow: her humour was a mere vane for constantly varying caprices. “You and Edgar have broken my heart, Heathcliff! And you both come to bewail the deed to me, as if you were the people to be pitied! I shall not pity you, not I. You have killed me—and thriven on it, I think. How strong you are! How many years do you mean to live after I am gone?”

Heathcliff had knelt on one knee to embrace her; he attempted to rise, but she seized his hair, and kept him down.

“I wish I could hold you,” she continued, bitterly, “till we were both dead! I shouldn’t care what you suffered. I care nothing for your sufferings. Why shouldn’t you suffer? I do! Will you forget me? Will you be happy when I am in the earth? Will you say twenty years hence, ‘That’s the grave of Catherine Earnshaw? I loved her long ago, and was wretched to lose her; but it is past. I’ve loved many others since: my children are dearer to me than she was; and, at death, I shall not rejoice that I am going to her: I shall be sorry that I must leave them!’ Will you say so, Heathcliff?”

“Don’t torture me till I’m as mad as yourself,” cried he, wrenching his head free, and grinding his teeth.

The two, to a cool spectator, made a strange and fearful picture. Well might Catherine deem that heaven would be a land of exile to her, unless with her mortal body she cast away her moral character also. Her present countenance had a wild vindictiveness in its white cheek, and a bloodless lip and scintillating eye; and she retained in her closed fingers a portion of the locks she had been grasping. As to her companion, while raising himself with one hand, he had taken her arm with the other; and so inadequate was his stock of gentleness to the requirements of her condition, that on his letting go I saw four distinct impressions left blue in the colourless skin.

“Are you possessed with a devil,” he pursued, savagely, “to talk in that manner to me when you are dying? Do you reflect that all those words will be branded in my memory, and eating deeper eternally after you have left me? You know you lie to say I have killed you: and, Catherine, you know that I could as soon forget you as my existence! Is it not sufficient for your infernal selfishness, that while you are at peace I shall writhe in the torments of hell?”

“I shall not be at peace,” moaned Catherine, recalled to a sense of physical weakness by the violent, unequal throbbing of her heart, which beat visibly and audibly under this excess of agitation. She said nothing further till the paroxysm was over; then she continued, more kindly—

“I’m not wishing you greater torment than I have, Heathcliff. I only wish us never to be parted: and should a word of mine distress you hereafter, think I feel the same distress underground, and for my own sake, forgive me! Come here and kneel down again! You never harmed me in your life. Nay, if you nurse anger, that will be worse to remember than my harsh words! Won’t you come here again? Do!”

Heathcliff went to the back of her chair, and leant over, but not so far as to let her see his face, which was livid with emotion. She bent round to look at him; he would not permit it: turning abruptly, he walked to the fireplace, where he stood, silent, with his back towards us. Mrs. Linton's glance followed him suspiciously: every movement woke a new sentiment in her. After a pause and a prolonged gaze, she resumed; addressing me in accents of indignant disappointment:—

“Oh, you see, Nelly, he would not relent a moment to keep me out of the grave. *That* is how I'm loved! Well, never mind. That is not *my* Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me: he's in my soul. And,” added she musingly, “the thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all. I'm tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there: not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart: but really with it, and in it. Nelly, you think you are better and more fortunate than I; in full health and strength: you are sorry for me—very soon that will be altered. I shall be sorry for *you*. I shall be incomparably beyond and above you all. I *wonder* he won't be near me!” She went on to herself. “I thought he wished it. Heathcliff, dear! you should not be sullen now. Do come to me, Heathcliff.”

In her eagerness she rose and supported herself on the arm of the chair. At that earnest appeal he turned to her, looking absolutely desperate. His eyes, wide and wet, at last flashed fiercely on her; his breast heaved convulsively. An instant they held asunder, and then how they met I hardly saw, but Catherine made a spring, and he caught her, and they were locked in an embrace from which I thought my mistress would never be released alive: in fact, to my eyes, she seemed directly insensible. He flung himself into the nearest seat, and on my approaching hurriedly to ascertain if she had fainted, he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with greedy jealousy. I did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species: it appeared that he would not understand, though I spoke to him; so I stood off, and held my tongue, in great perplexity.

A movement of Catherine's relieved me a little presently: she put up her hand to clasp his neck, and bring her cheek to his as he held her; while he, in return, covering her with frantic caresses, said wildly—

“You teach me now how cruel you’ve been—cruel and false. *Why* did you despise me? *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one word of comfort. You deserve this. You have killed yourself. Yes, you may kiss me, and cry; and wring out my kisses and tears: they’ll blight you—they’ll damn you. You loved me—then what *right* had you to leave me? What right—answer me—for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, *you*, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart—you have broken it; and in breaking it, you have broken mine. So much the worse for me that I am strong. Do I want to live? What kind of living will it be when you—oh, God! would *you* like to live with your soul in the grave?”

“Let me alone. Let me alone,” sobbed Catherine. “If I’ve done wrong, I’m dying for it. It is enough! You left me too: but I won’t upbraid you! I forgive you. Forgive me!”

“It is hard to forgive, and to look at those eyes, and feel those wasted hands,” he answered. “Kiss me again; and don’t let me see your eyes! I forgive what you have done to me. I love *my* murderer—but *yours*! How can I?”

They were silent—their faces hid against each other, and washed by each other’s tears. At least, I suppose the weeping was on both sides; as it seemed Heathcliff could weep on a great occasion like this.

I grew very uncomfortable, meanwhile; for the afternoon wore fast away, the man whom I had sent off returned from his errand, and I could distinguish, by the shine of the western sun up the valley, a concourse thickening outside Gimmerton chapel porch.

“Service is over,” I announced. “My master will be here in half an hour.”

Heathcliff groaned a curse, and strained Catherine closer: she never moved.

Ere long I perceived a group of the servants passing up the road towards the kitchen wing. Mr. Linton was not far behind; he opened the gate himself and sauntered slowly up, probably enjoying the lovely afternoon that breathed as soft as summer.

“Now he is here,” I exclaimed. “For heaven’s sake, hurry down! You’ll not meet any one on the front stairs. Do be quick; and stay among the trees

till he is fairly in.”

“I must go, Cathy,” said Heathcliff, seeking to extricate himself from his companion’s arms. “But if I live, I’ll see you again before you are asleep. I won’t stray five yards from your window.”

“You must not go!” she answered, holding him as firmly as her strength allowed. “You *shall* not, I tell you.”

“For one hour,” he pleaded earnestly.

“Not for one minute,” she replied.

“I *must*—Linton will be up immediately,” persisted the alarmed intruder.

He would have risen, and unfixed her fingers by the act—she clung fast, gasping: there was mad resolution in her face.

“No!” she shrieked. “Oh, don’t, don’t go. It is the last time! Edgar will not hurt us. Heathcliff, I shall die! I shall die!”

“Damn the fool! There he is,” cried Heathcliff, sinking back into his seat. “Hush, my darling! Hush, hush, Catherine! I’ll stay. If he shot me so, I’d expire with a blessing on my lips.”

And there they were fast again. I heard my master mounting the stairs—the cold sweat ran from my forehead: I was horrified.

“Are you going to listen to her ravings?” I said, passionately. “She does not know what she says. Will you ruin her, because she has not wit to help herself? Get up! You could be free instantly. That is the most diabolical deed that ever you did. We are all done for—master, mistress, and servant.”

I wrung my hands, and cried out; and Mr. Linton hastened his step at the noise. In the midst of my agitation, I was sincerely glad to observe that Catherine’s arms had fallen relaxed, and her head hung down.

“She’s fainted, or dead,” I thought: “so much the better. Far better that she should be dead, than lingering a burden and a misery-maker to all about her.”

Edgar sprang to his unbidden guest, blanched with astonishment and rage. What he meant to do I cannot tell; however, the other stopped all demonstrations, at once, by placing the lifeless-looking form in his arms.

“Look there!” he said. “Unless you be a fiend, help her first—then you shall speak to me!”

He walked into the parlour, and sat down. Mr. Linton summoned me, and with great difficulty, and after resorting to many means, we managed to restore her to sensation; but she was all bewildered; she sighed, and moaned, and knew nobody. Edgar, in his anxiety for her, forgot her hated friend. I did not. I went, at the earliest opportunity, and besought him to depart; affirming that Catherine was better, and he should hear from me in the morning how she passed the night.

“I shall not refuse to go out of doors,” he answered; “but I shall stay in the garden: and, Nelly, mind you keep your word to-morrow. I shall be under those larch-trees. Mind! or I pay another visit, whether Linton be in or not.”

He sent a rapid glance through the half-open door of the chamber, and, ascertaining that what I stated was apparently true, delivered the house of his luckless presence.

## CHAPTER XVI

About twelve o'clock that night was born the Catherine you saw at Wuthering Heights: a puny, seven-months' child; and two hours after the mother died, having never recovered sufficient consciousness to miss Heathcliff, or know Edgar. The latter's distraction at his bereavement is a subject too painful to be dwelt on; its after-effects showed how deep the sorrow sunk. A great addition, in my eyes, was his being left without an heir. I bemoaned that, as I gazed on the feeble orphan; and I mentally abused old Linton for (what was only natural partiality) the securing his estate to his own daughter, instead of his son's. An unwelcomed infant it was, poor thing! It might have wailed out of life, and nobody cared a morsel, during those first hours of existence. We redeemed the neglect afterwards; but its beginning was as friendless as its end is likely to be.

Next morning—bright and cheerful out of doors—stole softened in through the blinds of the silent room, and suffused the couch and its occupant with a mellow, tender glow. Edgar Linton had his head laid on the pillow, and his eyes shut. His young and fair features were almost as deathlike as those of the form beside him, and almost as fixed: but *his* was the hush of exhausted anguish, and *hers* of perfect peace. Her brow smooth, her lids closed, her lips wearing the expression of a smile; no angel in heaven could be more beautiful than she appeared. And I partook of the infinite calm in which she lay: my mind was never in a holier frame than while I gazed on that untroubled image of Divine rest. I instinctively echoed the words she had uttered a few hours before: "Incomparably beyond and above us all! Whether still on earth or now in heaven, her spirit is at home with God!"

I don't know if it be a peculiarity in me, but I am seldom otherwise than happy while watching in the chamber of death, should no frenzied or despairing mourner share the duty with me. I see a repose that neither earth nor hell can break, and I feel an assurance of the endless and shadowless



hereafter—the Eternity they have entered—where life is boundless in its duration, and love in its sympathy, and joy in its fulness. I noticed on that occasion how much selfishness there is even in a love like Mr. Linton's, when he so regretted Catherine's blessed release! To be sure, one might have doubted, after the wayward and impatient existence she had led, whether she merited a haven of peace at last. One might doubt in seasons of cold reflection; but not then, in the presence of her corpse. It asserted its own tranquillity, which seemed a pledge of equal quiet to its former inhabitant.

Do you believe such people are happy in the other world, sir? I'd give a great deal to know.

I declined answering Mrs. Dean's question, which struck me as something heterodox. She proceeded:

Retracing the course of Catherine Linton, I fear we have no right to think she is; but we'll leave her with her Maker.

The master looked asleep, and I ventured soon after sunrise to quit the room and steal out to the pure refreshing air. The servants thought me gone to shake off the drowsiness of my protracted watch; in reality, my chief motive was seeing Mr. Heathcliff. If he had remained among the larches all night, he would have heard nothing of the stir at the Grange; unless, perhaps, he might catch the gallop of the messenger going to Gimmerton. If he had come nearer, he would probably be aware, from the lights flitting to and fro, and the opening and shutting of the outer doors, that all was not right within. I wished, yet feared, to find him. I felt the terrible news must be told, and I longed to get it over; but how to do it I did not know. He was there—at least, a few yards further in the park; leant against an old ash-tree, his hat off, and his hair soaked with the dew that had gathered on the budded branches, and fell pattering round him. He had been standing a long time in that position, for I saw a pair of ousels passing and repassing scarcely three feet from him, busy in building their nest, and regarding his proximity no more than that of a piece of timber. They flew off at my approach, and he raised his eyes and spoke:—"She's dead!" he said; "I've not waited for you to learn that. Put your handkerchief away—don't snivel before me. Damn you all! she wants none of your tears!"

I was weeping as much for him as her: we do sometimes pity creatures that have none of the feeling either for themselves or others. When I first

looked into his face, I perceived that he had got intelligence of the catastrophe; and a foolish notion struck me that his heart was quelled and he prayed, because his lips moved and his gaze was bent on the ground.

“Yes, she’s dead!” I answered, checking my sobs and drying my cheeks. “Gone to heaven, I hope; where we may, every one, join her, if we take due warning and leave our evil ways to follow good!”

“Did *she* take due warning, then?” asked Heathcliff, attempting a sneer. “Did she die like a saint? Come, give me a true history of the event. How did—?”

He endeavoured to pronounce the name, but could not manage it; and compressing his mouth he held a silent combat with his inward agony, defying, meanwhile, my sympathy with an unflinching, ferocious stare. “How did she die?” he resumed, at last—fain, notwithstanding his hardihood, to have a support behind him; for, after the struggle, he trembled, in spite of himself, to his very finger-ends.

“Poor wretch!” I thought; “you have a heart and nerves the same as your brother men! Why should you be anxious to conceal them? Your pride cannot blind God! You tempt him to wring them, till he forces a cry of humiliation.”

“Quietly as a lamb!” I answered, aloud. “She drew a sigh, and stretched herself, like a child reviving, and sinking again to sleep; and five minutes after I felt one little pulse at her heart, and nothing more!”

“And—did she ever mention me?” he asked, hesitating, as if he dreaded the answer to his question would introduce details that he could not bear to hear.

“Her senses never returned: she recognised nobody from the time you left her,” I said. “She lies with a sweet smile on her face; and her latest ideas wandered back to pleasant early days. Her life closed in a gentle dream—may she wake as kindly in the other world!”

“May she wake in torment!” he cried, with frightful vehemence, stamping his foot, and groaning in a sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion. “Why, she’s a liar to the end! Where is she? Not *there*—not in heaven—not perished—where? Oh! you said you cared nothing for my sufferings! And I pray one prayer—I repeat it till my tongue stiffens—Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living; you said I

killed you—haunt me, then! The murdered *do* haunt their murderers, I believe. I know that ghosts *have* wandered on earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! only *do* not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!”

He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast being goaded to death with knives and spears. I observed several splashes of blood about the bark of the tree, and his hand and forehead were both stained; probably the scene I witnessed was a repetition of others acted during the night. It hardly moved my compassion—it appalled me: still, I felt reluctant to quit him so. But the moment he recollected himself enough to notice me watching, he thundered a command for me to go, and I obeyed. He was beyond my skill to quiet or console!

Mrs. Linton’s funeral was appointed to take place on the Friday following her decease; and till then her coffin remained uncovered, and strewn with flowers and scented leaves, in the great drawing-room. Linton spent his days and nights there, a sleepless guardian; and—a circumstance concealed from all but me—Heathcliff spent his nights, at least, outside, equally a stranger to repose. I held no communication with him: still, I was conscious of his design to enter, if he could; and on the Tuesday, a little after dark, when my master, from sheer fatigue, had been compelled to retire a couple of hours, I went and opened one of the windows; moved by his perseverance to give him a chance of bestowing on the faded image of his idol one final adieu. He did not omit to avail himself of the opportunity, cautiously and briefly; too cautiously to betray his presence by the slightest noise. Indeed, I shouldn’t have discovered that he had been there, except for the disarrangement of the drapery about the corpse’s face, and for observing on the floor a curl of light hair, fastened with a silver thread; which, on examination, I ascertained to have been taken from a locket hung round Catherine’s neck. Heathcliff had opened the trinket and cast out its contents, replacing them by a black lock of his own. I twisted the two, and enclosed them together.

Mr. Earnshaw was, of course, invited to attend the remains of his sister to the grave; he sent no excuse, but he never came; so that, besides her

husband, the mourners were wholly composed of tenants and servants. Isabella was not asked.

The place of Catherine's interment, to the surprise of the villagers, was neither in the chapel under the carved monument of the Lintons, nor yet by the tombs of her own relations, outside. It was dug on a green slope in a corner of the kirk-yard, where the wall is so low that heath and bilberry-plants have climbed over it from the moor; and peat-mould almost buries it. Her husband lies in the same spot now; and they have each a simple headstone above, and a plain grey block at their feet, to mark the graves.

## CHAPTER XVII

That Friday made the last of our fine days for a month. In the evening the weather broke: the wind shifted from south to north-east, and brought rain first, and then sleet and snow. On the morrow one could hardly imagine that there had been three weeks of summer: the primroses and crocuses were hidden under wintry drifts; the larks were silent, the young leaves of the early trees smitten and blackened. And dreary, and chill, and dismal, that morrow did creep over! My master kept his room; I took possession of the lonely parlour, converting it into a nursery: and there I was, sitting with the moaning doll of a child laid on my knee; rocking it to and fro, and watching, meanwhile, the still driving flakes build up the uncurtained window, when the door opened, and some person entered, out of breath and laughing! My anger was greater than my astonishment for a minute. I supposed it one of the maids, and I cried—"Have done! How dare you show your giddiness here; What would Mr. Linton say if he heard you?"

"Excuse me!" answered a familiar voice; "but I know Edgar is in bed, and I cannot stop myself."

With that the speaker came forward to the fire, panting and holding her hand to her side.

"I have run the whole way from Wuthering Heights!" she continued, after a pause; "except where I've flown. I couldn't count the number of falls I've had. Oh, I'm aching all over! Don't be alarmed! There shall be an explanation as soon as I can give it; only just have the goodness to step out and order the carriage to take me on to Gimmerton, and tell a servant to seek up a few clothes in my wardrobe."

The intruder was Mrs. Heathcliff. She certainly seemed in no laughing predicament: her hair streamed on her shoulders, dripping with snow and water; she was dressed in the girlish dress she commonly wore, befitting her age more than her position: a low frock with short sleeves, and nothing on

either head or neck. The frock was of light silk, and clung to her with wet, and her feet were protected merely by thin slippers; add to this a deep cut under one ear, which only the cold prevented from bleeding profusely, a white face scratched and bruised, and a frame hardly able to support itself through fatigue; and you may fancy my first fright was not much allayed when I had had leisure to examine her.

“My dear young lady,” I exclaimed, “I’ll stir nowhere, and hear nothing, till you have removed every article of your clothes, and put on dry things; and certainly you shall not go to Gimmerton to-night, so it is needless to order the carriage.”

“Certainly I shall,” she said; “walking or riding: yet I’ve no objection to dress myself decently. And—ah, see how it flows down my neck now! The fire does make it smart.”

She insisted on my fulfilling her directions, before she would let me touch her; and not till after the coachman had been instructed to get ready, and a maid set to pack up some necessary attire, did I obtain her consent for binding the wound and helping to change her garments.

“Now, Ellen,” she said, when my task was finished and she was seated in an easy-chair on the hearth, with a cup of tea before her, “you sit down opposite me, and put poor Catherine’s baby away: I don’t like to see it! You mustn’t think I care little for Catherine, because I behaved so foolishly on entering: I’ve cried, too, bitterly—yes, more than any one else has reason to cry. We parted unreconciled, you remember, and I sha’n’t forgive myself. But, for all that, I was not going to sympathise with him—the brute beast! Oh, give me the poker! This is the last thing of his I have about me:” she slipped the gold ring from her third finger, and threw it on the floor. “I’ll smash it!” she continued, striking it with childish spite, “and then I’ll burn it!” and she took and dropped the misused article among the coals. “There! he shall buy another, if he gets me back again. He’d be capable of coming to seek me, to tease Edgar. I dare not stay, lest that notion should possess his wicked head! And besides, Edgar has not been kind, has he? And I won’t come suing for his assistance; nor will I bring him into more trouble. Necessity compelled me to seek shelter here; though, if I had not learned he was out of the way, I’d have halted at the kitchen, washed my face, warmed myself, got you to bring what I wanted, and departed again to anywhere out of the reach of my accursed—of that incarnate goblin! Ah, he was in such a

fury! If he had caught me! It's a pity Earnshaw is not his match in strength: I wouldn't have run till I'd seen him all but demolished, had Hindley been able to do it!"

"Well, don't talk so fast, Miss!" I interrupted; "you'll disorder the handkerchief I have tied round your face, and make the cut bleed again. Drink your tea, and take breath, and give over laughing: laughter is sadly out of place under this roof, and in your condition!"

"An undeniable truth," she replied. "Listen to that child! It maintains a constant wail—send it out of my hearing for an hour; I sha'n't stay any longer."

I rang the bell, and committed it to a servant's care; and then I inquired what had urged her to escape from Wuthering Heights in such an unlikely plight, and where she meant to go, as she refused remaining with us.

"I ought, and I wished to remain," answered she, "to cheer Edgar and take care of the baby, for two things, and because the Grange is my right home. But I tell you he wouldn't let me! Do you think he could bear to see me grow fat and merry—could bear to think that we were tranquil, and not resolve on poisoning our comfort? Now, I have the satisfaction of being sure that he detests me, to the point of its annoying him seriously to have me within ear-shot or eyesight: I notice, when I enter his presence, the muscles of his countenance are involuntarily distorted into an expression of hatred; partly arising from his knowledge of the good causes I have to feel that sentiment for him, and partly from original aversion. It is strong enough to make me feel pretty certain that he would not chase me over England, supposing I contrived a clear escape; and therefore I must get quite away. I've recovered from my first desire to be killed by him: I'd rather he'd kill himself! He has extinguished my love effectually, and so I'm at my ease. I can recollect yet how I loved him; and can dimly imagine that I could still be loving him, if—no, no! Even if he had doted on me, the devilish nature would have revealed its existence somehow. Catherine had an awfully perverted taste to esteem him so dearly, knowing him so well. Monster! would that he could be blotted out of creation, and out of my memory!"

"Hush, hush! He's a human being," I said. "Be more charitable: there are worse men than he is yet!"

“He’s not a human being,” she retorted; “and he has no claim on my charity. I gave him my heart, and he took and pinched it to death, and flung it back to me. People feel with their hearts, Ellen: and since he has destroyed mine, I have not power to feel for him: and I would not, though he groaned from this to his dying day, and wept tears of blood for Catherine! No, indeed, indeed, I wouldn’t!” And here Isabella began to cry; but, immediately dashing the water from her lashes, she recommenced. “You asked, what has driven me to flight at last? I was compelled to attempt it, because I had succeeded in rousing his rage a pitch above his malignity. Pulling out the nerves with red hot pincers requires more coolness than knocking on the head. He was worked up to forget the fiendish prudence he boasted of, and proceeded to murderous violence. I experienced pleasure in being able to exasperate him: the sense of pleasure woke my instinct of self-preservation, so I fairly broke free; and if ever I come into his hands again he is welcome to a signal revenge.

“Yesterday, you know, Mr. Earnshaw should have been at the funeral. He kept himself sober for the purpose—tolerably sober: not going to bed mad at six o’clock and getting up drunk at twelve. Consequently, he rose, in suicidal low spirits, as fit for the church as for a dance; and instead, he sat down by the fire and swallowed gin or brandy by tumblerfuls.

“Heathcliff—I shudder to name him! has been a stranger in the house from last Sunday till to-day. Whether the angels have fed him, or his kin beneath, I cannot tell; but he has not eaten a meal with us for nearly a week. He has just come home at dawn, and gone upstairs to his chamber; locking himself in—as if anybody dreamt of coveting his company! There he has continued, praying like a Methodist: only the deity he implored is senseless dust and ashes; and God, when addressed, was curiously confounded with his own black father! After concluding these precious orisons—and they lasted generally till he grew hoarse and his voice was strangled in his throat—he would be off again; always straight down to the Grange! I wonder Edgar did not send for a constable, and give him into custody! For me, grieved as I was about Catherine, it was impossible to avoid regarding this season of deliverance from degrading oppression as a holiday.

“I recovered spirits sufficient to bear Joseph’s eternal lectures without weeping, and to move up and down the house less with the foot of a frightened thief than formerly. You wouldn’t think that I should cry at



anything Joseph could say; but he and Hareton are detestable companions. I'd rather sit with Hindley, and hear his awful talk, than with 't' little maister' and his staunch supporter, that odious old man! When Heathcliff is in, I'm often obliged to seek the kitchen and their society, or starve among the damp uninhabited chambers; when he is not, as was the case this week, I establish a table and chair at one corner of the house fire, and never mind how Mr. Earnshaw may occupy himself; and he does not interfere with my arrangements. He is quieter now than he used to be, if no one provokes him: more sullen and depressed, and less furious. Joseph affirms he's sure he's an altered man: that the Lord has touched his heart, and he is saved 'so as by fire.' I'm puzzled to detect signs of the favourable change: but it is not my business.

"Yester-evening I sat in my nook reading some old books till late on towards twelve. It seemed so dismal to go upstairs, with the wild snow blowing outside, and my thoughts continually reverting to the kirk-yard and the new-made grave! I dared hardly lift my eyes from the page before me, that melancholy scene so instantly usurped its place. Hindley sat opposite, his head leant on his hand; perhaps meditating on the same subject. He had ceased drinking at a point below irrationality, and had neither stirred nor spoken during two or three hours. There was no sound through the house but the moaning wind, which shook the windows every now and then, the faint crackling of the coals, and the click of my snuffers as I removed at intervals the long wick of the candle. Hareton and Joseph were probably fast asleep in bed. It was very, very sad: and while I read I sighed, for it seemed as if all joy had vanished from the world, never to be restored.

"The doleful silence was broken at length by the sound of the kitchen latch: Heathcliff had returned from his watch earlier than usual; owing, I suppose, to the sudden storm. That entrance was fastened, and we heard him coming round to get in by the other. I rose with an irrepressible expression of what I felt on my lips, which induced my companion, who had been staring towards the door, to turn and look at me.

"'I'll keep him out five minutes,' he exclaimed. 'You won't object?'

"'No, you may keep him out the whole night for me,' I answered. 'Do! put the key in the lock, and draw the bolts.'

"Earnshaw accomplished this ere his guest reached the front; he then came and brought his chair to the other side of my table, leaning over it, and

searching in my eyes for a sympathy with the burning hate that gleamed from his: as he both looked and felt like an assassin, he couldn't exactly find that; but he discovered enough to encourage him to speak.

“‘You, and I,’ he said, ‘have each a great debt to settle with the man out yonder! If we were neither of us cowards, we might combine to discharge it. Are you as soft as your brother? Are you willing to endure to the last, and not once attempt a repayment?’

“‘I’m weary of enduring now,’ I replied; ‘and I’d be glad of a retaliation that wouldn’t recoil on myself; but treachery and violence are spears pointed at both ends; they wound those who resort to them worse than their enemies.’

“‘Treachery and violence are a just return for treachery and violence!’ cried Hindley. ‘Mrs. Heathcliff, I’ll ask you to do nothing; but sit still and be dumb. Tell me now, can you? I’m sure you would have as much pleasure as I in witnessing the conclusion of the fiend’s existence; he’ll be *your* death unless you overreach him; and he’ll be *my* ruin. Damn the hellish villain! He knocks at the door as if he were master here already! Promise to hold your tongue, and before that clock strikes—it wants three minutes of one—you’re a free woman!’

“He took the implements which I described to you in my letter from his breast, and would have turned down the candle. I snatched it away, however, and seized his arm.

“‘I’ll not hold my tongue!’ I said; ‘you mustn’t touch him. Let the door remain shut, and be quiet!’

“‘No! I’ve formed my resolution, and by God I’ll execute it!’ cried the desperate being. ‘I’ll do you a kindness in spite of yourself, and Hareton justice! And you needn’t trouble your head to screen me; Catherine is gone. Nobody alive would regret me, or be ashamed, though I cut my throat this minute—and it’s time to make an end!’

“I might as well have struggled with a bear, or reasoned with a lunatic. The only resource left me was to run to a lattice and warn his intended victim of the fate which awaited him.

“‘You’d better seek shelter somewhere else to-night!’ I exclaimed, in rather a triumphant tone. ‘Mr. Earnshaw has a mind to shoot you, if you persist in endeavouring to enter.’

“‘You’d better open the door, you—’ he answered, addressing me by some elegant term that I don’t care to repeat.

“‘I shall not meddle in the matter,’ I retorted again. ‘Come in and get shot, if you please. I’ve done my duty.’

“With that I shut the window and returned to my place by the fire; having too small a stock of hypocrisy at my command to pretend any anxiety for the danger that menaced him. Earnshaw swore passionately at me: affirming that I loved the villain yet; and calling me all sorts of names for the base spirit I evinced. And I, in my secret heart (and conscience never reproached me), thought what a blessing it would be for *him* should Heathcliff put him out of misery; and what a blessing for *me* should he send Heathcliff to his right abode! As I sat nursing these reflections, the casement behind me was banged on to the floor by a blow from the latter individual, and his black countenance looked blighting through. The stanchions stood too close to suffer his shoulders to follow, and I smiled, exulting in my fancied security. His hair and clothes were whitened with snow, and his sharp cannibal teeth, revealed by cold and wrath, gleamed through the dark.

“‘Isabella, let me in, or I’ll make you repent!’ he ‘girmed,’ as Joseph calls it.

“‘I cannot commit murder,’ I replied. ‘Mr. Hindley stands sentinel with a knife and loaded pistol.’

“‘Let me in by the kitchen door,’ he said.

“‘Hindley will be there before me,’ I answered: ‘and that’s a poor love of yours that cannot bear a shower of snow! We were left at peace in our beds as long as the summer moon shone, but the moment a blast of winter returns, you must run for shelter! Heathcliff, if I were you, I’d go stretch myself over her grave and die like a faithful dog. The world is surely not worth living in now, is it? You had distinctly impressed on me the idea that Catherine was the whole joy of your life: I can’t imagine how you think of surviving her loss.’

“‘He’s there, is he?’ exclaimed my companion, rushing to the gap. ‘If I can get my arm out I can hit him!’

“‘I’m afraid, Ellen, you’ll set me down as really wicked; but you don’t know all, so don’t judge. I wouldn’t have aided or abetted an attempt on

even *his* life for anything. Wish that he were dead, I must; and therefore I was fearfully disappointed, and unnerved by terror for the consequences of my taunting speech, when he flung himself on Earnshaw's weapon and wrenched it from his grasp.

“The charge exploded, and the knife, in springing back, closed into its owner's wrist. Heathcliff pulled it away by main force, slitting up the flesh as it passed on, and thrust it dripping into his pocket. He then took a stone, struck down the division between two windows, and sprang in. His adversary had fallen senseless with excessive pain and the flow of blood, that gushed from an artery or a large vein. The ruffian kicked and trampled on him, and dashed his head repeatedly against the flags, holding me with one hand, meantime, to prevent me summoning Joseph. He exerted preterhuman self-denial in abstaining from finishing him completely; but getting out of breath, he finally desisted, and dragged the apparently inanimate body on to the settle. There he tore off the sleeve of Earnshaw's coat, and bound up the wound with brutal roughness; spitting and cursing during the operation as energetically as he had kicked before. Being at liberty, I lost no time in seeking the old servant; who, having gathered by degrees the purport of my hasty tale, hurried below, gasping, as he descended the steps two at once.

“‘What is ther to do, now? what is ther to do, now?’

“‘There's this to do,’ thundered Heathcliff, ‘that your master's mad; and should he last another month, I'll have him to an asylum. And how the devil did you come to fasten me out, you toothless hound? Don't stand muttering and mumbling there. Come, I'm not going to nurse him. Wash that stuff away; and mind the sparks of your candle—it is more than half brandy!’

“‘And so ye've been murthering on him?’ exclaimed Joseph, lifting his hands and eyes in horror. ‘If iver I seed a seeght loike this! May the Lord —’

“Heathcliff gave him a push on to his knees in the middle of the blood, and flung a towel to him; but instead of proceeding to dry it up, he joined his hands and began a prayer, which excited my laughter from its odd phraseology. I was in the condition of mind to be shocked at nothing: in fact, I was as reckless as some malefactors show themselves at the foot of the gallows.

“‘Oh, I forgot you,’ said the tyrant. ‘You shall do that. Down with you. And you conspire with him against me, do you, viper? There, that is work fit for you!’

“He shook me till my teeth rattled, and pitched me beside Joseph, who steadily concluded his supplications, and then rose, vowing he would set off for the Grange directly. Mr. Linton was a magistrate, and though he had fifty wives dead, he should inquire into this. He was so obstinate in his resolution, that Heathcliff deemed it expedient to compel from my lips a recapitulation of what had taken place; standing over me, heaving with malevolence, as I reluctantly delivered the account in answer to his questions. It required a great deal of labour to satisfy the old man that Heathcliff was not the aggressor; especially with my hardly-wrung replies. However, Mr. Earnshaw soon convinced him that he was alive still; Joseph hastened to administer a dose of spirits, and by their succour his master presently regained motion and consciousness. Heathcliff, aware that his opponent was ignorant of the treatment received while insensible, called him deliriously intoxicated; and said he should not notice his atrocious conduct further, but advised him to get to bed. To my joy, he left us, after giving this judicious counsel, and Hindley stretched himself on the hearthstone. I departed to my own room, marvelling that I had escaped so easily.

“This morning, when I came down, about half an hour before noon, Mr. Earnshaw was sitting by the fire, deadly sick; his evil genius, almost as gaunt and ghastly, leant against the chimney. Neither appeared inclined to dine, and, having waited till all was cold on the table, I commenced alone. Nothing hindered me from eating heartily, and I experienced a certain sense of satisfaction and superiority, as, at intervals, I cast a look towards my silent companions, and felt the comfort of a quiet conscience within me. After I had done, I ventured on the unusual liberty of drawing near the fire, going round Earnshaw’s seat, and kneeling in the corner beside him.

“Heathcliff did not glance my way, and I gazed up, and contemplated his features almost as confidently as if they had been turned to stone. His forehead, that I once thought so manly, and that I now think so diabolical, was shaded with a heavy cloud; his basilisk eyes were nearly quenched by sleeplessness, and weeping, perhaps, for the lashes were wet then: his lips devoid of their ferocious sneer, and sealed in an expression of unspeakable

sadness. Had it been another, I would have covered my face in the presence of such grief. In *his* case, I was gratified; and, ignoble as it seems to insult a fallen enemy, I couldn't miss this chance of sticking in a dart: his weakness was the only time when I could taste the delight of paying wrong for wrong."

"Fie, fie, Miss!" I interrupted. "One might suppose you had never opened a Bible in your life. If God afflict your enemies, surely that ought to suffice you. It is both mean and presumptuous to add your torture to his!"

"In general I'll allow that it would be, Ellen," she continued; "but what misery laid on Heathcliff could content me, unless I have a hand in it? I'd rather he suffered less, if I might cause his sufferings and he might *know* that I was the cause. Oh, I owe him so much. On only one condition can I hope to forgive him. It is, if I may take an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; for every wrench of agony return a wrench: reduce him to my level. As he was the first to injure, make him the first to implore pardon; and then—why then, Ellen, I might show you some generosity. But it is utterly impossible I can ever be revenged, and therefore I cannot forgive him. Hindley wanted some water, and I handed him a glass, and asked him how he was.

"'Not as ill as I wish,' he replied. 'But leaving out my arm, every inch of me is as sore as if I had been fighting with a legion of imps!'

"'Yes, no wonder,' was my next remark. 'Catherine used to boast that she stood between you and bodily harm: she meant that certain persons would not hurt you for fear of offending her. It's well people don't *really* rise from their grave, or, last night, she might have witnessed a repulsive scene! Are not you bruised, and cut over your chest and shoulders?'

"'I can't say,' he answered, 'but what do you mean? Did he dare to strike me when I was down?'

"'He trampled on and kicked you, and dashed you on the ground,' I whispered. 'And his mouth watered to tear you with his teeth; because he's only half man: not so much, and the rest fiend.'

"Mr. Earnshaw looked up, like me, to the countenance of our mutual foe; who, absorbed in his anguish, seemed insensible to anything around him: the longer he stood, the plainer his reflections revealed their blackness through his features.

““Oh, if God would but give me strength to strangle him in my last agony, I’d go to hell with joy,” groaned the impatient man, writhing to rise, and sinking back in despair, convinced of his inadequacy for the struggle.

““Nay, it’s enough that he has murdered one of you,” I observed aloud. ‘At the Grange, every one knows your sister would have been living now had it not been for Mr. Heathcliff. After all, it is preferable to be hated than loved by him. When I recollect how happy we were—how happy Catherine was before he came—I’m fit to curse the day.’

“Most likely, Heathcliff noticed more the truth of what was said, than the spirit of the person who said it. His attention was roused, I saw, for his eyes rained down tears among the ashes, and he drew his breath in suffocating sighs. I stared full at him, and laughed scornfully. The clouded windows of hell flashed a moment towards me; the fiend which usually looked out, however, was so dimmed and drowned that I did not fear to hazard another sound of derision.

““Get up, and begone out of my sight,” said the mourner.

“I guessed he uttered those words, at least, though his voice was hardly intelligible.

““I beg your pardon,” I replied. ‘But I loved Catherine too; and her brother requires attendance, which, for her sake, I shall supply. Now, that she’s dead, I see her in Hindley: Hindley has exactly her eyes, if you had not tried to gouge them out, and made them black and red; and her—’

““Get up, wretched idiot, before I stamp you to death!” he cried, making a movement that caused me to make one also.

““But then,” I continued, holding myself ready to flee, ‘if poor Catherine had trusted you, and assumed the ridiculous, contemptible, degrading title of Mrs. Heathcliff, she would soon have presented a similar picture! *She* wouldn’t have borne your abominable behaviour quietly: her detestation and disgust must have found voice.’

“The back of the settle and Earnshaw’s person interposed between me and him; so instead of endeavouring to reach me, he snatched a dinner-knife from the table and flung it at my head. It struck beneath my ear, and stopped the sentence I was uttering; but, pulling it out, I sprang to the door and delivered another; which I hope went a little deeper than his missile. The last glimpse I caught of him was a furious rush on his part, checked by the

embrace of his host; and both fell locked together on the hearth. In my flight through the kitchen I bid Joseph speed to his master; I knocked over Hareton, who was hanging a litter of puppies from a chair-back in the doorway; and, blessed as a soul escaped from purgatory, I bounded, leaped, and flew down the steep road; then, quitting its windings, shot direct across the moor, rolling over banks, and wading through marshes: precipitating myself, in fact, towards the beacon-light of the Grange. And far rather would I be condemned to a perpetual dwelling in the infernal regions than, even for one night, abide beneath the roof of Wuthering Heights again.”

Isabella ceased speaking, and took a drink of tea; then she rose, and bidding me put on her bonnet, and a great shawl I had brought, and turning a deaf ear to my entreaties for her to remain another hour, she stepped on to a chair, kissed Edgar’s and Catherine’s portraits, bestowed a similar salute on me, and descended to the carriage, accompanied by Fanny, who yelped wild with joy at recovering her mistress. She was driven away, never to revisit this neighbourhood: but a regular correspondence was established between her and my master when things were more settled. I believe her new abode was in the south, near London; there she had a son born a few months subsequent to her escape. He was christened Linton, and, from the first, she reported him to be an ailing, peevish creature.

Mr. Heathcliff, meeting me one day in the village, inquired where she lived. I refused to tell. He remarked that it was not of any moment, only she must beware of coming to her brother: she should not be with him, if he had to keep her himself. Though I would give no information, he discovered, through some of the other servants, both her place of residence and the existence of the child. Still, he didn’t molest her: for which forbearance she might thank his aversion, I suppose. He often asked about the infant, when he saw me; and on hearing its name, smiled grimly, and observed: “They wish me to hate it too, do they?”

“I don’t think they wish you to know anything about it,” I answered.

“But I’ll have it,” he said, “when I want it. They may reckon on that!”

Fortunately its mother died before the time arrived; some thirteen years after the decease of Catherine, when Linton was twelve, or a little more.

On the day succeeding Isabella’s unexpected visit I had no opportunity of speaking to my master: he shunned conversation, and was fit for discussing nothing. When I could get him to listen, I saw it pleased him that his sister



had left her husband; whom he abhorred with an intensity which the mildness of his nature would scarcely seem to allow. So deep and sensitive was his aversion, that he refrained from going anywhere where he was likely to see or hear of Heathcliff. Grief, and that together, transformed him into a complete hermit: he threw up his office of magistrate, ceased even to attend church, avoided the village on all occasions, and spent a life of entire seclusion within the limits of his park and grounds; only varied by solitary rambles on the moors, and visits to the grave of his wife, mostly at evening, or early morning before other wanderers were abroad. But he was too good to be thoroughly unhappy long. *He* didn't pray for Catherine's soul to haunt him. Time brought resignation, and a melancholy sweeter than common joy. He recalled her memory with ardent, tender love, and hopeful aspiring to the better world; where he doubted not she was gone.

And he had earthly consolation and affections also. For a few days, I said, he seemed regardless of the puny successor to the departed: that coldness melted as fast as snow in April, and ere the tiny thing could stammer a word or totter a step it wielded a despot's sceptre in his heart. It was named Catherine; but he never called it the name in full, as he had never called the first Catherine short: probably because Heathcliff had a habit of doing so. The little one was always Cathy: it formed to him a distinction from the mother, and yet a connection with her; and his attachment sprang from its relation to her, far more than from its being his own.

I used to draw a comparison between him and Hindley Earnshaw, and perplex myself to explain satisfactorily why their conduct was so opposite in similar circumstances. They had both been fond husbands, and were both attached to their children; and I could not see how they shouldn't both have taken the same road, for good or evil. But, I thought in my mind, Hindley, with apparently the stronger head, has shown himself sadly the worse and the weaker man. When his ship struck, the captain abandoned his post; and the crew, instead of trying to save her, rushed into riot and confusion, leaving no hope for their luckless vessel. Linton, on the contrary, displayed the true courage of a loyal and faithful soul: he trusted God; and God comforted him. One hoped, and the other despaired: they chose their own lots, and were righteously doomed to endure them. But you'll not want to hear my moralising, Mr. Lockwood; you'll judge, as well as I can, all these things: at least, you'll think you will, and that's the same. The end of

Earnshaw was what might have been expected; it followed fast on his sister's: there were scarcely six months between them. We, at the Grange, never got a very succinct account of his state preceding it; all that I did learn was on occasion of going to aid in the preparations for the funeral. Mr. Kenneth came to announce the event to my master.

"Well, Nelly," said he, riding into the yard one morning, too early not to alarm me with an instant presentiment of bad news, "it's yours and my turn to go into mourning at present. Who's given us the slip now, do you think?"

"Who?" I asked in a flurry.

"Why, guess!" he returned, dismounting, and slinging his bridle on a hook by the door. "And nip up the corner of your apron: I'm certain you'll need it."

"Not Mr. Heathcliff, surely?" I exclaimed.

"What! would you have tears for him?" said the doctor. "No, Heathcliff's a tough young fellow: he looks blooming to-day. I've just seen him. He's rapidly regaining flesh since he lost his better half."

"Who is it, then, Mr. Kenneth?" I repeated impatiently.

"Hindley Earnshaw! Your old friend Hindley," he replied, "and my wicked gossip: though he's been too wild for me this long while. There! I said we should draw water. But cheer up! He died true to his character: drunk as a lord. Poor lad! I'm sorry, too. One can't help missing an old companion: though he had the worst tricks with him that ever man imagined, and has done me many a rascally turn. He's barely twenty-seven, it seems; that's your own age: who would have thought you were born in one year?"

I confess this blow was greater to me than the shock of Mrs. Linton's death: ancient associations lingered round my heart; I sat down in the porch and wept as for a blood relation, desiring Mr. Kenneth to get another servant to introduce him to the master. I could not hinder myself from pondering on the question—"Had he had fair play?" Whatever I did, that idea would bother me: it was so tiresomely pertinacious that I resolved on requesting leave to go to Wuthering Heights, and assist in the last duties to the dead. Mr. Linton was extremely reluctant to consent, but I pleaded eloquently for the friendless condition in which he lay; and I said my old master and foster-brother had a claim on my services as strong as his own.

Besides, I reminded him that the child Hareton was his wife's nephew, and, in the absence of nearer kin, he ought to act as its guardian; and he ought to and must inquire how the property was left, and look over the concerns of his brother-in-law. He was unfit for attending to such matters then, but he bid me speak to his lawyer; and at length permitted me to go. His lawyer had been Earnshaw's also: I called at the village, and asked him to accompany me. He shook his head, and advised that Heathcliff should be let alone; affirming, if the truth were known, Hareton would be found little else than a beggar.

"His father died in debt," he said; "the whole property is mortgaged, and the sole chance for the natural heir is to allow him an opportunity of creating some interest in the creditor's heart, that he may be inclined to deal leniently towards him."

When I reached the Heights, I explained that I had come to see everything carried on decently; and Joseph, who appeared in sufficient distress, expressed satisfaction at my presence. Mr. Heathcliff said he did not perceive that I was wanted; but I might stay and order the arrangements for the funeral, if I chose.

"Correctly," he remarked, "that fool's body should be buried at the cross-roads, without ceremony of any kind. I happened to leave him ten minutes yesterday afternoon, and in that interval he fastened the two doors of the house against me, and he has spent the night in drinking himself to death deliberately! We broke in this morning, for we heard him sporting like a horse; and there he was, laid over the settle: flaying and scalping would not have wakened him. I sent for Kenneth, and he came; but not till the beast had changed into carrion: he was both dead and cold, and stark; and so you'll allow it was useless making more stir about him!"

The old servant confirmed this statement, but muttered:

"I'd rayther he'd goan hisseln for t' doctor! I sud ha' taen tent o' t' maister better nor him—and he warn't deead when I left, naught o' t' soart!"

I insisted on the funeral being respectable. Mr. Heathcliff said I might have my own way there too: only, he desired me to remember that the money for the whole affair came out of his pocket. He maintained a hard, careless deportment, indicative of neither joy nor sorrow: if anything, it expressed a flinty gratification at a piece of difficult work successfully

executed. I observed once, indeed, something like exultation in his aspect: it was just when the people were bearing the coffin from the house. He had the hypocrisy to represent a mourner: and previous to following with Hareton, he lifted the unfortunate child on to the table and muttered, with peculiar gusto, "Now, my bonny lad, you are *mine*! And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it!" The unsuspecting thing was pleased at this speech: he played with Heathcliff's whiskers, and stroked his cheek; but I divined its meaning, and observed tartly, "That boy must go back with me to Thrushcross Grange, sir. There is nothing in the world less yours than he is!"

"Does Linton say so?" he demanded.

"Of course—he has ordered me to take him," I replied.

"Well," said the scoundrel, "we'll not argue the subject now: but I have a fancy to try my hand at rearing a young one; so intimate to your master that I must supply the place of this with my own, if he attempt to remove it. I don't engage to let Hareton go undisputed; but I'll be pretty sure to make the other come! Remember to tell him."

This hint was enough to bind our hands. I repeated its substance on my return; and Edgar Linton, little interested at the commencement, spoke no more of interfering. I'm not aware that he could have done it to any purpose, had he been ever so willing.

The guest was now the master of Wuthering Heights: he held firm possession, and proved to the attorney—who, in his turn, proved it to Mr. Linton—that Earnshaw had mortgaged every yard of land he owned for cash to supply his mania for gaming; and he, Heathcliff, was the mortgagee. In that manner Hareton, who should now be the first gentleman in the neighbourhood, was reduced to a state of complete dependence on his father's inveterate enemy; and lives in his own house as a servant, deprived of the advantage of wages: quite unable to right himself, because of his friendlessness, and his ignorance that he has been wronged.

## CHAPTER XVIII

The twelve years, continued Mrs. Dean, following that dismal period were the happiest of my life: my greatest troubles in their passage rose from our little lady's trifling illnesses, which she had to experience in common with all children, rich and poor. For the rest, after the first six months, she grew like a larch, and could walk and talk too, in her own way, before the heath blossomed a second time over Mrs. Linton's dust. She was the most winning thing that ever brought sunshine into a desolate house: a real beauty in face, with the Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin and small features, and yellow curling hair. Her spirit was high, though not rough, and qualified by a heart sensitive and lively to excess in its affections. That capacity for intense attachments reminded me of her mother: still she did not resemble her: for she could be soft and mild as a dove, and she had a gentle voice and pensive expression: her anger was never furious; her love never fierce: it was deep and tender. However, it must be acknowledged, she had faults to foil her gifts. A propensity to be saucy was one; and a perverse will, that indulged children invariably acquire, whether they be good tempered or cross. If a servant chanced to vex her, it was always—"I shall tell papa!" And if he reproved her, even by a look, you would have thought it a heart-breaking business: I don't believe he ever did speak a harsh word to her. He took her education entirely on himself, and made it an amusement. Fortunately, curiosity and a quick intellect made her an apt scholar: she learned rapidly and eagerly, and did honour to his teaching.

Till she reached the age of thirteen she had not once been beyond the range of the park by herself. Mr. Linton would take her with him a mile or so outside, on rare occasions; but he trusted her to no one else. Gimmerton was an unsubstantial name in her ears; the chapel, the only building she had approached or entered, except her own home. Wuthering Heights and Mr. Heathcliff did not exist for her: she was a perfect recluse; and, apparently,

perfectly contented. Sometimes, indeed, while surveying the country from her nursery window, she would observe—

“Ellen, how long will it be before I can walk to the top of those hills? I wonder what lies on the other side—is it the sea?”

“No, Miss Cathy,” I would answer; “it is hills again, just like these.”

“And what are those golden rocks like when you stand under them?” she once asked.

The abrupt descent of Penistone Crags particularly attracted her notice; especially when the setting sun shone on it and the topmost heights, and the whole extent of landscape besides lay in shadow. I explained that they were bare masses of stone, with hardly enough earth in their clefts to nourish a stunted tree.

“And why are they bright so long after it is evening here?” she pursued.

“Because they are a great deal higher up than we are,” replied I; “you could not climb them, they are too high and steep. In winter the frost is always there before it comes to us; and deep into summer I have found snow under that black hollow on the north-east side!”

“Oh, you have been on them!” she cried gleefully. “Then I can go, too, when I am a woman. Has papa been, Ellen?”

“Papa would tell you, Miss,” I answered, hastily, “that they are not worth the trouble of visiting. The moors, where you ramble with him, are much nicer; and Thrushcross Park is the finest place in the world.”

“But I know the park, and I don’t know those,” she murmured to herself. “And I should delight to look round me from the brow of that tallest point: my little pony Minny shall take me some time.”

One of the maids mentioning the Fairy Cave, quite turned her head with a desire to fulfil this project: she teased Mr. Linton about it; and he promised she should have the journey when she got older. But Miss Catherine measured her age by months, and, “Now, am I old enough to go to Penistone Crags?” was the constant question in her mouth. The road thither wound close by Wuthering Heights. Edgar had not the heart to pass it; so she received as constantly the answer, “Not yet, love: not yet.”

I said Mrs. Heathcliff lived above a dozen years after quitting her husband. Her family were of a delicate constitution: she and Edgar both lacked the ruddy health that you will generally meet in these parts. What

her last illness was, I am not certain: I conjecture, they died of the same thing, a kind of fever, slow at its commencement, but incurable, and rapidly consuming life towards the close. She wrote to inform her brother of the probable conclusion of a four-months' indisposition under which she had suffered, and entreated him to come to her, if possible; for she had much to settle, and she wished to bid him adieu, and deliver Linton safely into his hands. Her hope was that Linton might be left with him, as he had been with her: his father, she would fain convince herself, had no desire to assume the burden of his maintenance or education. My master hesitated not a moment in complying with her request: reluctant as he was to leave home at ordinary calls, he flew to answer this; commanding Catherine to my peculiar vigilance, in his absence, with reiterated orders that she must not wander out of the park, even under my escort he did not calculate on her going unaccompanied.

He was away three weeks. The first day or two my charge sat in a corner of the library, too sad for either reading or playing: in that quiet state she caused me little trouble; but it was succeeded by an interval of impatient, fretful weariness; and being too busy, and too old then, to run up and down amusing her, I hit on a method by which she might entertain herself. I used to send her on her travels round the grounds—now on foot, and now on a pony; indulging her with a patient audience of all her real and imaginary adventures when she returned.

The summer shone in full prime; and she took such a taste for this solitary rambling that she often contrived to remain out from breakfast till tea; and then the evenings were spent in recounting her fanciful tales. I did not fear her breaking bounds; because the gates were generally locked, and I thought she would scarcely venture forth alone, if they had stood wide open. Unluckily, my confidence proved misplaced. Catherine came to me, one morning, at eight o'clock, and said she was that day an Arabian merchant, going to cross the Desert with his caravan; and I must give her plenty of provision for herself and beasts: a horse, and three camels, personated by a large hound and a couple of pointers. I got together good store of dainties, and slung them in a basket on one side of the saddle; and she sprang up as gay as a fairy, sheltered by her wide-brimmed hat and gauze veil from the July sun, and trotted off with a merry laugh, mocking my cautious counsel to avoid galloping, and come back early. The naughty thing never made her appearance at tea. One traveller, the hound, being an

old dog and fond of its ease, returned; but neither Cathy, nor the pony, nor the two pointers were visible in any direction: I despatched emissaries down this path, and that path, and at last went wandering in search of her myself. There was a labourer working at a fence round a plantation, on the borders of the grounds. I inquired of him if he had seen our young lady.

“I saw her at morn,” he replied: “she would have me to cut her a hazel switch, and then she leapt her Galloway over the hedge yonder, where it is lowest, and galloped out of sight.”

You may guess how I felt at hearing this news. It struck me directly she must have started for Penistone Crag. “What will become of her?” I ejaculated, pushing through a gap which the man was repairing, and making straight to the high-road. I walked as if for a wager, mile after mile, till a turn brought me in view of the Heights; but no Catherine could I detect, far or near. The Crag lies about a mile and a half beyond Mr. Heathcliff’s place, and that is four from the Grange, so I began to fear night would fall ere I could reach them. “And what if she should have slipped in clambering among them,” I reflected, “and been killed, or broken some of her bones?” My suspense was truly painful; and, at first, it gave me delightful relief to observe, in hurrying by the farmhouse, Charlie, the fiercest of the pointers, lying under a window, with swelled head and bleeding ear. I opened the wicket and ran to the door, knocking vehemently for admittance. A woman whom I knew, and who formerly lived at Gimmerton, answered: she had been servant there since the death of Mr. Earnshaw.

“Ah,” said she, “you are come a-seeking your little mistress! Don’t be frightened. She’s here safe: but I’m glad it isn’t the master.”

“He is not at home then, is he?” I panted, quite breathless with quick walking and alarm.

“No, no,” she replied: “both he and Joseph are off, and I think they won’t return this hour or more. Step in and rest you a bit.”

I entered, and beheld my stray lamb seated on the hearth, rocking herself in a little chair that had been her mother’s when a child. Her hat was hung against the wall, and she seemed perfectly at home, laughing and chattering, in the best spirits imaginable, to Hareton—now a great, strong lad of eighteen—who stared at her with considerable curiosity and astonishment: comprehending precious little of the fluent succession of remarks and questions which her tongue never ceased pouring forth.



“Very well, Miss!” I exclaimed, concealing my joy under an angry countenance. “This is your last ride, till papa comes back. I’ll not trust you over the threshold again, you naughty, naughty girl!”

“Aha, Ellen!” she cried, gaily, jumping up and running to my side. “I shall have a pretty story to tell to-night; and so you’ve found me out. Have you ever been here in your life before?”

“Put that hat on, and home at once,” said I. “I’m dreadfully grieved at you, Miss Cathy: you’ve done extremely wrong! It’s no use pouting and crying: that won’t repay the trouble I’ve had, scouring the country after you. To think how Mr. Linton charged me to keep you in; and you stealing off so! It shows you are a cunning little fox, and nobody will put faith in you any more.”

“What have I done?” sobbed she, instantly checked. “Papa charged me nothing: he’ll not scold me, Ellen—he’s never cross, like you!”

“Come, come!” I repeated. “I’ll tie the riband. Now, let us have no petulance. Oh, for shame! You thirteen years old, and such a baby!”

This exclamation was caused by her pushing the hat from her head, and retreating to the chimney out of my reach.

“Nay,” said the servant, “don’t be hard on the bonny lass, Mrs. Dean. We made her stop: she’d fain have ridden forwards, afeard you should be uneasy. Hareton offered to go with her, and I thought he should: it’s a wild road over the hills.”

Hareton, during the discussion, stood with his hands in his pockets, too awkward to speak; though he looked as if he did not relish my intrusion.

“How long am I to wait?” I continued, disregarding the woman’s interference. “It will be dark in ten minutes. Where is the pony, Miss Cathy? And where is Phoenix? I shall leave you, unless you be quick; so please yourself.”

“The pony is in the yard,” she replied, “and Phoenix is shut in there. He’s bitten—and so is Charlie. I was going to tell you all about it; but you are in a bad temper, and don’t deserve to hear.”

I picked up her hat, and approached to reinstate it; but perceiving that the people of the house took her part, she commenced capering round the room; and on my giving chase, ran like a mouse over and under and behind the furniture, rendering it ridiculous for me to pursue. Hareton and the woman

laughed, and she joined them, and waxed more impertinent still; till I cried, in great irritation,—“Well, Miss Cathy, if you were aware whose house this is you’d be glad enough to get out.”

“It’s *your* father’s, isn’t it?” said she, turning to Hareton.

“Nay,” he replied, looking down, and blushing bashfully.

He could not stand a steady gaze from her eyes, though they were just his own.

“Whose then—your master’s?” she asked.

He coloured deeper, with a different feeling, muttered an oath, and turned away.

“Who is his master?” continued the tiresome girl, appealing to me. “He talked about ‘our house,’ and ‘our folk.’ I thought he had been the owner’s son. And he never said Miss: he should have done, shouldn’t he, if he’s a servant?”

Hareton grew black as a thunder-cloud at this childish speech. I silently shook my questioner, and at last succeeded in equipping her for departure.

“Now, get my horse,” she said, addressing her unknown kinsman as she would one of the stable-boys at the Grange. “And you may come with me. I want to see where the goblin-hunter rises in the marsh, and to hear about the *fairishes*, as you call them: but make haste! What’s the matter? Get my horse, I say.”

“I’ll see thee damned before I be *thy* servant!” growled the lad.

“You’ll see me *what!*” asked Catherine in surprise.

“Damned—thou saucy witch!” he replied.

“There, Miss Cathy! you see you have got into pretty company,” I interposed. “Nice words to be used to a young lady! Pray don’t begin to dispute with him. Come, let us seek for Minny ourselves, and begone.”

“But, Ellen,” cried she, staring fixed in astonishment, “how dare he speak so to me? Mustn’t he be made to do as I ask him? You wicked creature, I shall tell papa what you said.—Now, then!”

Hareton did not appear to feel this threat; so the tears sprang into her eyes with indignation. “You bring the pony,” she exclaimed, turning to the woman, “and let my dog free this moment!”

“Softly, Miss,” answered she addressed; “you’ll lose nothing by being civil. Though Mr. Hareton, there, be not the master’s son, he’s your cousin: and I was never hired to serve you.”

“*He* my cousin!” cried Cathy, with a scornful laugh.

“Yes, indeed,” responded her reprovener.

“Oh, Ellen! don’t let them say such things,” she pursued in great trouble. “Papa is gone to fetch my cousin from London: my cousin is a gentleman’s son. That my—” she stopped, and wept outright; upset at the bare notion of relationship with such a clown.

“Hush, hush!” I whispered; “people can have many cousins and of all sorts, Miss Cathy, without being any the worse for it; only they needn’t keep their company, if they be disagreeable and bad.”

“He’s not—he’s not my cousin, Ellen!” she went on, gathering fresh grief from reflection, and flinging herself into my arms for refuge from the idea.

I was much vexed at her and the servant for their mutual revelations; having no doubt of Linton’s approaching arrival, communicated by the former, being reported to Mr. Heathcliff; and feeling as confident that Catherine’s first thought on her father’s return would be to seek an explanation of the latter’s assertion concerning her rude-bred kindred. Hareton, recovering from his disgust at being taken for a servant, seemed moved by her distress; and, having fetched the pony round to the door, he took, to propitiate her, a fine crooked-legged terrier whelp from the kennel, and putting it into her hand, bid her whist! for he meant nought. Pausing in her lamentations, she surveyed him with a glance of awe and horror, then burst forth anew.

I could scarcely refrain from smiling at this antipathy to the poor fellow; who was a well-made, athletic youth, good-looking in features, and stout and healthy, but attired in garments befitting his daily occupations of working on the farm and lounging among the moors after rabbits and game. Still, I thought I could detect in his physiognomy a mind owning better qualities than his father ever possessed. Good things lost amid a wilderness of weeds, to be sure, whose rankness far over-topped their neglected growth; yet, notwithstanding, evidence of a wealthy soil, that might yield luxuriant crops under other and favourable circumstances. Mr. Heathcliff, I believe, had not treated him physically ill; thanks to his fearless nature, which offered no temptation to that course of oppression: he had none of

the timid susceptibility that would have given zest to ill-treatment, in Heathcliff's judgment. He appeared to have bent his malevolence on making him a brute: he was never taught to read or write; never rebuked for any bad habit which did not annoy his keeper; never led a single step towards virtue, or guarded by a single precept against vice. And from what I heard, Joseph contributed much to his deterioration, by a narrow-minded partiality which prompted him to flatter and pet him, as a boy, because he was the head of the old family. And as he had been in the habit of accusing Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, when children, of putting the master past his patience, and compelling him to seek solace in drink by what he termed their "offald ways," so at present he laid the whole burden of Hareton's faults on the shoulders of the usurper of his property. If the lad swore, he wouldn't correct him: nor however culpably he behaved. It gave Joseph satisfaction, apparently, to watch him go the worst lengths: he allowed that the lad was ruined: that his soul was abandoned to perdition; but then he reflected that Heathcliff must answer for it. Hareton's blood would be required at his hands; and there lay immense consolation in that thought. Joseph had instilled into him a pride of name, and of his lineage; he would, had he dared, have fostered hate between him and the present owner of the Heights: but his dread of that owner amounted to superstition; and he confined his feelings regarding him to muttered innuendoes and private comminations. I don't pretend to be intimately acquainted with the mode of living customary in those days at Wuthering Heights: I only speak from hearsay; for I saw little. The villagers affirmed Mr. Heathcliff was *near*, and a cruel hard landlord to his tenants; but the house, inside, had regained its ancient aspect of comfort under female management, and the scenes of riot common in Hindley's time were not now enacted within its walls. The master was too gloomy to seek companionship with any people, good or bad; and he is yet.

This, however, is not making progress with my story. Miss Cathy rejected the peace-offering of the terrier, and demanded her own dogs, Charlie and Phoenix. They came limping and hanging their heads; and we set out for home, sadly out of sorts, every one of us. I could not wring from my little lady how she had spent the day; except that, as I supposed, the goal of her pilgrimage was Penistone Crag; and she arrived without adventure to the gate of the farm-house, when Hareton happened to issue forth, attended by some canine followers, who attacked her train. They had a smart battle,

before their owners could separate them: that formed an introduction. Catherine told Hareton who she was, and where she was going; and asked him to show her the way: finally, beguiling him to accompany her. He opened the mysteries of the Fairy Cave, and twenty other queer places. But, being in disgrace, I was not favoured with a description of the interesting objects she saw. I could gather, however, that her guide had been a favourite till she hurt his feelings by addressing him as a servant; and Heathcliff's housekeeper hurt hers by calling him her cousin. Then the language he had held to her rankled in her heart; she who was always "love," and "darling," and "queen," and "angel," with everybody at the Grange, to be insulted so shockingly by a stranger! She did not comprehend it; and hard work I had to obtain a promise that she would not lay the grievance before her father. I explained how he objected to the whole household at the Heights, and how sorry he would be to find she had been there; but I insisted most on the fact, that if she revealed my negligence of his orders, he would perhaps be so angry that I should have to leave; and Cathy couldn't bear that prospect: she pledged her word, and kept it for my sake. After all, she was a sweet little girl.

## CHAPTER XIX

A letter, edged with black, announced the day of my master's return. Isabella was dead; and he wrote to bid me get mourning for his daughter, and arrange a room, and other accommodations, for his youthful nephew. Catherine ran wild with joy at the idea of welcoming her father back; and indulged most sanguine anticipations of the innumerable excellencies of her "real" cousin. The evening of their expected arrival came. Since early morning she had been busy ordering her own small affairs; and now attired in her new black frock—poor thing! her aunt's death impressed her with no definite sorrow—she obliged me, by constant worrying, to walk with her down through the grounds to meet them.

"Linton is just six months younger than I am," she chattered, as we strolled leisurely over the swells and hollows of mossy turf, under shadow of the trees. "How delightful it will be to have him for a playfellow! Aunt Isabella sent papa a beautiful lock of his hair; it was lighter than mine—more flaxen, and quite as fine. I have it carefully preserved in a little glass box; and I've often thought what a pleasure it would be to see its owner. Oh! I am happy—and papa, dear, dear papa! Come, Ellen, let us run! come, run."

She ran, and returned and ran again, many times before my sober footsteps reached the gate, and then she seated herself on the grassy bank beside the path, and tried to wait patiently; but that was impossible: she couldn't be still a minute.

"How long they are!" she exclaimed. "Ah, I see, some dust on the road—they are coming! No! When will they be here? May we not go a little way—half a mile, Ellen, only just half a mile? Do say Yes: to that clump of birches at the turn!"

I refused staunchly. At length her suspense was ended: the travelling carriage rolled in sight. Miss Cathy shrieked and stretched out her arms as

soon as she caught her father's face looking from the window. He descended, nearly as eager as herself; and a considerable interval elapsed ere they had a thought to spare for any but themselves. While they exchanged caresses I took a peep in to see after Linton. He was asleep in a corner, wrapped in a warm, fur-lined cloak, as if it had been winter. A pale, delicate, effeminate boy, who might have been taken for my master's younger brother, so strong was the resemblance: but there was a sickly peevishness in his aspect that Edgar Linton never had. The latter saw me looking; and having shaken hands, advised me to close the door, and leave him undisturbed; for the journey had fatigued him. Cathy would fain have taken one glance, but her father told her to come, and they walked together up the park, while I hastened before to prepare the servants.

"Now, darling," said Mr. Linton, addressing his daughter, as they halted at the bottom of the front steps: "your cousin is not so strong or so merry as you are, and he has lost his mother, remember, a very short time since; therefore, don't expect him to play and run about with you directly. And don't harass him much by talking: let him be quiet this evening, at least, will you?"

"Yes, yes, papa," answered Catherine: "but I do want to see him; and he hasn't once looked out."

The carriage stopped; and the sleeper being roused, was lifted to the ground by his uncle.

"This is your cousin Cathy, Linton," he said, putting their little hands together. "She's fond of you already; and mind you don't grieve her by crying to-night. Try to be cheerful now; the travelling is at an end, and you have nothing to do but rest and amuse yourself as you please."

"Let me go to bed, then," answered the boy, shrinking from Catherine's salute; and he put his fingers to remove incipient tears.

"Come, come, there's a good child," I whispered, leading him in. "You'll make her weep too—see how sorry she is for you!"

I do not know whether it was sorrow for him, but his cousin put on as sad a countenance as himself, and returned to her father. All three entered, and mounted to the library, where tea was laid ready. I proceeded to remove Linton's cap and mantle, and placed him on a chair by the table; but he was no sooner seated than he began to cry afresh. My master inquired what was the matter.

“I can’t sit on a chair,” sobbed the boy.

“Go to the sofa, then, and Ellen shall bring you some tea,” answered his uncle patiently.

He had been greatly tried, during the journey, I felt convinced, by his fretful ailing charge. Linton slowly trailed himself off, and lay down. Cathy carried a footstool and her cup to his side. At first she sat silent; but that could not last: she had resolved to make a pet of her little cousin, as she would have him to be; and she commenced stroking his curls, and kissing his cheek, and offering him tea in her saucer, like a baby. This pleased him, for he was not much better: he dried his eyes, and lightened into a faint smile.

“Oh, he’ll do very well,” said the master to me, after watching them a minute. “Very well, if we can keep him, Ellen. The company of a child of his own age will instil new spirit into him soon, and by wishing for strength he’ll gain it.”

“Ay, if we can keep him!” I mused to myself; and sore misgivings came over me that there was slight hope of that. And then, I thought, how ever will that weakling live at Wuthering Heights? Between his father and Hareton, what playmates and instructors they’ll be. Our doubts were presently decided—even earlier than I expected. I had just taken the children upstairs, after tea was finished, and seen Linton asleep—he would not suffer me to leave him till that was the case—I had come down, and was standing by the table in the hall, lighting a bedroom candle for Mr. Edgar, when a maid stepped out of the kitchen and informed me that Mr. Heathcliff’s servant Joseph was at the door, and wished to speak with the master.

“I shall ask him what he wants first,” I said, in considerable trepidation. “A very unlikely hour to be troubling people, and the instant they have returned from a long journey. I don’t think the master can see him.”

Joseph had advanced through the kitchen as I uttered these words, and now presented himself in the hall. He was donned in his Sunday garments, with his most sanctimonious and sourest face, and, holding his hat in one hand, and his stick in the other, he proceeded to clean his shoes on the mat.

“Good-evening, Joseph,” I said, coldly. “What business brings you here to-night?”



“It’s Maister Linton I mun spake to,” he answered, waving me disdainfully aside.

“Mr. Linton is going to bed; unless you have something particular to say, I’m sure he won’t hear it now,” I continued. “You had better sit down in there, and entrust your message to me.”

“Which is his rahm?” pursued the fellow, surveying the range of closed doors.

I perceived he was bent on refusing my mediation, so very reluctantly I went up to the library, and announced the unseasonable visitor, advising that he should be dismissed till next day. Mr. Linton had no time to empower me to do so, for Joseph mounted close at my heels, and, pushing into the apartment, planted himself at the far side of the table, with his two fists clapped on the head of his stick, and began in an elevated tone, as if anticipating opposition—

“Hathecliff has sent me for his lad, and I munn’t goa back ’bout him.”

Edgar Linton was silent a minute; an expression of exceeding sorrow overcast his features: he would have pitied the child on his own account; but, recalling Isabella’s hopes and fears, and anxious wishes for her son, and her commendations of him to his care, he grieved bitterly at the prospect of yielding him up, and searched in his heart how it might be avoided. No plan offered itself: the very exhibition of any desire to keep him would have rendered the claimant more peremptory: there was nothing left but to resign him. However, he was not going to rouse him from his sleep.

“Tell Mr. Heathcliff,” he answered calmly, “that his son shall come to Wuthering Heights to-morrow. He is in bed, and too tired to go the distance now. You may also tell him that the mother of Linton desired him to remain under my guardianship; and, at present, his health is very precarious.”

“Noa!” said Joseph, giving a thud with his prop on the floor, and assuming an authoritative air. “Noa! that means naught. Hathecliff maks noa ’count o’ t’ mother, nor ye norther; but he’ll heu’ his lad; und I mun tak’ him—soa now ye knaw!”

“You shall not to-night!” answered Linton decisively. “Walk down stairs at once, and repeat to your master what I have said. Ellen, show him down. Go—”

And, aiding the indignant elder with a lift by the arm, he rid the room of him and closed the door.

“Varrah weell!” shouted Joseph, as he slowly drew off. “To-morn, he’s come hisseln, and thrust *him* out, if ye darr!”

## CHAPTER XX

To obviate the danger of this threat being fulfilled, Mr. Linton commissioned me to take the boy home early, on Catherine's pony; and, said he—"As we shall now have no influence over his destiny, good or bad, you must say nothing of where he is gone to my daughter: she cannot associate with him hereafter, and it is better for her to remain in ignorance of his proximity; lest she should be restless, and anxious to visit the Heights. Merely tell her his father sent for him suddenly, and he has been obliged to leave us."

Linton was very reluctant to be roused from his bed at five o'clock, and astonished to be informed that he must prepare for further travelling; but I softened off the matter by stating that he was going to spend some time with his father, Mr. Heathcliff, who wished to see him so much, he did not like to defer the pleasure till he should recover from his late journey.

"My father!" he cried, in strange perplexity. "Mamma never told me I had a father. Where does he live? I'd rather stay with uncle."

"He lives a little distance from the Grange," I replied; "just beyond those hills: not so far, but you may walk over here when you get hearty. And you should be glad to go home, and to see him. You must try to love him, as you did your mother, and then he will love you."

"But why have I not heard of him before?" asked Linton. "Why didn't mamma and he live together, as other people do?"

"He had business to keep him in the north," I answered, "and your mother's health required her to reside in the south."

"And why didn't mamma speak to me about him?" persevered the child. "She often talked of uncle, and I learnt to love him long ago. How am I to love papa? I don't know him."

"Oh, all children love their parents," I said. "Your mother, perhaps, thought you would want to be with him if she mentioned him often to you."

Let us make haste. An early ride on such a beautiful morning is much preferable to an hour's more sleep."

"Is *she* to go with us," he demanded, "the little girl I saw yesterday?"

"Not now," replied I.

"Is uncle?" he continued.

"No, I shall be your companion there," I said.

Linton sank back on his pillow and fell into a brown study.

"I won't go without uncle," he cried at length: "I can't tell where you mean to take me."

I attempted to persuade him of the naughtiness of showing reluctance to meet his father; still he obstinately resisted any progress towards dressing, and I had to call for my master's assistance in coaxing him out of bed. The poor thing was finally got off, with several delusive assurances that his absence should be short: that Mr. Edgar and Cathy would visit him, and other promises, equally ill-founded, which I invented and reiterated at intervals throughout the way. The pure heather-scented air, the bright sunshine, and the gentle canter of Minny, relieved his despondency after a while. He began to put questions concerning his new home, and its inhabitants, with greater interest and liveliness.

"Is Wuthering Heights as pleasant a place as Thrushcross Grange?" he inquired, turning to take a last glance into the valley, whence a light mist mounted and formed a fleecy cloud on the skirts of the blue.

"It is not so buried in trees," I replied, "and it is not quite so large, but you can see the country beautifully all round; and the air is healthier for you—fresher and drier. You will, perhaps, think the building old and dark at first; though it is a respectable house: the next best in the neighbourhood. And you will have such nice rambles on the moors. Hareton Earnshaw—that is, Miss Cathy's other cousin, and so yours in a manner—will show you all the sweetest spots; and you can bring a book in fine weather, and make a green hollow your study; and, now and then, your uncle may join you in a walk: he does, frequently, walk out on the hills."

"And what is my father like?" he asked. "Is he as young and handsome as uncle?"

"He's as young," said I; "but he has black hair and eyes, and looks sterner; and he is taller and bigger altogether. He'll not seem to you so

gentle and kind at first, perhaps, because it is not his way: still, mind you, be frank and cordial with him; and naturally he'll be fonder of you than any uncle, for you are his own."

"Black hair and eyes!" mused Linton. "I can't fancy him. Then I am not like him, am I?"

"Not much," I answered: not a morsel, I thought, surveying with regret the white complexion and slim frame of my companion, and his large languid eyes—his mother's eyes, save that, unless a morbid touchiness kindled them a moment, they had not a vestige of her sparkling spirit.

"How strange that he should never come to see mamma and me!" he murmured. "Has he ever seen me? If he has, I must have been a baby. I remember not a single thing about him!"

"Why, Master Linton," said I, "three hundred miles is a great distance; and ten years seem very different in length to a grown-up person compared with what they do to you. It is probable Mr. Heathcliff proposed going from summer to summer, but never found a convenient opportunity; and now it is too late. Don't trouble him with questions on the subject: it will disturb him, for no good."

The boy was fully occupied with his own cogitations for the remainder of the ride, till we halted before the farmhouse garden-gate. I watched to catch his impressions in his countenance. He surveyed the carved front and low-browed lattices, the straggling gooseberry-bushes and crooked firs, with solemn intentness, and then shook his head: his private feelings entirely disapproved of the exterior of his new abode. But he had sense to postpone complaining: there might be compensation within. Before he dismounted, I went and opened the door. It was half-past six; the family had just finished breakfast: the servant was clearing and wiping down the table. Joseph stood by his master's chair telling some tale concerning a lame horse; and Hareton was preparing for the hayfield.

"Hallo, Nelly!" said Mr. Heathcliff, when he saw me. "I feared I should have to come down and fetch my property myself. You've brought it, have you? Let us see what we can make of it."

He got up and strode to the door: Hareton and Joseph followed in gaping curiosity. Poor Linton ran a frightened eye over the faces of the three.

“Sure-ly,” said Joseph after a grave inspection, “he’s swopped wi’ ye, Maister, an’ yon’s his lass!”

Heathcliff, having stared his son into an ague of confusion, uttered a scornful laugh.

“God! what a beauty! what a lovely, charming thing!” he exclaimed. “Hav’n’t they reared it on snails and sour milk, Nelly? Oh, damn my soul! but that’s worse than I expected—and the devil knows I was not sanguine!”

I bid the trembling and bewildered child get down, and enter. He did not thoroughly comprehend the meaning of his father’s speech, or whether it were intended for him: indeed, he was not yet certain that the grim, sneering stranger was his father. But he clung to me with growing trepidation; and on Mr. Heathcliff’s taking a seat and bidding him “come hither” he hid his face on my shoulder and wept.

“Tut, tut!” said Heathcliff, stretching out a hand and dragging him roughly between his knees, and then holding up his head by the chin. “None of that nonsense! We’re not going to hurt thee, Linton—isn’t that thy name? Thou art thy mother’s child, entirely! Where is my share in thee, puling chicken?”

He took off the boy’s cap and pushed back his thick flaxen curls, felt his slender arms and his small fingers; during which examination Linton ceased crying, and lifted his great blue eyes to inspect the inspector.

“Do you know me?” asked Heathcliff, having satisfied himself that the limbs were all equally frail and feeble.

“No,” said Linton, with a gaze of vacant fear.

“You’ve heard of me, I daresay?”

“No,” he replied again.

“No! What a shame of your mother, never to waken your filial regard for me! You are my son, then, I’ll tell you; and your mother was a wicked slut to leave you in ignorance of the sort of father you possessed. Now, don’t wince, and colour up! Though it is something to see you have not white blood. Be a good lad; and I’ll do for you. Nelly, if you be tired you may sit down; if not, get home again. I guess you’ll report what you hear and see to the cipher at the Grange; and this thing won’t be settled while you linger about it.”

“Well,” replied I, “I hope you’ll be kind to the boy, Mr. Heathcliff, or you’ll not keep him long; and he’s all you have akin in the wide world, that you will ever know—remember.”

“I’ll be very kind to him, you needn’t fear,” he said, laughing. “Only nobody else must be kind to him: I’m jealous of monopolising his affection. And, to begin my kindness, Joseph, bring the lad some breakfast. Hareton, you infernal calf, begone to your work. Yes, Nell,” he added, when they had departed, “my son is prospective owner of your place, and I should not wish him to die till I was certain of being his successor. Besides, he’s *mine*, and I want the triumph of seeing *my* descendant fairly lord of their estates; my child hiring their children to till their fathers’ lands for wages. That is the sole consideration which can make me endure the whelp: I despise him for himself, and hate him for the memories he revives! But that consideration is sufficient: he’s as safe with me, and shall be tended as carefully as your master tends his own. I have a room upstairs, furnished for him in handsome style; I’ve engaged a tutor, also, to come three times a week, from twenty miles’ distance, to teach him what he pleases to learn. I’ve ordered Hareton to obey him: and in fact I’ve arranged everything with a view to preserve the superior and the gentleman in him, above his associates. I do regret, however, that he so little deserves the trouble: if I wished any blessing in the world, it was to find him a worthy object of pride; and I’m bitterly disappointed with the whey-faced, whining wretch!”

While he was speaking, Joseph returned bearing a basin of milk-porridge, and placed it before Linton: who stirred round the homely mess with a look of aversion, and affirmed he could not eat it. I saw the old man-servant shared largely in his master’s scorn of the child; though he was compelled to retain the sentiment in his heart, because Heathcliff plainly meant his underlings to hold him in honour.

“Cannot ate it?” repeated he, peering in Linton’s face, and subduing his voice to a whisper, for fear of being overheard. “But Maister Hareton nivir ate naught else, when he wer a little ’un; and what wer gooid enough for him’s gooid enough for ye, I’s rayther think!”

“I *sha* ’n’t eat it!” answered Linton, snappishly. “Take it away.”

Joseph snatched up the food indignantly, and brought it to us.

“Is there aught ails th’ victuals?” he asked, thrusting the tray under Heathcliff’s nose.

“What should ail them?” he said.

“Wah!” answered Joseph, “yon dainty chap says he cannut ate ’em. But I guess it’s raight! His mother wer just soa—we wer a’most too mucky to sow t’ corn for makking her breaad.”

“Don’t mention his mother to me,” said the master, angrily. “Get him something that he can eat, that’s all. What is his usual food, Nelly?”

I suggested boiled milk or tea; and the housekeeper received instructions to prepare some. Come, I reflected, his father’s selfishness may contribute to his comfort. He perceives his delicate constitution, and the necessity of treating him tolerably. I’ll console Mr. Edgar by acquainting him with the turn Heathcliff’s humour has taken. Having no excuse for lingering longer, I slipped out, while Linton was engaged in timidly rebuffing the advances of a friendly sheep-dog. But he was too much on the alert to be cheated: as I closed the door, I heard a cry, and a frantic repetition of the words—

“Don’t leave me! I’ll not stay here! I’ll not stay here!”

Then the latch was raised and fell: they did not suffer him to come forth. I mounted Minny, and urged her to a trot; and so my brief guardianship ended.



## CHAPTER XXI

We had sad work with little Cathy that day: she rose in high glee, eager to join her cousin, and such passionate tears and lamentations followed the news of his departure that Edgar himself was obliged to soothe her, by affirming he should come back soon: he added, however, “if I can get him”; and there were no hopes of that. This promise poorly pacified her; but time was more potent; and though still at intervals she inquired of her father when Linton would return, before she did see him again his features had waxed so dim in her memory that she did not recognise him.

When I chanced to encounter the housekeeper of Wuthering Heights, in paying business visits to Gimmerton, I used to ask how the young master got on; for he lived almost as secluded as Catherine herself, and was never to be seen. I could gather from her that he continued in weak health, and was a tiresome inmate. She said Mr. Heathcliff seemed to dislike him ever longer and worse, though he took some trouble to conceal it: he had an antipathy to the sound of his voice, and could not do at all with his sitting in the same room with him many minutes together. There seldom passed much talk between them: Linton learnt his lessons and spent his evenings in a small apartment they called the parlour: or else lay in bed all day: for he was constantly getting coughs, and colds, and aches, and pains of some sort.

“And I never know such a fainthearted creature,” added the woman; “nor one so careful of hisseln. He *will* go on, if I leave the window open a bit late in the evening. Oh! it’s killing, a breath of night air! And he must have a fire in the middle of summer; and Joseph’s bacca-pipe is poison; and he must always have sweets and dainties, and always milk, milk for ever—heeding naught how the rest of us are pinched in winter; and there he’ll sit, wrapped in his furred cloak in his chair by the fire, with some toast and water or other slop on the hob to sip at; and if Hareton, for pity, comes to amuse him—Hareton is not bad-natured, though he’s rough—they’re sure to part, one swearing and the other crying. I believe the master would relish

Earnshaw's thrashing him to a mummy, if he were not his son; and I'm certain he would be fit to turn him out of doors, if he knew half the nursing he gives hisseln. But then he won't go into danger of temptation: he never enters the parlour, and should Linton show those ways in the house where he is, he sends him upstairs directly."

I divined, from this account, that utter lack of sympathy had rendered young Heathcliff selfish and disagreeable, if he were not so originally; and my interest in him, consequently, decayed: though still I was moved with a sense of grief at his lot, and a wish that he had been left with us. Mr. Edgar encouraged me to gain information: he thought a great deal about him, I fancy, and would have run some risk to see him; and he told me once to ask the housekeeper whether he ever came into the village? She said he had only been twice, on horseback, accompanying his father; and both times he pretended to be quite knocked up for three or four days afterwards. That housekeeper left, if I recollect rightly, two years after he came; and another, whom I did not know, was her successor; she lives there still.

Time wore on at the Grange in its former pleasant way till Miss Cathy reached sixteen. On the anniversary of her birth we never manifested any signs of rejoicing, because it was also the anniversary of my late mistress's death. Her father invariably spent that day alone in the library; and walked, at dusk, as far as Gimmerton kirkyard, where he would frequently prolong his stay beyond midnight. Therefore Catherine was thrown on her own resources for amusement. This twentieth of March was a beautiful spring day, and when her father had retired, my young lady came down dressed for going out, and said she asked to have a ramble on the edge of the moor with me: Mr. Linton had given her leave, if we went only a short distance and were back within the hour.

"So make haste, Ellen!" she cried. "I know where I wish to go; where a colony of moor-game are settled: I want to see whether they have made their nests yet."

"That must be a good distance up," I answered; "they don't breed on the edge of the moor."

"No, it's not," she said. "I've gone very near with papa."

I put on my bonnet and sallied out, thinking nothing more of the matter. She bounded before me, and returned to my side, and was off again like a young greyhound; and, at first, I found plenty of entertainment in listening

to the larks singing far and near, and enjoying the sweet, warm sunshine; and watching her, my pet and my delight, with her golden ringlets flying loose behind, and her bright cheek, as soft and pure in its bloom as a wild rose, and her eyes radiant with cloudless pleasure. She was a happy creature, and an angel, in those days. It's a pity she could not be content.

"Well," said I, "where are your moor-game, Miss Cathy? We should be at them: the Grange park-fence is a great way off now."

"Oh, a little further—only a little further, Ellen," was her answer, continually. "Climb to that hillock, pass that bank, and by the time you reach the other side I shall have raised the birds."

But there were so many hillocks and banks to climb and pass, that, at length, I began to be weary, and told her we must halt, and retrace our steps. I shouted to her, as she had outstripped me a long way; she either did not hear or did not regard, for she still sprang on, and I was compelled to follow. Finally, she dived into a hollow; and before I came in sight of her again, she was two miles nearer Wuthering Heights than her own home; and I beheld a couple of persons arrest her, one of whom I felt convinced was Mr. Heathcliff himself.

Cathy had been caught in the fact of plundering, or, at least, hunting out the nests of the grouse. The Heights were Heathcliff's land, and he was reproving the poacher.

"I've neither taken any nor found any," she said, as I toiled to them, expanding her hands in corroboration of the statement. "I didn't mean to take them; but papa told me there were quantities up here, and I wished to see the eggs."

Heathcliff glanced at me with an ill-meaning smile, expressing his acquaintance with the party, and, consequently, his malevolence towards it, and demanded who "papa" was?

"Mr. Linton of Thrushcross Grange," she replied. "I thought you did not know me, or you wouldn't have spoken in that way."

"You suppose papa is highly esteemed and respected, then?" he said, sarcastically.

"And what are you?" inquired Catherine, gazing curiously on the speaker. "That man I've seen before. Is he your son?"

She pointed to Hareton, the other individual, who had gained nothing but increased bulk and strength by the addition of two years to his age: he seemed as awkward and rough as ever.

“Miss Cathy,” I interrupted, “it will be three hours instead of one that we are out, presently. We really must go back.”

“No, that man is not my son,” answered Heathcliff, pushing me aside. “But I have one, and you have seen him before too; and, though your nurse is in a hurry, I think both you and she would be the better for a little rest. Will you just turn this nab of heath, and walk into my house? You’ll get home earlier for the ease; and you shall receive a kind welcome.”

I whispered Catherine that she mustn’t, on any account, accede to the proposal: it was entirely out of the question.

“Why?” she asked, aloud. “I’m tired of running, and the ground is dewy: I can’t sit here. Let us go, Ellen. Besides, he says I have seen his son. He’s mistaken, I think; but I guess where he lives: at the farmhouse I visited in coming from Penistone Crag. Don’t you?”

“I do. Come, Nelly, hold your tongue—it will be a treat for her to look in on us. Hareton, get forwards with the lass. You shall walk with me, Nelly.”

“No, she’s not going to any such place,” I cried, struggling to release my arm, which he had seized: but she was almost at the door-stones already, scampering round the brow at full speed. Her appointed companion did not pretend to escort her: he shied off by the road-side, and vanished.

“Mr. Heathcliff, it’s very wrong,” I continued: “you know you mean no good. And there she’ll see Linton, and all will be told as soon as ever we return; and I shall have the blame.”

“I want her to see Linton,” he answered; “he’s looking better these few days; it’s not often he’s fit to be seen. And we’ll soon persuade her to keep the visit secret: where is the harm of it?”

“The harm of it is, that her father would hate me if he found I suffered her to enter your house; and I am convinced you have a bad design in encouraging her to do so,” I replied.

“My design is as honest as possible. I’ll inform you of its whole scope,” he said. “That the two cousins may fall in love, and get married. I’m acting generously to your master: his young chit has no expectations, and should

she second my wishes she'll be provided for at once as joint successor with Linton."

"If Linton died," I answered, "and his life is quite uncertain, Catherine would be the heir."

"No, she would not," he said. "There is no clause in the will to secure it so: his property would go to me; but, to prevent disputes, I desire their union, and am resolved to bring it about."

"And I'm resolved she shall never approach your house with me again," I returned, as we reached the gate, where Miss Cathy waited our coming.

Heathcliff bade me be quiet; and, preceding us up the path, hastened to open the door. My young lady gave him several looks, as if she could not exactly make up her mind what to think of him; but now he smiled when he met her eye, and softened his voice in addressing her; and I was foolish enough to imagine the memory of her mother might disarm him from desiring her injury. Linton stood on the hearth. He had been out walking in the fields, for his cap was on, and he was calling to Joseph to bring him dry shoes. He had grown tall of his age, still wanting some months of sixteen. His features were pretty yet, and his eye and complexion brighter than I remembered them, though with merely temporary lustre borrowed from the salubrious air and genial sun.

"Now, who is that?" asked Mr. Heathcliff, turning to Cathy. "Can you tell?"

"Your son?" she said, having doubtfully surveyed, first one and then the other.

"Yes, yes," answered he: "but is this the only time you have beheld him? Think! Ah! you have a short memory. Linton, don't you recall your cousin, that you used to tease us so with wishing to see?"

"What, Linton!" cried Cathy, kindling into joyful surprise at the name. "Is that little Linton? He's taller than I am! Are you Linton?"

The youth stepped forward, and acknowledged himself: she kissed him fervently, and they gazed with wonder at the change time had wrought in the appearance of each. Catherine had reached her full height; her figure was both plump and slender, elastic as steel, and her whole aspect sparkling with health and spirits. Linton's looks and movements were very languid, and his form extremely slight; but there was a grace in his manner that

mitigated these defects, and rendered him not displeasing. After exchanging numerous marks of fondness with him, his cousin went to Mr. Heathcliff, who lingered by the door, dividing his attention between the objects inside and those that lay without: pretending, that is, to observe the latter, and really noting the former alone.

“And you are my uncle, then!” she cried, reaching up to salute him. “I thought I liked you, though you were cross at first. Why don’t you visit at the Grange with Linton? To live all these years such close neighbours, and never see us, is odd: what have you done so for?”

“I visited it once or twice too often before you were born,” he answered. “There—damn it! If you have any kisses to spare, give them to Linton: they are thrown away on me.”

“Naughty Ellen!” exclaimed Catherine, flying to attack me next with her lavish caresses. “Wicked Ellen! to try to hinder me from entering. But I’ll take this walk every morning in future: may I, uncle? and sometimes bring papa. Won’t you be glad to see us?”

“Of course,” replied the uncle, with a hardly suppressed grimace, resulting from his deep aversion to both the proposed visitors. “But stay,” he continued, turning towards the young lady. “Now I think of it, I’d better tell you. Mr. Linton has a prejudice against me: we quarrelled at one time of our lives, with unchristian ferocity; and, if you mention coming here to him, he’ll put a veto on your visits altogether. Therefore, you must not mention it, unless you be careless of seeing your cousin hereafter: you may come, if you will, but you must not mention it.”

“Why did you quarrel?” asked Catherine, considerably crestfallen.

“He thought me too poor to wed his sister,” answered Heathcliff, “and was grieved that I got her: his pride was hurt, and he’ll never forgive it.”

“That’s wrong!” said the young lady: “some time I’ll tell him so. But Linton and I have no share in your quarrel. I’ll not come here, then; he shall come to the Grange.”

“It will be too far for me,” murmured her cousin: “to walk four miles would kill me. No, come here, Miss Catherine, now and then: not every morning, but once or twice a week.”

The father launched towards his son a glance of bitter contempt.

“I am afraid, Nelly, I shall lose my labour,” he muttered to me. “Miss Catherine, as the ninny calls her, will discover his value, and send him to the devil. Now, if it had been Hareton!—Do you know that, twenty times a day, I covet Hareton, with all his degradation? I’d have loved the lad had he been some one else. But I think he’s safe from *her* love. I’ll pit him against that paltry creature, unless it bestir itself briskly. We calculate it will scarcely last till it is eighteen. Oh, confound the vapid thing! He’s absorbed in drying his feet, and never looks at her.—Linton!”

“Yes, father,” answered the boy.

“Have you nothing to show your cousin anywhere about, not even a rabbit or a weasel’s nest? Take her into the garden, before you change your shoes; and into the stable to see your horse.”

“Wouldn’t you rather sit here?” asked Linton, addressing Cathy in a tone which expressed reluctance to move again.

“I don’t know,” she replied, casting a longing look to the door, and evidently eager to be active.

He kept his seat, and shrank closer to the fire. Heathcliff rose, and went into the kitchen, and from thence to the yard, calling out for Hareton. Hareton responded, and presently the two re-entered. The young man had been washing himself, as was visible by the glow on his cheeks and his wetted hair.

“Oh, I’ll ask *you*, uncle,” cried Miss Cathy, recollecting the housekeeper’s assertion. “That is not my cousin, is he?”

“Yes,” he, replied, “your mother’s nephew. Don’t you like him!”

Catherine looked queer.

“Is he not a handsome lad?” he continued.

The uncivil little thing stood on tiptoe, and whispered a sentence in Heathcliff’s ear. He laughed; Hareton darkened: I perceived he was very sensitive to suspected slights, and had obviously a dim notion of his inferiority. But his master or guardian chased the frown by exclaiming—

“You’ll be the favourite among us, Hareton! She says you are a—What was it? Well, something very flattering. Here! you go with her round the farm. And behave like a gentleman, mind! Don’t use any bad words; and don’t stare when the young lady is not looking at you, and be ready to hide your face when she is; and, when you speak, say your words slowly, and

keep your hands out of your pockets. Be off, and entertain her as nicely as you can.”

He watched the couple walking past the window. Earnshaw had his countenance completely averted from his companion. He seemed studying the familiar landscape with a stranger’s and an artist’s interest. Catherine took a sly look at him, expressing small admiration. She then turned her attention to seeking out objects of amusement for herself, and tripped merrily on, lilting a tune to supply the lack of conversation.

“I’ve tied his tongue,” observed Heathcliff. “He’ll not venture a single syllable all the time! Nelly, you recollect me at his age—nay, some years younger. Did I ever look so stupid: so ‘gaumless,’ as Joseph calls it?”

“Worse,” I replied, “because more sullen with it.”

“I’ve a pleasure in him,” he continued, reflecting aloud. “He has satisfied my expectations. If he were a born fool I should not enjoy it half so much. But he’s no fool; and I can sympathise with all his feelings, having felt them myself. I know what he suffers now, for instance, exactly: it is merely a beginning of what he shall suffer, though. And he’ll never be able to emerge from his bathos of coarseness and ignorance. I’ve got him faster than his scoundrel of a father secured me, and lower; for he takes a pride in his brutishness. I’ve taught him to scorn everything extra-animal as silly and weak. Don’t you think Hindley would be proud of his son, if he could see him? almost as proud as I am of mine. But there’s this difference; one is gold put to the use of paving-stones, and the other is tin polished to ape a service of silver. *Mine* has nothing valuable about it; yet I shall have the merit of making it go as far as such poor stuff can go. *His* had first-rate qualities, and they are lost: rendered worse than unavailing. *I* have nothing to regret; *he* would have more than any, but I, are aware of. And the best of it is, Hareton is damnably fond of me! You’ll own that I’ve outmatched Hindley there. If the dead villain could rise from his grave to abuse me for his offspring’s wrongs, I should have the fun of seeing the said offspring fight him back again, indignant that he should dare to rail at the one friend he has in the world!”

Heathcliff chuckled a fiendish laugh at the idea. I made no reply, because I saw that he expected none. Meantime, our young companion, who sat too removed from us to hear what was said, began to evince symptoms of uneasiness, probably repenting that he had denied himself the treat of



Catherine's society for fear of a little fatigue. His father remarked the restless glances wandering to the window, and the hand irresolutely extended towards his cap.

"Get up, you idle boy!" he exclaimed, with assumed heartiness.

"Away after them! they are just at the corner, by the stand of hives."

Linton gathered his energies, and left the hearth. The lattice was open, and, as he stepped out, I heard Cathy inquiring of her unsociable attendant what was that inscription over the door? Hareton stared up, and scratched his head like a true clown.

"It's some damnable writing," he answered. "I cannot read it."

"Can't read it?" cried Catherine; "I can read it: it's English. But I want to know why it is there."

Linton giggled: the first appearance of mirth he had exhibited.

"He does not know his letters," he said to his cousin. "Could you believe in the existence of such a colossal dunce?"

"Is he all as he should be?" asked Miss Cathy, seriously; "or is he simple: not right? I've questioned him twice now, and each time he looked so stupid I think he does not understand me. I can hardly understand him, I'm sure!"

Linton repeated his laugh, and glanced at Hareton tauntingly; who certainly did not seem quite clear of comprehension at that moment.

"There's nothing the matter but laziness; is there, Earnshaw?" he said. "My cousin fancies you are an idiot. There you experience the consequence of scorning 'book-larning,' as you would say. Have you noticed, Catherine, his frightful Yorkshire pronunciation?"

"Why, where the devil is the use on't?" growled Hareton, more ready in answering his daily companion. He was about to enlarge further, but the two youngsters broke into a noisy fit of merriment: my giddy miss being delighted to discover that she might turn his strange talk to matter of amusement.

"Where is the use of the devil in that sentence?" tittered Linton. "Papa told you not to say any bad words, and you can't open your mouth without one. Do try to behave like a gentleman, now do!"

"If thou weren't more a lass than a lad, I'd fell thee this minute, I would; pitiful lath of a crater!" retorted the angry boor, retreating, while his face

burnt with mingled rage and mortification! for he was conscious of being insulted, and embarrassed how to resent it.

Mr. Heathcliff having overheard the conversation, as well as I, smiled when he saw him go; but immediately afterwards cast a look of singular aversion on the flippant pair, who remained chattering in the door-way: the boy finding animation enough while discussing Hareton's faults and deficiencies, and relating anecdotes of his goings on; and the girl relishing his pert and spiteful sayings, without considering the ill-nature they evinced. I began to dislike, more than to compassionate Linton, and to excuse his father in some measure for holding him cheap.

We stayed till afternoon: I could not tear Miss Cathy away sooner; but happily my master had not quitted his apartment, and remained ignorant of our prolonged absence. As we walked home, I would fain have enlightened my charge on the characters of the people we had quitted: but she got it into her head that I was prejudiced against them.

"Aha!" she cried, "you take papa's side, Ellen: you are partial I know; or else you wouldn't have cheated me so many years into the notion that Linton lived a long way from here. I'm really extremely angry; only I'm so pleased I can't show it! But you must hold your tongue about *my* uncle; he's my uncle, remember; and I'll scold papa for quarrelling with him."

And so she ran on, till I relinquished the endeavour to convince her of her mistake. She did not mention the visit that night, because she did not see Mr. Linton. Next day it all came out, sadly to my chagrin; and still I was not altogether sorry: I thought the burden of directing and warning would be more efficiently borne by him than me. But he was too timid in giving satisfactory reasons for his wish that she should shun connection with the household of the Heights, and Catherine liked good reasons for every restraint that harassed her petted will.

"Papa!" she exclaimed, after the morning's salutations, "guess whom I saw yesterday, in my walk on the moors. Ah, papa, you started! you've not done right, have you, now? I saw—but listen, and you shall hear how I found you out; and Ellen, who is in league with you, and yet pretended to pity me so, when I kept hoping, and was always disappointed about Linton's coming back!"

She gave a faithful account of her excursion and its consequences; and my master, though he cast more than one reproachful look at me, said

nothing till she had concluded. Then he drew her to him, and asked if she knew why he had concealed Linton's near neighbourhood from her? Could she think it was to deny her a pleasure that she might harmlessly enjoy?

"It was because you disliked Mr. Heathcliff," she answered.

"Then you believe I care more for my own feelings than yours, Cathy?" he said. "No, it was not because I disliked Mr. Heathcliff, but because Mr. Heathcliff dislikes me; and is a most diabolical man, delighting to wrong and ruin those he hates, if they give him the slightest opportunity. I knew that you could not keep up an acquaintance with your cousin without being brought into contact with him; and I knew he would detest you on my account; so for your own good, and nothing else, I took precautions that you should not see Linton again. I meant to explain this some time as you grew older, and I'm sorry I delayed it."

"But Mr. Heathcliff was quite cordial, papa," observed Catherine, not at all convinced; "and he didn't object to our seeing each other: he said I might come to his house when I pleased; only I must not tell you, because you had quarrelled with him, and would not forgive him for marrying aunt Isabella. And you won't. *You* are the one to be blamed: he is willing to let us be friends, at least; Linton and I; and you are not."

My master, perceiving that she would not take his word for her uncle-in-law's evil disposition, gave a hasty sketch of his conduct to Isabella, and the manner in which Wuthering Heights became his property. He could not bear to discourse long upon the topic; for though he spoke little of it, he still felt the same horror and detestation of his ancient enemy that had occupied his heart ever since Mrs. Linton's death. "She might have been living yet, if it had not been for him!" was his constant bitter reflection; and, in his eyes, Heathcliff seemed a murderer. Miss Cathy—conversant with no bad deeds except her own slight acts of disobedience, injustice, and passion, arising from hot temper and thoughtlessness, and repented of on the day they were committed—was amazed at the blackness of spirit that could brood on and cover revenge for years, and deliberately prosecute its plans without a visitation of remorse. She appeared so deeply impressed and shocked at this new view of human nature—excluded from all her studies and all her ideas till now—that Mr. Edgar deemed it unnecessary to pursue the subject. He merely added: "You will know hereafter, darling, why I wish you to avoid

his house and family; now return to your old employments and amusements, and think no more about them.”

Catherine kissed her father, and sat down quietly to her lessons for a couple of hours, according to custom; then she accompanied him into the grounds, and the whole day passed as usual: but in the evening, when she had retired to her room, and I went to help her to undress, I found her crying, on her knees by the bedside.

“Oh, fie, silly child!” I exclaimed. “If you had any real griefs you’d be ashamed to waste a tear on this little contrariety. You never had one shadow of substantial sorrow, Miss Catherine. Suppose, for a minute, that master and I were dead, and you were by yourself in the world: how would you feel, then? Compare the present occasion with such an affliction as that, and be thankful for the friends you have, instead of coveting more.”

“I’m not crying for myself, Ellen,” she answered, “it’s for him. He expected to see me again to-morrow, and there he’ll be so disappointed: and he’ll wait for me, and I sha’n’t come!”

“Nonsense!” said I, “do you imagine he has thought as much of you as you have of him? Hasn’t he Hareton for a companion? Not one in a hundred would weep at losing a relation they had just seen twice, for two afternoons. Linton will conjecture how it is, and trouble himself no further about you.”

“But may I not write a note to tell him why I cannot come?” she asked, rising to her feet. “And just send those books I promised to lend him? His books are not as nice as mine, and he wanted to have them extremely, when I told him how interesting they were. May I not, Ellen?”

“No, indeed! no, indeed!” replied I with decision. “Then he would write to you, and there’d never be an end of it. No, Miss Catherine, the acquaintance must be dropped entirely: so papa expects, and I shall see that it is done.”

“But how can one little note—?” she recommenced, putting on an imploring countenance.

“Silence!” I interrupted. “We’ll not begin with your little notes. Get into bed.”

She threw at me a very naughty look, so naughty that I would not kiss her good-night at first: I covered her up, and shut her door, in great displeasure; but, repenting half-way, I returned softly, and lo! there was Miss standing at

the table with a bit of blank paper before her and a pencil in her hand, which she guiltily slipped out of sight on my entrance.

“You’ll get nobody to take that, Catherine,” I said, “if you write it; and at present I shall put out your candle.”

I set the extinguisher on the flame, receiving as I did so a slap on my hand and a petulant “cross thing!” I then quitted her again, and she drew the bolt in one of her worst, most peevish humours. The letter was finished and forwarded to its destination by a milk-fetcher who came from the village; but that I didn’t learn till some time afterwards. Weeks passed on, and Cathy recovered her temper; though she grew wondrous fond of stealing off to corners by herself and often, if I came near her suddenly while reading, she would start and bend over the book, evidently desirous to hide it; and I detected edges of loose paper sticking out beyond the leaves. She also got a trick of coming down early in the morning and lingering about the kitchen, as if she were expecting the arrival of something; and she had a small drawer in a cabinet in the library, which she would trifle over for hours, and whose key she took special care to remove when she left it.

One day, as she inspected this drawer, I observed that the playthings and trinkets which recently formed its contents were transmuted into bits of folded paper. My curiosity and suspicions were roused; I determined to take a peep at her mysterious treasures; so, at night, as soon as she and my master were safe upstairs, I searched, and readily found among my house keys one that would fit the lock. Having opened, I emptied the whole contents into my apron, and took them with me to examine at leisure in my own chamber. Though I could not but suspect, I was still surprised to discover that they were a mass of correspondence—daily almost, it must have been—from Linton Heathcliff: answers to documents forwarded by her. The earlier dated were embarrassed and short; gradually, however, they expanded into copious love-letters, foolish, as the age of the writer rendered natural, yet with touches here and there which I thought were borrowed from a more experienced source. Some of them struck me as singularly odd compounds of ardour and flatness; commencing in strong feeling, and concluding in the affected, wordy style that a schoolboy might use to a fancied, incorporeal sweetheart. Whether they satisfied Cathy I don’t know; but they appeared very worthless trash to me. After turning over as many as

I thought proper, I tied them in a handkerchief and set them aside, relocking the vacant drawer.

Following her habit, my young lady descended early, and visited the kitchen: I watched her go to the door, on the arrival of a certain little boy; and, while the dairymaid filled his can, she tucked something into his jacket pocket, and plucked something out. I went round by the garden, and laid wait for the messenger; who fought valorously to defend his trust, and we spilt the milk between us; but I succeeded in abstracting the epistle; and, threatening serious consequences if he did not look sharp home, I remained under the wall and perused Miss Cathy's affectionate composition. It was more simple and more eloquent than her cousin's: very pretty and very silly. I shook my head, and went meditating into the house. The day being wet, she could not divert herself with rambling about the park; so, at the conclusion of her morning studies, she resorted to the solace of the drawer. Her father sat reading at the table; and I, on purpose, had sought a bit of work in some unripped fringes of the window-curtain, keeping my eye steadily fixed on her proceedings. Never did any bird flying back to a plundered nest, which it had left brimful of chirping young ones, express more complete despair, in its anguished cries and flutterings, than she by her single "Oh!" and the change that transfigured her late happy countenance. Mr. Linton looked up.

"What is the matter, love? Have you hurt yourself?" he said.

His tone and look assured her *he* had not been the discoverer of the hoard.

"No, papa!" she gasped. "Ellen! Ellen! come upstairs—I'm sick!"

I obeyed her summons, and accompanied her out.

"Oh, Ellen! you have got them," she commenced immediately, dropping on her knees, when we were enclosed alone. "Oh, give them to me, and I'll never, never do so again! Don't tell papa. You have not told papa, Ellen? say you have not? I've been exceedingly naughty, but I won't do it any more!"

With a grave severity in my manner I bade her stand up.

"So," I exclaimed, "Miss Catherine, you are tolerably far on, it seems: you may well be ashamed of them! A fine bundle of trash you study in your leisure hours, to be sure: why, it's good enough to be printed! And what do

you suppose the master will think when I display it before him? I hav'n't shown it yet, but you needn't imagine I shall keep your ridiculous secrets. For shame! and you must have led the way in writing such absurdities: he would not have thought of beginning, I'm certain."

"I didn't! I didn't!" sobbed Cathy, fit to break her heart. "I didn't once think of loving him till—"

"*Loving!*" cried I, as scornfully as I could utter the word. "*Loving!* Did anybody ever hear the like! I might just as well talk of loving the miller who comes once a year to buy our corn. Pretty loving, indeed! and both times together you have seen Linton hardly four hours in your life! Now here is the babyish trash. I'm going with it to the library; and we'll see what your father says to such *loving.*"

She sprang at her precious epistles, but I held them above my head; and then she poured out further frantic entreaties that I would burn them—do anything rather than show them. And being really fully as much inclined to laugh as scold—for I esteemed it all girlish vanity—I at length relented in a measure, and asked,—“If I consent to burn them, will you promise faithfully neither to send nor receive a letter again, nor a book (for I perceive you have sent him books), nor locks of hair, nor rings, nor playthings?”

“We don't send playthings,” cried Catherine, her pride overcoming her shame.

“Nor anything at all, then, my lady?” I said. “Unless you will, here I go.”

“I promise, Ellen!” she cried, catching my dress. “Oh, put them in the fire, do, do!”

But when I proceeded to open a place with the poker the sacrifice was too painful to be borne. She earnestly supplicated that I would spare her one or two.

“One or two, Ellen, to keep for Linton's sake!”

I unknotted the handkerchief, and commenced dropping them in from an angle, and the flame curled up the chimney.

“I will have one, you cruel wretch!” she screamed, darting her hand into the fire, and drawing forth some half-consumed fragments, at the expense of her fingers.

“Very well—and I will have some to exhibit to papa!” I answered, shaking back the rest into the bundle, and turning anew to the door.

She emptied her blackened pieces into the flames, and motioned me to finish the immolation. It was done; I stirred up the ashes, and interred them under a shovelful of coals; and she mutely, and with a sense of intense injury, retired to her private apartment. I descended to tell my master that the young lady’s qualm of sickness was almost gone, but I judged it best for her to lie down a while. She wouldn’t dine; but she reappeared at tea, pale, and red about the eyes, and marvellously subdued in outward aspect. Next morning I answered the letter by a slip of paper, inscribed, “Master Heathcliff is requested to send no more notes to Miss Linton, as she will not receive them.” And, henceforth, the little boy came with vacant pockets.



## CHAPTER XXII

Summer drew to an end, and early autumn: it was past Michaelmas, but the harvest was late that year, and a few of our fields were still uncleared. Mr. Linton and his daughter would frequently walk out among the reapers; at the carrying of the last sheaves they stayed till dusk, and the evening happening to be chill and damp, my master caught a bad cold, that settled obstinately on his lungs, and confined him indoors throughout the whole of the winter, nearly without intermission.

Poor Cathy, frightened from her little romance, had been considerably sadder and duller since its abandonment; and her father insisted on her reading less, and taking more exercise. She had his companionship no longer; I esteemed it a duty to supply its lack, as much as possible, with mine: an inefficient substitute; for I could only spare two or three hours, from my numerous diurnal occupations, to follow her footsteps, and then my society was obviously less desirable than his.

On an afternoon in October, or the beginning of November—a fresh watery afternoon, when the turf and paths were rustling with moist, withered leaves, and the cold blue sky was half hidden by clouds—dark grey streamers, rapidly mounting from the west, and boding abundant rain—I requested my young lady to forego her ramble, because I was certain of showers. She refused; and I unwillingly donned a cloak, and took my umbrella to accompany her on a stroll to the bottom of the park: a formal walk which she generally affected if low-spirited—and that she invariably was when Mr. Edgar had been worse than ordinary, a thing never known from his confession, but guessed both by her and me from his increased silence and the melancholy of his countenance. She went sadly on: there was no running or bounding now, though the chill wind might well have tempted her to race. And often, from the side of my eye, I could detect her raising a hand, and brushing something off her cheek. I gazed round for a means of diverting her thoughts. On one side of the road rose a high, rough

bank, where hazels and stunted oaks, with their roots half exposed, held uncertain tenure: the soil was too loose for the latter; and strong winds had blown some nearly horizontal. In summer Miss Catherine delighted to climb along these trunks, and sit in the branches, swinging twenty feet above the ground; and I, pleased with her agility and her light, childish heart, still considered it proper to scold every time I caught her at such an elevation, but so that she knew there was no necessity for descending. From dinner to tea she would lie in her breeze-rocked cradle, doing nothing except singing old songs—my nursery lore—to herself, or watching the birds, joint tenants, feed and entice their young ones to fly: or nestling with closed lids, half thinking, half dreaming, happier than words can express.

“Look, Miss!” I exclaimed, pointing to a nook under the roots of one twisted tree. “Winter is not here yet. There’s a little flower up yonder, the last bud from the multitude of bluebells that clouded those turf steps in July with a lilac mist. Will you clamber up, and pluck it to show to papa?” Cathy stared a long time at the lonely blossom trembling in its earthy shelter, and replied, at length—“No, I’ll not touch it: but it looks melancholy, does it not, Ellen?”

“Yes,” I observed, “about as starved and suckless as you: your cheeks are bloodless; let us take hold of hands and run. You’re so low, I daresay I shall keep up with you.”

“No,” she repeated, and continued sauntering on, pausing at intervals to muse over a bit of moss, or a tuft of blanched grass, or a fungus spreading its bright orange among the heaps of brown foliage; and, ever and anon, her hand was lifted to her averted face.

“Catherine, why are you crying, love?” I asked, approaching and putting my arm over her shoulder. “You mustn’t cry because papa has a cold; be thankful it is nothing worse.”

She now put no further restraint on her tears; her breath was stifled by sobs.

“Oh, it will be something worse,” she said. “And what shall I do when papa and you leave me, and I am by myself? I can’t forget your words, Ellen; they are always in my ear. How life will be changed, how dreary the world will be, when papa and you are dead.”

“None can tell whether you won’t die before us,” I replied. “It’s wrong to anticipate evil. We’ll hope there are years and years to come before any of

us go: master is young, and I am strong, and hardly forty-five. My mother lived till eighty, a canty dame to the last. And suppose Mr. Linton were spared till he saw sixty, that would be more years than you have counted, Miss. And would it not be foolish to mourn a calamity above twenty years beforehand?"

"But Aunt Isabella was younger than papa," she remarked, gazing up with timid hope to seek further consolation.

"Aunt Isabella had not you and me to nurse her," I replied. "She wasn't as happy as Master: she hadn't as much to live for. All you need do, is to wait well on your father, and cheer him by letting him see you cheerful; and avoid giving him anxiety on any subject: mind that, Cathy! I'll not disguise but you might kill him if you were wild and reckless, and cherished a foolish, fanciful affection for the son of a person who would be glad to have him in his grave; and allowed him to discover that you fretted over the separation he has judged it expedient to make."

"I fret about nothing on earth except papa's illness," answered my companion. "I care for nothing in comparison with papa. And I'll never—never—oh, never, while I have my senses, do an act or say a word to vex him. I love him better than myself, Ellen; and I know it by this: I pray every night that I may live after him; because I would rather be miserable than that he should be: that proves I love him better than myself."

"Good words," I replied. "But deeds must prove it also; and after he is well, remember you don't forget resolutions formed in the hour of fear."

As we talked, we neared a door that opened on the road; and my young lady, lightening into sunshine again, climbed up and seated herself on the top of the wall, reaching over to gather some hips that bloomed scarlet on the summit branches of the wild-rose trees shadowing the highway side: the lower fruit had disappeared, but only birds could touch the upper, except from Cathy's present station. In stretching to pull them, her hat fell off; and as the door was locked, she proposed scrambling down to recover it. I bid her be cautious lest she got a fall, and she nimbly disappeared. But the return was no such easy matter: the stones were smooth and neatly cemented, and the rose-bushes and black-berry stragglers could yield no assistance in re-ascending. I, like a fool, didn't recollect that, till I heard her laughing and exclaiming—"Ellen! you'll have to fetch the key, or else I

must run round to the porter's lodge. I can't scale the ramparts on this side!"

"Stay where you are," I answered; "I have my bundle of keys in my pocket: perhaps I may manage to open it; if not, I'll go."

Catherine amused herself with dancing to and fro before the door, while I tried all the large keys in succession. I had applied the last, and found that none would do; so, repeating my desire that she would remain there, I was about to hurry home as fast as I could, when an approaching sound arrested me. It was the trot of a horse; Cathy's dance stopped also.

"Who is that?" I whispered.

"Ellen, I wish you could open the door," whispered back my companion, anxiously.

"Ho, Miss Linton!" cried a deep voice (the rider's), "I'm glad to meet you. Don't be in haste to enter, for I have an explanation to ask and obtain."

"I sha'n't speak to you, Mr. Heathcliff," answered Catherine. "Papa says you are a wicked man, and you hate both him and me; and Ellen says the same."

"That is nothing to the purpose," said Heathcliff. (He it was.) "I don't hate my son, I suppose; and it is concerning him that I demand your attention. Yes; you have cause to blush. Two or three months since, were you not in the habit of writing to Linton? making love in play, eh? You deserved, both of you, flogging for that! You especially, the elder; and less sensitive, as it turns out. I've got your letters, and if you give me any pertness I'll send them to your father. I presume you grew weary of the amusement and dropped it, didn't you? Well, you dropped Linton with it into a Slough of Despond. He was in earnest: in love, really. As true as I live, he's dying for you; breaking his heart at your fickleness: not figuratively, but actually. Though Hareton has made him a standing jest for six weeks, and I have used more serious measures, and attempted to frighten him out of his idiocy, he gets worse daily; and he'll be under the sod before summer, unless you restore him!"

"How can you lie so glaringly to the poor child?" I called from the inside. "Pray ride on! How can you deliberately get up such paltry falsehoods? Miss Cathy, I'll knock the lock off with a stone: you won't believe that vile

nonsense. You can feel in yourself it is impossible that a person should die for love of a stranger.”

“I was not aware there were eavesdroppers,” muttered the detected villain. “Worthy Mrs. Dean, I like you, but I don’t like your double-dealing,” he added aloud. “How could *you* lie so glaringly as to affirm I hated the ‘poor child’? and invent bugbear stories to terrify her from my door-stones? Catherine Linton (the very name warms me), my bonny lass, I shall be from home all this week; go and see if have not spoken truth: do, there’s a darling! Just imagine your father in my place, and Linton in yours; then think how you would value your careless lover if he refused to stir a step to comfort you, when your father himself entreated him; and don’t, from pure stupidity, fall into the same error. I swear, on my salvation, he’s going to his grave, and none but you can save him!”

The lock gave way and I issued out.

“I swear Linton is dying,” repeated Heathcliff, looking hard at me. “And grief and disappointment are hastening his death. Nelly, if you won’t let her go, you can walk over yourself. But I shall not return till this time next week; and I think your master himself would scarcely object to her visiting her cousin.”

“Come in,” said I, taking Cathy by the arm and half forcing her to re-enter; for she lingered, viewing with troubled eyes the features of the speaker, too stern to express his inward deceit.

He pushed his horse close, and, bending down, observed—“Miss Catherine, I’ll own to you that I have little patience with Linton; and Hareton and Joseph have less. I’ll own that he’s with a harsh set. He pines for kindness, as well as love; and a kind word from you would be his best medicine. Don’t mind Mrs. Dean’s cruel cautions; but be generous, and contrive to see him. He dreams of you day and night, and cannot be persuaded that you don’t hate him, since you neither write nor call.”

I closed the door, and rolled a stone to assist the loosened lock in holding it; and spreading my umbrella, I drew my charge underneath: for the rain began to drive through the moaning branches of the trees, and warned us to avoid delay. Our hurry prevented any comment on the encounter with Heathcliff, as we stretched towards home; but I divined instinctively that Catherine’s heart was clouded now in double darkness. Her features were so

sad, they did not seem hers: she evidently regarded what she had heard as every syllable true.

The master had retired to rest before we came in. Cathy stole to his room to inquire how he was; he had fallen asleep. She returned, and asked me to sit with her in the library. We took our tea together; and afterwards she lay down on the rug, and told me not to talk, for she was weary. I got a book, and pretended to read. As soon as she supposed me absorbed in my occupation, she recommenced her silent weeping: it appeared, at present, her favourite diversion. I suffered her to enjoy it a while; then I expostulated: deriding and ridiculing all Mr. Heathcliff's assertions about his son, as if I were certain she would coincide. Alas! I hadn't skill to counteract the effect his account had produced: it was just what he intended.

"You may be right, Ellen," she answered; "but I shall never feel at ease till I know. And I must tell Linton it is not my fault that I don't write, and convince him that I shall not change."

What use were anger and protestations against her silly credulity? We parted that night—hostile; but next day beheld me on the road to Wuthering Heights, by the side of my wilful young mistress's pony. I couldn't bear to witness her sorrow: to see her pale, dejected countenance, and heavy eyes: and I yielded, in the faint hope that Linton himself might prove, by his reception of us, how little of the tale was founded on fact.

## CHAPTER XXIII

The rainy night had ushered in a misty morning—half frost, half drizzle—and temporary brooks crossed our path—gurgling from the uplands. My feet were thoroughly wetted; I was cross and low; exactly the humour suited for making the most of these disagreeable things. We entered the farm-house by the kitchen way, to ascertain whether Mr. Heathcliff were really absent: because I put slight faith in his own affirmation.

Joseph seemed sitting in a sort of elysium alone, beside a roaring fire; a quart of ale on the table near him, bristling with large pieces of toasted oat-cake; and his black, short pipe in his mouth. Catherine ran to the hearth to warm herself. I asked if the master was in? My question remained so long unanswered, that I thought the old man had grown deaf, and repeated it louder.

“Na—ay!” he snarled, or rather screamed through his nose. “Na—ay! yah muh goa back whear yah coom frough.”

“Joseph!” cried a peevish voice, simultaneously with me, from the inner room. “How often am I to call you? There are only a few red ashes now. Joseph! come this moment.”

Vigorous puffs, and a resolute stare into the grate, declared he had no ear for this appeal. The housekeeper and Hareton were invisible; one gone on an errand, and the other at his work, probably. We knew Linton’s tones, and entered.

“Oh, I hope you’ll die in a garret, starved to death!” said the boy, mistaking our approach for that of his negligent attendant.

He stopped on observing his error: his cousin flew to him.

“Is that you, Miss Linton?” he said, raising his head from the arm of the great chair, in which he reclined. “No—don’t kiss me: it takes my breath. Dear me! Papa said you would call,” continued he, after recovering a little from Catherine’s embrace; while she stood by looking very contrite. “Will

you shut the door, if you please? you left it open; and those—those *detestable* creatures won't bring coals to the fire. It's so cold!"

I stirred up the cinders, and fetched a scuttleful myself. The invalid complained of being covered with ashes; but he had a tiresome cough, and looked feverish and ill, so I did not rebuke his temper.

"Well, Linton," murmured Catherine, when his corrugated brow relaxed, "are you glad to see me? Can I do you any good?"

"Why didn't you come before?" he asked. "You should have come, instead of writing. It tired me dreadfully writing those long letters. I'd far rather have talked to you. Now, I can neither bear to talk, nor anything else. I wonder where Zillah is! Will you" (looking at me) "step into the kitchen and see?"

I had received no thanks for my other service; and being unwilling to run to and fro at his behest, I replied—"Nobody is out there but Joseph."

"I want to drink," he exclaimed fretfully, turning away. "Zillah is constantly gadding off to Gimmerton since papa went: it's miserable! And I'm obliged to come down here—they resolved never to hear me upstairs."

"Is your father attentive to you, Master Heathcliff?" I asked, perceiving Catherine to be checked in her friendly advances.

"Attentive? He makes them a little more attentive at least," he cried. "The wretches! Do you know, Miss Linton, that brute Hareton laughs at me! I hate him! indeed, I hate them all: they are odious beings."

Cathy began searching for some water; she lighted on a pitcher in the dresser, filled a tumbler, and brought it. He bid her add a spoonful of wine from a bottle on the table; and having swallowed a small portion, appeared more tranquil, and said she was very kind.

"And are you glad to see me?" asked she, reiterating her former question and pleased to detect the faint dawn of a smile.

"Yes, I am. It's something new to hear a voice like yours!" he replied. "But I have been vexed, because you wouldn't come. And papa swore it was owing to me: he called me a pitiful, shuffling, worthless thing; and said you despised me; and if he had been in my place, he would be more the master of the Grange than your father by this time. But you don't despise me, do you, Miss—?"



“I wish you would say Catherine, or Cathy,” interrupted my young lady. “Despise you? No! Next to papa and Ellen, I love you better than anybody living. I don’t love Mr. Heathcliff, though; and I dare not come when he returns: will he stay away many days?”

“Not many,” answered Linton; “but he goes on to the moors frequently, since the shooting season commenced; and you might spend an hour or two with me in his absence. Do say you will. I think I should not be peevish with you: you’d not provoke me, and you’d always be ready to help me, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes,” said Catherine, stroking his long soft hair: “if I could only get papa’s consent, I’d spend half my time with you. Pretty Linton! I wish you were my brother.”

“And then you would like me as well as your father?” observed he, more cheerfully. “But papa says you would love me better than him and all the world, if you were my wife; so I’d rather you were that.”

“No, I should never love anybody better than papa,” she returned gravely. “And people hate their wives, sometimes; but not their sisters and brothers: and if you were the latter, you would live with us, and papa would be as fond of you as he is of me.”

Linton denied that people ever hated their wives; but Cathy affirmed they did, and, in her wisdom, instanced his own father’s aversion to her aunt. I endeavoured to stop her thoughtless tongue. I couldn’t succeed till everything she knew was out. Master Heathcliff, much irritated, asserted her relation was false.

“Papa told me; and papa does not tell falsehoods,” she answered pertly.

“*My* papa scorns yours!” cried Linton. “He calls him a sneaking fool.”

“Yours is a wicked man,” retorted Catherine; “and you are very naughty to dare to repeat what he says. He must be wicked to have made Aunt Isabella leave him as she did.”

“She didn’t leave him,” said the boy; “you sha’n’t contradict me.”

“She did,” cried my young lady.

“Well, I’ll tell you something!” said Linton. “Your mother hated your father: now then.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Catherine, too enraged to continue.

“And she loved mine,” added he.

“You little liar! I hate you now!” she panted, and her face grew red with passion.

“She did! she did!” sang Linton, sinking into the recess of his chair, and leaning back his head to enjoy the agitation of the other disputant, who stood behind.

“Hush, Master Heathcliff!” I said; “that’s your father’s tale, too, I suppose.”

“It isn’t: you hold your tongue!” he answered. “She did, she did, Catherine! she did, she did!”

Cathy, beside herself, gave the chair a violent push, and caused him to fall against one arm. He was immediately seized by a suffocating cough that soon ended his triumph. It lasted so long that it frightened even me. As to his cousin, she wept with all her might, aghast at the mischief she had done: though she said nothing. I held him till the fit exhausted itself. Then he thrust me away, and leant his head down silently. Catherine quelled her lamentations also, took a seat opposite, and looked solemnly into the fire.

“How do you feel now, Master Heathcliff?” I inquired, after waiting ten minutes.

“I wish *she* felt as I do,” he replied: “spiteful, cruel thing! Hareton never touches me: he never struck me in his life. And I was better to-day: and there—” his voice died in a whimper.

“I didn’t strike you!” muttered Cathy, chewing her lip to prevent another burst of emotion.

He sighed and moaned like one under great suffering, and kept it up for a quarter of an hour; on purpose to distress his cousin apparently, for whenever he caught a stifled sob from her he put renewed pain and pathos into the inflexions of his voice.

“I’m sorry I hurt you, Linton,” she said at length, racked beyond endurance. “But I couldn’t have been hurt by that little push, and I had no idea that you could, either: you’re not much, are you, Linton? Don’t let me go home thinking I’ve done you harm. Answer! speak to me.”

“I can’t speak to you,” he murmured; “you’ve hurt me so that I shall lie awake all night choking with this cough. If you had it you’d know what it was; but *you’ll* be comfortably asleep while I’m in agony, and nobody near

me. I wonder how you would like to pass those fearful nights!" And he began to wail aloud, for very pity of himself.

"Since you are in the habit of passing dreadful nights," I said, "it won't be Miss who spoils your ease: you'd be the same had she never come. However, she shall not disturb you again; and perhaps you'll get quieter when we leave you."

"Must I go?" asked Catherine dolefully, bending over him. "Do you want me to go, Linton?"

"You can't alter what you've done," he replied pettishly, shrinking from her, "unless you alter it for the worse by teasing me into a fever."

"Well, then, I must go?" she repeated.

"Let me alone, at least," said he; "I can't bear your talking."

She lingered, and resisted my persuasions to departure a tiresome while; but as he neither looked up nor spoke, she finally made a movement to the door, and I followed. We were recalled by a scream. Linton had slid from his seat on to the hearthstone, and lay writhing in the mere perverseness of an indulged plague of a child, determined to be as grievous and harassing as it can. I thoroughly gauged his disposition from his behaviour, and saw at once it would be folly to attempt humouring him. Not so my companion: she ran back in terror, knelt down, and cried, and soothed, and entreated, till he grew quiet from lack of breath: by no means from compunction at distressing her.

"I shall lift him on to the settle," I said, "and he may roll about as he pleases: we can't stop to watch him. I hope you are satisfied, Miss Cathy, that you are not the person to benefit him; and that his condition of health is not occasioned by attachment to you. Now, then, there he is! Come away: as soon as he knows there is nobody by to care for his nonsense, he'll be glad to lie still."

She placed a cushion under his head, and offered him some water; he rejected the latter, and tossed uneasily on the former, as if it were a stone or a block of wood. She tried to put it more comfortably.

"I can't do with that," he said; "it's not high enough."

Catherine brought another to lay above it.

"That's too high," murmured the provoking thing.

“How must I arrange it, then?” she asked despairingly.

He twined himself up to her, as she half knelt by the settle, and converted her shoulder into a support.

“No, that won’t do,” I said. “You’ll be content with the cushion, Master Heathcliff. Miss has wasted too much time on you already: we cannot remain five minutes longer.”

“Yes, yes, we can!” replied Cathy. “He’s good and patient now. He’s beginning to think I shall have far greater misery than he will to-night, if I believe he is the worse for my visit: and then I dare not come again. Tell the truth about it, Linton; for I musn’t come, if I have hurt you.”

“You must come, to cure me,” he answered. “You ought to come, because you have hurt me: you know you have extremely! I was not as ill when you entered as I am at present—was I?”

“But you’ve made yourself ill by crying and being in a passion.—I didn’t do it all,” said his cousin. “However, we’ll be friends now. And you want me: you would wish to see me sometimes, really?”

“I told you I did,” he replied impatiently. “Sit on the settle and let me lean on your knee. That’s as mamma used to do, whole afternoons together. Sit quite still and don’t talk: but you may sing a song, if you can sing; or you may say a nice long interesting ballad—one of those you promised to teach me; or a story. I’d rather have a ballad, though: begin.”

Catherine repeated the longest she could remember. The employment pleased both mightily. Linton would have another, and after that another, notwithstanding my strenuous objections; and so they went on until the clock struck twelve, and we heard Hareton in the court, returning for his dinner.

“And to-morrow, Catherine, will you be here to-morrow?” asked young Heathcliff, holding her frock as she rose reluctantly.

“No,” I answered, “nor next day neither.” She, however, gave a different response evidently, for his forehead cleared as she stooped and whispered in his ear.

“You won’t go to-morrow, recollect, Miss!” I commenced, when we were out of the house. “You are not dreaming of it, are you?”

She smiled.

“Oh, I’ll take good care,” I continued: “I’ll have that lock mended, and you can escape by no way else.”

“I can get over the wall,” she said laughing. “The Grange is not a prison, Ellen, and you are not my gaoler. And besides, I’m almost seventeen: I’m a woman. And I’m certain Linton would recover quickly if he had me to look after him. I’m older than he is, you know, and wiser: less childish, am I not? And he’ll soon do as I direct him, with some slight coaxing. He’s a pretty little darling when he’s good. I’d make such a pet of him, if he were mine. We should never quarrel, should we after we were used to each other? Don’t you like him, Ellen?”

“Like him!” I exclaimed. “The worst-tempered bit of a sickly slip that ever struggled into its teens. Happily, as Mr. Heathcliff conjectured, he’ll not win twenty. I doubt whether he’ll see spring, indeed. And small loss to his family whenever he drops off. And lucky it is for us that his father took him: the kinder he was treated, the more tedious and selfish he’d be. I’m glad you have no chance of having him for a husband, Miss Catherine.”

My companion waxed serious at hearing this speech. To speak of his death so regardlessly wounded her feelings.

“He’s younger than I,” she answered, after a protracted pause of meditation, “and he ought to live the longest: he will—he must live as long as I do. He’s as strong now as when he first came into the north; I’m positive of that. It’s only a cold that ails him, the same as papa has. You say papa will get better, and why shouldn’t he?”

“Well, well,” I cried, “after all, we needn’t trouble ourselves; for listen, Miss,—and mind, I’ll keep my word,—if you attempt going to Wuthering Heights again, with or without me, I shall inform Mr. Linton, and, unless he allow it, the intimacy with your cousin must not be revived.”

“It has been revived,” muttered Cathy, sulkily.

“Must not be continued, then,” I said.

“We’ll see,” was her reply, and she set off at a gallop, leaving me to toil in the rear.

We both reached home before our dinner-time; my master supposed we had been wandering through the park, and therefore he demanded no explanation of our absence. As soon as I entered I hastened to change my soaked shoes and stockings; but sitting such awhile at the Heights had done

the mischief. On the succeeding morning I was laid up, and during three weeks I remained incapacitated for attending to my duties: a calamity never experienced prior to that period, and never, I am thankful to say, since.

My little mistress behaved like an angel in coming to wait on me, and cheer my solitude; the confinement brought me exceedingly low. It is wearisome, to a stirring active body: but few have slighter reasons for complaint than I had. The moment Catherine left Mr. Linton's room she appeared at my bedside. Her day was divided between us; no amusement usurped a minute: she neglected her meals, her studies, and her play; and she was the fondest nurse that ever watched. She must have had a warm heart, when she loved her father so, to give so much to me. I said her days were divided between us; but the master retired early, and I generally needed nothing after six o'clock, thus the evening was her own. Poor thing! I never considered what she did with herself after tea. And though frequently, when she looked in to bid me good-night, I remarked a fresh colour in her cheeks and a pinkness over her slender fingers, instead of fancying the line borrowed from a cold ride across the moors, I laid it to the charge of a hot fire in the library.

## CHAPTER XXIV

At the close of three weeks I was able to quit my chamber and move about the house. And on the first occasion of my sitting up in the evening I asked Catherine to read to me, because my eyes were weak. We were in the library, the master having gone to bed: she consented, rather unwillingly, I fancied; and imagining my sort of books did not suit her, I bid her please herself in the choice of what she perused. She selected one of her own favourites, and got forward steadily about an hour; then came frequent questions.

“Ellen, are not you tired? Hadn’t you better lie down now? You’ll be sick, keeping up so long, Ellen.”

“No, no, dear, I’m not tired,” I returned, continually.

Perceiving me immovable, she essayed another method of showing her disrelish for her occupation. It changed to yawning, and stretching, and—

“Ellen, I’m tired.”

“Give over then and talk,” I answered.

That was worse: she fretted and sighed, and looked at her watch till eight, and finally went to her room, completely overdone with sleep; judging by her peevish, heavy look, and the constant rubbing she inflicted on her eyes. The following night she seemed more impatient still; and on the third from recovering my company she complained of a headache, and left me. I thought her conduct odd; and having remained alone a long while, I resolved on going and inquiring whether she were better, and asking her to come and lie on the sofa, instead of upstairs in the dark. No Catherine could I discover upstairs, and none below. The servants affirmed they had not seen her. I listened at Mr. Edgar’s door; all was silence. I returned to her apartment, extinguished my candle, and seated myself in the window.

The moon shone bright; a sprinkling of snow covered the ground, and I reflected that she might, possibly, have taken it into her head to walk about

the garden, for refreshment. I did detect a figure creeping along the inner fence of the park; but it was not my young mistress: on its emerging into the light, I recognised one of the grooms. He stood a considerable period, viewing the carriage-road through the grounds; then started off at a brisk pace, as if he had detected something, and reappeared presently, leading Miss's pony; and there she was, just dismounted, and walking by its side. The man took his charge stealthily across the grass towards the stable. Cathy entered by the casement-window of the drawing-room, and glided noiselessly up to where I awaited her. She put the door gently too, slipped off her snowy shoes, untied her hat, and was proceeding, unconscious of my espionage, to lay aside her mantle, when I suddenly rose and revealed myself. The surprise petrified her an instant: she uttered an inarticulate exclamation, and stood fixed.

“My dear Miss Catherine,” I began, too vividly impressed by her recent kindness to break into a scold, “where have you been riding out at this hour? And why should you try to deceive me by telling a tale? Where have you been? Speak!”

“To the bottom of the park,” she stammered. “I didn't tell a tale.”

“And nowhere else?” I demanded.

“No,” was the muttered reply.

“Oh, Catherine!” I cried, sorrowfully. “You know you have been doing wrong, or you wouldn't be driven to uttering an untruth to me. That does grieve me. I'd rather be three months ill, than hear you frame a deliberate lie.”

She sprang forward, and bursting into tears, threw her arms round my neck.

“Well, Ellen, I'm so afraid of you being angry,” she said. “Promise not to be angry, and you shall know the very truth: I hate to hide it.”

We sat down in the window-seat; I assured her I would not scold, whatever her secret might be, and I guessed it, of course; so she commenced—

“I've been to Wuthering Heights, Ellen, and I've never missed going a day since you fell ill; except thrice before, and twice after you left your room. I gave Michael books and pictures to prepare Minny every evening, and to put her back in the stable: you mustn't scold him either, mind. I was



at the Heights by half-past six, and generally stayed till half-past eight, and then galloped home. It was not to amuse myself that I went: I was often wretched all the time. Now and then I was happy: once in a week perhaps. At first, I expected there would be sad work persuading you to let me keep my word to Linton: for I had engaged to call again next day, when we quitted him; but, as you stayed upstairs on the morrow, I escaped that trouble. While Michael was refastening the lock of the park door in the afternoon, I got possession of the key, and told him how my cousin wished me to visit him, because he was sick, and couldn't come to the Grange; and how papa would object to my going: and then I negotiated with him about the pony. He is fond of reading, and he thinks of leaving soon to get married; so he offered, if I would lend him books out of the library, to do what I wished: but I preferred giving him my own, and that satisfied him better.

“On my second visit Linton seemed in lively spirits; and Zillah (that is their housekeeper) made us a clean room and a good fire, and told us that, as Joseph was out at a prayer-meeting and Hareton Earnshaw was off with his dogs—robbing our woods of pheasants, as I heard afterwards—we might do what we liked. She brought me some warm wine and gingerbread, and appeared exceedingly good-natured, and Linton sat in the arm-chair, and I in the little rocking chair on the hearth-stone, and we laughed and talked so merrily, and found so much to say: we planned where we would go, and what we would do in summer. I needn't repeat that, because you would call it silly.

“One time, however, we were near quarrelling. He said the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly. That was his most perfect idea of heaven's happiness: mine was rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only larks, but throstles, and blackbirds, and linnets, and cuckoos pouring out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance, broken into cool dusky dells; but close by great swells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze; and woods and sounding water, and the whole world awake and wild with joy. He wanted all to lie in an ecstasy of peace; I wanted all to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee. I said his

heaven would be only half alive; and he said mine would be drunk: I said I should fall asleep in his; and he said he could not breathe in mine, and began to grow very snappish. At last, we agreed to try both, as soon as the right weather came; and then we kissed each other and were friends.

“After sitting still an hour, I looked at the great room with its smooth uncarpeted floor, and thought how nice it would be to play in, if we removed the table; and I asked Linton to call Zillah in to help us, and we’d have a game at blindman’s-buff; she should try to catch us: you used to, you know, Ellen. He wouldn’t: there was no pleasure in it, he said; but he consented to play at ball with me. We found two in a cupboard, among a heap of old toys, tops, and hoops, and battledores and shuttlecocks. One was marked C., and the other H.; I wished to have the C., because that stood for Catherine, and the H. might be for Heathcliff, his name; but the bran came out of H., and Linton didn’t like it. I beat him constantly: and he got cross again, and coughed, and returned to his chair. That night, though, he easily recovered his good humour: he was charmed with two or three pretty songs—*your* songs, Ellen; and when I was obliged to go, he begged and entreated me to come the following evening; and I promised. Minny and I went flying home as light as air; and I dreamt of Wuthering Heights and my sweet, darling cousin, till morning.

“On the morrow I was sad; partly because you were poorly, and partly that I wished my father knew, and approved of my excursions: but it was beautiful moonlight after tea; and, as I rode on, the gloom cleared. I shall have another happy evening, I thought to myself; and what delights me more, my pretty Linton will. I trotted up their garden, and was turning round to the back, when that fellow Earnshaw met me, took my bridle, and bid me go in by the front entrance. He patted Minny’s neck, and said she was a bonny beast, and appeared as if he wanted me to speak to him. I only told him to leave my horse alone, or else it would kick him. He answered in his vulgar accent, ‘It wouldn’t do mitch hurt if it did;’ and surveyed its legs with a smile. I was half inclined to make it try; however, he moved off to open the door, and, as he raised the latch, he looked up to the inscription above, and said, with a stupid mixture of awkwardness and elation: ‘Miss Catherine! I can read yon, now.’

“‘Wonderful,’ I exclaimed. ‘Pray let us hear you—you *are* grown clever!’

“He spelt, and drawled over by syllables, the name—‘Hareton Earnshaw.’

“‘And the figures?’ I cried, encouragingly, perceiving that he came to a dead halt.

“‘I cannot tell them yet,’ he answered.

“‘Oh, you dunce!’ I said, laughing heartily at his failure.

“The fool stared, with a grin hovering about his lips, and a scowl gathering over his eyes, as if uncertain whether he might not join in my mirth: whether it were not pleasant familiarity, or what it really was, contempt. I settled his doubts, by suddenly retrieving my gravity and desiring him to walk away, for I came to see Linton, not him. He reddened—I saw that by the moonlight—dropped his hand from the latch, and skulked off, a picture of mortified vanity. He imagined himself to be as accomplished as Linton, I suppose, because he could spell his own name; and was marvellously discomfited that I didn’t think the same.”

“Stop, Miss Catherine, dear!”—I interrupted. “I shall not scold, but I don’t like your conduct there. If you had remembered that Hareton was your cousin as much as Master Heathcliff, you would have felt how improper it was to behave in that way. At least, it was praiseworthy ambition for him to desire to be as accomplished as Linton; and probably he did not learn merely to show off: you had made him ashamed of his ignorance before, I have no doubt; and he wished to remedy it and please you. To sneer at his imperfect attempt was very bad breeding. Had you been brought up in his circumstances, would you be less rude? He was as quick and as intelligent a child as ever you were; and I’m hurt that he should be despised now, because that base Heathcliff has treated him so unjustly.”

“Well, Ellen, you won’t cry about it, will you?” she exclaimed, surprised at my earnestness. “But wait, and you shall hear if he coned his A B C to please me; and if it were worth while being civil to the brute. I entered; Linton was lying on the settle, and half got up to welcome me.

“‘I’m ill to-night, Catherine, love,’ he said; ‘and you must have all the talk, and let me listen. Come, and sit by me. I was sure you wouldn’t break your word, and I’ll make you promise again, before you go.’

“I knew now that I mustn’t tease him, as he was ill; and I spoke softly and put no questions, and avoided irritating him in any way. I had brought

some of my nicest books for him: he asked me to read a little of one, and I was about to comply, when Earnshaw burst the door open: having gathered venom with reflection. He advanced direct to us, seized Linton by the arm, and swung him off the seat.

““Get to thy own room!” he said, in a voice almost inarticulate with passion; and his face looked swelled and furious. ‘Take her there if she comes to see thee: thou shalln’t keep me out of this. Begone wi’ ye both!’

“He swore at us, and left Linton no time to answer, nearly throwing him into the kitchen; and he clenched his fist as I followed, seemingly longing to knock me down. I was afraid for a moment, and I let one volume fall; he kicked it after me, and shut us out. I heard a malignant, crackly laugh by the fire, and turning, beheld that odious Joseph standing rubbing his bony hands, and quivering.

““I wer sure he’d sarve ye out! He’s a grand lad! He’s gotten t’ raight sperrit in him! *He* knaws—ay, he knaws, as weel as I do, who sud be t’ maister yonder—Ech, ech, ech! He made ye skift properly! Ech, ech, ech!’

““Where must we go?’ I asked of my cousin, disregarding the old wretch’s mockery.

“Linton was white and trembling. He was not pretty then, Ellen: oh, no! he looked frightful; for his thin face and large eyes were wrought into an expression of frantic, powerless fury. He grasped the handle of the door, and shook it: it was fastened inside.

““If you don’t let me in, I’ll kill you!—If you don’t let me in, I’ll kill you!’ he rather shrieked than said. ‘Devil! devil!—I’ll kill you—I’ll kill you!’

Joseph uttered his croaking laugh again.

““Thear, that’s t’ father!’ he cried. ‘That’s father! We’ve allas summut o’ either side in us. Niver heed, Hareton, lad—dunnut be ’feard—he cannot get at thee!’

“I took hold of Linton’s hands, and tried to pull him away; but he shrieked so shockingly that I dared not proceed. At last his cries were choked by a dreadful fit of coughing; blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell on the ground. I ran into the yard, sick with terror; and called for Zillah, as loud as I could. She soon heard me: she was milking the cows in a shed behind the barn, and hurrying from her work, she inquired what there was

to do? I hadn't breath to explain; dragging her in, I looked about for Linton. Earnshaw had come out to examine the mischief he had caused, and he was then conveying the poor thing upstairs. Zillah and I ascended after him; but he stopped me at the top of the steps, and said I shouldn't go in: I must go home. I exclaimed that he had killed Linton, and I *would* enter. Joseph locked the door, and declared I should do 'no sich stuff,' and asked me whether I were 'bahn to be as mad as him.' I stood crying till the housekeeper reappeared. She affirmed he would be better in a bit, but he couldn't do with that shrieking and din; and she took me, and nearly carried me into the house.

"Ellen, I was ready to tear my hair off my head! I sobbed and wept so that my eyes were almost blind; and the ruffian you have such sympathy with stood opposite: presuming every now and then to bid me 'wisht,' and denying that it was his fault; and, finally, frightened by my assertions that I would tell papa, and that he should be put in prison and hanged, he commenced blubbering himself, and hurried out to hide his cowardly agitation. Still, I was not rid of him: when at length they compelled me to depart, and I had got some hundred yards off the premises, he suddenly issued from the shadow of the road-side, and checked Minny and took hold of me.

"'Miss Catherine, I'm ill grieved,' he began, 'but it's rayther too bad—'

"I gave him a cut with my whip, thinking perhaps he would murder me. He let go, thundering one of his horrid curses, and I galloped home more than half out of my senses.

"I didn't bid you good-night that evening, and I didn't go to Wuthering Heights the next: I wished to go exceedingly; but I was strangely excited, and dreaded to hear that Linton was dead, sometimes; and sometimes shuddered at the thought of encountering Hareton. On the third day I took courage: at least, I couldn't bear longer suspense, and stole off once more. I went at five o'clock, and walked; fancying I might manage to creep into the house, and up to Linton's room, unobserved. However, the dogs gave notice of my approach. Zillah received me, and saying 'the lad was mending nicely,' showed me into a small, tidy, carpeted apartment, where, to my inexpressible joy, I beheld Linton laid on a little sofa, reading one of my books. But he would neither speak to me nor look at me, through a whole hour, Ellen: he has such an unhappy temper. And what quite confounded

me, when he did open his mouth, it was to utter the falsehood that I had occasioned the uproar, and Hareton was not to blame! Unable to reply, except passionately, I got up and walked from the room. He sent after me a faint 'Catherine!' He did not reckon on being answered so: but I wouldn't turn back; and the morrow was the second day on which I stayed at home, nearly determined to visit him no more. But it was so miserable going to bed and getting up, and never hearing anything about him, that my resolution melted into air before it was properly formed. It had appeared wrong to take the journey once; now it seemed wrong to refrain. Michael came to ask if he must saddle Minny; I said 'Yes,' and considered myself doing a duty as she bore me over the hills. I was forced to pass the front windows to get to the court: it was no use trying to conceal my presence.

"'Young master is in the house,' said Zillah, as she saw me making for the parlour. I went in; Earnshaw was there also, but he quitted the room directly. Linton sat in the great arm-chair half asleep; walking up to the fire, I began in a serious tone, partly meaning it to be true—

"'As you don't like me, Linton, and as you think I come on purpose to hurt you, and pretend that I do so every time, this is our last meeting: let us say good-bye; and tell Mr. Heathcliff that you have no wish to see me, and that he mustn't invent any more falsehoods on the subject.'

"'Sit down and take your hat off, Catherine,' he answered. 'You are so much happier than I am, you ought to be better. Papa talks enough of my defects, and shows enough scorn of me, to make it natural I should doubt myself. I doubt whether I am not altogether as worthless as he calls me, frequently; and then I feel so cross and bitter, I hate everybody! I am worthless, and bad in temper, and bad in spirit, almost always; and, if you choose, you may say good-bye: you'll get rid of an annoyance. Only, Catherine, do me this justice: believe that if I might be as sweet, and as kind, and as good as you are, I would be; as willingly, and more so, than as happy and as healthy. And believe that your kindness has made me love you deeper than if I deserved your love: and though I couldn't, and cannot help showing my nature to you, I regret it and repent it; and shall regret and repent it till I die!'

"I felt he spoke the truth; and I felt I must forgive him: and, though we should quarrel the next moment, I must forgive him again. We were reconciled; but we cried, both of us, the whole time I stayed: not entirely for

sorrow; yet I *was* sorry Linton had that distorted nature. He'll never let his friends be at ease, and he'll never be at ease himself! I have always gone to his little parlour, since that night; because his father returned the day after.

“About three times, I think, we have been merry and hopeful, as we were the first evening; the rest of my visits were dreary and troubled: now with his selfishness and spite, and now with his sufferings: but I've learned to endure the former with nearly as little resentment as the latter. Mr. Heathcliff purposely avoids me: I have hardly seen him at all. Last Sunday, indeed, coming earlier than usual, I heard him abusing poor Linton cruelly for his conduct of the night before. I can't tell how he knew of it, unless he listened. Linton had certainly behaved provokingly: however, it was the business of nobody but me, and I interrupted Mr. Heathcliff's lecture by entering and telling him so. He burst into a laugh, and went away, saying he was glad I took that view of the matter. Since then, I've told Linton he must whisper his bitter things. Now, Ellen, you have heard all. I can't be prevented from going to Wuthering Heights, except by inflicting misery on two people; whereas, if you'll only not tell papa, my going need disturb the tranquillity of none. You'll not tell, will you? It will be very heartless, if you do.”

“I'll make up my mind on that point by to-morrow, Miss Catherine,” I replied. “It requires some study; and so I'll leave you to your rest, and go think it over.”

I thought it over aloud, in my master's presence; walking straight from her room to his, and relating the whole story: with the exception of her conversations with her cousin, and any mention of Hareton. Mr. Linton was alarmed and distressed, more than he would acknowledge to me. In the morning, Catherine learnt my betrayal of her confidence, and she learnt also that her secret visits were to end. In vain she wept and writhed against the interdict, and implored her father to have pity on Linton: all she got to comfort her was a promise that he would write and give him leave to come to the Grange when he pleased; but explaining that he must no longer expect to see Catherine at Wuthering Heights. Perhaps, had he been aware of his nephew's disposition and state of health, he would have seen fit to withhold even that slight consolation.

## CHAPTER XXV

“These things happened last winter, sir,” said Mrs. Dean; “hardly more than a year ago. Last winter, I did not think, at another twelve months’ end, I should be amusing a stranger to the family with relating them! Yet, who knows how long you’ll be a stranger? You’re too young to rest always contented, living by yourself; and I some way fancy no one could see Catherine Linton and not love her. You smile; but why do you look so lively and interested when I talk about her? and why have you asked me to hang her picture over your fireplace? and why—?”

“Stop, my good friend!” I cried. “It may be very possible that *I* should love her; but would she love me? I doubt it too much to venture my tranquillity by running into temptation: and then my home is not here. I’m of the busy world, and to its arms I must return. Go on. Was Catherine obedient to her father’s commands?”

“She was,” continued the housekeeper. “Her affection for him was still the chief sentiment in her heart; and he spoke without anger: he spoke in the deep tenderness of one about to leave his treasure amid perils and foes, where his remembered words would be the only aid that he could bequeath to guide her. He said to me, a few days afterwards, ‘I wish my nephew would write, Ellen, or call. Tell me, sincerely, what you think of him: is he changed for the better, or is there a prospect of improvement, as he grows a man?’

“‘He’s very delicate, sir,’ I replied; ‘and scarcely likely to reach manhood: but this I can say, he does not resemble his father; and if Miss Catherine had the misfortune to marry him, he would not be beyond her control: unless she were extremely and foolishly indulgent. However, master, you’ll have plenty of time to get acquainted with him and see whether he would suit her: it wants four years and more to his being of age.’”



Edgar sighed; and, walking to the window, looked out towards Gimmerton Kirk. It was a misty afternoon, but the February sun shone dimly, and we could just distinguish the two fir-trees in the yard, and the sparsely-scattered gravestones.

“I’ve prayed often,” he half soliloquised, “for the approach of what is coming; and now I begin to shrink, and fear it. I thought the memory of the hour I came down that glen a bridegroom would be less sweet than the anticipation that I was soon, in a few months, or, possibly, weeks, to be carried up, and laid in its lonely hollow! Ellen, I’ve been very happy with my little Cathy: through winter nights and summer days she was a living hope at my side. But I’ve been as happy musing by myself among those stones, under that old church: lying, through the long June evenings, on the green mound of her mother’s grave, and wishing—yearning for the time when I might lie beneath it. What can I do for Cathy? How must I quit her? I’d not care one moment for Linton being Heathcliff’s son; nor for his taking her from me, if he could console her for my loss. I’d not care that Heathcliff gained his ends, and triumphed in robbing me of my last blessing! But should Linton be unworthy—only a feeble tool to his father—I cannot abandon her to him! And, hard though it be to crush her buoyant spirit, I must persevere in making her sad while I live, and leaving her solitary when I die. Darling! I’d rather resign her to God, and lay her in the earth before me.”

“Resign her to God as it is, sir,” I answered, “and if we should lose you—which may He forbid—under His providence, I’ll stand her friend and counsellor to the last. Miss Catherine is a good girl: I don’t fear that she will go wilfully wrong; and people who do their duty are always finally rewarded.”

Spring advanced; yet my master gathered no real strength, though he resumed his walks in the grounds with his daughter. To her inexperienced notions, this itself was a sign of convalescence; and then his cheek was often flushed, and his eyes were bright; she felt sure of his recovering. On her seventeenth birthday, he did not visit the churchyard: it was raining, and I observed—“You’ll surely not go out to-night, sir?”

He answered,—“No, I’ll defer it this year a little longer.” He wrote again to Linton, expressing his great desire to see him; and, had the invalid been presentable, I’ve no doubt his father would have permitted him to come. As

it was, being instructed, he returned an answer, intimating that Mr. Heathcliff objected to his calling at the Grange; but his uncle's kind remembrance delighted him, and he hoped to meet him sometimes in his rambles, and personally to petition that his cousin and he might not remain long so utterly divided.

That part of his letter was simple, and probably his own. Heathcliff knew he could plead eloquently for Catherine's company, then.

"I do not ask," he said, "that she may visit here; but am I never to see her, because my father forbids me to go to her home, and you forbid her to come to mine? Do, now and then, ride with her towards the Heights; and let us exchange a few words, in your presence! We have done nothing to deserve this separation; and you are not angry with me: you have no reason to dislike me, you allow, yourself. Dear uncle! send me a kind note to-morrow, and leave to join you anywhere you please, except at Thrushcross Grange. I believe an interview would convince you that my father's character is not mine: he affirms I am more your nephew than his son; and though I have faults which render me unworthy of Catherine, she has excused them, and for her sake, you should also. You inquire after my health—it is better; but while I remain cut off from all hope, and doomed to solitude, or the society of those who never did and never will like me, how can I be cheerful and well?"

Edgar, though he felt for the boy, could not consent to grant his request; because he could not accompany Catherine. He said, in summer, perhaps, they might meet: meantime, he wished him to continue writing at intervals, and engaged to give him what advice and comfort he was able by letter; being well aware of his hard position in his family. Linton complied; and had he been unrestrained, would probably have spoiled all by filling his epistles with complaints and lamentations: but his father kept a sharp watch over him; and, of course, insisted on every line that my master sent being shown; so, instead of penning his peculiar personal sufferings and distresses, the themes constantly uppermost in his thoughts, he harped on the cruel obligation of being held asunder from his friend and love; and gently intimated that Mr. Linton must allow an interview soon, or he should fear he was purposely deceiving him with empty promises.

Cathy was a powerful ally at home; and between them they at length persuaded my master to acquiesce in their having a ride or a walk together

about once a week, under my guardianship, and on the moors nearest the Grange: for June found him still declining. Though he had set aside yearly a portion of his income for my young lady's fortune, he had a natural desire that she might retain—or at least return in a short time to—the house of her ancestors; and he considered her only prospect of doing that was by a union with his heir; he had no idea that the latter was failing almost as fast as himself; nor had any one, I believe: no doctor visited the Heights, and no one saw Master Heathcliff to make report of his condition among us. I, for my part, began to fancy my forebodings were false, and that he must be actually rallying, when he mentioned riding and walking on the moors, and seemed so earnest in pursuing his object. I could not picture a father treating a dying child as tyrannically and wickedly as I afterwards learned Heathcliff had treated him, to compel this apparent eagerness: his efforts redoubling the more imminently his avaricious and unfeeling plans were threatened with defeat by death.

## CHAPTER XXVI

Summer was already past its prime, when Edgar reluctantly yielded his assent to their entreaties, and Catherine and I set out on our first ride to join her cousin. It was a close, sultry day: devoid of sunshine, but with a sky too dappled and hazy to threaten rain: and our place of meeting had been fixed at the guide-stone, by the cross-roads. On arriving there, however, a little herd-boy, despatched as a messenger, told us that,—“Maister Linton wer just o’ this side th’ Heights: and he’d be mitch obleeged to us to gang on a bit further.”

“Then Master Linton has forgot the first injunction of his uncle,” I observed: “he bid us keep on the Grange land, and here we are off at once.”

“Well, we’ll turn our horses’ heads round when we reach him,” answered my companion; “our excursion shall lie towards home.”

But when we reached him, and that was scarcely a quarter of a mile from his own door, we found he had no horse; and we were forced to dismount, and leave ours to graze. He lay on the heath, awaiting our approach, and did not rise till we came within a few yards. Then he walked so feebly, and looked so pale, that I immediately exclaimed,—“Why, Master Heathcliff, you are not fit for enjoying a ramble this morning. How ill you do look!”

Catherine surveyed him with grief and astonishment: she changed the ejaculation of joy on her lips to one of alarm; and the congratulation on their long-postponed meeting to an anxious inquiry, whether he were worse than usual?

“No—better—better!” he panted, trembling, and retaining her hand as if he needed its support, while his large blue eyes wandered timidly over her; the hollowness round them transforming to haggard wildness the languid expression they once possessed.

“But you have been worse,” persisted his cousin; “worse than when I saw you last; you are thinner, and—”

“I’m tired,” he interrupted, hurriedly. “It is too hot for walking, let us rest here. And, in the morning, I often feel sick—papa says I grow so fast.”

Badly satisfied, Cathy sat down, and he reclined beside her.

“This is something like your paradise,” said she, making an effort at cheerfulness. “You recollect the two days we agreed to spend in the place and way each thought pleasantest? This is nearly yours, only there are clouds; but then they are so soft and mellow: it is nicer than sunshine. Next week, if you can, we’ll ride down to the Grange Park, and try mine.”

Linton did not appear to remember what she talked of and he had evidently great difficulty in sustaining any kind of conversation. His lack of interest in the subjects she started, and his equal incapacity to contribute to her entertainment, were so obvious that she could not conceal her disappointment. An indefinite alteration had come over his whole person and manner. The pettishness that might be caressed into fondness, had yielded to a listless apathy; there was less of the peevish temper of a child which frets and teases on purpose to be soothed, and more of the self-absorbed moroseness of a confirmed invalid, repelling consolation, and ready to regard the good-humoured mirth of others as an insult. Catherine perceived, as well as I did, that he held it rather a punishment, than a gratification, to endure our company; and she made no scruple of proposing, presently, to depart. That proposal, unexpectedly, roused Linton from his lethargy, and threw him into a strange state of agitation. He glanced fearfully towards the Heights, begging she would remain another half-hour, at least.

“But I think,” said Cathy, “you’d be more comfortable at home than sitting here; and I cannot amuse you to-day, I see, by my tales, and songs, and chatter: you have grown wiser than I, in these six months; you have little taste for my diversions now: or else, if I could amuse you, I’d willingly stay.”

“Stay to rest yourself,” he replied. “And, Catherine, don’t think or say that I’m *very* unwell: it is the heavy weather and heat that make me dull; and I walked about, before you came, a great deal for me. Tell uncle I’m in tolerable health, will you?”

“I’ll tell him that *you* say so, Linton. I couldn’t affirm that you are,” observed my young lady, wondering at his pertinacious assertion of what was evidently an untruth.

“And be here again next Thursday,” continued he, shunning her puzzled gaze. “And give him my thanks for permitting you to come—my best thanks, Catherine. And—and, if you *did* meet my father, and he asked you about me, don’t lead him to suppose that I’ve been extremely silent and stupid: don’t look sad and downcast, as you are doing—he’ll be angry.”

“I care nothing for his anger,” exclaimed Cathy, imagining she would be its object.

“But I do,” said her cousin, shuddering. “*Don’t* provoke him against me, Catherine, for he is very hard.”

“Is he severe to you, Master Heathcliff?” I inquired. “Has he grown weary of indulgence, and passed from passive to active hatred?”

Linton looked at me, but did not answer; and, after keeping her seat by his side another ten minutes, during which his head fell drowsily on his breast, and he uttered nothing except suppressed moans of exhaustion or pain, Cathy began to seek solace in looking for bilberries, and sharing the produce of her researches with me: she did not offer them to him, for she saw further notice would only weary and annoy.

“Is it half-an-hour now, Ellen?” she whispered in my ear, at last. “I can’t tell why we should stay. He’s asleep, and papa will be wanting us back.”

“Well, we must not leave him asleep,” I answered; “wait till he wakes, and be patient. You were mighty eager to set off, but your longing to see poor Linton has soon evaporated!”

“Why did *he* wish to see me?” returned Catherine. “In his crosslest humours, formerly, I liked him better than I do in his present curious mood. It’s just as if it were a task he was compelled to perform—this interview—for fear his father should scold him. But I’m hardly going to come to give Mr. Heathcliff pleasure; whatever reason he may have for ordering Linton to undergo this penance. And, though I’m glad he’s better in health, I’m sorry he’s so much less pleasant, and so much less affectionate to me.”

“You think *he is* better in health, then?” I said.

“Yes,” she answered; “because he always made such a great deal of his sufferings, you know. He is not tolerably well, as he told me to tell papa; but he’s better, very likely.”

“There you differ with me, Miss Cathy,” I remarked; “I should conjecture him to be far worse.”

Linton here started from his slumber in bewildered terror, and asked if any one had called his name.

“No,” said Catherine; “unless in dreams. I cannot conceive how you manage to doze out of doors, in the morning.”

“I thought I heard my father,” he gasped, glancing up to the frowning nab above us. “You are sure nobody spoke?”

“Quite sure,” replied his cousin. “Only Ellen and I were disputing concerning your health. Are you truly stronger, Linton, than when we separated in winter? If you be, I’m certain one thing is not stronger—your regard for me: speak,—are you?”

The tears gushed from Linton’s eyes as he answered, “Yes, yes, I am!” And, still under the spell of the imaginary voice, his gaze wandered up and down to detect its owner.

Cathy rose. “For to-day we must part,” she said. “And I won’t conceal that I have been sadly disappointed with our meeting; though I’ll mention it to nobody but you: not that I stand in awe of Mr. Heathcliff.”

“Hush,” murmured Linton; “for God’s sake, hush! He’s coming.” And he clung to Catherine’s arm, striving to detain her; but at that announcement she hastily disengaged herself, and whistled to Minny, who obeyed her like a dog.

“I’ll be here next Thursday,” she cried, springing to the saddle. “Good-bye. Quick, Ellen!”

And so we left him, scarcely conscious of our departure, so absorbed was he in anticipating his father’s approach.

Before we reached home, Catherine’s displeasure softened into a perplexed sensation of pity and regret, largely blended with vague, uneasy doubts about Linton’s actual circumstances, physical and social: in which I partook, though I counselled her not to say much; for a second journey would make us better judges. My master requested an account of our ongoings. His nephew’s offering of thanks was duly delivered, Miss Cathy gently touching on the rest: I also threw little light on his inquiries, for I hardly knew what to hide and what to reveal.

## CHAPTER XXVII

Seven days glided away, every one marking its course by the henceforth rapid alteration of Edgar Linton's state. The havoc that months had previously wrought was now emulated by the inroads of hours. Catherine we would fain have deluded yet; but her own quick spirit refused to delude her: it divined in secret, and brooded on the dreadful probability, gradually ripening into certainty. She had not the heart to mention her ride, when Thursday came round; I mentioned it for her, and obtained permission to order her out of doors: for the library, where her father stopped a short time daily—the brief period he could bear to sit up—and his chamber, had become her whole world. She grudged each moment that did not find her bending over his pillow, or seated by his side. Her countenance grew wan with watching and sorrow, and my master gladly dismissed her to what he flattered himself would be a happy change of scene and society; drawing comfort from the hope that she would not now be left entirely alone after his death.

He had a fixed idea, I guessed by several observations he let fall, that, as his nephew resembled him in person, he would resemble him in mind; for Linton's letters bore few or no indications of his defective character. And I, through pardonable weakness, refrained from correcting the error; asking myself what good there would be in disturbing his last moments with information that he had neither power nor opportunity to turn to account.

We deferred our excursion till the afternoon; a golden afternoon of August: every breath from the hills so full of life, that it seemed whoever respired it, though dying, might revive. Catherine's face was just like the landscape—shadows and sunshine flitting over it in rapid succession; but the shadows rested longer, and the sunshine was more transient; and her poor little heart reproached itself for even that passing forgetfulness of its cares.



We discerned Linton watching at the same spot he had selected before. My young mistress alighted, and told me that, as she was resolved to stay a very little while, I had better hold the pony and remain on horseback; but I dissented: I wouldn't risk losing sight of the charge committed to me a minute; so we climbed the slope of heath together. Master Heathcliff received us with greater animation on this occasion: not the animation of high spirits though, nor yet of joy; it looked more like fear.

"It is late!" he said, speaking short and with difficulty. "Is not your father very ill? I thought you wouldn't come."

"*Why* won't you be candid?" cried Catherine, swallowing her greeting. "Why cannot you say at once you don't want me? It is strange, Linton, that for the second time you have brought me here on purpose, apparently to distress us both, and for no reason besides!"

Linton shivered, and glanced at her, half supplicating, half ashamed; but his cousin's patience was not sufficient to endure this enigmatical behaviour.

"My father *is* very ill," she said; "and why am I called from his bedside? Why didn't you send to absolve me from my promise, when you wished I wouldn't keep it? Come! I desire an explanation: playing and trifling are completely banished out of my mind; and I can't dance attendance on your affectations now!"

"My affectations!" he murmured; "what are they? For heaven's sake, Catherine, don't look so angry! Despise me as much as you please; I am a worthless, cowardly wretch: I can't be scorned enough; but I'm too mean for your anger. Hate my father, and spare me for contempt."

"Nonsense!" cried Catherine in a passion. "Foolish, silly boy! And there! he trembles: as if I were really going to touch him! You needn't bespeak contempt, Linton: anybody will have it spontaneously at your service. Get off! I shall return home: it is folly dragging you from the hearth-stone, and pretending—what do we pretend? Let go my frock! If I pitied you for crying and looking so very frightened, you should spurn such pity. Ellen, tell him how disgraceful this conduct is. Rise, and don't degrade yourself into an abject reptile—*don't!*"

With streaming face and an expression of agony, Linton had thrown his nerveless frame along the ground: he seemed convulsed with exquisite terror.

“Oh!” he sobbed, “I cannot bear it! Catherine, Catherine, I’m a traitor, too, and I dare not tell you! But leave me, and I shall be killed! *Dear* Catherine, my life is in your hands: and you have said you loved me, and if you did, it wouldn’t harm you. You’ll not go, then? kind, sweet, good Catherine! And perhaps you *will* consent—and he’ll let me die with you!”

My young lady, on witnessing his intense anguish, stooped to raise him. The old feeling of indulgent tenderness overcame her vexation, and she grew thoroughly moved and alarmed.

“Consent to what?” she asked. “To stay! tell me the meaning of this strange talk, and I will. You contradict your own words, and distract me! Be calm and frank, and confess at once all that weighs on your heart. You wouldn’t injure me, Linton, would you? You wouldn’t let any enemy hurt me, if you could prevent it? I’ll believe you are a coward, for yourself, but not a cowardly betrayer of your best friend.”

“But my father threatened me,” gasped the boy, clasping his attenuated fingers, “and I dread him—I dread him! I *dare* not tell!”

“Oh, well!” said Catherine, with scornful compassion, “keep your secret: *I’m* no coward. Save yourself: I’m not afraid!”

Her magnanimity provoked his tears: he wept wildly, kissing her supporting hands, and yet could not summon courage to speak out. I was cogitating what the mystery might be, and determined Catherine should never suffer to benefit him or any one else, by my good will; when, hearing a rustle among the ling, I looked up and saw Mr. Heathcliff almost close upon us, descending the Heights. He didn’t cast a glance towards my companions, though they were sufficiently near for Linton’s sobs to be audible; but hailing me in the almost hearty tone he assumed to none besides, and the sincerity of which I couldn’t avoid doubting, he said—

“It is something to see you so near to my house, Nelly. How are you at the Grange? Let us hear. The rumour goes,” he added, in a lower tone, “that Edgar Linton is on his death-bed: perhaps they exaggerate his illness?”

“No; my master is dying,” I replied: “it is true enough. A sad thing it will be for us all, but a blessing for him!”

“How long will he last, do you think?” he asked.

“I don’t know,” I said.

“Because,” he continued, looking at the two young people, who were fixed under his eye—Linton appeared as if he could not venture to stir or raise his head, and Catherine could not move, on his account—“because that lad yonder seems determined to beat me; and I’d thank his uncle to be quick, and go before him! Hallo! has the whelp been playing that game long? I *did* give him some lessons about snivelling. Is he pretty lively with Miss Linton generally?”

“Lively? no—he has shown the greatest distress,” I answered. “To see him, I should say, that instead of rambling with his sweetheart on the hills, he ought to be in bed, under the hands of a doctor.”

“He shall be, in a day or two,” muttered Heathcliff. “But first—get up, Linton! Get up!” he shouted. “Don’t grovel on the ground there up, this moment!”

Linton had sunk prostrate again in another paroxysm of helpless fear, caused by his father’s glance towards him, I suppose: there was nothing else to produce such humiliation. He made several efforts to obey, but his little strength was annihilated for the time, and he fell back again with a moan. Mr. Heathcliff advanced, and lifted him to lean against a ridge of turf.

“Now,” said he, with curbed ferocity, “I’m getting angry and if you don’t command that paltry spirit of yours—*damn* you! get up directly!”

“I will, father,” he panted. “Only, let me alone, or I shall faint. I’ve done as you wished, I’m sure. Catherine will tell you that I—that I—have been cheerful. Ah! keep by me, Catherine; give me your hand.”

“Take mine,” said his father; “stand on your feet. There now—she’ll lend you her arm: that’s right, look at her. You would imagine I was the devil himself, Miss Linton, to excite such horror. Be so kind as to walk home with him, will you? He shudders if I touch him.”

“Linton dear!” whispered Catherine, “I can’t go to Wuthering Heights: papa has forbidden me. He’ll not harm you: why are you so afraid?”

“I can never re-enter that house,” he answered. “I’m *not* to re-enter it without you!”

“Stop!” cried his father. “We’ll respect Catherine’s filial scruples. Nelly, take him in, and I’ll follow your advice concerning the doctor, without delay.”

“You’ll do well,” replied I. “But I must remain with my mistress: to mind your son is not my business.”

“You are very stiff,” said Heathcliff, “I know that: but you’ll force me to pinch the baby and make it scream before it moves your charity. Come, then, my hero. Are you willing to return, escorted by me?”

He approached once more, and made as if he would seize the fragile being; but, shrinking back, Linton clung to his cousin, and implored her to accompany him, with a frantic importunity that admitted no denial. However I disapproved, I couldn’t hinder her: indeed, how could she have refused him herself? What was filling him with dread we had no means of discerning; but there he was, powerless under its grip, and any addition seemed capable of shocking him into idiocy. We reached the threshold; Catherine walked in, and I stood waiting till she had conducted the invalid to a chair, expecting her out immediately; when Mr. Heathcliff, pushing me forward, exclaimed—“My house is not stricken with the plague, Nelly; and I have a mind to be hospitable to-day: sit down, and allow me to shut the door.”

He shut and locked it also. I started.

“You shall have tea before you go home,” he added. “I am by myself. Hareton is gone with some cattle to the Lees, and Zillah and Joseph are off on a journey of pleasure; and, though I’m used to being alone, I’d rather have some interesting company, if I can get it. Miss Linton, take your seat by *him*. I give you what I have: the present is hardly worth accepting; but I have nothing else to offer. It is Linton, I mean. How she does stare! It’s odd what a savage feeling I have to anything that seems afraid of me! Had I been born where laws are less strict and tastes less dainty, I should treat myself to a slow vivisection of those two, as an evening’s amusement.”

He drew in his breath, struck the table, and swore to himself, “By hell! I hate them.”

“I am not afraid of you!” exclaimed Catherine, who could not hear the latter part of his speech. She stepped close up; her black eyes flashing with passion and resolution. “Give me that key: I will have it!” she said. “I wouldn’t eat or drink here, if I were starving.”

Heathcliff had the key in his hand that remained on the table. He looked up, seized with a sort of surprise at her boldness; or, possibly, reminded, by her voice and glance, of the person from whom she inherited it. She

snatched at the instrument, and half succeeded in getting it out of his loosened fingers: but her action recalled him to the present; he recovered it speedily.

“Now, Catherine Linton,” he said, “stand off, or I shall knock you down; and, that will make Mrs. Dean mad.”

Regardless of this warning, she captured his closed hand and its contents again. “We *will* go!” she repeated, exerting her utmost efforts to cause the iron muscles to relax; and finding that her nails made no impression, she applied her teeth pretty sharply. Heathcliff glanced at me a glance that kept me from interfering a moment. Catherine was too intent on his fingers to notice his face. He opened them suddenly, and resigned the object of dispute; but, ere she had well secured it, he seized her with the liberated hand, and, pulling her on his knee, administered with the other a shower of terrific slaps on both sides of the head, each sufficient to have fulfilled his threat, had she been able to fall.

At this diabolical violence I rushed on him furiously. “You villain!” I began to cry, “you villain!” A touch on the chest silenced me: I am stout, and soon put out of breath; and, what with that and the rage, I staggered dizzily back and felt ready to suffocate, or to burst a blood-vessel. The scene was over in two minutes; Catherine, released, put her two hands to her temples, and looked just as if she were not sure whether her ears were off or on. She trembled like a reed, poor thing, and leant against the table perfectly bewildered.

“I know how to chastise children, you see,” said the scoundrel, grimly, as he stooped to repossess himself of the key, which had dropped to the floor. “Go to Linton now, as I told you; and cry at your ease! I shall be your father, to-morrow—all the father you’ll have in a few days—and you shall have plenty of that. You can bear plenty; you’re no weakling: you shall have a daily taste, if I catch such a devil of a temper in your eyes again!”

Cathy ran to me instead of Linton, and knelt down and put her burning cheek on my lap, weeping aloud. Her cousin had shrunk into a corner of the settle, as quiet as a mouse, congratulating himself, I dare say, that the correction had alighted on another than him. Mr. Heathcliff, perceiving us all confounded, rose, and expeditiously made the tea himself. The cups and saucers were laid ready. He poured it out, and handed me a cup.

“Wash away your spleen,” he said. “And help your own naughty pet and mine. It is not poisoned, though I prepared it. I’m going out to seek your horses.”

Our first thought, on his departure, was to force an exit somewhere. We tried the kitchen door, but that was fastened outside: we looked at the windows—they were too narrow for even Cathy’s little figure.

“Master Linton,” I cried, seeing we were regularly imprisoned, “you know what your diabolical father is after, and you shall tell us, or I’ll box your ears, as he has done your cousin’s.”

“Yes, Linton, you must tell,” said Catherine. “It was for your sake I came; and it will be wickedly ungrateful if you refuse.”

“Give me some tea, I’m thirsty, and then I’ll tell you,” he answered. “Mrs. Dean, go away. I don’t like you standing over me. Now, Catherine, you are letting your tears fall into my cup. I won’t drink that. Give me another.” Catherine pushed another to him, and wiped her face. I felt disgusted at the little wretch’s composure, since he was no longer in terror for himself. The anguish he had exhibited on the moor subsided as soon as ever he entered Wuthering Heights; so I guessed he had been menaced with an awful visitation of wrath if he failed in decoying us there; and, that accomplished, he had no further immediate fears.

“Papa wants us to be married,” he continued, after sipping some of the liquid. “And he knows your papa wouldn’t let us marry now; and he’s afraid of my dying if we wait; so we are to be married in the morning, and you are to stay here all night; and, if you do as he wishes, you shall return home next day, and take me with you.”

“Take you with her, pitiful changeling!” I exclaimed. “*You* marry? Why, the man is mad! or he thinks us fools, every one. And do you imagine that beautiful young lady, that healthy, hearty girl, will tie herself to a little perishing monkey like you? Are you cherishing the notion that anybody, let alone Miss Catherine Linton, would have you for a husband? You want whipping for bringing us in here at all, with your dastardly puling tricks: and—don’t look so silly, now! I’ve a very good mind to shake you severely, for your contemptible treachery, and your imbecile conceit.”

I did give him a slight shaking; but it brought on the cough, and he took to his ordinary resource of moaning and weeping, and Catherine rebuked me.

“Stay all night? No,” she said, looking slowly round. “Ellen, I’ll burn that door down but I’ll get out.”

And she would have commenced the execution of her threat directly, but Linton was up in alarm for his dear self again. He clasped her in his two feeble arms sobbing:—“Won’t you have me, and save me? not let me come to the Grange? Oh, darling Catherine! you mustn’t go and leave, after all. You *must* obey my father—you *must*!”

“I must obey my own,” she replied, “and relieve him from this cruel suspense. The whole night! What would he think? He’ll be distressed already. I’ll either break or burn a way out of the house. Be quiet! You’re in no danger; but if you hinder me—Linton, I love papa better than you!” The mortal terror he felt of Mr. Heathcliff’s anger restored to the boy his coward’s eloquence. Catherine was near distraught: still, she persisted that she must go home, and tried entreaty in her turn, persuading him to subdue his selfish agony. While they were thus occupied, our jailor re-entered.

“Your beasts have trotted off,” he said, “and—now Linton! snivelling again? What has she been doing to you? Come, come—have done, and get to bed. In a month or two, my lad, you’ll be able to pay her back her present tyrannies with a vigorous hand. You’re pining for pure love, are you not? nothing else in the world: and she shall have you! There, to bed! Zillah won’t be here to-night; you must undress yourself. Hush! hold your noise! Once in your own room, I’ll not come near you: you needn’t fear. By chance, you’ve managed tolerably. I’ll look to the rest.”

He spoke these words, holding the door open for his son to pass, and the latter achieved his exit exactly as a spaniel might which suspected the person who attended on it of designing a spiteful squeeze. The lock was re-secured. Heathcliff approached the fire, where my mistress and I stood silent. Catherine looked up, and instinctively raised her hand to her cheek: his neighbourhood revived a painful sensation. Anybody else would have been incapable of regarding the childish act with sternness, but he scowled on her and muttered—“Oh! you are not afraid of me? Your courage is well disguised: you seem damnably afraid!”

“I *am* afraid now,” she replied, “because, if I stay, papa will be miserable: and how can I endure making him miserable—when he—when he—Mr. Heathcliff, let *me* go home! I promise to marry Linton: papa would like me

to: and I love him. Why should you wish to force me to do what I'll willingly do of myself?"

"Let him dare to force you," I cried. "There's law in the land, thank God! there is; though we be in an out-of-the-way place. I'd inform if he were my own son: and it's felony without benefit of clergy!"

"Silence!" said the ruffian. "To the devil with your clamour! I don't want *you* to speak. Miss Linton, I shall enjoy myself remarkably in thinking your father will be miserable: I shall not sleep for satisfaction. You could have hit on no surer way of fixing your residence under my roof for the next twenty-four hours than informing me that such an event would follow. As to your promise to marry Linton, I'll take care you shall keep it; for you shall not quit this place till it is fulfilled."

"Send Ellen, then, to let papa know I'm safe!" exclaimed Catherine, weeping bitterly. "Or marry me now. Poor papa! Ellen, he'll think we're lost. What shall we do?"

"Not he! He'll think you are tired of waiting on him, and run off for a little amusement," answered Heathcliff. "You cannot deny that you entered my house of your own accord, in contempt of his injunctions to the contrary. And it is quite natural that you should desire amusement at your age; and that you would weary of nursing a sick man, and that man *only* your father. Catherine, his happiest days were over when your days began. He cursed you, I dare say, for coming into the world (I did, at least); and it would just do if he cursed you as *he* went out of it. I'd join him. I don't love you! How should I? Weep away. As far as I can see, it will be your chief diversion hereafter; unless Linton make amends for other losses: and your provident parent appears to fancy he may. His letters of advice and consolation entertained me vastly. In his last he recommended my jewel to be careful of his; and kind to her when he got her. Careful and kind—that's paternal. But Linton requires his whole stock of care and kindness for himself. Linton can play the little tyrant well. He'll undertake to torture any number of cats, if their teeth be drawn and their claws pared. You'll be able to tell his uncle fine tales of his *kindness*, when you get home again, I assure you."

"You're right there!" I said; "explain your son's character. Show his resemblance to yourself: and then, I hope, Miss Cathy will think twice before she takes the cockatrice!"



“I don’t much mind speaking of his amiable qualities now,” he answered; “because she must either accept him or remain a prisoner, and you along with her, till your master dies. I can detain you both, quite concealed, here. If you doubt, encourage her to retract her word, and you’ll have an opportunity of judging!”

“I’ll not retract my word,” said Catherine. “I’ll marry him within this hour, if I may go to Thrushcross Grange afterwards. Mr. Heathcliff, you’re a cruel man, but you’re not a fiend; and you won’t, from *mere* malice, destroy irrevocably all my happiness. If papa thought I had left him on purpose, and if he died before I returned, could I bear to live? I’ve given over crying: but I’m going to kneel here, at your knee; and I’ll not get up, and I’ll not take my eyes from your face till you look back at me! No, don’t turn away! *do look!* you’ll see nothing to provoke you. I don’t hate you. I’m not angry that you struck me. Have you never loved *anybody* in all your life, uncle? *never?* Ah! you must look once. I’m so wretched, you can’t help being sorry and pitying me.”

“Keep your eft’s fingers off; and move, or I’ll kick you!” cried Heathcliff, brutally repulsing her. “I’d rather be hugged by a snake. How the devil can you dream of fawning on me? I *detest* you!”

He shrugged his shoulders: shook himself, indeed, as if his flesh crept with aversion; and thrust back his chair; while I got up, and opened my mouth, to commence a downright torrent of abuse. But I was rendered dumb in the middle of the first sentence, by a threat that I should be shown into a room by myself the very next syllable I uttered. It was growing dark—we heard a sound of voices at the garden-gate. Our host hurried out instantly: *he* had his wits about him; *we* had not. There was a talk of two or three minutes, and he returned alone.

“I thought it had been your cousin Hareton,” I observed to Catherine. “I wish he would arrive! Who knows but he might take our part?”

“It was three servants sent to seek you from the Grange,” said Heathcliff, overhearing me. “You should have opened a lattice and called out: but I could swear that chit is glad you didn’t. She’s glad to be obliged to stay, I’m certain.”

At learning the chance we had missed, we both gave vent to our grief without control; and he allowed us to wail on till nine o’clock. Then he bid us go upstairs, through the kitchen, to Zillah’s chamber; and I whispered my

companion to obey: perhaps we might contrive to get through the window there, or into a garret, and out by its skylight. The window, however, was narrow, like those below, and the garret trap was safe from our attempts; for we were fastened in as before. We neither of us lay down: Catherine took her station by the lattice, and watched anxiously for morning; a deep sigh being the only answer I could obtain to my frequent entreaties that she would try to rest. I seated myself in a chair, and rocked to and fro, passing harsh judgment on my many derelictions of duty; from which, it struck me then, all the misfortunes of my employers sprang. It was not the case, in reality, I am aware; but it was, in my imagination, that dismal night; and I thought Heathcliff himself less guilty than I.

At seven o'clock he came, and inquired if Miss Linton had risen. She ran to the door immediately, and answered, "Yes." "Here, then," he said, opening it, and pulling her out. I rose to follow, but he turned the lock again. I demanded my release.

"Be patient," he replied; "I'll send up your breakfast in a while."

I thumped on the panels, and rattled the latch angrily and Catherine asked why I was still shut up? He answered, I must try to endure it another hour, and they went away. I endured it two or three hours; at length, I heard a footstep: not Heathcliff's.

"I've brought you something to eat," said a voice; "open t' door!"

Complying eagerly, I beheld Hareton, laden with food enough to last me all day.

"Tak' it," he added, thrusting the tray into my hand.

"Stay one minute," I began.

"Nay," cried he, and retired, regardless of any prayers I could pour forth to detain him.

And there I remained enclosed the whole day, and the whole of the next night; and another, and another. Five nights and four days I remained, altogether, seeing nobody but Hareton once every morning; and he was a model of a jailor: surly, and dumb, and deaf to every attempt at moving his sense of justice or compassion.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

On the fifth morning, or rather afternoon, a different step approached—lighter and shorter; and, this time, the person entered the room. It was Zillah; donned in her scarlet shawl, with a black silk bonnet on her head, and a willow-basket swung to her arm.

“Eh, dear! Mrs. Dean!” she exclaimed. “Well! there is a talk about you at Gimmerton. I never thought but you were sunk in the Blackhorse marsh, and missy with you, till master told me you’d been found, and he’d lodged you here! What! and you must have got on an island, sure? And how long were you in the hole? Did master save you, Mrs. Dean? But you’re not so thin—you’ve not been so poorly, have you?”

“Your master is a true scoundrel!” I replied. “But he shall answer for it. He needn’t have raised that tale: it shall all be laid bare!”

“What do you mean?” asked Zillah. “It’s not his tale: they tell that in the village—about your being lost in the marsh; and I calls to Earnshaw, when I come in—‘Eh, they’s queer things, Mr. Hareton, happened since I went off. It’s a sad pity of that likely young lass, and cant Nelly Dean.’ He stared. I thought he had not heard aught, so I told him the rumour. The master listened, and he just smiled to himself, and said, ‘If they have been in the marsh, they are out now, Zillah. Nelly Dean is lodged, at this minute, in your room. You can tell her to flit, when you go up; here is the key. The bog-water got into her head, and she would have run home quite flighty; but I fixed her till she came round to her senses. You can bid her go to the Grange at once, if she be able, and carry a message from me, that her young lady will follow in time to attend the squire’s funeral.’”

“Mr. Edgar is not dead?” I gasped. “Oh! Zillah, Zillah!”

“No, no; sit you down, my good mistress,” she replied; “you’re right sickly yet. He’s not dead; Doctor Kenneth thinks he may last another day. I met him on the road and asked.”

Instead of sitting down, I snatched my outdoor things, and hastened below, for the way was free. On entering the house, I looked about for some one to give information of Catherine. The place was filled with sunshine, and the door stood wide open; but nobody seemed at hand. As I hesitated whether to go off at once, or return and seek my mistress, a slight cough drew my attention to the hearth. Linton lay on the settle, sole tenant, sucking a stick of sugar-candy, and pursuing my movements with apathetic eyes. "Where is Miss Catherine?" I demanded sternly, supposing I could frighten him into giving intelligence, by catching him thus, alone. He sucked on like an innocent.

"Is she gone?" I said.

"No," he replied; "she's upstairs: she's not to go; we won't let her."

"You won't let her, little idiot!" I exclaimed. "Direct me to her room immediately, or I'll make you sing out sharply."

"Papa would make you sing out, if you attempted to get there," he answered. "He says I'm not to be soft with Catherine: she's my wife, and it's shameful that she should wish to leave me. He says she hates me and wants me to die, that she may have my money; but she shan't have it: and she shan't go home! She never shall!—she may cry, and be sick as much as she pleases!"

He resumed his former occupation, closing his lids, as if he meant to drop asleep.

"Master Heathcliff," I resumed, "have you forgotten all Catherine's kindness to you last winter, when you affirmed you loved her, and when she brought you books and sung you songs, and came many a time through wind and snow to see you? She wept to miss one evening, because you would be disappointed; and you felt then that she was a hundred times too good to you: and now you believe the lies your father tells, though you know he detests you both. And you join him against her. That's fine gratitude, is it not?"

The corner of Linton's mouth fell, and he took the sugar-candy from his lips.

"Did she come to Wuthering Heights because she hated you?" I continued. "Think for yourself! As to your money, she does not even know that you will have any. And you say she's sick; and yet you leave her alone,

up there in a strange house! You who have felt what it is to be so neglected! You could pity your own sufferings; and she pitied them, too; but you won't pity hers! I shed tears, Master Heathcliff, you see—an elderly woman, and a servant merely—and you, after pretending such affection, and having reason to worship her almost, store every tear you have for yourself, and lie there quite at ease. Ah! you're a heartless, selfish boy!"

"I can't stay with her," he answered crossly. "I'll not stay by myself. She cries so I can't bear it. And she won't give over, though I say I'll call my father. I did call him once, and he threatened to strangle her if she was not quiet; but she began again the instant he left the room, moaning and grieving all night long, though I screamed for vexation that I couldn't sleep."

"Is Mr. Heathcliff out?" I inquired, perceiving that the wretched creature had no power to sympathize with his cousin's mental tortures.

"He's in the court," he replied, "talking to Doctor Kenneth; who says uncle is dying, truly, at last. I'm glad, for I shall be master of the Grange after him. Catherine always spoke of it as her house. It isn't hers! It's mine: papa says everything she has is mine. All her nice books are mine; she offered to give me them, and her pretty birds, and her pony Minny, if I would get the key of our room, and let her out; but I told her she had nothing to give, they were all, all mine. And then she cried, and took a little picture from her neck, and said I should have that; two pictures in a gold case, on one side her mother, and on the other uncle, when they were young. That was yesterday—I said they were mine, too; and tried to get them from her. The spiteful thing wouldn't let me: she pushed me off, and hurt me. I shrieked out—that frightens her—she heard papa coming, and she broke the hinges and divided the case, and gave me her mother's portrait; the other she attempted to hide: but papa asked what was the matter, and I explained it. He took the one I had away, and ordered her to resign hers to me; she refused, and he—he struck her down, and wrenched it off the chain, and crushed it with his foot."

"And were you pleased to see her struck?" I asked: having my designs in encouraging his talk.

"I winked," he answered: "I wink to see my father strike a dog or a horse, he does it so hard. Yet I was glad at first—she deserved punishing for pushing me: but when papa was gone, she made me come to the window

and showed me her cheek cut on the inside, against her teeth, and her mouth filling with blood; and then she gathered up the bits of the picture, and went and sat down with her face to the wall, and she has never spoken to me since: and I sometimes think she can't speak for pain. I don't like to think so; but she's a naughty thing for crying continually; and she looks so pale and wild, I'm afraid of her."

"And you can get the key if you choose?" I said.

"Yes, when I am upstairs," he answered; "but I can't walk upstairs now."

"In what apartment is it?" I asked.

"Oh," he cried, "I shan't tell *you* where it is. It is our secret. Nobody, neither Hareton nor Zillah, is to know. There! you've tired me—go away, go away!" And he turned his face on to his arm, and shut his eyes again.

I considered it best to depart without seeing Mr. Heathcliff, and bring a rescue for my young lady from the Grange. On reaching it, the astonishment of my fellow-servants to see me, and their joy also, was intense; and when they heard that their little mistress was safe, two or three were about to hurry up and shout the news at Mr. Edgar's door: but I bespoke the announcement of it myself. How changed I found him, even in those few days! He lay an image of sadness and resignation awaiting his death. Very young he looked: though his actual age was thirty-nine, one would have called him ten years younger, at least. He thought of Catherine; for he murmured her name. I touched his hand, and spoke.

"Catherine is coming, dear master!" I whispered; "she is alive and well; and will be here, I hope, to-night."

I trembled at the first effects of this intelligence: he half rose up, looked eagerly round the apartment, and then sank back in a swoon. As soon as he recovered, I related our compulsory visit, and detention at the Heights. I said Heathcliff forced me to go in: which was not quite true. I uttered as little as possible against Linton; nor did I describe all his father's brutal conduct—my intentions being to add no bitterness, if I could help it, to his already over-flowing cup.

He divined that one of his enemy's purposes was to secure the personal property, as well as the estate, to his son: or rather himself; yet why he did not wait till his decease was a puzzle to my master, because ignorant how nearly he and his nephew would quit the world together. However, he felt

that his will had better be altered: instead of leaving Catherine's fortune at her own disposal, he determined to put it in the hands of trustees for her use during life, and for her children, if she had any, after her. By that means, it could not fall to Mr. Heathcliff should Linton die.

Having received his orders, I despatched a man to fetch the attorney, and four more, provided with serviceable weapons, to demand my young lady of her jailor. Both parties were delayed very late. The single servant returned first. He said Mr. Green, the lawyer, was out when he arrived at his house, and he had to wait two hours for his re-entrance; and then Mr. Green told him he had a little business in the village that must be done; but he would be at Thrushcross Grange before morning. The four men came back unaccompanied also. They brought word that Catherine was ill: too ill to quit her room; and Heathcliff would not suffer them to see her. I scolded the stupid fellows well for listening to that tale, which I would not carry to my master; resolving to take a whole bevy up to the Heights, at day-light, and storm it literally, unless the prisoner were quietly surrendered to us. Her father *shall* see her, I vowed, and vowed again, if that devil be killed on his own doorstones in trying to prevent it!

Happily, I was spared the journey and the trouble. I had gone downstairs at three o'clock to fetch a jug of water; and was passing through the hall with it in my hand, when a sharp knock at the front door made me jump. "Oh! it is Green," I said, recollecting myself—"only Green," and I went on, intending to send somebody else to open it; but the knock was repeated: not loud, and still importunately. I put the jug on the banister and hastened to admit him myself. The harvest moon shone clear outside. It was not the attorney. My own sweet little mistress sprang on my neck sobbing, "Ellen, Ellen! Is papa alive?"

"Yes," I cried: "yes, my angel, he is, God be thanked, you are safe with us again!"

She wanted to run, breathless as she was, upstairs to Mr. Linton's room; but I compelled her to sit down on a chair, and made her drink, and washed her pale face, chafing it into a faint colour with my apron. Then I said I must go first, and tell of her arrival; imploring her to say, she should be happy with young Heathcliff. She stared, but soon comprehending why I counselled her to utter the falsehood, she assured me she would not complain.

I couldn't abide to be present at their meeting. I stood outside the chamber-door a quarter of an hour, and hardly ventured near the bed, then. All was composed, however: Catherine's despair was as silent as her father's joy. She supported him calmly, in appearance; and he fixed on her features his raised eyes that seemed dilating with ecstasy.

He died blissfully, Mr. Lockwood: he died so. Kissing her cheek, he murmured,—“I am going to her; and you, darling child, shall come to us!” and never stirred or spoke again; but continued that rapt, radiant gaze, till his pulse imperceptibly stopped and his soul departed. None could have noticed the exact minute of his death, it was so entirely without a struggle.

Whether Catherine had spent her tears, or whether the grief were too weighty to let them flow, she sat there dry-eyed till the sun rose: she sat till noon, and would still have remained brooding over that deathbed, but I insisted on her coming away and taking some repose. It was well I succeeded in removing her, for at dinner-time appeared the lawyer, having called at Wuthering Heights to get his instructions how to behave. He had sold himself to Mr. Heathcliff: that was the cause of his delay in obeying my master's summons. Fortunately, no thought of worldly affairs crossed the latter's mind, to disturb him, after his daughter's arrival.

Mr. Green took upon himself to order everything and everybody about the place. He gave all the servants but me, notice to quit. He would have carried his delegated authority to the point of insisting that Edgar Linton should not be buried beside his wife, but in the chapel, with his family. There was the will, however, to hinder that, and my loud protestations against any infringement of its directions. The funeral was hurried over; Catherine, Mrs. Linton Heathcliff now, was suffered to stay at the Grange till her father's corpse had quitted it.

She told me that her anguish had at last spurred Linton to incur the risk of liberating her. She heard the men I sent disputing at the door, and she gathered the sense of Heathcliff's answer. It drove her desperate. Linton who had been conveyed up to the little parlour soon after I left, was terrified into fetching the key before his father re-ascended. He had the cunning to unlock and re-lock the door, without shutting it; and when he should have gone to bed, he begged to sleep with Hareton, and his petition was granted for once. Catherine stole out before break of day. She dared not try the doors lest the dogs should raise an alarm; she visited the empty chambers



and examined their windows; and, luckily, lighting on her mother's, she got easily out of its lattice, and on to the ground, by means of the fir-tree close by. Her accomplice suffered for his share in the escape, notwithstanding his timid contrivances.

## CHAPTER XXIX

The evening after the funeral, my young lady and I were seated in the library; now musing mournfully—one of us despairingly—on our loss, now venturing conjectures as to the gloomy future.

We had just agreed the best destiny which could await Catherine would be a permission to continue resident at the Grange; at least during Linton's life: he being allowed to join her there, and I to remain as housekeeper. That seemed rather too favourable an arrangement to be hoped for; and yet I did hope, and began to cheer up under the prospect of retaining my home and my employment, and, above all, my beloved young mistress; when a servant—one of the discarded ones, not yet departed—rushed hastily in, and said "that devil Heathcliff" was coming through the court: should he fasten the door in his face?

If we had been mad enough to order that proceeding, we had not time. He made no ceremony of knocking or announcing his name: he was master, and availed himself of the master's privilege to walk straight in, without saying a word. The sound of our informant's voice directed him to the library; he entered and motioning him out, shut the door.

It was the same room into which he had been ushered, as a guest, eighteen years before: the same moon shone through the window; and the same autumn landscape lay outside. We had not yet lighted a candle, but all the apartment was visible, even to the portraits on the wall: the splendid head of Mrs. Linton, and the graceful one of her husband. Heathcliff advanced to the hearth. Time had little altered his person either. There was the same man: his dark face rather sallow and more composed, his frame a stone or two heavier, perhaps, and no other difference. Catherine had risen with an impulse to dash out, when she saw him.

"Stop!" he said, arresting her by the arm. "No more runnings away! Where would you go? I'm come to fetch you home; and I hope you'll be a

dutiful daughter and not encourage my son to further disobedience. I was embarrassed how to punish him when I discovered his part in the business: he's such a cobweb, a pinch would annihilate him; but you'll see by his look that he has received his due! I brought him down one evening, the day before yesterday, and just set him in a chair, and never touched him afterwards. I sent Hareton out, and we had the room to ourselves. In two hours, I called Joseph to carry him up again; and since then my presence is as potent on his nerves as a ghost; and I fancy he sees me often, though I am not near. Hareton says he wakes and shrieks in the night by the hour together, and calls you to protect him from me; and, whether you like your precious mate, or not, you must come: he's your concern now; I yield all my interest in him to you."

"Why not let Catherine continue here," I pleaded, "and send Master Linton to her? As you hate them both, you'd not miss them: they can only be a daily plague to your unnatural heart."

"I'm seeking a tenant for the Grange," he answered; "and I want my children about me, to be sure. Besides, that lass owes me her services for her bread. I'm not going to nurture her in luxury and idleness after Linton is gone. Make haste and get ready, now; and don't oblige me to compel you."

"I shall," said Catherine. "Linton is all I have to love in the world, and though you have done what you could to make him hateful to me, and me to him, you cannot make us hate each other. And I defy you to hurt him when I am by, and I defy you to frighten me!"

"You are a boastful champion," replied Heathcliff; "but I don't like you well enough to hurt him: you shall get the full benefit of the torment, as long as it lasts. It is not I who will make him hateful to you—it is his own sweet spirit. He's as bitter as gall at your desertion and its consequences: don't expect thanks for this noble devotion. I heard him draw a pleasant picture to Zillah of what he would do if he were as strong as I: the inclination is there, and his very weakness will sharpen his wits to find a substitute for strength."

"I know he has a bad nature," said Catherine: "he's your son. But I'm glad I've a better, to forgive it; and I know he loves me, and for that reason I love him. Mr. Heathcliff *you* have *nobody* to love you; and, however miserable you make us, we shall still have the revenge of thinking that your cruelty arises from your greater misery. You *are* miserable, are you not?"

Lonely, like the devil, and envious like him? *Nobody* loves you—*nobody* will cry for you when you die! I wouldn't be you!"

Catherine spoke with a kind of dreary triumph: she seemed to have made up her mind to enter into the spirit of her future family, and draw pleasure from the griefs of her enemies.

"You shall be sorry to be yourself presently," said her father-in-law, "if you stand there another minute. Begone, witch, and get your things!"

She scornfully withdrew. In her absence I began to beg for Zillah's place at the Heights, offering to resign mine to her; but he would suffer it on no account. He bid me be silent; and then, for the first time, allowed himself a glance round the room and a look at the pictures. Having studied Mrs. Linton's, he said—"I shall have that home. Not because I need it, but—" He turned abruptly to the fire, and continued, with what, for lack of a better word, I must call a smile—"I'll tell you what I did yesterday! I got the sexton, who was digging Linton's grave, to remove the earth off her coffin lid, and I opened it. I thought, once, I would have stayed there: when I saw her face again—it is hers yet!—he had hard work to stir me; but he said it would change if the air blew on it, and so I struck one side of the coffin loose, and covered it up: not Linton's side, damn him! I wish he'd been soldered in lead. And I bribed the sexton to pull it away when I'm laid there, and slide mine out too; I'll have it made so: and then by the time Linton gets to us he'll not know which is which!"

"You were very wicked, Mr. Heathcliff!" I exclaimed; "were you not ashamed to disturb the dead?"

"I disturbed nobody, Nelly," he replied; "and I gave some ease to myself. I shall be a great deal more comfortable now; and you'll have a better chance of keeping me underground, when I get there. Disturbed her? No! she has disturbed me, night and day, through eighteen years—incessantly—remorselessly—till yesternight; and yesternight I was tranquil. I dreamt I was sleeping the last sleep by that sleeper, with my heart stopped and my cheek frozen against hers."

"And if she had been dissolved into earth, or worse, what would you have dreamt of then?" I said.

"Of dissolving with her, and being more happy still!" he answered. "Do you suppose I dread any change of that sort? I expected such a transformation on raising the lid—but I'm better pleased that it should not

commence till I share it. Besides, unless I had received a distinct impression of her passionless features, that strange feeling would hardly have been removed. It began oddly. You know I was wild after she died; and eternally, from dawn to dawn, praying her to return to me her spirit! I have a strong faith in ghosts: I have a conviction that they can, and do, exist among us! The day she was buried, there came a fall of snow. In the evening I went to the churchyard. It blew bleak as winter—all round was solitary. I didn't fear that her fool of a husband would wander up the glen so late; and no one else had business to bring them there. Being alone, and conscious two yards of loose earth was the sole barrier between us, I said to myself—'I'll have her in my arms again! If she be cold, I'll think it is this north wind that chills *me*; and if she be motionless, it is sleep.' I got a spade from the tool-house, and began to delve with all my might—it scraped the coffin; I fell to work with my hands; the wood commenced cracking about the screws; I was on the point of attaining my object, when it seemed that I heard a sigh from some one above, close at the edge of the grave, and bending down. 'If I can only get this off,' I muttered, 'I wish they may shovel in the earth over us both!' and I wrenched at it more desperately still. There was another sigh, close at my ear. I appeared to feel the warm breath of it displacing the sleet-laden wind. I knew no living thing in flesh and blood was by; but, as certainly as you perceive the approach to some substantial body in the dark, though it cannot be discerned, so certainly I felt that Cathy was there: not under me, but on the earth. A sudden sense of relief flowed from my heart through every limb. I relinquished my labour of agony, and turned consoled at once: unspeakably consoled. Her presence was with me: it remained while I re-filled the grave, and led me home. You may laugh, if you will; but I was sure I should see her there. I was sure she was with me, and I could not help talking to her. Having reached the Heights, I rushed eagerly to the door. It was fastened; and, I remember, that accursed Earnshaw and my wife opposed my entrance. I remember stopping to kick the breath out of him, and then hurrying upstairs, to my room and hers. I looked round impatiently—I felt her by me—I could *almost* see her, and yet I *could not*! I ought to have sweat blood then, from the anguish of my yearning—from the fervour of my supplications to have but one glimpse! I had not one. She showed herself, as she often was in life, a devil to me! And, since then, sometimes more and sometimes less, I've been the sport of that intolerable torture! Infernal! keeping my nerves at such a stretch that, if they had not

resembled catgut, they would long ago have relaxed to the feebleness of Linton's. When I sat in the house with Hareton, it seemed that on going out I should meet her; when I walked on the moors I should meet her coming in. When I went from home I hastened to return; she *must* be somewhere at the Heights, I was certain! And when I slept in her chamber—I was beaten out of that. I couldn't lie there; for the moment I closed my eyes, she was either outside the window, or sliding back the panels, or entering the room, or even resting her darling head on the same pillow as she did when a child; and I must open my lids to see. And so I opened and closed them a hundred times a night—to be always disappointed! It racked me! I've often groaned aloud, till that old rascal Joseph no doubt believed that my conscience was playing the fiend inside of me. Now, since I've seen her, I'm pacified—a little. It was a strange way of killing: not by inches, but by fractions of hairbreadths, to beguile me with the spectre of a hope through eighteen years!”

Mr. Heathcliff paused and wiped his forehead; his hair clung to it, wet with perspiration; his eyes were fixed on the red embers of the fire, the brows not contracted, but raised next the temples; diminishing the grim aspect of his countenance, but imparting a peculiar look of trouble, and a painful appearance of mental tension towards one absorbing subject. He only half addressed me, and I maintained silence. I didn't like to hear him talk! After a short period he resumed his meditation on the picture, took it down and leant it against the sofa to contemplate it at better advantage; and while so occupied Catherine entered, announcing that she was ready, when her pony should be saddled.

“Send that over to-morrow,” said Heathcliff to me; then turning to her, he added: “You may do without your pony: it is a fine evening, and you'll need no ponies at Wuthering Heights; for what journeys you take, your own feet will serve you. Come along.”

“Good-bye, Ellen!” whispered my dear little mistress.

As she kissed me, her lips felt like ice. “Come and see me, Ellen; don't forget.”

“Take care you do no such thing, Mrs. Dean!” said her new father. “When I wish to speak to you I'll come here. I want none of your prying at my house!”

He signed her to precede him; and casting back a look that cut my heart, she obeyed. I watched them, from the window, walk down the garden. Heathcliff fixed Catherine's arm under his: though she disputed the act at first evidently; and with rapid strides he hurried her into the alley, whose trees concealed them.

## CHAPTER XXX

I have paid a visit to the Heights, but I have not seen her since she left: Joseph held the door in his hand when I called to ask after her, and wouldn't let me pass. He said Mrs. Linton was "thrang," and the master was not in. Zillah has told me something of the way they go on, otherwise I should hardly know who was dead and who living. She thinks Catherine haughty, and does not like her, I can guess by her talk. My young lady asked some aid of her when she first came; but Mr. Heathcliff told her to follow her own business, and let his daughter-in-law look after herself; and Zillah willingly acquiesced, being a narrow-minded, selfish woman. Catherine evinced a child's annoyance at this neglect; repaid it with contempt, and thus enlisted my informant among her enemies, as securely as if she had done her some great wrong. I had a long talk with Zillah about six weeks ago, a little before you came, one day when we foregathered on the moor; and this is what she told me.

"The first thing Mrs. Linton did," she said, "on her arrival at the Heights, was to run upstairs, without even wishing good-evening to me and Joseph; she shut herself into Linton's room, and remained till morning. Then, while the master and Earnshaw were at breakfast, she entered the house, and asked all in a quiver if the doctor might be sent for? her cousin was very ill.

"We know that!" answered Heathcliff; 'but his life is not worth a farthing, and I won't spend a farthing on him.'

"But I cannot tell how to do,' she said; 'and if nobody will help me, he'll die!'

"Walk out of the room,' cried the master, 'and let me never hear a word more about him! None here care what becomes of him; if you do, act the nurse; if you do not, lock him up and leave him.'

"Then she began to bother me, and I said I'd had enough plague with the tiresome thing; we each had our tasks, and hers was to wait on Linton: Mr.



Heathcliff bid me leave that labour to her.

“How they managed together, I can’t tell. I fancy he fretted a great deal, and moaned hisseln night and day; and she had precious little rest: one could guess by her white face and heavy eyes. She sometimes came into the kitchen all wildered like, and looked as if she would fain beg assistance; but I was not going to disobey the master: I never dare disobey him, Mrs. Dean; and, though I thought it wrong that Kenneth should not be sent for, it was no concern of mine either to advise or complain, and I always refused to meddle. Once or twice, after we had gone to bed, I’ve happened to open my door again and seen her sitting crying on the stairs’-top; and then I’ve shut myself in quick, for fear of being moved to interfere. I did pity her then, I’m sure: still I didn’t wish to lose my place, you know.

“At last, one night she came boldly into my chamber, and frightened me out of my wits, by saying, ‘Tell Mr. Heathcliff that his son is dying—I’m sure he is, this time. Get up, instantly, and tell him.’

“Having uttered this speech, she vanished again. I lay a quarter of an hour listening and trembling. Nothing stirred—the house was quiet.

“She’s mistaken, I said to myself. He’s got over it. I needn’t disturb them; and I began to doze. But my sleep was marred a second time by a sharp ringing of the bell—the only bell we have, put up on purpose for Linton; and the master called to me to see what was the matter, and inform them that he wouldn’t have that noise repeated.

“I delivered Catherine’s message. He cursed to himself, and in a few minutes came out with a lighted candle, and proceeded to their room. I followed. Mrs. Heathcliff was seated by the bedside, with her hands folded on her knees. Her father-in-law went up, held the light to Linton’s face, looked at him, and touched him; afterwards he turned to her.

“‘Now—Catherine,’ he said, ‘how do you feel?’

“She was dumb.

“‘How do you feel, Catherine?’ he repeated.

“‘He’s safe, and I’m free,’ she answered: ‘I should feel well—but,’ she continued, with a bitterness she couldn’t conceal, ‘you have left me so long to struggle against death alone, that I feel and see only death! I feel like death!’

“And she looked like it, too! I gave her a little wine. Hareton and Joseph, who had been wakened by the ringing and the sound of feet, and heard our talk from outside, now entered. Joseph was fain, I believe, of the lad’s removal; Hareton seemed a thought bothered: though he was more taken up with staring at Catherine than thinking of Linton. But the master bid him get off to bed again: we didn’t want his help. He afterwards made Joseph remove the body to his chamber, and told me to return to mine, and Mrs. Heathcliff remained by herself.

“In the morning, he sent me to tell her she must come down to breakfast: she had undressed, and appeared going to sleep, and said she was ill; at which I hardly wondered. I informed Mr. Heathcliff, and he replied, —‘Well, let her be till after the funeral; and go up now and then to get her what is needful; and, as soon as she seems better, tell me.’”

Cathy stayed upstairs a fortnight, according to Zillah; who visited her twice a day, and would have been rather more friendly, but her attempts at increasing kindness were proudly and promptly repelled.

Heathcliff went up once, to show her Linton’s will. He had bequeathed the whole of his, and what had been her, moveable property, to his father: the poor creature was threatened, or coaxed, into that act during her week’s absence, when his uncle died. The lands, being a minor, he could not meddle with. However, Mr. Heathcliff has claimed and kept them in his wife’s right and his also: I suppose legally; at any rate, Catherine, destitute of cash and friends, cannot disturb his possession.

“Nobody,” said Zillah, “ever approached her door, except that once, but I; and nobody asked anything about her. The first occasion of her coming down into the house was on a Sunday afternoon. She had cried out, when I carried up her dinner, that she couldn’t bear any longer being in the cold; and I told her the master was going to Thrushcross Grange, and Earnshaw and I needn’t hinder her from descending; so, as soon as she heard Heathcliff’s horse trot off, she made her appearance, donned in black, and her yellow curls combed back behind her ears as plain as a Quaker: she couldn’t comb them out.

“Joseph and I generally go to chapel on Sundays:” the kirk, you know, has no minister now, explained Mrs. Dean; and they call the Methodists’ or Baptists’ place (I can’t say which it is) at Gimmerton, a chapel. “Joseph had gone,” she continued, “but I thought proper to bide at home. Young folks

are always the better for an elder's over-looking; and Hareton, with all his bashfulness, isn't a model of nice behaviour. I let him know that his cousin would very likely sit with us, and she had been always used to see the Sabbath respected; so he had as good leave his guns and bits of indoor work alone, while she stayed. He coloured up at the news, and cast his eyes over his hands and clothes. The train-oil and gunpowder were shoved out of sight in a minute. I saw he meant to give her his company; and I guessed, by his way, he wanted to be presentable; so, laughing, as I durst not laugh when the master is by, I offered to help him, if he would, and joked at his confusion. He grew sullen, and began to swear.

"Now, Mrs. Dean," Zillah went on, seeing me not pleased by her manner, "you happen think your young lady too fine for Mr. Hareton; and happen you're right: but I own I should love well to bring her pride a peg lower. And what will all her learning and her daintiness do for her, now? She's as poor as you or I: poorer, I'll be bound: you're saying, and I'm doing my little all that road."

Hareton allowed Zillah to give him her aid; and she flattered him into a good humour; so, when Catherine came, half forgetting her former insults, he tried to make himself agreeable, by the housekeeper's account.

"Missis walked in," she said, "as chill as an icicle, and as high as a princess. I got up and offered her my seat in the arm-chair. No, she turned up her nose at my civility. Earnshaw rose, too, and bid her come to the settle, and sit close by the fire: he was sure she was starved.

"I've been starved a month and more," she answered, resting on the word as scornful as she could.

"And she got a chair for herself, and placed it at a distance from both of us. Having sat till she was warm, she began to look round, and discovered a number of books on the dresser; she was instantly upon her feet again, stretching to reach them: but they were too high up. Her cousin, after watching her endeavours a while, at last summoned courage to help her; she held her frock, and he filled it with the first that came to hand.

"That was a great advance for the lad. She didn't thank him; still, he felt gratified that she had accepted his assistance, and ventured to stand behind as she examined them, and even to stoop and point out what struck his fancy in certain old pictures which they contained; nor was he daunted by the saucy style in which she jerked the page from his finger: he contented

himself with going a bit farther back and looking at her instead of the book. She continued reading, or seeking for something to read. His attention became, by degrees, quite centred in the study of her thick silky curls: her face he couldn't see, and she couldn't see him. And, perhaps, not quite awake to what he did, but attracted like a child to a candle, at last he proceeded from staring to touching; he put out his hand and stroked one curl, as gently as if it were a bird. He might have stuck a knife into her neck, she started round in such a taking.

“Get away this moment! How dare you touch me? Why are you stopping there?” she cried, in a tone of disgust. ‘I can't endure you! I'll go upstairs again, if you come near me.’

“Mr. Hareton recoiled, looking as foolish as he could do: he sat down in the settle very quiet, and she continued turning over her volumes another half hour; finally, Earnshaw crossed over, and whispered to me.

“Will you ask her to read to us, Zillah? I'm stalled of doing naught; and I do like—I could like to hear her! Dunnot say I wanted it, but ask of yourseln.’

“Mr. Hareton wishes you would read to us, ma'am,” I said, immediately. ‘He'd take it very kind—he'd be much obliged.’

“She frowned; and looking up, answered—

“Mr. Hareton, and the whole set of you, will be good enough to understand that I reject any pretence at kindness you have the hypocrisy to offer! I despise you, and will have nothing to say to any of you! When I would have given my life for one kind word, even to see one of your faces, you all kept off. But I won't complain to you! I'm driven down here by the cold; not either to amuse you or enjoy your society.’

“What could I ha' done?” began Earnshaw. ‘How was I to blame?’

“Oh! you are an exception,” answered Mrs. Heathcliff. ‘I never missed such a concern as you.’

“But I offered more than once, and asked,” he said, kindling up at her pertness, ‘I asked Mr. Heathcliff to let me wake for you—’

“Be silent! I'll go out of doors, or anywhere, rather than have your disagreeable voice in my ear!” said my lady.

“Hareton muttered she might go to hell, for him! and unslinging his gun, restrained himself from his Sunday occupations no longer. He talked now,

freely enough; and she presently saw fit to retreat to her solitude: but the frost had set in, and, in spite of her pride, she was forced to condescend to our company, more and more. However, I took care there should be no further scorning at my good nature: ever since, I've been as stiff as herself; and she has no lover or liker among us: and she does not deserve one; for, let them say the least word to her, and she'll curl back without respect of any one. She'll snap at the master himself, and as good as dares him to thrash her; and the more hurt she gets, the more venomous she grows."

At first, on hearing this account from Zillah, I determined to leave my situation, take a cottage, and get Catherine to come and live with me: but Mr. Heathcliff would as soon permit that as he would set up Hareton in an independent house; and I can see no remedy, at present, unless she could marry again; and that scheme it does not come within my province to arrange.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus ended Mrs. Dean's story. Notwithstanding the doctor's prophecy, I am rapidly recovering strength; and though it be only the second week in January, I propose getting out on horseback in a day or two, and riding over to Wuthering Heights, to inform my landlord that I shall spend the next six months in London; and, if he likes, he may look out for another tenant to take the place after October. I would not pass another winter here for much.

## CHAPTER XXXI

Yesterday was bright, calm, and frosty. I went to the Heights as I proposed: my housekeeper entreated me to bear a little note from her to her young lady, and I did not refuse, for the worthy woman was not conscious of anything odd in her request. The front door stood open, but the jealous gate was fastened, as at my last visit; I knocked and invoked Earnshaw from among the garden-beds; he unchained it, and I entered. The fellow is as handsome a rustic as need be seen. I took particular notice of him this time; but then he does his best apparently to make the least of his advantages.

I asked if Mr. Heathcliff were at home? He answered, No; but he would be in at dinner-time. It was eleven o'clock, and I announced my intention of going in and waiting for him; at which he immediately flung down his tools and accompanied me, in the office of watchdog, not as a substitute for the host.

We entered together; Catherine was there, making herself useful in preparing some vegetables for the approaching meal; she looked more sulky and less spirited than when I had seen her first. She hardly raised her eyes to notice me, and continued her employment with the same disregard to common forms of politeness as before; never returning my bow and good-morning by the slightest acknowledgment.

“She does not seem so amiable,” I thought, “as Mrs. Dean would persuade me to believe. She’s a beauty, it is true; but not an angel.”

Earnshaw surlily bid her remove her things to the kitchen. “Remove them yourself,” she said, pushing them from her as soon as she had done; and retiring to a stool by the window, where she began to carve figures of birds and beasts out of the turnip-parings in her lap. I approached her, pretending to desire a view of the garden; and, as I fancied, adroitly dropped Mrs.

Dean's note on to her knee, unnoticed by Hareton—but she asked aloud, “What is that?” And chucked it off.

“A letter from your old acquaintance, the housekeeper at the Grange,” I answered; annoyed at her exposing my kind deed, and fearful lest it should be imagined a missive of my own. She would gladly have gathered it up at this information, but Hareton beat her; he seized and put it in his waistcoat, saying Mr. Heathcliff should look at it first. Thereat, Catherine silently turned her face from us, and, very stealthily, drew out her pocket-handkerchief and applied it to her eyes; and her cousin, after struggling awhile to keep down his softer feelings, pulled out the letter and flung it on the floor beside her, as ungraciously as he could. Catherine caught and perused it eagerly; then she put a few questions to me concerning the inmates, rational and irrational, of her former home; and gazing towards the hills, murmured in soliloquy:

“I should like to be riding Minny down there! I should like to be climbing up there! Oh! I'm tired—I'm *stalled*, Hareton!” And she leant her pretty head back against the sill, with half a yawn and half a sigh, and lapsed into an aspect of abstracted sadness: neither caring nor knowing whether we remarked her.

“Mrs. Heathcliff,” I said, after sitting some time mute, “you are not aware that I am an acquaintance of yours? so intimate that I think it strange you won't come and speak to me. My housekeeper never wearies of talking about and praising you; and she'll be greatly disappointed if I return with no news of or from you, except that you received her letter and said nothing!”

She appeared to wonder at this speech, and asked,—

“Does Ellen like you?”

“Yes, very well,” I replied, hesitatingly.

“You must tell her,” she continued, “that I would answer her letter, but I have no materials for writing: not even a book from which I might tear a leaf.”

“No books!” I exclaimed. “How do you contrive to live here without them? if I may take the liberty to inquire. Though provided with a large library, I'm frequently very dull at the Grange; take my books away, and I should be desperate!”

“I was always reading, when I had them,” said Catherine; “and Mr. Heathcliff never reads; so he took it into his head to destroy my books. I have not had a glimpse of one for weeks. Only once, I searched through Joseph’s store of theology, to his great irritation; and once, Hareton, I came upon a secret stock in your room—some Latin and Greek, and some tales and poetry: all old friends. I brought the last here—and you gathered them, as a magpie gathers silver spoons, for the mere love of stealing! They are of no use to you; or else you concealed them in the bad spirit that, as you cannot enjoy them, nobody else shall. Perhaps *your* envy counselled Mr. Heathcliff to rob me of my treasures? But I’ve most of them written on my brain and printed in my heart, and you cannot deprive me of those!”

Earnshaw blushed crimson when his cousin made this revelation of his private literary accumulations, and stammered an indignant denial of her accusations.

“Mr. Hareton is desirous of increasing his amount of knowledge,” I said, coming to his rescue. “He is not *envious*, but *emulous* of your attainments. He’ll be a clever scholar in a few years.”

“And he wants me to sink into a dunce, meantime,” answered Catherine. “Yes, I hear him trying to spell and read to himself, and pretty blunders he makes! I wish you would repeat Chevy Chase as you did yesterday: it was extremely funny. I heard you; and I heard you turning over the dictionary to seek out the hard words, and then cursing because you couldn’t read their explanations!”

The young man evidently thought it too bad that he should be laughed at for his ignorance, and then laughed at for trying to remove it. I had a similar notion; and, remembering Mrs. Dean’s anecdote of his first attempt at enlightening the darkness in which he had been reared, I observed,—“But, Mrs. Heathcliff, we have each had a commencement, and each stumbled and tottered on the threshold; had our teachers scorned instead of aiding us, we should stumble and totter yet.”

“Oh!” she replied, “I don’t wish to limit his acquirements: still, he has no right to appropriate what is mine, and make it ridiculous to me with his vile mistakes and mispronunciations! Those books, both prose and verse, are consecrated to me by other associations; and I hate to have them debased and profaned in his mouth! Besides, of all, he has selected my favourite pieces that I love the most to repeat, as if out of deliberate malice.”



Hareton's chest heaved in silence a minute: he laboured under a severe sense of mortification and wrath, which it was no easy task to suppress. I rose, and, from a gentlemanly idea of relieving his embarrassment, took up my station in the doorway, surveying the external prospect as I stood. He followed my example, and left the room; but presently reappeared, bearing half a dozen volumes in his hands, which he threw into Catherine's lap, exclaiming,—“Take them! I never want to hear, or read, or think of them again!”

“I won't have them now,” she answered. “I shall connect them with you, and hate them.”

She opened one that had obviously been often turned over, and read a portion in the drawling tone of a beginner; then laughed, and threw it from her. “And listen,” she continued, provokingly, commencing a verse of an old ballad in the same fashion.

But his self-love would endure no further torment: I heard, and not altogether disapprovingly, a manual check given to her saucy tongue. The little wretch had done her utmost to hurt her cousin's sensitive though uncultivated feelings, and a physical argument was the only mode he had of balancing the account, and repaying its effects on the inflictor. He afterwards gathered the books and hurled them on the fire. I read in his countenance what anguish it was to offer that sacrifice to spleen. I fancied that as they consumed, he recalled the pleasure they had already imparted, and the triumph and ever-increasing pleasure he had anticipated from them; and I fancied I guessed the incitement to his secret studies also. He had been content with daily labour and rough animal enjoyments, till Catherine crossed his path. Shame at her scorn, and hope of her approval, were his first prompters to higher pursuits; and instead of guarding him from one and winning him to the other, his endeavours to raise himself had produced just the contrary result.

“Yes that's all the good that such a brute as you can get from them!” cried Catherine, sucking her damaged lip, and watching the conflagration with indignant eyes.

“You'd *better* hold your tongue, now,” he answered fiercely.

And his agitation precluded further speech; he advanced hastily to the entrance, where I made way for him to pass. But ere he had crossed the

door-stones, Mr. Heathcliff, coming up the causeway, encountered him, and laying hold of his shoulder asked,—“What’s to do now, my lad?”

“Naught, naught,” he said, and broke away to enjoy his grief and anger in solitude.

Heathcliff gazed after him, and sighed.

“It will be odd if I thwart myself,” he muttered, unconscious that I was behind him. “But when I look for his father in his face, I find *her* every day more! How the devil is he so like? I can hardly bear to see him.”

He bent his eyes to the ground, and walked moodily in. There was a restless, anxious expression in his countenance. I had never remarked there before; and he looked sparer in person. His daughter-in-law, on perceiving him through the window, immediately escaped to the kitchen, so that I remained alone.

“I’m glad to see you out of doors again, Mr. Lockwood,” he said, in reply to my greeting; “from selfish motives partly: I don’t think I could readily supply your loss in this desolation. I’ve wondered more than once what brought you here.”

“An idle whim, I fear, sir,” was my answer; “or else an idle whim is going to spirit me away. I shall set out for London next week; and I must give you warning that I feel no disposition to retain Thrushcross Grange beyond the twelve months I agreed to rent it. I believe I shall not live there any more.”

“Oh, indeed; you’re tired of being banished from the world, are you?” he said. “But if you be coming to plead off paying for a place you won’t occupy, your journey is useless: I never relent in exacting my due from any one.”

“I’m coming to plead off nothing about it,” I exclaimed, considerably irritated. “Should you wish it, I’ll settle with you now,” and I drew my notebook from my pocket.

“No, no,” he replied, coolly; “you’ll leave sufficient behind to cover your debts, if you fail to return: I’m not in such a hurry. Sit down and take your dinner with us; a guest that is safe from repeating his visit can generally be made welcome. Catherine! bring the things in: where are you?”

Catherine reappeared, bearing a tray of knives and forks.

“You may get your dinner with Joseph,” muttered Heathcliff, aside, “and remain in the kitchen till he is gone.”

She obeyed his directions very punctually: perhaps she had no temptation to transgress. Living among clowns and misanthropists, she probably cannot appreciate a better class of people when she meets them.

With Mr. Heathcliff, grim and saturnine, on the one hand, and Hareton, absolutely dumb, on the other, I made a somewhat cheerless meal, and bade adieu early. I would have departed by the back way, to get a last glimpse of Catherine and annoy old Joseph; but Hareton received orders to lead up my horse, and my host himself escorted me to the door, so I could not fulfil my wish.

“How dreary life gets over in that house!” I reflected, while riding down the road. “What a realisation of something more romantic than a fairy tale it would have been for Mrs. Linton Heathcliff, had she and I struck up an attachment, as her good nurse desired, and migrated together into the stirring atmosphere of the town!”

## CHAPTER XXXII

1802.—This September I was invited to devastate the moors of a friend in the north, and on my journey to his abode, I unexpectedly came within fifteen miles of Gimmerton. The ostler at a roadside public-house was holding a pail of water to refresh my horses, when a cart of very green oats, newly reaped, passed by, and he remarked,—“Yon’s frough Gimmerton, nah! They’re allas three wick’ after other folk wi’ ther harvest.”

“Gimmerton?” I repeated—my residence in that locality had already grown dim and dreamy. “Ah! I know. How far is it from this?”

“Happen fourteen mile o’er th’ hills; and a rough road,” he answered.

A sudden impulse seized me to visit Thrushcross Grange. It was scarcely noon, and I conceived that I might as well pass the night under my own roof as in an inn. Besides, I could spare a day easily to arrange matters with my landlord, and thus save myself the trouble of invading the neighbourhood again. Having rested awhile, I directed my servant to inquire the way to the village; and, with great fatigue to our beasts, we managed the distance in some three hours.

I left him there, and proceeded down the valley alone. The grey church looked greyer, and the lonely churchyard lonelier. I distinguished a moor-sheep cropping the short turf on the graves. It was sweet, warm weather—too warm for travelling; but the heat did not hinder me from enjoying the delightful scenery above and below: had I seen it nearer August, I’m sure it would have tempted me to waste a month among its solitudes. In winter nothing more dreary, in summer nothing more divine, than those glens shut in by hills, and those bluff, bold swells of heath.

I reached the Grange before sunset, and knocked for admittance; but the family had retreated into the back premises, I judged, by one thin, blue wreath, curling from the kitchen chimney, and they did not hear. I rode into

the court. Under the porch, a girl of nine or ten sat knitting, and an old woman reclined on the housesteps, smoking a meditative pipe.

“Is Mrs. Dean within?” I demanded of the dame.

“Mistress Dean? Nay!” she answered, “she doesn’t bide here: shoo’s up at th’ Heights.”

“Are you the housekeeper, then?” I continued.

“Eea, aw keep th’ hause,” she replied.

“Well, I’m Mr. Lockwood, the master. Are there any rooms to lodge me in, I wonder? I wish to stay all night.”

“T’ maister!” she cried in astonishment. “Whet, whoiver knew yah wur coming? Yah sud ha’ send word. They’s nowt norther dry nor mensful abaht t’ place: nowt there isn’t!”

She threw down her pipe and bustled in, the girl followed, and I entered too; soon perceiving that her report was true, and, moreover, that I had almost upset her wits by my unwelcome apparition, I bade her be composed. I would go out for a walk; and, meantime she must try to prepare a corner of a sitting-room for me to sup in, and a bedroom to sleep in. No sweeping and dusting, only good fire and dry sheets were necessary. She seemed willing to do her best; though she thrust the hearth-brush into the grates in mistake for the poker, and malappropriated several other articles of her craft: but I retired, confiding in her energy for a resting-place against my return. Wuthering Heights was the goal of my proposed excursion. An afterthought brought me back, when I had quitted the court.

“All well at the Heights?” I inquired of the woman.

“Eea, f’r owt ee know!” she answered, skurrying away with a pan of hot cinders.

I would have asked why Mrs. Dean had deserted the Grange, but it was impossible to delay her at such a crisis, so I turned away and made my exit, rambling leisurely along, with the glow of a sinking sun behind, and the mild glory of a rising moon in front—one fading, and the other brightening—as I quitted the park, and climbed the stony by-road branching off to Mr. Heathcliff’s dwelling. Before I arrived in sight of it, all that remained of day was a beamless amber light along the west: but I could see every pebble on the path, and every blade of grass, by that splendid moon. I had neither to climb the gate nor to knock—it yielded to my hand. That is an

improvement, I thought. And I noticed another, by the aid of my nostrils; a fragrance of stocks and wallflowers wafted on the air from amongst the homely fruit-trees.

Both doors and lattices were open; and yet, as is usually the case in a coal-district, a fine red fire illumined the chimney: the comfort which the eye derives from it renders the extra heat endurable. But the house of Wuthering Heights is so large that the inmates have plenty of space for withdrawing out of its influence; and accordingly what inmates there were had stationed themselves not far from one of the windows. I could both see them and hear them talk before I entered, and looked and listened in consequence; being moved thereto by a mingled sense of curiosity and envy, that grew as I lingered.

“*Con-trary!*” said a voice as sweet as a silver bell. “That for the third time, you dunce! I’m not going to tell you again. Recollect, or I’ll pull your hair!”

“Contrary, then,” answered another, in deep but softened tones. “And now, kiss me, for minding so well.”

“No, read it over first correctly, without a single mistake.”

The male speaker began to read: he was a young man, respectably dressed and seated at a table, having a book before him. His handsome features glowed with pleasure, and his eyes kept impatiently wandering from the page to a small white hand over his shoulder, which recalled him by a smart slap on the cheek, whenever its owner detected such signs of inattention. Its owner stood behind; her light, shining ringlets blending, at intervals, with his brown looks, as she bent to superintend his studies; and her face—it was lucky he could not see her face, or he would never have been so steady. I could; and I bit my lip in spite, at having thrown away the chance I might have had of doing something besides staring at its smiting beauty.

The task was done, not free from further blunders; but the pupil claimed a reward, and received at least five kisses; which, however, he generously returned. Then they came to the door, and from their conversation I judged they were about to issue out and have a walk on the moors. I supposed I should be condemned in Hareton Earnshaw’s heart, if not by his mouth, to the lowest pit in the infernal regions if I showed my unfortunate person in his neighbourhood then; and feeling very mean and malignant, I skulked

round to seek refuge in the kitchen. There was unobstructed admittance on that side also; and at the door sat my old friend Nelly Dean, sewing and singing a song; which was often interrupted from within by harsh words of scorn and intolerance, uttered in far from musical accents.

“I’d rayther, by th’ haulf, hev’ ’em swearing i’ my lugs fro’ h morn to neeght, nor hearken ye hahsiver!” said the tenant of the kitchen, in answer to an unheard speech of Nelly’s. “It’s a blazing shame, that I cannot oppen t’ blessed Book, but yah set up them glories to sattan, and all t’ flaysome wickednesses that iver were born into th’ warld! Oh! ye’re a raight nowt; and shoo’s another; and that poor lad ’ll be lost atween ye. Poor lad!” he added, with a groan; “he’s witched: I’m sartin on’t. Oh, Lord, judge ’em, for there’s norther law nor justice among wer rullers!”

“No! or we should be sitting in flaming fagots, I suppose,” retorted the singer. “But wisht, old man, and read your Bible like a Christian, and never mind me. This is ‘Fairy Annie’s Wedding’—a bonny tune—it goes to a dance.”

Mrs. Dean was about to recommence, when I advanced; and recognising me directly, she jumped to her feet, crying—“Why, bless you, Mr. Lockwood! How could you think of returning in this way? All’s shut up at Thrushcross Grange. You should have given us notice!”

“I’ve arranged to be accommodated there, for as long as I shall stay,” I answered. “I depart again to-morrow. And how are you transplanted here, Mrs. Dean? tell me that.”

“Zillah left, and Mr. Heathcliff wished me to come, soon after you went to London, and stay till you returned. But, step in, pray! Have you walked from Gimmerton this evening?”

“From the Grange,” I replied; “and while they make me lodging room there, I want to finish my business with your master; because I don’t think of having another opportunity in a hurry.”

“What business, sir?” said Nelly, conducting me into the house. “He’s gone out at present, and won’t return soon.”

“About the rent,” I answered.

“Oh! then it is with Mrs. Heathcliff you must settle,” she observed; “or rather with me. She has not learnt to manage her affairs yet, and I act for her: there’s nobody else.”

I looked surprised.

“Ah! you have not heard of Heathcliff’s death, I see,” she continued.

“Heathcliff dead!” I exclaimed, astonished. “How long ago?”

“Three months since: but sit down, and let me take your hat, and I’ll tell you all about it. Stop, you have had nothing to eat, have you?”

“I want nothing: I have ordered supper at home. You sit down too. I never dreamt of his dying! Let me hear how it came to pass. You say you don’t expect them back for some time—the young people?”

“No—I have to scold them every evening for their late rambles: but they don’t care for me. At least, have a drink of our old ale; it will do you good: you seem weary.”

She hastened to fetch it before I could refuse, and I heard Joseph asking whether “it warn’t a crying scandal that she should have followers at her time of life? And then, to get them jocks out o’ t’ maister’s cellar! He fair shaamed to ’bide still and see it.”

She did not stay to retaliate, but re-entered in a minute, bearing a reaming silver pint, whose contents I lauded with becoming earnestness. And afterwards she furnished me with the sequel of Heathcliff’s history. He had a “queer” end, as she expressed it.

I was summoned to Wuthering Heights, within a fortnight of your leaving us, she said; and I obeyed joyfully, for Catherine’s sake. My first interview with her grieved and shocked me: she had altered so much since our separation. Mr. Heathcliff did not explain his reasons for taking a new mind about my coming here; he only told me he wanted me, and he was tired of seeing Catherine: I must make the little parlour my sitting-room, and keep her with me. It was enough if he were obliged to see her once or twice a day. She seemed pleased at this arrangement; and, by degrees, I smuggled over a great number of books, and other articles, that had formed her amusement at the Grange; and flattered myself we should get on in tolerable comfort. The delusion did not last long. Catherine, contented at first, in a brief space grew irritable and restless. For one thing, she was forbidden to move out of the garden, and it fretted her sadly to be confined to its narrow bounds as spring drew on; for another, in following the house, I was forced to quit her frequently, and she complained of loneliness: she preferred quarrelling with Joseph in the kitchen to sitting at peace in her



solitude. I did not mind their skirmishes: but Hareton was often obliged to seek the kitchen also, when the master wanted to have the house to himself! and though in the beginning she either left it at his approach, or quietly joined in my occupations, and shunned remarking or addressing him—and though he was always as sullen and silent as possible—after a while, she changed her behaviour, and became incapable of letting him alone: talking at him; commenting on his stupidity and idleness; expressing her wonder how he could endure the life he lived—how he could sit a whole evening staring into the fire, and dozing.

“He’s just like a dog, is he not, Ellen?” she once observed, “or a cart-horse? He does his work, eats his food, and sleeps eternally! What a blank, dreary mind he must have! Do you ever dream, Hareton? And, if you do, what is it about? But you can’t speak to me!”

Then she looked at him; but he would neither open his mouth nor look again.

“He’s, perhaps, dreaming now,” she continued. “He twitched his shoulder as Juno twitches hers. Ask him, Ellen.”

“Mr. Hareton will ask the master to send you upstairs, if you don’t behave!” I said. He had not only twitched his shoulder but clenched his fist, as if tempted to use it.

“I know why Hareton never speaks, when I am in the kitchen,” she exclaimed, on another occasion. “He is afraid I shall laugh at him. Ellen, what do you think? He began to teach himself to read once; and, because I laughed, he burned his books, and dropped it: was he not a fool?”

“Were not you naughty?” I said; “answer me that.”

“Perhaps I was,” she went on; “but I did not expect him to be so silly. Hareton, if I gave you a book, would you take it now? I’ll try!”

She placed one she had been perusing on his hand; he flung it off, and muttered, if she did not give over, he would break her neck.

“Well, I shall put it here,” she said, “in the table-drawer; and I’m going to bed.”

Then she whispered me to watch whether he touched it, and departed. But he would not come near it; and so I informed her in the morning, to her great disappointment. I saw she was sorry for his persevering sulkiness and indolence: her conscience reproved her for frightening him off improving

himself: she had done it effectually. But her ingenuity was at work to remedy the injury: while I ironed, or pursued other such stationary employments as I could not well do in the parlour, she would bring some pleasant volume and read it aloud to me. When Hareton was there, she generally paused in an interesting part, and left the book lying about: that she did repeatedly; but he was as obstinate as a mule, and, instead of snatching at her bait, in wet weather he took to smoking with Joseph; and they sat like automatons, one on each side of the fire, the elder happily too deaf to understand her wicked nonsense, as he would have called it, the younger doing his best to seem to disregard it. On fine evenings the latter followed his shooting expeditions, and Catherine yawned and sighed, and teased me to talk to her, and ran off into the court or garden the moment I began; and, as a last resource, cried, and said she was tired of living: her life was useless.

Mr. Heathcliff, who grew more and more disinclined to society, had almost banished Earnshaw from his apartment. Owing to an accident at the commencement of March, he became for some days a fixture in the kitchen. His gun burst while out on the hills by himself; a splinter cut his arm, and he lost a good deal of blood before he could reach home. The consequence was that, perforce, he was condemned to the fireside and tranquillity, till he made it up again. It suited Catherine to have him there: at any rate, it made her hate her room upstairs more than ever: and she would compel me to find out business below, that she might accompany me.

On Easter Monday, Joseph went to Gimmerton fair with some cattle; and, in the afternoon, I was busy getting up linen in the kitchen. Earnshaw sat, morose as usual, at the chimney corner, and my little mistress was beguiling an idle hour with drawing pictures on the window-panes, varying her amusement by smothered bursts of songs, and whispered ejaculations, and quick glances of annoyance and impatience in the direction of her cousin, who steadfastly smoked, and looked into the grate. At a notice that I could do with her no longer intercepting my light, she removed to the hearthstone. I bestowed little attention on her proceedings, but, presently, I heard her begin—"I've found out, Hareton, that I want—that I'm glad—that I should like you to be my cousin now, if you had not grown so cross to me, and so rough."

Hareton returned no answer.

“Hareton, Hareton, Hareton! do you hear?” she continued.

“Get off wi’ ye!” he growled, with uncompromising gruffness.

“Let me take that pipe,” she said, cautiously advancing her hand and abstracting it from his mouth.

Before he could attempt to recover it, it was broken, and behind the fire. He swore at her and seized another.

“Stop,” she cried, “you must listen to me first; and I can’t speak while those clouds are floating in my face.”

“Will you go to the devil!” he exclaimed, ferociously, “and let me be!”

“No,” she persisted, “I won’t: I can’t tell what to do to make you talk to me; and you are determined not to understand. When I call you stupid, I don’t mean anything: I don’t mean that I despise you. Come, you shall take notice of me, Hareton: you are my cousin, and you shall own me.”

“I shall have naught to do wi’ you and your mucky pride, and your damned mocking tricks!” he answered. “I’ll go to hell, body and soul, before I look sideways after you again. Side out o’ t’ gate, now, this minute!”

Catherine frowned, and retreated to the window-seat chewing her lip, and endeavouring, by humming an eccentric tune, to conceal a growing tendency to sob.

“You should be friends with your cousin, Mr. Hareton,” I interrupted, “since she repents of her sauciness. It would do you a great deal of good: it would make you another man to have her for a companion.”

“A companion!” he cried; “when she hates me, and does not think me fit to wipe her shoon! Nay, if it made me a king, I’d not be scorned for seeking her good-will any more.”

“It is not I who hate you, it is you who hate me!” wept Cathy, no longer disguising her trouble. “You hate me as much as Mr. Heathcliff does, and more.”

“You’re a damned liar,” began Earnshaw: “why have I made him angry, by taking your part, then, a hundred times? and that when you sneered at and despised me, and—Go on plaguing me, and I’ll step in yonder, and say you worried me out of the kitchen!”

“I didn’t know you took my part,” she answered, drying her eyes; “and I was miserable and bitter at everybody; but now I thank you, and beg you to forgive me: what can I do besides?”

She returned to the hearth, and frankly extended her hand. He blackened and scowled like a thunder-cloud, and kept his fists resolutely clenched, and his gaze fixed on the ground. Catherine, by instinct, must have divined it was obdurate perversity, and not dislike, that prompted this dogged conduct; for, after remaining an instant undecided, she stooped and impressed on his cheek a gentle kiss. The little rogue thought I had not seen her, and, drawing back, she took her former station by the window, quite demurely. I shook my head reprovably, and then she blushed and whispered—“Well! what should I have done, Ellen? He wouldn’t shake hands, and he wouldn’t look: I must show him some way that I like him—that I want to be friends.”

Whether the kiss convinced Hareton, I cannot tell: he was very careful, for some minutes, that his face should not be seen, and when he did raise it, he was sadly puzzled where to turn his eyes.

Catherine employed herself in wrapping a handsome book neatly in white paper, and having tied it with a bit of ribbon, and addressed it to “Mr. Hareton Earnshaw,” she desired me to be her ambassadress, and convey the present to its destined recipient.

“And tell him, if he’ll take it, I’ll come and teach him to read it right,” she said; “and, if he refuse it, I’ll go upstairs, and never tease him again.”

I carried it, and repeated the message; anxiously watched by my employer. Hareton would not open his fingers, so I laid it on his knee. He did not strike it off, either. I returned to my work. Catherine leaned her head and arms on the table, till she heard the slight rustle of the covering being removed; then she stole away, and quietly seated herself beside her cousin. He trembled, and his face glowed: all his rudeness and all his surly harshness had deserted him: he could not summon courage, at first, to utter a syllable in reply to her questioning look, and her murmured petition.

“Say you forgive me, Hareton, do. You can make me so happy by speaking that little word.”

He muttered something inaudible.

“And you’ll be my friend?” added Catherine, interrogatively.

“Nay, you’ll be ashamed of me every day of your life,” he answered; “and the more ashamed, the more you know me; and I cannot bide it.”

“So you won’t be my friend?” she said, smiling as sweet as honey, and creeping close up.

I overheard no further distinguishable talk, but, on looking round again, I perceived two such radiant countenances bent over the page of the accepted book, that I did not doubt the treaty had been ratified on both sides; and the enemies were, thenceforth, sworn allies.

The work they studied was full of costly pictures; and those and their position had charm enough to keep them unmoved till Joseph came home. He, poor man, was perfectly aghast at the spectacle of Catherine seated on the same bench with Hareton Earnshaw, leaning her hand on his shoulder; and confounded at his favourite’s endurance of her proximity: it affected him too deeply to allow an observation on the subject that night. His emotion was only revealed by the immense sighs he drew, as he solemnly spread his large Bible on the table, and overlaid it with dirty bank-notes from his pocket-book, the produce of the day’s transactions. At length he summoned Hareton from his seat.

“Tak’ these in to t’ maister, lad,” he said, “and bide there. I’s gang up to my own rahm. This hoile’s neither mensful nor seemly for us: we mun side out and seearch another.”

“Come, Catherine,” I said, “we must ‘side out’ too: I’ve done my ironing. Are you ready to go?”

“It is not eight o’clock!” she answered, rising unwillingly.

“Hareton, I’ll leave this book upon the chimney-piece, and I’ll bring some more to-morrow.”

“Ony books that yah leave, I shall tak’ into th’ hahse,” said Joseph, “and it’ll be mitch if yah find ’em agean; soa, yah may plase yerseln!”

Cathy threatened that his library should pay for hers; and, smiling as she passed Hareton, went singing upstairs: lighter of heart, I venture to say, than ever she had been under that roof before; except, perhaps, during her earliest visits to Linton.

The intimacy thus commenced grew rapidly; though it encountered temporary interruptions. Earnshaw was not to be civilized with a wish, and my young lady was no philosopher, and no paragon of patience; but both

their minds tending to the same point—one loving and desiring to esteem, and the other loving and desiring to be esteemed—they contrived in the end to reach it.

You see, Mr. Lockwood, it was easy enough to win Mrs. Heathcliff's heart. But now, I'm glad you did not try. The crown of all my wishes will be the union of those two. I shall envy no one on their wedding day: there won't be a happier woman than myself in England!

## CHAPTER XXXIII

On the morrow of that Monday, Earnshaw being still unable to follow his ordinary employments, and therefore remaining about the house, I speedily found it would be impracticable to retain my charge beside me, as heretofore. She got downstairs before me, and out into the garden, where she had seen her cousin performing some easy work; and when I went to bid them come to breakfast, I saw she had persuaded him to clear a large space of ground from currant and gooseberry bushes, and they were busy planning together an importation of plants from the Grange.

I was terrified at the devastation which had been accomplished in a brief half-hour; the black-currant trees were the apple of Joseph's eye, and she had just fixed her choice of a flower-bed in the midst of them.

"There! That will be all shown to the master," I exclaimed, "the minute it is discovered. And what excuse have you to offer for taking such liberties with the garden? We shall have a fine explosion on the head of it: see if we don't! Mr. Hareton, I wonder you should have no more wit than to go and make that mess at her bidding!"

"I'd forgotten they were Joseph's," answered Earnshaw, rather puzzled; "but I'll tell him I did it."

We always ate our meals with Mr. Heathcliff. I held the mistress's post in making tea and carving; so I was indispensable at table. Catherine usually sat by me, but to-day she stole nearer to Hareton; and I presently saw she would have no more discretion in her friendship than she had in her hostility.

"Now, mind you don't talk with and notice your cousin too much," were my whispered instructions as we entered the room. "It will certainly annoy Mr. Heathcliff, and he'll be mad at you both."

"I'm not going to," she answered.

The minute after, she had sidled to him, and was sticking primroses in his plate of porridge.

He dared not speak to her there: he dared hardly look; and yet she went on teasing, till he was twice on the point of being provoked to laugh. I frowned, and then she glanced towards the master: whose mind was occupied on other subjects than his company, as his countenance evinced; and she grew serious for an instant, scrutinizing him with deep gravity. Afterwards she turned, and recommenced her nonsense; at last, Hareton uttered a smothered laugh. Mr. Heathcliff started; his eye rapidly surveyed our faces, Catherine met it with her accustomed look of nervousness and yet defiance, which he abhorred.

“It is well you are out of my reach,” he exclaimed. “What fiend possesses you to stare back at me, continually, with those infernal eyes? Down with them! and don’t remind me of your existence again. I thought I had cured you of laughing.”

“It was me,” muttered Hareton.

“What do you say?” demanded the master.

Hareton looked at his plate, and did not repeat the confession. Mr. Heathcliff looked at him a bit, and then silently resumed his breakfast and his interrupted musing. We had nearly finished, and the two young people prudently shifted wider asunder, so I anticipated no further disturbance during that sitting: when Joseph appeared at the door, revealing by his quivering lip and furious eyes that the outrage committed on his precious shrubs was detected. He must have seen Cathy and her cousin about the spot before he examined it, for while his jaws worked like those of a cow chewing its cud, and rendered his speech difficult to understand, he began:

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“I mun hev’ my wage, and I mun goa! I *hed* aimed to dee wheare I’d sarved fur sixty year; and I thowt I’d lug my books up into t’ garret, and all my bits o’ stuff, and they sud hev’ t’ kitchen to theirseln; for t’ sake o’ quietness. It wur hard to gie up my awn hearthstun, but I thowt I *could* do that! But nah, shoo’s taan my garden fro’ me, and by th’ heart, maister, I cannot stand it! Yah may bend to th’ yoak an ye will—I noan used to ’t, and an old man doesn’t sooin get used to new barthens. I’d rayther arn my bite an’ my sup wi’ a hammer in th’ road!”



“Now, now, idiot!” interrupted Heathcliff, “cut it short! What’s your grievance? I’ll interfere in no quarrels between you and Nelly. She may thrust you into the coal-hole for anything I care.”

“It’s noan Nelly!” answered Joseph. “I sudn’t shift for Nelly—nasty ill nowt as shoo is. Thank God! *shoo* cannot stale t’ sowl o’ nob’dy! Shoo wer niver soa handsome, but what a body mud look at her ’bout winking. It’s yon flaysome, graceless quean, that’s witched our lad, wi’ her bold een and her forrard ways—till—Nay! it fair brusts my heart! He’s forgotten all I’ve done for him, and made on him, and goan and riven up a whole row o’ t’ grandest currant-trees i’ t’ garden!” and here he lamented outright; unmanned by a sense of his bitter injuries, and Earnshaw’s ingratitude and dangerous condition.

“Is the fool drunk?” asked Mr. Heathcliff. “Hareton, is it you he’s finding fault with?”

“I’ve pulled up two or three bushes,” replied the young man; “but I’m going to set ’em again.”

“And why have you pulled them up?” said the master.

Catherine wisely put in her tongue.

“We wanted to plant some flowers there,” she cried. “I’m the only person to blame, for I wished him to do it.”

“And who the devil gave *you* leave to touch a stick about the place?” demanded her father-in-law, much surprised. “And who ordered *you* to obey her?” he added, turning to Hareton.

The latter was speechless; his cousin replied—“You shouldn’t grudge a few yards of earth for me to ornament, when you have taken all my land!”

“Your land, insolent slut! You never had any,” said Heathcliff.

“And my money,” she continued; returning his angry glare, and meantime biting a piece of crust, the remnant of her breakfast.

“Silence!” he exclaimed. “Get done, and begone!”

“And Hareton’s land, and his money,” pursued the reckless thing. “Hareton and I are friends now; and I shall tell him all about you!”

The master seemed confounded a moment: he grew pale, and rose up, eyeing her all the while, with an expression of mortal hate.

“If you strike me, Hareton will strike you,” she said; “so you may as well sit down.”

“If Hareton does not turn you out of the room, I’ll strike him to hell,” thundered Heathcliff. “Damnable witch! dare you pretend to rouse him against me? Off with her! Do you hear? Fling her into the kitchen! I’ll kill her, Ellen Dean, if you let her come into my sight again!”

Hareton tried, under his breath, to persuade her to go.

“Drag her away!” he cried, savagely. “Are you staying to talk?” And he approached to execute his own command.

“He’ll not obey you, wicked man, any more,” said Catherine; “and he’ll soon detest you as much as I do.”

“Wisht! wisht!” muttered the young man, reproachfully; “I will not hear you speak so to him. Have done.”

“But you won’t let him strike me?” she cried.

“Come, then,” he whispered earnestly.

It was too late: Heathcliff had caught hold of her.

“Now, *you* go!” he said to Earnshaw. “Accursed witch! this time she has provoked me when I could not bear it; and I’ll make her repent it for ever!”

He had his hand in her hair; Hareton attempted to release her locks, entreating him not to hurt her that once. Heathcliff’s black eyes flashed; he seemed ready to tear Catherine in pieces, and I was just worked up to risk coming to the rescue, when of a sudden his fingers relaxed; he shifted his grasp from her head to her arm, and gazed intently in her face. Then he drew his hand over his eyes, stood a moment to collect himself apparently, and turning anew to Catherine, said, with assumed calmness—“You must learn to avoid putting me in a passion, or I shall really murder you some time! Go with Mrs. Dean, and keep with her; and confine your insolence to her ears. As to Hareton Earnshaw, if I see him listen to you, I’ll send him seeking his bread where he can get it! Your love will make him an outcast and a beggar. Nelly, take her; and leave me, all of you! Leave me!”

I led my young lady out: she was too glad of her escape to resist; the other followed, and Mr. Heathcliff had the room to himself till dinner. I had counselled Catherine to dine upstairs; but, as soon as he perceived her vacant seat, he sent me to call her. He spoke to none of us, ate very little,

and went out directly afterwards, intimating that he should not return before evening.

The two new friends established themselves in the house during his absence; where I heard Hareton sternly check his cousin, on her offering a revelation of her father-in-law's conduct to his father. He said he wouldn't suffer a word to be uttered in his disparagement: if he were the devil, it didn't signify; he would stand by him; and he'd rather she would abuse himself, as she used to, than begin on Mr. Heathcliff. Catherine was waxing cross at this; but he found means to make her hold her tongue, by asking how she would like *him* to speak ill of her father? Then she comprehended that Earnshaw took the master's reputation home to himself; and was attached by ties stronger than reason could break—chains, forged by habit, which it would be cruel to attempt to loosen. She showed a good heart, thenceforth, in avoiding both complaints and expressions of antipathy concerning Heathcliff; and confessed to me her sorrow that she had endeavoured to raise a bad spirit between him and Hareton: indeed, I don't believe she has ever breathed a syllable, in the latter's hearing, against her oppressor since.

When this slight disagreement was over, they were friends again, and as busy as possible in their several occupations of pupil and teacher. I came in to sit with them, after I had done my work; and I felt so soothed and comforted to watch them, that I did not notice how time got on. You know, they both appeared in a measure my children: I had long been proud of one; and now, I was sure, the other would be a source of equal satisfaction. His honest, warm, and intelligent nature shook off rapidly the clouds of ignorance and degradation in which it had been bred; and Catherine's sincere commendations acted as a spur to his industry. His brightening mind brightened his features, and added spirit and nobility to their aspect: I could hardly fancy it the same individual I had beheld on the day I discovered my little lady at Wuthering Heights, after her expedition to the Craggs. While I admired and they laboured, dusk drew on, and with it returned the master. He came upon us quite unexpectedly, entering by the front way, and had a full view of the whole three, ere we could raise our heads to glance at him. Well, I reflected, there was never a pleasanter, or more harmless sight; and it will be a burning shame to scold them. The red fire-light glowed on their two bonny heads, and revealed their faces animated with the eager interest of children; for, though he was twenty-three and she eighteen, each had so

much of novelty to feel and learn, that neither experienced nor evinced the sentiments of sober disenchanted maturity.

They lifted their eyes together, to encounter Mr. Heathcliff: perhaps you have never remarked that their eyes are precisely similar, and they are those of Catherine Earnshaw. The present Catherine has no other likeness to her, except a breadth of forehead, and a certain arch of the nostril that makes her appear rather haughty, whether she will or not. With Hareton the resemblance is carried farther: it is singular at all times, *then* it was particularly striking; because his senses were alert, and his mental faculties wakened to unwonted activity. I suppose this resemblance disarmed Mr. Heathcliff: he walked to the hearth in evident agitation; but it quickly subsided as he looked at the young man: or, I should say, altered its character; for it was there yet. He took the book from his hand, and glanced at the open page, then returned it without any observation; merely signing Catherine away: her companion lingered very little behind her, and I was about to depart also, but he bid me sit still.

“It is a poor conclusion, is it not?” he observed, having brooded awhile on the scene he had just witnessed: “an absurd termination to my violent exertions? I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me; now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives: I could do it; and none could hinder me. But where is the use? I don’t care for striking: I can’t take the trouble to raise my hand! That sounds as if I had been labouring the whole time only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity. It is far from being the case: I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing.

“Nelly, there is a strange change approaching; I’m in its shadow at present. I take so little interest in my daily life that I hardly remember to eat and drink. Those two who have left the room are the only objects which retain a distinct material appearance to me; and that appearance causes me pain, amounting to agony. About *her* I won’t speak; and I don’t desire to think; but I earnestly wish she were invisible: her presence invokes only maddening sensations. *He* moves me differently: and yet if I could do it without seeming insane, I’d never see him again! You’ll perhaps think me

rather inclined to become so,” he added, making an effort to smile, “if I try to describe the thousand forms of past associations and ideas he awakens or embodies. But you’ll not talk of what I tell you; and my mind is so eternally secluded in itself, it is tempting at last to turn it out to another.

“Five minutes ago Hareton seemed a personification of my youth, not a human being; I felt to him in such a variety of ways, that it would have been impossible to have accosted him rationally. In the first place, his startling likeness to Catherine connected him fearfully with her. That, however, which you may suppose the most potent to arrest my imagination, is actually the least: for what is not connected with her to me? and what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree—filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day—I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women—my own features—mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her! Well, Hareton’s aspect was the ghost of my immortal love; of my wild endeavours to hold my right; my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish—

“But it is frenzy to repeat these thoughts to you: only it will let you know why, with a reluctance to be always alone, his society is no benefit; rather an aggravation of the constant torment I suffer: and it partly contributes to render me regardless how he and his cousin go on together. I can give them no attention any more.”

“But what do you mean by a *change*, Mr. Heathcliff?” I said, alarmed at his manner: though he was neither in danger of losing his senses, nor dying, according to my judgment: he was quite strong and healthy; and, as to his reason, from childhood he had a delight in dwelling on dark things, and entertaining odd fancies. He might have had a monomania on the subject of his departed idol; but on every other point his wits were as sound as mine.

“I shall not know that till it comes,” he said; “I’m only half conscious of it now.”

“You have no feeling of illness, have you?” I asked.

“No, Nelly, I have not,” he answered.

“Then you are not afraid of death?” I pursued.

“Afraid? No!” he replied. “I have neither a fear, nor a presentiment, nor a hope of death. Why should I? With my hard constitution and temperate mode of living, and unperilous occupations, I ought to, and probably *shall*, remain above ground till there is scarcely a black hair on my head. And yet I cannot continue in this condition! I have to remind myself to breathe—almost to remind my heart to beat! And it is like bending back a stiff spring: it is by compulsion that I do the slightest act not prompted by one thought; and by compulsion that I notice anything alive or dead, which is not associated with one universal idea. I have a single wish, and my whole being and faculties are yearning to attain it. They have yearned towards it so long, and so unwaveringly, that I’m convinced it will be reached—and soon—because it has devoured my existence: I am swallowed up in the anticipation of its fulfilment. My confessions have not relieved me; but they may account for some otherwise unaccountable phases of humour which I show. O God! It is a long fight; I wish it were over!”

He began to pace the room, muttering terrible things to himself, till I was inclined to believe, as he said Joseph did, that conscience had turned his heart to an earthly hell. I wondered greatly how it would end. Though he seldom before had revealed this state of mind, even by looks, it was his habitual mood, I had no doubt: he asserted it himself; but not a soul, from his general bearing, would have conjectured the fact. You did not when you saw him, Mr. Lockwood: and at the period of which I speak, he was just the same as then; only fonder of continued solitude, and perhaps still more laconic in company.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

For some days after that evening Mr. Heathcliff shunned meeting us at meals; yet he would not consent formally to exclude Hareton and Cathy. He had an aversion to yielding so completely to his feelings, choosing rather to absent himself; and eating once in twenty-four hours seemed sufficient sustenance for him.

One night, after the family were in bed, I heard him go downstairs, and out at the front door. I did not hear him re-enter, and in the morning I found he was still away. We were in April then: the weather was sweet and warm, the grass as green as showers and sun could make it, and the two dwarf apple-trees near the southern wall in full bloom. After breakfast, Catherine insisted on my bringing a chair and sitting with my work under the fir-trees at the end of the house; and she beguiled Hareton, who had perfectly recovered from his accident, to dig and arrange her little garden, which was shifted to that corner by the influence of Joseph's complaints. I was comfortably revelling in the spring fragrance around, and the beautiful soft blue overhead, when my young lady, who had run down near the gate to procure some primrose roots for a border, returned only half laden, and informed us that Mr. Heathcliff was coming in. "And he spoke to me," she added, with a perplexed countenance.

"What did he say?" asked Hareton.

"He told me to begone as fast as I could," she answered. "But he looked so different from his usual look that I stopped a moment to stare at him."

"How?" he inquired.

"Why, almost bright and cheerful. No, *almost* nothing—*very much* excited, and wild, and glad!" she replied.

"Night-walking amuses him, then," I remarked, affecting a careless manner: in reality as surprised as she was, and anxious to ascertain the truth of her statement; for to see the master looking glad would not be an every-

day spectacle. I framed an excuse to go in. Heathcliff stood at the open door; he was pale, and he trembled: yet, certainly, he had a strange joyful glitter in his eyes, that altered the aspect of his whole face.

“Will you have some breakfast?” I said. “You must be hungry, rambling about all night!” I wanted to discover where he had been, but I did not like to ask directly.

“No, I’m not hungry,” he answered, averting his head, and speaking rather contemptuously, as if he guessed I was trying to divine the occasion of his good humour.

I felt perplexed: I didn’t know whether it were not a proper opportunity to offer a bit of admonition.

“I don’t think it right to wander out of doors,” I observed, “instead of being in bed: it is not wise, at any rate this moist season. I daresay you’ll catch a bad cold or a fever: you have something the matter with you now!”

“Nothing but what I can bear,” he replied; “and with the greatest pleasure, provided you’ll leave me alone: get in, and don’t annoy me.”

I obeyed: and, in passing, I noticed he breathed as fast as a cat.

“Yes!” I reflected to myself, “we shall have a fit of illness. I cannot conceive what he has been doing.”

That noon he sat down to dinner with us, and received a heaped-up plate from my hands, as if he intended to make amends for previous fasting.

“I’ve neither cold nor fever, Nelly,” he remarked, in allusion to my morning’s speech; “and I’m ready to do justice to the food you give me.”

He took his knife and fork, and was going to commence eating, when the inclination appeared to become suddenly extinct. He laid them on the table, looked eagerly towards the window, then rose and went out. We saw him walking to and fro in the garden while we concluded our meal, and Earnshaw said he’d go and ask why he would not dine: he thought we had grieved him some way.

“Well, is he coming?” cried Catherine, when her cousin returned.

“Nay,” he answered; “but he’s not angry: he seemed rarely pleased indeed; only I made him impatient by speaking to him twice; and then he bid me be off to you: he wondered how I could want the company of anybody else.”



I set his plate to keep warm on the fender; and after an hour or two he re-entered, when the room was clear, in no degree calmer: the same unnatural—it was unnatural—appearance of joy under his black brows; the same bloodless hue, and his teeth visible, now and then, in a kind of smile; his frame shivering, not as one shivers with chill or weakness, but as a tight-stretched cord vibrates—a strong thrilling, rather than trembling.

I will ask what is the matter, I thought; or who should? And I exclaimed—“Have you heard any good news, Mr. Heathcliff? You look uncommonly animated.”

“Where should good news come from to me?” he said. “I’m animated with hunger; and, seemingly, I must not eat.”

“Your dinner is here,” I returned; “why won’t you get it?”

“I don’t want it now,” he muttered, hastily: “I’ll wait till supper. And, Nelly, once for all, let me beg you to warn Hareton and the other away from me. I wish to be troubled by nobody: I wish to have this place to myself.”

“Is there some new reason for this banishment?” I inquired. “Tell me why you are so queer, Mr. Heathcliff? Where were you last night? I’m not putting the question through idle curiosity, but—”

“You are putting the question through very idle curiosity,” he interrupted, with a laugh. “Yet I’ll answer it. Last night I was on the threshold of hell. To-day, I am within sight of my heaven. I have my eyes on it: hardly three feet to sever me! And now you’d better go! You’ll neither see nor hear anything to frighten you, if you refrain from prying.”

Having swept the hearth and wiped the table, I departed; more perplexed than ever.

He did not quit the house again that afternoon, and no one intruded on his solitude; till, at eight o’clock, I deemed it proper, though unsummoned, to carry a candle and his supper to him. He was leaning against the ledge of an open lattice, but not looking out: his face was turned to the interior gloom. The fire had smouldered to ashes; the room was filled with the damp, mild air of the cloudy evening; and so still, that not only the murmur of the beck down Gimmerton was distinguishable, but its ripples and its gurgling over the pebbles, or through the large stones which it could not cover. I uttered an ejaculation of discontent at seeing the dismal grate, and commenced shutting the casements, one after another, till I came to his.

“Must I close this?” I asked, in order to rouse him; for he would not stir.

The light flashed on his features as I spoke. Oh, Mr. Lockwood, I cannot express what a terrible start I got by the momentary view! Those deep black eyes! That smile, and ghastly paleness! It appeared to me, not Mr. Heathcliff, but a goblin; and, in my terror, I let the candle bend towards the wall, and it left me in darkness.

“Yes, close it,” he replied, in his familiar voice. “There, that is pure awkwardness! Why did you hold the candle horizontally? Be quick, and bring another.”

I hurried out in a foolish state of dread, and said to Joseph—“The master wishes you to take him a light and rekindle the fire.” For I dared not go in myself again just then.

Joseph rattled some fire into the shovel, and went: but he brought it back immediately, with the supper-tray in his other hand, explaining that Mr. Heathcliff was going to bed, and he wanted nothing to eat till morning. We heard him mount the stairs directly; he did not proceed to his ordinary chamber, but turned into that with the panelled bed: its window, as I mentioned before, is wide enough for anybody to get through; and it struck me that he plotted another midnight excursion, of which he had rather we had no suspicion.

“Is he a ghoul or a vampire?” I mused. I had read of such hideous incarnate demons. And then I set myself to reflect how I had tended him in infancy, and watched him grow to youth, and followed him almost through his whole course; and what absurd nonsense it was to yield to that sense of horror. “But where did he come from, the little dark thing, harboured by a good man to his bane?” muttered Superstition, as I dozed into unconsciousness. And I began, half dreaming, to weary myself with imagining some fit parentage for him; and, repeating my waking meditations, I tracked his existence over again, with grim variations; at last, picturing his death and funeral: of which, all I can remember is, being exceedingly vexed at having the task of dictating an inscription for his monument, and consulting the sexton about it; and, as he had no surname, and we could not tell his age, we were obliged to content ourselves with the single word, “Heathcliff.” That came true: we were. If you enter the kirkyard, you’ll read, on his headstone, only that, and the date of his death.

Dawn restored me to common sense. I rose, and went into the garden, as soon as I could see, to ascertain if there were any footmarks under his window. There were none. "He has stayed at home," I thought, "and he'll be all right to-day." I prepared breakfast for the household, as was my usual custom, but told Hareton and Catherine to get theirs ere the master came down, for he lay late. They preferred taking it out of doors, under the trees, and I set a little table to accommodate them.

On my re-entrance, I found Mr. Heathcliff below. He and Joseph were conversing about some farming business; he gave clear, minute directions concerning the matter discussed, but he spoke rapidly, and turned his head continually aside, and had the same excited expression, even more exaggerated. When Joseph quitted the room he took his seat in the place he generally chose, and I put a basin of coffee before him. He drew it nearer, and then rested his arms on the table, and looked at the opposite wall, as I supposed, surveying one particular portion, up and down, with glittering, restless eyes, and with such eager interest that he stopped breathing during half a minute together.

"Come now," I exclaimed, pushing some bread against his hand, "eat and drink that, while it is hot: it has been waiting near an hour."

He didn't notice me, and yet he smiled. I'd rather have seen him gnash his teeth than smile so.

"Mr. Heathcliff! master!" I cried, "don't, for God's sake, stare as if you saw an unearthly vision."

"Don't, for God's sake, shout so loud," he replied. "Turn round, and tell me, are we by ourselves?"

"Of course," was my answer; "of course we are."

Still, I involuntarily obeyed him, as if I was not quite sure. With a sweep of his hand he cleared a vacant space in front among the breakfast things, and leant forward to gaze more at his ease.

Now, I perceived he was not looking at the wall; for when I regarded him alone, it seemed exactly that he gazed at something within two yards' distance. And whatever it was, it communicated, apparently, both pleasure and pain in exquisite extremes: at least the anguished, yet raptured, expression of his countenance suggested that idea. The fancied object was not fixed, either: his eyes pursued it with unwearied diligence, and, even in

speaking to me, were never weaned away. I vainly reminded him of his protracted abstinence from food: if he stirred to touch anything in compliance with my entreaties, if he stretched his hand out to get a piece of bread, his fingers clenched before they reached it, and remained on the table, forgetful of their aim.

I sat, a model of patience, trying to attract his absorbed attention from its engrossing speculation; till he grew irritable, and got up, asking why I would not allow him to have his own time in taking his meals? and saying that on the next occasion I needn't wait: I might set the things down and go. Having uttered these words he left the house, slowly sauntered down the garden path, and disappeared through the gate.

The hours crept anxiously by: another evening came. I did not retire to rest till late, and when I did, I could not sleep. He returned after midnight, and, instead of going to bed, shut himself into the room beneath. I listened, and tossed about, and, finally, dressed and descended. It was too irksome to lie there, harassing my brain with a hundred idle misgivings.

I distinguished Mr. Heathcliff's step, restlessly measuring the floor, and he frequently broke the silence by a deep inspiration, resembling a groan. He muttered detached words also; the only one I could catch was the name of Catherine, coupled with some wild term of endearment or suffering; and spoken as one would speak to a person present; low and earnest, and wrung from the depth of his soul. I had not courage to walk straight into the apartment; but I desired to divert him from his reverie, and therefore fell foul of the kitchen fire, stirred it, and began to scrape the cinders. It drew him forth sooner than I expected. He opened the door immediately, and said—"Nelly, come here—is it morning? Come in with your light."

"It is striking four," I answered. "You want a candle to take upstairs: you might have lit one at this fire."

"No, I don't wish to go upstairs," he said. "Come in, and kindle *me* a fire, and do anything there is to do about the room."

"I must blow the coals red first, before I can carry any," I replied, getting a chair and the bellows.

He roamed to and fro, meantime, in a state approaching distraction; his heavy sighs succeeding each other so thick as to leave no space for common breathing between.

“When day breaks I’ll send for Green,” he said; “I wish to make some legal inquiries of him while I can bestow a thought on those matters, and while I can act calmly. I have not written my will yet; and how to leave my property I cannot determine. I wish I could annihilate it from the face of the earth.”

“I would not talk so, Mr. Heathcliff,” I interposed. “Let your will be a while: you’ll be spared to repent of your many injustices yet! I never expected that your nerves would be disordered: they are, at present, marvellously so, however; and almost entirely through your own fault. The way you’ve passed these three last days might knock up a Titan. Do take some food, and some repose. You need only look at yourself in a glass to see how you require both. Your cheeks are hollow, and your eyes blood-shot, like a person starving with hunger and going blind with loss of sleep.”

“It is not my fault that I cannot eat or rest,” he replied. “I assure you it is through no settled designs. I’ll do both, as soon as I possibly can. But you might as well bid a man struggling in the water rest within arms’ length of the shore! I must reach it first, and then I’ll rest. Well, never mind Mr. Green: as to repenting of my injustices, I’ve done no injustice, and I repent of nothing. I’m too happy; and yet I’m not happy enough. My soul’s bliss kills my body, but does not satisfy itself.”

“Happy, master?” I cried. “Strange happiness! If you would hear me without being angry, I might offer some advice that would make you happier.”

“What is that?” he asked. “Give it.”

“You are aware, Mr. Heathcliff,” I said, “that from the time you were thirteen years old you have lived a selfish, unchristian life; and probably hardly had a Bible in your hands during all that period. You must have forgotten the contents of the book, and you may not have space to search it now. Could it be hurtful to send for some one—some minister of any denomination, it does not matter which—to explain it, and show you how very far you have erred from its precepts; and how unfit you will be for its heaven, unless a change takes place before you die?”

“I’m rather obliged than angry, Nelly,” he said, “for you remind me of the manner in which I desire to be buried. It is to be carried to the churchyard in the evening. You and Hareton may, if you please, accompany me: and mind, particularly, to notice that the sexton obeys my directions concerning the

two coffins! No minister need come; nor need anything be said over me.—I tell you I have nearly attained *my* heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued and uncoveted by me.”

“And supposing you persevered in your obstinate fast, and died by that means, and they refused to bury you in the precincts of the kirk?” I said, shocked at his godless indifference. “How would you like it?”

“They won’t do that,” he replied: “if they did, you must have me removed secretly; and if you neglect it you shall prove, practically, that the dead are not annihilated!”

As soon as he heard the other members of the family stirring he retired to his den, and I breathed freer. But in the afternoon, while Joseph and Hareton were at their work, he came into the kitchen again, and, with a wild look, bid me come and sit in the house: he wanted somebody with him. I declined; telling him plainly that his strange talk and manner frightened me, and I had neither the nerve nor the will to be his companion alone.

“I believe you think me a fiend,” he said, with his dismal laugh: “something too horrible to live under a decent roof.” Then turning to Catherine, who was there, and who drew behind me at his approach, he added, half sneeringly,—“Will *you* come, chuck? I’ll not hurt you. No! to you I’ve made myself worse than the devil. Well, there is *one* who won’t shrink from my company! By God! she’s relentless. Oh, damn it! It’s unutterably too much for flesh and blood to bear—even mine.”

He solicited the society of no one more. At dusk he went into his chamber. Through the whole night, and far into the morning, we heard him groaning and murmuring to himself. Hareton was anxious to enter; but I bid him fetch Mr. Kenneth, and he should go in and see him. When he came, and I requested admittance and tried to open the door, I found it locked; and Heathcliff bid us be damned. He was better, and would be left alone; so the doctor went away.

The following evening was very wet: indeed, it poured down till day-dawn; and, as I took my morning walk round the house, I observed the master’s window swinging open, and the rain driving straight in. He cannot be in bed, I thought: those showers would drench him through. He must either be up or out. But I’ll make no more ado, I’ll go boldly and look.”

Having succeeded in obtaining entrance with another key, I ran to unclosethe panels, for the chamber was vacant; quickly pushing them

aside, I peeped in. Mr. Heathcliff was there—laid on his back. His eyes met mine so keen and fierce, I started; and then he seemed to smile. I could not think him dead: but his face and throat were washed with rain; the bed-clothes dripped, and he was perfectly still. The lattice, flapping to and fro, had grazed one hand that rested on the sill; no blood trickled from the broken skin, and when I put my fingers to it, I could doubt no more: he was dead and stark!

I hasped the window; I combed his black long hair from his forehead; I tried to close his eyes: to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation before any one else beheld it. They would not shut: they seemed to sneer at my attempts; and his parted lips and sharp white teeth sneered too! Taken with another fit of cowardice, I cried out for Joseph. Joseph shuffled up and made a noise, but resolutely refused to meddle with him.

“Th’ divil’s harried off his soul,” he cried, “and he may hev’ his carcass into t’ bargain, for aught I care! Ech! what a wicked ’un he looks, girning at death!” and the old sinner grinned in mockery. I thought he intended to cut a caper round the bed; but suddenly composing himself, he fell on his knees, and raised his hands, and returned thanks that the lawful master and the ancient stock were restored to their rights.

I felt stunned by the awful event; and my memory unavoidably recurred to former times with a sort of oppressive sadness. But poor Hareton, the most wronged, was the only one who really suffered much. He sat by the corpse all night, weeping in bitter earnest. He pressed its hand, and kissed the sarcastic, savage face that every one else shrank from contemplating; and bemoaned him with that strong grief which springs naturally from a generous heart, though it be tough as tempered steel.

Mr. Kenneth was perplexed to pronounce of what disorder the master died. I concealed the fact of his having swallowed nothing for four days, fearing it might lead to trouble, and then, I am persuaded, he did not abstain on purpose: it was the consequence of his strange illness, not the cause.

We buried him, to the scandal of the whole neighbourhood, as he wished. Earnshaw and I, the sexton, and six men to carry the coffin, comprehended the whole attendance. The six men departed when they had let it down into the grave: we stayed to see it covered. Hareton, with a streaming face, dug green sods, and laid them over the brown mould himself: at present it is as

smooth and verdant as its companion mounds—and I hope its tenant sleeps as soundly. But the country folks, if you ask them, would swear on the Bible that he *walks*: there are those who speak to having met him near the church, and on the moor, and even within this house. Idle tales, you'll say, and so say I. Yet that old man by the kitchen fire affirms he has seen two on 'em looking out of his chamber window on every rainy night since his death:—and an odd thing happened to me about a month ago. I was going to the Grange one evening—a dark evening, threatening thunder—and, just at the turn of the Heights, I encountered a little boy with a sheep and two lambs before him; he was crying terribly; and I supposed the lambs were skittish, and would not be guided.

“What is the matter, my little man?” I asked.

“There's Heathcliff and a woman yonder, under t' nab,” he blubbered, “un' I darnut pass 'em.”

I saw nothing; but neither the sheep nor he would go on so I bid him take the road lower down. He probably raised the phantoms from thinking, as he traversed the moors alone, on the nonsense he had heard his parents and companions repeat. Yet, still, I don't like being out in the dark now; and I don't like being left by myself in this grim house: I cannot help it; I shall be glad when they leave it, and shift to the Grange.

“They are going to the Grange, then?” I said.

“Yes,” answered Mrs. Dean, “as soon as they are married, and that will be on New Year's Day.”

“And who will live here then?”

“Why, Joseph will take care of the house, and, perhaps, a lad to keep him company. They will live in the kitchen, and the rest will be shut up.”

“For the use of such ghosts as choose to inhabit it?” I observed.

“No, Mr. Lockwood,” said Nelly, shaking her head. “I believe the dead are at peace: but it is not right to speak of them with levity.”

At that moment the garden gate swung to; the ramblers were returning.

“*They* are afraid of nothing,” I grumbled, watching their approach through the window. “Together, they would brave Satan and all his legions.”



As they stepped on to the door-stones, and halted to take a last look at the moon—or, more correctly, at each other by her light—I felt irresistibly impelled to escape them again; and, pressing a remembrance into the hand of Mrs. Dean, and disregarding her expostulations at my rudeness, I vanished through the kitchen as they opened the house-door; and so should have confirmed Joseph in his opinion of his fellow-servant's gay indiscretions, had he not fortunately recognised me for a respectable character by the sweet ring of a sovereign at his feet.

My walk home was lengthened by a diversion in the direction of the kirk. When beneath its walls, I perceived decay had made progress, even in seven months: many a window showed black gaps deprived of glass; and slates juttred off here and there, beyond the right line of the roof, to be gradually worked off in coming autumn storms.

I sought, and soon discovered, the three headstones on the slope next the moor: the middle one grey, and half buried in the heath; Edgar Linton's only harmonized by the turf and moss creeping up its foot; Heathcliff's still bare.

I lingered round them, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

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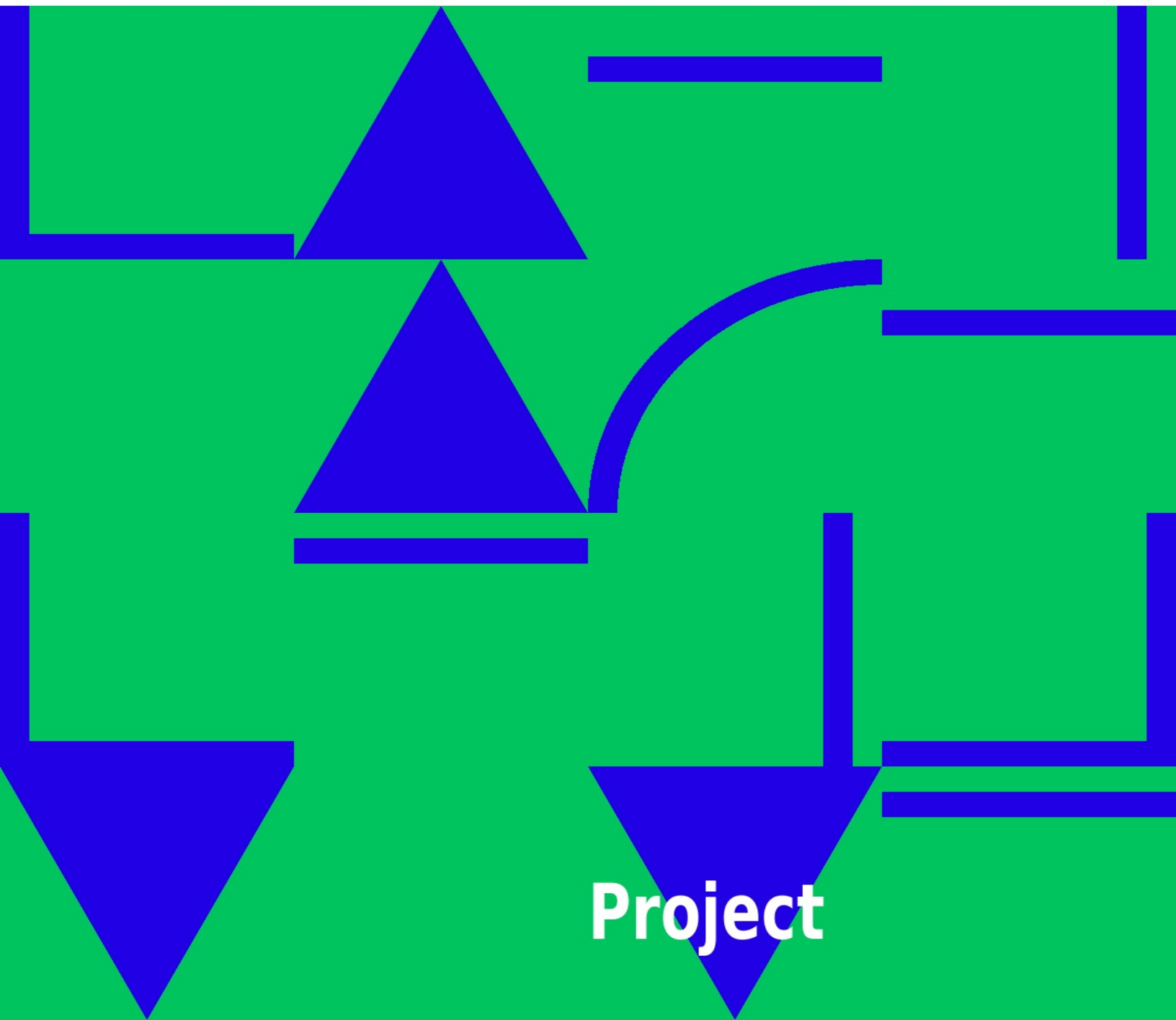
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# Lady Audley's Secret

M. E. Braddon



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# LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET

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**By Mary Elizabeth Braddon**



# CHAPTER I.

## LUCY.

It lay down in a hollow, rich with fine old timber and luxuriant pastures; and you came upon it through an avenue of limes, bordered on either side by meadows, over the high hedges of which the cattle looked inquisitively at you as you passed, wondering, perhaps, what you wanted; for there was no thorough-fare, and unless you were going to the Court you had no business there at all.

At the end of this avenue there was an old arch and a clock tower, with a stupid, bewildering clock, which had only one hand—and which jumped straight from one hour to the next—and was therefore always in extremes. Through this arch you walked straight into the gardens of Audley Court.

A smooth lawn lay before you, dotted with groups of rhododendrons, which grew in more perfection here than anywhere else in the county. To the right there were the kitchen gardens, the fish-pond, and an orchard bordered by a dry moat, and a broken ruin of a wall, in some places thicker than it was high, and everywhere overgrown with trailing ivy, yellow stonecrop, and dark moss. To the left there was a broad graveled walk, down which, years ago, when the place had been a convent, the quiet nuns had walked hand in hand; a wall bordered with espaliers, and shadowed on one side by goodly oaks, which shut out the flat landscape, and circled in the house and gardens with a darkening shelter.

The house faced the arch, and occupied three sides of a quadrangle. It was very old, and very irregular and rambling. The windows were uneven; some small, some large, some with heavy stone mullions and rich stained glass; others with frail lattices that rattled in every breeze; others so modern that they might have been added only yesterday. Great piles of chimneys rose up here and there behind the pointed gables, and seemed as if they were so broken down by age and long service that they must have fallen but for the straggling ivy which, crawling up the walls and trailing even over the roof, wound itself about them and supported them. The principal door was squeezed into a corner of a turret at one angle of the building, as if it

were in hiding from dangerous visitors, and wished to keep itself a secret—a noble door for all that—old oak, and studded with great square-headed iron nails, and so thick that the sharp iron knocker struck upon it with a muffled sound, and the visitor rung a clanging bell that dangled in a corner among the ivy, lest the noise of the knocking should never penetrate the stronghold.

A glorious old place. A place that visitors fell in raptures with; feeling a yearning wish to have done with life, and to stay there forever, staring into the cool fish-ponds and counting the bubbles as the roach and carp rose to the surface of the water. A spot in which peace seemed to have taken up her abode, setting her soothing hand on every tree and flower, on the still ponds and quiet alleys, the shady corners of the old-fashioned rooms, the deep window-seats behind the painted glass, the low meadows and the stately avenues—ay, even upon the stagnant well, which, cool and sheltered as all else in the old place, hid itself away in a shrubbery behind the gardens, with an idle handle that was never turned and a lazy rope so rotten that the pail had broken away from it, and had fallen into the water.

A noble place; inside as well as out, a noble place—a house in which you incontinently lost yourself if ever you were so rash as to attempt to penetrate its mysteries alone; a house in which no one room had any sympathy with another, every chamber running off at a tangent into an inner chamber, and through that down some narrow staircase leading to a door which, in its turn, led back into that very part of the house from which you thought yourself the furthest; a house that could never have been planned by any mortal architect, but must have been the handiwork of that good old builder, Time, who, adding a room one year, and knocking down a room another year, toppling down a chimney coeval with the Plantagenets, and setting up one in the style of the Tudors; shaking down a bit of Saxon wall, allowing a Norman arch to stand here; throwing in a row of high narrow windows in the reign of Queen Anne, and joining on a dining-room after the fashion of the time of Hanoverian George I, to a refectory that had been standing since the Conquest, had contrived, in some eleven centuries, to run up such a mansion as was not elsewhere to be met with throughout the county of Essex. Of course, in such a house there were secret chambers; the little daughter of the present owner, Sir Michael Audley, had fallen by accident upon the discovery of one. A board had rattled under her feet in the great nursery where she played, and on attention being drawn to it, it was

found to be loose, and so removed, revealed a ladder, leading to a hiding-place between the floor of the nursery and the ceiling of the room below—a hiding-place so small that he who had hid there must have crouched on his hands and knees or lain at full length, and yet large enough to contain a quaint old carved oak chest, half filled with priests' vestments, which had been hidden away, no doubt, in those cruel days when the life of a man was in danger if he was discovered to have harbored a Roman Catholic priest, or to have mass said in his house.

The broad outer moat was dry and grass-grown, and the laden trees of the orchard hung over it with gnarled, straggling branches that drew fantastical shadows upon the green slope. Within this moat there was, as I have said, the fish-pond—a sheet of water that extended the whole length of the garden and bordering which there was an avenue called the lime-tree walk; an avenue so shaded from the sun and sky, so screened from observation by the thick shelter of the over-arching trees that it seemed a chosen place for secret meetings or for stolen interviews; a place in which a conspiracy might have been planned, or a lover's vow registered with equal safety; and yet it was scarcely twenty paces from the house.

At the end of this dark arcade there was the shrubbery, where, half buried among the tangled branches and the neglected weeds, stood the rusty wheel of that old well of which I have spoken. It had been of good service in its time, no doubt; and busy nuns have perhaps drawn the cool water with their own fair hands; but it had fallen into disuse now, and scarcely any one at Audley Court knew whether the spring had dried up or not. But sheltered as was the solitude of this lime-tree walk, I doubt very much if it was ever put to any romantic uses. Often in the cool of the evening Sir Michael Audley would stroll up and down smoking his cigar, with his dogs at his heels, and his pretty young wife dawdling by his side; but in about ten minutes the baronet and his companion would grow tired of the rustling limes and the still water, hidden under the spreading leaves of the water-lilies, and the long green vista with the broken well at the end, and would stroll back to the drawing-room, where my lady played dreamy melodies by Beethoven and Mendelssohn till her husband fell asleep in his easy-chair.

Sir Michael Audley was fifty-six years of age, and he had married a second wife three months after his fifty-fifth birthday. He was a big man, tall and stout, with a deep, sonorous voice, handsome black eyes, and a

white beard—a white beard which made him look venerable against his will, for he was as active as a boy, and one of the hardest riders in the country. For seventeen years he had been a widower with an only child, a daughter, Alicia Audley, now eighteen, and by no means too well pleased at having a step-mother brought home to the Court; for Miss Alicia had reigned supreme in her father's house since her earliest childhood, and had carried the keys, and jingled them in the pockets of her silk aprons, and lost them in the shrubbery, and dropped them into the pond, and given all manner of trouble about them from the hour in which she entered her teens, and had, on that account, deluded herself into the sincere belief, that for the whole of that period, she had been keeping the house.

But Miss Alicia's day was over; and now, when she asked anything of the housekeeper, the housekeeper would tell her that she would speak to my lady, or she would consult my lady, and if my lady pleased it should be done. So the baronet's daughter, who was an excellent horsewoman and a very clever artist, spent most of her time out of doors, riding about the green lanes, and sketching the cottage children, and the plow-boys, and the cattle, and all manner of animal life that came in her way. She set her face with a sulky determination against any intimacy between herself and the baronet's young wife; and amiable as that lady was, she found it quite impossible to overcome Miss Alicia's prejudices and dislike; or to convince the spoilt girl that she had not done her a cruel injury by marrying Sir Michael Audley. The truth was that Lady Audley had, in becoming the wife of Sir Michael, made one of those apparently advantageous matches which are apt to draw upon a woman the envy and hatred of her sex. She had come into the neighborhood as a governess in the family of a surgeon in the village near Audley Court. No one knew anything of her, except that she came in answer to an advertisement which Mr. Dawson, the surgeon, had inserted in *The Times*. She came from London; and the only reference she gave was to a lady at a school at Brompton, where she had once been a teacher. But this reference was so satisfactory that none other was needed, and Miss Lucy Graham was received by the surgeon as the instructress of his daughters. Her accomplishments were so brilliant and numerous, that it seemed strange that she should have answered an advertisement offering such very moderate terms of remuneration as those named by Mr. Dawson; but Miss Graham seemed perfectly well satisfied with her situation, and she taught the girls to play sonatas by Beethoven, and to paint from nature after

Creswick, and walked through a dull, out-of-the-way village to the humble little church, three times every Sunday, as contentedly as if she had no higher aspiration in the world than to do so all the rest of her life.

People who observed this, accounted for it by saying that it was a part of her amiable and gentle nature always to be light-hearted, happy and contented under any circumstances.

Wherever she went she seemed to take joy and brightness with her. In the cottages of the poor her fair face shone like a sunbeam. She would sit for a quarter of an hour talking to some old woman, and apparently as pleased with the admiration of a toothless crone as if she had been listening to the compliments of a marquis; and when she tripped away, leaving nothing behind her (for her poor salary gave no scope to her benevolence), the old woman would burst out into senile raptures with her grace, beauty, and her kindness, such as she never bestowed upon the vicar's wife, who half fed and clothed her. For you see, Miss Lucy Graham was blessed with that magic power of fascination, by which a woman can charm with a word or intoxicate with a smile. Every one loved, admired, and praised her. The boy who opened the five-barred gate that stood in her pathway, ran home to his mother to tell of her pretty looks, and the sweet voice in which she thanked him for the little service. The verger at the church, who ushered her into the surgeon's pew; the vicar, who saw the soft blue eyes uplifted to his face as he preached his simple sermon; the porter from the railway station, who brought her sometimes a letter or a parcel, and who never looked for reward from her; her employer; his visitors; her pupils; the servants; everybody, high and low, united in declaring that Lucy Graham was the sweetest girl that ever lived.

Perhaps it was the rumor of this which penetrated into the quiet chamber of Audley Court; or, perhaps, it was the sight of her pretty face, looking over the surgeon's high pew every Sunday morning; however it was, it was certain that Sir Michael Audley suddenly experienced a strong desire to be better acquainted with Mr. Dawson's governess.

He had only to hint his wish to the worthy doctor for a little party to be got up, to which the vicar and his wife, and the baronet and his daughter, were invited.

That one quiet evening sealed Sir Michael's fate. He could no more resist the tender fascination of those soft and melting blue eyes; the graceful

beauty of that slender throat and drooping head, with its wealth of showering flaxen curls; the low music of that gentle voice; the perfect harmony which pervaded every charm, and made all doubly charming in this woman; than he could resist his destiny! Destiny! Why, she was his destiny! He had never loved before. What had been his marriage with Alicia's mother but a dull, jog-trot bargain made to keep some estate in the family that would have been just as well out of it? What had been his love for his first wife but a poor, pitiful, smoldering spark, too dull to be extinguished, too feeble to burn? But *this* was love—this fever, this longing, this restless, uncertain, miserable hesitation; these cruel fears that his age was an insurmountable barrier to his happiness; this sick hatred of his white beard; this frenzied wish to be young again, with glistening raven hair, and a slim waist, such as he had twenty years before; these, wakeful nights and melancholy days, so gloriously brightened if he chanced to catch a glimpse of her sweet face behind the window curtains, as he drove past the surgeon's house; all these signs gave token of the truth, and told only too plainly that, at the sober age of fifty-five, Sir Michael Audley had fallen ill of the terrible fever called love.

I do not think that, throughout his courtship, the baronet once calculated upon his wealth or his position as reasons for his success. If he ever remembered these things, he dismissed the thought of them with a shudder. It pained him too much to believe for a moment that any one so lovely and innocent could value herself against a splendid house or a good old title. No; his hope was that, as her life had been most likely one of toil and dependence, and as she was very young nobody exactly knew her age, but she looked little more than twenty, she might never have formed any attachment, and that he, being the first to woo her, might, by tender attentions, by generous watchfulness, by a love which should recall to her the father she had lost, and by a protecting care that should make him necessary to her, win her young heart, and obtain from her fresh and earliest love, the promise of her hand. It was a very romantic day-dream, no doubt; but, for all that, it seemed in a very fair way to be realized. Lucy Graham appeared by no means to dislike the baronet's attentions. There was nothing whatever in her manner that betrayed the shallow artifices employed by a woman who wishes to captivate a rich man. She was so accustomed to admiration from every one, high and low, that Sir Michael's conduct made very little impression upon her. Again, he had been so many years a



widower that people had given up the idea of his ever marrying again. At last, however, Mrs. Dawson spoke to the governess on the subject. The surgeon's wife was sitting in the school-room busy at work, while Lucy was putting the finishing touches on some water-color sketches done by her pupils.

"Do you know, my dear Miss Graham," said Mrs. Dawson, "I think you ought to consider yourself a remarkably lucky girl?"

The governess lifted her head from its stooping attitude, and stared wonderingly at her employer, shaking back a shower of curls. They were the most wonderful curls in the world—soft and feathery, always floating away from her face, and making a pale halo round her head when the sunlight shone through them.

"What do you mean, my dear Mrs. Dawson?" she asked, dipping her camel's-hair brush into the wet aquamarine upon the palette, and poising it carefully before putting in the delicate streak of purple which was to brighten the horizon in her pupil's sketch.

"Why, I mean, my dear, that it only rests with yourself to become Lady Audley, and the mistress of Audley Court."

Lucy Graham dropped the brush upon the picture, and flushed scarlet to the roots of her fair hair; and then grew pale again, far paler than Mrs. Dawson had ever seen her before.

"My dear, don't agitate yourself," said the surgeon's wife, soothingly; "you know that nobody asks you to marry Sir Michael unless you wish. Of course it would be a magnificent match; he has a splendid income, and is one of the most generous of men. Your position would be very high, and you would be enabled to do a great deal of good; but, as I said before, you must be entirely guided by your own feelings. Only one thing I must say, and that is that if Sir Michael's attentions are not agreeable to you, it is really scarcely honorable to encourage him."

"His attentions—encourage him!" muttered Lucy, as if the words bewildered her. "Pray, pray don't talk to me, Mrs. Dawson. I had no idea of this. It is the last thing that would have occurred to me." She leaned her elbows on the drawing-board before her, and clasping her hands over her face, seemed for some minutes to be thinking deeply. She wore a narrow black ribbon round her neck, with a locket, or a cross, or a miniature, perhaps, attached to it; but whatever the trinket was, she always kept it

hidden under her dress. Once or twice, while she sat silently thinking, she removed one of her hands from before her face, and fidgeted nervously with the ribbon, clutching at it with a half-angry gesture, and twisting it backward and forward between her fingers.

"I think some people are born to be unlucky, Mrs. Dawson," she said, by-and-by; "it would be a great deal too much good fortune for me to become Lady Audley."

She said this with so much bitterness in her tone, that the surgeon's wife looked up at her with surprise.

"You unlucky, my dear!" she exclaimed. "I think you are the last person who ought to talk like that—you, such a bright, happy creature, that it does every one good to see you. I'm sure I don't know what we shall do if Sir Michael robs us of you."

After this conversation they often spoke upon the subject, and Lucy never again showed any emotion whatever when the baronet's admiration for her was canvassed. It was a tacitly understood thing in the surgeon's family that whenever Sir Michael proposed, the governess would quietly accept him; and, indeed, the simple Dawsons would have thought it something more than madness in a penniless girl to reject such an offer.

So, one misty August evening, Sir Michael, sitting opposite to Lucy Graham, at a window in the surgeon's little drawing-room, took an opportunity while the family happened by some accident to be absent from the room, of speaking upon the subject nearest to his heart. He made the governess, in a few but solemn words, an offer of his hand. There was something almost touching in the manner and tone in which he spoke to her—half in deprecation, knowing that he could hardly expect to be the choice of a beautiful young girl, and praying rather that she would reject him, even though she broke his heart by doing so, than that she should accept his offer if she did not love him.

"I scarcely think there is a greater sin, Lucy," he said, solemnly, "than that of a woman who marries a man she does not love. You are so precious to me, my beloved, that deeply as my heart is set on this, and bitter as the mere thought of disappointment is to me, I would not have you commit such a sin for any happiness of mine. If my happiness could be achieved by such an act, which it could not—which it never could," he repeated,

earnestly—"nothing but misery can result from a marriage dictated by any motive but truth and love."

Lucy Graham was not looking at Sir Michael, but straight out into the misty twilight and dim landscape far away beyond the little garden. The baronet tried to see her face, but her profile was turned to him, and he could not discover the expression of her eyes. If he could have done so, he would have seen a yearning gaze which seemed as if it would have pierced the far obscurity and looked away—away into another world.

"Lucy, you heard me?"

"Yes," she said, gravely; not coldly, or in any way as if she were offended at his words.

"And your answer?"

She did not remove her gaze from the darkening country side, but for some moments was quite silent; then turning to him, with a sudden passion in her manner, that lighted up her face with a new and wonderful beauty which the baronet perceived even in the growing twilight, she fell on her knees at his feet.

"No, Lucy; no, no!" he cried, vehemently, "not here, not here!"

"Yes, here, here," she said, the strange passion which agitated her making her voice sound shrill and piercing—not loud, but preternaturally distinct; "here and nowhere else. How good you are—how noble and how generous! Love you! Why, there are women a hundred times my superiors in beauty and in goodness who might love you dearly; but you ask too much of me! Remember what my life has been; only remember that! From my very babyhood I have never seen anything but poverty. My father was a gentleman: clever, accomplished, handsome—but poor—and what a pitiful wretch poverty made of him! My mother—But do not let me speak of her. Poverty—poverty, trials, vexations, humiliations, deprivations. You cannot tell; you, who are among those for whom life is so smooth and easy, you can never guess what is endured by such as we. Do not ask too much of me, then. I cannot be disinterested; I cannot be blind to the advantages of such an alliance. I cannot, I cannot!"

Beyond her agitation and her passionate vehemence, there is an undefined something in her manner which fills the baronet with a vague alarm. She is still on the ground at his feet, crouching rather than kneeling,

her thin white dress clinging about her, her pale hair streaming over her shoulders, her great blue eyes glittering in the dusk, and her hands clutching at the black ribbon about her throat, as if it had been strangling her. "Don't ask too much of me," she kept repeating; "I have been selfish from my babyhood."

"Lucy—Lucy, speak plainly. Do you dislike me?"

"Dislike you? No—no!"

"But is there any one else whom you love?"

She laughed aloud at his question. "I do not love any one in the world," she answered.

He was glad of her reply; and yet that and the strange laugh jarred upon his feelings. He was silent for some moments, and then said, with a kind of effort:

"Well, Lucy, I will not ask too much of you. I dare say I am a romantic old fool; but if you do not dislike me, and if you do not love any one else, I see no reason why we should not make a very happy couple. Is it a bargain, Lucy?"

"Yes."

The baronet lifted her in his arms and kissed her once upon the forehead, then quietly bidding her good-night, he walked straight out of the house.

He walked straight out of the house, this foolish old man, because there was some strong emotion at work in his breast—neither joy nor triumph, but something almost akin to disappointment—some stifled and unsatisfied longing which lay heavy and dull at his heart, as if he had carried a corpse in his bosom. He carried the corpse of that hope which had died at the sound of Lucy's words. All the doubts and fears and timid aspirations were ended now. He must be contented, like other men of his age, to be married for his fortune and his position.

Lucy Graham went slowly up the stairs to her little room at the top of the house. She placed her dim candle on the chest of drawers, and seated herself on the edge of the white bed, still and white as the draperies hanging around her.

"No more dependence, no more drudgery, no more humiliations," she said; "every trace of the old life melted away—every clew to identity buried and forgotten—except these, except these."

She had never taken her left hand from the black ribbon at her throat. She drew it from her bosom, as she spoke, and looked at the object attached to it.

It was neither a locket, a miniature, nor a cross; it was a ring wrapped in an oblong piece of paper—the paper partly written, partly printed, yellow with age, and crumpled with much folding.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ON BOARD THE ARGUS.

He threw the end of his cigar into the water, and leaning his elbows upon the bulwarks, stared meditatively at the waves.

"How wearisome they are," he said; "blue and green, and opal; opal, and blue, and green; all very well in their way, of course, but three months of them are rather too much, especially—"

He did not attempt to finish his sentence; his thoughts seemed to wander in the very midst of it, and carry him a thousand miles or so away.

"Poor little girl, how pleased she'll be!" he muttered, opening his cigar-case, lazily surveying its contents; "how pleased and how surprised? Poor little girl. After three years and a half, too; she *will* be surprised."

He was a young man of about five-and-twenty, with dark face bronzed by exposure to the sun; he had handsome brown eyes, with a lazy smile in them that sparkled through the black lashes, and a bushy beard and mustache that covered the whole lower part of his face. He was tall and powerfully built; he wore a loose gray suit and a felt hat, thrown carelessly upon his black hair. His name was George Talboys, and he was aft-cabin passenger on board the good ship *Argus*, laden with Australian wool and sailing from Sydney to Liverpool.

There were very few passengers in the aft-cabin of the *Argus*. An elderly wool-stapler returning to his native country with his wife and daughters, after having made a fortune in the colonies; a governess of three-and-thirty years of age, going home to marry a man to whom she had been engaged fifteen years; the sentimental daughter of a wealthy Australian wine-merchant, invoiced to England to finish her education, and George Talboys, were the only first-class passengers on board.

This George Talboys was the life and soul of the vessel; nobody knew who or what he was, or where he came from, but everybody liked him. He sat at the bottom of the dinner-table, and assisted the captain in doing the honors of the friendly meal. He opened the champagne bottles, and took

wine with every one present; he told funny stories, and led the life himself with such a joyous peal that the man must have been a churl who could not have laughed for pure sympathy. He was a capital hand at speculation and vingt-et-un, and all the merry games, which kept the little circle round the cabin-lamp so deep in innocent amusement, that a hurricane might have howled overhead without their hearing it; but he freely owned that he had no talent for whist, and that he didn't know a knight from a castle upon the chess-board.

Indeed, Mr. Talboys was by no means too learned a gentleman. The pale governess had tried to talk to him about fashionable literature, but George had only pulled his beard and stared very hard at her, saying occasionally, "Ah, yes, by Jove!" and "To be sure, ah!"

The sentimental young lady, going home to finish her education, had tried him with Shelby and Byron, and he had fairly laughed in her face, as if poetry were a joke. The woolstapler sounded him on politics, but he did not seem very deeply versed in them; so they let him go his own way, smoke his cigars and talk to the sailors, lounge over the bulwarks and stare at the water, and make himself agreeable to everybody in his own fashion. But when the *Argus* came to be within about a fortnight's sail of England everybody noticed a change in George Talboys. He grew restless and fidgety; sometimes so merry that the cabin rung with his laughter; sometimes moody and thoughtful. Favorite as he was among the sailors, they were tired at last of answering his perpetual questions about the probable time of touching land. Would it be in ten days, in eleven, in twelve, in thirteen? Was the wind favorable? How many knots an hour was the vessel doing? Then a sudden passion would seize him, and he would stamp upon the deck, crying out that she was a rickety old craft, and that her owners were swindlers to advertise her as the fast-sailing *Argus*. She was not fit for passenger traffic; she was not fit to carry impatient living creatures, with hearts and souls; she was fit for nothing but to be laden with bales of stupid wool, that might rot on the sea and be none the worse for it.

The sun was drooping down behind the waves as George Talboys lighted his cigar upon this August evening. Only ten days more, the sailors had told him that afternoon, and they would see the English coast. "I will go ashore in the first boat that hails us," he cried; "I will go ashore in a cockle-shell. By Jove, if it comes to that, I will swim to land."

His friends in the aft-cabin, with the exception of the pale governess, laughed at his impatience; she sighed as she watched the young man, chafing at the slow hours, pushing away his untasted wine, flinging himself restlessly about upon the cabin sofa, rushing up and down the companion ladder, and staring at the waves.

As the red rim of the sun dropped into the water, the governess ascended the cabin stairs for a stroll on deck, while the passengers sat over their wine below. She stopped when she came up to George, and, standing by his side, watched the fading crimson in the western sky.

The lady was very quiet and reserved, seldom sharing in the after-cabin amusements, never laughing, and speaking very little; but she and George Talboys had been excellent friends throughout the passage.

"Does my cigar annoy you, Miss Morley?" he said, taking it out of his mouth.

"Not at all; pray do not leave off smoking. I only came up to look at the sunset. What a lovely evening!"

"Yes, yes, I dare say," he answered, impatiently; "yet so long, so long! Ten more interminable days and ten more weary nights before we land."

"Yes," said Miss Morley, sighing. "Do you wish the time shorter?"

"Do I?" cried George. "Indeed I do. Don't you?"

"Scarcely."

"But is there no one you love in England? Is there no one you love looking out for your arrival?"

"I hope so," she said gravely. They were silent for some time, he smoking his cigar with a furious impatience, as if he could hasten the course of the vessel by his own restlessness; she looking out at the waning light with melancholy blue eyes—eyes that seemed to have faded with poring over closely-printed books and difficult needlework; eyes that had faded a little, perhaps, by reason of tears secretly shed in the lonely night.

"See!" said George, suddenly, pointing in another direction from that toward which Miss Morley was looking, "there's the new moon!"

She looked up at the pale crescent, her own face almost as pale and wan.

"This is the first time we have seen it."

"We must wish!" said George. "I know what I wish."



"What?"

"That we may get home quickly."

"My wish is that we may find no disappointment when we get there," said the governess, sadly.

"Disappointment!"

He started as if he had been struck, and asked what she meant by talking of disappointment.

"I mean this," she said, speaking rapidly, and with a restless motion of her thin hands; "I mean that as the end of the voyage draws near, hope sinks in my heart; and a sick fear comes over me that at the last all may not be well. The person I go to meet may be changed in his feelings toward me; or he may retain all the old feeling until the moment of seeing me, and then lose it in a breath at sight of my poor wan face, for I was called a pretty girl, Mr. Talboys, when I sailed for Sydney, fifteen years ago; or he may be so changed by the world as to have grown selfish and mercenary, and he may welcome me for the sake of my fifteen years' savings. Again, he may be dead. He may have been well, perhaps, up to within a week of our landing, and in that last week may have taken a fever, and died an hour before our vessel anchors in the Mersey. I think of all these things, Mr. Talboys, and act the scenes over in my mind, and feel the anguish of them twenty times a day. Twenty times a day," she repeated; "why I do it a thousand times a day."

George Talboys had stood motionless, with his cigar in his hand, listening to her so intently that, as she said the last words, his hold relaxed, and the cigar dropped in the water.

"I wonder," she continued, more to herself than to him, "I wonder, looking back, to think how hopeful I was when the vessel sailed; I never thought then of disappointment, but I pictured the joy of meeting, imagining the very words that would be said, the very tones, the very looks; but for this last month of the voyage, day by day, and hour by hour my heart sinks and my hopeful fancies fade away, and I dread the end as much as if I knew that I was going to England to attend a funeral."

The young man suddenly changed his attitude, and turned his face full upon his companion, with a look of alarm. She saw in the pale light that the color had faded from his cheek.

"What a fool!" he cried, striking his clenched fist upon the side of the vessel, "what a fool I am to be frightened at this? Why do you come and say these things to me? Why do you come and terrify me out of my senses, when I am going straight home to the woman I love; to a girl whose heart is as true as the light of Heaven; and in whom I no more expect to find any change than I do to see another sun rise in to-morrow's sky? Why do you come and try to put such fancies in my head when I am going home to my darling wife?"

"Your wife," she said; "that is different. There is no reason that my terrors should terrify you. I am going to England to rejoin a man to whom I was engaged to be married fifteen years ago. He was too poor to marry then, and when I was offered a situation as governess in a rich Australian family, I persuaded him to let me accept it, so that I might leave him free and unfettered to win his way in the world, while I saved a little money to help us when we began life together. I never meant to stay away so long, but things have gone badly with him in England. That is my story, and you can understand my fears. They need not influence you. Mine is an exceptional case."

"So is mine," said George, impatiently. "I tell you that mine is an exceptional case: although I swear to you that until this moment, I have never known a fear as to the result of my voyage home. But you are right; your terrors have nothing to do with me. You have been away fifteen years; all kinds of things may happen in fifteen years. Now it is only three years and a half this very month since I left England. What can have happened in such a short time as that?"

Miss Morley looked at him with a mournful smile, but did not speak. His feverish ardor, the freshness and impatience of his nature were so strange and new to her, that she looked at him half in admiration, half in pity.

"My pretty little wife! My gentle, innocent, loving little wife! Do you know, Miss Morley," he said, with all his old hopefulness of manner, "that I left my little girl asleep, with her baby in her arms, and with nothing but a few blotted lines to tell her why her faithful husband had deserted her?"

"Deserted her!" exclaimed the governess.

"Yes. I was an ensign in a cavalry regiment when I first met my little darling. We were quartered at a stupid seaport town, where my pet lived with her shabby old father, a half-pay naval officer; a regular old humbug,

as poor as Job, and with an eye for nothing but the main chance. I saw through all his shallow tricks to catch one of us for his pretty daughter. I saw all the pitiable, contemptible, palpable traps he set for us big dragoons to walk into. I saw through his shabby-genteel dinners and public-house port; his fine talk of the grandeur of his family; his sham pride and independence, and the sham tears of his bleared old eyes when he talked of his only child. He was a drunken old hypocrite, and he was ready to sell my poor, little girl to the highest bidder. Luckily for me, I happened just then to be the highest bidder; for my father, is a rich man, Miss Morley, and as it was love at first sight on both sides, my darling and I made a match of it. No sooner, however, did my father hear that I had married a penniless little girl, the daughter of a tipsy old half-pay lieutenant, than he wrote me a furious letter, telling me he would never again hold any communication with me, and that my yearly allowance would stop from my wedding-day.

"As there was no remaining in such a regiment as mine, with nothing but my pay to live on, and my pretty little wife to keep, I sold out, thinking that before the money was exhausted, I should be sure to drop into something. I took my darling to Italy, and we lived there in splendid style as long as my two thousand pounds lasted; but when that began to dwindle down to a couple of hundred or so, we came back to England, and as my darling had a fancy for being near that tiresome old father of hers, we settled at the watering-place where he lived. Well, as soon as the old man heard that I had a couple of hundred pounds left, he expressed a wonderful degree of affection for us, and insisted on our boarding in his house. We consented, still to please my darling, who had just then a peculiar right to have every whim and fancy of her innocent heart indulged. We did board with him, and finally he fleeced us; but when I spoke of it to my little wife, she only shrugged her shoulders, and said she did not like to be unkind to her 'poor papa.' So poor papa made away with our little stock of money in no time; and as I felt that it was now becoming necessary to look about for something, I ran up to London, and tried to get a situation as a clerk in a merchant's office, or as accountant, or book-keeper, or something of that kind. But I suppose there was the stamp of a heavy dragoon about me, for do what I would I couldn't get anybody to believe in my capacity; and tired out, and down-hearted, I returned to my darling, to find her nursing a son and heir to his father's poverty. Poor little girl, she was very low-spirited; and when I told her that my London expedition had failed, she fairly broke

down, and burst in to a storm of sobs and lamentations, telling me that I ought not to have married her if I could give her nothing but poverty and misery; and that I had done her a cruel wrong in making her my wife. By heaven! Miss Morley, her tears and reproaches drove me almost mad; and I flew into a rage with her, myself, her father, the world, and everybody in it, and then ran out of the house. I walked about the streets all that day, half out of my mind, and with a strong inclination to throw myself into the sea, so as to leave my poor girl free to make a better match. 'If I drown myself, her father must support her,' I thought; 'the old hypocrite could never refuse her a shelter; but while I live she has no claim on him.' I went down to a rickety old wooden pier, meaning to wait there till it was dark, and then drop quietly over the end of it into the water; but while I sat there smoking my pipe, and staring vacantly at the sea-gulls, two men came down, and one of them began to talk of the Australian gold-diggings, and the great things that were to be done there. It appeared that he was going to sail in a day or two, and he was trying to persuade his companion to join him in the expedition.

"I listened to these men for upward of an hour, following them up and down the pier, with my pipe in my mouth, and hearing all their talk. After this I fell into conversation with them myself, and ascertained that there was a vessel going to leave Liverpool in three days, by which vessel one of the men was going out. This man gave me all the information I required, and told me, moreover, that a stalwart young fellow, such as I was, could hardly fail to do well in the diggings. The thought flashed upon me so suddenly, that I grew hot and red in the face, and trembled in every limb with excitement. This was better than the water, at any rate. Suppose I stole away from my darling, leaving her safe under her father's roof, and went and made a fortune in the new world, and came back in a twelvemonth to throw it into her lap; for I was so sanguine in those days that I counted on making my fortune in a year or so. I thanked the man for his information, and late at night strolled homeward. It was bitter winter weather, but I had been too full of passion to feel cold, and I walked through the quiet streets, with the snow drifting in my face, and a desperate hopefulness in my heart. The old man was sitting drinking brandy-and-water in the little dining-room; and my wife was up-stairs, sleeping peacefully, with the baby on her breast. I sat down and wrote a few brief lines, which told her that I never had loved her better than now, when I seemed to desert her; that I was going to try my

fortune in the new world, and that if I succeeded I should come back to bring her plenty and happiness; but that if I failed I should never look upon her face again. I divided the remainder of our money—something over forty pounds—into two equal portions, leaving one for her, and putting the other in my pocket. I knelt down and prayed for my wife and child, with my head upon the white counterpane that covered them. I wasn't much of a praying man at ordinary times, but God knows *that* was a heartfelt prayer. I kissed her once, and the baby once, and then crept out of the room. The dining-room door was open, and the old man was nodding over his paper. He looked up as he heard my step in the passage, and asked me where I was going. 'To have a smoke in the street,' I answered; and as this was a common habit of mine he believed me. Three nights after I was out at sea, bound for Melbourne—a steerage passenger, with a digger's tools for my baggage, and about seven shillings in my pocket."

"And you succeeded?" asked Miss Morley.

"Not till I had long despaired of success; not until poverty and I had become such old companions and bed-fellows, that looking back at my past life, I wondered whether that dashing, reckless, extravagant, luxurious, champagne-drinking dragoon could have really been the same man who sat on the damp ground gnawing a moldy crust in the wilds of the new world. I clung to the memory of my darling, and the trust that I had in her love and truth was the one keystone that kept the fabric of my past life together—the one star that lit the thick black darkness of the future. I was hail-fellow-well-met with bad men; I was in the center of riot, drunkenness, and debauchery; but the purifying influence of my love kept me safe from all. Thin and gaunt, the half-starved shadow of what I once had been, I saw myself one day in a broken bit of looking-glass, and was frightened by my own face. But I toiled on through all; through disappointment and despair, rheumatism, fever, starvation; at the very gates of death, I toiled on steadily to the end; and in the end I conquered."

He was so brave in his energy and determination, in his proud triumph of success, and in the knowledge of the difficulties he had vanquished, that the pale governess could only look at him in wondering admiration.

"How brave you were!" she said.

"Brave!" he cried, with a joyous peal of laughter; "wasn't I working for my darling? Through all the dreary time of that probation, her pretty white

hand seemed beckoning me onward to a happy future! Why, I have seen her under my wretched canvas tent sitting by my side, with her boy in her arms, as plainly as I had ever seen her in the one happy year of our wedded life. At last, one dreary foggy morning, just three months ago, with a drizzling rain wetting me to the skin, up to my neck in clay and mire, half-starved, enfeebled by fever, stiff with rheumatism, a monster nugget turned up under my spade, and I was in one minute the richest man in Australia. I fell down on the wet clay, with my lump of gold in the bosom of my shirt, and, for the first time in my life, cried like a child. I traveled post-haste to Sydney, realized my price, which was worth upward of £20,000, and a fortnight afterward took my passage for England in this vessel; and in ten days—in ten days I shall see my darling."

"But in all that time did you never write to your wife?"

"Never, till the night before I left Sydney. I could not write when everything looked so black. I could not write and tell her that I was fighting hard with despair and death. I waited for better fortune, and when that came I wrote telling her that I should be in England almost as soon as my letter, and giving her an address at a coffee-house in London where she could write to me, telling me where to find her, though she is hardly likely to have left her father's house."

He fell into a reverie after this, and puffed meditatively at his cigar. His companion did not disturb him. The last ray of summer daylight had died out, and the pale light of the crescent moon only remained.

Presently George Talboys flung away his cigar, and turning to the governess, cried abruptly, "Miss Morley, if, when I get to England, I hear that anything has happened to my wife, I shall fall down dead."

"My dear Mr. Talboys, why do you think of these things? God is very good to us; He will not afflict us beyond our power of endurance. I see all things, perhaps, in a melancholy light; for the long monotony of my life has given me too much time to think over my troubles."

"And my life has been all action, privation, toil, alternate hope and despair; I have had no time to think upon the chances of anything happening to my darling. What a blind, reckless fool I have been! Three years and a half and not one line—one word from her, or from any mortal creature who knows her. Heaven above! what may not have happened?"

In the agitation of his mind he began to walk rapidly up and down the lonely deck, the governess following, and trying to soothe him.

"I swear to you, Miss Morley," he said, "that till you spoke to me to-night, I never felt one shadow of fear, and now I have that sick, sinking dread at my heart which you talked of an hour ago. Let me alone, please, to get over it my own way."

She drew silently away from him, and seated herself by the side of the vessel, looking over into the water.

George Talboys walked backward and forward for some time, with his head bent upon his breast, looking neither to the right nor the left, but in about a quarter of an hour he returned to the spot where the governess was seated.

"I have been praying," he said—"praying for my darling."

He spoke in a voice little above a whisper, and she saw his face ineffably calm in the moonlight.

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## CHAPTER III.

### HIDDEN RELICS.

The same August sun which had gone down behind the waste of waters glimmered redly upon the broad face of the old clock over that ivy-covered archway which leads into the gardens of Audley Court.

A fierce and crimson sunset. The mullioned windows and twinkling lattices are all ablaze with the red glory; the fading light flickers upon the leaves of the limes in the long avenue, and changes the still fish-pond into a sheet of burnished copper; even into those dim recesses of brier and brushwood, amidst which the old well is hidden, the crimson brightness penetrates in fitful flashes till the dank weeds and the rusty iron wheel and broken woodwork seem as if they were flecked with blood.

The lowing of a cow in the quiet meadows, the splash of a trout in the fish-pond, the last notes of a tired bird, the creaking of wagon-wheels upon the distant road, every now and then breaking the evening silence, only made the stillness of the place seem more intense. It was almost oppressive, this twilight stillness. The very repose of the place grew painful from its intensity, and you felt as if a corpse must be lying somewhere within that gray and ivy-covered pile of building—so deathlike was the tranquillity of all around.

As the clock over the archway struck eight, a door at the back of the house was softly opened, and a girl came out into the gardens.

But even the presence of a human being scarcely broke the silence; for the girl crept slowly over the thick grass, and gliding into the avenue by the side of the fish-pond, disappeared in the rich shelter of the limes.

She was not, perhaps, positively a pretty girl; but her appearance was of that order which is commonly called interesting. Interesting, it may be, because in the pale face and the light gray eyes, the small features and compressed lips, there was something which hinted at a power of repression and self-control not common in a woman of nineteen or twenty. She might have been pretty, I think, but for the one fault in her small oval face. This



fault was an absence of color. Not one tinge of crimson flushed the waxen whiteness of her cheeks; not one shadow of brown redeemed the pale insipidity of her eyebrows and eyelashes; not one glimmer of gold or auburn relieved the dull flaxen of her hair. Even her dress was spoiled by this same deficiency. The pale lavender muslin faded into a sickly gray, and the ribbon knotted round her throat melted into the same neutral hue.

Her figure was slim and fragile, and in spite of her humble dress, she had something of the grace and carriage of a gentlewoman, but she was only a simple country girl, called Phoebe Marks, who had been nursemaid in Mr. Dawson's family, and whom Lady Audley had chosen for her maid after her marriage with Sir Michael.

Of course, this was a wonderful piece of good fortune for Phoebe, who found her wages trebled and her work lightened in the well-ordered household at the Court; and who was therefore quite as much the object of envy among her particular friends as my lady herself to higher circles.

A man, who was sitting on the broken wood-work of the well, started as the lady's-maid came out of the dim shade of the limes and stood before him among the weeds and brushwood.

I have said before that this was a neglected spot; it lay in the midst of a low shrubbery, hidden away from the rest of the gardens, and only visible from the garret windows at the back of the west wing.

"Why, Phoebe," said the man, shutting a clasp-knife with which he had been stripping the bark from a blackthorn stake, "you came upon me so still and sudden, that I thought you was an evil spirit. I've come across through the fields, and come in here at the gate agen the moat, and I was taking a rest before I came up to the house to ask if you was come back."

"I can see the well from my bedroom window, Luke," Phoebe answered, pointing to an open lattice in one of the gables. "I saw you sitting here, and came down to have a chat; it's better talking out here than in the house, where there's always somebody listening."

The man was a big, broad-shouldered, stupid-looking clod-hopper of about twenty-three years of age. His dark red hair grew low upon his forehead, and his bushy brows met over a pair of greenish gray eyes; his nose was large and well-shaped, but the mouth was coarse in form and animal in expression. Rosy-cheeked, red-haired, and bull-necked, he was

not unlike one of the stout oxen grazing in the meadows round about the Court.

The girl seated herself lightly upon the wood-work at his side, and put one of her hands, which had grown white in her new and easy service, about his thick neck.

"Are you glad to see me, Luke?" she asked.

"Of course I'm glad, lass," he answered, boorishly, opening his knife again, and scraping away at the hedge-stake.

They were first cousins, and had been play fellows in childhood, and sweethearts in early youth.

"You don't seem much as if you were glad," said the girl; "you might look at me, Luke, and tell me if you think my journey has improved me."

"It ain't put any color into your cheeks, my girl," he said, glancing up at her from under his lowering eyebrows; "you're every bit as white as you was when you went away."

"But they say traveling makes people genteel, Luke. I've been on the Continent with my lady, through all manner of curious places; and you know, when I was a child, Squire Horton's daughters taught me to speak a little French, and I found it so nice to be able to talk to the people abroad."

"Genteel!" cried Luke Marks, with a hoarse laugh; "who wants you to be genteel, I wonder? Not me, for one; when you're my wife you won't have overmuch time for gentility, my girl. French, too! Dang me, Phoebe, I suppose when we've saved money enough between us to buy a bit of a farm, you'll be *parleyvooring* to the cows?"

She bit her lip as her lover spoke, and looked away. He went on cutting and chopping at a rude handle he was fashioning to the stake, whistling softly to himself all the while, and not once looking at his cousin.

For some time they were silent, but by-and-by she said, with her face still turned away from her companion:

"What a fine thing it is for Miss Graham that was, to travel with her maid and her courier, and her chariot and four, and a husband that thinks there isn't one spot upon all the earth that's good enough for her to set her foot upon!"

"Ay, it is a fine thing, Phoebe, to have lots of money," answered Luke, "and I hope you'll be warned by that, my lass, to save up your wages agin we get married."

"Why, what was she in Mr. Dawson's house only three months ago?" continued the girl, as if she had not heard her cousin's speech. "What was she but a servant like me? Taking wages and working for them as hard, or harder, than I did. You should have seen her shabby clothes, Luke—worn and patched, and darned and turned and twisted, yet always looking nice upon her, somehow. She gives me more as lady's-maid here than ever she got from Mr. Dawson then. Why, I've seen her come out of the parlor with a few sovereigns and a little silver in her hand, that master had just given her for her quarter's salary; and now look at her!"

"Never you mind her," said Luke; "take care of yourself, Phoebe; that's all you've got to do. What should you say to a public-house for you and me, by-and-by, my girl? There's a deal of money to be made out of a public-house."

The girl still sat with her face averted from her lover, her hands hanging listlessly in her lap, and her pale gray eyes fixed upon the last low streak of crimson dying out behind the trunks of the trees.

"You should see the inside of the house, Luke," she said; "it's a tumbledown looking place enough outside; but you should see my lady's rooms—all pictures and gilding, and great looking-glasses that stretch from the ceiling to the floor. Painted ceilings, too, that cost hundreds of pounds, the housekeeper told her, and all done for her."

"She's a lucky one," muttered Luke, with lazy indifference.

"You should have seen her while we were abroad, with a crowd of gentlemen hanging about her; Sir Michael not jealous of them, only proud to see her so much admired. You should have heard her laugh and talk with them; throwing all their compliments and fine speeches back at them, as it were, as if they had been pelting her with roses. She set everybody mad about her, wherever she went. Her singing, her playing, her painting, her dancing, her beautiful smile, and sunshiny ringlets! She was always the talk of a place, as long as we stayed in it."

"Is she at home to-night?"

"No; she has gone out with Sir Michael to a dinner party at the Beeches. They've seven or eight miles to drive, and they won't be back till after eleven."

"Then I'll tell you what, Phoebe, if the inside of the house is so mighty fine, I should like to have a look at it."

"You shall, then. Mrs. Barton, the housekeeper, knows you by sight, and she can't object to my showing you some of the best rooms."

It was almost dark when the cousins left the shrubbery and walked slowly to the house. The door by which they entered led into the servants' hall, on one side of which was the housekeeper's room. Phoebe Marks stopped for a moment to ask the housekeeper if she might take her cousin through some of the rooms, and having received permission to do so, lighted a candle at the lamp in the hall, and beckoned to Luke to follow her into the other part of the house.

The long, black oak corridors were dim in the ghostly twilight—the light carried by Phoebe looking only a poor speck in the broad passages through which the girl led her cousin. Luke looked suspiciously over his shoulder now and then, half-frightened by the creaking of his own hob-nailed boots.

"It's a mortal dull place, Phoebe," he said, as they emerged from a passage into the principal hall, which was not yet lighted; "I've heard tell of a murder that was done here in old times."

"There are murders enough in these times, as to that, Luke," answered the girl, ascending the staircase, followed by the young man.

She led the way through a great drawing-room, rich in satin and ormolu, buhl and inlaid cabinets, bronzes, cameos, statuettes, and trinkets, that glistened in the dusky light; then through a morning room, hung with proof engravings of valuable pictures; through this into an ante-chamber, where she stopped, holding the light above her head.

The young man stared about him, open-mouthed and open-eyed.

"It's a rare fine place," he said, "and must have cost a heap of money."

"Look at the pictures on the walls," said Phoebe, glancing at the panels of the octagonal chamber, which were hung with Claudes and Poussins, Wouvermans and Cuyps. "I've heard that those alone are worth a fortune. This is the entrance to my lady's apartments, Miss Graham that was." She lifted a heavy green cloth curtain which hung across a doorway, and led the

astonished countryman into a fairy-like boudoir, and thence to a dressing-room, in which the open doors of a wardrobe and a heap of dresses flung about a sofa showed that it still remained exactly as its occupants had left it.

"I've got all these things to put away before my lady comes home, Luke; you might sit down here while I do it, I shan't be long."

Her cousin looked around in gawky embarrassment, bewildered by the splendor of the room; and after some deliberation selected the most substantial of the chairs, on the extreme edge of which he carefully seated himself.

"I wish I could show you the jewels, Luke," said the girl; "but I can't, for she always keeps the keys herself; that's the case on the dressing-table there."

"What, *that*?" cried Luke, staring at the massive walnut-wood and brass inlaid casket. "Why, that's big enough to hold every bit of clothes I've got!"

"And it's as full as it can be of diamonds, rubies, pearls and emeralds," answered Phoebe, busy as she spoke in folding the rustling silk dresses, and laying them one by one upon the shelves of the wardrobe. As she was shaking out the flounces of the last, a jingling sound caught her ear, and she put her hand into the pocket.

"I declare!" she exclaimed, "my lady has left her keys in her pocket for once in a way; I can show you the jewelry, if you like, Luke."

"Well, I may as well have a look at it, my girl," he said, rising from his chair and holding the light while his cousin unlocked the casket. He uttered a cry of wonder when he saw the ornaments glittering on white satin cushions. He wanted to handle the delicate jewels; to pull them about, and find out their mercantile value. Perhaps a pang of longing and envy shot through his heart as he thought how he would have liked to have taken one of them.

"Why, one of those diamond things would set us up in life, Phoebe, he said, turning a bracelet over and over in his big red hands.

"Put it down, Luke! Put it down directly!" cried the girl, with a look of terror; "how can you speak about such things?"

He laid the bracelet in its place with a reluctant sigh, and then continued his examination of the casket.

"What's this?" he asked presently, pointing to a brass knob in the framework of the box.

He pushed it as he spoke, and a secret drawer, lined with purple velvet, flew out of the casket.

"Look ye here!" cried Luke, pleased at his discovery.

Phoebe Marks threw down the dress she had been folding, and went over to the toilette table.

"Why, I never saw this before," she said; "I wonder what there is in it?"

There was not much in it; neither gold nor gems; only a baby's little worsted shoe rolled up in a piece of paper, and a tiny lock of pale and silky yellow hair, evidently taken from a baby's head. Phoebe's eyes dilated as she examined the little packet.

"So this is what my lady hides in the secret drawer," she muttered.

"It's queer rubbish to keep in such a place," said Luke, carelessly.

The girl's thin lip curved into a curious smile.

"You will bear me witness where I found this," she said, putting the little parcel into her pocket.

"Why, Phoebe, you're not going to be such a fool as to take that," cried the young man.

"I'd rather have this than the diamond bracelet you would have liked to take," she answered; "you shall have the public house, Luke."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### IN THE FIRST PAGE OF "THE TIMES."

Robert Audley was supposed to be a barrister. As a barrister was his name inscribed in the law-list; as a barrister he had chambers in Figtree Court, Temple; as a barrister he had eaten the allotted number of dinners, which form the sublime ordeal through which the forensic aspirant wades on to fame and fortune. If these things can make a man a barrister, Robert Audley decidedly was one. But he had never either had a brief, or tried to get a brief, or even wished to have a brief in all those five years, during which his name had been painted upon one of the doors in Figtree Court. He was a handsome, lazy, care-for-nothing fellow, of about seven-and-twenty; the only son of a younger brother of Sir Michael Audley. His father had left him £400 a year, which his friends had advised him to increase by being called to the bar; and as he found it, after due consideration, more trouble to oppose the wishes of these friends than to eat so many dinners, and to take a set of chambers in the Temple, he adopted the latter course, and unblushingly called himself a barrister.

Sometimes, when the weather was very hot, and he had exhausted himself with the exertion of smoking his German pipe, and reading French novels, he would stroll into the Temple Gardens, and lying in some shady spot, pale and cool, with his shirt collar turned down and a blue silk handkerchief tied loosely about his neck, would tell grave benchers that he had knocked himself up with over work.

The sly old benchers laughed at the pleasant fiction; but they all agreed that Robert Audley was a good fellow; a generous-hearted fellow; rather a curious fellow, too, with a fund of sly wit and quiet humor, under his listless, dawdling, indifferent, irresolute manner. A man who would never get on in the world; but who would not hurt a worm. Indeed, his chambers were converted into a perfect dog-kennel, by his habit of bringing home stray and benighted curs, who were attracted by his looks in the street, and followed him with abject fondness.

Robert always spent the hunting season at Audley Court; not that he was distinguished as a Nimrod, for he would quietly trot to covert upon a mild-tempered, stout-limbed bay hack, and keep at a very respectful distance from the hard riders; his horse knowing quite as well as he did, that nothing was further from his thoughts than any desire to be in at the death.

The young man was a great favorite with his uncle, and by no means despised by his pretty, gipsy-faced, light-hearted, hoydenish cousin, Miss Alicia Audley. It might have seemed to other men, that the partiality of a young lady who was sole heiress to a very fine estate, was rather well worth cultivating, but it did not so occur to Robert Audley. Alicia was a very nice girl, he said, a jolly girl, with no nonsense about her—a girl of a thousand; but this was the highest point to which enthusiasm could carry him. The idea of turning his cousin's girlish liking for him to some good account never entered his idle brain. I doubt if he even had any correct notion of the amount of his uncle's fortune, and I am certain that he never for one moment calculated upon the chances of any part of that fortune ultimately coming to himself. So that when, one fine spring morning, about three months before the time of which I am writing, the postman brought him the wedding cards of Sir Michael and Lady Audley, together with a very indignant letter from his cousin, setting forth how her father had just married a wax-dollish young person, no older than Alicia herself, with flaxen ringlets, and a perpetual giggle; for I am sorry to say that Miss Audley's animus caused her thus to describe that pretty musical laugh which had been so much admired in the late Miss Lucy Graham—when, I say, these documents reached Robert Audley—they elicited neither vexation nor astonishment in the lymphatic nature of that gentleman. He read Alicia's angry crossed and recrossed letter without so much as removing the amber mouth-piece of his German pipe from his mustached lips. When he had finished the perusal of the epistle, which he read with his dark eyebrows elevated to the center of his forehead (his only manner of expressing surprise, by the way) he deliberately threw that and the wedding cards into the waste-paper basket, and putting down his pipe, prepared himself for the exertion of thinking out the subject.

"I always said the old buffer would marry," he muttered, after about half an hour's revery. Alicia and my lady, the stepmother, will go at it hammer and tongs. I hope they won't quarrel in the hunting season, or say unpleasant



things to each other at the dinner-table; rows always upset a man's digestion.

At about twelve o'clock on the morning following that night upon which the events recorded in my last chapter had taken place, the baronet's nephew strolled out of the Temple, Blackfriarsward, on his way to the city. He had in an evil hour obliged some necessitous friend by putting the ancient name of Audley across a bill of accommodation, which bill not having been provided for by the drawer, Robert was called upon to pay. For this purpose he sauntered up Ludgate Hill, with his blue necktie fluttering in the hot August air, and thence to a refreshingly cool banking-house in a shady court out of St. Paul's churchyard, where he made arrangements for selling out a couple of hundred pounds' worth of consols.

He had transacted this business, and was loitering at the corner of the court, waiting for a chance hansom to convey him back to the Temple, when he was almost knocked down by a man of about his own age, who dashed headlong into the narrow opening.

"Be so good as to look where you're going, my friend!" Robert remonstrated, mildly, to the impetuous passenger; "you might give a man warning before you throw him down and trample upon him."

The stranger stopped suddenly, looked very hard at the speaker, and then gasped for breath.

"Bob!" he cried, in a tone expressive of the most intense astonishment; "I only touched British ground after dark last night, and to think that I should meet you this morning."

"I've seen you somewhere before, my bearded friend," said Mr. Audley, calmly scrutinizing the animated face of the other, "but I'll be hanged if I can remember when or where."

"What!" exclaimed the stranger, reproachfully. "You don't mean to say that you've forgotten George Talboys?"

"*No I have not!*" said Robert, with an emphasis by no means usual to him; and then hooking his arm into that of his friend, he led him into the shady court, saying, with his old indifference, "and now, George tell us all about it."

George Talboys did tell him all about it. He told that very story which he had related ten days before to the pale governess on board the *Argus*; and

then, hot and breathless, he said that he had twenty thousand pounds or so in his pocket, and that he wanted to bank it at Messrs. ——, who had been his bankers many years before.

"If you'll believe me, I've only just left their counting-house," said Robert. "I'll go back with you, and we'll settle that matter in five minutes."

They did contrive to settle it in about a quarter of an hour; and then Robert Audley was for starting off immediately for the Crown and Scepter, at Greenwich, or the Castle, at Richmond, where they could have a bit of dinner, and talk over those good old times when they were together at Eton. But George told his friend that before he went anywhere, before he shaved or broke his fast, or in any way refreshed himself after a night journey from Liverpool by express train, he must call at a certain coffee-house in Bridge street, Westminster, where he expected to find a letter from his wife.

As they dashed through Ludgate Hill, Fleet street, and the Strand, in a fast hansom, George Talboys poured into his friend's ear all those wild hopes and dreams which had usurped such a dominion over his sanguine nature.

"I shall take a villa on the banks of the Thames, Bob," he said, "for the little wife and myself; and we'll have a yacht, Bob, old boy, and you shall lie on the deck and smoke, while my pretty one plays her guitar and sings songs to us. She's for all the world like one of those what's-its-names, who got poor old Ulysses into trouble," added the young man, whose classic lore was not very great.

The waiters at the Westminster coffee-house stared at the hollow-eyed, unshaven stranger, with his clothes of colonial cut, and his boisterous, excited manner; but he had been an old frequenter of the place in his military days, and when they heard who he was they flew to do his bidding.

He did not want much—only a bottle of soda-water, and to know if there was a letter at the bar directed to George Talboys.

The waiter brought the soda-water before the young men had seated themselves in a shady box near the disused fire-place. No; there was no letter for that name.

The waiter said it with consummate indifference, while he mechanically dusted the little mahogany table.

George's face blanched to a deadly whiteness. "Talboys," he said; "perhaps you didn't hear the name distinctly—T, A, L, B, O, Y, S. Go and look again, there *must* be a letter."

The waiter shrugged his shoulders as he left the room, and returned in three minutes to say that there was no name at all resembling Talboys in the letter rack. There was Brown, and Sanderson, and Pinchbeck; only three letters altogether.

The young man drank his soda-water in silence, and then, leaning his elbows on the table, covered his face with his hands. There was something in his manner which told Robert Audley that his disappointment, trifling as it may appear, was in reality a very bitter one. He seated himself opposite to his friend, but did not attempt to address him.

By-and-by George looked up, and mechanically taking a greasy *Times* newspaper of the day before from a heap of journals on the table, stared vacantly at the first page.

I cannot tell how long he sat blankly staring at one paragraph among the list of deaths, before his dazed brain took in its full meaning; but after considerable pause he pushed the newspaper over to Robert Audley, and with a face that had changed from its dark bronze to a sickly, chalky grayish white, and with an awful calmness in his manner, he pointed with his finger to a line which ran thus:

"On the 24th inst., at Ventnor, Isle of Wight, Helen Talboys, aged 22."

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE HEADSTONE AT VENTNOR.

Yes, there it was in black and white—"Helen Talboys, aged 22."

When George told the governess on board the *Argus* that if he heard any evil tidings of his wife he should drop down dead, he spoke in perfect good faith; and yet, here were the worst tidings that could come to him, and he sat rigid, white and helpless, staring stupidly at the shocked face of his friend.

The suddenness of the blow had stunned him. In this strange and bewildered state of mind he began to wonder what had happened, and why it was that one line in the *Times* newspaper could have so horrible an effect upon him.

Then by degrees even this vague consciousness of his misfortune faded slowly out of his mind, succeeded by a painful consciousness of external things.

The hot August sunshine, the dusty window-panes and shabby-painted blinds, a file of fly-blown play-bills fastened to the wall, the black and empty fire-places, a bald-headed old man nodding over the *Morning Advertiser*, the slip-shod waiter folding a tumbled table-cloth, and Robert Audley's handsome face looking at him full of compassionate alarm—he knew that all these things took gigantic proportions, and then, one by one, melted into dark blots and swam before his eyes. He knew that there was a great noise, as of half a dozen furious steam-engines tearing and grinding in his ears, and he knew nothing more—except that somebody or something fell heavily to the ground.

He opened his eyes upon the dusky evening in a cool and shaded room, the silence only broken by the rumbling of wheels at a distance.

He looked about him wonderingly, but half indifferently. His old friend, Robert Audley, was seated by his side smoking. George was lying on a low iron bedstead opposite to an open window, in which there was a stand of flowers and two or three birds in cages.

"You don't mind the pipe, do you, George?" his friend asked, quietly.

"No."

He lay for some time looking at the flowers and the birds; one canary was singing a shrill hymn to the setting sun.

"Do the birds annoy you, George? Shall I take them out of the room?"

"No; I like to hear them sing."

Robert Audley knocked the ashes out of his pipe, laid the precious meerschaum tenderly upon the mantelpiece, and going into the next room, returned presently with a cup of strong tea.

"Take this, George," he said, as he placed the cup on a little table close to George's pillow; "it will do your head good."

The young man did not answer, but looked slowly round the room, and then at his friend's grave face.

"Bob," he said, "where are we?"

"In my chambers, dear boy, in the Temple. You have no lodgings of your own, so you may as well stay with me while you're in town."

George passed his hand once or twice across his forehead, and then, in a hesitating manner, said, quietly:

"That newspaper this morning, Bob; what was it?"

"Never mind just now, old boy; drink some tea."

"Yes, yes," cried George, impatiently, raising himself upon the bed, and staring about him with hollow eyes. "I remember all about it. Helen! my Helen! my wife, my darling, my only love! Dead, dead!"

"George," said Robert Audley, laying his hand gently upon the young man's arm, "you must remember that the person whose name you saw in the paper may not be your wife. There may have been some other Helen Talboys."

"No, no!" he cried; "the age corresponds with hers, and Talboys is such an uncommon name."

"It may be a misprint for Talbot."

"No, no, no; my wife is dead!"

He shook off Robert's restraining hand, and rising from the bed, walked straight to the door.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed his friend.

"To Ventnor, to see her grave."

"Not to-night, George, not to-night. I will go with you myself by the first train to-morrow."

Robert led him back to the bed, and gently forced him to lie down again. He then gave him an opiate, which had been left for him by the medical man whom they had called in at the coffee-house in Bridge street, when George fainted.

So George Talboys fell into a heavy slumber, and dreamed that he went to Ventnor, to find his wife alive and happy, but wrinkled, old, and gray, and to find his son grown into a young man.

Early the next morning he was seated opposite to Robert Audley in the first-class carriage of an express, whirling through the pretty open country toward Portsmouth.

They landed at Ventnor under the burning heat of the midday sun. As the two young men came from the steamer, the people on the pier stared at George's white face and untrimmed beard.

"What are we to do, George?" Robert Audley asked. "We have no clew to finding the people you want to see."

The young man looked at him with a pitiful, bewildered expression. The big dragoon was as helpless as a baby; and Robert Audley, the most vacillating and unenergetic of men, found himself called upon to act for another. He rose superior to himself, and equal to the occasion.

"Had we not better ask at one of the hotels about a Mrs. Talboys, George?" he said.

"Her father's name was Maldon," George muttered; "he could never have sent her here to die alone."

They said nothing more; but Robert walked straight to a hotel where he inquired for a Mr. Maldon.

Yes, they told him, there was a gentleman of that name stopping at Ventnor, a Captain Maldon; his daughter was lately dead. The waiter would go and inquire for the address.

The hotel was a busy place at this season; people hurrying in and out, and a great bustle of grooms and waiters about the halls.

George Talboys leaned against the doorpost, with much the same look in his face, as that which had frightened his friend in the Westminster coffee-house.

The worst was confirmed now. His wife, Captain Maldon's daughter was dead.

The waiter returned in about five minutes to say that Captain Maldon was lodging at Lansdowne Cottage, No. 4.

They easily found the house, a shabby, low-windowed cottage, looking toward the water.

Was Captain Maldon at home? No, the landlady said; he had gone out on the beach with his little grandson. Would the gentleman walk in and sit down a bit?

George mechanically followed his friend into the little front parlor—dusty, shabbily furnished, and disorderly, with a child's broken toys scattered on the floor, and the scent of stale tobacco hanging about the muslin window-curtains.

"Look!" said George, pointing to a picture over the mantelpiece.

It was his own portrait, painted in the old dragooning days. A pretty good likeness, representing him in uniform, with his charger in the background.

Perhaps the most animated of men would have been scarcely so wise a comforter as Robert Audley. He did not utter a word to the stricken widower, but quietly seated himself with his back to George, looking out of the open window.

For some time the young man wandered restlessly about the room, looking at and sometimes touching the nick-nacks lying here and there.

Her workbox, with an unfinished piece of work; her album full of extracts from Byron and Moore, written in his own scrawling hand; some books which he had given her, and a bunch of withered flowers in a vase they had bought in Italy.

"Her portrait used to hang by the side of mine," he muttered; "I wonder what they have done with it."

By-and-by he said, after about an hour's silence:

"I should like to see the woman of the house; I should like to ask her about—"



He broke down, and buried his face in his hands.

Robert summoned the landlady. She was a good-natured garrulous creature, accustomed to sickness and death, for many of her lodgers came to her to die.

She told all the particulars of Mrs. Talboys' last hours; how she had come to Ventnor only ten days before her death, in the last stage of decline; and how, day by day, she had gradually, but surely, sunk under the fatal malady. Was the gentleman any relative? she asked of Robert Audley, as George sobbed aloud.

"Yes, he is the lady's husband."

"What!" the woman cried; "him as deserted her so cruel, and left her with her pretty boy upon her poor old father's hands, which Captain Maldon has told me often, with the tears in his poor eyes?"

"I did not desert her," George cried out; and then he told the history of his three years' struggle.

"Did she speak of me?" he asked; "did she speak of me—at—at the last?"

"No, she went off as quiet as a lamb. She said very little from the first; but the last day she knew nobody, not even her little boy, nor her poor old father, who took on awful. Once she went off wild-like, talking about her mother, and about the cruel shame it was to leave her to die in a strange place, till it was quite pitiful to hear her."

"Her mother died when she was quite a child," said George. "To think that she should remember her and speak of her, but never once of me."

The woman took him into the little bedroom in which his wife had died. He knelt down by the bed and kissed the pillow tenderly, the landlady crying as he did so.

While he was kneeling, praying, perhaps, with his face buried in this humble, snow-white pillow, the woman took something from a drawer. She gave it to him when he rose from his knees; it was a long tress of hair wrapped in silver paper.

"I cut this off when she lay in her coffin," she said, "poor dear?"

He pressed the soft lock to his lips. "Yes," he murmured; "this is the dear hair that I have kissed so often when her head lay upon my shoulder. But it

always had a rippling wave in it then, and now it seems smooth and straight."

"It changes in illness," said the landlady. "If you'd like to see where they have laid her, Mr. Talboys, my little boy shall show you the way to the churchyard."

So George Talboys and his faithful friend walked to the quiet spot, where, beneath a mound of earth, to which the patches of fresh turf hardly adhered, lay that wife of whose welcoming smile George had dreamed so often in the far antipodes.

Robert left the young man by the side of this newly-made grave, and returning in about a quarter of an hour, found that he had not once stirred.

He looked up presently, and said that if there was a stone-mason's anywhere near he should like to give an order.

They very easily found the stonemason, and sitting down amidst the fragmentary litter of the man's yard, George Talboys wrote in pencil this brief inscription for the headstone of his dead wife's grave:

Sacred to the Memory of  
HELEN,  
THE BELOVED WIFE OF GEORGE TALBOYS,  
"Who departed this life  
August 24th, 18—, aged 22,  
Deeply regretted by her sorrowing Husband.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### ANYWHERE, ANYWHERE OUT OF THE WORLD.

When they returned to Lansdowne Cottage they found the old man had not yet come in, so they walked down to the beach to look for him. After a brief search they found him, sitting upon a heap of pebbles, reading a newspaper and eating filberts. The little boy was at some distance from his grandfather, digging in the sand with a wooden spade. The crape round the old man's shabby hat, and the child's poor little black frock, went to George's heart. Go where he would he met fresh confirmation of this great grief of his life. His wife was dead.

"Mr. Maldon," he said, as he approached his father-in-law.

The old man looked up, and, dropping his newspaper, rose from the pebbles with a ceremonious bow. His faded light hair was tinged with gray; he had a pinched hook nose; watery blue eyes, and an irresolute-looking mouth; he wore his shabby dress with an affectation of foppish gentility; an eye-glass dangled over his closely buttoned-up waistcoat, and he carried a cane in his ungloved hand.

"Great Heaven!" cried George, "don't you know me?"

Mr. Maldon started and colored violently, with something of a frightened look, as he recognized his son-in-law.

"My dear boy," he said, "I did not; for the first moment I did not. That beard makes such a difference. You find the beard makes a great difference, do you not, sir?" he said, appealing to Robert.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed George Talboys, "is this the way you welcome me? I come to England to find my wife dead within a week of my touching land, and you begin to chatter to me about my beard—you, her father!"

"True! true!" muttered the old man, wiping his bloodshot eyes; "a sad shock, a sad shock, my dear George. If you'd only been here a week earlier."

"If I had," cried George, in an outburst of grief and passion, "I scarcely think that I would have let her die. I would have disputed for her with death. I would! I would! Oh God! why did not the *Argus* go down with every soul on board her before I came to see this day?"

He began to walk up and down the beach, his father-in-law looking helplessly at him, rubbing his feeble eyes with a handkerchief.

"I've a strong notion that that old man didn't treat his daughter too well," thought Robert, as he watched the half-pay lieutenant. "He seems, for some reason or other, to be half afraid of George."

While the agitated young man walked up and down in a fever of regret and despair, the child ran to his grandfather, and clung about the tails of his coat.

"Come home, grandpa, come home," he said. "I'm tired."

George Talboys turned at the sound of the babyish voice, and looked long and earnestly at the boy.

He had his father's brown eyes and dark hair.

"My darling! my darling!" said George, taking the child in his arms, "I am your father, come across the sea to find you. Will you love me?"

The little fellow pushed him away. "I don't know you," he said. "I love grandpa and Mrs. Monks at Southampton."

"Georgey has a temper of his own, sir," said the old man. "He has been spoiled."

They walked slowly back to the cottage, and once more George Talboys told the history of that desertion which had seemed so cruel. He told, too, of the twenty thousand pounds banked by him the day before. He had not the heart to ask any questions about the past, and his father-in-law only told him that a few months after his departure they had gone from the place where George left them to live at Southampton, where Helen got a few pupils for the piano, and where they managed pretty well till her health failed, and she fell into the decline of which she died. Like most sad stories it was a very brief one.

"The boy seems fond of you, Mr. Maldon," said George, after a pause.

"Yes, yes," answered the old man, smoothing the child's curling hair; "yes. Georgey is very fond of his grandfather."

"Then he had better stop with you. The interest of my money will be about six hundred a year. You can draw a hundred of that for Georgey's education, leaving the rest to accumulate till he is of age. My friend here will be trustee, and if he will undertake the charge, I will appoint him guardian to the boy, allowing him for the present to remain under your care."

"But why not take care of him yourself, George?" asked Robert Audley.

"Because I shall sail in the very next vessel that leaves Liverpool for Australia. I shall be better in the diggings or the backwoods than ever I could be here. I'm broken for a civilized life from this hour, Bob."

The old man's weak eyes sparkled as George declared this determination.

"My poor boy, I think you're right," he said, "I really think you're right. The change, the wild life, the—the—" He hesitated and broke down as Robert looked earnestly at him.

"You're in a great hurry to get rid of your son-in-law, I think, Mr. Maldon," he said, gravely.

"Get rid of him, dear boy! Oh, no, no! But for his own sake, my dear sir, for his own sake, you know."

"I think for his own sake he'd much better stay in England and look after his son," said Robert.

"But I tell you I can't," cried George; "every inch of this accursed ground is hateful to me—I want to run out of it as I would out of a graveyard. I'll go back to town to-night, get that business about the money settled early to-morrow morning, and start for Liverpool without a moment's delay. I shall be better when I've put half the world between me and her grave."

"Before he left the house he stole out to the landlady, and asked some more questions about his dead wife.

"Were they poor?" he asked, "were they pinched for money while she was ill?"

"Oh, no!" the woman answered; "though the captain dresses shabby, he has always plenty of sovereigns in his purse. The poor lady wanted for nothing."

George was relieved at this, though it puzzled him to know where the drunken half-pay lieutenant could have contrived to find money for all the

expenses of his daughter's illness.

But he was too thoroughly broken down by the calamity which had befallen him to be able to think much of anything, so he asked no further questions, but walked with his father-in-law and Robert Audley down to the boat by which they were to cross to Portsmouth.

The old man bade Robert a very ceremonious adieu.

"You did not introduce me to your friend, by-the-bye, my dear boy," he said. George stared at him, muttered something indistinct, and ran down the ladder to the boat before Mr. Maldon could repeat his request. The steamer sped away through the sunset, and the outline of the island melted in the horizon as they neared the opposite shore.

"To think," said George, "that two nights ago, at this time, I was steaming into Liverpool, full of the hope of clasping her to my heart, and to-night I am going away from her grave!"

The document which appointed Robert Audley as guardian to little George Talboys was drawn up in a solicitor's office the next morning.

"It's a great responsibility," exclaimed Robert; "I, guardian to anybody or anything! I, who never in my life could take care of myself!"

"I trust in your noble heart, Bob," said George. "I know you will take care of my poor orphan boy, and see that he is well used by his grandfather. I shall only draw enough from Georgey's fortune to take me back to Sydney, and then begin my old work again."

But it seemed as if George was destined to be himself the guardian of his son; for when he reached Liverpool, he found that a vessel had just sailed, and that there would not be another for a month; so he returned to London, and once more threw himself upon Robert Audley's hospitality.

The barrister received him with open arms; he gave him the room with the birds and flowers, and had a bed put up in his dressing-room for himself. Grief is so selfish that George did not know the sacrifices his friend made for his comfort. He only knew that for him the sun was darkened, and the business of life done. He sat all day long smoking cigars, and staring at the flowers and canaries, chafing for the time to pass that he might be far out at sea.

But just as the hour was drawing near for the sailing of the vessel, Robert Audley came in one day, full of a great scheme.

A friend of his, another of those barristers whose last thought is of a brief, was going to St. Petersburg to spend the winter, and wanted Robert to accompany him. Robert would only go on condition that George went too.

For a long time the young man resisted; but when he found that Robert was, in a quiet way, thoroughly determined upon not going without him, he gave in, and consented to join the party. What did it matter? he said. One place was the same to him as another; anywhere out of England; what did he care where?

This was not a very cheerful way of looking at things, but Robert Audley was quite satisfied with having won his consent.

The three young men started under very favorable circumstances, carrying letters of introduction to the most influential inhabitants of the Russian capital.

Before leaving England, Robert wrote to his cousin Alicia, telling her of his intended departure with his old friend George Talboys, whom he had lately met for the first time after a lapse of years, and who had just lost his wife.

Alicia's reply came by return post, and ran thus:

"MY DEAR ROBERT—How cruel of you to run away to that horrid St. Petersburg before the hunting season! I have heard that people lose their noses in that disagreeable climate, and as yours is rather a long one, I should advise you to return before the very severe weather sets in. What sort of person is this Mr. Talboys? If he is very agreeable you may bring him to the Court as soon as you return from your travels. Lady Audley tells me to request you to secure her a set of sables. You are not to consider the price, but to be sure that they are the handsomest that can be obtained. Papa is perfectly absurd about his new wife, and she and I cannot get on together at all; not that she is disagreeable to me, for, as far as that goes, she makes herself agreeable to every one; but she is so irretrievably childish and silly.

"Believe me to be, my dear Robert.

"Your affectionate cousin,

"ALICIA AUDLEY."

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## CHAPTER VII.

### AFTER A YEAR.

The first year of George Talboys' widowhood passed away, the deep band of crepe about his hat grew brown and dusty, and as the last burning day of another August faded out, he sat smoking cigars in the quiet chambers of Figtree Court, much as he had done the year before, when the horror of his grief was new to him, and every object in life, however trifling or however important, seemed saturated with his one great sorrow.

But the big ex-dragoon had survived his affliction by a twelvemonth, and hard as it may be to have to tell it, he did not look much the worse for it. Heaven knows what wasted agonies of remorse and self-reproach may not have racked George's honest heart, as he lay awake at nights thinking of the wife he had abandoned in the pursuit of a fortune, which she never lived to share.

Once, while they were abroad, Robert Audley ventured to congratulate him upon his recovered spirits. He burst into a bitter laugh.

"Do you know, Bob," he said, "that when some of our fellows were wounded in India, they came home, bringing bullets inside them. They did not talk of them, and they were stout and hearty, and looked as well, perhaps, as you or I; but every change in the weather, however slight, every variation of the atmosphere, however trifling, brought back the old agony of their wounds as sharp as ever they had felt it on the battle-field. I've had my wound, Bob; I carry the bullet still, and I shall carry it into my coffin."

The travelers returned from St. Petersburg in the spring, and George again took up his quarters at his old friend's chambers, only leaving them now and then to run down to Southampton and take a look at his little boy. He always went loaded with toys and sweetmeats to give to the child; but, for all this, Georgey would not become very familiar with his papa, and the young man's heart sickened as he began to fancy that even his child was lost to him.



"What can I do?" he thought. "If I take him away from his grandfather, I shall break his heart; if I let him remain, he will grow up a stranger to me, and care more for that drunken old hypocrite than for his own father. But then, what could an ignorant, heavy dragoon like me do with such a child? What could I teach him, except to smoke cigars and idle around all day with his hands in his pockets?"

So the anniversary of that 30th of August, upon which George had seen the advertisement of his wife's death in the *Times* newspaper, came round for the first time, and the young man put off his black clothes and the shabby crape from his hat, and laid his mournful garments in a trunk in which he kept a packet of his wife's letters, her portrait, and that lock of hair which had been cut from her head after death. Robert Audley had never seen either the letters, the portrait, or the long tress of silky hair; nor, indeed, had George ever mentioned the name of his dead wife after that one day at Ventnor, on which he learned the full particulars of her decease.

"I shall write to my cousin Alicia to-day, George," the young barrister said, upon this very 30th of August. "Do you know that the day after to-morrow is the 1st of September? I shall write and tell her that we will both run down to the Court for a week's shooting."

"No, no, Bob; go by yourself; they don't want me, and I'd rather—"

"Bury yourself in Figtree Court, with no company but my dogs and canaries! No, George, you shall do nothing of the kind."

"But I don't care for shooting."

"And do you suppose *I* care for it?" cried Robert, with charming *naivete*. "Why, man, I don't know a partridge from a pigeon, and it might be the 1st of April, instead of the 1st of September, for aught I care. I never hurt a bird in my life, but I have hurt my own shoulder with the weight of my gun. I only go down to Essex for the change of air, the good dinners, and the sight of my uncle's honest, handsome face. Besides, this time I've another inducement, as I want to see this fair-haired paragon—my new aunt. You'll go with me, George?"

"Yes, if you really wish it."

The quiet form his grief had taken after its first brief violence, left him as submissive as a child to the will of his friend; ready to go anywhere or do anything; never enjoying himself, or originating any enjoyment, but joining

in the pleasures of others with a hopeless, uncomplaining, unobtrusive resignation peculiar to his simple nature. But the return of post brought a letter from Alicia Audley, to say that the two young men could not be received at the Court.

"There are seventeen spare bed-rooms," wrote the young lady, in an indignant running hand, "but for all that, my dear Robert, you can't come; for my lady has taken it into her silly head that she is too ill to entertain visitors (there is no more the matter with her than there is with me), and she cannot have gentlemen (great, rough men, she says) in the house. Please apologize to your friend Mr. Talboys, and tell him that papa expects to see you both in the hunting season."

"My lady's airs and graces shan't keep us out of Essex for all that," said Robert, as he twisted the letter into a pipe-light for his big meerschaum. "I'll tell you what we'll do, George: there's a glorious inn at Audley, and plenty of fishing in the neighborhood; we'll go there and have a week's sport. Fishing is much better than shooting; you've only to lie on a bank and stare at your line; I don't find that you often catch anything, but it's very pleasant."

He held the twisted letter to the feeble spark of fire glimmering in the grate, as he spoke, and then changing his mind, deliberately unfolded it, and smoothed the crumpled paper with his hand.

"Poor little Alicia!" he said, thoughtfully; "it's rather hard to treat her letter so cavalierly—I'll keep it;" upon which Mr. Robert Audley put the note back into its envelope, and afterward thrust it into a pigeon-hole in his office desk, marked *important*. Heaven knows what wonderful documents there were in this particular pigeon-hole, but I do not think it likely to have contained anything of great judicial value. If any one could at that moment have told the young barrister that so simple a thing as his cousin's brief letter would one day come to be a link in that terrible chain of evidence afterward to be slowly forged in the only criminal case in which he was ever to be concerned, perhaps Mr. Robert Audley would have lifted his eyebrows a little higher than usual.

So the two young men left London the next day, with one portmanteau and a rod and tackle between them, and reached the straggling, old-fashioned, fast-decaying village of Audley, in time to order a good dinner at the Sun Inn.

Audley Court was about three-quarters of a mile from the village, lying, as I have said, deep down in the hollow, shut in by luxuriant timber. You could only reach it by a cross-road bordered by trees, and as trimly kept as the avenues in a gentleman's park. It was a lonely place enough, even in all its rustic beauty, for so bright a creature as the late Miss Lucy Graham, but the generous baronet had transformed the interior of the gray old mansion into a little palace for his young wife, and Lady Audley seemed as happy as a child surrounded by new and costly toys.

In her better fortunes, as in her old days of dependence, wherever she went she seemed to take sunshine and gladness with her. In spite of Miss Alicia's undisguised contempt for her step-mother's childishness and frivolity, Lucy was better loved and more admired than the baronet's daughter. That very childishness had a charm which few could resist. The innocence and candor of an infant beamed in Lady Audley's fair face, and shone out of her large and liquid blue eyes. The rosy lips, the delicate nose, the profusion of fair ringlets, all contributed to preserve to her beauty the character of extreme youth and freshness. She owned to twenty years of age, but it was hard to believe her more than seventeen. Her fragile figure, which she loved to dress in heavy velvets, and stiff, rustling silks, till she looked like a child tricked out for a masquerade, was as girlish as if she had just left the nursery. All her amusements were childish. She hated reading, or study of any kind, and loved society. Rather than be alone, she would admit Phoebe Marks into her confidence, and loll on one of the sofas in her luxurious dressing-room, discussing a new costume for some coming dinner-party; or sit chattering to the girl with her jewel-box beside her, upon the satin cushions, and Sir Michael's presents spread out in her lap, while she counted and admired her treasures.

She had appeared at several public balls at Chelmsford and Colchester, and was immediately established as the belle of the county. Pleased with her high position and her handsome house; with every caprice gratified, every whim indulged; admired and caressed wherever she went; fond of her generous husband; rich in a noble allowance of pin-money; with no poor relations to worry her with claims upon her purse or patronage; it would have been hard to find in the County of Essex a more fortunate creature than Lucy, Lady Audley.

The two young men loitered over the dinner-table in the private sitting-room at the Sun Inn. The windows were thrown wide open, and the fresh country air blew in upon them as they dined. The weather was lovely; the foliage of the woods touched here and there with faint gleams of the earliest tints of autumn; the yellow corn still standing in some of the fields, in others just falling under the shining sickle; while in the narrow lanes you met great wagons drawn by broad-chested cart-horses, carrying home the rich golden store. To any one who has been, during the hot summer months, pent up in London, there is in the first taste of rustic life a kind of sensuous rapture scarcely to be described. George Talboys felt this, and in this he experienced the nearest approach to enjoyment that he had ever known since his wife's death.

The clock struck five as they finished dinner.

"Put on your hat, George," said Robert Audley; "they don't dine at the Court till seven; we shall have time to stroll down and see the old place and its inhabitants."

The landlord, who had come into the room with a bottle of wine, looked up as the young man spoke.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Audley," he said, "but if you want to see your uncle, you'll lose your time by going to the Court just now. Sir Michael and my lady and Miss Alicia have all gone to the races up at Chorley, and they won't be back till nigh upon eight o'clock, most likely. They must pass by here to go home."

Under these circumstances of course it was no use going to the Court, so the two young men strolled through the village and looked at the old church, and then went and reconnoitered the streams in which they were to fish the next day, and by such means beguiled the time until after seven o'clock. At about a quarter past that hour they returned to the inn, and seating themselves in the open window, lit their cigars and looked out at the peaceful prospect.

We hear every day of murders committed in the country. Brutal and treacherous murders; slow, protracted agonies from poisons administered by some kindred hand; sudden and violent deaths by cruel blows, inflicted with a stake cut from some spreading oak, whose every shadow promised—peace. In the county of which I write, I have been shown a meadow in which, on a quiet summer Sunday evening, a young farmer murdered the

girl who had loved and trusted him; and yet, even now, with the stain of that foul deed upon it, the aspect of the spot is—peace. No species of crime has ever been committed in the worst rookeries about Seven Dials that has not been also done in the face of that rustic calm which still, in spite of all, we look on with a tender, half-mournful yearning, and associate with—peace.

It was dusk when gigs and chaises, dog-carts and clumsy farmers' phaetons, began to rattle through the village street, and under the windows of the Sun Inn; deeper dusk still when an open carriage and four drew suddenly up beneath the rocking sign-post.

It was Sir Michael Audley's barouche which came to so sudden a stop before the little inn. The harness of one of the leaders had become out of order, and the foremost postillion dismounted to set it right.

"Why, it's my uncle," cried Robert Audley, as the carriage stopped. "I'll run down and speak to him."

George lit another cigar, and, sheltered by the window-curtains, looked out at the little party. Alicia sat with her back to the horses, and he could perceive, even in the dusk, that she was a handsome brunette; but Lady Audley was seated on the side of the carriage furthest from the inn, and he could see nothing of the fair-haired paragon of whom he had heard so much.

"Why, Robert," exclaimed Sir Michael, as his nephew emerged from the inn, "this is a surprise!"

"I have not come to intrude upon you at the Court, my dear uncle," said the young man, as the baronet shook him by the hand in his own hearty fashion. "Essex is my native county, you know, and about this time of year I generally have a touch of homesickness; so George and I have come down to the inn for two or three day's fishing."

"George—George who?"

"George Talboys."

"What, has he come?" cried Alicia. "I'm so glad; for I'm dying to see this handsome young widower."

"Are you, Alicia?" said her cousin, "Then egad, I'll run and fetch him, and introduce you to him at once."

Now, so complete was the dominion which Lady Audley had, in her own childish, unthinking way, obtained over her devoted husband, that it was

very rarely that the baronet's eyes were long removed from his wife's pretty face. When Robert, therefore, was about to re-enter the inn, it needed but the faintest elevation of Lucy's eyebrows, with a charming expression of weariness and terror, to make her husband aware that she did not want to be bored by an introduction to Mr. George Talboys.

"Never mind to-night, Bob," he said. "My wife is a little tired after our long day's pleasure. Bring your friend to dinner to-morrow, and then he and Alicia can make each other's acquaintance. Come round and speak to Lady Audley, and then we'll drive home."

My lady was so terribly fatigued that she could only smile sweetly, and hold out a tiny gloved hand to her nephew by marriage.

"You will come and dine with us to-morrow, and bring your interesting friend?" she said, in a low and tired voice. She had been the chief attraction of the race-course, and was wearied out by the exertion of fascinating half the county.

"It's a wonder she didn't treat you to her never-ending laugh," whispered Alicia, as she leaned over the carriage-door to bid Robert good-night; "but I dare say she reserves that for your delectation to-morrow. I suppose *you* are fascinated as well as everybody else?" added the young lady, rather snappishly.

"She is a lovely creature, certainly," murmured Robert, with placid admiration.

"Oh, of course! Now, she is the first woman of whom I ever heard you say a civil word, Robert Audley. I'm sorry to find you can only admire wax dolls."

Poor Alicia had had many skirmishes with her cousin upon that particular temperament of his, which, while it enabled him to go through life with perfect content and tacit enjoyment, entirely precluded his feeling one spark of enthusiasm upon any subject whatever.

"As to his ever falling in love," thought the young lady sometimes, "the idea is preposterous. If all the divinities on earth were ranged before him, waiting for his sultanship to throw the handkerchief, he would only lift his eyebrows to the middle of his forehead, and tell them to scramble for it."

But, for once in his life, Robert was almost enthusiastic.

"She's the prettiest little creature you ever saw in your life, George," he cried, when the carriage had driven off and he returned to his friend. "Such blue eyes, such ringlets, such a ravishing smile, such a fairy-like bonnet—all of a-tremble with heart's-ease and dewy spangles, shining out of a cloud of gauze. George Talboys, I feel like the hero of a French novel: I am falling in love with my aunt."

The widower only sighed and puffed his cigar fiercely out of the open window. Perhaps he was thinking of that far-away time—little better than five years ago, in fact; but such an age gone by to him—when he first met the woman for whom he had worn crape round his hat three days before. They returned, all those old unforgotten feelings; they came back, with the scene of their birth-place. Again he lounged with his brother officers upon the shabby pier at the shabby watering-place, listening to a dreary band with a cornet that was a note and a half flat. Again he heard the old operatic airs, and again *she* came tripping toward him, leaning on her old father's arm, and pretending (with such a charming, delicious, serio-comic pretense) to be listening to the music, and quite unaware of the admiration of half a dozen open-mouthed cavalry officers. Again the old fancy came back that she was something too beautiful for earth, or earthly uses, and that to approach her was to walk in a higher atmosphere and to breathe a purer air. And since this she had been his wife, and the mother of his child. She lay in the little churchyard at Ventnor, and only a year ago he had given the order for her tombstone. A few slow, silent tears dropped upon his waistcoat as he thought of these things in the quiet and darkening room.

Lady Audley was so exhausted when she reached home, that she excused herself from the dinner-table, and retired at once to her dressing-room, attended by her maid, Phoebe Marks.

She was a little capricious in her conduct to this maid—sometimes very confidential, sometimes rather reserved; but she was a liberal mistress, and the girl had every reason to be satisfied with her situation.

This evening, in spite of her fatigue, she was in extremely high spirits, and gave an animated account of the races, and the company present at them.

"I am tired to death, though, Phoebe," she said, by-and-by. "I am afraid I must look a perfect fright, after a day in the hot sun."

There were lighted candles on each side of the glass before which Lady Audley was standing unfastening her dress. She looked full at her maid as she spoke, her blue eyes clear and bright, and the rosy childish lips puckered into an arch smile.

"You are a little pale, my lady," answered the girl, "but you look as pretty as ever."

"That's right, Phoebe," she said, flinging herself into a chair, and throwing back her curls at the maid, who stood, brush in hand, ready to arrange the luxuriant hair for the night. "Do you know, Phoebe, I have heard some people say that you and I are alike?"

"I have heard them say so, too, my lady," said the girl, quietly "but they must be very stupid to say it, for your ladyship is a beauty, and I am a poor, plain creature."

"Not at all, Phoebe," said the little lady, superbly; "you *are* like me, and your features are very nice; it is only color that you want. My hair is pale yellow shot with gold, and yours is drab; my eyebrows and eyelashes are dark brown, and yours are almost—I scarcely like to say it, but they're almost white, my dear Phoebe. Your complexion is sallow, and mine is pink and rosy. Why, with a bottle of hair-dye, such as we see advertised in the papers, and a pot of rouge, you'd be as good-looking as I, any day, Phoebe."

She prattled on in this way for a long time, talking of a hundred different subjects, and ridiculing the people she had met at the races, for her maid's amusement. Her step-daughter came into the dressing-room to bid her good-night, and found the maid and mistress laughing aloud over one of the day's adventures. Alicia, who was never familiar with her servants, withdrew in disgust at my lady's frivolity.

"Go on brushing my hair, Phoebe," Lady Audley said, every time the girl was about to complete her task, "I quite enjoy a chat with you."

At last, just as she had dismissed her maid, she suddenly called her back. "Phoebe Marks," she said, "I want you to do me a favor."

"Yes, my lady."

"I want you to go to London by the first train to-morrow morning to execute a little commission for me. You may take a day's holiday afterward, as I know you have friends in town; and I shall give you a five-pound note if you do what I want, and keep your own counsel about it."



"Yes, my lady."

"See that that door is securely shut, and come and sit on this stool at my feet."

The girl obeyed. Lady Audley smoothed her maid's neutral-tinted hair with her plump, white, and bejeweled hand as she reflected for a few moments.

"And now listen, Phoebe. What I want you to do is very simple."

It was so simple that it was told in five minutes, and then Lady Audley retired into her bed-room, and curled herself up cozily under the eider-down quilt. She was a chilly creature, and loved to bury herself in soft wrappings of satin and fur.

"Kiss me, Phoebe," she said, as the girl arranged the curtains. "I hear Sir Michael's step in the anteroom; you will meet him as you go out, and you may as well tell him that you are going up by the first train to-morrow morning to get my dress from Madam Frederick for the dinner at Morton Abbey."

It was late the next morning when Lady Audley went down to breakfast—past ten o'clock. While she was sipping her coffee a servant brought her a sealed packet, and a book for her to sign.

"A telegraphic message!" she cried; for the convenient word telegram had not yet been invented. "What can be the matter?"

She looked up at her husband with wide-open, terrified eyes, and seemed half afraid to break the seal. The envelope was addressed to Miss Lucy Graham, at Mr. Dawson's, and had been sent on from the village.

"Read it, my darling," he said, "and do not be alarmed; it may be nothing of any importance."

It came from a Mrs. Vincent, the schoolmistress with whom she had lived before entering Mr. Dawson's family. The lady was dangerously ill, and implored her old pupil to go and see her.

"Poor soul! she always meant to leave me her money," said Lucy, with a mournful smile. "She has never heard of the change in my fortunes. Dear Sir Michael, I must go to her."

"To be sure you must, dearest. If she was kind to my poor girl in her adversity, she has a claim upon her prosperity that shall never be forgotten.

Put on your bonnet, Lucy; we shall be in time to catch the express."

"You will go with me?"

"Of course, my darling. Do you suppose I would let you go alone?"

"I was sure you would go with me," she said, thoughtfully.

"Does your friend send any address?"

"No; but she always lived at Crescent Villa, West Brompton; and no doubt she lives there still."

There was only time for Lady Audley to hurry on her bonnet and shawl before she heard the carriage drive round to the door, and Sir Michael calling to her at the foot of the staircase.

Her suite of rooms, as I have said, opened one out of another, and terminated in an octagon antechamber hung with oil-paintings. Even in her haste she paused deliberately at the door of this room, double-locked it, and dropped the key into her pocket. This door once locked cut off all access to my lady's apartments.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### BEFORE THE STORM.

So the dinner at Audley Court was postponed, and Miss Alicia had to wait still longer for an introduction to the handsome young widower, Mr. George Talboys.

I am afraid, if the real truth is to be told, there was, perhaps, something of affectation in the anxiety this young lady expressed to make George's acquaintance; but if poor Alicia for a moment calculated upon arousing any latent spark of jealousy lurking in her cousin's breast by this exhibition of interest, she was not so well acquainted with Robert Audley's disposition as she might have been. Indolent, handsome, and indifferent, the young barrister took life as altogether too absurd a mistake for any one event in its foolish course to be for a moment considered seriously by a sensible man.

His pretty, gipsy-faced cousin might have been over head and ears in love with him; and she might have told him so, in some charming, roundabout, womanly fashion, a hundred times a day for all the three hundred and sixty-five days in the year; but unless she had waited for some privileged 29th of February, and walked straight up to him, saying, "Robert, please will you marry me?" I very much doubt if he would ever have discovered the state of her feelings.

Again, had he been in love with her himself, I fancy that the tender passion would, with him, have been so vague and feeble a sentiment that he might have gone down to his grave with a dim sense of some uneasy sensation which might be love or indigestion, and with, beyond this, no knowledge whatever of his state.

So it was not the least use, my poor Alicia, to ride about the lanes around Audley during those three days which the two young men spent in Essex; it was wasted trouble to wear that pretty cavalier hat and plume, and to be always, by the most singular of chances, meeting Robert and his friend. The black curls (nothing like Lady Audley's feathery ringlets, but heavy clustering locks, that clung about your slender brown throat), the red and

pouting lips, the nose inclined to be *retrousee*, the dark complexion, with its bright crimson flush, always ready to glance up like a signal light in a dusky sky, when you came suddenly upon your apathetic cousin—all this coquettish *espiègle*, brunette beauty was thrown away upon the dull eyes of Robert Audley, and you might as well have taken your rest in the cool drawing-room at the Court, instead of working your pretty mare to death under the hot September sun.

Now fishing, except to the devoted disciple of Izaak Walton, is not the most lively of occupations; therefore, it is scarcely, perhaps, to be wondered that on the day after Lady Audley's departure, the two young men (one of whom was disabled by that heart wound which he bore so quietly, from really taking pleasure in anything, and the other of whom looked upon almost all pleasure as a negative kind of trouble) began to grow weary of the shade of the willows overhanging the winding streams about Audley.

"Figtree Court is not gay in the long vacation," said Robert, reflectively: "but I think, upon the whole, it's better than this; at any rate, it's near a tobacconist's," he added, puffing resignedly at an execrable cigar procured from the landlord of the Sun Inn.

George Talboys, who had only consented to the Essex expedition in passive submission to his friend, was by no means inclined to object to their immediate return to London. "I shall be glad to get back, Bob," he said, "for I want to take a run down to Southampton; I haven't seen the little one for upward of a month."

He always spoke of his son as "the little one;" always spoke of him mournfully rather than hopefully. He accounted for this by saying that he had a fancy that the child would never learn to love him; and worse even than this fancy, a dim presentiment that he would not live to see his little Georgey reach manhood.

"I'm not a romantic man, Bob," he would say sometimes, "and I never read a line of poetry in my life that was any more to me than so many words and so much jingle; but a feeling has come over me, since my wife's death, that I am like a man standing upon a long, low shore, with hideous cliffs frowning down upon him from behind, and the rising tide crawling slowly but surely about his feet. It seems to grow nearer and nearer every day, that black, pitiless tide; not rushing upon me with a great noise and a mighty

impetus, but crawling, creeping, stealing, gliding toward me, ready to close in above my head when I am least prepared for the end."

Robert Audley stared at his friend in silent amazement; and, after a pause of profound deliberation, said solemnly, "George Talboys, I could understand this if you had been eating heavy suppers. Cold pork, now, especially if underdone, might produce this sort of thing. You want change of air, my dear boy; you want the refreshing breezes of Figtree Court, and the soothing air of Fleet street. Or, stay," he added, suddenly, "I have it! You've been smoking our friend the landlord's cigars; that accounts for everything."

They met Alicia Audley on her mare about half an hour after they had come to the determination of leaving Essex early the next morning. The young lady was very much surprised and disappointed at hearing her cousin's determination, and for that very reason pretended to take the matter with supreme indifference.

"You are very soon tired of Audley, Robert," she said, carelessly; "but of course you have no friends here, except your relations at the Court; while in London, no doubt, you have the most delightful society and—"

"I get good tobacco," murmured Robert, interrupting his cousin. "Audley is the dearest old place, but when a man has to smoke dried cabbage leaves, you know, Alicia—"

"Then you are really going to-morrow morning?"

"Positively—by the express train that leaves at 10.50."

"Then Lady Audley will lose an introduction to Mr. Talboys, and Mr. Talboys will lose the chance of seeing the prettiest woman in Essex."

"Really—" stammered George.

"The prettiest woman in Essex would have a poor chance of getting much admiration out of my friend, George Talboys," said Robert. "His heart is at Southampton, where he has a curly-headed little urchin, about as high as his knee, who calls him 'the big gentleman,' and asks him for sugar-plums."

"I am going to write to my step-mother by to-night's post," said Alicia. "She asked me particularly in her letter how long you were going to stop, and whether there was any chance of her being back in time to receive you."

Miss Audley took a letter from the pocket of her riding-jacket as she spoke—a pretty, fairy-like note, written on shining paper of a peculiar

creamy hue.

"She says in her postscript, 'Be sure you answer my question about Mr. Audley and his friend, you volatile, forgetful Alicia!'"

"What a pretty hand she writes!" said Robert, as his cousin folded the note.

"Yes, it is pretty, is it not? Look at it, Robert."

She put the letter into his hand, and he contemplated it lazily for a few minutes, while Alicia patted the graceful neck of her chestnut mare, which was anxious to be off once more.

"Presently, Atalanta, presently. Give me back my note, Bob."

"It is the prettiest, most coquettish little hand I ever saw. Do you know, Alicia, I have no great belief in those fellows who ask you for thirteen postage stamps, and offer to tell you what you have never been able to find out yourself; but upon my word I think that if I had never seen your aunt, I should know what she was like by this slip of paper. Yes, here it all is—the feathery, gold-shot, flaxen curls, the penciled eyebrows, the tiny, straight nose, the winning, childish smile; all to be guessed in these few graceful up-strokes and down-strokes. George, look here!"

But absent-minded and gloomy George Talboys had strolled away along the margin of the ditch, and stood striking the bulrushes with his cane, half a dozen paces away from Robert and Alicia.

"Nevermind," said the young lady, impatiently; for she by no means relished this long disquisition upon my lady's note. "Give me the letter, and let me go; it's past eight, and I must answer it by to-night's post. Come, Atalanta! Good-by, Robert—good-by, Mr. Talboys. A pleasant journey to town."

The chestnut mare cantered briskly through the lane, and Miss Audley was out of sight before those two big, bright tears that stood in her eyes for one moment, before her pride sent them, back again, rose from her angry heart.

"To have only one cousin in the world," she cried, passionately, "my nearest relation after papa, and for him to care about as much for me as he would for a dog!"

By the merest of accidents, however, Robert and his friend did not go by the 10.50 express on the following morning, for the young barrister awoke

with such a splitting headache, that he asked George to send him a cup of the strongest green tea that had ever been made at the Sun, and to be furthermore so good as to defer their journey until the next day. Of course George assented, and Robert Audley spent the forenoon in a darkened room with a five-days'-old Chelmsford paper to entertain himself withal.

"It's nothing but the cigars, George," he said, repeatedly. "Get me out of the place without my seeing the landlord; for if that man and I meet there will be bloodshed."

Fortunately for the peace of Audley, it happened to be market-day at Chelmsford; and the worthy landlord had ridden off in his chaise-cart to purchase supplies for his house—among other things, perhaps, a fresh stock of those very cigars which had been so fatal in their effect upon Robert.

The young men spent a dull, dawdling, stupid, unprofitable day; and toward dusk Mr. Audley proposed that they should stroll down to the Court, and ask Alicia to take them over the house.

"It will kill a couple of hours, you know, George: and it seems a great pity to drag you away from Audley without having shown you the old place, which, I give you my honor, is very well worth seeing."

The sun was low in the skies as they took a short cut through the meadows, and crossed a stile into the avenue leading to the archway—a lurid, heavy-looking, ominous sunset, and a deathly stillness in the air, which frightened the birds that had a mind to sing, and left the field open to a few captious frogs croaking in the ditches. Still as the atmosphere was, the leaves rustled with that sinister, shivering motion which proceeds from no outer cause, but is rather an instinctive shudder of the frail branches, prescient of a coming storm. That stupid clock, which knew no middle course, and always skipped from one hour to the other, pointed to seven as the young men passed under the archway; but, for all that, it was nearer eight.

They found Alicia in the lime-walk, wandering listlessly up and down under the black shadow of the trees, from which every now and then a withered leaf flapped slowly to the ground.

Strange to say, George Talboys, who very seldom observed anything, took particular notice of this place.

"It ought to be an avenue in a churchyard," he said. "How peacefully the dead might sleep under this somber shade! I wish the churchyard at Ventnor was like this."

They walked on to the ruined well; and Alicia told them some old legend connected with the spot—some gloomy story, such as those always attached to an old house, as if the past were one dark page of sorrow and crime.

"We want to see the house before it is dark, Alicia," said Robert.

"Then we must be quick." she answered. "Come."

She led the way through an open French window, modernized a few years before, into the library, and thence to the hall.

In the hall they passed my lady's pale-faced maid, who looked furtively under her white eyelashes at the two young men.

They were going up-stairs, when Alicia turned and spoke to the girl.

"After we have been in the drawing-room, I should like to show these gentlemen Lady Audley's rooms. Are they in good order, Phoebe?"

"Yes, miss; but the door of the anteroom is locked, and I fancy that my lady has taken the key to London."

"Taken the key! Impossible!" cried Alicia.

"Indeed, miss, I think she has. I cannot find it, and it always used to be in the door."

"I declare," said Alicia, impatiently, "that is not at all unlike my lady to have taken this silly freak into her head. I dare say she was afraid we should go into her rooms, and pry about among her pretty dresses, and meddle with her jewelry. It is very provoking, for the best pictures in the house are in that antechamber. There is her own portrait, too, unfinished but wonderfully like."

"Her portrait!" exclaimed Robert Audley. "I would give anything to see it, for I have only an imperfect notion of her face. Is there no other way of getting into the room, Alicia?"

"Another way?"

"Yes; is there any door, leading through some of the other rooms, by which we can contrive to get into hers?"

His cousin shook her head, and conducted them into a corridor where there were some family portraits. She showed them a tapestried chamber,



the large figures upon the faded canvas looking threatening in the dusky light.

"That fellow with the battle-ax looks as if he wanted to split George's head open," said Mr. Audley, pointing to a fierce warrior, whose uplifted arm appeared above George Talboys' dark hair.

"Come out of this room, Alicia," added the young man, nervously; "I believe it's damp, or else haunted. Indeed, I believe all ghosts to be the result of damp or dyspepsia. You sleep in a damp bed—you awake suddenly in the dead of the night with a cold shiver, and see an old lady in the court costume of George the First's time, sitting at the foot of the bed. The old lady's indigestion, and the cold shiver is a damp sheet."

There were lighted candles in the drawing-room. No new-fangled lamps had ever made their appearance at Audley Court. Sir Michael's rooms were lighted by honest, thick, yellow-looking wax candles, in massive silver candlesticks, and in sconces against the walls.

There was very little to see in the drawing-room; and George Talboys soon grew tired of staring at the handsome modern furniture, and at a few pictures of some of the Academicians.

"Isn't there a secret passage, or an old oak chest, or something of that kind, somewhere about the place, Alicia?" asked Robert.

"To be sure!" cried Miss Audley, with a vehemence that startled her cousin; "of course. Why didn't I think of it before? How stupid of me, to be sure!"

"Why stupid?"

"Because, if you don't mind crawling upon your hands and knees, you can see my lady's apartments, for that passage communicates with her dressing-room. She doesn't know of it herself, I believe. How astonished she'd be if some black-visored burglar, with a dark-lantern, were to rise through the floor some night as she sat before her looking-glass, having her hair dressed for a party!"

"Shall we try the secret passage, George?" asked Mr. Audley.

"Yes, if you wish it."

Alicia led them into the room which had once been her nursery. It was now disused, except on very rare occasions when the house was full of company.

Robert Audley lifted a corner of the carpet, according to his cousin's directions, and disclosed a rudely-cut trap-door in the oak flooring.

"Now listen to me," said Alicia. "You must let yourself down by the hands into the passage, which is about four feet high; stoop your head, walk straight along it till you come to a sharp turn which will take you to the left, and at the extreme end of it you will find a short ladder below a trap-door like this, which you will have to unbolt; that door opens into the flooring of my lady's dressing-room, which is only covered with a square Persian carpet that you can easily manage to raise. You understand me?"

"Perfectly."

"Then take the light; Mr. Talboys will follow you. I give you twenty minutes for your inspection of the paintings—that is, about a minute apiece—and at the end of that time I shall expect to see you return."

Robert obeyed her implicitly, and George submissively following his friend, found himself, in five minutes, standing amidst the elegant disorder of Lady Audley's dressing-room.

She had left the house in a hurry on her unlooked-for journey to London, and the whole of her glittering toilette apparatus lay about on the marble dressing-table. The atmosphere of the room was almost oppressive for the rich odors of perfumes in bottles whose gold stoppers had not been replaced. A bunch of hot-house flowers was withering upon a tiny writing-table. Two or three handsome dresses lay in a heap upon the ground, and the open doors of a wardrobe revealed the treasures within. Jewelry, ivory-backed hair-brushes, and exquisite china were scattered here and there about the apartment. George Talboys saw his bearded face and tall, gaunt figure reflected in the glass, and wondered to see how out of place he seemed among all these womanly luxuries.

They went from the dressing-room to the boudoir, and through the boudoir into the ante-chamber, in which there were, as Alicia had said, about twenty valuable paintings, besides my lady's portrait.

My lady's portrait stood on an easel, covered with a green baize in the center of the octagonal chamber. It had been a fancy of the artist to paint her standing in this very room, and to make his background a faithful reproduction of the pictured walls. I am afraid the young man belonged to the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, for he had spent a most unconscionable

time upon the accessories of this picture—upon my lady's crispy ringlets and the heavy folds of her crimson velvet dress.

The two young men looked at the paintings on the walls first, leaving this unfinished portrait for a *bonne bouche*.

By this time it was dark, the candle carried by Robert only making one nucleus of light as he moved about holding it before the pictures one by one. The broad, bare window looked out upon the pale sky, tinged with the last cold flicker of the twilight. The ivy rustled against the glass with the same ominous shiver as that which agitated every leaf in the garden, prophetic of the storm that was to come.

"There are our friend's eternal white horses," said Robert, standing beside a Wouvermans. "Nicholas Poussin—Salvator—ha—hum! Now for the portrait."

He paused with his hand on the baize, and solemnly addressed his friend.

"George Talboys," he said, "we have between us only one wax candle, a very inadequate light with which to look at a painting. Let me, therefore, request that you will suffer us to look at it one at a time; if there is one thing more disagreeable than another, it is to have a person dodging behind your back and peering over your shoulder, when you're trying to see what a picture's made of."

George fell back immediately. He took no more interest in any lady's picture than in all the other wearinesses of this troublesome world. He fell back, and leaning his forehead against the window-panes, looked out at the night.

When he turned round he saw that Robert had arranged the easel very conveniently, and that he had seated himself on a chair before it for the purpose of contemplating the painting at his leisure.

He rose as George turned round.

"Now, then, for your turn, Talboys," he said. "It's an extraordinary picture."

He took George's place at the window, and George seated himself in the chair before the easel.

Yes, the painter must have been a pre-Raphaelite. No one but a pre-Raphaelite would have painted, hair by hair, those feathery masses of ringlets, with every glimmer of gold, and every shadow of pale brown. No

one but a pre-Raphaelite would have so exaggerated every attribute of that delicate face as to give a lurid brightness to the blonde complexion, and a strange, sinister light to the deep blue eyes. No one but a pre-Raphaelite could have given to that pretty pouting mouth the hard and almost wicked look it had in the portrait.

It was so like, and yet so unlike. It was as if you had burned strange-colored fires before my lady's face, and by their influence brought out new lines and new expressions never seen in it before. The perfection of feature, the brilliancy of coloring, were there; but I suppose the painter had copied quaint mediaeval monstrosities until his brain had grown bewildered, for my lady, in his portrait of her, had something of the aspect of a beautiful fiend.

Her crimson dress, exaggerated like all the rest in this strange picture, hung about her in folds that looked like flames, her fair head peeping out of the lurid mass of color as if out of a raging furnace. Indeed the crimson dress, the sunshine on the face, the red gold gleaming in the yellow hair, the ripe scarlet of the pouting lips, the glowing colors of each accessory of the minutely painted background, all combined to render the first effect of the painting by no means an agreeable one.

But strange as the picture was, it could not have made any great impression on George Talboys, for he sat before it for about a quarter of an hour without uttering a word—only staring blankly at the painted canvas, with the candlestick grasped in his strong right hand, and his left arm hanging loosely by his side. He sat so long in this attitude, that Robert turned round at last.

"Why, George, I thought you had gone to sleep!"

"I had almost."

"You've caught a cold from standing in that damp tapestried room. Mark my words, George Talboys, you've caught a cold; you're as hoarse as a raven. But come along."

Robert Audley took the candle from his friend's hand, and crept back through the secret passage, followed by George—very quiet, but scarcely more quiet than usual.

They found Alicia in the nursery waiting for them.

"Well?" she said, interrogatively.

"We managed it capitally. But I don't like the portrait; there's something odd about it."

"There is," said Alicia; "I've a strange fancy on that point. I think that sometimes a painter is in a manner inspired, and is able to see, through the normal expression of the face, another expression that is equally a part of it, though not to be perceived by common eyes. We have never seen my lady look as she does in that picture; but I think that she *could* look so."

"Alicia," said Robert Audley, imploringly, "don't be German!"

"But, Robert—"

"Don't be German, Alicia, if you love me. The picture is—the picture: and my lady is—my lady. That's my way of taking things, and I'm not metaphysical; don't unsettle me."

He repeated this several times with an air of terror that was perfectly sincere; and then, having borrowed an umbrella in case of being overtaken by the coming storm, left the Court, leading passive George Talboys away with him. The one hand of the stupid clock had skipped to nine by the time they reached the archway; but before they could pass under its shadow they had to step aside to allow a carriage to dash past them. It was a fly from the village, but Lady Audley's fair face peeped out at the window. Dark as it was, she could see the two figures of the young men black against the dusk.

"Who is that?" she asked, putting out her head. "Is it the gardener?"

"No, my dear aunt," said Robert, laughing; "it is your most dutiful nephew."

He and George stopped by the archway while the fly drew up at the door, and the surprised servants came out to welcome their master and mistress.

"I think the storm will hold off to-night," said the baronet looking up at the sky; "but we shall certainly have it tomorrow."

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## CHAPTER IX.

### AFTER THE STORM.

Sir Michael was mistaken in his prophecy upon the weather. The storm did not hold off until next day, but burst with terrible fury over the village of Audley about half an hour before midnight.

Robert Audley took the thunder and lightning with the same composure with which he accepted all the other ills of life. He lay on a sofa in the sitting-room, ostensibly reading the five-days-old Chelmsford paper, and regaling himself occasionally with a few sips from a large tumbler of cold punch. But the storm had quite a different effect upon George Talboys. His friend was startled when he looked at the young man's white face as he sat opposite the open window listening to the thunder, and staring at the black sky, rent every now and then by forked streaks of steel-blue lightning.

"George," said Robert, after watching him for some time, "are you frightened of the lightning?"

"No," he answered, curtly.

"But, dear boy, some of the most courageous men have been frightened of it. It is scarcely to be called a fear: it is constitutional. I am sure you are frightened of it."

"No, I am not."

"But, George, if you could see yourself, white and haggard, with your great hollow eyes staring out at the sky as if they were fixed upon a ghost. I tell you I know that you are frightened."

"And I tell you that I am not."

"George Talboys, you are not only afraid of the lightning, but you are savage with yourself for being afraid, and with me for telling you of your fear."

"Robert Audley, if you say another word to me, I shall knock you down," cried George, furiously; having said which, Mr. Talboys strode out of the room, banging the door after him with a violence that shook the house.

Those inky clouds, which had shut in the sultry earth as if with a roof of hot iron, poured out their blackness in a sudden deluge as George left the room; but if the young man was afraid of the lightning, he certainly was not afraid of the rain; for he walked straight down-stairs to the inn door, and went out into the wet high road. He walked up and down, up and down, in the soaking shower for about twenty minutes, and then, re-entering the inn, strode up to his bedroom.

Robert Audley met him on the landing, with his hair beaten about his white face, and his garments dripping wet.

"Are you going to bed, George?"

"Yes."

"But you have no candle."

"I don't want one."

"But look at your clothes, man! Do you see the wet streaming down your coat-sleeves? What on earth made you go out upon such a night?"

"I am tired, and want to go to bed—don't bother me."

"You'll take some hot brandy-and-water, George?"

Robert Audley stood in his friend's way as he spoke, anxious to prevent his going to bed in the state he was in; but George pushed him fiercely aside, and, striding past him, said, in the same hoarse voice Robert had noticed at the Court:

"Let me alone, Robert Audley, and keep clear of me if you can."

Robert followed George to his bedroom, but the young man banged the door in his face, so there was nothing for it but to leave Mr. Talboys to himself, to recover his temper as best he might.

"He was irritated at my noticing his terror of the lightning," thought Robert, as he calmly retired to rest, serenely indifferent to the thunder, which seemed to shake him in his bed, and the lightning playing fitfully round the razors in his open dressing-case.

The storm rolled away from the quiet village of Audley, and when Robert awoke the next morning it was to see bright sunshine, and a peep of cloudless sky between the white curtains of his bedroom window.

It was one of those serene and lovely mornings that sometimes succeed a storm. The birds sung loud and cheerily, the yellow corn uplifted itself in



the broad fields, and waved proudly after its sharp tussle with the tempest, which had done its best to beat down the heavy ears with cruel wind and driving rain half the night through. The vine-leaves clustering round Robert's window fluttered with a joyous rustling, shaking the rain-drops in diamond showers from every spray and tendril.

Robert Audley found his friend waiting for him at the breakfast-table.

George was very pale, but perfectly tranquil—if anything, indeed, more cheerful than usual.

He shook Robert by the hand with something of that hearty manner for which he had been distinguished before the one affliction of his life overtook and shipwrecked him.

"Forgive me, Bob," he said, frankly, "for my surly temper of last night. You were quite correct in your assertion; the thunderstorm *did* upset me. It always had the same effect upon me in my youth."

"Poor old boy! Shall we go up by the express, or shall we stop here and dine with my uncle to-night?" asked Robert.

"To tell the truth, Bob, I would rather do neither. It's a glorious morning. Suppose we stroll about all day, take another turn with the rod and line, and go up to town by the train that leaves here at 6.15 in the evening?"

Robert Audley would have assented to a far more disagreeable proposition than this, rather than have taken the trouble to oppose his friend, so the matter was immediately agreed upon; and after they had finished their breakfast, and ordered a four o'clock dinner, George Talboys took the fishing-rod across his broad shoulders, and strode out of the house with his friend and companion.

But if the equable temperament of Mr. Robert Audley had been undisturbed by the crackling peals of thunder that shook the very foundations of the Sun Inn, it had not been so with the more delicate sensibilities of his uncle's young wife. Lady Audley confessed herself terribly frightened of the lightning. She had her bedstead wheeled into a corner of the room, and with the heavy curtains drawn tightly round her, she lay with her face buried in the pillow, shuddering convulsively at every sound of the tempest without. Sir Michael, whose stout heart had never known a fear, almost trembled for this fragile creature, whom it was his happy privilege to protect and defend. My lady would not consent to

undress till nearly three o'clock in the morning, when the last lingering peal of thunder had died away among the distant hills. Until that hour she lay in the handsome silk dress in which she had traveled, huddled together among the bedclothes, only looking up now and then with a scared face to ask if the storm was over.

Toward four o'clock her husband, who spent the night in watching by her bedside, saw her drop off into a deep sleep, from which she did not awake for nearly five hours.

But she came into the breakfast-room, at half-past nine o'clock, singing a little Scotch melody, her cheeks tinged with as delicate a pink as the pale hue of her muslin morning dress. Like the birds and the flowers, she seemed to recover her beauty and joyousness in the morning sunshine. She tripped lightly out onto the lawn, gathering a last lingering rosebud here and there, and a sprig or two of geranium, and returning through the dewy grass, warbling long cadences for very happiness of heart, and looking as fresh and radiant as the flowers in her hands. The baronet caught her in his strong arms as she came in through the open window.

"My pretty one," he said, "my darling, what happiness to see you your own merry self again! Do you know, Lucy, that once last night, when you looked out through the dark-green bed-curtains, with your poor, white face, and the purple rims round your hollow eyes, I had almost a difficulty to recognize my little wife in that terrified, agonized-looking creature, crying out about the storm. Thank God for the morning sun, which has brought back the rosy cheeks and bright smile! I hope to Heaven, Lucy, I shall never again see you look as you did last night."

She stood on tiptoe to kiss him, and then was only tall enough to reach his white beard. She told him, laughing, that she had always been a silly, frightened creature—frightened of dogs, frightened of cattle, frightened of a thunderstorm, frightened of a rough sea. "Frightened of everything and everybody but my dear, noble, handsome husband," she said.

She had found the carpet in her dressing-room disarranged, and had inquired into the mystery of the secret passage. She chid Miss Alicia in a playful, laughing way, for her boldness in introducing two great men into my lady's rooms.

"And they had the audacity to look at my picture, Alicia," she said, with mock indignation. "I found the baize thrown on the ground, and a great

man's glove on the carpet. Look!"

"She held up a thick driving glove as she spoke. It was George's, which he had dropped looking at the picture.

"I shall go up to the Sun, and ask those boys to dinner," Sir Michael said, as he left the Court upon his morning walk around his farm.

Lady Audley flitted from room to room in the bright September sunshine—now sitting down to the piano to trill out a ballad, or the first page of an Italian bravura, or running with rapid fingers through a brilliant waltz—now hovering about a stand of hot-house flowers, doing amateur gardening with a pair of fairy-like, silver-mounted embroidery scissors—now strolling into her dressing-room to talk to Phoebe Marks, and have her curls rearranged for the third or fourth time; for the ringlets were always getting into disorder, and gave no little trouble to Lady Audley's maid.

My dear lady seemed, on this particular September day, restless from very joyousness of spirit, and unable to stay long in one place, or occupy herself with one thing.

While Lady Audley amused herself in her own frivolous fashion, the two young men strolled slowly along the margin of the stream until they reached a shady corner where the water was deep and still, and the long branches of the willows trailed into the brook.

George Talboys took the fishing-rod, while Robert stretched himself at full length on a railway rug, and balancing his hat upon his nose as a screen from the sunshine, fell fast asleep.

Those were happy fish in the stream on the banks of which Mr. Talboys was seated. They might have amused themselves to their hearts' content with timid nibbles at this gentleman's bait without in any manner endangering their safety; for George only stared vacantly in the water, holding his rod in a loose, listless hand, and with a strange, far-away look in his eyes. As the church clock struck two he threw down his rod, and, striding away along the bank, left Robert Audley to enjoy a nap which, according to that gentleman's habits, was by no means unlikely to last for two or three hours. About a quarter of a mile further on George crossed a rustic bridge, and struck into the meadows which led to Audley Court.

The birds had sung so much all the morning, that they had, perhaps, by this time grown tired; the lazy cattle were asleep in the meadows; Sir

Michael was still away on his morning's ramble; Miss Alicia had scampered off an hour before on her chestnut mare; the servants were all at dinner in the back part of the house; and my lady had strolled, book in hand, into the shadowy lime-walk; so the gray old building had never worn a more peaceful aspect than on that bright afternoon when George Talboys walked across the lawn to ring a sonorous peal at the sturdy, iron-bound oak door.

The servant who answered his summons told him that Sir Michael was out, and my lady walking in the lime-tree avenue.

He looked a little disappointed at this intelligence, and muttering something about wishing to see my lady, or going to look for my lady (the servant did not clearly distinguish his words), strode away from the door without leaving either card or message for the family.

It was full an hour and a half after this when Lady Audley returned to the house, not coming from the lime-walk, but from exactly the opposite direction, carrying her open book in her hand, and singing as she came. Alicia had just dismounted from her mare, and stood in the low-arched doorway, with her great Newfoundland dog by her side.

The dog, which had never liked my lady, showed his teeth with a suppressed growl.

"Send that horrid animal away, Alicia," Lady Audley said, impatiently. "The brute knows that I am frightened of him, and takes advantage of my terror. And yet they call the creatures generous and noble-hearted! Bah, Caesar! I hate you, and you hate me; and if you met me in the dark in some narrow passage you would fly at my throat and strangle me, wouldn't you?"

My lady, safely sheltered behind her step-daughter, shook her yellow curls at the angry animal, and defied him maliciously.

"Do you know, Lady Audley, that Mr. Talboys, the young widower, has been here asking for Sir Michael and you?"

Lucy Audley lifted her penciled eyebrows. "I thought they were coming to dinner," she said. "Surely we shall have enough of them then."

She had a heap of wild autumn flowers in the skirt of her muslin dress. She had come through the fields at the back of the Court, gathering the hedge-row blossoms in her way. She ran lightly up the broad staircase to her own rooms. George's glove lay on her boudoir table. Lady Audley rung the bell violently, and it was answered by Phoebe Marks. "Take that litter

away," she said, sharply. The girl collected the glove and a few withered flowers and torn papers lying on the table into her apron.

"What have you been doing all this morning?" asked my lady. "Not wasting your time, I hope?"

"No, my lady, I have been altering the blue dress. It is rather dark on this side of the house, so I took it up to my own room, and worked at the window."

The girl was leaving the room as she spoke, but she turned around and looked at Lady Audley as if waiting for further orders.

Lucy looked up at the same moment, and the eyes of the two women met.

"Phoebe Marks," said my lady, throwing herself into an easy-chair, and trifling with the wild flowers in her lap, "you are a good, industrious girl, and while I live and am prosperous, you shall never want a firm friend or a twenty-pound note."

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## CHAPTER X.

### MISSING.

When Robert Audley awoke he was surprised to see the fishing-rod lying on the bank, the line trailing idly in the water, and the float bobbing harmlessly up and down in the afternoon sunshine. The young barrister was a long time stretching his arms and legs in various directions to convince himself, by means of such exercise, that he still retained the proper use of those members; then, with a mighty effort, he contrived to rise from the grass, and having deliberately folded his railway rug into a convenient shape for carrying over his shoulder, he strolled away to look for George Talboys.

Once or twice he gave a sleepy shout, scarcely loud enough to scare the birds in the branches above his head, or the trout in the stream at his feet: but receiving no answer, grew tired of the exertion, and dawdled on, yawning as he went, and still looking for George Talboys.

By-and-by he took out his watch, and was surprised to find that it was a quarter past four.

"Why, the selfish beggar must have gone home to his dinner!" he muttered, reflectively; "and yet that isn't much like him, for he seldom remembers even his meals unless I jog his memory."

Even a good appetite, and the knowledge that his dinner would very likely suffer by this delay, could not quicken Mr. Robert Audley's constitutional dawdle, and by the time he strolled in at the front door of the Sun, the clocks were striking five. He so fully expected to find George Talboys waiting for him in the little sitting-room, that the absence of that gentleman seemed to give the apartment a dreary look, and Robert groaned aloud.

"This is lively!" he said. "A cold dinner, and nobody to eat it with!"

The landlord of the Sun came himself to apologize for his ruined dishes.

"As fine a pair of ducks, Mr. Audley, as ever you clapped eyes on, but burnt up to a cinder, along of being kep' hot."

"Never mind the ducks," Robert said impatiently; "where's Mr. Talboys?"

"He ain't been in, sir, since you went out together this morning."

"What!" cried Robert. "Why, in heaven's name, what has the man done with himself?"

He walked to the window and looked out upon the broad, white high road. There was a wagon laden with trusses of hay crawling slowly past, the lazy horses and the lazy wagoner drooping their heads with a weary stoop under the afternoon's sunshine. There was a flock of sheep straggling about the road, with a dog running himself into a fever in the endeavor to keep them decently together. There were some bricklayers just released from work—a tinker mending some kettles by the roadside; there was a dog-cart dashing down the road, carrying the master of the Audley hounds to his seven o'clock dinner; there were a dozen common village sights and sounds that mixed themselves up into a cheerful bustle and confusion; but there was no George Talboys.

"Of all the extraordinary things that ever happened to me in the whole course of my life," said Mr. Robert Audley, "this is the most miraculous!"

The landlord still in attendance, opened his eyes as Robert made this remark. What could there be extraordinary in the simple fact of a gentleman being late for his dinner?

"I shall go and look for him," said Robert, snatching up his hat and walking straight out of the house.

But the question was where to look for him. He certainly was not by the trout stream, so it was no good going back there in search of him. Robert was standing before the inn, deliberating on what was best to be done, when the landlord came out after him.

"I forgot to tell you, Mr. Audley, as how your uncle called here five minutes after you was gone, and left a message, asking of you and the other gentleman to go down to dinner at the Court."

"Then I shouldn't wonder," said Robert, "if George Talboys has gone down to the Court to call upon my uncle. It isn't like him, but it's just possible that he has done it."

It was six o'clock when Robert knocked at the door of his uncle's house. He did not ask to see any of the family, but inquired at once for his friend.

Yes, the servant told him; Mr. Talboys had been there at two o'clock or a little after.

"And not since?"

"No, not since."

Was the man sure that it was at two Mr. Talboys called? Robert asked.

Yes, perfectly sure. He remembered the hour because it was the servants' dinner hour, and he had left the table to open the door to Mr. Talboys.

"Why, what can have become of the man?" thought Robert, as he turned his back upon the Court. "From two till six—four good hours—and no signs of him!"

If any one had ventured to tell Mr. Robert Audley that he could possibly feel a strong attachment to any creature breathing, that cynical gentleman would have elevated his eyebrows in supreme contempt at the preposterous notion. Yet here he was, flurried and anxious, bewildering his brain by all manner of conjectures about his missing friend; and false to every attribute of his nature, walking fast.

"I haven't walked fast since I was at Eton," he murmured, as he hurried across one of Sir Michael's meadows in the direction of the village; "and the worst of it is, that I haven't the most remote idea where I am going."

Here he crossed another meadow, and then seating himself upon a stile, rested his elbows upon his knees, buried his face in his hands, and set himself seriously to think the matter out.

"I have it," he said, after a few minutes' thought; "the railway station!" He sprang over the stile, and started off in the direction of the little red brick building.

There was no train expected for another half hour, and the clerk was taking his tea in an apartment on one side of the office, on the door of which was inscribed in large, white letters, "Private."

But Mr. Audley was too much occupied with the one idea of looking for his friend to pay any attention to this warning. He strode at once to the door, and rattling his cane against it, brought the clerk out of his sanctum in a perspiration from hot tea, and with his mouth full of bread and butter.

"Do you remember the gentleman that came down to Audley with me, Smithers?" asked Robert.



"Well, to tell you the real truth, Mr. Audley, I can't say that I do. You came by the four o'clock, if you remember, and there's always a good many passengers by that train."

"You don't remember him, then?"

"Not to my knowledge, sir."

"That's provoking! I want to know, Smithers, whether he has taken a ticket for London since two o'clock to-day. He's a tall, broad-chested young fellow, with a big brown beard. You couldn't well mistake him."

"There was four or five gentlemen as took tickets for the 3.30 up," said the clerk rather vaguely, casting an anxious glance over his shoulder at his wife, who looked by no means pleased at this interruption to the harmony of the tea-table.

"Four or five gentlemen! But did either of them answer to the description of my friend?"

"Well, I think one of them had a beard, sir."

"A dark-brown beard?"

"Well, I don't know, but it was brownish-like."

"Was he dressed in gray?"

"I believe it was gray; a great many gents wear gray. He asked for the ticket sharp and short-like, and when he'd got it walked straight out onto the platform whistling."

"That's George," said Robert. "Thank you, Smithers; I needn't trouble you any more. It's as clear as daylight," he muttered, as he left the station; "he's got one of his gloomy fits on him, and he's gone back to London without saying a word about it. I'll leave Audley myself to-morrow morning; and for to-night—why, I may as well go down to the Court and make the acquaintance of my uncle's young wife. They don't dine till seven; if I get back across the fields I shall be in time. Bob—otherwise Robert Audley—this sort of thing will never do; you are falling over head and ears in love with your aunt."

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MARK UPON MY LADY'S WRIST.

Robert found Sir Michael and Lady Audley in the drawing-room. My lady was sitting on a music-stool before the grand piano, turning over the leaves of some new music. She twirled upon the revolving seat, making a rustling with her silk flounces, as Mr. Robert Audley's name was announced; then, leaving the piano, she made her nephew a pretty, mock ceremonious courtesy.

"Thank you so much for the sables," she said, holding out her little fingers, all glittering and twinkling with the diamonds she wore upon them; "thank you for those beautiful sables. How good it was of you to get them for me."

Robert had almost forgotten the commission he had executed for Lady Audley during his Russian expedition. His mind was so full of George Talboys that he only acknowledged my lady's gratitude by a bow.

"Would you believe it, Sir Michael?" he said. "That foolish chum of mine has gone back to London leaving me in the lurch."

"Mr. George Talboys returned to town?" exclaimed my lady, lifting her eyebrows. "What a dreadful catastrophe!" said Alicia, maliciously, "since Pythias, in the person of Mr. Robert Audley, cannot exist for half an hour without Damon, commonly known as George Talboys."

"He's a very good fellow," Robert said, stoutly; "and to tell the honest truth, I'm rather uneasy about him."

"Uneasy about him!" My lady was quite anxious to know why Robert was uneasy about his friend.

"I'll tell you why, Lady Audley," answered the young barrister. "George had a bitter blow a year ago in the death of his wife. He has never got over that trouble. He takes life pretty quietly—almost as quietly as I do—but he often talks very strangely, and I sometimes think that one day this grief will get the better of him, and he will do something rash."

Mr. Robert Audley spoke vaguely, but all three of his listeners knew that the something rash to which he alluded was that one deed for which there is no repentance.

There was a brief pause, during which Lady Audley arranged her yellow ringlets by the aid of the glass over the console table opposite to her.

"Dear me!" she said, "this is very strange. I did not think men were capable of these deep and lasting affections. I thought that one pretty face was as good as another pretty face to them; and that when number one with blue eyes and fair hair died, they had only to look out for number two, with dark eyes and black hair, by way of variety."

"George Talboys is not one of those men. I firmly believe that his wife's death broke his heart."

"How sad!" murmured Lady Audley. "It seems almost cruel of Mrs. Talboys to die, and grieve her poor husband so much."

"Alicia was right, she is childish," thought Robert as he looked at his aunt's pretty face.

My lady was very charming at the dinner-table; she professed the most bewitching incapacity for carving the pheasant set before her, and called Robert to her assistance.

"I could carve a leg of mutton at Mr. Dawson's," she said, laughing; "but a leg of mutton is so easy, and then I used to stand up."

Sir Michael watched the impression my lady made upon his nephew with a proud delight in her beauty and fascination.

"I am so glad to see my poor little woman in her usual good spirits once more," he said. "She was very down-hearted yesterday at a disappointment she met with in London."

"A disappointment!"

"Yes, Mr. Audley, a very cruel one," answered my lady. "I received the other morning a telegraphic message from my dear old friend and school-mistress, telling me that she was dying, and that if I wanted to see her again, I must hasten to her immediately. The telegraphic dispatch contained no address, and of course, from that very circumstance, I imagined that she must be living in the house in which I left her three years ago. Sir Michael and I hurried up to town immediately, and drove straight to the old address. The house was occupied by strange people, who could give me no tidings

of my friend. It is in a retired place, where there are very few tradespeople about. Sir Michael made inquiries at the few shops there are, but, after taking an immense deal of trouble, could discover nothing whatever likely to lead to the information we wanted. I have no friends in London, and had therefore no one to assist me except my dear, generous husband, who did all in his power, but in vain, to find my friend's new residence."

"It was very foolish not to send the address in the telegraphic message," said Robert.

"When people are dying it is not so easy to think of all these things," murmured my lady, looking reproachfully at Mr. Audley with her soft blue eyes.

In spite of Lady Audley's fascination, and in spite of Robert's very unqualified admiration of her, the barrister could not overcome a vague feeling of uneasiness on this quiet September evening.

As he sat in the deep embrasure of a mullioned window, talking to my lady, his mind wandered away to shady Figtree Court, and he thought of poor George Talboys smoking his solitary cigar in the room with the birds and canaries.

"I wish I'd never felt any friendliness for the fellow," he thought. "I feel like a man who has an only son whose life has gone wrong with him. I wish to Heaven I could give him back his wife, and send him down to Ventnor to finish his days in peace."

Still my lady's pretty musical prattle ran on as merrily and continuously as the babble in some brook; and still Robert's thoughts wandered, in spite of himself, to George Talboys.

He thought of him hurrying down to Southampton by the mail train to see his boy. He thought of him as he had often seen him spelling over the shipping advertisements in the *Times*, looking for a vessel to take him back to Australia. Once he thought of him with a shudder, lying cold and stiff at the bottom of some shallow stream with his dead face turned toward the darkening sky.

Lady Audley noticed his abstraction, and asked him what he was thinking of.

"George Talboys," he answered abruptly.

She gave a little nervous shudder.

"Upon my word," she said, "you make me quite uncomfortable by the way in which you talk of Mr. Talboys. One would think that something extraordinary had happened to him."

"God forbid! But I cannot help feeling uneasy about him."

Later in the evening Sir Michael asked for some music, and my lady went to the piano. Robert Audley strolled after her to the instrument to turn over the leaves of her music; but she played from memory, and he was spared the trouble his gallantry would have imposed upon him.

He carried a pair of lighted candles to the piano, and arranged them conveniently for the pretty musician. She struck a few chords, and then wandered into a pensive sonata of Beethoven's. It was one of the many paradoxes in her character, that love of somber and melancholy melodies, so opposite to her gay nature.

Robert Audley lingered by her side, and as he had no occupation in turning over the leaves of her music, he amused himself by watching her jeweled, white hands gliding softly over the keys, with the lace sleeves dropping away from, her graceful, arched wrists. He looked at her pretty fingers one by one; this one glittering with a ruby heart; that encircled by an emerald serpent; and about them all a starry glitter of diamonds. From the fingers his eyes wandered to the rounded wrists: the broad, flat, gold bracelet upon her right wrist dropped over her hand, as she executed a rapid passage. She stopped abruptly to rearrange it; but before she could do so Robert Audley noticed a bruise upon her delicate skin.

"You have hurt your arm, Lady Audley!" he exclaimed. She hastily replaced the bracelet.

"It is nothing," she said. "I am unfortunate in having a skin which the slightest touch bruises."

She went on playing, but Sir Michael came across the room to look into the matter of the bruise upon his wife's pretty wrist.

"What is it, Lucy?" he asked; "and how did it happen?"

"How foolish you all are to trouble yourselves about anything so absurd!" said Lady Audley, laughing. "I am rather absent in mind, and amused myself a few days ago by tying a piece of ribbon around my arm so tightly, that it left a bruise when I removed it."

"Hum!" thought Robert. "My lady tells little childish white lies; the bruise is of a more recent date than a few days ago; the skin has only just begun to change color."

Sir Michael took the slender wrist in his strong hand.

"Hold the candle, Robert," he said, "and let us look at this poor little arm."

It was not one bruise, but four slender, purple marks, such as might have been made by the four fingers of a powerful hand, that had grasped the delicate wrist a shade too roughly. A narrow ribbon, bound tightly, might have left some such marks, it is true, and my lady protested once more that, to the best of her recollection, that must have been how they were made.

Across one of the faint purple marks there was a darker tinge, as if a ring worn on one of those strong and cruel fingers had been ground into the tender flesh.

"I am sure my lady must tell white lies," thought Robert, "for I can't believe the story of the ribbon."

He wished his relations good-night and good-by at about half past ten o'clock; he should run up to London by the first train to look for George in Figtree Court.

"If I don't find him there I shall go to Southampton," he said; "and if I don't find him there—"

"What then?" asked my lady.

"I shall think that something strange has happened."

Robert Audley felt very low-spirited as he walked slowly home between the shadowy meadows; more low-spirited still when he re-entered the sitting room at Sun Inn, where he and George had lounged together, staring out of the window and smoking their cigars.

"To think," he said, meditatively, "that it is possible to care so much for a fellow! But come what may, I'll go up to town after him the first thing tomorrow morning; and, sooner than be balked in finding him, I'll go to the very end of the world."

With Mr. Audley's lymphatic nature, determination was so much the exception rather than the rule, that when he did for once in his life resolve

upon any course of action, he had a certain dogged, iron-like obstinacy that pushed him on to the fulfillment of his purpose.

The lazy bent of his mind, which prevented him from thinking of half a dozen things at a time, and not thinking thoroughly of any one of them, as is the manner of your more energetic people, made him remarkably clear-sighted upon any point to which he ever gave his serious attention.

Indeed, after all, though solemn benchers laughed at him, and rising barristers shrugged their shoulders under rustling silk gowns, when people spoke of Robert Audley, I doubt if, had he ever taken the trouble to get a brief, he might not have rather surprised the magnates who underrated his abilities.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### STILL MISSING.

The September sunlight sparkled upon the fountain in the Temple Gardens when Robert Audley returned to Figtree Court early the following morning.

He found the canaries singing in the pretty little room in which George had slept, but the apartment was in the same prim order in which the laundress had arranged it after the departure of the two young men—not a chair displaced, or so much as the lid of a cigar-box lifted, to bespeak the presence of George Talboys. With a last, lingering hope, he searched upon the mantelpieces and tables of his rooms, on the chance of finding some letter left by George.

"He may have slept here last night, and started for Southampton early this morning," he thought. "Mrs. Maloney has been here, very likely, to make everything tidy after him."

But as he sat looking lazily around the room, now and then whistling to his delighted canaries, a slipshod foot upon the staircase without bespoke the advent of that very Mrs. Maloney who waited upon the two young men.

No, Mr. Talboys had not come home; she had looked in as early as six o'clock that morning, and found the chambers empty.

"Had anything happened to the poor, dear gentleman?" she asked, seeing Robert Audley's pale face.

He turned around upon her quite savagely at this question.

Happened to him! What should happen to him? They had only parted at two o'clock the day before.

Mrs. Maloney would have related to him the history of a poor dear young engine-driver, who had once lodged with her, and who went out, after eating a hearty dinner, in the best of spirits, to meet with his death from the concussion of an express and a luggage train; but Robert put on his hat



again, and walked straight out of the house before the honest Irishwoman could begin her pitiful story.

It was growing dusk when he reached Southampton. He knew his way to the poor little terrace of houses, in a full street leading down to the water, where George's father-in-law lived. Little Georgey was playing at the open parlor window as the young man walked down the street.

Perhaps it was this fact, and the dull and silent aspect of the house, which filled Robert Audley's mind with a vague conviction that the man he came to look for was not there. The old man himself opened the door, and the child peeped out of the parlor to see the strange gentleman.

He was a handsome boy, with his father's brown eyes and dark waving hair, and with some latent expression which was not his father's and which pervaded his whole face, so that although each feature of the child resembled the same feature in George Talboys, the boy was not actually like him.

Mr. Maldon was delighted to see Robert Audley; he remembered having had the pleasure of meeting him at Ventnor, on the melancholy occasion of—He wiped his watery old eyes by way of conclusion to the sentence. Would Mr. Audley walk in? Robert strode into the parlor. The furniture was shabby and dingy, and the place reeked with the smell of stale tobacco and brandy-and-water. The boy's broken playthings, and the old man's broken clay pipes and torn, brandy-and-water-stained newspapers were scattered upon the dirty carpet. Little Georgey crept toward the visitor, watching him furtively out of his big, brown eyes. Robert took the boy on his knee, and gave him his watch-chain to play with while he talked to the old man.

"I need scarcely ask the question that I come to ask," he said; "I was in hopes I should have found your son-in-law here."

"What! you knew that he was coming to Southampton?"

"Knew that he was coming?" cried Robert, brightening up. "He *is* here, then?"

"No, he is not here now; but he has been here."

"When?"

"Late last night; he came by the mail."

"And left again immediately?"

"He stayed little better than an hour."

"Good Heaven!" said Robert, "what useless anxiety that man has given me! What can be the meaning of all this?"

"You knew nothing of his intention, then?"

"Of what intention?"

"I mean of his determination to go to Australia."

"I know that it was always in his mind more or less, but not more just now than usual."

"He sails to-night from Liverpool. He came here at one o'clock this morning to have a look at the boy, he said, before he left England, perhaps never to return. He told me he was sick of the world, and that the rough life out there was the only thing to suit him. He stayed an hour, kissed the boy without awaking him, and left Southampton by the mail that starts at a quarter-past two."

"What can be the meaning of all this?" said Robert. "What could be his motive for leaving England in this manner, without a word to me, his most intimate friend—without even a change of clothes; for he has left everything at my chambers? It is the most extraordinary proceeding!"

The old man looked very grave. "Do you know, Mr. Audley," he said, tapping his forehead significantly, "I sometimes fancy that Helen's death had a strange effect upon poor George."

"Pshaw!" cried Robert, contemptuously; "he felt the blow most cruelly, but his brain was as sound as yours or mine."

"Perhaps he will write to you from Liverpool," said George's father-in-law. He seemed anxious to smooth over any indignation that Robert might feel at his friend's conduct.

"He ought," said Robert, gravely, "for we've been good friends from the days when we were together at Eton. It isn't kind of George Talboys to treat me like this."

But even at the moment that he uttered the reproach a strange thrill of remorse shot through his heart.

"It isn't like him," he said, "it isn't like George Talboys."

Little Georgey caught at the sound. "That's my name," he said, "and my papa's name—the big gentleman's name."

"Yes, little Georgey, and your papa came last night and kissed you in your sleep. Do you remember?"

"No," said the boy, shaking his curly little head.

"You must have been very fast asleep, little Georgey, not to see poor papa."

The child did not answer, but presently, fixing his eyes upon Robert's face, he said abruptly:

"Where's the pretty lady?"

"What pretty lady?"

"The pretty lady that used to come a long while ago."

"He means his poor mamma," said the old man.

"No," cried the boy resolutely, "not mamma. Mamma was always crying. I didn't like mamma—"

"Hush, little Georgey!"

"But I didn't, and she didn't like me. She was always crying. I mean the pretty lady; the lady that was dressed so fine, and that gave me my gold watch."

"He means the wife of my old captain—an excellent creature, who took a great fancy to Georgey, and gave him some handsome presents."

"Where's my gold watch? Let me show the gentleman my gold watch," cried Georgey.

"It's gone to be cleaned, Georgey," answered his grandfather.

"It's always going to be cleaned," said the boy.

"The watch is perfectly safe, I assure you, Mr. Audley," murmured the old man, apologetically; and taking out a pawnbroker's duplicate, he handed it to Robert.

It was made out in the name of Captain Mortimer: "Watch, set with diamonds, £11."

"I'm often hard pressed for a few shillings, Mr. Audley," said the old man. "My son-in-law has been very liberal to me; but there are others, there are others, Mr. Audley—and—and—I've not been treated well." He wiped away some genuine tears as he said this in a pitiful, crying voice. "Come,

Georgey, it's time the brave little man was in bed. Come along with grandpa. Excuse me for a quarter of an hour, Mr. Audley."

The boy went very willingly. At the door of the room the old man looked back at his visitor, and said in the same peevish voice, "This is a poor place for me to pass my declining years in, Mr. Audley. I've made many sacrifices, and I make them still, but I've not been treated well."

Left alone in the dusky little sitting-room, Robert Audley folded his arms, and sat absently staring at the floor.

George was gone, then; he might receive some letter of explanation perhaps, when he returned to London; but the chances were that he would never see his old friend again.

"And to think that I should care so much for the fellow!" he said, lifting his eyebrows to the center of his forehead.

"The place smells of stale tobacco like a tap-room," he muttered presently; "there can be no harm in my smoking a cigar here."

He took one from the case in his pocket: there was a spark of fire in the little grate, and he looked about for something to light his cigar with.

A twisted piece of paper lay half burned upon the hearthrug; he picked it up, and unfolded it, in order to get a better pipe-light by folding it the other way of the paper. As he did so, absently glancing at the penciled writing upon the fragment of thin paper, a portion of a name caught his eye—a portion of the name that was most in his thoughts. He took the scrap of paper to the window, and examined it by the declining light.

It was part of a telegraphic dispatch. The upper portion had been burnt away, but the more important part, the greater part of the message itself, remained.

"—alboys came to —— last night, and left by the mail for London, on his way to Liverpool, whence he was to sail for Sydney."

The date and the name and address of the sender of the message had been burnt with the heading. Robert Audley's face blanched to a deathly whiteness. He carefully folded the scrap of paper, and placed it between the leaves of his pocket-book.

"My God!" he said, "what is the meaning of this? I shall go to Liverpool to-night, and make inquiries there!"

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### TROUBLED DREAMS.

Robert Audley left Southampton by the mail, and let himself into his chambers just as the dawn was creeping cold and gray into the solitary rooms, and the canaries were beginning to rustle their feathers feebly in the early morning.

There were several letters in the box behind the door, but there was none from George Talboys.

The young barrister was worn out by a long day spent in hurrying from place to place. The usual lazy monotony of his life had been broken as it had never been broken before in eight-and-twenty tranquil, easy-going years. His mind was beginning to grow confused upon the point of time. It seemed to him months since he had lost sight of George Talboys. It was so difficult to believe that it was less than forty-eight hours ago that the young man had left him asleep under the willows by the trout stream.

His eyes were painfully weary for want of sleep. He searched about the room for some time, looking in all sorts of impossible places for a letter from George Talboys, and then threw himself dressed upon his friend's bed, in the room with the canaries and geraniums.

"I shall wait for to-morrow morning's post," he said; "and if that brings no letter from George, I shall start for Liverpool without a moment's delay."

He was thoroughly exhausted, and fell into a heavy sleep—a sleep which was profound without being in any way refreshing, for he was tormented all the time by disagreeable dreams—dreams which were painful, not from any horror in themselves, but from a vague and wearying sense of their confusion and absurdity.

At one time he was pursuing strange people and entering strange houses in the endeavor to unravel the mystery of the telegraphic dispatch; at another time he was in the church-yard at Ventnor, gazing at the headstone George had ordered for the grave of his dead wife. Once in the long, rambling mystery of these dreams he went to the grave, and found this

headstone gone, and on remonstrating with the stonemason, was told that the man had a reason for removing the inscription; a reason that Robert would some day learn.

In another dream he saw the grave of Helen Talboys open, and while he waited, with the cold horror lifting up his hair, to see the dead woman rise and stand before him with her stiff, charnel-house drapery clinging about her rigid limbs, his uncle's wife tripped gaily out of the open grave, dressed in the crimson velvet robes in which the artist had painted her, and with her ringlets flashing like red gold in the unearthly light that shone about her.

But into all these dreams the places he had last been in, and the people with whom he had last been concerned, were dimly interwoven—sometimes his uncle; sometimes Alicia; oftenest of all my lady; the trout stream in Essex; the lime-walk at the Court. Once he was walking in the black shadows of this long avenue, with Lady Audley hanging on his arm, when suddenly they heard a great knocking in the distance, and his uncle's wife wound her slender arms around him, crying out that it was the day of judgment, and that all wicked secrets must now be told. Looking at her as she shrieked this in his ear, he saw that her face had grown ghastly white, and that her beautiful golden ringlets were changing into serpents, and slowly creeping down her fair neck.

He started from his dream to find that there was some one really knocking at the outer door of his chambers.

It was a dreary, wet morning, the rain beating against the windows, and the canaries twittering dismally to each other—complaining, perhaps, of the bad weather. Robert could not tell how long the person had been knocking. He had mixed the sound with his dreams, and when he woke he was only half conscious of other things.

"It's that stupid Mrs. Maloney, I dare say," he muttered. "She may knock again for all I care. Why can't she use her duplicate key, instead of dragging a man out of bed when he's half dead with fatigue."

The person, whoever it was, did knock again, and then desisted, apparently tired out; but about a minute afterward a key turned in the door.

"She had her key with her all the time, then," said Robert. "I'm very glad I didn't get up."

The door between the sitting-room and bed-room was half open, and he could see the laundress bustling about, dusting the furniture, and rearranging things that had never been disarranged.

"Is that you, Mrs. Maloney?" he asked.

"Yes, sir,"

"Then why, in goodness' name, did you make that row at the door, when you had a key with you all the time?"

"A row at the door, sir?"

"Yes; that infernal knocking."

"Sure I never knocked, Mister Audley, but walked straight in with my key—"

"Then who did knock? There's been some one kicking up a row at that door for a quarter of an hour, I should think; you must have met him going down-stairs."

"But I'm rather late this morning, sir, for I've been in Mr. Martin's rooms first, and I've come straight from the floor above."

"Then you didn't see any one at the door, or on the stairs?"

"Not a mortal soul, sir."

"Was ever anything so provoking?" said Robert. "To think that I should have let this person go away without ascertaining who he was, or what he wanted! How do I know that it was not some one with a message or a letter from George Talboys?"

"Sure if it was, sir, he'll come again," said Mrs. Maloney, soothingly.

"Yes, of course, if it was anything of consequence he'll come again," muttered Robert. The fact was, that from the moment of finding the telegraphic message at Southampton, all hope of hearing of George had faded out of his mind. He felt that there was some mystery involved in the disappearance of his friend—some treachery toward himself, or toward George. What if the young man's greedy old father-in-law had tried to separate them on account of the monetary trust lodged in Robert Audley's hands? Or what if, since even in these civilized days all kinds of unsuspected horrors are constantly committed—what if the old man had decoyed George down to Southampton, and made away with him in order

to get possession of that £20,000, left in Robert's custody for little Georgey's use?

But neither of these suppositions explained the telegraphic message, and it was the telegraphic message which had filled Robert's mind with a vague sense of alarm. The postman brought no letter from George Talboys, and the person who had knocked at the door of the chambers did not return between seven and nine o'clock, so Robert Audley left Figtree Court once more in search of his friend. This time he told the cabman to drive to the Euston Station, and in twenty minutes he was on the platform, making inquiries about the trains.

The Liverpool express had started half an hour before he reached the station, and he had to wait an hour and a quarter for a slow train to take him to his destination.

Robert Audley chafed cruelly at this delay. Half a dozen vessels might sail for Australia while he roamed up and down the long platform, tumbling over trucks and porters, and swearing at his ill-luck.

He bought the *Times* newspaper, and looked instinctively at the second column, with a morbid interest in the advertisements of people missing—sons, brothers, and husbands who had left their homes, never to return or to be heard of more.

There was one advertisement of a young man found drowned somewhere on the Lambeth shore.

What if that should have been George's fate? No; the telegraphic message involved his father-in-law in the fact of his disappearance, and every speculation about him must start from that one point.

It was eight o'clock in the evening when Robert got into Liverpool; too late for anything except to make inquiries as to what vessel had sailed within the last two days for the antipodes.

An emigrant ship had sailed at four o'clock that afternoon—the *Victoria Regia*, bound for Melbourne.

The result of his inquiries amounted to this—If he wanted to find out who had sailed in the *Victoria Regia*, he must wait till the next morning, and apply for information of that vessel.

Robert Audley was at the office at nine o'clock the next morning, and was the first person after the clerks who entered it.



He met with every civility from the clerk to whom he applied. The young man referred to his books, and running his pen down the list of passengers who had sailed in the *Victoria Regia*, told Robert that there was no one among them of the name of Talboys. He pushed his inquiries further. Had any of the passengers entered their names within a short time of the vessel's sailing?

One of the other clerks looked up from his desk as Robert asked this question. Yes, he said; he remembered a young man's coming into the office at half-past three o'clock in the afternoon, and paying his passage money. His name was the last on the list—Thomas Brown.

Robert Audley shrugged his shoulders. There could have been no possible reason for George's taking a feigned name. He asked the clerk who had last spoken if he could remember the appearance of this Mr. Thomas Brown.

No; the office was crowded at the time; people were running in and out, and he had not taken any particular notice of this last passenger.

Robert thanked them for their civility, and wished them good-morning. As he was leaving the office, one of the young men called after him:

"Oh, by-the-by, sir," he said, "I remember one thing about this Mr. Thomas Brown—his arm was in a sling."

There was nothing more for Robert Audley to do but to return to town. He re-entered his chambers at six o'clock that evening, thoroughly worn out once more with his useless search.

Mrs. Maloney brought him his dinner and a pint of wine from a tavern in the Strand. The evening was raw and chilly, and the laundress had lighted a good fire in the sitting-room grate.

After eating about half a mutton-chop, Robert sat with his wine untasted upon the table before him, smoking cigars and staring into the blaze.

"George Talboys never sailed for Australia," he said, after long and painful reflection. "If he is alive, he is still in England; and if he is dead, his body is hidden in some corner of England."

He sat for hours smoking and thinking—trouble and gloomy thoughts leaving a dark shadow upon his moody face, which neither the brilliant light of the gas nor the red blaze of the fire could dispel.

Very late in the evening he rose from his chair, pushed away the table, wheeled his desk over to the fire-place, took out a sheet of fools-cap, and dipped a pen in the ink.

But after doing this he paused, leaned his forehead upon his hand, and once more relapsed into thought.

"I shall draw up a record of all that has occurred between our going down to Essex and to-night, beginning at the very beginning."

He drew up this record in short, detached sentences, which he numbered as he wrote.

It ran thus:

*"Journal of Facts connected with the Disappearance of George Talboys, inclusive of Facts which have no apparent Relation to that Circumstance."*

In spite of the troubled state of his mind, he was rather inclined to be proud of the official appearance of this heading. He sat for some time looking at it with affection, and with the feather of his pen in his mouth. "Upon my word," he said, "I begin to think that I ought to have pursued my profession, instead of dawdling my life away as I have done."

He smoked half a cigar before he had got his thoughts in proper train, and then began to write:

"1. I write to Alicia, proposing to take George down to the Court."

"2. Alicia writes, objecting to the visit, on the part of Lady Audley."

"3. We go to Essex in spite of that objection. I see my lady. My lady refuses to be introduced to George on that particular evening on the score of fatigue."

"4. Sir Michael invites George and me to dinner for the following evening."

"5. My lady receives a telegraphic dispatch the next morning which summons her to London."

"6. Alicia shows me a letter from my lady, in which she requests to be told when I and my friend, Mr. Talboys, mean to leave Essex. To this letter is subjoined a postscript, reiterating the above request."

"7. We call at the Court, and ask to see the house. My lady's apartments are locked."

"8. We get at the aforesaid apartments by means of a secret passage, the existence of which is unknown to my lady. In one of the rooms we find her portrait."

"9. George is frightened at the storm. His conduct is exceedingly strange for the rest of the evening."

"10. George quite himself again the following morning. I propose leaving Audley Court immediately; he prefers remaining till the evening."

"11. We go out fishing. George leaves me to go to the Court."

"12. The last positive information I can obtain of him in Essex is at the Court, where the servant says he thinks Mr. Talboys told him he would go and look for my lady in the grounds."

"13. I receive information about him at the station which may or may not be correct."

"14. I hear of him positively once more at Southampton, where, according to his father-in-law, he had been for an hour on the previous night."

"15. The telegraphic message."

When Robert Audley had completed this brief record, which he drew up with great deliberation, and with frequent pauses for reflection, alterations and erasures, he sat for a long time contemplating the written page.

At last he read it carefully over, stopping at some of the numbered paragraphs, and marking some of them with a pencil cross; then he folded the sheet of foolscap, went over to a cabinet on the opposite side of the room, unlocked it, and placed the paper in that very pigeon-hole into which he had thrust Alicia's letter—the pigeon-hole marked *Important*.

Having done this, he returned to his easy-chair by the fire, pushed away his desk, and lighted a cigar. "It's as dark as midnight from first to last," he said; "and the clew to the mystery must be found either at Southampton or in Essex. Be it how it may, my mind is made up. I shall first go to Audley Court, and look for George Talboys in a narrow radius."

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### PHOEBE'S SUITOR.

"Mr. George Talboys.—Any person who has met this gentleman since the 7th inst., or who possesses any information respecting him subsequent to that date, will be liberally rewarded on communicating with A.Z., 14 Chancery Lane."

Sir Michael Audley read the above advertisement in the second column of the *Times*, as he sat at breakfast with my lady and Alicia two or three days after Robert's return to town.

"Robert's friend has not yet been heard of, then," said the baronet, after reading the advertisement to his wife and daughter.

"As for that," replied my lady, "I cannot help wondering that any one can be silly enough to advertise for him. The young man was evidently of a restless, roving disposition—a sort of Bamfyld Moore Carew of modern life, whom no attraction could ever keep in one spot."

Though the advertisement appeared three successive times, the party at the Court attached very little importance to Mr. Talboys' disappearance; and after this one occasion his name was never again mentioned by either Sir Michael, my lady, or Alicia.

Alicia Audley and her pretty stepmother were by no means any better friends after that quiet evening on which the young barrister had dined at the Court.

"She is a vain, frivolous, heartless little coquette," said Alicia, addressing herself to her Newfoundland dog Caesar, who was the sole recipient of the young lady's confidences; "she is a practiced and consummate flirt, Caesar; and not contented with setting her yellow ringlets and her silly giggle at half the men in Essex, she must needs make that stupid cousin of mine dance attendance upon her. I haven't common patience with her."

In proof of which last assertion Miss Alicia Audley treated her stepmother with such very palpable impertinence that Sir Michael felt himself called upon to remonstrate with his only daughter.

"The poor little woman is very sensitive, you know, Alicia," the baronet said, gravely, "and she feels your conduct most acutely."

"I don't believe it a bit, papa," answered Alicia, stoutly. "You think her sensitive because she has soft little white hands, and big blue eyes with long lashes, and all manner of affected, fantastical ways, which you stupid men call fascinating. Sensitive! Why, I've seen her do cruel things with those slender white fingers, and laugh at the pain she inflicted. I'm very sorry, papa," she added, softened a little by her father's look of distress; "though she has come between us, and robbed poor Alicia of the love of that dear, generous heart, I wish I could like her for your sake; but I can't, I can't, and no more can Caesar. She came up to him once with her red lips apart, and her little white teeth glistening between them, and stroked his great head with her soft hand; but if I had not had hold of his collar, he would have flown at her throat and strangled her. She may bewitch every man in Essex, but she'd never make friends with my dog."

"Your dog shall be shot," answered Sir Michael angrily, "if his vicious temper ever endangers Lucy."

The Newfoundland rolled his eyes slowly round in the direction of the speaker, as if he understood every word that had been said. Lady Audley happened to enter the room at this very moment, and the animal cowered down by the side of his mistress with a suppressed growl. There was something in the manner of the dog which was, if anything, more indicative of terror than of fury; incredible as it appears that Caesar should be frightened by so fragile a creature as Lucy Audley.

Amicable as was my lady's nature, she could not live long at the Court without discovering Alicia's dislike to her. She never alluded to it but once; then, shrugging her graceful white shoulders, she said, with a sigh:

"It seems very hard that you cannot love me, Alicia, for I have never been used to make enemies; but since it seems that it must be so, I cannot help it. If we cannot be friends, let us be neutral. You won't try to injure me?"

"Injure you!" exclaimed Alicia; "how should I injure you?"

"You'll not try to deprive me of your father's affection?"

"I may not be as amiable as you are, my lady, and I may not have the same sweet smiles and pretty words for every stranger I meet, but I am not

capable of a contemptible meanness; and even if I were, I think you are so secure of my father's love, that nothing but your own act will ever deprive you of it."

"What a severe creature you are, Alicia!" said my lady, making a little grimace. "I suppose you mean to infer by all that, that I'm deceitful. Why, I can't help smiling at people, and speaking prettily to them. I know I'm no *better* than the rest of the world; but I can't help it if I'm *plaisantér*. It's constitutional."

Alicia having thus entirely shut the door upon all intimacy between Lady Audley and herself, and Sir Michael being chiefly occupied in agricultural pursuits and manly sports, which kept him away from home, it was perhaps natural that my lady, being of an eminently social disposition, should find herself thrown a good deal upon her white-eyelashed maid for society.

Phoebe Marks was exactly the sort of a girl who is generally promoted from the post of lady's maid to that of companion. She had just sufficient education to enable her to understand her mistress when Lucy chose to allow herself to run riot in a species of intellectual tarantella, in which her tongue went mad to the sound of its own rattle, as the Spanish dancer at the noise of his castanets. Phoebe knew enough of the French language to be able to dip into the yellow-paper-covered novels which my lady ordered from the Burlington Arcade, and to discourse with her mistress upon the questionable subjects of these romances. The likeness which the lady's maid bore to Lucy Audley was, perhaps, a point of sympathy between the two women. It was not to be called a striking likeness; a stranger might have seen them both together, and yet have failed to remark it. But there were certain dim and shadowy lights in which, meeting Phoebe Marks gliding softly through the dark oak passages of the Court, or under the shrouded avenues in the garden, you might have easily mistaken her for my lady.

Sharp October winds were sweeping the leaves from the limes in the long avenue, and driving them in withered heaps with a ghostly rustling noise along the dry gravel walks. The old well must have been half choked up with the leaves that drifted about it, and whirled in eddying circles into its black, broken mouth. On the still bosom of the fish-pond the same withered leaves slowly rotted away, mixing themselves with the tangled weeds that discolored the surface of the water. All the gardeners Sir Michael could

employ could not keep the impress of autumn's destroying hand from the grounds about the Court.

"How I hate this desolate month!" my lady said, as she walked about the garden, shivering beneath her sable mantle. "Every thing dropping to ruin and decay, and the cold flicker of the sun lighting up the ugliness of the earth, as the glare of gas-lamps lights the wrinkles of an old woman. Shall I ever grow old, Phoebe? Will my hair ever drop off as the leaves are falling from those trees, and leave me wan and bare like them? What is to become of me when I grow old?"

She shivered at the thought of this more than she had done at the cold, wintry breeze, and muffling herself closely in her fur, walked so fast that her maid had some difficulty in keeping up with her.

"Do you remember, Phoebe," she said, presently, relaxing her pace, "do you remember that French story we read—the story of a beautiful woman who had committed some crime—I forget what—in the zenith of her power and loveliness, when all Paris drank to her every night, and when the people ran away from the carriage of the king to flock about hers, and get a peep at her face? Do you remember how she kept the secret of what she had done for nearly half a century, spending her old age in her family chateau, beloved and honored by all the province as an uncanonized saint and benefactress to the poor; and how, when her hair was white, and her eyes almost blind with age, the secret was revealed through one of those strange accidents by which such secrets always are revealed in romances, and she was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be burned alive? The king who had worn her colors was dead and gone; the court of which she had been a star had passed away; powerful functionaries and great magistrates, who might perhaps have helped her, were moldering in the graves; brave young cavaliers, who would have died for her, had fallen upon distant battle-fields; she had lived to see the age to which she had belonged fade like a dream; and she went to the stake, followed by only a few ignorant country people, who forgot all her bounties, and hooted at her for a wicked sorceress."

"I don't care for such dismal stories, my lady," said Phoebe Marks with a shudder. "One has no need to read books to give one the horrors in this dull place."

Lady Audley shrugged her shoulders and laughed at her maid's candor.

"It is a dull place, Phoebe," she said, "though it doesn't do to say so to my dear old husband. Though I am the wife of one of the most influential men in the county, I don't know that I wasn't nearly as well off at Mr. Dawson's; and yet it's something to wear sables that cost sixty guineas, and have a thousand pounds spent on the decoration of one's apartments."

Treated as a companion by her mistress, in the receipt of the most liberal wages, and with perquisites such as perhaps lady's maid never had before, it was strange that Phoebe Marks should wish to leave her situation; but it was not the less a fact that she was anxious to exchange all the advantages of Audley Court for the very unpromising prospect which awaited her as the wife of her Cousin Luke.

The young man had contrived in some manner to associate himself with the improved fortunes of his sweetheart. He had never allowed Phoebe any peace till she had obtained for him, by the aid of my lady's interference, a situation as undergroom of the Court.

He never rode out with either Alicia or Sir Michael; but on one of the few occasions upon which my lady mounted the pretty little gray thoroughbred reserved for her use, he contrived to attend her in her ride. He saw enough, in the very first half hour they were out, to discover that, graceful as Lucy Audley might look in her long blue cloth habit, she was a timid horsewoman, and utterly unable to manage the animal she rode.

Lady Audley remonstrated with her maid upon her folly in wishing to marry the uncouth groom.

The two women were seated together over the fire in my lady's dressing-room, the gray sky closing in upon the October afternoon, and the black tracery of ivy darkening the casement windows.

"You surely are not in love with the awkward, ugly creature are you, Phoebe?" asked my lady sharply.

The girl was sitting on a low stool at her mistress feet. She did not answer my lady's question immediately, but sat for some time looking vacantly into the red abyss in the hollow fire.

Presently she said, rather as if she had been thinking aloud than answering Lucy's question:

"I don't think I can love him. We have been together from children, and I promised, when I was little better than fifteen, that I'd be his wife. I daren't



break that promise now. There have been times when I've made up the very sentence I meant to say to him, telling him that I couldn't keep my faith with him; but the words have died upon my lips, and I've sat looking at him, with a choking sensation, in my throat that wouldn't let me speak. I daren't refuse to marry him. I've often watched and watched him, as he has sat slicing away at a hedge-stake with his great clasp-knife, till I have thought that it is just such men as he who have decoyed their sweethearts into lonely places, and murdered them for being false to their word. When he was a boy he was always violent and revengeful. I saw him once take up that very knife in a quarrel with his mother. I tell you, my lady, I must marry him."

"You silly girl, you shall do nothing of the kind!" answered Lucy. "You think he'll murder you, do you? Do you think, then, if murder is in him, you would be any safer as his wife? If you thwarted him, or made him jealous; if he wanted to marry another woman, or to get hold of some poor, pitiful bit of money of yours, couldn't he murder you then? I tell you you sha'n't marry him, Phoebe. In the first place I hate the man; and, in the next place I can't afford to part with you. We'll give him a few pounds and send him about his business."

Phoebe Marks caught my lady's hand in hers, and clasped them convulsively.

"My lady—my good, kind mistress!" she cried, vehemently, "don't try to thwart me in this—don't ask me to thwart him. I tell you I must marry him. You don't know what he is. It will be my ruin, and the ruin of others, if I break my word. I must marry him!"

"Very well, then, Phoebe," answered her mistress, "I can't oppose you. There must be some secret at the bottom of all this." "There is, my lady," said the girl, with her face turned away from Lucy.

"I shall be very sorry to lose you; but I have promised to stand your friend in all things. What does your cousin mean to do for a living when you are married?"

"He would like to take a public house."

"Then he shall take a public house, and the sooner he drinks himself to death the better. Sir Michael dines at a bachelor's party at Major Margrave's this evening, and my step-daughter is away with her friends at the Grange. You can bring your cousin into the drawing-room after dinner, and I'll tell him what I mean to do for him."

"You are very good, my lady," Phoebe answered with a sigh.

Lady Audley sat in the glow of firelight and wax candles in the luxurious drawing-room; the amber damask cushions of the sofa contrasting with her dark violet velvet dress, and her rippling hair falling about her neck in a golden haze. Everywhere around her were the evidences of wealth and splendor; while in strange contrast to all this, and to her own beauty; the awkward groom stood rubbing his bullet head as my lady explained to him what she intended to do for her confidential maid. Lucy's promises were very liberal, and she had expected that, uncouth as the man was, he would, in his own rough manner, have expressed his gratitude.

To her surprise he stood staring at the floor without uttering a word in answer to her offer. Phoebe was standing close to his elbow, and seemed distressed at the man's rudeness.

"Tell my lady how thankful you are, Luke," she said.

"But I'm not so over and above thankful," answered her lover, savagely. "Fifty pound ain't much to start a public. You'll make it a hundred, my lady?"

"I shall do nothing of the kind," said Lady Audley, her clear blue eyes flashing with indignation, "and I wonder at your impertinence in asking it."

"Oh, yes, you will, though," answered Luke, with quiet insolence that had a hidden meaning. "You'll make it a hundred, my lady."

Lady Audley rose from her seat, looked the man steadfastly in the face till his determined gaze sunk under hers; then walking straight up to her maid, she said in a high, piercing voice, peculiar to her in moments of intense agitation:

"Phoebe Marks, you have told *this man!*"

The girl fell on her knees at my lady's feet.

"Oh, forgive me, forgive me!" she cried. "He forced it from me, or I would never, never have told!"

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## CHAPTER XV.

### ON THE WATCH.

Upon a lowering morning late in November, with the yellow fog low upon the flat meadows, and the blinded cattle groping their way through the dim obscurity, and blundering stupidly against black and leafless hedges, or stumbling into ditches, undistinguishable in the hazy atmosphere; with the village church looming brown and dingy through the uncertain light; with every winding path and cottage door, every gable end and gray old chimney, every village child and straggling cur seeming strange and weird of aspect in the semi-darkness, Phoebe Marks and her Cousin Luke made their way through the churchyard of Audley, and presented themselves before a shivering curate, whose surplice hung in damp folds, soddened by the morning mist, and whose temper was not improved by his having waited five minutes for the bride and bridegroom.

Luke Marks, dressed in his ill-fitting Sunday clothes, looked by no means handsomer than in his every-day apparel; but Phoebe, arrayed in a rustling silk of delicate gray, that had been worn about half a dozen times by her mistress, looked, as the few spectators of the ceremony remarked, "quite the lady."

A very dim and shadowy lady, vague of outline, and faint of coloring, with eyes, hair, complexion and dress all melting into such pale and uncertain shades that, in the obscure light of the foggy November morning a superstitious stranger might have mistaken the bride for the ghost of some other bride, dead and buried in the vault below the church.

Mr. Luke Marks, the hero of the occasion, thought very little of all this. He had secured the wife of his choice, and the object of his life-long ambition—a public house. My lady had provided the seventy-five pounds necessary for the purchase of the good-will and fixtures, with the stock of ales and spirits, of a small inn in the center of a lonely little village, perched on the summit of a hill, and called Mount Stanning. It was not a very pretty house to look at; it had something of a tumble-down, weather-beaten appearance, standing, as it did, upon high ground, sheltered only by four or

five bare and overgrown poplars, that had shot up too rapidly for their strength, and had a blighted, forlorn look in consequence. The wind had had its own way with the Castle Inn, and had sometimes made cruel use of its power. It was the wind that battered and bent the low, thatched roofs of outhouses and stables, till they hung over and lurched forward, as a slouched hat hangs over the low forehead of some village ruffian; it was the wind that shook and rattled the wooden shutters before the narrow casements, till they hung broken and dilapidated upon their rusty hinges; it was the wind that overthrew the pigeon house, and broke the vane that had been imprudently set up to tell the movements of its mightiness; it was the wind that made light of any little bit of wooden trellis-work, or creeping plant, or tiny balcony, or any modest decoration whatsoever, and tore and scattered it in its scornful fury; it was the wind that left mossy secretions on the discolored surface of the plaster walls; it was the wind, in short, that shattered, and ruined, and rent, and trampled upon the tottering pile of buildings, and then flew shrieking off, to riot and glory in its destroying strength. The dispirited proprietor grew tired of his long struggle with this mighty enemy; so the wind was left to work its own will, and the Castle Inn fell slowly to decay. But for all that it suffered without, it was not the less prosperous within doors. Sturdy drovers stopped to drink at the little bar; well-to-do farmers spent their evenings and talked politics in the low, wainscoted parlor, while their horses munched some suspicious mixture of moldy hay and tolerable beans in the tumble-down stables. Sometimes even the members of the Audley hunt stopped to drink and bait their horses at the Castle Inn; while, on one grand and never-to-be-forgotten occasion, a dinner had been ordered by the master of the hounds for some thirty gentlemen, and the proprietor driven nearly mad by the importance of the demand.

So Luke Marks, who was by no means troubled with an eye for the beautiful, thought himself very fortunate in becoming the landlord of the Castle Inn, Mount Stanning.

A chaise-cart was waiting in the fog to convey the bride and bridegroom to their new home; and a few of the villagers, who had known Phoebe from a child, were lingering around the churchyard gate to bid her good-by. Her pale eyes were still paler from the tears she had shed, and the red rims which surrounded them. The bridegroom was annoyed at this exhibition of emotion.

"What are you blubbering for, lass?" he said, fiercely. "If you didn't want to marry me you should have told me so. I ain't going to murder you, am I?"

The lady's maid shivered as he spoke to her, and dragged her little silk mantle closely around her.

"You're cold in all this here finery," said Luke, staring at her costly dress with no expression of good-will. "Why can't women dress according to their station? You won't have no silk gownds out of my pocket, I can tell you."

He lifted the shivering girl into the chaise, wrapped a rough great-coat about her, and drove off through the yellow fog, followed by a feeble cheer from two or three urchins clustered around the gate.

A new maid was brought from London to replace Phoebe Marks about the person of my lady—a very showy damsel, who wore a black satin gown, and rose-colored ribbons in her cap, and complained bitterly of the dullness of Audley Court.

But Christmas brought visitors to the rambling old mansion. A country squire and his fat wife occupied the tapestried chamber; merry girls scampered up and down the long passages, and young men stared out of the latticed windows, watching for southerly winds and cloudy skies; there was not an empty stall in the roomy old stables; an extempore forge had been set up in the yard for the shoeing of hunters; yelping dogs made the place noisy with their perpetual clamor; strange servants herded together on the garret story; and every little casement hidden away under some pointed gable, and every dormer window in the quaint old roof, glimmered upon the winter's night with its separate taper, till, coming suddenly upon Audley Court, the benighted stranger, misled by the light, and noise, and bustle of the place, might have easily fallen into young Marlowe's error, and have mistaken the hospitable mansion for a good, old-fashioned inn, such as have faded from this earth since the last mail coach and prancing tits took their last melancholy journey to the knacker's yard.

Among other visitors Mr. Robert Audley came down to Essex for the hunting season, with half a dozen French novels, a case of cigars, and three pounds of Turkish tobacco in his portmanteau.

The honest young country squires, who talked all breakfast time of Flying Dutchman fillies and Voltigeur colts; of glorious runs of seven hours' hard riding over three counties, and a midnight homeward ride of thirty miles upon their covert hacks; and who ran away from the well-spread table

with their mouths full of cold sirloin, to look at that off pastern, or that sprained forearm, or the colt that had just come back from the veterinary surgeon's, set down Robert Audley, dawdling over a slice of bread and marmalade, as a person utterly unworthy of any remark whatsoever.

The young barrister had brought a couple of dogs with him; and the country gentleman who gave fifty pounds for a pointer; and traveled a couple of hundred miles to look at a leash of setters before he struck a bargain, laughed aloud at the two miserable curs, one of which had followed Robert Audley through Chancery Lane, and half the length of Holborn; while his companion had been taken by the barrister *vi et armis* from a coster-monger who was ill-using him. And as Robert furthermore insisted on having these two deplorable animals under his easy-chair in the drawing-room, much to the annoyance of my lady, who, as we know, hated all dogs, the visitors at Audley Court looked upon the baronet's nephew as an inoffensive species of maniac.

During other visits to the Court Robert Audley had made a feeble show of joining in the sports of the merry assembly. He had jogged across half a dozen ploughed fields on a quiet gray pony of Sir Michael's, and drawing up breathless and panting at the door of some farm-house, had expressed his intention of following the hounds no further *that* morning. He had even gone so far as to put on, with great labor, a pair of skates, with a view to taking a turn on the frozen surface of the fishpond, and had fallen ignominiously at the first attempt, lying placidly extended on the flat of his back until such time as the bystanders should think fit to pick him up. He had occupied the back seat in a dog-cart during a pleasant morning drive, vehemently protesting against being taken up hill, and requiring the vehicle to be stopped every ten minutes in order to readjust the cushions. But this year he showed no inclination for any of these outdoor amusements, and he spent his time entirely in lounging in the drawing-room, and making himself agreeable, after his own lazy fashion, to my lady and Alicia.

Lady Audley received her nephew's attentions in that graceful half-childish fashion which her admirers found so charming; but Alicia was indignant at the change in her cousin's conduct.

"You were always a poor, spiritless fellow, Bob," said the young lady, contemptuously, as she bounced into the drawing-room in her riding-habit, after a hunting breakfast, from which Robert had absented himself,

preferring a cup of tea in my lady's boudoir; "but this year I don't know what has come to you. You are good for nothing but to hold a skein of silk or read Tennyson to Lady Audley."

"My dear, hasty, impetuous Alicia, don't be violent," said the young man imploringly. "A conclusion isn't a five-barred gate; and you needn't give your judgment its head, as you give your mare Atalanta hers, when you're flying across country at the heels of an unfortunate fox. Lady Audley interests me, and my uncle's county friends do not. Is that a sufficient answer, Alicia?"

Miss Audley gave her head a little scornful toss.

"It's as good an answer as I shall ever get from, you, Bob," she said, impatiently; "but pray amuse yourself in your own way; loll in an easy-chair all day, with those two absurd dogs asleep on your knees; spoil my lady's window-curtains with your cigars and annoy everybody in the house with your stupid, inanimate countenance."

Mr. Robert Audley opened his handsome gray eyes to their widest extent at this tirade, and looked helplessly at Miss Alicia.

The young lady was walking up and down the room, slashing the skirt of her habit with her riding-whip. Her eyes sparkled with an angry flash, and a crimson glow burned under her clear brown skin. The young barrister knew very well, by these diagnostics, that his cousin was in a passion.

"Yes," she repeated, "your stupid, inanimate countenance. Do you know, Robert Audley, that with all your mock amiability, you are brimful of conceit and superciliousness. You look down upon our amusements; you lift up your eyebrows, and shrug your shoulders, and throw yourself back in your chair, and wash your hands of us and our pleasures. You are a selfish, cold-hearted Sybarite—"

"Alicia! Good—gracious—me!"

The morning paper dropped out of his hands, and he sat feebly staring at his assailant.

"Yes, *selfish*, Robert Audley! You take home half-starved dogs, because you like half-starved dogs. You stoop down, and pat the head of every good-for-nothing cur in the village street, because you like good-for-nothing curs. You notice little children, and give them halfpence, because it amuses you to do so. But you lift your eyebrows a quarter of a yard when

poor Sir Harry Towers tells a stupid story, and stare the poor fellow out of countenance with your lazy insolence. As to your amiability, you would let a man hit you, and say 'Thank you' for the blow, rather than take the trouble to hit him again; but you wouldn't go half a mile out of your way to serve your dearest friend. Sir Harry is worth twenty of you, though he *did* write to ask if my m-a-i-r Atalanta had recovered from the sprain. He can't spell, or lift his eyebrows to the roots of his hair; but he would go through fire and water for the girl he loves; while *you*—"

At this very point, when Robert was most prepared to encounter his cousin's violence, and when Miss Alicia seemed about to make her strongest attack, the young lady broke down altogether, and burst into tears.

Robert sprang from his easy-chair, upsetting his dogs on the carpet.

"Alicia, my darling, what is it?"

"It's—it's—it's the feather of my hat that got into my eyes," sobbed his cousin; and before he could investigate the truth of this assertion Alicia had darted out of the room.

Robert Audley was preparing to follow her, when he heard her voice in the court-yard below, amidst the tramping of horses and the clamor of visitors, dogs, and grooms. Sir Harry Towers, the most aristocratic young sportsman in the neighborhood, had just taken her little foot in his hand as she sprung into her saddle.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Robert, as he watched the merry party of equestrians until they disappeared under the archway. "What does all this mean? How charmingly she sits her horse! What a pretty figure, too, and a fine, candid, brown, rosy face: but to fly at a fellow like that, without the least provocation! That's the consequence of letting a girl follow the hounds. She learns to look at everything in life as she does at six feet of timber or a sunk fence; she goes through the world as she goes across country—straight ahead, and over everything. Such a nice girl as she might have been, too, if she'd been brought up in Figtree Court! If ever I marry, and have daughters (which remote contingency may Heaven forefend!) they shall be educated in Paper Buildings, take their sole exercise in the Temple Gardens, and they shall never go beyond the gates till they are marriageable, when I will walk them straight across Fleet street to St. Dunstan's church, and deliver them into the hands of their husbands."



With such reflections as these did Mr. Robert Audley beguile the time until my lady re-entered the drawing-room, fresh and radiant in her elegant morning costume, her yellow curls glistening with the perfumed waters in which she had bathed, and her velvet-covered sketch-book in her arms. She planted a little easel upon a table by the window, seated herself before it, and began to mix the colors upon her palette, Robert watching her out of his half-closed eyes.

"You are sure my cigar does not annoy you, Lady Audley?"

"Oh, no indeed; I am quite used to the smell of tobacco. Mr. Dawson, the surgeon, smoked all the evening when I lived in his house."

"Dawson is a good fellow, isn't he?" Robert asked, carelessly.

My lady burst into her pretty, gushing laugh.

"The dearest of good creatures," she said. "He paid me five-and-twenty pounds a year—only fancy, five-and-twenty pounds! That made six pounds five a quarter. How well I remember receiving the money—six dingy old sovereigns, and a little heap of untidy, dirty silver, that came straight from the till in the surgery! And then how glad I was to get it! While *now*—I can't help laughing while I think of it—these colors I am using cost a guinea each at Winsor & Newton's—the carmine and ultramarine thirty shillings. I gave Mrs. Dawson one of my silk dresses the other day, and the poor thing kissed me, and the surgeon carried the bundle home under his cloak."

My lady laughed long and joyously at the thought. Her colors were mixed; she was copying a water-colored sketch of an impossibly Turner-esque atmosphere. The sketch was nearly finished, and she had only to put in some critical little touches with the most delicate of her sable pencils. She prepared herself daintily for the work, looking sideways at the painting.

All this time Mr. Robert Audley's eyes were fixed intently on her pretty face.

"It *is* a change," he said, after so long a pause that my lady might have forgotten what she had been talking of, "it *is* a change! Some women would do a great deal to accomplish such a change as that."

Lady Audley's clear blue eyes dilated as she fixed them suddenly on the young barrister. The wintry sunlight, gleaming full upon her face from a side window, lit up the azure of those beautiful eyes, till their color seemed

to flicker and tremble betwixt blue and green, as the opal tints of the sea change upon a summer's day. The small brush fell from her hand, and blotted out the peasant's face under a widening circle of crimson lake.

Robert Audley was tenderly coaxing the crumbled leaf of his cigar with cautious fingers.

"My friend at the corner of Chancery Lane has not given me such good Manillas as usual," he murmured. "If ever you smoke, my dear aunt (and I am told that many women take a quiet weed under the rose), be very careful how you choose your cigars."

My lady drew a long breath, picked up her brush, and laughed aloud at Robert's advice.

"What an eccentric creature you are, Mr. Audley I Do you know that you sometimes puzzle me—"

"Not more than you puzzle me, dear aunt."

My lady put away her colors and sketch book, and seating herself in the deep recess of another window, at a considerable distance from Robert Audley, settled to a large piece of Berlin-wool work—a piece of embroidery which the Penelopes of ten or twelve years ago were very fond of exercising their ingenuity upon—the Olden Time at Bolton Abbey.

Seated in the embrasure of this window, my lady was separated from Robert Audley by the whole length of the room, and the young man could only catch an occasional glimpse of her fair face, surrounded by its bright aureole of hazy, golden hair.

Robert Audley had been a week at the Court, but as yet neither he nor my lady had mentioned the name of George Talboys.

This morning, however, after exhausting the usual topics of conversation, Lady Audley made an inquiry about her nephew's friend; "That Mr. George—George—" she said, hesitating.

"Talboys," suggested Robert.

"Yes, to be sure—Mr. George Talboys. Rather a singular name, by-the-by, and certainly, by all accounts, a very singular person. Have you seen him lately?"

"I have not seen him since the 7th of September last—the day upon which he left me asleep in the meadows on the other side of the village."

"Dear me!" exclaimed my lady, "what a very strange young man this Mr. George Talboys must be! Pray tell me all about it."

Robert told, in a few words, of his visit to Southampton and his journey to Liverpool, with their different results, my lady listening very attentively.

In order to tell this story to better advantage, the young man left his chair, and, crossing the room, took up his place opposite to Lady Audley, in the embrasure of the window.

"And what do you infer from all this?" asked my lady, after a pause.

"It is so great a mystery to me," he answered, "that I scarcely dare to draw any conclusion whatever; but in the obscurity I think I can grope my way to two suppositions, which to me seem almost certainties."

"And they are—"

"First, that George Talboys never went beyond Southampton. Second, that he never went to Southampton at all."

"But you traced him there. His father-in-law had seen him."

"I have reason to doubt his father-in-law's integrity."

"Good gracious me!" cried my lady, piteously. "What do you mean by all this?"

"Lady Audley," answered the young man, gravely, "I have never practiced as a barrister. I have enrolled myself in the ranks of a profession, the members of which hold solemn responsibilities and have sacred duties to perform; and I have shrunk from those responsibilities and duties, as I have from all the fatigues of this troublesome life. But we are sometimes forced into the very position we have most avoided, and I have found myself lately compelled to think of these things. Lady Audley, did you ever study the theory of circumstantial evidence?"

"How can you ask a poor little woman about such horrid things?" exclaimed my lady.

"Circumstantial evidence," continued the young man, as if he scarcely heard Lady Audley's interruption—"that wonderful fabric which is built out of straws collected at every point of the compass, and which is yet strong enough to hang a man. Upon what infinitesimal trifles may sometimes hang the whole secret of some wicked mystery, inexplicable heretofore to the wisest upon the earth! A scrap of paper, a shred of some torn garment, the

button off a coat, a word dropped incautiously from the overcautious lips of guilt, the fragment of a letter, the shutting or opening of a door, a shadow on a window-blind, the accuracy of a moment tested by one of Benson's watches—a thousand circumstances so slight as to be forgotten by the criminal, but links of iron in the wonderful chain forged by the science of the detective officer; and lo! the gallows is built up; the solemn bell tolls through the dismal gray of the early morning, the drop creaks under the guilty feet, and the penalty of crime is paid."

Faint shadows of green and crimson fell upon my lady's face from the painted escutcheons in the mullioned window by which she sat; but every trace of the natural color of that face had faded out, leaving it a ghastly ashen gray.

Sitting quietly in her chair, her head fallen back upon the amber damask cushions, and her little hands lying powerless in her lap, Lady Audley had fainted away.

"The radius grows narrower day by day," said Robert Audley. "George Talboys never reached Southampton."

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### ROBERT AUDLEY GETS HIS CONGE.

The Christmas week was over, and one by one the country visitors dropped away from Audley Court. The fat squire and his wife abandoned the gray, tapestried chamber, and left the black-browed warriors looming from the wall to scowl upon and threaten new guests, or to glare vengefully upon vacancy. The merry girls on the second story packed, or caused to be packed, their trunks and imperials, and tumbled gauze ball-dresses were taken home that had been brought fresh to Audley. Blundering old family chariots, with horses whose untrimmed fetlocks told of rougher work than even country roads, were brought round to the broad space before the grim oak door, and laden with chaotic heaps of womanly luggage. Pretty rosy faces peeped out of carriage windows to smile the last farewell upon the group at the hall door, as the vehicle rattled and rumbled under the ivied archway. Sir Michael was in request everywhere. Shaking hands with the young sportsmen; kissing the rosy-cheeked girls; sometimes even embracing portly matrons who came to thank him for their pleasant visit; everywhere genial, hospitable, generous, happy, and beloved, the baronet hurried from room to room, from the hall to the stables, from the stables to the court-yard, from the court-yard to the arched gateway to speed the parting guest.

My lady's yellow curls flashed hither and thither like wandering gleams of sunshine on these busy days of farewell. Her great blue eyes had a pretty, mournful look, in charming unison with the soft pressure of her little hand, and that friendly, though perhaps rather stereotyped speech, in which she told her visitors how she was so sorry to lose them, and how she didn't know what she should do till they came once more to enliven the court by their charming society.

But however sorry my lady might be to lose her visitors, there was at least one guest whose society she was not deprived of. Robert Audley showed no intention of leaving his uncle's house. He had no professional duties, he said; Figtree Court was delightfully shady in hot weather, but

there was a sharp corner round which the wind came in the summer months, armed with avenging rheumatisms and influenzas. Everybody was so good to him at the Court, that really he had no inclination to hurry away.

Sir Michael had but one answer to this: "Stay, my dear boy; stay, my dear Bob, as long as ever you like. I have no son, and you stand to me in the place of one. Make yourself agreeable to Lucy, and make the Court your home as long as you live."

To which Robert would merely reply by grasping his uncle's hand vehemently, and muttering something about "a jolly old prince."

It was to be observed that there was sometimes a certain vague sadness in the young man's tone when he called Sir Michael "a jolly old prince;" some shadow of affectionate regret that brought a mist into Robert's eyes, as he sat in a corner of the room looking thoughtfully at the white-bearded baronet.

Before the last of the young sportsmen departed, Sir Harry Towers demanded and obtained an interview with Miss Alicia Audley in the oak library—an interview in which considerable emotion was displayed by the stalwart young fox-hunter; so much emotion, indeed, and of such a genuine and honest character, that Alicia fairly broke down as she told him she should forever esteem and respect him for his true and noble heart, but that he must never, never, unless he wished to cause her the most cruel distress, ask more from her than this esteem and respect.

Sir Harry left the library by the French window opening into the pond-garden. He strolled into that very lime-walk which George Talboys had compared to an avenue in a churchyard, and under the leafless trees fought the battle of his brave young heart.

"What a fool I am to feel it like this!" he cried, stamping his foot upon the frosty ground. "I always knew it would be so; I always knew that she was a hundred times too good for me. God bless her! How nobly and tenderly she spoke; how beautiful she looked with the crimson blushes under her brown skin, and the tears in her big, gray eyes—almost as handsome as the day she took the sunk fence, and let me put the brush in her hat as we rode home! God bless her! I can get over anything as long as she doesn't care for that sneaking lawyer. But I couldn't stand that."

That sneaking lawyer, by which appellation Sir Harry alluded to Mr. Robert Audley, was standing in the hall, looking at a map of the midland

counties, when Alicia came out of the library, with red eyes, after her interview with the fox-hunting baronet.

Robert, who was short-sighted, had his eyes within half an inch of the surface of the map as the young lady approached him.

"Yes," he said, "Norwich *is* in Norfolk, and that fool, young Vincent, said it was in Herefordshire. Ha, Alicia, is that you?"

He turned round so as to intercept Miss Audley on her way to the staircase.

"Yes," replied his cousin curtly, trying to pass him.

"Alicia, you have been crying."

The young lady did not condescend to reply.

"You have been crying, Alicia. Sir Harry Towers, of Towers Park, in the county of Herts, has been making you an offer of his hand, eh?"

"Have you been listening at the door, Mr. Audley?"

"I have not, Miss Audley. On principle, I object to listen, and in practice I believe it to be a very troublesome proceeding; but I am a barrister, Miss Alicia, and able to draw a conclusion by induction. Do you know what inductive evidence is, Miss Audley?"

"No," replied Alicia, looking at her cousin as a handsome young panther might look at its daring tormentor.

"I thought not. I dare say Sir Harry would ask if it was a new kind of horse-ball. I knew by induction that the baronet was going to make you an offer; first, because he came downstairs with his hair parted on the wrong side, and his face as pale as a tablecloth; secondly, because he couldn't eat any breakfast, and let his coffee go the wrong way; and, thirdly, because he asked for an interview with you before he left the Court. Well, how's it to be, Alicia? Do we marry the baronet, and is poor Cousin Bob to be the best man at the wedding?"

"Sir Harry Towers is a noble-hearted young man," said Alicia, still trying to pass her cousin.

"But do we accept him—yes or no? Are we to be Lady Towers, with a superb estate in Hertfordshire, summer quarters for our hunters, and a drag with outriders to drive us across to papa's place in Essex? Is it to be so, Alicia, or not?"

"What is that to you, Mr. Robert Audley?" cried Alicia, passionately. "What do *you* care what becomes of me, or whom I marry? If I married a chimney-sweep you'd only lift up your eyebrows and say, 'Bless my soul, she was always eccentric.' I have refused Sir Harry Towers; but when I think of his generous and unselfish affection, and compare it with the heartless, lazy, selfish, supercilious indifference of other men, I've a good mind to run after him and tell him—"

"That you'll retract, and be my Lady Towers?"

"Yes."

"Then don't, Alicia, don't," said Robert Audley, grasping his cousin's slender little wrist, and leading her up-stairs. "Come into the drawing-room with me, Alicia, my poor little cousin; my charming, impetuous, alarming little cousin. Sit down here in this mullioned window, and let us talk seriously and leave off quarreling if we can."

The cousins had the drawing-room all to themselves. Sir Michael was out, my lady in her own apartments, and poor Sir Harry Towers walking up and down upon the gravel walk, darkened with the flickering shadows of the leafless branches in the cold winter sunshine.

"My poor little Alicia," said Robert, as tenderly as if he had been addressing some spoiled child, "do you suppose that because people don't wear vinegar tops, or part their hair on the wrong side, or conduct themselves altogether after the manner of well-meaning maniacs, by way of proving the vehemence of their passion—do you suppose because of this, Alicia Audley, that they may not be just as sensible of the merits of a dear little warm-hearted and affectionate girl as ever their neighbors can be? Life is such a very troublesome matter, when all is said and done, that it's as well even to take its blessings quietly. I don't make a great howling because I can get good cigars one door from the corner of Chancery Lane, and have a dear, good girl for my cousin; but I am not the less grateful to Providence that it is so."

Alicia opened her gray eyes to their widest extent, looking her cousin full in the face with a bewildered stare. Robert had picked up the ugliest and leanest of his attendant curs, and was placidly stroking the animal's ears.

"Is this all you have to say to me, Robert?" asked Miss Audley, meekly.



"Well, yes, I think so," replied her cousin, after considerable deliberation. "I fancy that what I wanted to say was this—don't marry the fox-hunting baronet if you like anybody else better; for if you'll only be patient and take life easily, and try and reform yourself of banging doors, bouncing in and out rooms, talking of the stables, and riding across country, I've no doubt the person you prefer will make you a very excellent husband."

"Thank you, cousin," said Miss Audley, crimsoning with bright, indignant blushes up to the roots of her waving brown hair; "but as you may not know the person I prefer, I think you had better not take upon yourself to answer for him."

Robert pulled the dog's ears thoughtfully for some moments.

"No, to be sure," he said, after a pause. "Of course, if I don't know him—I thought I did."

"*Did you?*" exclaimed Alicia; and opening the door with a violence that made her cousin shiver, she bounced out of the drawing-room.

"I only said I thought I knew him," Robert called after her; and, then, as he sunk into an easy-chair, he murmured thoughtfully: "Such a nice girl, too, if she didn't bounce."

So poor Sir Harry Towers rode away from Audley Court, looking very crestfallen and dismal.

He had very little pleasure in returning to the stately mansion, hidden among sheltering oaks and venerable beeches. The square, red brick house, gleaming at the end of a long arcade of leafless trees was to be forever desolate, he thought, since Alicia would not come to be its mistress.

A hundred improvements planned and thought of were dismissed from his mind as useless now. The hunter that Jim the trainer was breaking in for a lady; the two pointer pups that were being reared for the next shooting season; the big black retriever that would have carried Alicia's parasol; the pavilion in the garden, disused since his mother's death, but which he had meant to have restored for Miss Audley—all these things were now so much vanity and vexation of spirit.

"What's the good of being rich if one has no one to help spend one's money?" said the young baronet. "One only grows a selfish beggar, and takes to drinking too much port. It's a hard thing that a girl can refuse a true

heart and such stables as we've got at the park. It unsettles a man somehow."

Indeed, this unlooked for rejection had very much unsettled the few ideas which made up the small sum of the baronet's mind.

He had been desperately in love with Alicia ever since the last hunting season, when he had met her at the county ball. His passion, cherished through the slow monotony of a summer, had broken out afresh in the merry winter months, and the young man's *mauvaise honte* alone had delayed the offer of his hand. But he had never for a moment supposed that he would be refused; he was so used to the adulation of mothers who had daughters to marry, and of even the daughters themselves; he had been so accustomed to feel himself the leading personage in an assembly, although half the wits of the age had been there, and he could only say "Haw, to be sure!" and "By Jove—hum!" he had been so spoiled by the flatteries of bright eyes that looked, or seemed to look, the brighter when he drew near, that without being possessed of one shadow of personal vanity, he had yet come to think that he had only to make an offer to the prettiest girl in Essex to behold himself immediately accepted.

"Yes," he would say complacently to some admiring satellite, "I know I'm a good match, and I know what makes the gals so civil. They're very pretty, and they're very friendly to a fellow; but I don't care about 'em. They're all alike—they can only drop their eyes and say, 'Lor', Sir Harry, why do you call that curly black dog a retriever?' or 'Oh Sir Harry, and did the poor mare really sprain her pastern shoulder-blade?' I haven't got much brains myself, I know," the baronet would add deprecatingly; "and I don't want a strong-minded woman, who writes books and wears green spectacles; but, hang it! I like a gal who knows what she's talking about."

So when Alicia said "No," or rather made that pretty speech about esteem and respect, which well-bred young ladies substitute for the obnoxious monosyllable, Sir Harry Towers felt that the whole fabric of the future he had built so complacently was shivered into a heap of dingy ruins.

Sir Michael grasped him warmly by the hand just before the young man mounted his horse in the court-yard.

"I'm very sorry, Towers," he said. "You're as good a fellow as ever breathed, and would have made my girl an excellent husband; but you know there's a cousin, and I think that—"

"Don't say that, Sir Michael," interrupted the fox-hunter, energetically. "I can get over anything but that. A fellow whose hand upon the curb weighs half a ton (why, he pulled the Cavalier's mouth to pieces, sir, the day you let him ride the horse); a fellow who turns his collars down, and eats bread and marmalade! No, no, Sir Michael; it's a queer world, but I can't think that of Miss Audley. There must be some one in the background, sir; it can't be the cousin."

Sir Michael shook his head as the rejected suitor rode away.

"I don't know about that," he muttered. "Bob's a good lad, and the girl might do worse; but he hangs back as if he didn't care for her. There's some mystery—there's some mystery!"

The old baronet said this in that semi-thoughtful tone with which we speak of other people's affairs. The shadows of the early winter twilight, gathering thickest under the low oak ceiling of the hall, and the quaint curve of the arched doorway, fell darkly round his handsome head; but the light of his declining life, his beautiful and beloved young wife, was near him, and he could see no shadows when she was by.

She came skipping through the hall to meet him, and, shaking her golden ringlets, buried her bright head on her husband's breast.

"So the last of our visitors is gone, dear, and we're all alone," she said. "Isn't that nice?"

"Yes, darling," he answered fondly, stroking her bright hair.

"Except Mr. Robert Audley. How long is that nephew of yours going to stay here?"

"As long as he likes, my pet; he's always welcome," said the baronet; and then, as if remembering himself, he added, tenderly: "But not unless his visit is agreeable to you, darling; not if his lazy habits, or his smoking, or his dogs, or anything about him is displeasing to you."

Lady Audley pursed up her rosy lips and looked thoughtfully at the ground.

"It isn't that," she said, hesitatingly. "Mr. Audley is a very agreeable young man, and a very honorable young man; but you know, Sir Michael, I'm rather a young aunt for such a nephew, and—"

"And what, Lucy?" asked the baronet, fiercely.

"Poor Alicia is rather jealous of any attention Mr. Audley pays me, and—and—I think it would be better for her happiness if your nephew were to bring his visit to a close."

"He shall go to-night, Lucy," exclaimed Sir Michael. "I am a blind, neglectful fool not to have thought of this before. My lovely little darling, it was scarcely just to Bob to expose the poor lad to your fascinations. I know him to be as good and true-hearted a fellow as ever breathed, but—but—he shall go tonight."

"But you won't be too abrupt, dear? You won't be rude?"

"Rude! No, Lucy. I left him smoking in the lime-walk. I'll go and tell him that he must get out of the house in an hour."

So in that leafless avenue, under whose gloomy shade George Talboys had stood on that thunderous evening before the day of his disappearance, Sir Michael Audley told his nephew that the Court was no home for him, and that my lady was too young and pretty to accept the attentions of a handsome nephew of eight-and-twenty.

Robert only shrugged his shoulders and elevated his thick, black eyebrows as Sir Michael delicately hinted all this.

"I have been attentive to my lady," he said. "She interests me;" and then, with a change in his voice, and an emotion not common to him, he turned to the baronet, and grasping his hand, exclaimed, "God forbid, my dear uncle, that I should ever bring trouble upon such a noble heart as yours! God forbid that the slightest shadow of dishonor should ever fall upon your honored head—least of all through agency of mine."

The young man uttered these few words in a broken and disjointed fashion in which Sir Michael had never heard him speak, before, and then turning away his head, fairly broke down.

He left the court that night, but he did not go far. Instead of taking the evening train for London, he went straight up to the little village of Mount Stanning, and walking into the neatly-kept inn, asked Phoebe Marks if he could be accommodated with apartments.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### AT THE CASTLE INN.

The little sitting-room into which Phoebe Marks ushered the baronet's nephew was situated on the ground floor, and only separated by a lath-and-plaster partition from the little bar-parlor occupied by the innkeeper and his wife.

It seemed as though the wise architect who had superintended the building of the Castle Inn had taken especial care that nothing but the frailest and most flimsy material should be used, and that the wind, having a special fancy for this unprotected spot, should have full play for the indulgence of its caprices.

To this end pitiful woodwork had been used instead of solid masonry; rickety ceilings had been propped up by fragile rafters, and beams that threatened on every stormy night to fall upon the heads of those beneath them; doors whose specialty was never to be shut, yet always to be banging; windows constructed with a peculiar view to letting in the draft when they were shut, and keeping out the air when they were open. The hand of genius had devised this lonely country inn; and there was not an inch of woodwork, or trowelful of plaster employed in all the rickety construction that did not offer its own peculiar weak point to every assault of its indefatigable foe.

Robert looked about him with a feeble smile of resignation.

It was a change, decidedly, from the luxurious comforts of Audley Court, and it was rather a strange fancy of the young barrister to prefer loitering at this dreary village hostelry to returning to his snug chambers in Figtree Court.

But he had brought his Lares and Penates with him, in the shape of his German pipe, his tobacco canister, half a dozen French novels, and his two ill-conditioned, canine favorites, which sat shivering before the smoky little fire, barking shortly and sharply now and then, by way of hinting for some slight refreshment.

While Mr. Robert Audley contemplated his new quarters, Phoebe Marks summoned a little village lad who was in the habit of running errands for her, and taking him into the kitchen, gave him a tiny note, carefully folded and sealed.

"You know Audley Court?"

"Yes, mum."

"If you'll run there with this letter to-night, and see that it's put safely in Lady Audley's hands, I'll give you a shilling."

"Yes, mum."

"You understand? Ask to see my lady; you can say you've a message—not a note, mind—but a message from Phoebe Marks; and when you see her, give this into her own hand."

"Yes, mum."

"You won't forget?"

"No, mum."

"Then be off with you."

The boy waited for no second bidding, but in another moment was scudding along the lonely high road, down the sharp descent that led to Audley.

Phoebe Marks went to the window, and looked out at the black figure of the lad hurrying through the dusky winter evening.

"If there's any bad meaning in his coming here," she thought, "my lady will know of it in time, at any rate."

Phoebe herself brought the neatly arranged tea-tray, and the little covered dish of ham and eggs which had been prepared for this unlooked-for visitor. Her pale hair was as smoothly braided, and her light gray dress fitted as precisely as of old. The same neutral tints pervaded her person and her dress; no showy rose-colored ribbons or rustling silk gown proclaimed the well-to-do innkeeper's wife. Phoebe Marks was a person who never lost her individuality. Silent and self-constrained, she seemed to hold herself within herself, and take no color from the outer world.

Robert looked at her thoughtfully as she spread the cloth, and drew the table nearer to the fireplace.

"That," he thought, "is a woman who could keep a secret."

The dogs looked rather suspiciously at the quiet figure of Mrs. Marks gliding softly about the room, from the teapot to the caddy, and from the caddy to the kettle singing on the hob.

"Will you pour out my tea for me, Mrs. Marks?" said Robert, seating himself on a horsehair-covered arm-chair, which fitted him as tightly in every direction as if he had been measured for it.

"You have come straight from the Court, sir?" said Phoebe, as she handed Robert the sugar-basin.

"Yes; I only left my uncle's an hour ago."

"And my lady, sir, was she quite well?"

"Yes, quite well."

"As gay and light-hearted as ever, sir?"

"As gay and light-hearted as ever."

Phoebe retired respectfully after having given Mr. Audley his tea, but as she stood with her hand upon the lock of the door he spoke again.

"You knew Lady Audley when she was Miss Lucy Graham, did you not?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. I lived at Mrs. Dawson's when my lady was governess there."

"Indeed! Was she long in the surgeon's family?"

"A year and a half, sir."

"And she came from London?"

"Yes, sir."

"And she was an orphan, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Always as cheerful as she is now?"

"Always, sir."

Robert emptied his teacup and handed it to Mrs. Marks. Their eyes met—a lazy look in his, and an active, searching glance in hers.

"This woman would be good in a witness-box," he thought; "it would take a clever lawyer to bother her in a cross-examination."

He finished his second cup of tea, pushed away his plate, fed his dogs, and lighted his pipe, while Phoebe carried off the tea-tray.

The wind came whistling up across the frosty open country, and through the leafless woods, and rattled fiercely at the window-frames.

"There's a triangular draught from those two windows and the door that scarcely adds to the comfort of this apartment," murmured Robert; "and there certainly are pleasantér sensations than that of standing up to one's knees in cold water."

He poked the fire, patted his dogs, put on his great coat, rolled a rickety old sofa close to the hearth, wrapped his legs in his railway rug, and stretching himself at full length upon the narrow horsehair cushion, smoked his pipe, and watched the bluish-gray wreaths curling upward to the dingy ceiling.

"No," he murmured, again; "that is a woman who can keep a secret. A counsel for the prosecution could get very little out of her."

I have said that the bar-parlor was only separated from the sitting-room occupied by Robert by a lath-and-plaster partition. The young barrister could hear the two or three village tradesmen and a couple of farmers laughing and talking round the bar, while Luke Marks served them from his stock of liquors.

Very often he could even hear their words, especially the landlord's, for he spoke in a coarse, loud voice, and had a more boastful manner than any of his customers.

"The man is a fool," said Robert, as he laid down his pipe. "I'll go and talk to him by-and-by."

He waited till the few visitors to the Castle had dropped away one by one, and when Luke Marks had bolted the door upon the last of his customers, he strolled quietly into the bar-parlor, where the landlord was seated with his wife.

Phoebe was busy at a little table, upon which stood a prim work-box, with every reel of cotton and glistening steel bodkin in its appointed place. She was darning the coarse gray stockings that adorned her husband's awkward feet, but she did her work as daintily as if they had been my lady's delicate silken hose.

I say that she took no color from external things, and that the vague air of refinement that pervaded her nature clung to her as closely in the society of



her boorish husband at the Castle Inn as in Lady Audley's boudoir at the Court.

She looked up suddenly as Robert entered the bar-parlor. There was some shade of vexation in her pale gray eyes, which changed to an expression of anxiety—nay, rather of almost terror—as she glanced from Mr. Audley to Luke Marks.

"I have come in for a few minutes' chat before I go to bed," said Robert, settling himself very comfortably before the cheerful fire. "Would you object to a cigar, Mrs. Marks? I mean, of course, to my smoking one," he added, explanatorily.

"Not at all, sir."

"It would be a good 'un her objectin' to a bit o' 'bacca," growled Mr. Marks, "when me and the customers smokes all day."

Robert lighted his cigar with a gilt-paper match of Phoebe's making that adorned the chimney-piece, and took half a dozen reflective puffs before he spoke.

"I want you to tell me all about Mount Stanning, Mr. Marks," he said, presently.

"Then that's pretty soon told," replied Luke, with a harsh, grating laugh. "Of all the dull holes as ever a man set foot in, this is about the dullest. Not that the business don't pay pretty tidy; I don't complain of that; but I should ha' liked a public at Chelmsford, or Brentwood, or Romford, or some place where there's a bit of life in the streets; and I might have had it," he added, discontentedly, "if folks hadn't been so precious stingy."

As her husband muttered this complaint in a grumbling undertone, Phoebe looked up from her work and spoke to him.

"We forgot the brew-house door, Luke," she said. "Will you come with me and help me put up the bar?"

"The brew-house door can bide for to-night," said Mr. Marks; "I ain't agoin' to move now. I've seated myself for a comfortable smoke."

He took a long clay pipe from a corner of the fender as he spoke, and began to fill it deliberately.

"I don't feel easy about that brew-house door, Luke," remonstrated his wife; "there are always tramps about, and they can get in easily when the

bar isn't up."

"Go and put the bar up yourself, then, can't you?" answered Mr. Marks.

"It's too heavy for me to lift."

"Then let it bide, if you're too fine a lady to see to it yourself. You're very anxious all of a sudden about this here brew-house door. I suppose you don't want me to open my mouth to this here gent, that's about it. Oh, you needn't frown at me to stop my speaking! You're always putting in your tongue and clipping off my words before I've half said 'em; but I won't stand it."

"Do you hear? I won't stand it!"

Phoebe Marks shrugged her shoulders, folded her work, shut her work-box, and crossing her hands in her lap, sat with her gray eyes fixed upon her husband's bull-like face.

"Then you don't particularly care to live at Mount Stanning?" said Robert, politely, as if anxious to change the conversation.

"No, I don't," answered Luke; "and I don't care who knows it; and, as I said before, if folks hadn't been so precious stingy, I might have had a public in a thrivin' market town, instead of this tumble-down old place, where a man has his hair blowed off his head on a windy day. What's fifty pound, or what's a hundred pound—"

"Luke! Luke!"

"No, you're not goin' to stop my mouth with all your 'Luke, Lukes!'" answered Mr. Marks to his wife's remonstrance. "I say again, what's a hundred pound?"

"No," answered Robert Audley, with wonderful distinctness, and addressing his words to Luke Marks, but fixing his eyes upon Phoebe's anxious face. "What, indeed, is a hundred pounds to a man possessed of the power which you hold, or rather which your wife holds, over the person in question."

Phoebe's face, at all times almost colorless, seemed scarcely capable of growing paler; but as her eyelids drooped under Robert Audley's searching glance, a visible change came over the pallid hues of her complexion.

"A quarter to twelve," said Robert, looking at his watch.

"Late hours for such a quiet village as Mount Stanning. Good-night, my worthy host. Good-night, Mrs. Marks. You needn't send me my shaving water till nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ROBERT RECEIVES A VISITOR WHOM HE HAD SCARCELY EXPECTED.

Eleven o'clock struck the next morning, and found Mr. Robert Audley still lounging over the well ordered little breakfast table, with one of his dogs at each side of his arm-chair, regarding him with watchful eyes and opened mouths, awaiting the expected morsel of ham or toast. Robert had a county paper on his knees, and made a feeble effort now and then to read the first page, which was filled with advertisements of farming stock, quack medicines, and other interesting matter.

The weather had changed, and the snow, which had for the last few days been looming blackly in the frosty sky, fell in great feathery flakes against the windows, and lay piled in the little bit of garden-ground without.

The long, lonely road leading toward Audley seemed untrodden by a footstep, as Robert Audley looked out at the wintry landscape.

"Lively," he said, "for a man used to the fascinations of Temple Bar."

As he watched the snow-flakes falling every moment thicker and faster upon the lonely road, he was surprised by seeing a brougham driving slowly up the hill.

"I wonder what unhappy wretch has too restless a spirit to stop at home on such a morning as this," he muttered, as he returned to the arm-chair by the fire.

He had only reseated himself a few moments when Phoebe Marks entered the room to announce Lady Audley.

"Lady Audley! Pray beg her to come in," said Robert; and then, as Phoebe left the room to usher in this unexpected visitor, he muttered between his teeth—"A false move, my lady, and one I never looked for from you."

Lucy Audley was radiant on this cold and snowy January morning. Other people's noses are rudely assailed by the sharp fingers of the grim ice-king,

but not my lady's; other people's lips turn pale and blue with the chilling influence of the bitter weather, but my lady's pretty little rosebud of a mouth retained its brightest coloring and cheeriest freshness.

She was wrapped in the very sables which Robert Audley had brought from Russia, and carried a muff that the young man thought seemed almost as big as herself.

She looked a childish, helpless, babyfied little creature; and Robert looked down upon her with some touch of pity in his eyes, as she came up to the hearth by which he was standing, and warmed her tiny gloved hands at the blaze.

"What a morning, Mr. Audley!" she said, "what a morning!"

"Yes, indeed! Why did you come out in such weather?"

"Because I wished to see you—particularly."

"Indeed!"

"Yes," said my lady, with an air of considerable embarrassment, playing with the button of her glove, and almost wrenching it off in her restlessness—"yes, Mr. Audley, I felt that you had not been well treated; that—that you had, in short, reason to complain; and that an apology was due to you."

"I do not wish for any apology, Lady Audley."

"But you are entitled to one," answered my lady, quietly. "Why, my dear Robert, should we be so ceremonious toward each other? You were very comfortable at Audley; we were very glad to have you there; but, my dear, silly husband must needs take it into his foolish head that it is dangerous for his poor little wife's peace of mind to have a nephew of eight or nine and twenty smoking his cigars in her boudoir, and, behold! our pleasant little family circle is broken up."

Lucy Audley spoke with that peculiar childish vivacity which seemed so natural to her, Robert looking down almost sadly at her bright, animated face.

"Lady Audley," he said, "Heaven forbid that either you or I should ever bring grief or dishonor upon my uncle's generous heart! Better, perhaps, that I should be out of the house—better, perhaps, that I had never entered it!"

My lady had been looking at the fire while her nephew spoke, but at his last words she lifted her head suddenly, and looked him full in the face with a wondering expression—an earnest, questioning gaze, whose full meaning the young barrister understood.

"Oh, pray do not be alarmed, Lady Audley," he said, gravely. "You have no sentimental nonsense, no silly infatuation, borrowed from Balzac or Dumas *filis*, to fear from me. The benchers of the Inner Temple will tell you that Robert Audley is troubled with none of the epidemics whose outward signs are turn-down collars and Byronic neckties. I say that I wish I had never entered my uncle's house during the last year; but I say it with a far more solemn meaning than any sentimental one."

My lady shrugged her shoulders.

"If you insist on talking in enigmas, Mr. Audley," she said, "you must forgive a poor little woman if she declines to answer them."

Robert made no reply to this speech.

"But tell me," said my lady, with an entire change of tone, "what could have induced you to come up to this dismal place?"

"Curiosity."

"Curiosity?"

"Yes; I felt an interest in that bull-necked man, with the dark-red hair and wicked gray eyes. A dangerous man, my lady—a man in whose power I should not like to be."

A sudden change came over Lady Audley's face; the pretty, roseate flush faded out from her cheeks, and left them waxen white, and angry flashes lightened in her blue eyes.

"What have I done to you, Robert Audley," she cried, passionately—"what have I done to you that you should hate me so?"

He answered her very gravely:

"I had a friend, Lady Audley, whom I loved very dearly, and since I have lost him I fear that my feelings toward other people are strangely embittered."

"You mean the Mr. Talboys who went to Australia?"

"Yes, I mean the Mr. Talboys who I was told set out for Liverpool with the idea of going to Australia."

"And you do not believe in his having sailed for Australia?"

"I do not."

"But why not?"

"Forgive me, Lady Audley, if I decline to answer that question."

"As you please," she said, carelessly.

"A week after my friend disappeared," continued Robert, "I posted an advertisement to the Sydney and Melbourne papers, calling upon him if he was in either city when the advertisement appeared, to write and tell me of his whereabouts, and also calling on any one who had met him, either in the colonies or on the voyage out, to give me any information respecting him. George Talboys left Essex, or disappeared from Essex, on the 6th of September last. I ought to receive some answer to this advertisement by the end of this month. To-day is the 27th; the time draws very near."

"And if you receive no answer?" asked Lady Audley.

"If I receive no answer I shall think that my fears have been not unfounded, and I shall do my best to act."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Ah, Lady Audley, you remind me how very powerless I am in this matter. My friend might have been made away with in this very inn, and I might stay here for a twelvemonth, and go away at the last as ignorant of his fate as if I had never crossed the threshold. What do we know of the mysteries that may hang about the houses we enter? If I were to go to-morrow into that commonplace, plebeian, eight-roomed house in which Maria Manning and her husband murdered their guest, I should have no awful prescience of that bygone horror. Foul deeds have been done under the most hospitable roofs; terrible crimes have been committed amid the fairest scenes, and have left no trace upon the spot where they were done. I do not believe in mandrake, or in bloodstains that no time can efface. I believe rather that we may walk unconsciously in an atmosphere of crime, and breathe none the less freely. I believe that we may look into the smiling face of a murderer, and admire its tranquil beauty."

My lady laughed at Robert's earnestness.

"You seem to have quite a taste for discussing these horrible subjects," she said, rather scornfully; "you ought to have been a detective police officer."

"I sometimes think I should have been a good one."

"Why?"

"Because I am patient."

"But to return to Mr. George Talboys, whom we lost sight of in your eloquent discussion. What if you receive no answer to your advertisements?"

"I shall then consider myself justified in concluding my friend is dead."

"Yes, and then—?"

"I shall examine the effects he left at my chambers."

"Indeed! and what are they? Coats, waistcoats, varnished boots, and meerschaum pipes, I suppose," said Lady Audley, laughing.

"No; letters—letters from his friends, his old schoolfellows, his father, his brother officers."

"Yes?"

"Letters, too, from his wife."

My lady was silent for some few moments, looking thoughtfully at the fire.

"Have you ever seen any of the letters written by the late Mrs. Talboys?" she asked presently.

"Never. Poor soul! her letters are not likely to throw much light upon my friend's fate. I dare say she wrote the usual womanly scrawl. There are very few who write so charming and uncommon a hand as yours, Lady Audley."

"Ah, you know my hand, of course."

"Yes, I know it very well indeed."

My lady warmed her hands once more, and then taking up the big muff which she had laid aside upon a chair, prepared to take her departure.

"You have refused to accept my apology, Mr. Audley," she said; "but I trust you are not the less assured of my feelings toward you."

"Perfectly assured, Lady Audley."

"Then good-by, and let me recommend you not to stay long in this miserable draughty place, if you do not wish to take rheumatism back to Figtree Court."

"I shall return to town to-morrow morning to see after my letters."



"Then once more good-by."

She held out her hand; he took it loosely in his own. It seemed such a feeble little hand that he might have crushed it in his strong grasp, had he chosen to be so pitiless.

He attended her to her carriage, and watched it as it drove off, not toward Audley, but in the direction of Brentwood, which was about six miles from Mount Stanning.

About an hour and a half after this, as Robert stood at the door of the inn, smoking a cigar and watching the snow falling in the whitened fields opposite, he saw the brougham drive back, empty this time, to the door of the inn.

"Have you taken Lady Audley back to the Court?" he said to the coachman, who had stopped to call for a mug of hot spiced ale.

"No, sir; I've just come from the Brentwood station. My lady started for London by the 12.40 train."

"For town?"

"Yes, sir."

"My lady gone to London!" said Robert, as he returned to the little sitting-room. "Then I'll follow her by the next train; and if I'm not very much mistaken, I know where to find her."

He packed his portmanteau, paid his bill, fastened his dogs together with a couple of leathern collars and a chain, and stepped into the rumbling fly kept by the Castle Inn for the convenience of Mount Stanning. He caught an express that left Brentwood at three o'clock, and settled himself comfortably in a corner of an empty first-class carriage, coiled up in a couple of railway rugs, and smoking a cigar in mild defiance of the authorities.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE WRITING IN THE BOOK.

It was exactly five minutes past four as Mr. Robert Audley stepped out upon the platform at Shoreditch, and waited placidly until such time as his dogs and his portmanteau should be delivered up to the attendant porter who had called his cab, and undertaken the general conduct of his affairs, with that disinterested courtesy which does such infinite credit to a class of servitors who are forbidden to accept the tribute of a grateful public.

Robert Audley waited with consummate patience for a considerable time; but as the express was generally a long train, and as there were a great many passengers from Norfolk carrying guns and pointers, and other paraphernalia of a critical description, it took a long while to make matters agreeable to all claimants, and even the barrister's seraphic indifference to mundane affairs nearly gave way.

"Perhaps, when that gentleman who is making such a noise about a pointer with liver-colored spots, has discovered the particular pointer and spots that he wants—which happy combination of events scarcely seems likely to arrive—they'll give me my luggage and let me go. The designing wretches knew at a glance that I was born to be imposed upon; and that if they were to trample the life out of me upon this very platform, I should never have the spirit to bring an action against the company."

Suddenly an idea seemed to strike him, and he left the porter to struggle for the custody of his goods, and walked round to the other side of the station.

He heard a bell ring, and looking at the clock, had remembered that the down train for Colchester started at this time. He had learned what it was to have an earnest purpose since the disappearance of George Talboys; and he reached the opposite platform in time to see the passengers take their seats.

There was one lady who had evidently only just arrived at the station; for she hurried on to the platform at the very moment that Robert approached the train, and almost ran against that gentleman in her haste and excitement.

"I beg your pardon," she began, ceremoniously; then raising her eyes from Mr. Audley's waistcoat, which was about on a level with her pretty face, she exclaimed, "Robert, you in London already?"

"Yes, Lady Audley; you were quite right; the Castle Inn is a dismal place, and—"

"You got tired of it—I knew you would. Please open the carriage door for me: the train will start in two minutes."

Robert Audley was looking at his uncle's wife with rather a puzzled expression of countenance.

"What does it mean?" he thought. "She is altogether a different being to the wretched, helpless creature who dropped her mask for a moment, and looked at me with her own pitiful face, in the little room at Mount Stanning, four hours ago. What has happened to cause the change?"

He opened the door for her while he thought this, and helped her to settle herself in her seat, spreading her furs over her knees, and arranging the huge velvet mantle in which her slender little figure was almost hidden.

"Thank you very much; how good you are to me," she said, as he did this. "You will think me very foolish to travel upon such a day, without my dear darling's knowledge too; but I went up to town to settle a very terrific milliner's bill, which I did not wish my best of husbands to see; for, indulgent as he is, he might think me extravagant; and I cannot bear to suffer even in his thoughts."

"Heaven forbid that you ever should, Lady Audley," Robert said, gravely.

She looked at him for a moment with a smile, which had something defiant in its brightness.

"Heaven forbid it, indeed," she murmured. "I don't think I ever shall."

The second bell rung, and the train moved as she spoke. The last Robert Audley saw of her was that bright defiant smile.

"Whatever object brought her to London has been successfully accomplished," he thought. "Has she baffled me by some piece of womanly jugglery? Am I never to get any nearer to the truth, but am I to be tormented all my life by vague doubts, and wretched suspicions, which may grow upon me till I become a monomaniac? Why did she come to London?"

He was still mentally asking himself this question as he ascended the stairs in Figtree Court, with one of his dogs under each arm, and his railway rugs over his shoulder.

He found his chambers in their accustomed order. The geraniums had been carefully tended, and the canaries had retired for the night under cover of a square of green baize, testifying to the care of honest Mrs. Maloney. Robert cast a hurried glance round the sitting-room; then setting down the dogs upon the hearth-rug, he walked straight into the little inner chamber which served as his dressing-room.

It was in this room that he kept disused portmanteaus, battered japanned cases, and other lumber; and it was in this room that George Talboys had left his luggage. Robert lifted a portmanteau from the top of a large trunk, and kneeling down before it with a lighted candle in his hand, carefully examined the lock.

To all appearance it was exactly in the same condition in which George had left it, when he laid his mourning garments aside and placed them in this shabby repository with all other memorials of his dead wife. Robert brushed his coat sleeve across the worn, leather-covered lid, upon which the initials G. T. were inscribed with big brass-headed nails; but Mrs. Maloney, the laundress, must have been the most precise of housewives, for neither the portmanteau nor the trunk were dusty.

Mr. Audley dispatched a boy to fetch his Irish attendant, and paced up and down his sitting-room waiting anxiously for her arrival.

She came in about ten minutes, and, after expressing her delight in the return of "the master," humbly awaited his orders.

"I only sent for you to ask if anybody has been here; that is to say, if anybody has applied to you for the key of my rooms to-day—any lady?"

"Lady? No, indeed, yer honor; there's been no lady for the kay; barrin' it's the blacksmith."

"The blacksmith!"

"Yes; the blacksmith your honor ordered to come to-day."

"I order a blacksmith!" exclaimed Robert. "I left a bottle of French brandy in the cupboard," he thought, "and Mrs. M. has been evidently enjoying herself."

"Sure, and the blacksmith your honor tould to see to the locks," replied Mrs. Maloney. "It's him that lives down in one of the little streets by the bridge," she added, giving a very lucid description of the man's whereabouts.

Robert lifted his eyebrows in mute despair.

"If you'll sit down and compose yourself, Mrs. M.," he said—he abbreviated her name thus on principle, for the avoidance of unnecessary labor—"perhaps we shall be able by and by to understand each other. You say a blacksmith has been here?"

"Sure and I did, sir."

"To-day?"

"Quite correct, sir."

Step by step Mr. Audley elicited the following information. A locksmith had called upon Mrs. Maloney that afternoon at three o'clock, and had asked for the key of Mr. Audley's chambers, in order that he might look to the locks of the doors, which he stated were all out of repair. He declared that he was acting upon Mr. Audley's own orders, conveyed to him by a letter from the country, where the gentleman was spending his Christmas. Mrs. Maloney, believing in the truth of this statement, had admitted the man to the chambers, where he stayed about half an hour.

"But you were with him while he examined the locks, I suppose?" Mr. Audley asked.

"Sure I was, sir, in and out, as you may say, all the time, for I've been cleaning the stairs this afternoon, and I took the opportunity to begin my scouring while the man was at work."

"Oh, you were in and out all the time. If you *could* conveniently give me a plain answer, Mrs. M., I should be glad to know what was the longest time that you were *out* while the locksmith was in my chambers?"

But Mrs. Maloney could not give a plain answer. It might have been ten minutes; though she didn't think it was as much. It might have been a quarter of an hour; but she was sure it wasn't more. It didn't *seem* to her more than five minutes, but "thim stairs, your honor;" and here she rambled off into a disquisition upon the scouring of stairs in general, and the stairs outside Robert's chambers in particular.

Mr. Audley sighed the weary sigh of mournful resignation.

"Never mind, Mrs. M.," he said; "the locksmith had plenty of time to do anything he wanted to do, I dare say, without your being any the wiser."

Mrs. Maloney stared at her employer with mingled surprise and alarm.

"Sure, there wasn't anything for him to stale, your honor, barrin' the birds and the geran'ums, and—"

"No, no, I understand. There, that'll do, Mrs. M. Tell me where the man lives, and I'll go and see him."

"But you'll have a bit of dinner first, sir?"

"I'll go and see the locksmith before I have my dinner."

He took up his hat as he announced his determination, and walked toward the door.

"The man's address, Mrs. M?"

The Irishwoman directed him to a small street at the back of St. Bride's Church, and thither Mr. Robert Audley quietly strolled, through the miry slush which simple Londoners call *snow*.

He found the locksmith, and, at the sacrifice of the crown of his hat, contrived to enter the low, narrow doorway of a little open shop. A jet of gas was flaring in the unglazed window, and there was a very merry party in the little room behind the shop; but no one responded to Robert's "Hulloa!" The reason of this was sufficiently obvious. The merry party was so much absorbed in its own merriment as to be deaf to all commonplace summonses from the outer world; and it was only when Robert, advancing further into the cavernous little shop, made so bold as to open the half-glass door which separated him from the merry-makers, that he succeeded in obtaining their attention.

A very jovial picture of the Teniers school was presented to Mr. Robert Audley upon the opening of this door.

The locksmith, with his wife and family, and two or three droppers-in of the female sex, were clustered about a table, which was adorned by two bottles; not vulgar bottles of that colorless extract of the juniper berry, much affected by the masses; but of *bona fide* port and sherry—fiercely strong sherry, which left a fiery taste in the mouth, nut-brown sherry—rather unnaturally brown, if anything—and fine old port; no sickly vintage, faded and thin from excessive age: but a rich, full-bodied wine, sweet and substantial and high colored.

The locksmith was speaking as Robert Audley opened the door.

"And with that," he said, "she walked off, as graceful as you please."

The whole party was thrown into confusion by the appearance of Mr. Audley, but it was to be observed that the locksmith was more embarrassed than his companions. He set down his glass so hurriedly, that he spilt his wine, and wiped his mouth nervously with the back of his dirty hand.

"You called at my chambers to-day," Robert said, quietly. "Don't let me disturb you, ladies." This to the droppers-in. "You called at my chambers to-day, Mr. White, and—"

The man interrupted him.

"I hope, sir, you will be so good as to look over the mistake," he stammered. "I'm sure, sir, I'm very sorry it should have occurred. I was sent for to another gentleman's chambers, Mr. Aulwin, in Garden Court; and the name slipped my memory; and havin' done odd jobs before for you, I thought it must be you as wanted me to-day; and I called at Mrs. Maloney's for the key accordin'; but directly I see the locks in your chambers, I says to myself, the gentleman's locks ain't out of order; the gentleman don't want all his locks repaired."

"But you stayed half an hour."

"Yes, sir; for there was *one* lock out of order—the door nighest the staircase—and I took it off and cleaned it and put it on again. I won't charge you nothin' for the job, and I hope as you'll be as good as to look over the mistake as has occurred, which I've been in business thirteen years come July, and—"

"Nothing of this kind ever happened before, I suppose," said Robert, gravely. "No, it's altogether a singular kind of business, not likely to come about every day. You've been enjoying yourself this evening I see, Mr. White. You've done a good stroke of work to-day, I'll wager—made a lucky hit, and you're what you call 'standing treat,' eh?"

Robert Audley looked straight into the man's dingy face as he spoke. The locksmith was not a bad-looking fellow, and there was nothing that he need have been ashamed of in his face, except the dirt, and that, as Hamlet's mother says, "is common;" but in spite of this, Mr. White's eyelids dropped under the young barrister's calm scrutiny, and he stammered out some apologetic sort of speech about his "missus," and his missus' neighbors, and

port wine and sherry wine, with as much confusion as if he, an honest mechanic in a free country, were called upon to excuse himself to Robert Audley for being caught in the act of enjoying himself in his own parlor.

Robert cut him short with a careless nod.

"Pray don't apologize," he said; "I like to see people enjoy themselves. Good-night, Mr. White good-night, ladies."

He lifted his hat to "the missus," and the missus' neighbors, who were much fascinated by his easy manner and his handsome face, and left the shop.

"And so," he muttered to himself as he went back to his chambers, "'with that she walked off as graceful as you please.' Who was it that walked off; and what was the story which the locksmith was telling when I interrupted him at that sentence? Oh, George Talboys, George Talboys, am I ever to come any nearer to the secret of your fate? Am I coming nearer to it now, slowly but surely? Is the radius to grow narrower day by day until it draws a dark circle around the home of those I love? How is it all to end?"

He sighed wearily as he walked slowly back across the flagged quadrangles in the Temple to his own solitary chambers.

Mrs. Maloney had prepared for him that bachelor's dinner, which, however excellent and nutritious in itself, has no claim to the special charm of novelty. She had cooked for him a mutton-chop, which was soddening itself between two plates upon the little table near the fire.

Robert Audley sighed as he sat down to the familiar meal, remembering his uncle's cook with a fond, regretful sorrow.

"Her cutlets a la Maintenon made mutton seem more than mutton; a sublimated meat that could scarcely have grown upon any mundane sheep," he murmured sentimentally, "and Mrs. Maloney's chops are apt to be tough; but such is life—what does it matter?"

He pushed away his plate impatiently after eating a few mouthfuls.

"I have never eaten a good dinner at this table since I lost George Talboys," he said. "The place seems as gloomy as if the poor fellow had died in the next room, and had never been taken away to be buried. How long ago that September afternoon appears as I look back at it—that September afternoon upon which I parted with him alive and well; and lost



him as suddenly and unaccountably as if a trap-door had opened in the solid earth and let him through to the antipodes!"

Mr. Audley rose from the dinner-table and walked over to the cabinet in which he kept the document he had drawn up relating to George Talboys. He unlocked the doors of his cabinet, took the paper from the pigeon-hole marked important, and seated himself at his desk to write. He added several paragraphs to those in the document, numbering the fresh paragraphs as carefully as he had numbered the old ones.

"Heaven help us all," he muttered once; "is this paper with which no attorney has had any hand to be my first brief?"

He wrote for about half an hour, then replaced the document in the pigeon-hole, and locked the cabinet. When he had done this, he took a candle in his hand, and went into the room in which were his own portmanteaus and the trunk belonging to George Talboys.

He took a bunch of keys from his pocket, and tried them one by one. The lock of the shabby old trunk was a common one, and at the fifth trial the key turned easily.

"There'd be no need for any one to break open such a lock as this," muttered Robert, as he lifted the lid of the trunk.

He slowly emptied it of its contents, taking out each article separately, and laying it carefully upon a chair by his side. He handled the things with a respectful tenderness, as if he had been lifting the dead body of his lost friend. One by one he laid the neatly folded mourning garments on the chair. He found old meerschaum pipes, and soiled, crumpled gloves that had once been fresh from the Parisian maker; old play-bills, whose biggest letters spelled the names of actors who were dead and gone; old perfume-bottles, fragrant with essences, whose fashion had passed away; neat little parcels of letters, each carefully labeled with the name of the writer; fragments of old newspapers; and a little heap of shabby, dilapidated books, each of which tumbled into as many pieces as a pack of cards in Robert's incautious hand. But among all the mass of worthless litter, each scrap of which had once had its separate purpose, Robert Audley looked in vain for that which he sought—the packet of letters written to the missing man by his dead wife Helen Talboys. He had heard George allude more than once to the existence of these letters. He had seen him once sorting the faded papers with a reverent hand; and he had seen him replace them, carefully tied

together with a faded ribbon which had once been Helen's, among the mourning garments in the trunk. Whether he had afterward removed them, or whether they had been removed since his disappearance by some other hand, it was not easy to say; but they were gone.

Robert Audley sighed wearily as he replaced the things in the empty box, one by one, as he had taken them out. He stopped with the little heap of tattered books in his hand, and hesitated for a moment.

"I will keep these out," he muttered, "there may be something to help me in one of them."

George's library was no very brilliant collection of literature. There was an old Greek Testament and the Eton Latin Grammar; a French pamphlet on the cavalry sword-exercise; an odd volume of Tom Jones with one half of its stiff leather cover hanging to it by a thread; Byron's Don Juan, printed in a murderous type, which must have been invented for the special advantage of oculists and opticians; and a fat book in a faded gilt and crimson cover.

Robert Audley locked the trunk and took the books under his arm. Mrs. Maloney was clearing away the remains of his repast when he returned to the sitting-room. He put the books aside on a little table in a corner of the fire-place, and waited patiently while the laundress finished her work. He was in no humor even for his meerschaum consoler; the yellow-papered fictions on the shelves above his head seemed stale and profitless—he opened a volume of Balzac, but his uncle's wife's golden curls danced and trembled in a glittering haze, alike upon the metaphysical diablerie of the *Peau de Chagrin*, and the hideous social horrors of "*Cousine Bette*." The volume dropped from his hand, and he sat wearily watching Mrs. Maloney as she swept up the ashes on the hearth, replenished the fire, drew the dark damask curtains, supplied the simple wants of the canaries, and put on her bonnet in the disused clerk's office, prior to bidding her employer good-night. As the door closed upon the Irishwoman, he arose impatiently from his chair, and paced up and down the room.

"Why do I go on with this," he said, "when I know that it is leading me, step by step, day by day, hour by hour, nearer to that conclusion which, of all others, I should avoid? Am I tied to a wheel, and must I go with its every revolution, let it take me where it will? Or can I sit down here to-night and say I have done my duty to my missing friend, I have searched for him patiently, but I have searched in vain? Should I be justified in doing this?"

Should I be justified in letting the chain which I have slowly put together, link by link, drop at this point, or must I go on adding fresh links to that fatal chain until the last rivet drops into its place and the circle is complete? I think, and I believe, that I shall never see my friend's face again; and that no exertion of mine can ever be of any benefit to him. In plainer, crueller words I believe him to be dead. Am I bound to discover how and where he died? or being, as I think, on the road to that discovery, shall I do a wrong to the memory of George Talboys by turning back or stopping still? What am I to do?—what am I to do?"

He rested his elbows on his knees, and buried his face in his hands. The one purpose which had slowly grown up in his careless nature until it had become powerful enough to work a change in that very nature, made him what he had never been before—a Christian; conscious of his own weakness; anxious to keep to the strict line of duty; fearful to swerve from the conscientious discharge of the strange task that had been forced upon him; and reliant on a stronger hand than his own to point the way which he was to go. Perhaps he uttered his first earnest prayer that night, seated by his lonely fireside, thinking of George Talboys. When he raised his head from that long and silent reverie, his eyes had a bright, determined glance, and every feature in his face seemed to wear a new expression.

"Justice to the dead first," he said; "mercy to the living afterward."

He wheeled his easy-chair to the table, trimmed the lamp, and settled himself to the examination of the books.

He took them up, one by one, and looked carefully through them, first looking at the page on which the name of the owner is ordinarily written, and then searching for any scrap of paper which might have been left within the leaves. On the first page of the Eton Latin Grammar the name of Master Talboys was written in a prim, scholastic hand; the French pamphlet had a careless G.T. scrawled on the cover in pencil, in George's big, slovenly calligraphy: the Tom Jones had evidently been bought at a book-stall, and bore an inscription, dated March 14th, 1788, setting forth that the book was a tribute of respect to Mr. Thos. Scrowton, from his obedient servant, James Anderley; the Don Juan and the Testament were blank. Robert Audley breathed more freely; he had arrived at the last but one of the books without any result whatever, and there only remained the fat gilt-and-crimson-bound volume to be examined before his task was finished.

It was an annual of the year 1845. The copper-plate engravings of lovely ladies, who had flourished in that day, were yellow and spotted with mildew; the costumes grotesque and outlandish; the simpering beauties faded and commonplace. Even the little clusters of verses (in which the poet's feeble candle shed its sickly light upon the obscurities of the artist's meaning) had an old-fashioned twang; like music on a lyre, whose strings are slackened by the damps of time. Robert Audley did not stop to read any of the mild productions. He ran rapidly through the leaves, looking for any scrap of writing or fragment of a letter which might have been used to mark a place. He found nothing but a bright ring of golden hair, of that glittering hue which is so rarely seen except upon the head of a child—a sunny lock, which curled as naturally as the tendril of a vine; and was very opposite in texture, if not different in hue, to the soft, smooth tresses which the landlady at Ventnor had given to George Talboys after his wife's death. Robert Audley suspended his examination of the book, and folded this yellow lock in a sheet of letter paper, which he sealed with his signet-ring, and laid aside, with the memorandum about George Talboys and Alicia's letter, in the pigeon-hole marked important. He was going to replace the fat annual among the other books, when he discovered that the two blank leaves at the beginning were stuck together. He was so determined to prosecute his search to the very uttermost, that he took the trouble to part these leaves with the sharp end of his paper-knife, and he was rewarded for his perseverance by finding an inscription upon one of them. This inscription was in three parts, and in three different hands. The first paragraph was dated as far back as the year in which the annual had been published, and set forth that the book was the property of a certain Miss Elizabeth Ann Bince, who had obtained the precious volume as a reward for habits of order, and for obedience to the authorities of Camford House Seminary, Torquay. The second paragraph was dated five years later, and was in the handwriting of Miss Bince herself, who presented the book, as a mark of undying affection and unfading esteem (Miss Bince was evidently of a romantic temperament) to her beloved friend, Helen Maldon. The third paragraph was dated September, 1853, and was in the hand of Helen Maldon, who gave the annual to George Talboys; and it was at the sight of this third paragraph that Mr. Robert Audley's face changed from its natural hue to a sickly, leaden pallor.

"I thought it would be so," said the young man, shutting the book with a weary sigh. "God knows I was prepared for the worst, and the worst has come. I can understand all now. My next visit must be to Southampton. I must place the boy in better hands."

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## CHAPTER XX.

### MRS. PLOWSON.

Among the packet of letters which Robert Audley had found in George's trunk, there was one labeled with the name of the missing man's father—the father, who had never been too indulgent a friend to his younger son, and who had gladly availed himself of the excuse afforded by George's imprudent marriage to abandon the young man to his own resources. Robert Audley had never seen Mr. Harcourt Talboys; but George's careless talk of his father had given his friend some notion of that gentleman's character. He had written to Mr. Talboys immediately after the disappearance of George, carefully wording his letter, which vaguely hinted at the writer's fear of some foul play in the mysterious business; and, after the lapse of several weeks, he had received a formal epistle, in which Mr. Harcourt Talboys expressly declared that he had washed his hands of all responsibility in his son George's affairs upon the young man's wedding-day; and that his absurd disappearance was only in character with his preposterous marriage. The writer of this fatherly letter added in a postscript that if George Talboys had any low design of alarming his friends by this pretended disappearance, and thereby playing on their feelings with a view to pecuniary advantage, he was most egregiously deceived in the character of those persons with whom he had to deal.

Robert Audley had answered this letter by a few indignant lines, informing Mr. Talboys that his son was scarcely likely to hide himself for the furtherance of any deep-laid design on the pockets of his relatives, as he had left twenty thousand pounds in his bankers' hands at the time of his disappearance. After dispatching this letter, Robert had abandoned all thought of assistance from the man who, in the natural course of things, should have been most interested in George's fate; but now that he found himself advancing every day some step nearer to the end that lay so darkly before him, his mind reverted to this heartlessly indifferent Mr. Harcourt Talboys.

"I will run into Dorsetshire after I leave Southampton," he said, "and see this man. If *he* is content to let his son's fate rest a dark and cruel mystery to all who knew him—if he is content to go down to his grave uncertain to the last of this poor fellow's end—why should I try to unravel the tangled skein, to fit the pieces of the terrible puzzle, and gather together the stray fragments which, when collected, may make such a hideous whole? I will go to him and lay my darkest doubts freely before him. It will be for him to say what I am to do."

Robert Audley started by an early express for Southampton. The snow lay thick and white upon the pleasant country through which he went; and the young barrister had wrapped himself in so many comforters and railway rugs as to appear a perambulating mass of woollen goods, rather than a living member of a learned profession. He looked gloomily out of the misty window, opaque with the breath of himself and an elderly Indian officer, who was his only companion, and watched the fleeting landscape, which had a certain phantom-like appearance in its shroud of snow. He wrapped himself in the vast folds of his railway rug, with a peevish shiver, and felt inclined to quarrel with the destiny which compelled him to travel by an early train upon a pitiless winter's day.

"Who would have thought that I could have grown so fond of the fellow," he muttered, "or feel so lonely without him? I've a comfortable little fortune in the three per cents.; I'm heir presumptive to my uncle's title; and I know of a certain dear little girl who, as I think, would do her best to make me happy; but I declare that I would freely give up all, and stand penniless in the world to-morrow, if this mystery could be satisfactorily cleared away, and George Talboys could stand by my side."

He reached Southampton between eleven and twelve o'clock, and walked across the platform, with the snow drifting in his face, toward the pier and the lower end of the town. The clock of St. Michael's Church was striking twelve as he crossed the quaint old square in which that edifice stands, and groped his way through the narrow streets leading down to the water.

Mr. Maldon had established his slovenly household gods in one of those dreary thoroughfares which speculative builders love to raise upon some miserable fragment of waste ground hanging to the skirts of a prosperous town. Brigsome's Terrace was, perhaps, one of the most dismal blocks of building that was ever composed of brick and mortar since the first mason

plied his trowel and the first architect drew his plan. The builder who had speculated in the ten dreary eight-roomed prison-houses had hung himself behind the parlor door of an adjacent tavern while the carcasses were yet unfinished. The man who had bought the brick and mortar skeletons had gone through the bankruptcy court while the paper-hangers were still busy in Brigsome's Terrace, and had whitewashed his ceilings and himself simultaneously. Ill luck and insolvency clung to the wretched habitations. The bailiff and the broker's man were as well known as the butcher and the baker to the noisy children who played upon the waste ground in front of the parlor windows. Solvent tenants were disturbed at unhallowed hours by the noise of ghostly furniture vans creeping stealthily away in the moonless night. Insolvent tenants openly defied the collector of the water-rate from their ten-roomed strongholds, and existed for weeks without any visible means of procuring that necessary fluid.

Robert Audley looked about him with a shudder as he turned from the waterside into this poverty-stricken locality. A child's funeral was leaving one of the houses as he approached, and he thought with a thrill of horror that if the little coffin had held George's son, he would have been in some measure responsible for the boy's death.

"The poor child shall not sleep another night in this wretched hovel," he thought, as he knocked at the door of Mr. Maldon's house. "He is the legacy of my best friend, and it shall be my business to secure his safety."

A slipshod servant girl opened the door and looked at Mr. Audley rather suspiciously as she asked him, very much through her nose, what he pleased to want. The door of the little sitting room was ajar, and Robert could hear the clattering of knives and forks and the childish voice of little George prattling gayly. He told the servant that he had come from London, that he wanted to see Master Talboys, and that he would announce himself; and walking past her, without further ceremony he opened the door of the parlor. The girl stared at him aghast as he did this; and as if struck by some sudden and terrible conviction, threw her apron over her head and ran out into the snow. She darted across the waste ground, plunged into a narrow alley, and never drew breath till she found herself upon the threshold of a certain tavern called the Coach and Horses, and much affected by Mr. Maldon. The lieutenant's faithful retainer had taken Robert Audley for some new and determined collector of poor's rates—rejecting that gentleman's



account of himself as an artful fiction devised for the destruction of parochial defaulters—and had hurried off to give her master timely warning of the enemy's approach.

When Robert entered the sitting-room he was surprised to find little George seated opposite to a woman who was doing the honors of a shabby repast, spread upon a dirty table-cloth, and flanked by a pewter beer measure. The woman rose as Robert entered, and courtesied very humbly to the young barrister. She looked about fifty years of age, and was dressed in rusty widow's weeds. Her complexion was insipidly fair, and the two smooth bands of hair beneath her cap were of that sunless, flaxen hue which generally accompanies pink cheeks and white eyelashes. She had been a rustic beauty, perhaps, in her time, but her features, although tolerably regular in their shape, had a mean, pinched look, as if they had been made too small for her face. This defect was peculiarly noticeable in her mouth, which was an obvious misfit for the set of teeth it contained. She smiled as she courtesied to Mr. Robert Audley, and her smile, which laid bare the greater part of this set of square, hungry-looking teeth, by no means added to the beauty of her personal appearance.

"Mr. Maldon is not at home, sir," she said, with insinuating civility; "but if it's for the water-rate, he requested me to say that—"

She was interrupted by little George Talboys, who scrambled down from the high chair upon which he had been perched, and ran to Robert Audley.

"I know you," he said; "you came to Ventnor with the big gentleman, and you came here once, and you gave me some money, and I gave it to gran'pa to take care of, and gran'pa kept it, and he always does."

Robert Audley took the boy in his arms, and carried him to a little table in the window.

"Stand there, Georgey," he said, "I want to have a good look at you."

He turned the boy's face to the light, and pushed the brown curls off his forehead with both hands.

"You are growing more like your father every day, Georgey; and you're growing quite a man, too," he said; "would you like to go to school?"

"Oh, yes, please, I should like it very much," the boy answered, eagerly. "I went to school at Miss Pevins' once—day-school, you know—round the corner in the next street; but I caught the measles, and gran'pa wouldn't let

me go any more, for fear I should catch the measles again; and gran'pa won't let me play with the little boys in the street, because they're rude boys; he said blackguard boys; but he said I mustn't say blackguard boys, because it's naughty. He says damn and devil, but he says he may because he's old. I shall say damn and devil when I'm old; and I should like to go to school, please, and I can go to-day, if you like; Mrs. Plowson will get my frocks ready, won't you, Mrs. Plowson?"

"Certainly, Master Georgey, if your grandpapa wishes it," the woman answered, looking rather uneasily at Mr. Robert Audley.

"What on earth is the matter with this woman," thought Robert as he turned from the boy to the fair-haired widow, who was edging herself slowly toward the table upon which little George Talboys stood talking to his guardian. "Does she still take me for a tax-collector with inimical intentions toward these wretched goods and chattels; or can the cause of her fidgety manner lie deeper still. That's scarcely likely, though; for whatever secrets Lieutenant Maldon may have, it's not very probable that this woman has any knowledge of them."

Mrs. Plowson had edged herself close to the little table by this time, and was making a stealthy descent upon the boy, when Robert turned sharply round.

"What are you going to do with the child?" he said.

"I was only going to take him away to wash his pretty face, sir, and smooth his hair," answered the woman, in the most insinuating tone in which she had spoken of the water-rate. "You don't see him to any advantage, sir, while his precious face is dirty. I won't be five minutes making him as neat as a new pin."

She had her long, thin arms about the boy as she spoke, and she was evidently going to carry him off bodily, when Robert stopped her.

"I'd rather see him as he is, thank you," he said. "My time in Southampton isn't very long, and I want to hear all that the little man can tell me."

The little man crept closer to Robert, and looked confidently into the barrister's gray eyes.

"I like you very much," he said. "I was frightened of you when you came before, because I was shy. I am not shy now—I am nearly six years old."

Robert patted the boy's head encouragingly, but he was not looking at little George; he was watching the fair-haired widow, who had moved to the window, and was looking out at the patch of waste ground.

"You're rather fidgety about some one, ma'am, I'm afraid," said Robert.

She colored violently as the barrister made this remark, and answered him in a confused manner.

"I was looking for Mr. Maldon, sir," she said; "he'll be so disappointed if he doesn't see you."

"You know who I am, then?"

"No, sir, but—"

The boy interrupted her by dragging a little jeweled watch from his bosom and showing it to Robert.

"This is the watch the pretty lady gave me," he said. "I've got it now—but I haven't had it long, because the jeweler who cleans it is an idle man, gran'pa says, and always keeps it such a long time; and gran'pa says it will have to be cleaned again, because of the taxes. He always takes it to be cleaned when there's taxes—but he says if he were to lose it the pretty lady would give me another. Do you know the pretty lady?"

"No, Georgey, but tell me about her."

Mrs. Plowson made another descent upon the boy. She was armed with a pocket-handkerchief this time, and displayed great anxiety about the state of little George's nose, but Robert warded off the dreaded weapon, and drew the child away from his tormentor.

"The boy will do very well, ma'am," he said, "if you'll be good enough to let him alone for five minutes. Now, Georgey, suppose you sit on my knee, and tell me all about the pretty lady."

The child clambered from the table onto Mr. Audley's knees, assisting his descent by a very unceremonious manipulation of his guardian's coat-collar.

"I'll tell you all about the pretty lady," he said, "because I like you very much. Gran'pa told me not to tell anybody, but I'll tell you, you know, because I like you, and because you're going to take me to school. The pretty lady came here one night—long ago—oh, so long ago," said the boy, shaking his head, with a face whose solemnity was expressive of some prodigious lapse of time. "She came when I was not nearly so big as I am

now—and she came at night—after I'd gone to bed, and she came up into my room, and sat upon the bed, and cried—and she left the watch under my pillow, and she—Why do you make faces at me, Mrs. Plowson? I may tell this gentleman," Georgey added, suddenly addressing the widow, who was standing behind Robert's shoulder.

Mrs. Plowson mumbled some confused apology to the effect that she was afraid Master George was troublesome.

"Suppose you wait till I say so, ma'am, before you stop the little fellow's mouth," said Robert Audley, sharply. "A suspicious person might think from your manner that Mr. Maldon and you had some conspiracy between you, and that you were afraid of what the boy's talk may let slip."

He rose from his chair, and looked full at Mrs. Plowson as he said this. The fair-haired widow's face was as white as her cap when she tried to answer him, and her pale lips were so dry that she was compelled to wet them with her tongue before the words would come.

The little boy relieved her embarrassment.

"Don't be cross to Mrs. Plowson," he said. "Mrs. Plowson is very kind to me. Mrs. Plowson is Matilda's mother. You don't know Matilda. Poor Matilda was always crying; she was ill, she—"

The boy was stopped by the sudden appearance of Mr. Maldon, who stood on the threshold of the parlor door staring at Robert Audley with a half-drunken, half-terrified aspect, scarcely consistent with the dignity of a retired naval officer. The servant girl, breathless and panting, stood close behind her master. Early in the day though it was, the old man's speech was thick and confused, as he addressed himself fiercely to Mrs. Plowson.

"You're a prett' creature to call yoursel' sensible woman?" he said. "Why don't you take th' chile 'way, er wash 's face? D'yer want to ruin me? D'yer want to 'stroy me? Take th' chile 'way! Mr. Audley, sir, I'm ver' glad to see yer; ver' 'appy to 'ceive yer in m' humbl' 'bode," the old man added with tipsy politeness, dropping into a chair as he spoke, and trying to look steadily at his unexpected visitor.

"Whatever this man's secrets are," thought Robert, as Mrs. Plowson hustled little George Talboys out of the room, "that woman has no unimportant share of them. Whatever the mystery may be, it grows darker and thicker at every step; but I try in vain to draw back or to stop short upon

the road, for a stronger hand than my own is pointing the way to my lost friend's unknown grave."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### LITTLE GEORGEY LEAVES HIS OLD HOME.

"I am going to take your grandson away with me, Mr. Maldon," Robert said gravely, as Mrs. Plowson retired with her young charge.

The old man's drunken imbecility was slowly clearing away like the heavy mists of a London fog, through which the feeble sunshine struggles dimly to appear. The very uncertain radiance of Lieutenant Maldon's intellect took a considerable time in piercing the hazy vapors of rum-and-water; but the flickering light at last faintly glimmered athwart the clouds, and the old man screwed his poor wits to the sticking-point.

"Yes, yes," he said, feebly; "take the boy away from his poor old grandfather; I always thought so."

"You always thought that I should take him away?" scrutinizing the half-drunken countenance with a searching glance. "Why did you think so, Mr. Maldon?"

The fogs of intoxication got the better of the light of sobriety for a moment, and the lieutenant answered vaguely:

"Thought so—'cause I thought so."

Meeting the young barrister's impatient frown, he made another effort, and the light glimmered again.

"Because I thought you or his father would fetch 'm away."

"When I was last in this house, Mr. Maldon, you told me that George Talboys had sailed for Australia."

"Yes, yes—I know, I know," the old man answered, confusedly, shuffling his scanty limp gray hairs with his two wandering hands—"I know; but he might have come back—mightn't he? He was restless, and—and—queer in his mind, perhaps, sometimes. He might have come back."

He repeated this two or three times in feeble, muttering tones; groping about on the littered mantle-piece for a dirty-looking clay pipe, and filling and lighting it with hands that trembled violently.

Robert Audley watched those poor, withered, tremulous fingers dropping shreds of tobacco upon the hearth rug, and scarcely able to kindle a lucifer for their unsteadiness. Then walking once or twice up and down the little room, he left the old man to take a few puffs from the great consoler.

Presently he turned suddenly upon the half-pay lieutenant with a dark solemnity in his handsome face.

"Mr. Maldon," he said, slowly watching the effect of every syllable as he spoke, "George Talboys never sailed for Australia—that I know. More than this, he never came to Southampton; and the lie you told me on the 8th of last September was dictated to you by the telegraphic message which you received on that day."

The dirty clay pipe dropped from the tremulous hand, and shivered against the iron fender, but the old man made no effort to find a fresh one; he sat trembling in every limb, and looking, Heaven knows how piteously, at Robert Audley.

"The lie was dictated to you, and you repeated your lesson. But you no more saw George Talboys here on the 7th of September than I see him in this room now. You thought you had burnt the telegraphic message, but you had only burnt a part of it—the remainder is in my possession."

Lieutenant Maldon was quite sober now.

"What have I done?" he murmured, hopelessly. "Oh, my God! what have I done?"

"At two o'clock on the 7th of September last," continued the pitiless, accusing voice, "George Talboys was seen alive and well at a house in Essex."

Robert paused to see the effect of these words. They had produced no change in the old man. He still sat trembling from head to foot, and staring with the fixed and solid gaze of some helpless wretch whose every sense is gradually becoming numbed by terror.

"At two o'clock on that day," remarked Robert Audley, "my poor friend was seen alive and well at ———, at the house of which I speak. From that hour to this I have never been able to hear that he has been seen by any living creature. I have taken such steps as *must* have resulted in procuring the information of his whereabouts, were he alive. I have done this patiently and carefully—at first, even hopefully. Now I know that he is dead."

Robert Audley had been prepared to witness some considerable agitation in the old man's manner, but he was not prepared for the terrible anguish, the ghastly terror, which convulsed Mr. Maldon's haggard face as he uttered the last word.

"No, no, no, no," reiterated the lieutenant, in a shrill, half-screaming voice; "no, no! For God's sake, don't say that! Don't think it—don't let *me* think it—don't let me dream of it! Not dead—anything but dead! Hidden away, perhaps—bribed to keep out of the way, perhaps; but not dead—not dead—not dead!"

He cried these words aloud, like one beside himself, beating his hands upon his gray head, and rocking backward and forward in his chair. His feeble hands trembled no longer—they were strengthened by some convulsive force that gave them a new power.

"I believe," said Robert, in the same solemn, relentless voice, "that my friend left Essex; and I believe he died on the 7th of September last."

The wretched old man, still beating his hands among his thin gray hair, slid from his chair to the ground, and groveled at Robert's feet.

"Oh! no, no—for God's, no!" he shrieked hoarsely. "No! you don't know what you say—you don't know what your words mean!"

"I know their weight and value only too well—as well as I see you do, Mr. Maldon. God help us!"

"Oh, what am I doing? what am I doing?" muttered the old man, feebly; then raising himself from the ground with an effort, he drew himself to his full height, and said, in a manner which was new to him, and which was not without a certain dignity of his own—that dignity which must be always attached to unutterable misery, in whatever form it may appear—he said, gravely:

"You have no right to come here and terrify a man who has been drinking, and who is not quite himself. You have no right to do it, Mr. Audley. Even the—the officer, sir, who—who—" He did not stammer, but his lips trembled so violently that his words seemed to be shaken into pieces by their motion. "The officer, I repeat, sir, who arrests a—thief, or a—" He stopped to wipe his lips, and to still them if he could by doing so, which he could not. "A thief or a murderer—" His voice died suddenly away upon the last word, and it was only by the motion of those trembling lips that Robert



knew what he meant. "Gives him warning, sir, fair warning, that he may say nothing which shall commit himself—or—or—other people. The—the—law, sir, has that amount of mercy for a—a—suspected criminal. But you, sir,—you come to my house, and you come at a time when—when—contrary to my usual habits—which, as people will tell you, are sober—you take the opportunity to—terrify me—and it is not right, sir—it is—"

Whatever he would have said died away into inarticulate gasps, which seemed to choke him, and sinking into a chair, he dropped his face upon the table, and wept aloud. Perhaps in all the dismal scenes of domestic misery which had been acted in those spare and dreary houses—in all the petty miseries, the burning shames, the cruel sorrows, the bitter disgraces which own poverty for their father—there had never been such a scene as this. An old man hiding his face from the light of day, and sobbing aloud in his wretchedness. Robert Audley contemplated the painful picture with a hopeless and pitying face.

"If I had known this," he thought, "I might have spared him. It would have been better, perhaps, to have spared him."

The shabby room, the dirt, the confusion, the figure of the old man, with his gray head upon the soiled tablecloth, amid the muddled *débris* of a wretched dinner, grew blurred before the sight of Robert Audley as he thought of another man, as old as this one, but, ah! how widely different in every other quality! who might come by and by to feel the same, or even a worse anguish, and to shed, perhaps, yet bitterer tears. The moment in which the tears rose to his eyes and dimmed the piteous scene before him, was long enough to take him back to Essex, and to show him the image of his uncle, stricken by agony and shame.

"Why do I go on with this?" he thought; "how pitiless I am, and how relentlessly I am carried on. It is not myself; it is the hand which is beckoning me further and further upon the dark road, whose end I dare not dream of."

He thought this, and a hundred times more than this, while the old man sat with his face still hidden, wrestling with his anguish, but without power to keep it down.

"Mr. Maldon," Robert Audley said, after a pause, "I do not ask you to forgive me for what I have brought upon you, for the feeling is strong within me that it must have come to you sooner or later—if not through me,

through some one else. There are—" he stopped for a moment hesitating. The sobbing did not cease; it was sometimes low, sometimes loud, bursting out with fresh violence, or dying away for an instant, but never ceasing. "There are some things which, as people say, cannot be hidden. I think there is truth in that common saying which had its origin in that old worldly wisdom which people gathered from experience and not from books. If—if I were content to let my friend rest in his hidden grave, it is but likely that some stranger who had never heard the name of George Talboys, might fall by the remotest accident upon the secret of his death. To-morrow, perhaps; or ten years hence, or in another generation, when the—the hand that wronged him is as cold as his own. If I *could* let the matter rest; if—if I could leave England forever, and purposely fly from the possibility of ever coming across another clew to the secret, I would do it—I would gladly, thankfully do it—but I *cannot*! A hand which is stronger than my own beckons me on. I wish to take no base advantage of you, less than of all other people; but I must go on; I must go on. If there is any warning you would give to any one, give it. If the secret toward which I am traveling day by day, hour by hour, involves any one in whom you have an interest, let that person fly before I come to the end. Let them leave this country; let them leave all who know them—all whose peace their wickedness has endangered; let them go away—they shall not be pursued. But if they slight your warning—if they try to hold their present position in defiance of what it will be in your power to tell them—let them beware of me, for, when the hour comes, I swear that I will not spare them."

The old man looked up for the first time, and wiped his wrinkled face upon a ragged silk handkerchief.

"I declare to you that I do not understand you," he said. "I solemnly declare to you that I cannot understand; and I do not believe that George Talboys is dead."

"I would give ten years of my own life if I could see him alive," answered Robert, sadly. "I am sorry for you, Mr. Maldon—I am sorry for all of us."

"I do not believe that my son-in-law is dead," said the lieutenant; "I do not believe that the poor lad is dead."

He endeavored in a feeble manner to show to Robert Audley that his wild outburst of anguish had been caused by his grief for the loss of George; but

the pretense was miserably shallow.

Mrs. Plowson re-entered the room, leading little Georgey, whose face shone with that brilliant polish which yellow soap and friction can produce upon the human countenance.

"Dear heart alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Plowson, "what has the poor old gentleman been taking on about? We could hear him in the passage, sobbin' awful."

Little George crept up to his grandfather, and smoothed the wet and wrinkled face with his pudgy hand.

"Don't cry, gran'pa," he said, "don't cry. You shall have my watch to be cleaned, and the kind jeweler shall lend you the money to pay the taxman while he cleans the watch—I don't mind, gran'pa. Let's go to the jeweler, the jeweler in High street, you know, with golden balls painted upon his door, to show that he comes from Lombar—Lombardshire," said the boy, making a dash at the name. "Come, gran'pa."

The little fellow took the jeweled toy from his bosom and made for the door, proud of being possessed of a talisman, which he had seen so often made useful.

"There are wolves at Southampton," he said, with rather a triumphant nod to Robert Audley. "My gran'pa says when he takes my watch that he does it to keep the wolf from the door. Are there wolves where you live?"

The young barrister did not answer the child's question, but stopped him as he was dragging his grandfather toward the door.

"Your grandpapa does not want the watch to-day, Georgey," he said, gravely.

"Why is he sorry, then?" asked Georgey, naively; "when he wants the watch he is always sorry, and beats his poor forehead so"—the boy stopped to pantomime with his small fists—"and says that she—the pretty lady, I think he means—uses him very hard, and that he can't keep the wolf from the door; and then I say, 'Gran'pa, have the watch;' and then he takes me in his arms, and says, 'Oh, my blessed angel! how can I rob my blessed angel?' and then he cries, but not like to-day—not loud, you know; only tears running down his poor cheeks, not so that you could hear him in the passage."

Painful as the child's prattle was to Robert Audley, it seemed a relief to the old man. He did not hear the boy's talk, but walked two or three times up and down the little room and smoothed his rumpled hair and suffered his cravat to be arranged by Mrs. Plowson, who seemed very anxious to find out the cause of his agitation.

"Poor dear old gentleman," she said, looking at Robert.

"What has happened to upset him so?"

"His son-in-law is dead," answered Mr. Audley, fixing his eyes upon Mrs. Plowson's sympathetic face. "He died, within a year and a half after the death of Helen Talboys, who lies buried in Ventnor churchyard."

The face into which he was looking changed very slightly, but the eyes that had been looking at him shifted away as he spoke, and Mrs. Plowson was obliged to moisten her white lips with her tongue before she answered him.

"Poor Mr. Talboys dead!" she said; "that is bad news indeed, sir."

Little George looked wistfully up at his guardian's face as this was said.

"Who's dead?" he said. "George Talboys is my name. Who's dead?"

"Another person whose name is Talboys, Georgey."

"Poor person! Will he go to the pit-hole?"

The boy had that notion of death which is generally imparted to children by their wise elders, and which always leads the infant mind to the open grave and rarely carries it any higher.

"I should like to *see* him put in the pit-hole," Georgey remarked, after a pause. He had attended several infant funerals in the neighborhood, and was considered valuable as a mourner on account of his interesting appearance. He had come, therefore, to look upon the ceremony of interment as a solemn festivity; in which cake and wine, and a carriage drive were the leading features.

"You have no objection to my taking Georgey away with me, Mr. Maldon?" asked Robert Audley.

The old man's agitation had very much subsided by this time. He had found another pipe stuck behind the tawdry frame of the looking-glass, and was trying to light it with a bit of twisted newspaper.

"You do not object, Mr. Maldon?"

"No, sir—no, sir; you are his guardian, and you have a right to take him where you please. He has been a very great comfort to me in my lonely old age, but I have been prepared to lose him. I—I may not have always done my duty to him, sir, in—in the way of schooling, and—and boots. The number of boots which boys of his age wear out, sir, is not easily realized by the mind of a young man like yourself; he has been kept away from school, perhaps, sometimes, and occasionally worn shabby boots when our funds have got low; but he has not been unkindly treated. No, sir; if you were to question him for a week, I don't think you'd hear that his poor old grandfather ever said a harsh word to him."

Upon this, Georgie, perceiving the distress of his old protector, set up a terrible howl, and declared that he would never leave him.

"Mr. Maldon," said Robert Audley, with a tone which was half-mournful, half-compassionate, "when I looked at my position last night, I did not believe that I could ever come to think it more painful than I thought it then. I can only say—God have mercy upon us all. I feel it my duty to take the child away, but I shall take him straight from your house to the best school in Southampton; and I give you my honor that I will extort nothing from his innocent simplicity which can in any manner—I mean," he said, breaking off abruptly, "I mean this. I will not seek to come one step nearer the secret through him. I—I am not a detective officer, and I do not think the most accomplished detective would like to get his information from a child."

The old man did not answer; he sat with his face shaded by his hand, and with his extinguished pipe between the listless fingers of the other.

"Take the boy away, Mrs. Plowson," he said, after a pause; "take him away and put his things on. He is going with Mr. Audley."

"Which I do say that it's not kind of the gentleman to take his poor grandpa's pet away," Mrs. Plowson exclaimed, suddenly, with respectful indignation.

"Hush, Mrs. Plowson," the old man answered, piteously; "Mr. Audley is the best judge. I—I haven't many years to live; I sha'n't trouble anybody long."

The tears oozed slowly through the dirty fingers with which he shaded his blood-shot eyes, as he said this.

"God knows, I never injured your friend, sir," he said, by-and-by, when Mrs. Plowson and Georgey had returned, "nor even wished him any ill. He was a good son-in-law to me—better than many a son. I never did him any wilful wrong, sir. I—I spent his money, perhaps, but I am sorry for it—I am very sorry for it now. But I don't believe he is dead—no, sir; no, I don't believe it!" exclaimed the old man, dropping his hand from his eyes, and looking with new energy at Robert Audley. "I—I don't believe it, sir! How—how should he be dead?"

Robert did not answer this eager questioning. He shook his head mournfully, and, walking to the little window, looked out across a row of

straggling geraniums at the dreary patch of waste ground on which the children were at play.

Mrs. Plowson returned with little Georgey muffled in a coat and comforter, and Robert took the boy's hand.

The little fellow sprung toward the old man, and clinging about him, kissed the dirty tears from his faded cheeks.

"Don't be sorry for me, gran'pa," he said; "I am going to school to learn to be a clever man, and I shall come home to see you and Mrs. Plowson, sha'n't I?" he added, turning to Robert.

"Yes, my dear, by-and-by."

"Take him away, sir—take him away," cried Mr. Maldon; "you are breaking my heart."

The little fellow trotted away contentedly at Robert's side. He was very well pleased at the idea of going to school, though he had been happy enough with his drunken old grandfather, who had always displayed a maudlin affection for the pretty child, and had done his best to spoil Georgey, by letting him have his own way in everything; in consequence of which indulgence, Master Talboys had acquired a taste for late hours, hot suppers of the most indigestible nature, and sips of rum-and-water from his grandfather's glass.

He communicated his sentiments upon many subjects to Robert Audley, as they walked to the Dolphin Hotel; but the barrister did not encourage him to talk.

It was no very difficult matter to find a good school in such a place as Southampton. Robert Audley was directed to a pretty house between the Bar and the Avenue, and leaving Georgey to the care of a good-natured waiter, who seemed to have nothing to do but to look out of the window, and whisk invisible dust off the brightly polished tables, the barrister walked up the High street toward Mr. Marchmont's academy for young gentlemen.

He found Mr. Marchmont a very sensible man, and he met a file of orderly-looking young gentlemen walking townward under the escort of a couple of ushers as he entered the house.

He told the schoolmaster that little George Talboys had been left in his charge by a dear friend, who had sailed for Australia some months before,

and whom he believed to be dead. He confided him to Mr. Marchmont's especial care, and he further requested that no visitors should be admitted to see the boy unless accredited by a letter from himself. Having arranged the matter in a very few business-like words, he returned to the hotel to fetch Georgey.

He found the little man on intimate terms with the idle waiter, who had been directing Master Georgey's attention to the different objects of interest in the High street.

Poor Robert had about as much notion of the requirements of a child as he had of those of a white elephant. He had catered for silkworms, guinea-pigs, dormice, canary-birds, and dogs, without number, during his boyhood, but he had never been called upon to provide for a young person of five years old.

He looked back five-and-twenty years, and tried to remember his own diet at the age of five.

"I've a vague recollection of getting a good deal of bread and milk and boiled mutton," he thought; "and I've another vague recollection of not liking them. I wonder if this boy likes bread and milk and boiled mutton."

He stood pulling his thick mustache and staring thoughtfully at the child for some minutes before he could get any further.

"I dare say you're hungry, Georgey?" he said, at last.

The boy nodded, and the waiter whisked some more invisible dust from the nearest table as a preparatory step toward laying a cloth.

"Perhaps you'd like some lunch?" Mr. Audley suggested, still pulling his mustache.

The boy burst out laughing.

"Lunch!" he cried. "Why, it's afternoon, and I've had my dinner."

Robert Audley felt himself brought to a standstill. What refreshment could he possibly provide for a boy who called it afternoon at three o'clock?

"You shall have some bread and milk, Georgey," he said, presently. "Waiter, bread and milk, and a pint of hock."

Master Talboys made a wry face.

"I never have bread and milk," he said, "I don't like it. I like what gran'pa calls something savory. I should like a veal cutlet. Gran'pa told me he dined



here once, and the veal cutlets were lovely, gran'pa said. Please may I have a veal cutlet, with egg and bread-crumbs, you know, and lemon-juice you know?" he added to the waiter: "Gran'pa knows the cook here. The cook's such a nice gentleman, and once gave me a shilling, when gran'pa brought me here. The cook wears better clothes than gran'pa—better than yours, even," said Master Georgey, pointing to Robert's rough great-coat with a depreciating nod.

Robert Audley stared aghast. How was he to deal with this epicure of five years old, who rejected bread and milk and asked for veal cutlets?

"I'll tell you what I'll do with you, little Georgey," he exclaimed, after a pause—"I'll give you a dinner!"

The waiter nodded briskly.

"Upon my word, sir," he said, approvingly, "I think the little gentleman will know how to eat it."

"I'll give you a dinner, Georgey," repeated Robert—"some stewed eels, a little Julienne, a dish of cutlets, a bird, and a pudding. What do you say to that, Georgey?"

"I don't think the young gentleman will object to it when he sees it, sir," said the waiter. "Eels, Julienne, cutlets, bird, pudding—I'll go and tell the cook, sir. What time, sir?"

"Well, we'll say six, and Master Georgey will get to his new school by bedtime. You can contrive to amuse the child for this afternoon, I dare say. I have some business to settle, and sha'n't be able to take him out. I shall sleep here to-night. Good-by, Georgey; take care of yourself and try and get your appetite in order against six o'clock."

Robert Audley left the boy in charge of the idle waiter, and strolled down to the water side, choosing that lonely bank which leads away under the mouldering walls of the town toward the little villages beside the narrowing river.

He had purposely avoided the society of the child, and he walked through the light drifting snow till the early darkness closed upon him.

He went back to the town, and made inquiries at the station about the trains for Dorsetshire.

"I shall start early to-morrow morning," he thought, "and see George's father before nightfall. I will tell him all—all but the interest which I take in

—in the suspected person, and he shall decide what is next to be done."

Master Georgey did very good justice to the dinner which Robert had ordered. He drank Bass' pale ale to an extent which considerably alarmed his entertainer, and enjoyed himself amazingly, showing an appreciation of roast pheasant and bread-sauce which was beyond his years. At eight o'clock a fly was brought out for his accommodation, and he departed in the highest spirits, with a sovereign in his pocket, and a letter from Robert to Mr. Marchmont, inclosing a check for the young gentleman's outfit.

"I'm glad I'm going to have new clothes," he said, as he bade Robert good-by; "for Mrs. Plowson has mended the old ones ever so many times. She can have them now, for Billy."

"Who's Billy?" Robert asked, laughing at the boy's chatter.

"Billy is poor Matilda's little boy. He's a common boy, you know. Matilda was common, but she—"

But the flyman snapping his whip at this moment, the old horse jogged off, and Robert Audley heard no more of Matilda.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### COMING TO A STANDSTILL.

Mr. Harcourt Talboys lived in a prim, square, red-brick mansion, within a mile of a little village called Grange Heath, in Dorsetshire. The prim, square, red-brick mansion stood in the center of prim, square grounds, scarcely large enough to be called a park, too large to be called anything else—so neither the house nor the grounds had any name, and the estate was simply designated Squire Talboys'.

Perhaps Mr. Harcourt Talboys was the last person in this world with whom it was possible to associate the homely, hearty, rural old English title of squire. He neither hunted nor farmed. He had never worn crimson, pink, or top-boots in his life. A southerly wind and a cloudy sky were matters of supreme indifference to him, so long as they did not in any way interfere with his own prim comforts; and he only cared for the state of the crops inasmuch as it involved the hazard of certain rents which he received for the farms upon his estate. He was a man of about fifty years of age, tall, straight, bony and angular, with a square, pale face, light gray eyes, and scanty dark hair, brushed from either ear across a bald crown, and thus imparting to his physiognomy some faint resemblance to that of a terrier—a sharp, uncompromising, hard-headed terrier—a terrier not to be taken in by the cleverest dog-stealer who ever distinguished himself in his profession.

Nobody ever remembered getting upon what is popularly called the blind side of Harcourt Talboys. He was like his own square-built, northern-fronted, shelterless house. There were no shady nooks in his character into which one could creep for shelter from his hard daylight. He was all daylight. He looked at everything in the same broad glare of intellectual sunlight, and would see no softening shadows that might alter the sharp outlines of cruel facts, subduing them to beauty. I do not know if I express what I mean, when I say that there were no curves in his character—that his mind ran in straight lines, never diverging to the right or the left to round off their pitiless angles. With him right was right, and wrong was wrong. He had never in his merciless, conscientious life admitted the idea that

circumstances might mitigate the blackness of wrong or weaken the force of right. He had cast off his only son because his only son had disobeyed him, and he was ready to cast off his only daughter at five minutes' notice for the same reason.

If this square-built, hard-headed man could be possessed of such a weakness as vanity, he was certainly vain of his hardness. He was vain of that inflexible squareness of intellect, which made him the disagreeable creature that he was. He was vain of that unwavering obstinacy which no influence of love or pity had ever been known to bend from its remorseless purpose. He was vain of the negative force of a nature which had never known the weakness of the affections, or the strength which may be born of that very weakness.

If he had regretted his son's marriage, and the breach of his own making, between himself and George, his vanity had been more powerful than his regret, and had enabled him to conceal it. Indeed, unlikely as it appears at the first glance that such a man as this could have been vain, I have little doubt that vanity was the center from which radiated all the disagreeable lines in the character of Mr. Harcourt Talboys. I dare say Junius Brutus was vain, and enjoyed the approval of awe-stricken Rome when he ordered his son off for execution. Harcourt Talboys would have sent poor George from his presence between the reversed fasces of the lictors, and grimly relished his own agony. Heaven only knows how bitterly this hard man may have felt the separation between himself and his only son, or how much the more terrible the anguish might have been made by that unflinching self-conceit which concealed the torture.

"My son did me an unpardonable wrong by marrying the daughter of a drunken pauper," Mr. Talboys would answer to any one who had the temerity to speak to him about George, "and from that hour I had no longer a son. I wish him no ill. He is simply dead to me. I am sorry for him, as I am sorry for his mother who died nineteen years ago. If you talk to me of him as you would talk of the dead, I shall be ready to hear you. If you speak of him as you would speak of the living, I must decline to listen."

I believe that Harcourt Talboys hugged himself upon the gloomy Roman grandeur of this speech, and that he would like to have worn a toga, and wrapped himself sternly in its folds, as he turned his back upon poor George's intercessor. George never in his own person made any effort to

soften his father's verdict. He knew his father well enough to know that the case was hopeless.

"If I write to him, he will fold my letter with the envelope inside, and indorse it with my name and the date of its arrival," the young man would say, "and call everybody in the house to witness that it had not moved him to one softening recollection or one pitiful thought. He will stick to his resolution to his dying day. I dare say, if the truth was known, he is glad that his only son has offended him and given him the opportunity of parading his Roman virtues."

George had answered his wife thus when she and her father had urged him to ask assistance from Harcourt Talboys.

"No my darling," he would say, conclusively. "It's very hard, perhaps, to be poor, but we will bear it. We won't go with pitiful faces to the stern father, and ask him to give us food and shelter, only to be refused in long, Johnsonian sentences, and made a classical example for the benefit of the neighborhood. No, my pretty one; it is easy to starve, but it is difficult to stoop."

Perhaps poor Mrs. George did not agree very heartily to the first of these two propositions. She had no great fancy for starving, and she whimpered pitifully when the pretty pint bottles of champagne, with Cliquot's and Moet's brands upon their corks, were exchanged for sixpenny ale, procured by a slipshod attendant from the nearest beer-shop. George had been obliged to carry his own burden and lend a helping hand with that of his wife, who had no idea of keeping her regrets or disappointments a secret.

"I thought dragoons were always rich," she used to say, peevishly. "Girls always want to marry dragoons; and tradespeople always want to serve dragoons; and hotel-keepers to entertain dragoons; and theatrical managers to be patronized by dragoons. Who could have ever expected that a dragoon would drink sixpenny ale, smoke horrid bird's-eye tobacco, and let his wife wear a shabby bonnet?"

If there were any selfish feelings displayed in such speeches as these, George Talboys had never discovered it. He had loved and believed in his wife from the first to the last hour of his brief married life. The love that is not blind is perhaps only a spurious divinity after all; for when Cupid takes the fillet from his eyes it is a fatally certain indication that he is preparing to spread his wings for a flight. George never forgot the hour in which he had

first become bewitched by Lieutenant Maldon's pretty daughter, and however she might have changed, the image which had charmed him then, unchanged and unchanging, represented her in his heart.

Robert Audley left Southampton by a train which started before daybreak, and reached Wareham station early in the day. He hired a vehicle at Wareham to take him over to Grange Heath.

The snow had hardened upon the ground, and the day was clear and frosty, every object in the landscape standing in sharp outline against the cold blue sky. The horses' hoofs clattered upon the ice-bound road, the iron shoes striking on the ground that was almost as iron as themselves. The wintry day bore some resemblance to the man to whom Robert was going. Like him, it was sharp, frigid, and uncompromising: like him, it was merciless to distress and impregnable to the softening power of sunshine. It would accept no sunshine but such January radiance as would light up the bleak, bare country without brightening it; and thus resembled Harcourt Talboys, who took the sternest side of every truth, and declared loudly to the disbelieving world that there never had been, and never could be, any other side.

Robert Audley's heart sunk within him as the shabby hired vehicle stopped at a stern-looking barred fence, and the driver dismounted to open a broad iron gate which swung back with a clanking noise and was caught by a great iron tooth, planted in the ground, which snapped at the lowest bar of the gate as if it wanted to bite.

This iron gate opened into a scanty plantation of straight-limbed fir-trees, that grew in rows and shook their sturdy winter foliage defiantly in the very teeth of the frosty breeze. A straight graveled carriage-drive ran between these straight trees across a smoothly kept lawn to a square red-brick mansion, every window of which winked and glittered in the January sunlight as if it had been that moment cleaned by some indefatigable housemaid.

I don't know whether Junius Brutus was a nuisance in his own house, but among other of his Roman virtues, Mr. Talboys owned an extreme aversion to disorder, and was the terror of every domestic in his establishment.

The windows winked and the flight of stone steps glared in the sunlight, the prim garden walks were so freshly graveled that they gave a sandy, gingery aspect to the place, reminding one unpleasantly of red hair. The

lawn was chiefly ornamented with dark, wintry shrubs of a funereal aspect which grew in beds that looked like problems in algebra; and the flight of stone steps leading to the square half-glass door of the hall was adorned with dark-green wooden tubs containing the same sturdy evergreens.

"If the man is anything like his house," Robert thought, "I don't wonder that poor George and he parted."

At the end of a scanty avenue the carriage-drive turned a sharp corner (it would have been made to describe a curve in any other man's grounds) and ran before the lower windows of the house. The flyman dismounted at the steps, ascended them, and rang a brass-handled bell, which flew back to its socket, with an angry, metallic snap, as if it had been insulted by the plebeian touch of the man's hand.

A man in black trousers and a striped linen jacket, which was evidently fresh from the hands of the laundress, opened the door. Mr. Talboys was at home. Would the gentleman send in his card?

Robert waited in the hall while his card was taken to the master of the house.

The hall was large and lofty, paved with stone. The panels of the oaken wainscot shone with the same uncompromising polish which was on every object within and without the red-bricked mansion.

Some people are so weak-minded as to affect pictures and statues. Mr. Harcourt Talboys was far too practical to indulge in any foolish fancies. A barometer and an umbrella-stand were the only adornments of his entrance-hall.

Robert Audley looked at these while his name was being submitted to George's father.

The linen-jacketed servant returned presently. He was a square, pale-faced man of almost forty, and had the appearance of having outlived every emotion to which humanity is subject.

"If you will step this way, sir," he said, "Mr. Talboys will see you, although he is at breakfast. He begged me to state that everybody in Dorsetshire was acquainted with his breakfast hour."

This was intended as a stately reproof to Mr. Robert Audley. It had, however, very small effect upon the young barrister. He merely lifted his eyebrows in placid deprecation of himself and everybody else.

"I don't belong to Dorsetshire," he said. "Mr. Talboys might have known that, if he'd done me the honor to exercise his powers of ratiocination. Drive on, my friend."

The emotionless man looked at Robert Audley with a vacant stare of unmitigated horror, and opening one of the heavy oak doors, led the way into a large dining-room furnished with the severe simplicity of an apartment which is meant to be ate in, but never lived in; and at top of a table which would have accommodated eighteen persons Robert beheld Mr. Harcourt Talboys.

Mr. Talboys was robed in a dressing-gown of gray cloth, fastened about his waist with a girdle. It was a severe looking garment, and was perhaps the nearest approach to the toga to be obtained within the range of modern costume. He wore a buff waistcoat, a stiffly starched cambric cravat, and a faultless shirt collar. The cold gray of his dressing gown was almost the same as the cold gray of his eyes, and the pale buff of his waistcoat was the pale buff of his complexion.

Robert Audley had not expected to find Harcourt Talboys at all like George in his manners or disposition, but he had expected to see some family likeness between the father and the son. There was none. It would have been impossible to imagine any one more unlike George than the author of his existence. Robert scarcely wondered at the cruel letter he received from Mr. Talboys when he saw the writer of it. Such a man could scarcely have written otherwise.

There was a second person in the large room, toward whom Robert glanced after saluting Harcourt Talboys, doubtful how to proceed. This second person was a lady, who sat at the last of a range of four windows, employed with some needlework, the kind which is generally called plain work, and with a large wicker basket, filled with calicoes and flannels, standing by her.

The whole length of the room divided this lady from Robert, but he could see that she was young, and that she was like George Talboys.

"His sister!" he thought in that one moment, during which he ventured to glance away from the master of the house toward the female figure at the window. "His sister, no doubt. He was fond of her, I know. Surely, she is not utterly indifferent as to his fate?"



The lady half rose from her seat, letting her work, which was large and awkward, fall from her lap as she did so, and dropping a reel of cotton, which rolled away upon the polished oaken flooring beyond the margin of the Turkey carpet.

"Sit down, Clara," said the hard voice of Mr. Talboys.

That gentleman did not appear to address his daughter, nor had his face been turned toward her when she rose. It seemed as if he had known it by some social magnetism peculiar to himself; it seemed, as his servants were apt disrespectfully to observe, as if he had eyes in the back of his head.

"Sit down, Clara," he repeated, "and keep your cotton in your workbox."

The lady blushed at this reproof, and stooped to look for the cotton. Mr. Robert Audley, who was unabashed by the stern presence of the master of the house, knelt on the carpet, found the reel, and restored it to its owner; Harcourt Talboys staring at the proceeding with an expression of unmitigated astonishment.

"Perhaps, Mr. ——, Mr. Robert Audley!" he said, looking at the card which he held between his finger and thumb, "perhaps when you have finished looking for reels of cotton, you will be good enough to tell me to what I owe the honor of this visit?"

He waved his well-shaped hand with a gesture which might have been admired in the stately John Kemble; and the servant, understanding the gesture, brought forward a ponderous red-morocco chair.

The proceeding was so slow and solemn, that Robert had at first thought that something extraordinary was about to be done; but the truth dawned upon him at last, and he dropped into the massive chair.

"You may remain, Wilson," said Mr. Talboys, as the servant was about to withdraw; "Mr. Audley would perhaps like coffee."

Robert had eaten nothing that morning, but he glanced at the long expanse of dreary table-cloth, the silver tea and coffee equipage, the stiff splendor, and the very little appearance of any substantial entertainment, and he declined Mr. Talboys' invitation.

"Mr. Audley will not take coffee, Wilson," said the master of the house. "You may go."

The man bowed and retired, opening and shutting the door as cautiously as if he were taking a liberty in doing it at all, or as if the respect due to Mr.

Talboys demanded his walking straight through the oaken panel like a ghost in a German story.

Mr. Harcourt Talboys sat with his gray eyes fixed severely on his visitor, his elbows on the red-morocco arms of his chair, and his finger-tips joined. It was the attitude in which, had he been Junius Brutus, he would have sat at the trial of his son. Had Robert Audley been easily to be embarrassed, Mr. Talboys might have succeeded in making him feel so: as he would have sat with perfect tranquility upon an open gunpowder barrel lighting his cigar, he was not at all disturbed upon this occasion. The father's dignity seemed a very small thing to him when he thought of the possible causes of the son's disappearance.

"I wrote to you some time since, Mr. Talboys," he said quietly, when he saw that he was expected to open the conversation.

Harcourt Talboys bowed. He knew that it was of his lost son that Robert came to speak. Heaven grant that his icy stoicism was the paltry affectation of a vain man, rather than the utter heartlessness which Robert thought it. He bowed across his finger-tips at his visitor. The trial had begun, and Junius Brutus was enjoying himself.

"I received your communication, Mr. Audley," he said. "It is among other business letters: it was duly answered."

"That letter concerned your son."

There was a little rustling noise at the window where the lady sat, as Robert said this: he looked at her almost instantaneously, but she did not seem to have stirred. She was not working, but she was perfectly quiet.

"She's as heartless as her father, I expect, though she is like George," thought Mr. Audley.

"If your letter concerned the person who was once my son, perhaps, sir," said Harcourt Talboys, "I must ask you to remember that I have no longer a son."

"You have no reason to remind me of that, Mr. Talboys," answered Robert, gravely; "I remember it only too well. I have fatal reason to believe that you have no longer a son. I have bitter cause to think that he is dead."

It may be that Mr. Talboys' complexion faded to a paler shade of buff as Robert said this; but he only elevated his bristling gray eyebrows and shook his head gently.

"No," he said, "no, I assure you, no."

"I believe that George Talboys died in the month of September."

The girl who had been addressed as Clara, sat with work primly folded upon her lap, and her hands lying clasped together on her work, and never stirred when Robert spoke of his friend's death. He could not distinctly see her face, for she was seated at some distance from him, and with her back to the window.

"No, no, I assure you," repeated Mr. Talboys, "you labor under a sad mistake."

"You believe that I am mistaken in thinking your son dead?" asked Robert.

"Most certainly," replied Mr. Talboys, with a smile, expressive of the serenity of wisdom. "Most certainly, my dear sir. The disappearance was a very clever trick, no doubt, but it was not sufficiently clever to deceive me. You must permit me to understand this matter a little better than you, Mr. Audley, and you must also permit me to assure you of three things. In the first place, your friend is not dead. In the second place, he is keeping out of the way for the purpose of alarming me, of trifling with my feelings as a— as a man who was once his father, and of ultimately obtaining my forgiveness. In the third place, he will not obtain that forgiveness, however long he may please to keep out of the way; and he would therefore act wisely by returning to his ordinary residence and avocations without delay."

"Then you imagine him to purposely hide himself from all who know him, for the purpose of—"

"For the purpose of influencing *me*," exclaimed Mr. Talboys, who, taking a stand upon his own vanity, traced every event in life from that one center, and resolutely declined to look at it from any other point of view. "For the purpose of influencing me. He knew the inflexibility of my character; to a certain degree he was acquainted with me, and knew that all attempts at softening my decision, or moving me from the fixed purpose of my life, would fail. He therefore tried extraordinary means; he has kept out of the way in order to alarm me, and when after due time he discovers that he has not alarmed me, he will return to his old haunts. When he does so," said Mr. Talboys, rising to sublimity, "I will forgive him. Yes, sir, I will forgive him. I shall say to him: You have attempted to deceive me, and I have shown you that I am not to be deceived; you have tried to frighten me, and I have

convinced you that I am not to be frightened; you did not believe in my generosity, I will show you that I can be generous."

Harcourt Talboys delivered himself of these superb periods with a studied manner, that showed they had been carefully composed long ago.

Robert Audley sighed as he heard them.

"Heaven grant that you may have an opportunity of saying this to your son, sir," he answered sadly. "I am very glad to find that you are willing to forgive him, but I fear that you will never see him again upon this earth. I have a great deal to say to you upon this—this sad subject, Mr. Talboys; but I would rather say it to you alone," he added, glancing at the lady in the window.

"My daughter knows my ideas upon this subject, Mr. Audley," said Harcourt Talboys; "there is no reason why she should not hear all you have to say. Miss Clara Talboys, Mr. Robert Audley," he added, waving his hand majestically.

The young lady bent her head in recognition of Robert's bow.

"Let her hear it," he thought. "If she has so little feeling as to show no emotion upon such a subject, let her hear the worst I have to tell."

There was a few minutes' pause, during which Robert took some papers from his pocket; among them the document which he had written immediately after George's disappearance.

"I shall require all your attention, Mr. Talboys," he said, "for that which I have to disclose to you is of a very painful nature. Your son was my very dear friend—dear to me for many reasons. Perhaps most of all dear, because I had known him and been with him through the great trouble of his life; and because he stood comparatively alone in the world—cast off by you who should have been his best friend, bereft of the only woman he had ever loved."

"The daughter of a drunken pauper," Mr. Talboys remarked, parenthetically.

"Had he died in his bed, as I sometimes thought he would," continued Robert Audley, "of a broken heart, I should have mourned for him very sincerely, even though I had closed his eyes with my own hands, and had seen him laid in his quiet resting-place. I should have grieved for my old schoolfellow, and for the companion who had been dear to me. But this

grief would have been a very small one compared to that which I feel now, believing, as I do only too firmly, that my poor friend has been murdered."

"Murdered!"

The father and daughter simultaneously repeated the horrible word. The father's face changed to a ghastly duskiness of hue; the daughter's face dropped upon her clasped hands, and was never lifted again throughout the interview.

"Mr. Audley, you are mad!" exclaimed Harcourt Talboys; "you are mad, or else you are commissioned by your friend to play upon my feelings. I protest against this proceeding as a conspiracy, and I—I revoke my intended forgiveness of the person who was once my son!"

He was himself again as he said this. The blow had been a sharp one, but its effect had been momentary.

"It is far from my wish to alarm you unnecessarily, sir," answered Robert. "Heaven grant that you may be right and I wrong. I pray for it, but I cannot think it—I cannot even hope it. I come to you for advice. I will state to you plainly and dispassionately the circumstances which have aroused my suspicions. If you say those suspicions are foolish and unfounded I am ready to submit to your better judgment. I will leave England; and I abandon my search for the evidence wanting to—to confirm my fears. If you say go on, I will go on."

Nothing could be more gratifying to the vanity of Mr. Harcourt Talboys than this appeal. He declared himself ready to listen to all that Robert might have to say, and ready to assist him to the uttermost of his power.

He laid some stress upon this last assurance, deprecating the value of his advice with an affectation that was as transparent as his vanity itself.

Robert Audley drew his chair nearer to that of Mr. Talboys, and commenced a minutely detailed account of all that had occurred to George from the time of his arrival in England to the hour of his disappearance, as well as all that had occurred since his disappearance in any way touching upon that particular subject. Harcourt Talboys listened with demonstrative attention, now and then interrupting the speaker to ask some magisterial kind of question. Clara Talboys never once lifted her face from her clasped hands.

The hands of the clock pointed to a quarter past eleven when Robert began his story. The clock struck twelve as he finished.

He had carefully suppressed the names of his uncle and his uncle's wife in relating the circumstances in which they had been concerned.

"Now, sir," he said, when the story had been told, "I await your decision. You have heard my reasons for coming to this terrible conclusion. In what manner do these reasons influence you?"

"They don't in any way turn me from my previous opinion," answered Mr. Harcourt Talboys, with the unreasoning pride of an obstinate man. "I still think, as I thought before, that my son is alive, and that his disappearance is a conspiracy against myself. I decline to become the victim of that conspiracy."

"And you tell me to stop?" asked Robert, solemnly.

"I tell you only this: If you go on, you go on for your own satisfaction, not for mine. I see nothing in what you have told me to alarm me for the safety of—your friend."

"So be it, then!" exclaimed Robert, suddenly; "from this moment I wash my hands of this business. From this moment the purpose of my life shall be to forget it."

He rose as he spoke, and took his hat from the table on which he had placed it. He looked at Clara Talboys. Her attitude had never changed since she had dropped her face upon her hands. "Good morning, Mr. Talboys," he said, gravely. "God grant that you are right. God grant that I am wrong. But I fear a day will come when you will have reason to regret your apathy respecting the untimely fate of your only son."

He bowed gravely to Mr. Harcourt Talboys and to the lady, whose face was hidden by her hands.

He lingered for a moment looking at Miss Talboys, thinking that she would look up, that she would make some sign, or show some desire to detain him.

Mr. Talboys rang for the emotionless servant, who led Robert off to the hall-door with the solemnity of manner which would have been in perfect keeping had he been leading him to execution.

"She is like her father," thought Mr. Audley, as he glanced for the last time at the drooping head. "Poor George, you had need of one friend in this

world, for you have had very few to love you."

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CLARA.

Robert Audley found the driver asleep upon the box of his lumbering vehicle. He had been entertained with beer of so hard a nature as to induce temporary strangulation in the daring imbiber thereof, and he was very glad to welcome the return of his fare. The old white horse, who looked as if he had been foaled in the year in which the carriage had been built, and seemed, like the carriage, to have outlived the fashion, was as fast asleep as his master, and woke up with a jerk as Robert came down the stony flight of steps, attended by his executioner, who waited respectfully till Mr. Audley had entered the vehicle and been turned off.

The horse, roused by a smack of his driver's whip and a shake of the shabby reins, crawled off in a semi-somnambulent state; and Robert, with his hat very much over his eyes, thought of his missing friend.

He had played in these stiff gardens, and under these dreary firs, years ago, perhaps—if it were possible for the most frolicsome youth to be playful within the range of Mr. Harcourt Talboys' hard gray eyes. He had played beneath these dark trees, perhaps, with the sister who had heard of his fate to-day without a tear. Robert Audley looked at the rigid primness of the orderly grounds, wondering how George could have grown up in such a place to be the frank, generous, careless friend whom he had known. How was it that with his father perpetually before his eyes, he had not grown up after the father's disagreeable model, to be a nuisance to his fellow-men? How was it? Because we have Some One higher than our parents to thank for the souls which make us great or small; and because, while family noses and family chins may descend in orderly sequence from father to son, from grandsire to grandchild, as the fashion of the fading flowers of one year is reproduced in the budding blossoms of the next, the spirit, more subtle than the wind which blows among those flowers, independent of all earthly rule, owns no order but the harmonious law of God.

"Thank God!" thought Robert Audley; "thank God! it is over. My poor friend must rest in his unknown grave; and I shall not be the means of



bringing disgrace upon those I love. It will come, perhaps, sooner or later, but it will not come through me. The crisis is past, and I am free."

He felt an unutterable relief in this thought. His generous nature revolted at the office into which he had found himself drawn—the office of spy, the collector of damning facts that led on to horrible deductions.

He drew a long breath—a sigh of relief at his release. It was all over now.

The fly was crawling out of the gate of the plantation as he thought this, and he stood up in the vehicle to look back at the dreary fir-trees, the gravel paths, the smooth grass, and the great desolate-looking, red-brick mansion.

He was startled by the appearance of a woman running, almost flying, along the carriage-drive by which he had come, and waving a handkerchief in her uplifted hand.

He stared at this singular apparition for some moments in silent wonder before he was able to reduce his stupefaction into words.

"Is it *me* the flying female wants?" he exclaimed, at last. "You'd better stop, perhaps," he added, to the flyman. "It is an age of eccentricity, an abnormal era of the world's history. She may want me. Very likely I left my pocket-handkerchief behind me, and Mr. Talboys has sent this person with it. Perhaps I'd better get out and go and meet her. It's civil to send my handkerchief."

Mr. Robert Audley deliberately descended from the fly and walked slowly toward the hurrying female figure, which gained upon him rapidly.

He was rather short sighted, and it was not until she came very near to him that he saw who she was.

"Good Heaven!" he exclaimed, "it's Miss Talboys."

It was Miss Talboys, flushed and breathless, with a woollen shawl thrown over her head.

Robert Audley now saw her face clearly for the first time, and he saw that she was very handsome. She had brown eyes, like George's, a pale complexion (she had been flushed when she approached him, but the color faded away as she recovered her breath), regular features, with a mobility of expression which bore record of every change of feeling. He saw all this in a few moments, and he wondered only the more at the stoicism of her manner during his interview with Mr. Talboys. There were no tears in her

eyes, but they were bright with a feverish luster—terribly bright and dry—and he could see that her lips trembled as she spoke to him.

"Miss Talboys," he said, "what can I—why—"

She interrupted him suddenly, catching at his wrist with her disengaged hand—she was holding her shawl in the other.

"Oh, let me speak to you," she cried—"let me speak to you, or I shall go mad. I heard it all. I believe what you believe, and I shall go mad unless I can do something—something toward avenging his death."

For a few moments Robert Audley was too much bewildered to answer her. Of all things possible upon earth he had least expected to behold her thus.

"Take my arm, Miss Talboys," he said. "Pray calm yourself. Let us walk a little way back toward the house, and talk quietly. I would not have spoken as I did before you had I known—"

"Had you known that I loved my brother?" she said, quickly. "How should you know that I loved him? How should any one think that I loved him, when I have never had power to give him a welcome beneath that roof, or a kindly word from his father? How should I dare to betray my love for him in that house when I knew that even a sister's affection would be turned to his disadvantage? You do not know my father, Mr. Audley. I do. I knew that to intercede for George would have been to ruin his cause. I knew that to leave matters in my father's hands, and to trust to time, was my only chance of ever seeing that dear brother again. And I waited—waited patiently, always hoping for the best; for I knew that my father loved his only son. I see your contemptuous smile, Mr. Audley, and I dare say it is difficult for a stranger to believe that underneath his affected stoicism my father conceals some degree of affection for his children—no very warm attachment perhaps, for he has always ruled his life by the strict law of duty. Stop," she said, suddenly, laying her hand upon his arm, and looking back through the straight avenue of pines; "I ran out of the house by the back way. Papa must not see me talking to you, Mr. Audley, and he must not see the fly standing at the gate. Will you go into the high-road and tell the man to drive on a little way? I will come out of the plantation by a little gate further on, and meet you in the road."

"But you will catch cold, Miss Talboys," remonstrated Robert, looking at her anxiously, for he saw that she was trembling. "You are shivering now."

"Not with cold," she answered. "I am thinking of my brother George. If you have any pity for the only sister of your lost friend, do what I ask you, Mr. Audley. I must speak to you—I must speak to you—calmly, if I can."

She put her hand to her head as if trying to collect her thoughts, and then pointed to the gate. Robert bowed and left her. He told the man to drive slowly toward the station, and walked on by the side of the tarred fence surrounding Mr. Talboys' grounds. About a hundred yards beyond the principal entrance he came to a little wooden gate in the fence, and waited at it for Miss Talboys.

She joined him presently, with her shawl still over her head, and her eyes still bright and tearless.

"Will you walk with me inside the plantation?" she said. "We might be observed on the high-road."

He bowed, passed through the gate, and shut it behind him.

When she took his offered arm he found that she was still trembling—trembling very violently.

"Pray, pray calm yourself, Miss Talboys," he said; "I may have been deceived in the opinion which I have formed; I may—"

"No, no, no," she exclaimed, "you are not deceived. My brother has been murdered. Tell me the name of that woman—the woman whom you suspect of being concerned in his disappearance—in his murder."

"That I cannot do until—"

"Until when?"

"Until I know that she is guilty."

"You told my father that you would abandon all idea of discovering the truth—that you would rest satisfied to leave my brother's fate a horrible mystery never to be solved upon this earth; but you will not do so, Mr. Audley—you will not be false to the memory of your friend. You will see vengeance done upon those who have destroyed him. You will do this, will you not?"

A gloomy shadow spread itself like a dark veil over Robert Audley's handsome face.

He remembered what he had said the day before at Southampton:

"A hand that is stronger than my own is beckoning me onward, upon the dark road."

A quarter of an hour before, he had believed that all was over, and that he was released from the dreadful duty of discovering the secret of George's death. Now this girl, this apparently passionless girl, had found a voice, and was urging him on toward his fate.

"If you knew what misery to me may be involved in discovering the truth, Miss Talboys," he said, "you would scarcely ask me to pursue this business any farther?"

"But I do ask you," she answered, with suppressed passion—"I do ask you. I ask you to avenge my brother's untimely death. Will you do so? Yes or no?"

"What if I answer no?"

"Then I will do it myself," she exclaimed, looking at him with her bright brown eyes. "I myself will follow up the clew to this mystery; I will find this woman—though you refuse to tell me in what part of England my brother disappeared. I will travel from one end of the world to the other to find the secret of his fate, if you refuse to find it for me. I am of age; my own mistress; rich, for I have money left me by one of my aunts; I shall be able to employ those who will help me in my search, and I will make it to their interest to serve me well. Choose between the two alternatives, Mr. Audley. Shall you or I find my brother's murderer?"

He looked in her face, and saw that her resolution was the fruit of no transient womanish enthusiasm which would give way under the iron hand of difficulty. Her beautiful features, naturally statuesque in their noble outlines, seemed transformed into marble by the rigidity of her expression. The face in which he looked was the face of a woman whom death only could turn from her purpose.

"I have grown up in an atmosphere of suppression," she said, quietly; "I have stifled and dwarfed the natural feelings of my heart, until they have become unnatural in their intensity; I have been allowed neither friends nor lovers. My mother died when I was very young. My father has always been to me what you saw him to-day. I have had no one but my brother. All the love that my heart can hold has been centered upon him. Do you wonder, then, that when I hear that his young life has been ended by the hand of treachery, that I wish to see vengeance done upon the traitor? Oh, my God,"

she cried, suddenly clasping her hands, and looking up at the cold winter sky, "lead me to the murderer of my brother, and let mine be the hand to avenge his untimely death."

Robert Audley stood looking at her with awe-stricken admiration. Her beauty was elevated into sublimity by the intensity of her suppressed passion. She was different to all other women that he had ever seen. His cousin was pretty, his uncle's wife was lovely, but Clara Talboys was beautiful. Niobe's face, sublimated by sorrow, could scarcely have been more purely classical than hers. Even her dress, puritan in its gray simplicity, became her beauty better than a more beautiful dress would have become a less beautiful woman.

"Miss Talboys," said Robert, after a pause, "your brother shall not be unavenged. He shall not be forgotten. I do not think that any professional aid which you could procure would lead you as surely to the secret of this mystery as I can lead you, if you are patient and trust me."

"I will trust you," she answered, "for I see that you will help me."

"I believe that it is my destiny to do so," he said, solemnly.

In the whole course of his conversation with Harcourt Talboys, Robert Audley had carefully avoided making any deductions from the circumstances which he had submitted to George's father. He had simply told the story of the missing man's life, from the hour of his arriving in London to that of his disappearance; but he saw that Clara Talboys had arrived at the same conclusion as himself, and that it was tacitly understood between them.

"Have you any letters of your brother's, Miss Talboys?" he asked.

"Two. One written soon after his marriage, the other written at Liverpool, the night before he sailed for Australia."

"Will you let me see them?"

"Yes, I will send them to you if you will give me your address. You will write to me from time to time, will you not, to tell me whether you are approaching the truth. I shall be obliged to act secretly here, but I am going to leave home in two or three months, and I shall be perfectly free then to act as I please."

"You are not going to leave England?" Robert asked.

"Oh no! I am only going to pay a long-promised visit to some friends in Essex."

Robert started so violently as Clara Talboys said this, that she looked suddenly at his face. The agitation visible there, betrayed a part of his secret.

"My brother George disappeared in Essex," she said.

He could not contradict her.

"I am sorry you have discovered so much," he replied. "My position becomes every day more complicated, every day more painful. Good-bye."

She gave him her hand mechanically, when he held out his; but it was cold as marble, and lay listlessly in his own, and fell like a log at her side when he released it.

"Pray lose no time in returning to the house," he said earnestly. "I fear you will suffer from this morning's work."

"Suffer!" she exclaimed, scornfully. "You talk to me of suffering, when the only creature in this world who ever loved me has been taken from it in the bloom of youth. What can there be for me henceforth but suffering? What is the cold to me?" she said, flinging back her shawl and baring her beautiful head to the bitter wind. "I would walk from here to London barefoot through the snow, and never stop by the way, if I could bring him back to life. What would I not do to bring him back? What would I not do?"

The words broke from her in a wail of passionate sorrow; and clasping her hands before her face, she wept for the first time that day. The violence of her sobs shook her slender frame, and she was obliged to lean against the trunk of a tree for support.

Robert looked at her with a tender compassion in his face; she was so like the friend whom he had loved and lost, that it was impossible for him to think of her as a stranger; impossible to remember that they had met that morning for the first time.

"Pray, pray be calm," he said: "hope even against hope. We may both be deceived; your brother may still live."

"Oh! if it were so," she murmured, passionately; "if it could be so."

"Let us try and hope that it may be so."

"No," she answered, looking at him through her tears, "let us hope for nothing but revenge. Good-by, Mr. Audley. Stop; your address."

He gave her a card, which she put into the pocket of her dress.

"I will send you George's letters," she said; "they may help you. Good-by."

She left him half bewildered by the passionate energy of her manner, and the noble beauty of her face. He watched her as she disappeared among the straight trunks of the fir-trees, and then walked slowly out of the plantation.

"Heaven help those who stand between me and the secret," he thought, "for they will be sacrificed to the memory of George Talboys."

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### GEORGE'S LETTERS.

Robert Audley did not return to Southampton, but took a ticket for the first up town train that left Wareham, and reached Waterloo Bridge an hour or two after dark. The snow, which had been hard and crisp in Dorsetshire, was a black and greasy slush in the Waterloo Road, thawed by the flaring lamps of the gin-palaces and the glaring gas in the butchers' shops.

Robert Audley shrugged his shoulders as he looked at the dingy streets through which the Hansom carried him, the cab-man choosing—with that delicious instinct which seems innate in the drivers of hackney vehicles—all those dark and hideous thoroughfares utterly unknown to the ordinary pedestrian.

"What a pleasant thing life is," thought the barrister. "What an unspeakable boon—what an overpowering blessing! Let any man make a calculation of his existence, subtracting the hours in which he has been *thoroughly* happy—really and entirely at his ease, without one *arriere pensée* to mar his enjoyment—without the most infinitesimal cloud to overshadow the brightness of his horizon. Let him do this, and surely he will laugh in utter bitterness of soul when he sets down the sum of his felicity, and discovers the pitiful smallness of the amount. He will have enjoyed himself for a week or ten days in thirty years, perhaps. In thirty years of dull December, and blustering March, and showery April, and dark November weather, there may have been seven or eight glorious August days, through which the sun has blazed in cloudless radiance, and the summer breezes have breathed perpetual balm. How fondly we recollect these solitary days of pleasure, and hope for their recurrence, and try to plan the circumstances that made them bright; and arrange, and predestinate, and diplomatize with fate for a renewal of the remembered joy. As if any joy could ever be built up out of such and such constituent parts! As if happiness were not essentially accidental—a bright and wandering bird, utterly irregular in its migrations; with us one summer's day, and forever gone from us on the next! Look at marriages, for instance," mused Robert,



who was as meditative in the jolting vehicle, for whose occupation he was to pay sixpence a mile, as if he had been riding a mustang on the wild loneliness of the prairies. "Look at marriage! Who is to say which shall be the one judicious selection out of nine hundred and ninety-nine mistakes! Who shall decide from the first aspect of the slimy creature, which is to be the one eel out of the colossal bag of snakes? That girl on the curbstone yonder, waiting to cross the street when my chariot shall have passed, may be the one woman out of every female creature in this vast universe who could make me a happy man. Yet I pass her by—bespatter her with the mud from my wheels, in my helpless ignorance, in my blind submission to the awful hand of fatality. If that girl, Clara Talboys, had been five minutes later, I should have left Dorsetshire thinking her cold, hard, and unwomanly, and should have gone to my grave with that mistake part and parcel of my mind. I took her for a stately and heartless automaton; I know her now to be a noble and beautiful woman. What an incalculable difference this may make in my life. When I left that house, I went out into the winter day with the determination of abandoning all further thought of the secret of George's death. I see her, and she forces me onward upon the loathsome path—the crooked by-way of watchfulness and suspicion. How can I say to this sister of my dead friend, 'I believe that your brother has been murdered! I believe that I know by whom, but I will take no step to set my doubts at rest, or to confirm my fears'? I cannot say this. This woman knows half my secret; she will soon possess herself of the rest, and then—and then—"

The cab stopped in the midst of Robert Audley's meditation, and he had to pay the cabman, and submit to all the dreary mechanism of life, which is the same whether we are glad or sorry—whether we are to be married or hung, elevated to the woolsack, or disbarred by our brother benchers on some mysterious technical tangle of wrong-doing, which is a social enigma to those outside the *forum domesticum* of the Middle Temple.

We are apt to be angry with this cruel hardness in our life—this unflinching regularity in the smaller wheels and meaner mechanism of the human machine, which knows no stoppage or cessation, though the mainspring be forever hollow, and the hands pointing to purposeless figures on a shattered dial.

Who has not felt, in the first madness of sorrow, an unreasoning rage against the mute propriety of chairs and tables, the stiff squareness of

Turkey carpets, the unbending obstinacy of the outward apparatus of existence? We want to root up gigantic trees in a primeval forest, and to tear their huge branches asunder in our convulsive grasp; and the utmost that we can do for the relief of our passion is to knock over an easy-chair, or smash a few shillings' worth of Mr. Copeland's manufacture.

Madhouses are large and only too numerous; yet surely it is strange they are not larger, when we think of how many helpless wretches must beat their brains against this hopeless persistency of the orderly outward world, as compared with the storm and tempest, the riot and confusion within—when we remember how many minds must tremble upon the narrow boundary between reason and unreason, mad to-day and sane to-morrow, mad yesterday and sane to-day.

Robert Audley had directed the cabman to drop him at the corner of Chancery Lane, and he ascended the brilliantly-lighted staircase leading to the dining-saloon of The London, and seated himself at one of the snug tables with a confused sense of emptiness and weariness, rather than any agreeable sensation of healthy hunger. He had come to the luxurious eating-house to dine, because it was absolutely necessary to eat something somewhere, and a great deal easier to get a very good dinner from Mr. Sawyer than a very bad one from Mrs. Maloney, whose mind ran in one narrow channel of chops and steaks, only variable by small creeks and outlets in the way of "broiled sole" or "boiled mack'-rill." The solicitous waiter tried in vain to rouse poor Robert to a proper sense of the solemnity of the dinner question. He muttered something to the effect that the man might bring him anything he liked, and the friendly waiter, who knew Robert as a frequent guest at the little tables, went back to his master with a doleful face, to say that Mr. Audley, from Figtree Court, was evidently out of spirits. Robert ate his dinner, and drank a pint of Moselle; but he had poor appreciation of the excellence of the viands or the delicate fragrance of the wine. The mental monologue still went on, and the young philosopher of the modern school was arguing the favorite modern question of the nothingness of everything, and the folly of taking too much trouble to walk upon a road that went nowhere, or to compass a work that meant nothing.

"I accept the dominion of that pale girl, with the statuesque features and the calm brown eyes," he thought. "I recognize the power of a mind superior to my own, and I yield to it, and bow down to it. I've been acting

for myself, and thinking for myself, for the last few months, and I'm tired of the unnatural business. I've been false to the leading principle of my life, and I've suffered for the folly. I found two gray hairs in my head the week before last, and an impertinent crow has planted a delicate impression of his foot under my right eye. Yes, I'm getting old upon the right side; and why—why should it be so?"

He pushed away his plate and lifted his eyebrows, staring at the crumbs upon the glistening damask, as he pondered the question.

"What the devil am I doing in this *galere*?" he asked. "But I am in it, and I can't get out of it; so I better submit myself to the brown-eyed girl, and do what she tells me patiently and faithfully. What a wonderful solution to life's enigma there is in petticoat government! Man might lie in the sunshine, and eat lotuses, and fancy it 'always afternoon,' if his wife would let him! But she won't, bless her impulsive heart and active mind! She knows better than that. Who ever heard of a woman taking life as it ought to be taken? Instead of supporting it as an unavoidable nuisance, only redeemable by its brevity, she goes through it as if it were a pageant or a procession. She dresses for it, and simpers and grins, and gesticulates for it. She pushes her neighbors, and struggles for a good place in the dismal march; she elbows, and writhes, and tramples, and prances to the one end of making the most of the misery. She gets up early and sits up late, and is loud, and restless, and noisy, and unpitying. She drags her husband on to the woolsack, or pushes him into Parliament. She drives him full butt at the dear, lazy machinery of government, and knocks and buffets him about the wheels, and cranks, and screws, and pulleys; until somebody, for quiet's sake, makes him something that she wanted him to be made. That's why incompetent men sometimes sit in high places, and interpose their poor, muddled intellects between the things to be done and the people that can do them, making universal confusion in the helpless innocence of well-placed incapacity. The square men in the round holes are pushed into them by their wives. The Eastern potentate who declared that women were at the bottom of all mischief, should have gone a little further and seen why it is so. It is because women are *never lazy*. They don't know what it is to be quiet. They are Semiramides, and Cleopatras, and Joans of Arc, Queen Elizabeths, and Catharines the Second, and they riot in battle, and murder, and clamor and desperation. If they can't agitate the universe and play at ball with hemispheres, they'll make mountains of warfare and vexation out of

domestic molehills, and social storms in household teacups. Forbid them to hold forth upon the freedom of nations and the wrongs of mankind, and they'll quarrel with Mrs. Jones about the shape of a mantle or the character of a small maid-servant. To call them the weaker sex is to utter a hideous mockery. They are the stronger sex, the noisier, the more persevering, the most self-assertive sex. They want freedom of opinion, variety of occupation, do they? Let them have it. Let them be lawyers, doctors, preachers, teachers, soldiers, legislators—anything they like—but let them be quiet—if they can."

Mr. Audley pushed his hands through the thick luxuriance of his straight brown hair, and uplifted the dark mass in his despair.

"I hate women," he thought, savagely. "They're bold, brazen, abominable creatures, invented for the annoyance and destruction of their superiors. Look at this business of poor George's! It's all woman's work from one end to the other. He marries a woman, and his father casts him off penniless and professionless. He hears of the woman's death and he breaks his heart—his good honest, manly heart, worth a million of the treacherous lumps of self-interest and mercenary calculation which beats in women's breasts. He goes to a woman's house and he is never seen alive again. And now I find myself driven into a corner by another woman, of whose existence I had never thought until this day. And—and then," mused Mr. Audley, rather irrelevantly, "there's Alicia, too; *she's* another nuisance. She'd like me to marry her I know; and she'll make me do it, I dare say, before she's done with me. But I'd much rather not; though she is a dear, bouncing, generous thing, bless her poor little heart."

Robert paid his bill and rewarded the waiter liberally. The young barrister was very willing to distribute his comfortable little income among the people who served him, for he carried his indifference to all things in the universe, even to the matter of pounds, shillings and pence. Perhaps he was rather exceptional in this, as you may frequently find that the philosopher who calls life an empty delusion is pretty sharp in the investment of his moneys, and recognizes the tangible nature of India bonds, Spanish certificates, and Egyptian scrip—as contrasted with the painful uncertainty of an Ego or a non-Ego in metaphysics.

The snug rooms in Figtree Court seemed dreary in their orderly quiet to Robert Audley upon this particular evening. He had no inclination for his

French novels, though there was a packet of uncut romances, comic and sentimental, ordered a month before, waiting his pleasure upon one of the tables. He took his favorite meerschaum and dropped into his favorite chair with a sigh.

"It's comfortable, but it seems so deuced lonely to-night. If poor George were sitting opposite to me, or—or even George's sister—she's very like him—existence might be a little more endurable. But when a fellow's lived by himself for eight or ten years he begins to be bad company."

He burst out laughing presently as he finished his first pipe.

"The idea of my thinking of George's sister," he thought; "what a preposterous idiot I am!"

The next day's post brought him a letter in a firm but feminine hand, which was strange to him. He found the little packet lying on his breakfast-table, beside the warm French roll wrapped in a napkin by Mrs. Maloney's careful but rather dirty hands. He contemplated the envelope for some minutes before opening it—not in any wonder as to his correspondent, for the letter bore the postmark of Grange Heath, and he knew that there was only one person who was likely to write to him from that obscure village, but in that lazy dreaminess which was a part of his character.

"From Clara Talboys," he murmured slowly, as he looked critically at the clearly-shaped letters of his name and address. "Yes, from Clara Talboys, most decidedly; I recognized a feminine resemblance to poor George's hand; neater than his, and more decided than his, but very like, very like."

He turned the letter over and examined the seal, which bore his friend's familiar crest.

"I wonder what she says to me?" he thought. "It's a long letter, I dare say; she's the kind of woman who would write a long letter—a letter that will urge me on, drive me forward, wrench me out of myself, I've no doubt. But that can't be helped—so here goes!"

He tore open the envelope with a sigh of resignation. It contained nothing but George's two letters, and a few words written on the flap: "I send the letters; please preserve and return them—C.T."

The letter, written from Liverpool, told nothing of the writer's life except his sudden determination of starting for a new world, to redeem the fortunes that had been ruined in the old. The letter written almost immediately after

George's marriage, contained a full description of his wife—such a description as a man could only write within three weeks of a love match—a description in which every feature was minutely catalogued, every grace of form or beauty of expression fondly dwelt upon, every charm of manner lovingly depicted.

Robert Audley read the letter three times before he laid it down.

"If George could have known for what a purpose this description would serve when he wrote it," thought the young barrister, "surely his hand would have fallen paralyzed by horror, and powerless to shape one syllable of these tender words."

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### RETROGRADE INVESTIGATION.

The dreary London January dragged its dull length slowly out. The last slender records of Christmas time were swept away, and Robert Audley still lingered in town—still spent his lonely evenings in his quiet sitting-room in Figtree Court—still wandered listlessly in the Temple Gardens on sunny mornings, absently listening to the children's babble, idly watching their play. He had many friends among the inhabitants of the quaint old buildings round him; he had other friends far away in pleasant country places, whose spare bedrooms were always at Bob's service, whose cheerful firesides had snugly luxurious chairs specially allotted to him. But he seemed to have lost all taste for companionship, all sympathy with the pleasures and occupations of his class, since the disappearance of George Talboys. Elderly benchers indulged in facetious observations upon the young man's pale face and moody manner. They suggested the probability of some unhappy attachment, some feminine ill-usage as the secret cause of the change. They told him to be of good cheer, and invited him to supper-parties, at which "lovely woman, with all her faults, God bless her," was drunk by gentlemen who shed tears as they proposed the toast, and were maudlin and unhappy in their cups toward the close of the entertainment. Robert had no inclination for the wine-bibbing and the punch-making. The one idea of his life had become his master. He was the bonden slave of one gloomy thought—one horrible presentiment. A dark cloud was brooding above his uncle's house, and it was his hand which was to give the signal for the thunder-clap, and the tempest that was to ruin that noble life.

"If she would only take warning and run away," he said to himself sometimes. "Heaven knows, I have given her a fair chance. Why doesn't she take it and run away?"

He heard sometimes from Sir Michael, sometimes from Alicia. The young lady's letter rarely contained more than a few curt lines informing him that her papa was well; and that Lady Audley was in very high spirits,

amusing herself in her usual frivolous manner, and with her usual disregard for other people.

A letter from Mr. Marchmont, the Southampton schoolmaster, informed Robert that little Georgey was going on very well, but that he was behindhand in his education, and had not yet passed the intellectual Rubicon of words of two syllables. Captain Maldon had called to see his grandson, but that privilege had been withheld from him, in accordance with Mr. Audley's instructions. The old man had furthermore sent a parcel of pastry and sweetmeats to the little boy, which had also been rejected on the ground of indigestible and bilious tendencies in the edibles.

Toward the close of February, Robert received a letter from his cousin Alicia, which hurried him one step further forward toward his destiny, by causing him to return to the house from which he had become in a manner exiled at the instigation of his uncle's wife.

"Papa is very ill," Alicia wrote; "not dangerously ill, thank God; but confined to his room by an attack of low fever which has succeeded a violent cold. Come and see him, Robert, if you have any regard for your nearest relations. He has spoken about you several times; and I know he will be glad to have you with him. Come at once, but say nothing about this letter.

"From your affectionate cousin, ALICIA."

A sick and deadly terror chilled Robert Audley's heart, as he read this letter—a vague yet hideous fear, which he dared not shape into any definite form.

"Have I done right?" he thought, in the first agony of this new horror—"have I done right to tamper with justice; and to keep the secret of my doubts in the hope that I was shielding those I love from sorrow and disgrace? What shall I do if I find him ill, very ill, dying perhaps, dying upon her breast! What shall I do?"

One course lay clear before him; and the first step of that course was a rapid journey to Audley Court. He packed his portmanteau, jumped into a cab, and reached the railway station within an hour of his receipt of Alicia's letter, which had come by the afternoon post.

The dim village lights flickered faintly through the growing dusk when Robert reached Audley. He left his portmanteau with the station-master, and



walked at a leisurely pace through the quiet lanes that led away to the still loneliness of the Court. The over-arching trees stretched their leafless branches above his head, bare and weird in the dusky light. A low moaning wind swept across the flat meadow land, and tossed those rugged branches hither and thither against the dark gray sky. They looked like the ghostly arms of shrunken and withered giants, beckoning Robert to his uncle's house. They looked like threatening phantoms in the chill winter twilight, gesticulating to him to hasten upon his journey. The long avenue so bright and pleasant when the perfumed limes scattered their light bloom upon the pathway, and the dog-rose leaves floated on the summer air, was terribly bleak and desolate in the cheerless interregnum that divides the homely joys of Christmas from the pale blush of coming spring—a dead pause in the year, in which Nature seems to lie in a tranced sleep, awaiting the wondrous signal for the budding of the flower.

A mournful presentiment crept into Robert Audley's heart as he drew nearer to his uncle's house. Every changing outline in the landscape was familiar to him; every bend of the trees; every caprice of the untrammelled branches; every undulation in the bare hawthorn hedge, broken by dwarf horse-chestnuts, stunted willows, blackberry and hazel bushes.

Sir Michael had been a second father to the young man, a generous and noble friend, a grave and earnest adviser; and perhaps the strongest sentiment of Robert's heart was his love for the gray-bearded baronet. But the grateful affection was so much a part of himself, that it seldom found an outlet in words, and a stranger would never have fathomed the depth of feeling which lay, a deep and powerful current, beneath the stagnant surface of the barrister's character.

"What would become of this place if my uncle were to die?" he thought, and he drew nearer to the ivied archway, and the still water-pools, coldly gray in the twilight. "Would other people live in the old house, and sit under the low oak ceilings in the homely familiar rooms?"

That wonderful faculty of association, so interwoven with the inmost fibers of even the hardest nature, filled the young man's breast with a prophetic pain as he remembered that, however long or late, the day must come on which the oaken shutters would be closed for awhile, and the sunshine shut out of the house he loved. It was painful to him even to remember this; as it must always be painful to think of the narrow lease the

greatest upon this earth can ever hold of its grandeurs. Is it so wonderful that some wayfarers drop asleep under the hedges, scarcely caring to toil onward on a journey that leads to no abiding habitation? Is it wonderful that there have been quietists in the world ever since Christ's religion was first preached upon earth. Is it strange that there is a patient endurance and tranquil resignation, calm expectation of that which is to come on the further shore of the dark flowing river? Is it not rather to be wondered that anybody should ever care to be great for greatness' sake; for any other reason than pure conscientiousness; the simple fidelity of the servant who fears to lay his talents by in a napkin, knowing that indifference is near akin to dishonesty? If Robert Audley had lived in the time of Thomas à Kempis, he would very likely have built himself a narrow hermitage amid some forest loneliness, and spent his life in tranquil imitation of the reputed author of *The Imitation*. As it was, Figtree Court was a pleasant hermitage in its way, and for breviaries and Books of Hours, I am ashamed to say the young barrister substituted Paul de Kock and Dumas, fils. But his sins were of so simply negative an order, that it would have been very easy for him to have abandoned them for negative virtues.

Only one solitary light was visible in the long irregular range of windows facing the archway, as Robert passed under the gloomy shade of the rustling ivy, restless in the chill moaning of the wind. He recognized that lighted window as the large oriel in his uncle's room. When last he had looked at the old house it had been gay with visitors, every window glittering like a low star in the dusk; now, dark and silent, it faced the winter's night like some dismal baronial habitation, deep in a woodland solitude.

The man who opened the door to the unlooked-for visitor, brightened as he recognized his master's nephew.

"Sir Michael will be cheered up a bit, sir, by the sight of you," he said, as he ushered Robert Audley into the fire-lit library, which seemed desolate by reason of the baronet's easy-chair standing empty on the broad hearth-rug. "Shall I bring you some dinner here, sir, before you go up-stairs?" the servant asked. "My lady and Miss Audley have dined early during my master's illness, but I can bring you anything you would please to take, sir."

"I'll take nothing until I have seen my uncle," Robert answered, hurriedly; "that is to say, if I can see him at once. He is not too ill to receive me, I suppose?" he added, anxiously.

"Oh, no, sir—not too ill; only a little low, sir. This way, if you please."

He conducted Robert up the short flight of shallow oaken stairs to the octagon chamber in which George Talboys had sat long five months before, staring absently at my lady's portrait. The picture was finished now, and hung in the post of honor opposite the window, amidst Claudes, Poussins and Wouvermans, whose less brilliant hues were killed by the vivid coloring of the modern artist. The bright face looked out of that tangled glitter of golden hair, in which the Pre-Raphaelites delight, with a mocking smile, as Robert paused for a moment to glance at the well-remembered picture. Two or three moments afterward he had passed through my lady's boudoir and dressing-room and stood upon the threshold of Sir Michael's room. The baronet lay in a quiet sleep, his arm laying outside the bed, and his strong hand clasped in his young wife's delicate fingers. Alicia sat in a low chair beside the broad open hearth, on which the huge logs burned fiercely in the frosty atmosphere. The interior of this luxurious bedchamber might have made a striking picture for an artist's pencil. The massive furniture, dark and somber, yet broken up and relieved here and there by scraps of gilding, and masses of glowing color; the elegance of every detail, in which wealth was subservient to purity of taste; and last, but greatest in importance, the graceful figures of the two women, and the noble form of the old man would have formed a worthy study for any painter.

Lucy Audley, with her disordered hair in a pale haze of yellow gold about her thoughtful face, the flowing lines of her soft muslin dressing-gown falling in straight folds to her feet, and clasped at the waist by a narrow circlet of agate links might have served as a model for a mediaeval saint, in one of the tiny chapels hidden away in the nooks and corners of a gray old cathedral, unchanged by Reformation or Cromwell; and what saintly martyr of the Middle Ages could have borne a holier aspect than the man whose gray beard lay upon the dark silken coverlet of the stately bed?

Robert paused upon the threshold, fearful of awaking his uncle. The two ladies had heard his step, cautious though he had been, and lifted their heads to look at him. My lady's face, quietly watching the sick man, had worn an anxious earnestness which made it only more beautiful; but the same face recognizing Robert Audley, faded from its delicate brightness, and looked scared and wan in the lamplight.

"Mr. Audley!" she cried, in a faint, tremulous voice.

"Hush!" whispered Alicia, with a warning gesture; "you will wake papa. How good of you to come, Robert," she added, in the same whispered tones, beckoning to her cousin to take an empty chair near the bed.

The young man seated himself in the indicated seat at the bottom of the bed, and opposite to my lady, who sat close beside the pillows. He looked long and earnestly at the face of the sleeper; still longer, still more earnestly at the face of Lady Audley, which was slowly recovering its natural hues.

"He has not been very ill, has he?" Robert asked, in the same key as that in which Alicia had spoken.

My lady answered the question.

"Oh, no, not dangerously ill," she said, without taking her eyes from her husband's face; "but still we have been anxious, very, very anxious."

Robert never relaxed his scrutiny of that pale face.

"She shall look at me," he thought; "I will make her meet my eyes, and I will read her as I have read her before. She shall know how useless her artifices are with me."

He paused for a few minutes before he spoke again. The regular breathing of the sleeper the ticking of a gold hunting-watch at the head of the bed, and the crackling of the burning logs, were the only sounds that broke the stillness.

"I have no doubt you have been anxious, Lady Audley," Robert said, after a pause, fixing my lady's eyes as they wandered furtively to his face. "There is no one to whom my uncle's life can be of more value than to you. Your happiness, your prosperity, your *safety* depend alike upon his existence."

The whisper in which he uttered these words was too low to reach the other side of the room, where Alicia sat.

Lucy Audley's eyes met those of the speaker with some gleam of triumph in their light.

"I know that," she said. "Those who strike me must strike through him."

She pointed to the sleeper as she spoke, still looking at Robert Audley. She defied him with her blue eyes, their brightness intensified by the triumph in their glance. She defied him with her quiet smile—a smile of

fatal beauty, full of lurking significance and mysterious meaning—the smile which the artist had exaggerated in his portrait of Sir Michael's wife.

Robert turned away from the lovely face, and shaded his eyes with his hand; putting a barrier between my lady and himself; a screen which baffled her penetration and provoked her curiosity. Was he still watching her or was he thinking? and of what was he thinking?

Robert had been seated at the bedside for upward of an hour before his uncle awoke. The baronet was delighted at his nephew's coming.

"It was very good of you to come to me, Bob," he said. "I have been thinking of you a good deal since I have been ill. You and Lucy must be good friends, you know, Bob; and you must learn to think of her as your aunt, sir; though she is young and beautiful; and—and—you understand, eh?"

Robert grasped his uncle's hand, but he looked down as he answered: "I do understand you, sir," he said, quietly; "and I give you my word of honor that I am steeled against my lady's fascinations. She knows that as well as I do."

Lucy Audley made a little grimace with her pretty little lips. "Bah, you silly Robert," she exclaimed; "you take everything *au serieux*. If I thought you were rather too young for a nephew, it was only in my fear of other people's foolish gossip; not from any—"

She hesitated for a moment, and escaped any conclusion to her sentence by the timely intervention of Mr. Dawson, her late employer, who entered the room upon his evening visit while she was speaking.

He felt the patient's pulse; asked two or three questions; pronounced the baronet to be steadily improving; exchanged a few commonplace remarks with Alicia and Lady Audley, and prepared to leave the room. Robert rose and accompanied him to the door.

"I will light you to the staircase," he said, taking a candle from one of the tables, and lighting it at the lamp.

"No, no, Mr. Audley, pray do not trouble yourself," expostulated the surgeon; "I know my way very well indeed."

Robert insisted, and the two men left the room together. As they entered the octagon ante-chamber the barrister paused and shut the door behind him.

"Will you see that the door is closed, Mr. Dawson?" he said, pointing to that which opened upon the staircase. "I wish to have a few moments' private conversation with you."

"With much pleasure," replied the surgeon, complying with Robert's request; "but if you are at all alarmed about your uncle, Mr. Audley, I can set your mind at rest. There is no occasion for the least uneasiness. Had his illness been at all serious I should have telegraphed immediately for the family physician."

"I am sure that you would have done your duty, sir," answered Robert, gravely. "But I am not going to speak of my uncle. I wish to ask you two or three questions about another person."

"Indeed."

"The person who once lived in your family as Miss Lucy Graham; the person who is now Lady Audley."

Mr. Dawson looked up with an expression of surprise upon his quiet face.

"Pardon me, Mr. Audley," he answered; "you can scarcely expect me to answer any questions about your uncle's wife without Sir Michael's express permission. I can understand no motive which can prompt you to ask such questions—no worthy motive, at least." He looked severely at the young man, as much as to say: "You have been falling in love with your uncle's pretty wife, sir, and you want to make me a go-between in some treacherous flirtation; but it won't do, sir, it won't do."

"I always respected the lady as Miss Graham, sir," he said, "and I esteem her doubly as Lady Audley—not on account of her altered position, but because she is the wife of one of the noblest men in Christendom."

"You cannot respect my uncle or my uncle's honor more sincerely than I do," answered Robert. "I have no unworthy motive for the questions I am about to ask; and you must answer them."

"*Must!*" echoed Mr. Dawson, indignantly.

"Yes, you are my uncle's friend. It was at your house he met the woman who is now his wife. She called herself an orphan, I believe, and enlisted his pity as well as his admiration in her behalf. She told him that she stood alone in the world, did she not?—without a friend or relative. This was all I could ever learn of her antecedents."

"What reason have you to wish to know more?" asked the surgeon.

"A very terrible reason," answered Robert Audley. "For some months past I have struggled with doubts and suspicions which have embittered my life. They have grown stronger every day; and they will not be set at rest by the commonplace sophistries and the shallow arguments with which men try to deceive themselves rather than believe that which of all things upon earth they most fear to believe. I do not think that the woman who bears my uncle's name, is worthy to be his wife. I may wrong her. Heaven grant that it is so. But if I do, the fatal chain of circumstantial evidence never yet linked itself so closely about an innocent person. I wish to set my doubts at rest or—or to confirm my fears. There is but one manner in which I can do this. I must trace the life of my uncle's wife backward, minutely and carefully, from this night to a period of six years ago. This is the twenty-fourth of February, fifty-nine. I want to know every record of her life between to-night and the February of the year fifty-three."

"And your motive is a worthy one?"

"Yes, I wish to clear her from a very dreadful suspicion."

"Which exists only in your mind?"

"And in the mind of one other person."

"May I ask who that person is?"

"No, Mr. Dawson," answered Robert, decisively; "I cannot reveal anything more than what I have already told you. I am a very irresolute, vacillating man in most things. In this matter I am compelled to be decided. I repeat once more that I *must* know the history of Lucy Graham's life. If you refuse to help me to the small extent in your power, I will find others who will help me. Painful as it would become, I will ask my uncle for the information which you would withhold, rather than be baffled in the first step of my investigation."

Mr. Dawson was silent for some minutes.

"I cannot express how much you have astonished and alarmed me, Mr. Audley," he said. "I can tell you so little about Lady Audley's antecedents, that it would be mere obstinacy to withhold the small amount of information I possess. I have always considered your uncle's wife one of the most amiable of women. I *cannot* bring myself to think her otherwise. It would be an uprooting of one of the strongest convictions of my life were I

compelled to think her otherwise. You wish to follow her life backward from the present hour to the year fifty-three?"

"I do."

"She was married to your uncle last June twelvemonth, in the midsummer of fifty-seven. She had lived in my house a little more than thirteen months. She became a member of my household upon the fourteenth of May, in the year fifty-six."

"And she came to you—"

"From a school at Brompton, a school kept by a lady of the name of Vincent. It was Mrs. Vincent's strong recommendation that induced me to receive Miss Graham into my family without any more special knowledge of her antecedents."

"Did you see this Mrs. Vincent?"

"I did not. I advertised for a governess, and Miss Graham answered my advertisement. In her letter she referred me to Mrs. Vincent, the proprietress of a school in which she was then residing as junior teacher. My time is always so fully occupied, that I was glad to escape the necessity of a day's loss in going from Audley to London to inquire about the young lady's qualifications. I looked for Mrs. Vincent's name in the directory, found it, and concluded that she was a responsible person, and wrote to her. Her reply was perfectly satisfactory;—Miss Lucy Graham was assiduous and conscientious; as well as fully qualified for the situation I offered. I accepted this reference, and I had no cause to regret what may have been an indiscretion. And now, Mr. Audley, I have told you all that I have the power to tell."

"Will you be so kind as to give me the address of this Mrs. Vincent?" asked Robert, taking out his pocketbook.

"Certainly; she was then living at No. 9 Crescent Villas, Brompton."

"Ah, to be sure," muttered Mr. Audley, a recollection of last September flashing suddenly back upon him as the surgeon spoke.

"Crescent Villas—yes, I have heard the address before from Lady Audley herself. This Mrs. Vincent telegraphed to my uncle's wife early in last September. She was ill—dying, I believe—and sent for my lady; but had removed from her old house and was not to be found."

"Indeed! I never heard Lady Audley mention the circumstance."



"Perhaps not. It occurred while I was down here. Thank you, Mr. Dawson, for the information you have so kindly and honestly given me. It takes me back two and a-half years in the history of my lady's life; but I have still a blank of three years to fill up before I can exonerate her from my terrible suspicion. Good evening."

Robert shook hands with the surgeon and returned to his uncle's room. He had been away about a quarter of an hour. Sir Michael had fallen asleep once more, and my lady's loving hands had lowered the heavy curtains and shaded the lamp by the bedside. Alicia and her father's wife were taking tea in Lady Audley's boudoir, the room next to the antechamber in which Robert and Mr. Dawson had been seated.

Lucy Audley looked up from her occupation among the fragile china cups and watched Robert rather anxiously as he walked softly to his uncle's room and back again to the boudoir. She looked very pretty and innocent, seated behind the graceful group of delicate opal china and glittering silver. Surely a pretty woman never looks prettier than when making tea. The most feminine and most domestic of all occupations imparts a magic harmony to her every movement, a witchery to her every glance. The floating mists from the boiling liquid in which she infuses the soothing herbs; whose secrets are known to her alone, envelope her in a cloud of scented vapor, through which she seems a social fairy, weaving potent spells with Gunpowder and Bohea. At the tea-table she reigns omnipotent, unapproachable. What do men know of the mysterious beverage? Read how poor Hazlitt made his tea, and shudder at the dreadful barbarism. How clumsily the wretched creatures attempt to assist the witch president of the tea-tray; how hopelessly they hold the kettle, how continually they imperil the frail cups and saucers, or the taper hands of the priestess. To do away with the tea-table is to rob woman of her legitimate empire. To send a couple of hulking men about among your visitors, distributing a mixture made in the housekeeper's room, is to reduce the most social and friendly of ceremonies to a formal giving out of rations. Better the pretty influence of the tea cups and saucers gracefully wielded in a woman's hand than all the inappropriate power snatched at the point of the pen from the unwilling sterner sex. Imagine all the women of England elevated to the high level of masculine intellectuality, superior to crinoline; above pearl powder and Mrs. Rachael Levison; above taking the pains to be pretty; above tea-tables and that cruelly scandalous and rather satirical gossip which even strong

men delight in; and what a drear, utilitarian, ugly life the sterner sex must lead.

My lady was by no means strong-minded. The starry diamonds upon her white fingers flashed hither and thither among the tea-things, and she bent her pretty head over the marvelous Indian tea-caddy of sandal-wood and silver, with as much earnestness as if life held no higher purpose than the infusion of Bohea.

"You'll take a cup of tea with us, Mr. Audley?" she asked, pausing with the teapot in her hand to look up at Robert, who was standing near the door.

"If you please."

"But you have not dined, perhaps? Shall I ring and tell them to bring you something a little more substantial than biscuits and transparent bread and butter?"

"No, thank you, Lady Audley. I took some lunch before I left town. I'll trouble you for nothing but a cup of tea."

He seated himself at the little table and looked across it at his Cousin Alicia, who sat with a book in her lap, and had the air of being very much absorbed by its pages. The bright brunette complexion had lost its glowing crimson, and the animation of the young lady's manner was suppressed—on account of her father's illness, no doubt, Robert thought.

"Alicia, my dear," the barrister said, after a very leisurely contemplation of his cousin, "you're not looking well."

Miss Audley shrugged her shoulders, but did not condescend to lift her eyes from her book.

"Perhaps not," she answered, contemptuously. "What does it matter? I'm growing a philosopher of your school, Robert Audley. What does it matter? Who cares whether I am well or ill?"

"What a spitfire she is," thought the barrister. He always knew his cousin was angry with him when she addressed him as "Robert Audley."

"You needn't pitch into a fellow because he asks you a civil question, Alicia," he said, reproachfully. "As to nobody caring about your health, that's nonsense. *I* care." Miss Audley looked up with a bright smile. "Sir Harry Towers cares." Miss Audley returned to her book with a frown.

"What are you reading there, Alicia?" Robert asked, after a pause, during which he had sat thoughtfully stirring his tea.

"*Changes and Chances*."

"A novel?"

"Yes."

"Who is it by?"

"The author of *Follies and Faults*," answered Alicia, still pursuing her study of the romance upon her lap.

"Is it interesting?"

Miss Audley pursed up her mouth and shrugged her shoulders.

"Not particularly," she said.

"Then I think you might have better manners than to read it while your first cousin is sitting opposite you," observed Mr. Audley, with some gravity, "especially as he has only come to pay you a flying visit, and will be off to-morrow morning."

"To-morrow morning!" exclaimed my lady, looking up suddenly.

Though the look of joy upon Lady Audley's face was as brief as a flash of lightning on a summer sky, it was not unperceived by Robert.

"Yes," he said; "I shall be obliged to run up to London to-morrow on business, but I shall return the next day, if you will allow me, Lady Audley, and stay here till my uncle recovers."

"But you are not seriously alarmed about him, are you?" asked my lady, anxiously.

"You do not think him very ill?"

"No," answered Robert. "Thank Heaven, I think there is not the slightest cause for apprehension."

My lady sat silent for a few moments, looking at the empty teacups with a prettily thoughtful face—a face grave with the innocent seriousness of a musing child.

"But you were closeted such a long time with Mr. Dawson, just now," she said, after this brief pause. "I was quite alarmed at the length of your conversation. Were you talking of Sir Michael all the time?"

"No; not all the time?"

My lady looked down at the teacups once more.

"Why, what could you find to say to Mr. Dawson, or he to say to you?" she asked, after another pause. "You are almost strangers to each other."

"Suppose Mr. Dawson wished to consult me about some law business."

"Was it that?" cried Lady Audley, eagerly.

"It would be rather unprofessional to tell you if it were so, my lady," answered Robert, gravely.

My lady bit her lip, and relapsed into silence. Alicia threw down her book, and watched her cousin's preoccupied face. He talked to her now and then for a few minutes, but it was evidently an effort to him to arouse himself from his revery.

"Upon my word, Robert Audley, you are a very agreeable companion," exclaimed Alicia at length, her rather limited stock of patience quite exhausted by two or three of these abortive attempts at conversation. "Perhaps the next time you come to the Court you will be good enough to bring your *mind* with you. By your present inanimate appearance, I should imagine that you had left your intellect, such as it is, somewhere in the Temple. You were never one of the liveliest of people, but latterly you have really grown almost unendurable. I suppose you are in love, Mr. Audley, and are thinking of the honored object of your affections."

He was thinking of Clara Talboys' uplifted face, sublime in its unutterable grief; of her impassioned words still ringing in his ears as clearly as when they were first spoken. Again he saw her looking at him with her bright brown eyes. Again he heard that solemn question: "Shall you or I find my brother's murderer?" And he was in Essex; in the little village from which he firmly believed George Talboys had never departed. He was on the spot at which all record of his friend's life ended as suddenly as a story ends when the reader shuts the book. And could he withdraw now from the investigation in which he found himself involved? Could he stop now? For any consideration? No; a thousand times no! Not with the image of that grief-stricken face imprinted on his mind. Not with the accents of that earnest appeal ringing on his ear.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### SO FAR AND NO FARTHER.

Robert left Audley the next morning by an early train, and reached Shoreditch a little after nine o'clock. He did not return to his chambers, but called a cab and drove straight to Crescent Villas, West Brompton. He knew that he should fail in finding the lady he went to seek at this address, as his uncle had failed a few months before, but he thought it possible to obtain some clew to the schoolmistress' new residence, in spite of Sir Michael's ill-success.

"Mrs. Vincent was in a dying state, according to the telegraphic message," Robert thought. "If I do find her, I shall at least succeed in discovering whether that message was genuine."

He found Crescent Villas after some difficulty. The houses were large, but they lay half imbedded among the chaos of brick and rising mortar around them. New terraces, new streets, new squares led away into hopeless masses of stone and plaster on every side. The roads were sticky with damp clay, which clogged the wheels of the cab and buried the fetlocks of the horse. The desolations—that awful aspect of incompleteness and discomfort which pervades a new and unfinished neighborhood—had set its dismal seal upon the surrounding streets which had arisen about and intrenched Crescent Villas; and Robert wasted forty minutes by his watch, and an hour and a quarter by the cabman's reckoning, in driving up and down uninhabited streets and terraces, trying to find the Villas; whose chimney-tops were frowning down upon him black and venerable, amid groves of virgin plaster, undimmed by time or smoke.

But having at last succeeded in reaching his destination, Mr. Audley alighted from the cab, directed the driver to wait for him at a certain corner, and set out upon his voyage of discovery.

"If I were a distinguished Q.C., I could not do this sort of thing," he thought; "my time would be worth a guinea or so a minute, and I should be retained in the great case of Hoggs vs. Boggs, going forward this very day

before a special jury at Westminster Hall. As it is, I can afford to be patient."

He inquired for Mrs. Vincent at the number which Mr. Dawson had given him. The maid who opened the door had never heard that lady's name; but after going to inquire of her mistress, she returned to tell Robert that Mrs. Vincent had lived there, but that she had left two months before the present occupants had entered the house, "and missus has been here fifteen months," the girl added emphatically.

"But you cannot tell where she went on leaving here?" Robert asked, despondingly.

"No, sir; missus says she believes the lady failed, and that she left sudden like, and didn't want her address to be known in the neighborhood."

Mr. Audley felt himself at a standstill once more. If Mrs. Vincent had left the place in debt, she had no doubt scrupulously concealed her whereabouts. There was little hope, then, of learning her address from the tradespeople; and yet, on the other hand, it was just possible that some of her sharpest creditors might have made it their business to discover the defaulter's retreat.

He looked about him for the nearest shops, and found a baker's, a stationer's, and a fruiterer's a few paces from the Crescent. Three empty-looking, pretentious shops, with plate-glass windows, and a hopeless air of gentility.

He stopped at the baker's, who called himself a pastrycook and confectioner, and exhibited some specimens of petrified sponge-cake in glass bottles, and some highly-glazed tarts, covered with green gauze.

"She *must* have bought bread," Robert thought, as he deliberated before the baker's shop; "and she is likely to have bought it at the handiest place. I'll try the baker."

The baker was standing behind his counter, disputing the items of a bill with a shabby-genteel young woman. He did not trouble himself to attend to Robert Audley until he had settled the dispute, but he looked up as he was receipting the bill, and asked the barrister what he pleased to want.

"Can you tell me the address of a Mrs. Vincent, who lived at No. 9 Crescent Villas a year and a half ago?" Mr. Audley inquired, mildly.

"No, I can't," answered the baker, growing very red in the face, and speaking in an unnecessarily loud voice; "and what's more, I wish I could. That lady owes me upward of eleven pound for bread, and it's rather more than I can afford to lose. If anybody can tell me where she lives, I shall be much obliged to 'em for so doing."

Robert Audley shrugged his shoulders and wished the man good-morning. He felt that his discovery of the lady's whereabouts would involve more trouble than he had expected. He might have looked for Mrs. Vincent's name in the Post-Office directory, but he thought it scarcely likely that a lady who was on such uncomfortable terms with her creditors, would afford them so easy a means of ascertaining her residence.

"If the baker can't find her, how should I find her?" he thought, despairingly. "If a resolute, sanguine, active and energetic creature, such as the baker, fail to achieve this business, how can a lymphatic wretch like me hope to accomplish it? Where the baker has been defeated, what preposterous folly it would be for me to try to succeed."

Mr. Audley abandoned himself to these gloomy reflections as he walked slowly back toward the corner at which he had left the cab. About half-way between the baker's shop and this corner he was arrested by hearing a woman's step close at his side, and a woman's voice asking him to stop. He turned and found himself face to face with the shabbily-dressed woman whom he had left settling her account with the baker.

"Eh, what?" he asked, vaguely. "Can I do anything for you, ma'am? Does Mrs. Vincent owe *you* money, too?"

"Yes, sir," the woman answered, with a semi-genteel manner which corresponded with the shabby gentility of her dress. "Mrs. Vincent is in my debt; but it isn't that, sir. I—I want to know, please, what your business may be with her—because—because—"

"You can give me her address if you choose, ma'am. That's what you mean to say, isn't it?"

The woman hesitated a little, looking rather suspiciously at Robert.

"You're not connected with—with the tally business, are you, sir?" she asked, after considering Mr. Audley's personal appearance for a few moments.

"The *what*, ma'am?" asked the young barrister, staring aghast at his questioner.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon, sir," exclaimed the little woman, seeing that she had made some awful mistake. "I thought you might have been, you know. Some of the gentlemen who collect for the tally shops do dress so very handsome; and I know Mrs. Vincent owes a good deal of money."

Robert Audley laid his hand upon the speaker's arm.

"My dear madam," he said, "I want to know nothing of Mrs. Vincent's affairs. So far from being concerned in what you call *the tally business*, I have not the remotest idea what you mean by that expression. You may mean a political conspiracy; you may mean some new species of taxes. Mrs. Vincent does not owe *me* any money, however badly she may stand with that awful-looking baker. I never saw her in my life; but I wish to see her to-day for the simple purpose of asking her a few very plain questions about a young lady who once resided in her house. If you know where Mrs. Vincent lives and will give me her address, you will be doing me a great favor."

He took out his card-case and handed a card to the woman, who examined the slip of pasteboard anxiously before she spoke again.

"I'm sure you look and speak like a gentleman, sir," she said, after a brief pause, "and I hope you will excuse me if I've seemed mistrustful like; but poor Mrs. Vincent has had dreadful difficulties, and I'm the only person hereabouts that she's trusted with her addresses. I'm a dressmaker, sir, and I've worked for her for upward of six years, and though she doesn't pay me regular, you know, sir, she gives me a little money on account now and then, and I get on as well as I can. I may tell you where she lives, then, sir? You haven't deceived me, have you?"

"On my honor, no."

"Well, then sir," said the dressmaker, dropping her voice as if she thought the pavement beneath her feet, or the iron railings before the houses by her side, might have ears to hear her, "it's Acacia Cottage, Peckham Grove. I took a dress there yesterday for Mrs. Vincent."

"Thank you," said Robert, writing the address in his pocketbook. "I am very much obliged to you, and you may rely upon it, Mrs. Vincent shall not suffer any inconvenience through me."



He lifted his hat, bowed to the little dressmaker, and turned back to the cab.

"I have beaten the baker, at any rate," he thought. "Now for the second stage, traveling backward, in my lady's life."

The drive from Brompton to the Peckham Road was a very long one, and between Crescent Villas and Acacia Cottage, Robert Audley had ample leisure for reflection. He thought of his uncle lying weak and ill in the oak-room at Audley Court. He thought of the beautiful blue eyes watching Sir Michael's slumbers; the soft, white hands tending on his waking moments; the low musical voice soothing his loneliness, cheering and consoling his declining years. What a pleasant picture it might have been, had he been able to look upon it ignorantly, seeing no more than others saw, looking no further than a stranger could look. But with the black cloud which he saw brooding over it, what an arch mockery, what a diabolical delusion it seemed.

Peckham Grove—pleasant enough in the summer-time—has rather a dismal aspect upon a dull February day, when the trees are bare and leafless, and the little gardens desolate. Acacia Cottage bore small token of the fitness of its nomenclature, and faced the road with its stuccoed walls sheltered only by a couple of attenuated poplars. But it announced that it was Acacia Cottage by means of a small brass plate upon one of the gate-posts, which was sufficient indication for the sharp-sighted cabman, who dropped Mr. Audley upon the pavement before the little gate.

Acacia Cottage was much lower in the social scale than Crescent Villas, and the small maid-servant who came to the low wooden gate and parleyed with Mr. Audley, was evidently well used to the encounter of relentless creditors across the same feeble barricade.

She murmured the familiar domestic fiction of the uncertainty regarding her mistress's whereabouts; and told Robert that if he would please to state his name and business, she would go and see if Mrs. Vincent was at home.

Mr. Audley produced a card, and wrote in pencil under his own name: "a connection of the late Miss Graham."

He directed the small servant to carry his card to her mistress, and quietly awaited the result.

The servant returned in about five minutes with the key of the gate. Her mistress was at home, she told Robert as she admitted him, and would be happy to see the gentleman.

The square parlor into which Robert was ushered bore in every scrap of ornament, in every article of furniture, the unmistakable stamp of that species of poverty which is most comfortless because it is never stationary. The mechanic who furnishes his tiny sitting-room with half-a-dozen cane chairs, a Pembroke table, a Dutch clock, a tiny looking-glass, a crockery shepherd and shepherdess, and a set of gaudily-japanned iron tea-trays, makes the most of his limited possessions, and generally contrives to get some degree of comfort out of them; but the lady who loses the handsome furniture of the house she is compelled to abandon and encamps in some smaller habitation with the shabby remainder—bought in by some merciful friend at the sale of her effects—carries with her an aspect of genteel desolation and tawdry misery not easily to be paralleled in wretchedness by any other phase which poverty can assume.

The room which Robert Audley surveyed was furnished with the shabbier scraps snatched from the ruin which had overtaken the imprudent schoolmistress in Crescent Villas. A cottage piano, a chiffonier, six sizes too large for the room, and dismally gorgeous in gilded moldings that were chipped and broken; a slim-legged card-table, placed in the post of honor, formed the principal pieces of furniture. A threadbare patch of Brussels carpet covered the center of the room, and formed an oasis of roses and lilies upon a desert of shabby green drugget. Knitted curtains shaded the windows, in which hung wire baskets of horrible-looking plants of the cactus species, that grew downward, like some demented class of vegetation, whose prickly and spider-like members had a fancy for standing on their heads.

The green-baize covered card-table was adorned with gaudily-bound annuals or books of beauty, placed at right angles; but Robert Audley did not avail himself of these literary distractions. He seated himself upon one of the rickety chairs, and waited patiently for the advent of the schoolmistress. He could hear the hum of half-a-dozen voices in a room near him, and the jingling harmonies of a set of variations in *Deh Conte*, upon a piano, whose every wire was evidently in the last stage of attenuation.

He had waited for about a quarter of an hour, when the door was opened, and a lady, very much dressed, and with the setting sunlight of faded beauty upon her face, entered the room.

"Mr. Audley, I presume," she said, motioning to Robert to reseal himself, and placing herself in an easy-chair opposite to him. "You will pardon me, I hope, for detaining you so long; my duties—"

"It is I who should apologize for intruding upon you," Robert answered, politely; "but my motive for calling upon you is a very serious one, and must plead my excuse. You remember the lady whose name I wrote upon my card?"

"Perfectly."

"May I ask how much you know of that lady's history since her departure from your house?"

"Very little. In point of fact, scarcely anything at all. Miss Graham, I believe, obtained a situation in the family of a surgeon resident in Essex. Indeed, it was I who recommended her to that gentleman. I have never heard from her since she left me."

"But you have communicated with her?" Robert asked, eagerly.

"No, indeed."

Mr. Audley was silent for a few moments, the shadow of gloomy thoughts gathering darkly on his face.

"May I ask if you sent a telegraphic dispatch to Miss Graham early in last September, stating that you were dangerously ill, and that you wished to see her?"

Mrs. Vincent smiled at her visitor's question.

"I had no occasion to send such a message," she said; "I have never been seriously ill in my life."

Robert Audley paused before he asked any further questions, and scrawled a few penciled words in his note-book.

"If I ask you a few straightforward questions about Miss Lucy Graham, madam," he said. "Will you do me the favor to answer them without asking my motive in making such inquiries?"

"Most certainly," replied Mrs. Vincent. "I know nothing to Miss Graham's disadvantage, and have no justification for making a mystery of

the little I do know."

"Then will you tell me at what date the young lady first came to you?"

Mrs. Vincent smiled and shook her head. She had a pretty smile—the frank smile of a woman who had been admired, and who has too long felt the certainty of being able to please, to be utterly subjugated by any worldly misfortune.

"It's not the least use to ask me, Mr. Audley," she said. "I'm the most careless creature in the world; I never did, and never could remember dates, though I do all in my power to impress upon my girls how important it is for their future welfare that they should know when William the Conqueror began to reign, and all that kind of thing. But I haven't the remotest idea when Miss Graham came to me, although I know it was ages ago, for it was the very summer I had my peach-colored silk. But we must consult Tonks—Tonks is sure to be right."

Robert Audley wondered who or what Tonks could be; a diary, perhaps, or a memorandum-book—some obscure rival of Letsome.

Mrs. Vincent rung the bell, which was answered by the maid-servant who had admitted Robert.

"Ask Miss Tonks to come to me," she said. "I want to see her particularly."

In less than five minutes Miss Tonks made her appearance. She was wintry and rather frost-bitten in aspect, and seemed to bring cold air in the scanty folds of her somber merino dress. She was no age in particular, and looked as if she had never been younger, and would never grow older, but would remain forever working backward and forward in her narrow groove, like some self-feeding machine for the instruction of young ladies.

"Tonks, my dear," said Mrs. Vincent, without ceremony, "this gentleman is a relative of Miss Graham's. Do you remember how long it is since she came to us at Crescent Villas?"

"She came in August, 1854," answered Miss Tonks; "I think it was the eighteenth of August, but I'm not quite sure that it wasn't the seventeenth. I know it was on a Tuesday."

"Thank you, Tonks; you are a most invaluable darling," exclaimed Mrs. Vincent, with her sweetest smile. It was, perhaps, because of the invaluable nature of Miss Tonks' services that she had received no remuneration

whatever from her employer for the last three or four years. Mrs. Vincent might have hesitated to pay from very contempt for the pitiful nature of the stipend as compared with the merits of the teacher.

"Is there anything else that Tonks or I can tell you, Mr. Audley?" asked the schoolmistress. "Tonks has a far better memory than I have."

"Can you tell me where Miss Graham came from when she entered your household?" Robert inquired.

"Not very precisely," answered Mrs. Vincent. "I have a vague notion that Miss Graham said something about coming from the seaside, but she didn't say where, or if she did I have forgotten it. Tonks, did Miss Graham tell you where she came from?"

"Oh, no!" replied Miss Tonks, shaking her grim little head significantly. "Miss Graham told me nothing; she was too clever for that. She knows how to keep her own secrets, in spite of her innocent ways and her curly hair," Miss Tonks added, spitefully.

"You think she had secrets?" Robert asked, rather eagerly.

"I know she had," replied Miss Tonks, with frosty decision; "all manner of secrets. I wouldn't have engaged such a person as junior teacher in a respectable school, without so much as one word of recommendation from any living creature."

"You had no reference, then, from Miss Graham?" asked Robert, addressing Mrs. Vincent.

"No," the lady answered, with some little embarrassment; "I waived that. Miss Graham waived the question of salary; I could not do less than waive the question of reference. She quarreled with her papa, she told me, and she wanted to find a home away from all the people she had ever known. She wished to keep herself quite separate from these people. She had endured so much, she said, young as she was, and she wanted to escape from her troubles. How could I press her for a reference under these circumstances, especially when I saw that she was a perfect lady. You know that Lucy Graham was a perfect lady, Tonks, and it is very unkind for you to say such cruel things about my taking her without a reference."

"When people make favorites, they are apt to be deceived in them," Miss Tonks answered, with icy sententiousness, and with no very perceptible relevance to the point in discussion.

"I never made her a favorite, you jealous Tonks," Mrs. Vincent answered, reproachfully. "I never said she was as useful as you, dear. You know I never did."

"Oh, no!" replied Miss Tonks, with a chilling accent, "you never said she was useful. She was only ornamental; a person to be shown off to visitors, and to play fantasias on the drawing-room piano."

"Then you can give me no clew to Miss Graham's previous history?" Robert asked, looking from the schoolmistress to her teacher. He saw very clearly that Miss Tonks bore an envious grudge against Lucy Graham—a grudge which even the lapse of time had not healed.

"If this woman knows anything to my lady's detriment, she will tell it," he thought. "She will tell it only too willingly."

But Miss Tonks appeared to know nothing whatever; except that Miss Graham had sometimes declared herself an ill-used creature, deceived by the baseness of mankind, and the victim of unmerited sufferings, in the way of poverty and deprivation. Beyond this, Miss Tonks could tell nothing; and although she made the most of what she did know, Robert soon sounded the depth of her small stock of information.

"I have only one more question to ask," he said at last. "It is this: Did Miss Graham leave any books or knick-knacks, or any other kind of property whatever, behind her, when she left your establishment?"

"Not to my knowledge," Mrs. Vincent replied.

"Yes," cried Miss Tonks, sharply. "She did leave something. She left a box. It's up-stairs in my room. I've got an old bonnet in it. Would you like to see the box?" she asked, addressing Robert.

"If you will be so good as to allow me," he answered, "I should very much like to see it."

"I'll fetch it down," said Miss Tonks. "It's not very big."

She ran out of the room before Mr. Audley had time to utter any polite remonstrance.

"How pitiless these women are to each other," he thought, while the teacher was absent. "This one knows intuitively that there is some danger to the other lurking beneath my questions. She sniffs the coming trouble to her fellow female creature, and rejoices in it, and would take any pains to help me. What a world it is, and how these women take life out of her hands."

Helen Maldon, Lady Audley, Clara Talboys, and now Miss Tonks—all womankind from beginning to end."

Miss Tonks re-entered while the young barrister was meditating upon the infamy of her sex. She carried a dilapidated paper-covered bonnet-box, which she submitted to Robert's inspection.

Mr. Audley knelt down to examine the scraps of railway labels and addresses which were pasted here and there upon the box. It had been battered upon a great many different lines of railway, and had evidently traveled considerably. Many of the labels had been torn off, but fragments of some of them remained, and upon one yellow scrap of paper Robert read the letters, TURI.

"The box has been to Italy," he thought. "Those are the first four letters of the word Turin, and the label is a foreign one."

The only direction which had not been either defaced or torn away was the last, which bore the name of Miss Graham, passenger to London. Looking very closely at this label, Mr. Audley discovered that it had been pasted over another.

"Will you be so good as to let me have a little water and a piece of sponge?" he said. "I want to get off this upper label. Believe me that I am justified in what I am doing."

Miss Tonks ran out of the room and returned immediately with a basin of water and a sponge.

"Shall I take off the label?" she asked.

"No, thank you," Robert answered, coldly. "I can do it very well myself."

He damped the upper label several times before he could loosen the edges of the paper; but after two or three careful attempts the moistened surface peeled off, without injury to the underneath address.

Miss Tonks could not contrive to read this address across Robert's shoulder, though she exhibited considerable dexterity in her endeavors to accomplish that object.

Mr. Audley repeated his operations upon the lower label, which he removed from the box, and placed very carefully between two blank leaves of his pocket-book.

"I need intrude upon you no longer, ladies," he said, when he had done this. "I am extremely obliged to you for having afforded me all the information in your power. I wish you good-morning."

Mrs. Vincent smiled and bowed, murmuring some complacent conventionality about the delight she had felt in Mr. Audley's visit. Miss Tonks, more observant, stared at the white change, which had come over the young man's face since he had removed the upper label from the box.

Robert walked slowly away from Acacia Cottage. "If that which I have found to-day is no evidence for a jury," he thought, "it is surely enough to convince my uncle that he has married a designing and infamous woman."

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### BEGINNING AT THE OTHER END.

Robert Audley walked slowly through the leafless grove, under the bare and shadowless trees in the gray February atmosphere, thinking as he went of the discovery he had just made.

"I have that in my pocket-book," he pondered, "which forms the connecting link between the woman whose death George Talboys read of in the *Times* newspaper and the woman who rules in my uncle's house. The history of Lucy Graham ends abruptly on the threshold of Mrs. Vincent's school. She entered that establishment in August, 1854. The schoolmistress and her assistant can tell me this but they cannot tell me whence she came. They cannot give me one clew to the secrets of her life from the day of her birth until the day she entered that house. I can go no further in this backward investigation of my lady's antecedents. What am I to do, then, if I mean to keep my promise to Clara Talboys?"

He walked on for a few paces revolving this question in his mind, with a darker shadow than the shadows of the gathering winter twilight on his face, and a heavy oppression of mingled sorrow and dread weighing down his heart.

"My duty is clear enough," he thought—"not the less clear because it leads me step by step, carrying ruin and desolation with me, to the home I love. I must begin at the other end—I must begin at the other end, and discover the history of Helen Talboys from the hour of George's departure until the day of the funeral in the churchyard at Ventnor."

Mr. Audley hailed a passing hansom, and drove back to his chambers.

He reached Figtree Court in time to write a few lines to Miss Talboys, and to post his letter at St. Martin's-le-Grand off before six o'clock.

"It will save me a day," he thought, as he drove to the General Post Office with this brief epistle.

He had written to Clara Talboys to inquire the name of the little seaport town in which George had met Captain Maldon and his daughter; for in

spite of the intimacy between the two young men, Robert Audley knew very few particulars of his friend's brief married life.

From the hour in which George Talboys had read the announcement of his wife's death in the columns of the *Times*, he had avoided all mention of the tender history which had been so cruelly broken, the familiar record which had been so darkly blotted out.

There was so much that was painful in that brief story! There was such bitter self-reproach involved in the recollection of that desertion which must have seemed so cruel to her who waited and watched at home! Robert Audley comprehended this, and he did not wonder at his friend's silence. The sorrowful story had been tacitly avoided by both, and Robert was as ignorant of the unhappy history of this one year in his schoolfellow's life as if they had never lived together in friendly companionship in those snug Temple chambers.

The letter, written to Miss Talboys by her brother George, within a month of his marriage, was dated Harrowgate. It was at Harrowgate, therefore, Robert concluded, the young couple spent their honeymoon.

Robert Audley had requested Clara Talboys to telegraph an answer to his question, in order to avoid the loss of a day in the accomplishment of the investigation he had promised to perform.

The telegraphic answer reached Figtree Court before twelve o'clock the next day.

The name of the seaport town was Wildernsea, Yorkshire.

Within an hour of the receipt of this message, Mr. Audley arrived at the King's-cross station, and took his ticket for Wildernsea by an express train that started at a quarter before two.

The shrieking engine bore him on the dreary northward journey, whirling him over desert wastes of flat meadow-land and bare cornfields, faintly tinted with fresh sprouting green. This northern road was strange and unfamiliar to the young barrister, and the wide expanse of the wintry landscape chilled him by its aspect of bare loneliness. The knowledge of the purpose of his journey blighted every object upon which his absent glances fixed themselves for a moment, only to wander wearily away; only to turn inward upon that far darker picture always presenting itself to his anxious mind.

It was dark when the train reached the Hull terminus, but Mr. Audley's journey was not ended. Amidst a crowd of porters and scattered heaps of that incongruous and heterogeneous luggage with which travelers incumber themselves, he was led, bewildered and half asleep, to another train which was to convey him along the branch line that swept past Wildernsea, and skirted the border of the German Ocean.

Half an hour after leaving Hull, Robert felt the briny freshness of the sea upon the breeze that blew in at the open window of the carriage, and an hour afterward the train stopped at a melancholy station, built amid a sandy desert, and inhabited by two or three gloomy officials, one of whom rung a terrific peal upon a harshly clanging bell as the train approached.

Mr. Audley was the only passenger who alighted at the dismal station. The train swept on to the gayer scenes before the barrister had time to collect his senses, or to pick up the portmanteau which had been discovered with some difficulty amid a black cavern of baggage only illuminated by one lantern.

"I wonder whether settlers in the backwoods of America feel as solitary and strange as I feel to-night?" he thought, as he stared hopelessly about him in the darkness.

He called to one of the officials, and pointed to his portmanteau.

"Will you carry that to the nearest hotel for me?" he asked—"that is to say, if I can get a good bed there."

The man laughed as he shouldered the portmanteau.

"You can get thirty beds, I dare say, sir, if you wanted 'em," he said. "We ain't over busy at Wildernsea at this time o' year. This way, sir."

The porter opened a wooden door in the station wall, and Robert Audley found himself upon a wide bowling-green of smooth grass, which surrounded a huge, square building, that loomed darkly on him through the winter's night, its black solidity only relieved by two lighted windows, far apart from each other, and glimmering redly like beacons on the darkness.

"This is the Victoria Hotel, sir," said the porter. "You wouldn't believe the crowds of company we have down here in the summer."

In the face of the bare grass-plat, the tenantless wooden alcoves, and the dark windows of the hotel, it was indeed rather difficult to imagine that the place was ever gay with merry people taking pleasure in the bright summer

weather; but Robert Audley declared himself willing to believe anything the porter pleased to tell him, and followed his guide meekly to a little door at the side of the big hotel, which led into a comfortable bar, where the humbler classes of summer visitors were accommodated with such refreshments as they pleased to pay for, without running the gantlet of the prim, white-waistcoated waiters on guard at the principal entrance.

But there were very few attendants retained at the hotel in the bleak February season, and it was the landlord himself who ushered Robert into a dreary wilderness of polished mahogany tables and horsehair cushioned chairs, which he called the coffee-room.

Mr. Audley seated himself close to the wide steel fender, and stretched his cramped legs upon the hearth-rug, while the landlord drove the poker into the vast pile of coal, and sent a ruddy blaze roaring upward through the chimney.

"If you would prefer a private room, sir—" the man began.

"No, thank you," said Robert, indifferently; "this room seems quite private enough just now. If you will order me a mutton chop and a pint of sherry, I shall be obliged."

"Certainly, sir."

"And I shall be still more obliged if you will favor me with a few minutes' conversation before you do so."

"With very great pleasure, sir," the landlord answered, good-naturedly. "We see so very little company at this season of the year, that we are only too glad to oblige those gentlemen who do visit us. Any information which I can afford you respecting the neighborhood of Wildernsea and its attractions," added the landlord, unconsciously quoting a small hand-book of the watering-place which he sold in the bar, "I shall be most happy to—"

"But I don't want to know anything about the neighborhood of Wildernsea," interrupted Robert, with a feeble protest against the landlord's volubility. "I want to ask you a few questions about some people who once lived here."

The landlord bowed and smiled, with an air which implied his readiness to recite the biographies of all the inhabitants of the little seaport, if required by Mr. Audley to do so.

"How many years have you lived here?" Robert asked, taking his memorandum book from his pocket. "Will it annoy you if I make notes of your replies to my questions?"

"Not at all, sir," replied the landlord, with a pompous enjoyment of the air of solemnity and importance which pervaded this business. "Any information which I can afford that is likely to be of ultimate value—"

"Yes, thank you," Robert murmured, interrupting the flow of words. "You have lived here—"

"Six years, sir."

"Since the year fifty-three?"

"Since November, in the year fifty-two, sir. I was in business at Hull prior to that time. This house was only completed in the October before I entered it."

"Do you remember a lieutenant in the navy, on half-pay, I believe, at that time, called Maldon?"

"Captain Maldon, sir?"

"Yes, commonly called Captain Maldon. I see you do remember him."

"Yes, sir. Captain Maldon was one of our best customers. He used to spend his evenings in this very room, though the walls were damp at that time, and we weren't able to paper the place for nearly a twelvemonth afterward. His daughter married a young officer that came here with his regiment, at Christmas time in fifty-two. They were married here, sir, and they traveled on the Continent for six months, and came back here again. But the gentleman ran away to Australia, and left the lady, a week or two after her baby was born. The business made quite a sensation in Wildernsea, sir, and Mrs.—Mrs.—I forgot the name—"

"Mrs. Talboys," suggested Robert.

"To be sure, sir, Mrs. Talboys. Mrs. Talboys was very much pitied by the Wildernsea folks, sir, I was going to say, for she was very pretty, and had such nice winning ways that she was a favorite with everybody who knew her."

"Can you tell me how long Mr. Maldon and his daughter remained at Wildernsea after Mr. Talboys left them?" Robert asked.

"Well—no, sir," answered the landlord, after a few moments' deliberation. "I can't say exactly how long it was. I know Mr. Maldon used to sit here in this very parlor, and tell people how badly his daughter had been treated, and how he'd been deceived by a young man he'd put so much confidence in; but I can't say how long it was before he left Wildernsea. But Mrs. Barkamb could tell you, sir," added the landlord, briskly.

"Mrs. Barkamb."

"Yes, Mrs. Barkamb is the person who owns No. 17 North Cottages, the house in which Mr. Maldon and his daughter lived. She's a nice, civil spoken, motherly woman, sir, and I'm sure she'll tell you anything you may want to know."

"Thank you, I will call upon Mrs. Barkamb to-morrow. Stay—one more question. Should you recognize Mrs. Talboys if you were to see her?"

"Certainly, sir. As sure as I should recognize one of my own daughters."

Robert Audley wrote Mrs. Barkamb's address in his pocket-book, ate his solitary dinner, drank a couple of glasses of sherry, smoked a cigar, and then retired to the apartment in which a fire had been lighted for his comfort.

He soon fell asleep, worn out with the fatigue of hurrying from place to place during the last two days; but his slumber was not a heavy one, and he heard the disconsolate moaning of the wind upon the sandy wastes, and the long waves rolling in monotonously upon the flat shore. Mingling with these dismal sounds, the melancholy thoughts engendered by his joyless journey repeated themselves in never-varying succession in the chaos of his slumbering brain, and made themselves into visions of things that never had been and never could be upon this earth, but which had some vague relation to real events remembered by the sleeper.

In those troublesome dreams he saw Audley Court, rooted up from amidst the green pastures and the shady hedgerows of Essex, standing bare and unprotected upon that desolate northern shore, threatened by the rapid rising of a boisterous sea, whose waves seemed gathering upward to descend and crush the house he loved. As the hurrying waves rolled nearer and nearer to the stately mansion, the sleeper saw a pale, starry face looking out of the silvery foam, and knew that it was my lady, transformed into a mermaid, beckoning his uncle to destruction. Beyond that rising sea great masses of cloud, blacker than the blackest ink, more dense than the darkest night, lowered upon the dreamer's eye; but as he looked at the dismal

horizon the storm-clouds slowly parted, and from a narrow rent in the darkness a ray of light streamed out upon the hideous waves, which slowly, very slowly, receded, leaving the old mansion safe and firmly rooted on the shore.

Robert awoke with the memory of this dream in his mind, and a sensation of physical relief, as if some heavy weight, which had oppressed him all the night, had been lifted from his breast.

He fell asleep again, and did not awake until the broad winter sunlight shone upon the window-blind, and the shrill voice of the chambermaid at his door announced that it was half-past eight o'clock. At a quarter-before ten he had left Victoria Hotel, and was making his way along the lonely platform in front of a row of shadowless houses that faced the sea.

This row of hard, uncompromising, square-built habitations stretched away to the little harbor, in which two or three merchant vessels and a couple of colliers were anchored. Beyond the harbor there loomed, gray and cold upon the wintry horizon, a dismal barrack, parted from the Wildernsea houses by a narrow creek, spanned by an iron drawbridge. The scarlet coat of the sentinel who walked backward and forward between two cannons, placed at remote angles before the barrack wall, was the only scrap of color that relieved the neutral-tinted picture of the gray stone houses and the leaden sea.

On one side of the harbor a long stone pier stretched out far away into the cruel loneliness of the sea, as if built for the especial accommodation of some modern Timon, too misanthropical to be satisfied even with the solitude of Wildernsea, and anxious to get still further away from his fellow-creatures.

It was on that pier George Talboys had first met his wife, under the blazing glory of a midsummer sky, and to the music of a braying band. It was there that the young cornet had first yielded to that sweet delusion, that fatal infatuation which had exercised so dark an influence upon his after-life.

Robert looked savagely at this solitary watering-place—the shabby seaport.

"It is such a place as this," he thought, "that works a strong man's ruin. He comes here, heart whole and happy, with no better experience of women than is to be learned at a flower-show or in a ball-room; with no more familiar knowledge of the creature than he has of the far-away satellites or the remoter planets; with a vague notion that she is a whirling teetotum in pink or blue gauze, or a graceful automaton for the display of milliners' manufacture. He comes to some place of this kind, and the universe is suddenly narrowed into about half a dozen acres; the mighty scheme of creation is crushed into a bandbox. The far-away creatures whom he had seen floating about him, beautiful and indistinct, are brought under his very



nose; and before he has time to recover his bewilderment, hey presto, the witchcraft has begun; the magic circle is drawn around him! the spells are at work, the whole formula of sorcery is in full play, and the victim is as powerless to escape as the marble-legged prince in the Eastern story."

Ruminating in this wise, Robert Audley reached the house to which he had been directed as the residence of Mrs. Barkamb. He was admitted immediately by a prim, elderly servant, who ushered him into a sitting-room as prim and elderly-looking as herself. Mrs. Barkamb, a comfortable matron of about sixty years of age, was sitting in an arm-chair before a bright handful of fire in the shining grate. An elderly terrier, whose black-and-tan coat was thickly sprinkled with gray, reposed in Mrs. Barkamb's lap. Every object in the quiet sitting-room had an elderly aspect of simple comfort and precision, which is the evidence of outward repose.

"I should like to live here," Robert thought, "and watch the gray sea slowly rolling over the gray sand under the still, gray sky. I should like to live here, and tell the beads upon my rosary, and repent and rest."

He seated himself in the arm-chair opposite Mrs. Barkamb, at that lady's invitation, and placed his hat upon the ground. The elderly terrier descended from his mistress' lap to bark at and otherwise take objection to this hat.

"You were wishing, I suppose, sir, to take one—be quiet, Dash—one of the cottages," suggested Mrs. Barkamb, whose mind ran in one narrow groove, and whose life during the last twenty years had been an unvarying round of house-letting.

Robert Audley explained the purpose of his visit.

"I come to ask one simple question," he said, in conclusion, "I wish to discover the exact date of Mrs. Talboys' departure from Wildernsea. The proprietor of the Victoria Hotel informed me that you were the most likely person to afford me that information."

Mrs. Barkamb deliberated for some moments.

"I can give you the date of Captain Maldon's departure," she said, "for he left No. 17 considerably in my debt, and I have the whole business in black and white; but with regard to Mrs. Talboys—"

Mrs. Barkamb paused for a few moments before resuming.

"You are aware that Mrs. Talboys left rather abruptly?" she asked.

"I was not aware of that fact."

"Indeed! Yes, she left abruptly, poor little woman! She tried to support herself after her husband's desertion by giving music lessons; she was a very brilliant pianist, and succeeded pretty well, I believe. But I suppose her father took her money from her, and spent it in public houses. However that might be, they had a very serious misunderstanding one night; and the next morning Mrs. Talboys left Wildernsea, leaving her little boy, who was out at nurse in the neighborhood."

"But you cannot tell me the date of her leaving?"

"I'm afraid not," answered Mrs. Barkamb; "and yet, stay. Captain Maldon wrote to me upon the day his daughter left. He was in very great distress, poor old gentleman, and he always came to me in his troubles. If I could find that letter, it might be dated, you know—mightn't it, now?"

Mr. Audley said that it was only probable the letter was dated.

Mrs. Barkamb retired to a table in the window on which stood an old-fashioned mahogany desk, lined with green baize, and suffering from a plethora of documents, which oozed out of it in every direction. Letters, receipts, bills, inventories and tax-papers were mingled in hopeless confusion; and among these Mrs. Barkamb set to work to search for Captain Maldon's letter.

Mr. Audley waited very patiently, watching the gray clouds sailing across the gray sky, the gray vessels gliding past upon the gray sea.

After about ten minutes' search, and a great deal of rustling, crackling, folding and unfolding of the papers, Mrs. Barkamb uttered an exclamation of triumph.

"I've got the letter," she said; "and there's a note inside it from Mrs. Talboys."

Robert Audley's pale face flushed a vivid crimson as he stretched out his hand to receive the papers.

"The persons who stole Helen Maldon's love-letters from George's trunk in my chambers might have saved themselves the trouble," he thought.

The letter from the old lieutenant was not long, but almost every other word was underscored.

"My generous friend," the writer began—Mr. Maldon had tried the lady's generosity pretty severely during his residence in her house, rarely paying his rent until threatened with the intruding presence of the broker's man—"I

am in the depths of despair. My daughter has left me! You may imagine my feelings! We had a few words last night upon the subject of money matters, which subject has always been a disagreeable one between us, and on rising this morning I found I was deserted! The enclosed from Helen was waiting for me on the parlor table.

"Yours in distraction and despair,

"HENRY MALDON.

"NORTH COTTAGES, August 16th, 1854."

The note from Mrs. Talboys was still more brief. It began abruptly thus:

"I am weary of my life here, and wish, if I can, to find a new one. I go out into the world, dissevered from every link which binds me to the hateful past, to seek another home and another fortune. Forgive me if I have been fretful, capricious, changeable. You should forgive me, for you know why I have been so. You know the secret which is the key to my life.

"HELEN TALBOYS."

These lines were written in a hand that Robert Audley knew only too well.

He sat for a long time pondering silently over the letter written by Helen Talboys.

What was the meaning of those two last sentences—"You should forgive me, for you know *why* I have been so. You know the *secret* which is the key to my life?"

He wearied his brain in endeavoring to find a clue to the signification of these two sentences. He could remember nothing, nor could he imagine anything that would throw a light upon their meaning. The date of Helen's departure, according to Mr. Maldon's letter, was the 16th of August, 1854. Miss Tonks had declared that Lucy Graham entered the school at Crescent Villas upon the 17th or 18th of August in the same year. Between the departure of Helen Talboys from the Yorkshire watering-place and the arrival of Lucy Graham at the Brompton school, not more than eight-and-forty hours could have elapsed. This made a very small link in the chain of circumstantial evidence, perhaps; but it was a link, nevertheless, and it fitted neatly into its place.

"Did Mr. Maldon hear from his daughter after she had left Wildernsea?" Robert asked.

"Well, I believe he did hear from her," Mrs. Barkamb answered; "but I didn't see much of the old gentleman after that August. I was obliged to sell him up in November, poor fellow, for he owed me fifteen months' rent; and it was only by selling his poor little bits of furniture that I could get him out of my place. We parted very good friends, in spite of my sending in the brokers; and the old gentleman went to London with the child, who was scarcely a twelvemonth old."

Mrs. Barkamb had nothing more to tell, and Robert had no further questions to ask. He requested permission to retain the two letters written by the lieutenant and his daughter, and left the house with them in his pocket-book.

He walked straight back to the hotel, where he called for a time-table. An express for London left Wildernsea at a quarter past one. Robert sent his portmanteau to the station, paid his bill, and walked up and down the stone terrace fronting the sea, waiting for the starting of the train.

"I have traced the histories of Lucy Graham and Helen Talboys to a vanishing point," he thought; "my next business is to discover the history of the woman who lies buried in Ventnor churchyard."

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### HIDDEN IN THE GRAVE.

Upon his return from Wildernsea, Robert Audley found a letter from his Cousin Alicia, awaiting him at his chambers.

"Papa is much better," the young lady wrote, "and is very anxious to have you at the Court. For some inexplicable reason, my stepmother has taken it into her head that your presence is extremely desirable, and worries me with her frivolous questions about your movements. So pray come without delay, and set these people at rest. Your affectionate cousin, A.A."

"So my lady is anxious to know my movements," thought Robert Audley, as he sat brooding and smoking by his lonely fireside. "She is anxious; and she questions her step-daughter in that pretty, childlike manner which has such a bewitching air of innocent frivolity. Poor little creature; poor unhappy little golden-haired sinner; the battle between us seems terribly unfair. Why doesn't she run away while there is still time? I have given her fair warning, I have shown her my cards, and worked openly enough in this business, Heaven knows. Why doesn't she run away?"

He repeated this question again and again as he filled and emptied his meerschaum, surrounding himself with the blue vapor from his pipe until he looked like some modern magician seated in his laboratory.

"Why doesn't she run away? I would bring no needless shame upon that house, of all other houses upon this wide earth. I would only do my duty to my missing friend, and to that brave and generous man who has pledged his faith to a worthless woman. Heaven knows I have no wish to punish. Heaven knows I was never born to be the avenger of guilt or the persecutor of the guilty. I only wish to do my duty. I will give her one more warning, a full and fair one, and then—"

His thoughts wandered away to that gloomy prospect in which he saw no gleam of brightness to relieve the dull, black obscurity that encompassed the future, shutting in his pathway on every side, and spreading a dense curtain around and about him, which Hope was powerless to penetrate. He

was forever haunted by the vision of his uncle's anguish, forever tortured by the thought of that ruin and desolation which, being brought about by his instrumentality, would seem in a manner his handiwork. But amid all, and through all, Clara Talboys, with an imperious gesture, beckoned him onward to her brother's unknown grave.

"Shall I go down to Southampton," he thought, "and endeavor to discover the history of the woman who died at Ventnor? Shall I work underground, bribing the paltry assistants in that foul conspiracy, until I find my way to the thrice guilty principal? No! not till I have tried other means of discovering the truth. Shall I go to that miserable old man, and charge him with his share in the shameful trick which I believe to have been played upon my poor friend? No; I will not torture that terror-stricken wretch as I tortured him a few weeks ago. I will go straight to that arch-conspirator, and will tear away the beautiful veil under which she hides her wickedness, and will wring from her the secret of my friend's fate, and banish her forever from the house which her presence has polluted."

He started early the next morning for Essex, and reached Audley before eleven o'clock.

Early as it was, my lady was out. She had driven to Chelmsford upon a shopping expedition with her step-daughter. She had several calls to make in the neighborhood of the town, and was not likely to return until dinner-time. Sir Michael's health was very much improved, and he would come down stairs in the afternoon. Would Mr. Audley go to his uncle's room?

No; Robert had no wish to meet that generous kinsman. What could he say to him? How could he smooth the way to the trouble that was to come?—how soften the cruel blow of the great grief that was preparing for that noble and trusting heart?

"If I could forgive her the wrong done to my friend," Robert thought, "I should still abhor her for the misery her guilt must bring upon the man who has believed in her."

He told his uncle's servant that he would stroll into the village, and return before dinner. He walked slowly away from the Court, wandering across the meadows between his uncle's house and the village, purposeless and indifferent, with the great trouble and perplexity of his life stamped upon his face and reflected in his manner.

"I will go into the churchyard," he thought, "and stare at the tombstones. There is nothing I can do that will make me more gloomy than I am."

He was in those very meadows through which he had hurried from Audley Court to the station upon the September day in which George Talboys had disappeared. He looked at the pathway by which he had gone upon that day, and remembered his unaccustomed hurry, and the vague feeling of terror which had taken possession of him immediately upon losing sight of his friend.

"Why did that unaccountable terror seize upon me," he thought. "Why was it that I saw some strange mystery in my friend's disappearance? Was it a monition, or a monomania? What if I am wrong after all? What if this chain of evidence which I have constructed link by link, is woven out of my own folly? What if this edifice of horror and suspicion is a mere collection of crotchets—the nervous fancies of a hypochondriacal bachelor? Mr. Harcourt Talboys sees no meaning in the events out of which I have made myself a horrible mystery. I lay the separate links of the chain before him, and he cannot recognize their fitness. He is unable to put them together. Oh, my God, if it should be in myself all this time that the misery lies; if—" he smiled bitterly, and shook his head. "I have the handwriting in my pocket-book which is the evidence of the conspiracy," he thought. "It remains for me to discover the darker half of my lady's secret."

He avoided the village, still keeping to the meadows. The church lay a little way back from the straggling High street, and a rough wooden gate opened from the churchyard into a broad meadow, that was bordered by a running stream, and sloped down into a grassy valley dotted by groups of cattle.

Robert slowly ascended the narrow hillside pathway leading up to the gate in the churchyard. The quiet dullness of the lonely landscape harmonized with his own gloom. The solitary figure of an old man hobbling toward a stile at the further end of the wide meadow was the only human creature visible upon the area over which the young barrister looked. The smoke slowly ascending from the scattered houses in the long High street was the only evidence of human life. The slow progress of the hands of the old clock in the church steeple was the only token by which a traveler could perceive that a sluggish course of rustic life had not come to a full stop in the village of Audley.

Yes, there was one other sign. As Robert opened the gate of the churchyard, and strolled listlessly into the little inclosure, he became aware of the solemn music of an organ, audible through a half-open window in the steeple.

He stopped and listened to the slow harmonies of a dreamy melody that sounded like an extempore composition of an accomplished player.

"Who would have believed that Audley church could boast such an organ?" thought Robert. "When last I was here, the national schoolmaster used to accompany his children by a primitive performance of common chords. I didn't think the old organ had such music in it."

He lingered at the gate, not caring to break the lazy spell woven about him by the monotonous melancholy of the organist's performance. The tones of the instrument, now swelling to their fullest power, now sinking to a low, whispering softness, floated toward him upon the misty winter atmosphere, and had a soothing influence, that seemed to comfort him in his trouble.

He closed the gate softly, and crossed the little patch of gravel before the door of the church. The door had been left ajar—by the organist, perhaps. Robert Audley pushed it open, and walked into the square porch, from which a flight of narrow stone steps wound upward to the organ-loft and the belfry. Mr. Audley took off his hat, and opened the door between the porch and the body of the church. He stepped softly into the holy edifice, which had a damp, moldy smell upon week-days. He walked down the narrow aisle to the altar-rails, and from that point of observation took a survey of the church. The little gallery was exactly opposite to him, but the scanty green curtains before the organ were closely drawn, and he could not get a glimpse of the player.

The music still rolled on. The organist had wandered into a melody of Mendelssohn's, a strain whose dreamy sadness went straight to Robert's heart. He loitered in the nooks and corners of the church, examining the dilapidated memorials of the well-nigh forgotten dead, and listening to the music.

"If my poor friend, George Talboys, had died in my arms, and I had buried him in this quiet church, in one corner of the vaults over which I tread to-day, how much anguish of mind, vacillation and torment I might have escaped," thought Robert Audley, as he read the faded inscriptions



upon tablets of discolored marble; "I should have known his fate—I should have known his fate! Ah, how much there would have been in that. It is this miserable uncertainty, this horrible suspicion which has poisoned my very life."

He looked at his watch.

"Half-past one," he muttered. "I shall have to wait four or five dreary hours before my lady comes home from her morning calls—her pretty visits of ceremony or friendliness. Good Heaven! what an actress this woman is. What an arch trickster—what an all-accomplished deceiver. But she shall play her pretty comedy no longer under my uncle's roof. I have diplomitized long enough. She has refused to accept an indirect warning. To-night I will speak plainly."

The music of the organ ceased, and Robert heard the closing of the instrument.

"I'll have a look at this new organist," he thought, "who can afford to bury his talents at Audley, and play Mendelssohn's finest fugues for a stipend of sixteen pounds a year." He lingered in the porch, waiting for the organist to descend the awkward little stair-case. In the weary trouble of his mind, and with the prospect of getting through the five hours in the best way he could, Mr. Audley was glad to cultivate any diversion of thought, however idle. He therefore freely indulged his curiosity about the new organist.

The first person who appeared upon the steep stone steps was a boy in corduroy trousers and a dark linen smock-frock, who shambled down the stairs with a good deal of unnecessary clatter of his hobnailed shoes, and who was red in the face from the exertion of blowing the bellows of the old organ. Close behind this boy came a young lady, very plainly dressed in a black silk gown and a large gray shawl, who started and turned pale at sight of Mr. Audley.

This young lady was Clara Talboys.

Of all people in the world she was the last whom Robert either expected or wished to see. She had told him that she was going to pay a visit to some friends who lived in Essex; but the county is a wide one, and the village of Audley one of the most obscure and least frequented spots in the whole of its extent. That the sister of his lost friend should be here—here where she could watch his every action, and from those actions deduce the secret

workings of his mind, tracing his doubts home to their object, made a complication of his difficulties that he could never have anticipated. It brought him back to that consciousness of his own helplessness, in which he had exclaimed:

"A hand that is stronger than my own is beckoning me onward on the dark road that leads to my lost friend's unknown grave."

Clara Talboys was the first to speak.

"You are surprised to see me here, Mr. Audley," she said.

"Very much surprised."

"I told you that I was coming to Essex. I left home day before yesterday. I was leaving home when I received your telegraphic message. The friend with whom I am staying is Mrs. Martyn, the wife of the new rector of Mount Stanning. I came down this morning to see the village and church, and as Mrs. Martyn had to pay a visit to the school with the curate and his wife, I stopped here and amused myself by trying the old organ. I was not aware till I came here that there was a village called Audley. The place takes its name from your family, I suppose?"

"I believe so," Robert answered, wondering at the lady's calmness, in contradistinction to his own embarrassment. "I have a vague recollection of hearing the story of some ancestor who was called Audley of Audley in the reign of Edward the Fourth. The tomb inside the rails near the altar belongs to one of the knights of Audley, but I have never taken the trouble to remember his achievements. Are you going to wait here for your friends, Miss Talboys?"

"Yes; they are to return here for me after they have finished their rounds."

"And you go back to Mount Stanning with them this afternoon?"

"Yes."

Robert stood with his hat in his hand, looking absently out at the tombstones and the low wall of the church yard. Clara Talboys watched his pale face, haggard under the deepening shadow that had rested upon it so long.

"You have been ill since I saw you last, Mr. Audley," she said, in a low voice, that had the same melodious sadness as the notes of the old organ under her touch.

"No, I have not been ill; I have been only harassed, wearied by a hundred doubts and perplexities."

He was thinking as he spoke to her:

"How much does she guess? How much does she suspect?"

He had told the story of George's disappearance and of his own suspicions, suppressing only the names of those concerned in the mystery; but what if this girl should fathom this slender disguise, and discover for herself that which he had chosen to withhold.

Her grave eyes were fixed upon his face, and he knew that she was trying to read the innermost secrets of his mind.

"What am I in her hands?" he thought. "What am I in the hands of this woman, who has my lost friend's face and the manner of Pallas Athene. She reads my pitiful, vacillating soul, and plucks the thoughts out of my heart with the magic of her solemn brown eyes. How unequal the fight must be between us, and how can I ever hope to conquer against the strength of her beauty and her wisdom?"

Mr. Audley was clearing his throat preparatory to bidding his beautiful companion good-morning, and making his escape from the thralldom of her presence into the lonely meadow outside the churchyard, when Clara Talboys arrested him by speaking upon that very subject which he was most anxious to avoid.

"You promised to write to me, Mr. Audley," she said, "if you made any discovery which carried you nearer to the mystery of my brother's disappearance. You have not written to me, and I imagine, therefore, that you have discovered nothing."

Robert Audley was silent for some moments. How could he answer this direct question?

"The chain of circumstantial evidence which unites the mystery of your brother's fate with the person whom I suspect," he said, after a pause, "is formed of very slight links. I think that I have added another link to that chain since I saw you in Dorsetshire."

"And you refuse to tell me what it is that you have discovered?"

"Only until I have discovered more."

"I thought from your message that you were going to Wildernsea."

"I have been there."

"Indeed! It was there that you made some discovery, then?"

"It was," answered Robert. "You must remember, Miss Talboys that the sole ground upon which my suspicions rest is the identity of two individuals who have no apparent connection—the identity of a person who is supposed to be dead with one who is living. The conspiracy of which I believe your brother to have been the victim hinges upon this. If his wife, Helen Talboys, died when the papers recorded her death—if the woman who lies buried in Ventnor churchyard was indeed the woman whose name is inscribed on the headstone of the grave—I have no case, I have no clew to the mystery of your brother's fate. I am about to put this to the test. I believe that I am now in a position to play a bold game, and I believe that I shall soon arrive at the truth."

He spoke in a low voice, and with a solemn emphasis that betrayed the intensity of his feeling. Miss Talboys stretched out her ungloved hand, and laid it in his own. The cold touch of that slender hand sent a shivering thrill through his frame.

"You will not suffer my brother's fate to remain a mystery, Mr. Audley," she said, quietly. "I know that you will do your duty to your friend."

The rector's wife and her two companions entered the churchyard as Clara Talboys said this. Robert Audley pressed the hand that rested in his own, and raised it to his lips.

"I am a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, Miss Talboys," he said; "but if I could restore your brother George to life and happiness, I should care very little for any sacrifice of my own feeling, fear that the most I can do is to fathom the secret of his fate and in doing that I must sacrifice those who are dearer to me than myself."

He put on his hat, and hurried through the gateway leading into the field as Mrs. Martyn came up to the porch.

"Who is that handsome young man I caught *tête-a-tête* with you, Clara?" she asked, laughing.

"He is a Mr. Audley, a friend of my poor brother's."

"Indeed! He is some relation of Sir Michael Audley, I suppose?"

"Sir Michael Audley!"

"Yes, my dear; the most important personage in the parish of Audley. But we'll call at the Court in a day or two, and you shall see the baronet and his pretty young wife."

"His young wife!" replied Clara Talboys, looking earnestly at her friend. "Has Sir Michael Audley lately married, then?"

"Yes. He was a widower for sixteen years, and married a penniless young governess about a year and a half ago. The story is quite romantic, and Lady Audley is considered the belle of the county. But come, my dear Clara, the pony is tired of waiting for us, and we've a long drive before dinner."

Clara Talboys took her seat in the little basket-carriage which was waiting at the principal gate of the churchyard, in the care of the boy who had blown the organ-bellows. Mrs. Martyn shook the reins, and the sturdy chestnut cob trotted off in the direction of Mount Stanning.

"Will you tell me more about this Lady Audley, Fanny?" Miss Talboys said, after a long pause. "I want to know all about her. Have you heard her maiden name?"

"Yes; she was a Miss Graham."

"And she is very pretty?"

"Yes, very, very pretty. Rather a childish beauty though, with large, clear blue eyes, and pale golden ringlets, that fall in a feathery shower over her throat and shoulders."

Clara Talboys was silent. She did not ask any further questions about my lady.

She was thinking of a passage in that letter which George had written to her during his honeymoon—a passage in which he said: "My childish little wife is watching me as I write this—Ah! how I wish you could see her, Clara! Her eyes are as blue and as clear as the skies on a bright summer's day, and her hair falls about her face like the pale golden halo you see round the head of a Madonna in an Italian picture."

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### IN THE LIME-WALK.

Robert Audley was loitering upon the broad grass-plat in front of the Court as the carriage containing my lady and Alicia drove under the archway, and drew up at the low turret-door. Mr. Audley presented himself in time to hand the ladies out of the vehicle.

My lady looked very pretty in a delicate blue bonnet and the sables which her nephew had bought for her at St. Petersburg. She seemed very well pleased to see Robert, and smiled most bewitchingly as she gave him her exquisitely gloved little hand.

"So you have come back to us, truant?" she said, laughing. "And now that you have returned, we shall keep you prisoner. We won't let him run away again, will we, Alicia?"

Miss Audley gave her head a scornful toss that shook the heavy curls under her cavalier hat.

"I have nothing to do with the movements of so erratic an individual," she said. "Since Robert Audley has taken it into his head to conduct himself like some ghost-haunted hero in a German story, I have given up attempting to understand him."

Mr. Audley looked at his cousin with an expression of serio-comic perplexity. "She's a nice girl," he thought, "but she's a nuisance. I don't know how it is, but she seems more a nuisance than she used to be."

He pulled his mustaches reflectively as he considered this question. His mind wandered away for a few moments from the great trouble of his life to dwell upon this minor perplexity.

"She's a dear girl," he thought; "a generous-hearted, bouncing, noble English lassie; and yet—" He lost himself in a quagmire of doubt and difficulty. There was some hitch in his mind which he could not understand; some change in himself, beyond the change made in him by his anxiety about George Talboys, which mystified and bewildered him.

"And pray where have you been wandering during the last day or two, Mr. Audley?" asked my lady, as she lingered with her step-daughter upon the threshold of the turret-door, waiting until Robert should be pleased to stand aside and allow them to pass. The young man started as she asked this question and looked up at her suddenly. Something in the aspect of her bright young beauty, something in the childish innocence of her expression, seemed to smite him to the heart, and his face grew ghastly pale as he looked at her.

"I have been—in Yorkshire," he said; "at the little watering place where my poor friend George Talboys lived at the time of his marriage."

The white change in my lady's face was the only sign of her having heard these words. She smiled, a faint, sickly smile, and tried to pass her husband's nephew.

"I must dress for dinner," she said. "I am going to a dinner-party, Mr. Audley; please let me go in."

"I must ask you to spare me half an hour, Lady Audley," Robert answered, in a low voice. "I came down to Essex on purpose to speak to you."

"What about?" asked my lady.

She had recovered herself from any shock which she might have sustained a few moments before, and it was in her usual manner that she asked this question. Her face expressed the mingled bewilderment and curiosity of a puzzled child, rather than the serious surprise of a woman.

"What can you want to talk to me about, Mr. Audley?" she repeated.

"I will tell you when we are alone," Robert said, glancing at his cousin, who stood a little way behind my lady, watching this confidential little dialogue.

"He is in love with my step-mother's wax-doll beauty," thought Alicia, "and it is for her sake he has become such a disconsolate object. He's just the sort of person to fall in love with his aunt."

Miss Audley walked away to the grass-plot, turning her back upon Robert and my lady.

"The absurd creature turned as white as a sheet when he saw her," she thought. "So he can be in love, after all. That slow lump of torpidity he calls his heart can beat, I suppose, once in a quarter of a century; but it seems

that nothing but a blue-eyed wax-doll can set it going. I should have given him up long ago if I'd known that his idea of beauty was to be found in a toy-shop."

Poor Alicia crossed the grass-plot and disappeared upon the opposite side of the quadrangle, where there was a Gothic gate that communicated with the stables. I am sorry to say that Sir Michael Audley's daughter went to seek consolation from her dog Caesar and her chestnut mare Atalanta, whose loose box the young lady was in the habit of visiting every day.

"Will you come into the lime-walk, Lady Audley?" said Robert, as his cousin left the garden. "I wish to talk to you without fear of interruption or observation. I think we could choose no safer place than that. Will you come there with me?"

"If you please," answered my lady. Mr. Audley could see that she was trembling, and that she glanced from side to side as if looking for some outlet by which she might escape him.

"You are shivering, Lady Audley," he said.

"Yes, I am very cold. I would rather speak to you some other day, please. Let it be to-morrow, if you will. I have to dress for dinner, and I want to see Sir Michael; I have not seen him since ten o'clock this morning. Please let it be to-morrow."

There was a painful piteousness in her tone. Heaven knows how painful to Robert's heart. Heaven knows what horrible images arose in his mind as he looked down at that fair young face and thought of the task that lay before him.

"I *must* speak to you, Lady Audley," he said. "If I am cruel, it is you who have made me cruel. You might have escaped this ordeal. You might have avoided me. I gave you fair warning. But you have chosen to defy me, and it is your own folly which is to blame if I no longer spare you. Come with me. I tell you again I must speak to you."

There was a cold determination in his tone which silenced my lady's objections. She followed him submissively to the little iron gate which communicated with the long garden behind the house—the garden in which a little rustic wooden bridge led across the quiet fish-pond into the lime-walk.



The early winter twilight was closing in, and the intricate tracery of the leafless branches that overarched the lonely pathway looked black against the cold gray of the evening sky. The lime-walk seemed like some cloister in this uncertain light.

"Why do you bring me to this horrible place to frighten me out of my poor wits?" cried my lady, peevishly. "You ought to know how nervous I am."

"You are nervous, my lady?"

"Yes, dreadfully nervous. I am worth a fortune to poor Mr. Dawson. He is always sending me camphor, and sal volatile, and red lavender, and all kinds of abominable mixtures, but he can't cure me."

"Do you remember what Macbeth tells his physician, my lady?" asked Robert, gravely. "Mr. Dawson may be very much more clever than the Scottish leech, but I doubt if even *he* can minister to the mind that is diseased."

"Who said that my mind was diseased?" exclaimed Lady Audley.

"I say so, my lady," answered Robert. "You tell me that you are nervous, and that all the medicines your doctor can prescribe are only so much physic that might as well be thrown to the dogs. Let me be the physician to strike to the root of your malady, Lady Audley. Heaven knows that I wish to be merciful—that I would spare you as far as it is in my power to spare you in doing justice to others—but justice must be done. Shall I tell you why you are nervous in this house, my lady?"

"If you can," she answered, with a little laugh.

"Because for you this house is haunted."

"Haunted?"

"Yes, haunted by the ghost of George Talboys."

Robert Audley heard my lady's quickened breathing, he fancied he could almost hear the loud beating of her heart as she walked by his side, shivering now and then, and with her sable cloak wrapped tightly around her.

"What do you mean?" she cried suddenly, after a pause of some moments. "Why do you torment me about this George Talboys, who happens to have taken it into his head to keep out of your way for a few

months? Are you going mad, Mr. Audley, and do you select me as the victim of your monomania? What is George Talboys to me that you should worry me about him?"

"He was a stranger to you, my lady, was he not?"

"Of course!" answered Lady Audley. "What should he be but a stranger?"

"Shall I tell you the story of my friend's disappearance as I read that story, my lady?" asked Robert.

"No," cried Lady Audley; "I wish to know nothing of your friend. If he is dead, I am sorry for him. If he lives, I have no wish either to see him or to hear of him. Let me go in to see my husband, if you please, Mr. Audley, unless you wish to detain me in this gloomy place until I catch my death of cold."

"I wish to detain you until you have heard what I have to say, Lady Audley," answered Robert, resolutely. "I will detain you no longer than is necessary, and when you have heard me you shall take your own course of action."

"Very well, then; pray lose no time in saying what you have to say," replied my lady, carelessly. "I promise you to attend very patiently."

"When my friend, George Talboys, returned to England," Robert began, gravely, "the thought which was uppermost in his mind was the thought of his wife."

"Whom he had deserted," said my lady, quickly. "At least," she added, more deliberately, "I remember your telling us something to that effect when you first told us your friend's story."

Robert Audley did not notice this observation.

"The thought that was uppermost in his mind was the thought of his wife," he repeated. "His fairest hope in the future was the hope of making her happy, and lavishing upon her the pittance which he had won by the force of his own strong arm in the gold-fields of Australia. I saw him within a few hours of his reaching England, and I was a witness to the joyful pride with which he looked forward to his re-union with his wife. I was also a witness to the blow which struck him to the very heart—which changed him from the man he had been to a creature as unlike that former self as one human being can be unlike another. The blow which made that cruel change

was the announcement of his wife's death in the *Times* newspaper. I now believe that that announcement was a black and bitter lie."

"Indeed!" said my lady; "and what reason could any one have for announcing the death of Mrs. Talboys, if Mrs. Talboys had been alive?"

"The lady herself might have had a reason," Robert answered, quietly.

"What reason?"

"How if she had taken advantage of George's absence to win a richer husband? How if she had married again, and wished to throw my poor friend off the scent by this false announcement?"

Lady Audley shrugged her shoulders.

"Your suppositions are rather ridiculous, Mr. Audley," she said; "it is to be hoped that you have some reasonable grounds for them."

"I have examined a file of each of the newspapers published in Chelmsford and Colchester," continued Robert, without replying to my lady's last observation, "and I find in one of the Colchester papers, dated July the 2d, 1857, a brief paragraph among numerous miscellaneous scraps of information copied from other newspapers, to the effect that a Mr. George Talboys, an English gentleman, had arrived at Sydney from the gold-fields, carrying with him nuggets and gold-dust to the amount of twenty thousand pounds, and that he had realized his property and sailed for Liverpool in the fast-sailing clipper *Argus*. This is a very small fact, of course, Lady Audley, but it is enough to prove that any person residing in Essex in the July of the year fifty-seven, was likely to become aware of George Talboys' return from Australia. Do you follow me?"

"Not very clearly," said my lady. "What have the Essex papers to do with the death of Mrs. Talboys?"

"We will come to that by-and-by, Lady Audley. I say that I believe the announcement in the *Times* to have been a false announcement, and a part of the conspiracy which was carried out by Helen Talboys and Lieutenant Maldon against my poor friend."

"A conspiracy!"

"Yes, a conspiracy concocted by an artful woman, who had speculated upon the chances of her husband's death, and had secured a splendid position at the risk of committing a crime; a bold woman, my lady, who thought to play her comedy out to the end without fear of detection; a

wicked woman, who did not care what misery she might inflict upon the honest heart of the man she betrayed; but a foolish woman, who looked at life as a game of chance, in which the best player was likely to hold the winning cards, forgetting that there is a Providence above the pitiful speculators, and that wicked secrets are never permitted to remain long hidden. If this woman of whom I speak had never been guilty of any blacker sin than the publication of that lying announcement in the *Times* newspaper, I should still hold her as the most detestable and despicable of her sex—the most pitiless and calculating of human creatures. That cruel lie was a base and cowardly blow in the dark; it was the treacherous dagger-thrust of an infamous assassin."

"But how do you know that the announcement was a false one?" asked my lady. "You told us that you had been to Ventnor with Mr. Talboys to see his wife's grave. Who was it who died at Ventnor if it was not Mrs. Talboys?"

"Ah, Lady Audley," said Robert, "that is a question which only two or three people can answer, and one or other of those persons shall answer it to me before long. I tell you, my lady, that I am determined to unravel the mystery of George Talboy's death. Do you think I am to be put off by feminine prevarication—by womanly trickery? No! Link by link I have put together the chain of evidence, which wants but a link here and there to be complete in its terrible strength. Do you think I will suffer myself to be baffled? Do you think I shall fail to discover those missing links? No, Lady Audley, I shall not fail, for *I know where to look for them!* There is a fair-haired woman at Southampton—a woman called Plowson, who has some share in the secrets of the father of my friend's wife. I have an idea that she can help me to discover the history of the woman who lies buried in Ventnor churchyard, and I will spare no trouble in making that discovery, unless—"

"Unless what?" asked my lady, eagerly.

"Unless the woman I wish to save from degradation and punishment accepts the mercy I offer her, and takes warning while there is still time."

My lady shrugged her graceful shoulders, and flashed bright defiance out of her blue eyes.

"She would be a very foolish woman if she suffered herself to be influenced by any such absurdity," she said. "You are hypochondriacal, Mr.

Audley, and you must take camphor, or red lavender, or sal volatile. What can be more ridiculous than this idea which you have taken into your head? You lose your friend George Talboys in rather a mysterious manner—that is to say, that gentleman chooses to leave England without giving you due notice. What of that? You confess that he became an altered man after his wife's death. He grew eccentric and misanthropical; he affected an utter indifference as to what became of him. What more likely, then, than that he grew tired of the monotony of civilized life, and ran away to those savage gold-fields to find a distraction for his grief? It is rather a romantic story, but by no means an uncommon one. But you are not satisfied with this simple interpretation of your friend's disappearance, and you build up some absurd theory of a conspiracy which has no existence except in your own overheated brain. Helen Talboys is dead. The *Times* newspaper declares she is dead. Her own father tells you that she is dead. The headstone of the grave in Ventnor churchyard bears record of her death. By what right," cried my lady, her voice rising to that shrill and piercing tone peculiar to her when affected by any intense agitation—"by what right, Mr. Audley, do you come to me, and torment me about George Talboys—by what right do you dare to say that his wife is still alive?"

"By the right of circumstantial evidence, Lady Audley," answered Robert—"by the right of that circumstantial evidence which will sometimes fix the guilt of a man's murder upon that person who, on the first hearing of the case, seems of all other men the most unlikely to be guilty."

"What circumstantial evidence?"

"The evidence of time and place. The evidence of handwriting. When Helen Talboys left her father's at Wildernsea, she left a letter behind her—a letter in which she declared that she was weary of her old life, and that she wished to seek a new home and a new fortune. That letter is in my possession."

"Indeed."

"Shall I tell you whose handwriting resembles that of Helen Talboys so closely, that the most dexterous expert could perceive no distinction between the two?"

"A resemblance between the handwriting of two women is no very uncommon circumstance now-a-days," replied my lady carelessly. "I could

show you the caligraphies of half-a-dozen female correspondents, and defy you to discover any great difference in them."

"But what if the handwriting is a very uncommon one, presenting marked peculiarities by which it may be recognized among a hundred?"

"Why, in that case the coincidence is rather curious," answered my lady; "but it is nothing more than a coincidence. You cannot deny the fact of Helen Talboys death on the ground that her handwriting resembles that of some surviving person."

"But if a series of such coincidences lead up to the same point," said Robert. "Helen Talboys left her father's house, according to the declaration in her own handwriting, because she was weary of her old life, and wished to begin a new one. Do you know what I infer from this?"

My lady shrugged her shoulders.

"I have not the least idea," she said; "and as you have detained me in this gloomy place nearly half-an-hour, I must beg that you will release me, and let me go and dress for dinner."

"No, Lady Audley," answered Robert, with a cold sternness that was so strange to him as to transform him into another creature—a pitiless embodiment of justice, a cruel instrument of retribution—"no, Lady Audley," he repeated, "I have told you that womanly prevarication will not help you; I tell you now that defiance will not serve you. I have dealt fairly with you, and have given you fair warning. I gave you indirect notice of your danger two months ago."

"What do you mean?" asked my lady, suddenly.

"You did not choose to take that warning, Lady Audley," pursued Robert, "and the time has come in which I must speak very plainly to you. Do you think the gifts which you have played against fortune are to hold you exempt from retribution? No, my lady, your youth and beauty, your grace and refinement, only make the horrible secret of your life more horrible. I tell you that the evidence against you wants only one link to be strong enough for your condemnation, and that link shall be added. Helen Talboys never returned to her father's house. When she deserted that poor old father, she went away from his humble shelter with the declared intention of washing her hands of that old life. What do people generally do when they wish to begin a new existence—to start for a second time in the race of life,

free from the incumbrances that had fettered their first journey. *They change their names*, Lady Audley. Helen Talboys deserted her infant son—she went away from Wildernsea with the predetermination of sinking her identity. She disappeared as Helen Talboys upon the 16th of August, 1854, and upon the 17th of that month she reappeared as Lucy Graham, the friendless girl who undertook a profitless duty in consideration of a home in which she was asked no questions."

"You are mad, Mr. Audley!" cried my lady. "You are mad, and my husband shall protect me from your insolence. What if this Helen Talboys ran away from her home upon one day, and I entered my employer's house upon the next, what does that prove?"

"By itself, very little," replied Robert Audley; "but with the help of other evidence—"

"What evidence?"

"The evidence of two labels, pasted one over the other, upon a box left by you in possession of Mrs. Vincent, the upper label bearing the name of Miss Graham, the lower that of Mrs. George Talboys."

My lady was silent. Robert Audley could not see her face in the dusk, but he could see that her two small hands were clasped convulsively over her heart, and he knew that the shot had gone home to its mark.

"God help her, poor, wretched creature," he thought. "She knows now that she is lost. I wonder if the judges of the land feel as I do now when they put on the black cap and pass sentence of death upon some poor, shivering wretch, who has never done them any wrong. Do they feel a heroic fervor of virtuous indignation, or do they suffer this dull anguish which gnaws my vitals as I talk to this helpless woman?"

He walked by my lady's side, silently, for some minutes. They had been pacing up and down the dim avenue, and they were now drawing near the leafless shrubbery at one end of the lime-walk—the shrubbery in which the ruined well sheltered its unheeded decay among the tangled masses of briery underwood.

A winding pathway, neglected and half-choked with weeds, led toward this well. Robert left the lime-walk, and struck into this pathway. There was more light in the shrubbery than in the avenue, and Mr. Audley wished to see my lady's face.

He did not speak until they reached the patch of rank grass beside the well. The massive brickwork had fallen away here and there, and loose fragments of masonry lay buried amidst weeds and briars. The heavy posts which had supported the wooden roller still remained, but the iron spindle had been dragged from its socket and lay a few paces from the well, rusty, discolored, and forgotten.

Robert Audley leaned against one of the moss-grown posts and looked down at my lady's face, very pale in the chill winter twilight. The moon had newly risen, a feebly luminous crescent in the gray heavens, and a faint, ghostly light mingled with the misty shadows of the declining day. My lady's face seemed like that face which Robert Audley had seen in his dreams looking out of the white foam-flakes on the green sea waves and luring his uncle to destruction.

"Those two labels are in my possession, Lady Audley," he resumed. "I took them from the box left by you at Crescent Villas. I took them in the presence of Mrs. Vincent and Miss Tonks. Have you any proofs to offer against this evidence? You say to me, 'I am Lucy Graham and I have nothing whatever to do with Helen Talboys.' In that case you will produce witnesses who will declare your antecedents. Where had you been living prior to your appearance at Crescent Villas? You must have friends, relations, connections, who can come forward to prove as much as this for you? If you were the most desolate creature upon this earth, you would be able to point to someone who could identify you with the past."

"Yes," cried my lady, "if I were placed in a criminal dock I could, no doubt, bring forward witnesses to refute your absurd accusation. But I am not in a criminal dock, Mr. Audley, and I do not choose to do anything but laugh at your ridiculous folly. I tell you that you are mad! If you please to say that Helen Talboys is not dead, and that I am Helen Talboys, you may do so. If you choose to go wandering about in the places in which I have lived, and to the places in which this Mrs. Talboys has lived, you must follow the bent of your own inclination, but I would warn you that such fancies have sometimes conducted people, as apparently sane as yourself, to the life-long imprisonment of a private lunatic-asylum."

Robert Audley started and recoiled a few paces among the weeds and brushwood as my lady said this.



"She would be capable of any new crime to shield her from the consequences of the old one," he thought. "She would be capable of using her influence with my uncle to place me in a mad-house."

I do not say that Robert Audley was a coward, but I will admit that a shiver of horror, something akin to fear, chilled him to the heart as he remembered the horrible things that have been done by women since that day upon which Eve was created to be Adam's companion and help-meet in the garden of Eden. "What if this woman's hellish power of dissimulation should be stronger than the truth, and crush him? She had not spared George Talboys when he stood in her way and menaced her with a certain peril; would she spare him who threatened her with a far greater danger? Are women merciful, or loving, or kind in proportion to their beauty and grace? Was there not a certain Monsieur Mazers de Latude, who had the bad fortune to offend the all-accomplished Madam de Pompadour, who expiated his youthful indiscretion by a life-long imprisonment; who twice escaped from prison, to be twice cast back into captivity; who, trusting in the tardy generosity of his beautiful foe, betrayed himself to an implacable fiend? Robert Audley looked at the pale face of the woman standing by his side; that fair and beautiful face, illumined by starry-blue eyes, that had a strange and surely a dangerous light in them; and remembering a hundred stories of womanly perfidy, shuddered as he thought how unequal the struggle might be between himself and his uncle's wife.

"I have shown her my cards," he thought, "but she has kept hers hidden from me. The mask that she wears is not to be plucked away. My uncle would rather think me mad than believe her guilty."

The pale face of Clara Talboys—that grave and earnest face, so different in its character to my lady's fragile beauty—arose before him.

"What a coward I am to think of myself or my own danger," he thought. "The more I see of this woman the more reason I have to dread her influence upon others; the more reason to wish her far away from this house."

He looked about him in the dusky obscurity. The lonely garden was as quiet as some solitary grave-yard, walled in and hidden away from the world of the living.

"It was somewhere in this garden that she met George Talboys upon the day of his disappearance," he thought. "I wonder where it was they met; I

wonder where it was that he looked into her cruel face and taxed her with her falsehood?"

My lady, with her little hand resting lightly upon the opposite post to that against which Robert leaned, toyed with her pretty foot among the long weeds, but kept a furtive watch upon her enemy's face.

"It is to be a duel to the death, then, my lady," said Robert Audley, solemnly. "You refuse to accept my warning. You refuse to run away and repent of your wickedness in some foreign place, far from the generous gentleman you have deceived and fooled by your false witcheries. You choose to remain here and defy me."

"I do," answered Lady Audley, lifting her head and looking full at the young barrister. "It is no fault of mine if my husband's nephew goes mad, and chooses me for the victim of his monomania."

"So be it, then, my lady," answered Robert. "My friend George Talboys was last seen entering these gardens by the little iron gate by which we came in to-night. He was last heard inquiring for you. He was seen to enter these gardens, but he was never seen to leave them. I believe that he met his death within the boundary of these grounds; and that his body lies hidden below some quiet water, or in some forgotten corner of this place. I will have such a search made as shall level that house to the earth and root up every tree in these gardens, rather than I will fail in finding the grave of my murdered friend."

Lucy Audley uttered a long, low, wailing cry, and threw up her arms above her head with a wild gesture of despair, but she made no answer to the ghastly charge of her accuser. Her arms slowly dropped, and she stood staring at Robert Audley, her white face gleaming through the dusk, her blue eyes glittering and dilated.

"You shall never live to do this," she said. "*I will kill you first.* Why have you tormented me so? Why could you not let me alone? What harm had I ever done you that you should make yourself my persecutor, and dog my steps, and watch my looks, and play the spy upon me? Do you want to drive me mad? Do you know what it is to wrestle with a mad-woman? No," cried my lady, with a laugh, "you do not, or you would never—"

She stopped abruptly and drew herself suddenly to her fullest height. It was the same action which Robert had seen in the old half-drunken lieutenant; and it had that same dignity—the sublimity of extreme misery.

"Go away, Mr. Audley," she said. "You are mad, I tell you, you are mad."

"I am going, my lady," answered Robert, quietly. "I would have condoned your crimes out of pity to your wretchedness. You have refused to accept my mercy. I wished to have pity upon the living. I shall henceforth only remember my duty to the dead."

He walked away from the lonely well under the shadow of the limes. My lady followed him slowly down that long, gloomy avenue, and across the rustic bridge to the iron gate. As he passed through the gate, Alicia came out of a little half-glass door that opened from an oak-paneled breakfast-room at one angle of the house, and met her cousin upon the threshold of the gateway.

"I have been looking for you everywhere, Robert," she said. "Papa has come down to the library, and will be glad to see you."

The young man started at the sound of his cousin's fresh young voice. "Good Heaven!" he thought, "can these two women be of the same clay? Can this frank, generous-hearted girl, who cannot conceal any impulse of her innocent nature, be of the same flesh and blood as that wretched creature whose shadow falls upon the path beside me!"

He looked from his cousin to Lady Audley, who stood near the gateway, waiting for him to stand aside and let her pass him.

"I don't know what has come to your cousin, my dear Alicia," said my lady. "He is so absent-minded and eccentric as to be quite beyond my comprehension."

"Indeed," exclaimed Miss Audley; "and yet I should imagine, from the length of your *tête-a-tête*, that you had made some effort to understand him."

"Oh, yes," said Robert, quietly, "my lady and I understand each other very well; but as it is growing late I will wish you good-evening, ladies. I shall sleep to-night at Mount Stanning, as I have some business to attend to up there, and I will come down and see my uncle to-morrow."

"What, Robert," cried Alicia, "you surely won't go away without seeing papa?"

"Yes, my dear," answered the young man. "I am a little disturbed by some disagreeable business in which I am very much concerned, and I would

rather not see my uncle. Good-night, Alicia. I will come or write to-morrow."

He pressed his cousin's hand, bowed to Lady Audley, and walked away under the black shadows of the archway, and out into the quiet avenue beyond the Court.

My lady and Alicia stood watching him until he was out of sight.

"What in goodness' name is the matter with my Cousin Robert?" exclaimed Miss Audley, impatiently, as the barrister disappeared. "What does he mean by these absurd goings-on? Some disagreeable business that disturbs him, indeed! I suppose the unhappy creature has had a brief forced upon him by some evil-starred attorney, and is sinking into a state of imbecility from a dim consciousness of his own incompetence."

"Have you ever studied your cousin's character, Alicia?" asked my lady, very seriously, after a pause.

"Studied his character! No, Lady Audley. Why should I study his character?" said Alicia. "There is very little study required to convince anybody that he is a lazy, selfish Sybarite, who cares for nothing in the world except his own ease and comfort."

"But have you never thought him eccentric?"

"Eccentric!" repeated Alicia, pursing up her red lips and shrugging up her shoulders. "Well, yes—I believe that is the excuse generally made for such people. I suppose Bob is eccentric."

"I have never heard you speak of his father and mother," said my lady, thoughtfully. "Do you remember them?"

"I never saw his mother. She was a Miss Dalrymple, a very dashing girl, who ran away with my uncle, and lost a very handsome fortune in consequence. She died at Nice when poor Bob was five years old."

"Did you ever hear anything particular about her?"

"How do you mean 'particular?'" asked Alicia.

"Did you ever hear that she was eccentric—what people call 'odd?'"

"Oh, no," said Alicia, laughing. "My aunt was a very reasonable woman, I believe, though she did marry for love. But you must remember that she died before I was born, and I have not, therefore, felt very much curiosity about her."

"But you recollect your uncle, I suppose."

"My Uncle Robert?" said Alicia. "Oh, yes, I remember him very well, indeed."

"Was *he* eccentric—I mean to say, peculiar in his habits, like your cousin?"

"Yes, I believe Robert inherits all his absurdities from his father. My uncle expressed the same indifference for his fellow-creatures as my cousin, but as he was a good husband, an affectionate father, and a kind master, nobody ever challenged his opinions."

"But he *was* eccentric?"

"Yes; I suppose he was generally thought a little eccentric."

"Ah," said my lady, gravely, "I thought as much. Do you know, Alicia, that madness is more often transmitted from father to daughter, and from mother to daughter than from mother to son? Your cousin, Robert Audley, is a very handsome young man, and I believe, a very good-hearted young man, but he must be watched, Alicia, for he is *mad!*"

"Mad!" cried Miss Audley, indignantly; "you are dreaming, my lady, or—or—you are trying to frighten me," added the young lady, with considerable alarm.

"I only wish to put you on your guard, Alicia," answered my lady. "Mr. Audley may be as you say, merely eccentric; but he has talked to me this evening in a manner that has filled me with absolute terror, and I believe that he is going mad. I shall speak very seriously to Sir Michael this very night."

"Speak to papa," exclaimed Alicia; "you surely won't distress papa by suggesting such a possibility!"

"I shall only put him on his guard, my dear Alicia."

"But he'll never believe you," said Miss Audley; "he will laugh at such an idea."

"No, Alicia; he will believe anything that I tell him," answered my lady, with a quiet smile.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### PREPARING THE GROUND.

Lady Audley went from the garden to the library, a pleasant, oak-paneled, homely apartment in which Sir Michael liked to sit reading or writing, or arranging the business of his estate with his steward, a stalwart countryman, half agriculturalist, half lawyer, who rented a small farm a few miles from the Court.

The baronet was seated in a capacious easy-chair near the hearth. The bright blaze of the fire rose and fell, flashing now upon the polished carvings of the black-oak bookcase, now upon the gold and scarlet bindings of the books; sometimes glimmering upon the Athenian helmet of a marble Pallas, sometimes lighting up the forehead of Sir Robert Peel.

The lamp upon the reading-table had not yet been lighted, and Sir Michael sat in the firelight waiting for the coming of his young wife.

It is impossible for me ever to tell the purity of his generous love—it is impossible to describe that affection which was as tender as the love of a young mother for her first born, as brave and chivalrous as the heroic passion of a Bayard for his liege mistress.

The door opened while he was thinking of this fondly-loved wife, and looking up, the baronet saw the slender form standing in the doorway.

"Why, my darling!" he exclaimed, as my lady closed the door behind her, and came toward his chair, "I have been thinking of you and waiting for you for an hour. Where have you been, and what have you been doing?"

My lady, standing in the shadow rather than the light, paused a few moments before replying to this question.

"I have been to Chelmsford," she said, "shopping; and—"

She hesitated—twisting her bonnet strings in her thin white fingers with an air of pretty embarrassment.

"And what, my dear?" asked the baronet—"what have you been doing since you came from Chelmsford? I heard a carriage stop at the door an

hour ago. It was yours, was it not?"

"Yes, I came home an hour ago," answered my lady, with the same air of embarrassment.

"And what have you been doing since you came home?"

Sir Michael Audley asked this question with a slightly reproachful accent. His young wife's presence made the sunshine of his life; and though he could not bear to chain her to his side, it grieved him to think that she could willingly remain unnecessarily absent from him, frittering away her time in some childish talk or frivolous occupation.

"What have you been doing since you came home, my dear?" he repeated. "What has kept you so long away from me?"

"I have been—talking—to—Mr. Robert Audley."

She still twisted her bonnet-string round and round her fingers.

She still spoke with the same air of embarrassment.

"Robert!" exclaimed the baronet; "is Robert here?"

"He was here a little while ago."

"And is here still, I suppose?"

"No, he has gone away."

"Gone away!" cried Sir Michael. "What do you mean, my darling?"

"I mean that your nephew came to the Court this afternoon. Alicia and I found him idling about the gardens. He stayed here till about a quarter of an hour ago talking to me, and then he hurried off without a word of explanation; except, indeed, some ridiculous excuse about business at Mount Stanning."

"Business at Mount Stanning! Why, what business can he possibly have in that out-of-the-way place? He has gone to sleep at Mount Stanning, then, I suppose?"

"Yes; I think he said something to that effect."

"Upon my word," exclaimed the baronet, "I think that boy is half mad."

My lady's face was so much in shadow, that Sir Michael Audley was unaware of the bright change that came over its sickly pallor as he made this very commonplace observation. A triumphant smile illuminated Lucy Audley's countenance, a smile that plainly said, "It is coming—it is coming;

I can twist him which way I like. I can put black before him, and if I say it is white, he will believe me."

But Sir Michael Audley in declaring that his nephew's wits were disordered, merely uttered that commonplace ejaculation which is well-known to have very little meaning. The baronet had, it is true, no very great estimate of Robert's faculty for the business of this everyday life. He was in the habit of looking upon his nephew as a good-natured nonentity—a man whose heart had been amply stocked by liberal Nature with all the best things the generous goddess had to bestow, but whose brain had been somewhat overlooked in the distribution of intellectual gifts. Sir Michael Audley made that mistake which is very commonly made by easy-going, well-to-do-observers, who have no occasion to look below the surface. He mistook laziness for incapacity. He thought because his nephew was idle, he must necessarily be stupid. He concluded that if Robert did not distinguish himself, it was because he could not.

He forgot the mute inglorious Miltons, who die voiceless and inarticulate for want of that dogged perseverance, that blind courage, which the poet must possess before he can find a publisher; he forgot the Cromwells, who see the noble vessels of the state floundering upon a sea of confusion, and going down in a tempest of noisy bewilderment, and who yet are powerless to get at the helm; forbidden even to send out a life-boat to the sinking ship. Surely it is a mistake to judge of what a man can do by that which he has done.

The world's Valhalla is a close borough, and perhaps the greatest men may be those who perish silently far away from the sacred portal. Perhaps the purest and brightest spirits are those who shrink from the turmoil of the race-course—the tumult and confusion of the struggle. The game of life is something like the game of *écarte*, and it may be that the very best cards are sometimes left in the pack.

My lady threw off her bonnet, and seated herself upon a velvet-covered footstool at Sir Michael's feet. There was nothing studied or affected in this girlish action. It was so natural to Lucy Audley to be childish, that no one would have wished to see her otherwise. It would have seemed as foolish to expect dignified reserve or womanly gravity from this amber-haired siren, as to wish for rich basses amid the clear treble of a sky-lark's song.



She sat with her pale face turned away from the firelight, and with her hands locked together upon the arm of her husband's easy-chair. They were very restless, these slender white hands. My lady twisted the jeweled fingers in and out of each other as she talked to her husband.

"I wanted to come to you, you know, dear," said she—"I wanted to come to you directly I got home, but Mr. Audley insisted upon my stopping to talk to him."

"But what about, my love?" asked the baronet. "What could Robert have to say to you?"

My lady did not answer this question. Her fair head dropped upon her husband's knee, her rippling, yellow curls fell over her face.

Sir Michael lifted that beautiful head with his strong hands, and raised my lady's face. The firelight shining on that pale face lit up the large, soft blue eyes and showed them drowned in tears.

"Lucy, Lucy!" cried the baronet, "what is the meaning of this? My love, my love! what has happened to distress you in this manner?"

Lady Audley tried to speak, but the words died inarticulately upon her trembling lips. A choking sensation in her throat seemed to strangle those false and plausible words, her only armor against her enemies. She could not speak. The agony she had endured silently in the dismal lime-walk had grown too strong for her, and she broke into a tempest of hysterical sobbing. It was no simulated grief that shook her slender frame and tore at her like some ravenous beast that would have rent her piecemeal with its horrible strength. It was a storm of real anguish and terror, of remorse and misery. It was the one wild outcry, in which the woman's feebler nature got the better of the siren's art.

It was not thus that she had meant to fight her terrible duel with Robert Audley. Those were not the weapons which she had intended to use; but perhaps no artifice which she could have devised would have served her so well as this one outburst of natural grief. It shook her husband to the very soul. It bewildered and terrified him. It reduced the strong intellect of the man to helpless confusion and perplexity. It struck at the one weak point in a good man's nature. It appealed straight to Sir Michael Audley's affection for his wife.

Ah, Heaven help a strong man's tender weakness for the woman he loves! Heaven pity him when the guilty creature has deceived him and comes with her tears and lamentations to throw herself at his feet in self-abandonment and remorse; torturing him with the sight of her agony; rending *his* heart with her sobs, lacerating *his* breast with her groans—multiplying her sufferings into a great anguish for him to bear! multiplying them by twenty-fold; multiplying them in a ratio of a brave man's capacity for endurance. Heaven forgive him, if maddened by that cruel agony, the balance wavers for a moment, and he is ready to forgive *anything*; ready to take this wretched one to the shelter of his breast, and to pardon that which the stern voice of manly honor urges must not be pardoned. Pity him, pity him! The wife's worst remorse when she stands without the threshold of the home she may never enter more is not equal to the agony of the husband who closes the portal on that familiar and entreating face. The anguish of the mother who may never look again upon her children is less than the torment of the father who has to say to those little ones, "My darlings, you are henceforth motherless."

Sir Michael Audley rose from his chair, trembling with indignation, and ready to do immediate battle with the person who had caused his wife's grief.

"Lucy," he said, "Lucy, I insist upon your telling me what and who has distressed you. I insist upon it. Whoever has annoyed you shall answer to me for your grief. Come, my love, tell me directly what it is."

He seated himself and bent over the drooping figure at his feet, calming his own agitation in his desire to soothe his wife's distress.

"Tell me what it is, my dear," he whispered, tenderly.

The sharp paroxysm had passed away, and my lady looked up. A glittering light shone through the tears in her eyes, and the lines about her pretty rosy mouth, those hard and cruel lines which Robert Audley had observed in the pre-Raphaelite portrait, were plainly visible in the firelight.

"I am very silly," she said; "but really he has made me quite hysterical."

"Who—who has made you hysterical?"

"Your nephew—Mr. Robert Audley."

"Robert," cried the baronet. "Lucy, what do you mean?"

"I told you that Mr. Audley insisted upon my going into the lime-walk, dear," said my lady. "He wanted to talk to me, he said, and I went, and he said such horrible things that—"

"What horrible things, Lucy?"

Lady Audley shuddered, and clung with convulsive fingers to the strong hand that had rested caressingly upon her shoulder.

"What did he say, Lucy?"

"Oh, my dear love, how can I tell you?" cried my lady. "I know that I shall distress you—or you will laugh at me, and then—"

"Laugh at you? no, Lucy."

Lady Audley was silent for a moment. She sat looking straight before her into the fire, with her fingers still locked about her husband's hand.

"My dear," she said, slowly, hesitating now and then between her words, as if she almost shrunk from uttering them, "have you ever—I am so afraid of vexing you—have you ever thought Mr. Audley a little—a little—"

"A little what, my darling?"

"A little out of his mind?" faltered Lady Audley.

"Out of his mind!" cried Sir Michael. "My dear girl, what are you thinking of?"

"You said just now, dear, that you thought he was half mad."

"Did I, my love?" said the baronet, laughing. "I don't remember saying it, and it was a mere *façon de parler*, that meant nothing whatever. Robert may be a little eccentric—a little stupid, perhaps—he mayn't be overburdened with wits, but I don't think he has brains enough for madness. I believe it's generally your great intellects that get out of order."

"But madness is sometimes hereditary," said my lady. "Mr. Audley may have inherited—"

"He has inherited no madness from his father's family," interrupted Sir Michael. "The Audleys have never peopled private lunatic asylums or fed mad doctors."

"Nor from his mother's family?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"People generally keep these things a secret," said my lady, gravely. "There may have been madness in your sister-in-law's family."

"I don't think so, my dear," replied Sir Michael. "But, Lucy, tell me what, in Heaven's name, has put this idea into your head."

"I have been trying to account for your nephew's conduct. I can account for it in no other manner. If you had heard the things he said to me to-night, Sir Michael, you too might have thought him mad."

"But what did he say, Lucy?"

"I can scarcely tell you. You can see how much he has stupefied and bewildered me. I believe he has lived too long alone in those solitary Temple chambers. Perhaps he reads too much, or smokes too much. You know that some physicians declare madness to be a mere illness of the brain—an illness to which any one is subject, and which may be produced by given causes, and cured by given means."

Lady Audley's eyes were still fixed upon the burning coals in the wide grate. She spoke as if she had been discussing a subject that she had often heard discussed before. She spoke as if her mind had almost wandered away from the thought of her husband's nephew to the wider question of madness in the abstract.

"Why should he not be mad?" resumed my lady. "People are insane for years and years before their insanity is found out. *They* know that they are mad, but they know how to keep their secret; and, perhaps, they may sometimes keep it till they die. Sometimes a paroxysm seizes them, and in an evil hour they betray themselves. They commit a crime, perhaps. The horrible temptation of opportunity assails them; the knife is in their hand, and the unconscious victim by their side. They may conquer the restless demon and go away and die innocent of any violent deed; but they *may* yield to the horrible temptation—the frightful, passionate, hungry craving for violence and horror. They sometimes yield and are lost."

Lady Audley's voice rose as she argued this dreadful question, The hysterical excitement from which she had only just recovered had left its effects upon her, but she controlled herself, and her tone grew calmer as she resumed:

"Robert Audley is mad," she said, decisively. "What is one of the strangest diagnostics of madness—what is the first appalling sign of mental

aberration? The mind becomes stationary; the brain stagnates; the even current of reflection is interrupted; the thinking power of the brain resolves itself into a monotone. As the waters of a tideless pool putrefy by reason of their stagnation, the mind becomes turbid and corrupt through lack of action; and the perpetual reflection upon one subject resolves itself into monomania. Robert Audley is a monomaniac. The disappearance of his friend, George Talboys, grieved and bewildered him. He dwelt upon this one idea until he lost the power of thinking of anything else. The one idea looked at perpetually became distorted to his mental vision. Repeat the commonest word in the English language twenty times, and before the twentieth repetition you will have begun to wonder whether the word which you repeat is really the word you mean to utter. Robert Audley has thought of his friend's disappearance until the one idea has done its fatal and unhealthy work. He looks at a common event with a vision that is diseased, and he distorts it into a gloomy horror engendered of his own monomania. If you do not want to make me as mad as he is, you must never let me see him again. He declared to-night that George Talboys was murdered in this place, and that he will root up every tree in the garden, and pull down every brick in the house in search for—"

My lady paused. The words died away upon her lips. She had exhausted herself by the strange energy with which she had spoken. She had been transformed from a frivolous, childish beauty into a woman, strong to argue her own cause and plead her own defense.

"Pull down this house?" cried the baronet. "George Talboys murdered at Audley Court! Did Robert say this, Lucy?"

"He said something of that kind—something that frightened me very much."

"Then he must be mad," said Sir Michael, gravely. "I'm bewildered by what you tell me. Did he really say this, Lucy, or did you misunderstand him?"

"I—I—don't think I did," faltered my lady. "You saw how frightened I was when I first came in. I should not have been so much agitated if he hadn't said something horrible."

Lady Audley had availed herself of the very strongest arguments by which she could help her cause.

"To be sure, my darling, to be sure," answered the baronet. "What could have put such a horrible fancy into the unhappy boy's head. This Mr. Talboys—a perfect stranger to all of us—murdered at Audley Court! I'll go to Mount Stanning to-night, and see Robert. I have known him ever since he was a baby, and I cannot be deceived in him. If there is really anything wrong, he will not be able to conceal it from me."

My lady shrugged her shoulders.

"That is rather an open question," she said. "It is generally a stranger who is the first to observe any psychological peculiarity."

The big words sounded strange from my lady's rosy lips; but her newly-adopted wisdom had a certain quaint prettiness about it, which charmed and bewildered her husband.

"But you must not go to Mount Stanning, my dear darling," she said, tenderly. "Remember that you are under strict orders to stay in doors until the weather is milder, and the sun shines upon this cruel ice-bound country."

Sir Michael Audley sank back in his capacious chair with a sigh of resignation.

"That's true, Lucy," he said; "we must obey Mr. Dawson. I suppose Robert will come to see me to-morrow."

"Yes, dear. I think he said he would."

"Then we must wait till to-morrow, my darling. I can't believe that there really is anything wrong with the poor boy—I can't believe it, Lucy."

"Then how do you account for this extraordinary delusion about this Mr. Talboys?" asked my lady.

Sir Michael shook his head.

"I don't know, Lucy—I don't know," he answered. "It is always so difficult to believe that any one of the calamities that continually befall our fellow-men will ever happen to us. I can't believe that my nephew's mind is impaired—I can't believe it. I—I'll get him to stop here, Lucy, and I'll watch him closely. I tell you, my love, if there is anything wrong I am sure to find it out. I can't be mistaken in a young man who has always been the same to me as my own son. But, my darling, why were you so frightened by Robert's wild talk? It could not affect you."

My lady sighed piteously.

"You must think me very strong-minded, Sir Michael," she said, with rather an injured air, "if you imagine I can hear of these sort of things indifferently. I know I shall never be able to see Mr. Audley again."

"And you shall not, my dear—you shall not."

"You said just now you would have him here," murmured Lady Audley.

"But I will not, my darling girl, if his presence annoys you. Good Heaven! Lucy, can you imagine for a moment that I have any higher wish than to promote your happiness? I will consult some London physician about Robert, and let him discover if there is really anything the matter with my poor brother's only son. *You* shall not be annoyed, Lucy."

"You must think me very unkind, dear," said my lady, "and I know I *ought* not to be annoyed by the poor fellow; but he really seems to have taken some absurd notion into his head about me."

"About *you*, Lucy!" cried Sir Michael.

"Yes, dear. He seems to connect me in some vague manner—which I cannot quite understand—with the disappearance of this Mr. Talboys."

"Impossible, Lucy! You must have misunderstood him."

"I don't think so."

"Then he must be mad," said the baronet—"he must be mad. I will wait till he goes back to town, and then send some one to his chambers to talk to him. Good Heaven! what a mysterious business this is."

"I fear I have distressed you, darling," murmured Lady Audley.

"Yes, my dear, I am very much distressed by what you have told me; but you were quite right to talk to me frankly about this dreadful business. I must think it over, dearest, and try and decide what is best to be done."

My lady rose from the low ottoman on which she had been seated. The fire had burned down, and there was only a faint glow of red light in the room. Lucy Audley bent over her husband's chair, and put her lips to his broad forehead.

"How good you have always been to me, dear," she whispered softly. "You would never let any one influence you against me, would you, dear?"

"Influence me against you?" repeated the baronet. "No, my love."

"Because you know, dear," pursued my lady, "there are wicked people as well as mad people in the world, and there may be some persons to whose

interest it would be to injure me."

"They had better not try it, then, my dear," answered Sir Michael; "they would find themselves in rather a dangerous position if they did."

Lady Audley laughed aloud, with a gay, triumphant, silvery peal of laughter that vibrated through the quiet room.

"My own dear darling," she said, "I know you love me. And now I must run away, dear, for it's past seven o'clock. I was engaged to dine at Mrs. Montford's, but I must send a groom with a message of apology, for Mr. Audley has made me quite unfit for company. I shall stay at home and nurse you, dear. You'll go to bed very early, won't you, and take great care of yourself?"

"Yes, dear."

My lady tripped out of the room to give her orders about the message that was to be carried to the house at which she was to have dined. She paused for a moment as she closed the library door—she paused, and laid her hand upon her breast to check the rapid throbbing of her heart.

"I have been afraid of you, Mr. Robert Audley," she thought; "but perhaps the time may come in which you will have cause to be afraid of me."

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### PHOEBE'S PETITION.

The division between Lady Audley and her step-daughter had not become any narrower in the two months which had elapsed since the pleasant Christmas holiday time had been kept at Audley Court. There was no open warfare between the two women; there was only an armed neutrality, broken every now and then by brief feminine skirmishes and transient wordy tempests. I am sorry to say that Alicia would very much have preferred a hearty pitched battle to this silent and undemonstrative disunion; but it was not very easy to quarrel with my lady. She had soft answers for the turning away of wrath. She could smile bewitchingly at her step-daughter's open petulance, and laugh merrily at the young lady's ill-temper. Perhaps had she been less amiable, had she been more like Alicia in disposition, the two ladies might have expended their enmity in one tremendous quarrel, and might ever afterward have been affectionate and friendly. But Lucy Audley would not make war. She carried forward the sum of her dislike, and put it out at a steady rate of interest, until the breach between her step-daughter and herself, widening a little every day, became a great gulf, utterly impassable by olive-branch-bearing doves from either side of the abyss. There can be no reconciliation where there is no open warfare. There must be a battle, a brave, boisterous battle, with pennants waving and cannon roaring, before there can be peaceful treaties and enthusiastic shaking of hands. Perhaps the union between France and England owes its greatest force to the recollection of Cressy and Waterloo, Navarino and Trafalgar. We have hated each other and licked each other and *had it out*, as the common phrase goes; and we can afford now to fall into each others' arms and vow eternal friendship and everlasting brotherhood. Let us hope that when Northern Yankeedom has decimated and been decimated, blustering Jonathan may fling himself upon his Southern brother's breast, forgiving and forgiven.

Alicia Audley and her father's pretty wife had plenty of room for the comfortable indulgence of their dislike in the spacious old mansion. My

lady had her own apartments, as we know—luxurious chambers, in which all conceivable elegancies had been gathered for the comfort of their occupant. Alicia had her own rooms in another part of the large house. She had her favorite mare, her Newfoundland dog, and her drawing materials, and she made herself tolerably happy. She was not very happy, this frank, generous-hearted girl, for it was scarcely possible that she could be altogether at ease in the constrained atmosphere of the Court. Her father was changed; that dear father over whom she had once reigned supreme with the boundless authority of a spoiled child, had accepted another ruler and submitted to a new dynasty. Little by little my lady's petty power made itself felt in that narrow household; and Alicia saw her father gradually lured across the gulf that divided Lady Audley from her step-daughter, until he stood at last quite upon the other side of the abyss, and looked coldly upon his only child across that widening chasm.

Alicia felt that he was lost to her. My lady's beaming smiles, my lady's winning words, my lady's radiant glances and bewitching graces had done their work of enchantment, and Sir Michael had grown to look upon his daughter as a somewhat wilful and capricious young person who had behaved with determined unkindness to the wife he loved.

Poor Alicia saw all this, and bore her burden as well as she could. It seemed very hard to be a handsome, gray-eyed heiress, with dogs and horses and servants at her command, and yet to be so much alone in the world as to know of not one friendly ear into which she might pour her sorrows.

"If Bob was good for anything I could have told him how unhappy I am," thought Miss Audley; "but I may just as well tell Caesar my troubles for any consolation I should get from Cousin Robert."

Sir Michael Audley obeyed his pretty nurse, and went to bed a little after nine o'clock upon this bleak March evening. Perhaps the baronet's bedroom was about the pleasantest retreat that an invalid could have chosen in such cold and cheerless weather. The dark-green velvet curtains were drawn before the windows and about the ponderous bed. The wood fire burned redly upon the broad hearth. The reading lamp was lighted upon a delicious little table close to Sir Michael's pillow, and a heap of magazines and

newspapers had been arranged by my lady's own fair hands for the pleasure of the invalid.

Lady Audley sat by the bedside for about ten minutes, talking to her husband, talking very seriously, about this strange and awful question—Robert Audley's lunacy; but at the end of that time she rose and bade her husband good-night.

She lowered the green silk shade before the reading lamp, adjusting it carefully for the repose of the baronet's eyes.

"I shall leave you, dear," she said. "If you can sleep, so much the better. If you wish to read, the books and papers are close to you. I will leave the doors between the rooms open, and I shall hear your voice if you call me."

Lady Audley went through her dressing-room into the boudoir, where she had sat with her husband since dinner.

Every evidence of womanly refinement was visible in the elegant chamber. My lady's piano was open, covered with scattered sheets of music and exquisitely-bound collections of scenas and fantasias which no master need have disdained to study. My lady's easel stood near the window, bearing witness to my lady's artistic talent, in the shape of a water-colored sketch of the Court and gardens. My lady's fairy-like embroideries of lace and muslin, rainbow-hued silks, and delicately-tinted wools littered the luxurious apartment; while the looking-glasses, cunningly placed at angles and opposite corners by an artistic upholsterer, multiplied my lady's image, and in that image reflected the most beautiful object in the enchanted chamber.

Amid all this lamplight, gilding, color, wealth, and beauty, Lucy Audley sat down on a low seat by the fire to think.

If Mr. Holman Hunt could have peeped into the pretty boudoir, I think the picture would have been photographed upon his brain to be reproduced by-and-by upon a bishop's half-length for the glorification of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. My lady in that half-recumbent attitude, with her elbow resting on one knee, and her perfect chin supported by her hand, the rich folds of drapery falling away in long undulating lines from the exquisite outline of her figure, and the luminous, rose-colored firelight enveloping her in a soft haze, only broken by the golden glitter of her yellow hair—beautiful in herself, but made bewilderingly beautiful by the gorgeous surroundings which adorn the shrine of her loveliness. Drinking-

cups of gold and ivory, chiseled by Benvenuto Cellini; cabinets of buhl and porcelain, bearing the cipher of Austrian Marie-Antoinette, amid devices of rosebuds and true-lovers' knots, birds and butterflies, cupidons and shepherdesses, goddesses, courtiers, cottagers, and milkmaids; statuettes of Parian marble and biscuit china; gilded baskets of hothouse flowers; fantastical caskets of Indian filigree-work; fragile tea-cups of turquoise china, adorned by medallion miniatures of Louis the Great and Louis the Well-beloved, Louise de la Valliere, Athenais de Montespan, and Marie Jeanne Gomar de Vaubernier: cabinet pictures and gilded mirrors, shimmering satin and diaphanous lace; all that gold can buy or art devise had been gathered together for the beautification of this quiet chamber in which my lady sat listening to the mourning of the shrill March wind, and the flapping of the ivy leaves against the casements, and looking into the red chasms in the burning coals.

I should be preaching a very stale sermon, and harping upon a very familiar moral, if I were to seize this opportunity of declaiming against art and beauty, because my lady was more wretched in this elegant apartment than many a half-starved seamstress in her dreary garret. She was wretched by reason of a wound which lay too deep for the possibility of any solace from such plasters as wealth and luxury; but her wretchedness was of an abnormal nature, and I can see no occasion for seizing upon the fact of her misery as an argument in favor of poverty and discomfort as opposed to opulence. The Benvenuto Cellini carvings and the Sevres porcelain could not give her happiness, because she had passed out of their region. She was no longer innocent; and the pleasure we take in art and loveliness being an innocent pleasure, had passed beyond her reach. Six or seven years before, she would have been happy in the possession of this little Aladdin's palace; but she had wandered out of the circle of careless, pleasure seeking creatures, she had strayed far away into a desolate labyrinth of guilt and treachery, terror and crime, and all the treasures that had been collected for her could have given her no pleasure but one, the pleasure of flinging them into a heap beneath her feet and trampling upon them and destroying them in her cruel despair.

There were some things that would have inspired her with an awful joy, a horrible rejoicing. If Robert Audley, her pitiless enemy, her unrelenting pursuer, had lain dead in the adjoining chamber, she would have exulted over his bier.

What pleasures could have remained for Lucretia Borgia and Catharine de Medici, when the dreadful boundary line between innocence and guilt was passed, and the lost creatures stood upon the lonely outer side? Only horrible, vengeful joys, and treacherous delights were left for these miserable women. With what disdainful bitterness they must have watched the frivolous vanities, the petty deceptions, the paltry sins of ordinary offenders. Perhaps they took a horrible pride in the enormity of their wickedness; in this "Divinity of Hell," which made them greatest among sinful creatures.

My lady, brooding by the fire in her lonely chamber, with her large, clear blue eyes fixed upon the yawning gulfs of lurid crimson in the burning coals, may have thought of many things very far away from the terribly silent struggle in which she was engaged. She may have thought of long-ago years of childish innocence, childish follies and selfishness, of frivolous, feminine sins that had weighed very lightly upon her conscience. Perhaps in that retrospective reverie she recalled that early time in which she had first looked in the glass and discovered that she was beautiful; that fatal early time in which she had first begun to look upon her loveliness as a right divine, a boundless possession which was to be a set-off against all girlish shortcomings, a counterbalance of every youthful sin. Did she remember the day in which that fairy dower of beauty had first taught her to be selfish and cruel, indifferent to the joys and sorrows of others, cold-hearted and capricious, greedy of admiration, exacting and tyrannical with that petty woman's tyranny which is the worst of despotism? Did she trace every sin of her life back to its true source? and did she discover that poisoned fountain in her own exaggerated estimate of the value of a pretty face? Surely, if her thoughts wandered so far along the backward current of her life, she must have repented in bitterness and despair of that first day in which the master-passions of her life had become her rulers, and the three demons of Vanity, Selfishness, and Ambition, had joined hands and said, "This woman is our slave, let us see what she will become under our guidance."

How small those first youthful errors seemed as my lady looked back upon them in that long reverie by the lonely hearth! What small vanities, what petty cruelties! A triumph over a schoolfellow; a flirtation with the lover of a friend; an assertion of the right divine invested in blue eyes and shimmering golden-tinted hair. But how terribly that narrow pathway had

widened out into the broad highroad of sin, and how swift the footsteps had become upon the now familiar way!

My lady twisted her fingers in her loose amber curls, and made as if she would have torn them from her head. But even in that moment of mute despair the unyielding dominion of beauty asserted itself, and she released the poor tangled glitter of ringlets, leaving them to make a halo round her head in the dim firelight.

"I was not wicked when I was young," she thought, as she stared gloomingly at the fire, "I was only thoughtless. I never did any harm—at least, wilfully. Have I ever been really *wicked*, I wonder?" she mused. "My worst wickednesses have been the result of wild impulses, and not of deeply-laid plots. I am not like the women I have read of, who have lain night after night in the horrible darkness and stillness, planning out treacherous deeds, and arranging every circumstance of an appointed crime. I wonder whether they suffered—those women—whether they ever suffered as—"

Her thoughts wandered away into a weary maze of confusion. Suddenly she drew herself up with a proud, defiant gesture, and her eyes glittered with a light that was not entirely reflected from the fire.

"You are mad, Mr. Robert Audley," she said, "you are mad, and your fancies are a madman's fancies. I know what madness is. I know its signs and tokens, and I say that you are mad."

She put her hand to her head, as if thinking of something which confused and bewildered her, and which she found it difficult to contemplate with calmness.

"Dare I defy him?" she muttered. "Dare I? dare I? Will he stop, now that he has once gone so far? Will he stop for fear of me? Will he stop for fear of me, when the thought of what his uncle must suffer has not stopped him? Will anything stop him—but death?"

She pronounced the last words in an awful whisper; and with her head bent forward, her eyes dilated, and her lips still parted as they had been parted in her utterance of that final word "death," she sat blankly staring at the fire.

"I can't plot horrible things," she muttered, presently; "my brain isn't strong enough, or I'm not wicked enough, or brave enough. If I met Robert

Audley in those lonely gardens, as I—"

The current of her thoughts was interrupted by a cautious knocking at her door. She rose suddenly, startled by any sound in the stillness of her room. She rose, and threw herself into a low chair near the fire. She flung her beautiful head back upon the soft cushions, and took a book from the table near her. Insignificant as this action was, it spoke very plainly. It spoke very plainly of ever-recurring fears—of fatal necessities for concealment—of a mind that in its silent agonies was ever alive to the importance of outward effect. It told more plainly than anything else could have told how complete an actress my lady had been made by the awful necessity of her life.

The modest rap at the door was repeated.

"Come in," cried Lady Audley, in her liveliest tone.

The door was opened with that respectful noiselessness peculiar to a well-bred servant, and a young woman, plainly dressed, and carrying some of the cold March winds in the folds of her garments, crossed the threshold of the apartment and lingered near the door, waiting permission to approach the inner regions of my lady's retreat.

It was Phoebe Marks, the pale-faced wife of the Mount Stanning innkeeper.

"I beg pardon, my lady, for intruding without leave," she said; "but I thought I might venture to come straight up without waiting for permission."

"Yes, yes, Phoebe, to be sure. Take off your bonnet, you wretched, cold-looking creature, and come sit down here."

Lady Audley pointed to the low ottoman upon which she had herself been seated a few minutes before. The lady's maid had often sat upon it listening to her mistress' prattle in the old days, when she had been my lady's chief companion and *confidante*.

"Sit down here, Phoebe," Lady Audley repeated; "sit down here and talk to me; I'm very glad you came here to-night. I was horribly lonely in this dreary place."

My lady shivered and looked round at the bright collection of *bric-a-brac*, as if the Sevres and bronze, the buhl and ormolu, had been the moldering adornments of some ruined castle. The dreary wretchedness of her thoughts had communicated itself to every object about her, and all

outer things took their color from that weary inner life which held its slow course of secret anguish in her breast. She had spoken the entire truth in saying that she was glad of her lady's maid's visit. Her frivolous nature clung to this weak shelter in the hour of her fear and suffering. There were sympathies between her and this girl, who was like herself, inwardly as well as outwardly—like herself, selfish, and cold, and cruel, eager for her own advancement, and greedy of opulence and elegance; angry with the lot that had been cast her, and weary of dull dependence. My lady hated Alicia for her frank, passionate, generous, daring nature; she hated her step-daughter, and clung to this pale-faced, pale-haired girl, whom she thought neither better nor worse than herself.

Phoebe Marks obeyed her late mistress' commands, and took off her bonnet before seating herself on the ottoman at Lady Audley's feet. Her smooth bands of light hair were unruffled by the March winds; her trimly-made drab dress and linen collar were as neatly arranged as they could have been had she only that moment completed her toilet.

"Sir Michael is better, I hope, my lady," she said.

"Yes, Phoebe, much better. He is asleep. You may close that door," added Lady Audley, with a motion of her head toward the door of communication between the rooms, which had been left open.

Mrs. Marks obeyed submissively, and then returned to her seat.

"I am very, very unhappy, Phoebe," my lady said, fretfully; "wretchedly miserable."

"About the—secret?" asked Mrs. Marks, in a half whisper.

My lady did not notice that question. She resumed in the same complaining tone. She was glad to be able to complain even to this lady's maid. She had brooded over her fears, and had suffered in secret so long, that it was an inexpressible relief to her to bemoan her fate aloud.

"I am cruelly persecuted and harassed, Phoebe Marks," she said. "I am pursued and tormented by a man whom I never injured, whom I have never wished to injure. I am never suffered to rest by this relentless tormentor, and —"

She paused, staring at the fire again, as she had done in her loneliness. Lost again in the dark intricacies of thoughts which wandered hither and



thither in a dreadful chaos of terrified bewilderments, she could not come to any fixed conclusion.

Phoebe Marks watched my lady's face, looking upward at her late mistress with pale, anxious eyes, that only relaxed their watchfulness when Lady Audley's glance met that of her companion.

"I think I know whom you mean, my lady," said the innkeeper's wife, after a pause; "I think I know who it is who is so cruel to you."

"Oh, of course," answered my lady, bitterly; "my secrets are everybody's secrets. You know all about it, no doubt."

"The person is a gentleman—is he not, my lady?"

"Yes."

"A gentleman who came to the Castle Inn two months ago, when I warned you—"

"Yes, yes," answered my lady, impatiently.

"I thought so. The same gentleman is at our place to-night, my lady."

Lady Audley started up from her chair—started up as if she would have done something desperate in her despairing fury; but she sank back again with a weary, querulous sigh. What warfare could such a feeble creature wage against her fate? What could she do but wind like a hunted hare till she found her way back to the starting-point of the cruel chase, to be there trampled down by her pursuers?

"At the Castle Inn?" she cried. "I might have known as much. He has gone there to wring my secrets from your husband. Fool!" she exclaimed, suddenly turning upon Phoebe Marks in a transport of anger, "do you want to destroy me that you have left those two men together?"

Mrs. Marks clasped her hands piteously.

"I didn't come away of my own free will, my lady," she said; "no one could have been more unwilling to leave the house than I was this night. I was sent here."

"Who sent you here?"

"Luke, my lady. You can't tell how hard he can be upon me if I go against him."

"Why did he send you?"

The innkeeper's wife dropped her eyelids under Lady Audley's angry glances, and hesitated confusedly before she answered this question.

"Indeed, my lady," she stammered, "I didn't want to come. I told Luke that it was too bad for us to worry you, first asking this favor, and then asking that, and never leaving you alone for a month together; but—but—he bore me down with his loud, blustering talk, and he made me come."

"Yes, yes," cried Lady Audley, impatiently. "I know that. I want to know why you have come."

"Why, you know, my lady," answered Phoebe, half reluctantly, "Luke is very extravagant; and all I can say to him, I can't get him to be careful or steady. He's not sober; and when he's drinking with a lot of rough countrymen, and drinking, perhaps even more than they do, it isn't likely that his head can be very clear for accounts. If it hadn't been for me we should have been ruined before this; and hard as I've tried, I haven't been able to keep the ruin off. You remember giving me the money for the brewer's bill, my lady?"

"Yes, I remember very well," answered Lady Audley, with a bitter laugh, "for I wanted that money to pay my own bills."

"I know you did, my lady, and it was very, very hard for me to have to come and ask you for it, after all that we'd received from you before. But that isn't the worst: when Luke sent me down here to beg the favor of that help he never told me that the Christmas rent was still owing; but it was, my lady, and it's owing now, and—and there's a bailiff in the house to-night, and we're to be sold up to-morrow unless—"

"Unless I pay your rent, I suppose," cried Lucy Audley. "I might have guessed what was coming."

"Indeed, indeed, my lady, I wouldn't have asked it," sobbed Phoebe Marks, "but he made me come."

"Yes," answered my lady, bitterly, "he made you come; and he will make you come whenever he pleases, and whenever he wants money for the gratification of his low vices; and you and he are my pensioners as long as I live, or as long as I have any money to give; for I suppose when my purse is empty and my credit ruined, you and your husband will turn upon me and sell me to the highest bidder. Do you know, Phoebe Marks, that my jewel-case has been half emptied to meet your claims? Do you know that my pin-

money, which I thought such a princely allowance when my marriage settlement was made, and when I was a poor governess at Mr. Dawson's, Heaven help me! my pin-money has been overdrawn half a year to satisfy your demands? What can I do to appease you? Shall I sell my Marie Antoinette cabinet, or my pompadour china, Leroy's and Benson's ormolu clocks, or my Gobelin tapestried chairs and ottomans? How shall I satisfy you next?"

"Oh, my lady, my lady," cried Phoebe, piteously, "don't be so cruel to me; you know, you know that it isn't I who want to impose upon you."

"I know nothing," exclaimed Lady Audley, "except that I am the most miserable of women. Let me think," she cried, silencing Phoebe's consolatory murmurs with an imperious gesture. "Hold your tongue, girl, and let me think of this business, if I can."

She put her hands to her forehead, clasping her slender fingers across her brow, as if she would have controlled the action of her brain by their convulsive pressure.

"Robert Audley is with your husband," she said, slowly, speaking to herself rather than to her companion. "These two men are together, and there are bailiffs in the house, and your brutal husband is no doubt brutally drunk by this time, and brutally obstinate and ferocious in his drunkenness. If I refuse to pay this money his ferocity will be multiplied by a hundredfold. There's little use in discussing that matter. The money must be paid."

"But if you do pay it," said Phoebe, earnestly, "I hope you will impress upon Luke that it is the last money you will ever give him while he stops in that house."

"Why?" asked Lady Audley, letting her hands fall on her lap, and looking inquiringly at Mrs. Marks.

"Because I want Luke to leave the Castle."

"But why do you want him to leave?"

"Oh, for ever so many reasons, my lady," answered Phoebe. "He's not fit to be the landlord of a public-house. I didn't know that when I married him, or I would have gone against the business, and tried to persuade him to take to the farming line. Not that I suppose he'd have given up his own fancy, either; for he's obstinate enough, as you know, my lady. He's not fit for his

present business. He's scarcely ever sober after dark; and when he's drunk he gets almost wild, and doesn't seem to know what he does. We've had two or three narrow escapes with him already."

"Narrow escapes!" repeated Lady Audley. "What do you mean?"

"Why, we've run the risk of being burnt in our beds through his carelessness."

"Burnt in your beds through his carelessness! Why, how was that?" asked my lady, rather listlessly. She was too selfish, and too deeply absorbed in her own troubles to take much interest in any danger which had befallen her some-time lady's-maid.

"You know what a queer old place the Castle is, my lady; all tumble-down wood-work, and rotten rafters, and such like. The Chelmsford Insurance Company won't insure it; for they say if the place did happen to catch fire of a windy night it would blaze away like so much tinder, and nothing in the world could save it. Well, Luke knows this; and the landlord has warned him of it times and often, for he lives close against us, and he keeps a pretty sharp eye upon all my husband's goings on; but when Luke's tipsy he doesn't know what he's about, and only a week ago he left a candle burning in one of the out-houses, and the flame caught one of the rafters of the sloping roof, and if it hadn't been for me finding it out when I went round the house the last thing, we should have all been burnt to death, perhaps. And that's the third time the same kind of thing has happened in the six months we've had the place, and you can't wonder that I'm frightened, can you, my lady?"

My lady had not wondered, she had not thought about the business at all. She had scarcely listened to these commonplace details; why should she care for this low-born waiting-woman's perils and troubles? Had she not her own terrors, her own soul-absorbing perplexities to usurp every thought of which her brain was capable?

She did not make any remark upon that which poor Phoebe just told her; she scarcely comprehended what had been said, until some moments after the girl had finished speaking, when the words assumed their full meaning, as some words do after they have been heard without being heeded.

"Burnt in your beds," said the young lady, at last. "It would have been a good thing for me if that precious creature, your husband, had been burnt in his bed before to-night."

A vivid picture had flashed upon her as she spoke. The picture of that frail wooden tenement, the Castle Inn, reduced to a roofless chaos of lath and plaster, vomiting flames from its black mouth, and spitting blazing sparks upward toward the cold night sky.

She gave a weary sigh as she dismissed this image from her restless brain. She would be no better off even if this enemy should be for ever silenced. She had another and far more dangerous foe—a foe who was not to be bribed or bought off, though she had been as rich as an empress.

"I'll give you the money to send this bailiff away," my lady said, after a pause. "I must give you the last sovereign in my purse, but what of that? you know as well as I do that I dare not refuse you."

Lady Audley rose and took the lighted lamp from her writing-table. "The money is in my dressing-room," she said; "I will go and fetch it."

"Oh, my lady," exclaimed Phoebe, suddenly, "I forgot something; I was in such a way about this business that I quite forgot it."

"Quite forgot what?"

"A letter that was given me to bring to you, my lady, just before I left home."

"What letter?"

"A letter from Mr. Audley. He heard my husband mention that I was coming down here, and he asked me to carry this letter."

Lady Audley set the lamp down upon the table nearest to her, and held out her hand to receive the letter. Phoebe Marks could scarcely fail to observe that the little jeweled hand shook like a leaf.

"Give it me—give it me," she cried; "let me see what more he has to say."

Lady Audley almost snatched the letter from Phoebe's hand in her wild impatience. She tore open the envelope and flung it from her; she could scarcely unfold the sheet of note-paper in her eager excitement.

The letter was very brief. It contained only these words:

"Should Mrs. George Talboys really have survived the date of her supposed death, as recorded in the public prints, and upon the tombstone in Ventnor churchyard, and should she exist in the person of the lady suspected and accused by the writer of this, there can be no great difficulty in finding some one able and willing to identify her. Mrs. Barkamb, the

owner of North Cottages, Wildernsea, would no doubt consent to throw some light upon this matter; either to dispel a delusion or to confirm a suspicion.

"ROBERT AUDLEY.

"March 3, 1859.

"The Castle Inn, Mount Stanning."

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE RED LIGHT IN THE SKY.

My lady crushed the letter fiercely in her hand, and flung it from her into the flames.

"If he stood before me now, and I could kill him," she muttered in a strange, inward whisper, "I would do it—I would do it!" She snatched up the lamp and rushed into the adjoining room. She shut the door behind her. She could not endure any witness of her horrible despair—she could endure nothing, neither herself nor her surroundings.

The door between my lady's dressing-room and the bed-chamber in which Sir Michael lay, had been left open. The baronet slept peacefully, his noble face plainly visible in the subdued lamplight. His breathing was low and regular, his lips curved into a half smile—a smile of tender happiness which he often wore when he looked at his beautiful wife, the smile of an all-indulgent father, who looks admiringly at his favorite child.

Some touch of womanly feeling, some sentiment of compassion softened Lady Audley's glance as it fell upon that noble, reposing figure. For a moment the horrible egotism of her own misery yielded to her pitying tenderness for another. It was perhaps only a semi-selfish tenderness after all, in which pity for herself was as powerful as pity for her husband; but for once in a way, her thoughts ran out of the narrow groove of her own terrors and her own troubles to dwell with prophetic grief upon the coming sorrows of another.

"If they make him believe, how wretched he will be," she thought. But intermingled with that thought there was another—there was the thought of her lovely face, her bewitching manner, her arch smile, her low, musical laugh, which was like a peal of silvery bells ringing across a broad expanse of flat meadow-land and a rippling river in the misty summer evening. She thought of all these things with a transient thrill of triumph, which was stronger even than her terror.

If Sir Michael Audley lived to be a hundred years old, whatever he might learn to believe of her, however he might grow to despise her, would he ever be able to disassociate her from these attributes? No; a thousand times no. To the last hour of his life his memory would present her to him invested with the loveliness that had first won his enthusiastic admiration, his devoted affection. Her worst enemies could not rob her of that fairy dower which had been so fatal in its influence upon her frivolous mind.

She paced up and down the dressing-room in the silvery lamplight, pondering upon the strange letter which she had received from Robert Audley. She walked backward and forward in that monotonous wandering for some time before she was able to steady her thoughts—before she was able to bring the scattered forces of her narrow intellect to bear upon the one all-important subject of the threat contained in the barrister's letter.

"He will do it," she said, between her set teeth—"he will do it, unless I get him into a lunatic-asylum first; or unless—"

She did not finish the thought in words. She did not even think out the sentence; but some new and unnatural impulse in her heart seemed to beat each syllable against her breast.

The thought was this: "He will do it, unless some strange calamity befalls him, and silences him for ever." The red blood flashed up into my lady's face with as sudden and transient a blaze as the flickering flame of a fire, and died as suddenly away, leaving her more pale than winter snow. Her hands, which had before been locked convulsively together, fell apart and dropped heavily at her sides. She stopped in her rapid pacing to and fro—stopped as Lot's wife may have stopped, after that fatal backward glance at the perishing city—with every pulse slackening, with every drop of blood congealing in her veins, in the terrible process that was to transform her from a woman into a statue.

Lady Audley stood still for about five minutes in that strangely statuesque attitude, her head erect, her eyes staring straight before her—staring far beyond the narrow boundary of her chamber wall, into dark distances of peril and horror.

But by-and-by she started from that rigid attitude almost as abruptly as she had fallen into it. She roused herself from that semi-lethargy. She walked rapidly to her dressing-table, and, seating herself before it, pushed away the litter of golden-stoppered bottles and delicate china essence-



boxes, and looked at her reflection in the large, oval glass. She was very pale; but there was no other trace of agitation visible in her girlish face. The lines of her exquisitely molded lips were so beautiful, that it was only a very close observer who could have perceived a certain rigidity that was unusual to them. She saw this herself, and tried to smile away that statue-like immobility: but to-night the rosy lips refused to obey her; they were firmly locked, and were no longer the slaves of her will and pleasure. All the latent forces of her character concentrated themselves in this one feature. She might command her eyes, but she could not control the muscles of her mouth. She rose from before her dressing-table, and took a dark velvet cloak and bonnet from the recesses of her wardrobe, and dressed herself for walking. The little ormolu clock on the chimney-piece struck the quarter after eleven while Lady Audley was employed in this manner; five minutes afterward she re-entered the room in which she had left Phoebe Marks.

The innkeeper's wife was sitting before the low fender very much in the same attitude as that in which her late mistress had brooded over that lonely hearth earlier in the evening. Phoebe had replenished the fire, and had reassumed her bonnet and shawl. She was anxious to get home to that brutal husband, who was only too apt to fall into some mischief in her absence. She looked up as Lady Audley entered the room, and uttered an exclamation of surprise at seeing her late mistress in a walking-costume.

"My lady," she cried, "you are not going out to-night?"

"Yes, I am, Phoebe," Lady Audley answered, very quietly. "I am going to Mount Stanning with you to see this bailiff, and to pay and dismiss him myself."

"But, my lady, you forget what the time is; you can't go out at such an hour."

Lady Audley did not answer. She stood with her finger resting lightly upon the handle of the bell, meditating quietly.

"The stables are always locked, and the men in bed by ten o'clock," she murmured, "when we are at home. It will make a terrible hubbub to get a carriage ready; but yet I dare say one of the servants could manage the matter quietly for me."

"But why should you go to-night, my lady?" cried Phoebe Marks. "To-morrow will do quite as well. A week hence will do as well. Our landlord

would take the man away if he had your promise to settle the debt."

Lady Audley took no notice of this interruption. She went hastily into the dressing-room, and flung off her bonnet and cloak, and then returned to the boudoir, in her simple dinner-costume, with her curls brushed carelessly away from her face.

"Now, Phoebe Marks, listen to me," she said, grasping her confidante's wrist, and speaking in a low, earnest voice, but with a certain imperious air that challenged contradiction and commanded obedience. "Listen to me, Phoebe," she repeated. "I am going to the Castle Inn to-night; whether it is early or late is of very little consequence to me; I have set my mind upon going, and I shall go. You have asked me why, and I have told you. I am going in order that I may pay this debt myself; and that I may see for myself that the money I give is applied to the purpose for which I give it. There is nothing out of the common course of life in my doing this. I am going to do what other women in my position very often do. I am going to assist a favorite servant."

"But it's getting on for twelve o'clock, my lady," pleaded Phoebe.

Lady Audley frowned impatiently at this interruption.

"If my going to your house to pay this man should be known," she continued, still retaining her hold of Phoebe's wrist, "I am ready to answer for my conduct; but I would rather that the business should be kept quiet. I think that I can leave this house without being seen by any living creature, if you will do as I tell you."

"I will do anything you wish, my lady," answered Phoebe, submissively.

"Then you will wish me good-night presently, when my maid comes into the room, and you will suffer her to show you out of the house. You will cross the courtyard and wait for me in the avenue upon the other side of the archway. It may be half an hour before I am able to join you, for I must not leave my room till the servants have all gone to bed, but you may wait for me patiently, for come what may I will join you."

Lady Audley's face was no longer pale. An unnatural luster gleamed in her great blue eyes. She spoke with an unnatural rapidity. She had altogether the appearance and manner of a person who has yielded to the dominant influence of some overpowering excitement. Phoebe Marks stared

at her late mistress in mute bewilderment. She began to fear that my lady was going mad.

The bell which Lady Audley rang was answered by the smart lady's-maid who wore rose-colored ribbons, and black silk gowns, and other adornments which were unknown to the humble people who sat below the salt in the good old days when servants wore linsey-woolsey.

"I did not know that it was so late, Martin," said my lady, in that gentle tone which always won for her the willing service of her inferiors. "I have been talking with Mrs. Marks and have let the time slip by me. I sha'n't want anything to-night, so you may go to bed when you please."

"Thank you, my lady," answered the girl, who looked very sleepy, and had some difficulty in repressing a yawn even in her mistress' presence, for the Audley household usually kept very early hours. "I'd better show Mrs. Marks out, my lady, hadn't I?" asked the maid, "before I go to bed?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure; you can let Phoebe out. All the other servants have gone to bed, then, I suppose?"

"Yes, my lady."

Lady Audley laughed as she glanced at the timepiece.

"We have been terrible dissipated up here, Phoebe," she said. "Good-night. You may tell your husband that his rent shall be paid."

"Thank you very much, my lady, and good-night," murmured Phoebe as she backed out of the room, followed by the lady's maid.

Lady Audley listened at the door, waiting till the muffled sounds of their footsteps died away in the octagon chamber and on the carpeted staircase.

"Martin sleeps at the top of the house," she said, "half a mile away from this room. In ten minutes I may safely make my escape."

She went back into her dressing-room, and put on her cloak and bonnet for the second time. The unnatural color still burnt like a flame in her cheeks; the unnatural light still glittered in her eyes. The excitement which she was under held her in so strong a spell that neither her mind nor her body seemed to have any consciousness of fatigue. However verbose I may be in my description of her feelings, I can never describe a tithe of her thoughts or her sufferings. She suffered agonies that would fill closely printed volumes, bulky with a thousand pages, in that one horrible night. She underwent volumes of anguish, and doubt, and perplexity; sometimes

repeating the same chapters of her torments over and over again; sometimes hurrying through a thousand pages of her misery without one pause, without one moment of breathing time. She stood by the low fender in her boudoir, watching the minute-hand of the clock, and waiting till it should be time for her to leave the house in safety.

"I will wait ten minutes," she said, "not a moment beyond, before I enter on my new peril."

She listened to the wild roaring of the March wind, which seemed to have risen with the stillness and darkness of the night.

The hand slowly made its inevitable way to the figures which told that the ten minutes were past. It was exactly a quarter to twelve when my lady took her lamp in her hand, and stole softly from the room. Her footfall was as light as that of some graceful wild animal, and there was no fear of that airy step awakening any echo upon the carpeted stone corridors and staircase. She did not pause until she reached the vestibule upon the ground floor. Several doors opened out of the vestibule, which was octagon, like my lady's ante-chamber. One of these doors led into the library, and it was this door which Lady Audley opened softly and cautiously.

To have attempted to leave the house secretly by any of the principal outlets would have been simple madness, for the housekeeper herself superintended the barricading of the great doors, back and front. The secrets of the bolts, and bars, and chains, and bells which secured these doors, and provided for the safety of Sir Michael Audley's plate-room, the door of which was lined with sheet-iron, were known only to the servants who had to deal with them. But although all these precautions were taken with the principal entrances to the citadel, a wooden shutter and a slender iron bar, light enough to be lifted by a child, were considered sufficient safeguard for the half-glass door which opened out of the breakfast-room into the graveled pathway and smooth turf in the courtyard.

It was by this outlet that Lady Audley meant to make her escape. She could easily remove the bar and unfasten the shutter, and she might safely venture to leave the window ajar while she was absent. There was little fear of Sir Michael's awaking for some time, as he was a heavy sleeper in the early part of the night, and had slept more heavily than usual since his illness.

Lady Audley crossed the library, and opened the door of the breakfast-room, which communicated with it. This latter apartment was one of the later additions to the Court. It was a simple, cheerful chamber, with brightly papered walls and pretty maple furniture, and was more occupied by Alicia than any one else. The paraphernalia of that young lady's favorite pursuits were scattered about the room—drawing-materials, unfinished scraps of work, tangled skeins of silk, and all the other tokens of a careless damsel's presence; while Miss Audley's picture—a pretty crayon sketch of a rosy-faced hoyden in a riding-habit and hat—hung over the quaint Wedgewood ornaments on the chimneypiece. My lady looked upon these familiar objects with scornful hatred flaming in her blue eyes.

"How glad she will be if any disgrace befalls me," she thought; "how she will rejoice if I am driven out of this house!"

Lady Audley set the lamp upon a table near the fireplace, and went to the window. She removed the iron-bar and the light wooden shutter, and then opened the glass-door. The March night was black and moonless, and a gust of wind blew in upon her as she opened this door, and filled the room with its chilly breath, extinguishing the lamp upon the table.

"No matter," my lady muttered, "I could not have left it burning. I shall know how to find my way through the house when I come back. I have left all the doors ajar."

She stepped quickly out upon the smooth gravel, and closed the glass-door behind her. She was afraid lest that treacherous wind should blow to the door opening into the library, and thus betray her.

She was in the quadrangle now, with that chill wind sweeping against her, and swirling her silken garments round her with a shrill, rustling noise, like the whistling of a sharp breeze against the sails of a yacht. She crossed the quadrangle and looked back—looked back for a moment at the firelight gleaming between the rosy-tinted curtains in her boudoir, and the dim gleam of the lamp through the mullioned windows in the room where Sir Michael Audley lay asleep.

"I feel as if I were running away," she thought; "I feel as if I were running away secretly in the dead of the night, to lose myself and be forgotten. Perhaps it would be wiser in me to run away, to take this man's warning, and escape out of his power forever. If I were to run away and disappear as—as George Talboys disappeared. But where could I go? what would

become of me? I have no money; my jewels are not worth a couple of hundred pounds, now that I have got rid of the best part of them. What could I do? I must go back to the old life, the old, hard, cruel, wretched life—the life of poverty, and humiliation, and vexation, and discontent. I should have to go back and wear myself out in that long struggle, and die—as my mother died, perhaps!"

My lady stood still for a moment on the smooth lawn between the quadrangle and the archway, with her head drooping upon her breast and her hands locked together, debating this question in the unnatural activity of her mind. Her attitude reflected the state of that mind—it expressed irresolution and perplexity. But presently a sudden change came over her; she lifted her head—lifted it with an action of defiance and determination.

"No! Mr. Robert Audley," she said, aloud, in a low, clear voice; "I will not go back—I will not go back. If the struggle between us is to be a duel to the death, you shall not find me drop my weapon."

She walked with a firm and rapid step under the archway. As she passed under that massive arch, it seemed as if she disappeared into some black gulf that had waited open to receive her. The stupid clock struck twelve, and the whole archway seemed to vibrate under its heavy strokes, as Lady Audley emerged upon the other side and joined Phoebe Marks, who had waited for her late mistress very near the gateway of the Court.

"Now, Phoebe," she said, "it is three miles from here to Mount Stanning, isn't it?"

"Yes, my lady."

"Then we can walk the distance in an hour and a half."

Lady Audley had not stopped to say this; she was walking quickly along the avenue with her humble companion by her side. Fragile and delicate as she was in appearance, she was a very good walker. She had been in the habit of taking long country rambles with Mr. Dawson's children in her old days of dependence, and she thought very little of a distance of three miles.

"Your beautiful husband will sit up for you, I suppose, Phoebe?" she said, as they struck across an open field that was used as a short cut from Audley Court to the high-road.

"Oh, yes, my lady; he's sure to sit up. He'll be drinking with the man, I dare say."

"The man! What man?"

"The man that's in possession, my lady."

"Ah, to be sure," said Lady Audley, indifferently.

It was strange that Phoebe's domestic troubles should seem so very far away from her thoughts at the time she was taking such an extraordinary step toward setting things right at the Castle Inn.

The two women crossed the field and turned into the high road. The way to Mount Stanning was all up hill, and the long road looked black and dreary in the dark night; but my lady walked on with a desperate courage, which was no common constituent in her selfish sensuous nature, but a strange faculty born out of her great despair. She did not speak again to her companion until they were close upon the glimmering lights at the top of the hill. One of these village lights, glaring redly through a crimson curtain, marked out the particular window behind which it was likely that Luke Marks sat nodding drowsily over his liquor, and waiting for the coming of his wife.

"He has not gone to bed, Phoebe," said my lady, eagerly. "But there is no other light burning at the inn. I suppose Mr. Audley is in bed and asleep."

"Yes, my lady, I suppose so."

"You are sure he was going to stay at the Castle to night?"

"Oh, yes, my lady. I helped the girl to get his room ready before I came away."

The wind, boisterous everywhere, was even shriller and more pitiless in the neighborhood of that bleak hill-top upon which the Castle Inn reared its rickety walls. The cruel blasts raved wildly round that frail erection. They disported themselves with the shattered pigeon-house, the broken weathercock, the loose tiles, and unshapely chimneys; they rattled at the window-panes, and whistled in the crevices; they mocked the feeble building from foundation to roof, and battered, and banged, and tormented it in their fierce gambols, until it trembled and rocked with the force of their rough play.

Mr. Luke Marks had not troubled himself to secure the door of his dwelling-house before sitting down to booze with the man who held provisional possession of his goods and chattels. The landlord of the Castle Inn was a lazy, sensual brute, who had no thought higher than a selfish concern for his own enjoyments, and a virulent hatred for anybody who stood in the way of his gratification.

Phoebe pushed open the door with her hand, and went into the house, followed by my lady. The gas was flaring in the bar, and smoking the low plastered ceiling. The door of the bar-parlor was half open, and Lady Audley heard the brutal laughter of Mr. Marks as she crossed the threshold of the inn.

"I'll tell him you're here, my lady," whispered Phoebe to her late mistress. "I know he'll be tipsy. You—you won't be offended, my lady, if he should say anything rude? You know it wasn't my wish that you should come."

"Yes, yes," answered Lady Audley, impatiently, "I know that. What should I care for his rudeness! Let him say what he likes."

Phoebe Marks pushed open the parlor door, leaving my lady in the bar close behind her.

Luke sat with his clumsy legs stretched out upon the hearth. He held a glass of gin-and-water in one hand and the poker in the other. He had just thrust the poker into a heap of black coals, and was scattering them to make a blaze, when his wife appeared upon the threshold of the room.

He snatched the poker from between the bars, and made a half drunken, half threatening motion with it as he saw her.



"So you've condescended to come home at last, ma'am," he said; "I thought you was never coming no more."

He spoke in a thick and drunken voice, and was by no means too intelligible. He was steeped to the very lips in alcohol. His eyes were dim and watery; his hands were unsteady; his voice was choked and muffled with drink. A brute, even when most sober; a brute, even on his best behavior, he was ten times more brutal in his drunkenness, when the few restraints which held his ignorant, every day brutality in check were flung aside in the indolent recklessness of intoxication.

"I—I've been longer than I intended to be, Luke," Phoebe answered, in her most conciliatory manner; "but I've seen my lady, and she's been very kind, and—and she'll settle this business for us."

"She's been very kind, has she?" muttered Mr. Marks, with a drunken laugh; "thank her for nothing. I know the vally of her kindness. She'd be oncommon kind, I dessay, if she warn't obligated to be it."

The man in possession, who had fallen into a maudlin and semi-unconscious state of intoxication upon about a third of the liquor that Mr. Marks had consumed, only stared in feeble wonderment at his host and hostess. He sat near the table. Indeed, he had hooked himself on to it with his elbows, as a safeguard against sliding under it, and he was making imbecile attempts to light his pipe at the flame of a guttering tallow candle near him.

"My lady has promised to settle the business for us, Luke," Phoebe repeated, without noticing Luke's remarks. She knew her husband's dogged nature well enough by this time to know that it was worse than useless to try to stop him from doing or saying anything which his own stubborn will led him to do or say. "My lady will settle it," she said, "and she's come down here to see about it to-night," she added.

The poker dropped from the landlord's hand, and fell clattering among the cinders on the hearth.

"My Lady Audley come here to-night!" he said.

"Yes, Luke."

My lady appeared upon the threshold of the door as Phoebe spoke.

"Yes, Luke Marks," she said, "I have come to pay this man, and to send him about his business."

Lady Audley said these words in a strange, semi-mechanical manner; very much as if she had learned the sentence by rote, and were repeating it without knowing what she said.

Mr. Marks gave a discontented growl, and set his empty glass down upon the table with an impatient gesture.

"You might have given the money to Phoebe," he said, "as well as have brought it yourself. We don't want no fine ladies up here, pryin' and pokin' their precious noses into everythink."

"Luke, Luke!" remonstrated Phoebe, "when my lady has been so kind!"

"Oh, damn her kindness!" cried Mr. Marks; "it ain't her kindness as we want, gal, it's her money. She won't get no snivelin' gratitood from me. Whatever she does for us she does because she is obliged; and if she wasn't obliged she wouldn't do it—"

Heaven knows how much more Luke Marks might have said, had not my lady turned upon him suddenly and awed him into silence by the unearthly glitter of her beauty. Her hair had been blown away from her face, and being of a light, feathery quality, had spread itself into a tangled mass that surrounded her forehead like a yellow flame. There was another flame in her eyes—a greenish light, such as might flash from the changing-hued orbs of an angry mermaid.

"Stop," she cried. "I didn't come up here in the dead of night to listen to your insolence. How much is this debt?"

"Nine pound."

Lady Audley produced her purse—a toy of ivory, silver, and turquoise—she took from it a note and four sovereigns. She laid these upon the table.

"Let that man give me a receipt for the money," she said, "before I go."

It was some time before the man could be roused into sufficient consciousness for the performance of this simple duty, and it was only by dipping a pen into the ink and pushing it between his clumsy fingers, that he was at last made to comprehend that his autograph was wanted at the bottom of the receipt which had been made out by Phoebe Marks. Lady Audley took the document as soon as the ink was dry, and turned to leave the parlor. Phoebe followed her.

"You mustn't go home alone, my lady," she said. "You'll let me go with you?"

"Yes, yes; you shall go home with me."

The two women were standing near the door of the inn as my lady said this. Phoebe stared wonderingly at her patroness. She had expected that Lady Audley would be in a hurry to return home after settling this business which she had capriciously taken upon herself; but it was not so; my lady stood leaning against the inn door and staring into vacancy, and again Mrs. Marks began to fear that trouble had driven her late mistress mad.

A little Dutch clock in the bar struck two while Lady Audley lingered in this irresolute, absent manner. She started at the sound and began to tremble violently.

"I think I am going to faint, Phoebe," she said; "where can I get some cold water?"

"The pump is in the wash-house, my lady; I'll run and get you a glass of cold water."

"No, no, no," cried my lady, clutching Phoebe's arm as she was about to run away upon this errand; "I'll get it myself. I must dip my head in a basin of water if I want to save myself from fainting. In which room does Mr. Audley sleep?"

There was something so irrelevant in this question that Phoebe Marks stared aghast at her mistress before she answered it.

"It was number three that I got ready, my lady—the front room—the room next to ours," she replied, after that pause of astonishment.

"Give me a candle," said my lady. "I'll go into your room, and get some water for my head; stay where you are, and see that that brute of a husband of yours does not follow me!"

She snatched the candle which Phoebe had lighted from the girl's hand and ran up the rickety, winding staircase which led to the narrow corridor upon the upper floor. Five bed-rooms opened out of this low-ceilinged, close-smelling corridor; the numbers of these rooms were indicated by squat black figures painted upon the panels of the doors. Lady Audley had driven up to Mount Stanning to inspect the house when she bought the business for her servant's bridegroom, and she knew her way about the dilapidated old place; she knew where to find Phoebe's bedroom, but she stopped before the door of that other chamber which had been prepared for Mr. Robert Audley.

She stopped and looked at the number on the door. The key was in the lock, and her hand dropped upon it as if unconsciously. But presently she suddenly began to tremble again, as she had trembled a few minutes before at the striking of the clock. She stood for a few moments trembling thus, with her hand still upon the key; then a horrible expression came over her face, and she turned the key in the lock. She turned it twice, double locking the door.

There was no sound from within; the occupant of the chamber made no sign of having heard that ominous creaking of the rusty key in the rusty lock.

Lady Audley hurried into the next room. She set the candle on the dressing-table, flung off her bonnet and slung it loosely across her arm; then she went to the wash-stand and filled the basin with water. She plunged her golden hair into this water, and then stood for a few moments in the center of the room looking about her, with a white, earnest face, and an eager gaze that seemed to take in every object in the poorly furnished chamber. Phoebe's bedroom was certainly very shabbily furnished; she had been compelled to select all the most decent things for those best bedrooms which were set apart for any chance traveler who might stop for a night's lodging at the Castle Inn; but Phoebe Marks had done her best to atone for the lack of substantial furniture in her apartment by a superabundance of drapery. Crisp curtains of cheap chintz hung from the tent-bedstead; festooned drapery of the same material shrouded the narrow window shutting out the light of day, and affording a pleasant harbor for tribes of flies and predatory bands of spiders. Even the looking-glass, a miserably cheap construction which distorted every face whose owner had the hardihood to look into it, stood upon a draped altar of starched muslin and pink glazed calico, and was adorned with frills of lace and knitted work.

My lady smiled as she looked at the festoons and furbelows which met her eyes upon every side. She had reason, perhaps, to smile, remembering the costly elegance of her own apartments; but there was something in that sardonic smile that seemed to have a deeper meaning than any natural contempt for Phoebe's attempts at decoration. She went to the dressing-table and, smoothed her wet hair before the looking-glass, and then put on her bonnet. She was obliged to place the flaming tallow candle very close to the

lace furbelows about the glass; so close that the starched muslin seemed to draw the flame toward it by some power of attraction in its fragile tissue.

Phoebe waited anxiously by the inn door for my lady's coming. She watched the minute hand of the little Dutch clock, wondering at the slowness of its progress. It was only ten minutes past two when Lady Audley came down-stairs, with her bonnet on and her hair still wet, but without the candle.

Phoebe was immediately anxious about this missing candle.

"The light, my lady," she said, "you have left it up-stairs!"

"The wind blew it out as I was leaving your room," Lady Audley answered, quietly. "I left it there."

"In my room, my lady?"

"Yes."

"And it was quite out?"

"Yes, I tell you; why do you worry me about your candle? It is past two o'clock. Come."

She took the girl's arm, and half led, half dragged her from the house. The convulsive pressure of her slight hand held her firmly as an iron vise could have held her. The fierce March wind banged to the door of the house, and left the two women standing outside it. The long, black road lay bleak and desolate before them, dimly visible between straight lines of leafless hedges.

A walk of three miles' length upon a lonely country road, between the hours of two and four on a cold winter's morning, is scarcely a pleasant task for a delicate woman—a woman whose inclinations lean toward ease and luxury. But my lady hurried along the hard, dry highway, dragging her companion with her as if she had been impelled by some horrible demoniac force which knew no abatement. With the black night above them—with the fierce wind howling around them, sweeping across a broad expanse of hidden country, blowing as if it had arisen simultaneously from every point of the compass, and making those wanderers the focus of its ferocity—the two women walked through the darkness down the hill upon which Mount Stanning stood, along a mile and a half of flat road, and then up another hill, on the western side of which Audley Court lay in that sheltered valley,

which seemed to shut in the old house from all the clamor and hubbub of the everyday world.

My lady stopped upon the summit of this hill to draw breath and to clasp her hands upon her heart, in the vain hope that she might still its cruel beating. They were now within three-quarters of a mile of the Court, and they had been walking for nearly an hour since they had left the Castle Inn.

Lady Audley stopped to rest, with her face still turned toward the place of her destination. Phoebe Marks, stopping also, and very glad of a moment's pause in that hurried journey, looked back into the far darkness beneath which lay that dreary shelter that had given her so much uneasiness. And she did so, she uttered a shrill cry of horror, and clutched wildly at her companion's cloak.

The night sky was no longer all dark. The thick blackness was broken by one patch of lurid light.

"My lady, my lady!" cried Phoebe, pointing to this lurid patch; "do you see?"

"Yes, child, I see," answered Lady Audley, trying to shake the clinging hands from her garments. "What's the matter?"

"It's a fire—a fire, my lady!"

"Yes, I am afraid it is a fire. At Brentwood, most likely. Let me go, Phoebe; it's nothing to us."

"Yes, yes, my lady; it's nearer than Brentwood—much nearer; it's at Mount Stanning."

Lady Audley did not answer. She was trembling again, with the cold perhaps, for the wind had torn her heavy cloak from her shoulders, and had left her slender figure exposed to the blast.

"It's at Mount Stanning, my lady!" cried Phoebe Marks. "It's the Castle that's on fire—I know it is, I know it is! I thought of fire to-night, and I was fidgety and uneasy, for I knew this would happen some day. I wouldn't mind if it was only the wretched place, but there'll be life lost, there'll be life lost!" sobbed the girl, distractedly. "There's Luke, too tipsy to help himself, unless others help him; there's Mr. Audley asleep—"

Phoebe Marks stopped suddenly at the mention of Robert's name, and fell upon her knees, clasping her uplifted hands, and appealing wildly to Lady Audley.

"Oh, my God!" she cried. "Say it's not true, my lady, say it's not true! It's too horrible, it's too horrible, it's too horrible!"

"What's too horrible?"

"The thought that's in my mind; the terrible thought that's in my mind."

"What do you mean, girl?" cried my lady, fiercely.

"Oh, God forgive me if I'm wrong!" the kneeling woman gasped in detached sentences, "and God grant I may be. Why did you go up to the Castle, my lady? Why were you so set on going against all I could say—you who are so bitter against Mr. Audley and against Luke, and who knew they were both under that roof? Oh, tell me that I do you a cruel wrong, my lady; tell me so—tell me! for as there is a Heaven above me I think that you went to that place to-night on purpose to set fire to it. Tell me that I'm wrong, my lady; tell me that I'm doing you a wicked wrong."

"I will tell you nothing, except that you are a mad woman," answered Lady Audley; in a cold, hard voice. "Get up; fool, idiot, coward! Is your husband such a precious bargain that you should be groveling there, lamenting and groaning for him? What is Robert Audley to you, that you behave like a maniac, because you think he is in danger? How do you know the fire is at Mount Stanning? You see a red patch in the sky, and you cry out directly that your own paltry hovel is in flames, as if there were no place in the world that could burn except that. The fire may be at Brentwood, or further away—at Romford, or still further away, on the eastern side of London, perhaps. Get up, mad woman, and go back and look after your goods and chattels, and your husband and your lodger. Get up and go: I don't want you."

"Oh! my lady, my lady, forgive me," sobbed Phoebe; "there's nothing you can say to me that's hard enough for having done you such a wrong, even in my thoughts. I don't mind your cruel words—I don't mind anything if I'm wrong."

"Go back and see for yourself," answered Lady Audley, sternly. "I tell you again, I don't want you."

She walked away in the darkness, leaving Phoebe Marks still kneeling upon the hard road, where she had cast herself in that agony of supplication. Sir Michael's wife walked toward the house in which her husband slept with

the red blaze lighting up the skies behind her, and with nothing but the blackness of the night before.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE BEARER OF THE TIDINGS.

It was very late the next morning when Lady Audley emerged from her dressing-room, exquisitely dressed in a morning costume of delicate muslin, delicate laces, and embroideries; but with a very pale face, and with half-circles of purple shadow under her eyes. She accounted for this pale face and these hollow eyes by declaring that she had sat up reading until a very late hour on the previous night.

Sir Michael and his young wife breakfasted in the library at a comfortable round table, wheeled close to the blazing fire; and Alicia was compelled to share this meal with her step-mother, however she might avoid that lady in the long interval between breakfast and dinner.

The March morning was bleak and dull, and a drizzling rain fell incessantly, obscuring the landscape and blotting out the distance. There were very few letters by the morning post; the daily newspapers did not arrive until noon; and such aids to conversation being missing, there was very little talk at the breakfast table.

Alicia looked out at the drizzling rain drifting against the broad window-panes.

"No riding to-day," she said; "and no chance of any callers to enliven us, unless that ridiculous Bob comes crawling through the wet from Mount Stanning."

Have you ever heard anybody, whom you knew to be dead, alluded to in a light, easy going manner by another person who did not know of his death—alluded to as doing that or this, as performing some trivial everyday operation—when *you* know that he has vanished away from the face of this earth, and separated himself forever from all living creatures and their commonplace pursuits in the awful solemnity of death? Such a chance allusion, insignificant though it may be, is apt to send a strange thrill of pain through the mind. The ignorant remark jars discordantly upon the hyper-sensitive brain; the King of Terrors is desecrated by that unwitting

disrespect. Heaven knows what hidden reason my lady may have had for experiencing some such revulsion of feeling on the sudden mention of Mr. Audley's name, but her pale face blanched to a sickly white as Alicia Audley spoke of her cousin.

"Yes, he will come down here in the wet, perhaps," the young lady continued, "with his hat sleek and shining as if it had been brushed with a pat of fresh butter, and with white vapors steaming out of his clothes, and making him look like an awkward genie just let out of his bottle. He will come down here and print impressions of his muddy boots all over the carpet, and he'll sit on your Gobelin tapestry, my lady, in his wet overcoat; and he'll abuse you if you remonstrate, and will ask why people have chairs that are not to be sat upon, and why you don't live in Figtree Court, and—"

Sir Michael Audley watched his daughter with a thoughtful countenance as she talked of her cousin. She very often talked of him, ridiculing him and inveighing against him in no very measured terms. But perhaps the baronet thought of a certain Signora Beatrice who very cruelly entreated a gentleman called Benedick, but who was, it may be, heartily in love with him at the same time.

"What do you think Major Melville told me when he called here yesterday, Alicia?" Sir Michael asked, presently.

"I haven't the remotest idea," replied Alicia, rather disdainfully. "Perhaps he told you that we should have another war before long, by Ged, sir; or perhaps he told you that we should have a new ministry, by Ged, sir, for that those fellows are getting themselves into a mess, sir; or that those other fellows were reforming this, and cutting down that, and altering the other in the army, until, by Ged, sir, we shall have no army at all, by-and-by—nothing but a pack of boys, sir, crammed up to the eyes with a lot of senseless schoolmasters' rubbish, and dressed in shell-jackets and calico helmets. Yes, sir, they're fighting in Oudh in calico helmets at this very day, sir."

"You're an impertinent minx, miss," answered the baronet. "Major Melville told me nothing of the kind; but he told me that a very devoted admirer of you, a certain Sir Harry Towers, has forsaken his place in Hertfordshire, and his hunting stable, and has gone on the continent for a twelvemonths' tour."

Miss Audley flushed up suddenly at the mention of her old adorer, but recovered herself very quickly.

"He has gone on the continent, has he?" she said indifferently. "He told me that he meant to do so—if—if he didn't have everything his own way. Poor fellow! he's a dear, good-hearted, stupid creature, and twenty times better than that peripatetic, patent refrigerator, Mr. Robert Audley."

"I wish, Alicia, you were not so fond of ridiculing Bob," Sir Michael said, gravely. "Bob is a good fellow, and I'm as fond of him as if he'd been my own son; and—and—I've been very uncomfortable about him lately. He has changed very much within the last few days, and he has taken all sorts of absurd ideas into his head, and my lady has alarmed me about him. She thinks—"

Lady Audley interrupted her husband with a grave shake of her head.

"It is better not to say too much about it as yet awhile," she said; "Alicia knows what I think."

"Yes," replied Miss Audley, "my lady thinks that Bob is going mad, but I know better than that. He's not at all the sort of person to go mad. How should such a sluggish ditch-pond of an intellect as his ever work itself into a tempest? He may move about for the rest of his life, perhaps, in a tranquil state of semi-idiotcy, imperfectly comprehending who he is, and where he's going, and what he's doing—but he'll never go mad."

Sir Michael did not reply to this. He had been very much disturbed by his conversation with my lady on the previous evening, and had silently debated the painful question, in his mind ever since.

His wife—the woman he best loved and most believed in—had told him, with all appearance of regret and agitation, her conviction of his nephew's insanity. He tried in vain to arrive at the conclusion he wished most ardently to attain; he tried in vain to think that my lady was misled by her own fancies, and had no foundation for what she said. But then, again, it suddenly flashed upon him, that to think this was to arrive at a worse conclusion; it was to transfer the horrible suspicion from his nephew to his wife. She appeared to be possessed with an actual conviction of Robert's insanity. To imagine her wrong was to imagine some weakness in her own mind. The longer he thought of the subject the more it harassed and perplexed him. It was most certain that the young man had always been eccentric. He was sensible, he was tolerably clever, he was honorable and

gentlemanlike in feeling, though perhaps a little careless in the performance of certain minor social duties; but there were some slight differences, not easily to be defined, that separated him from other men of his age and position. Then, again, it was equally true that he had very much changed within the period that had succeeded the disappearance of George Talboys. He had grown moody and thoughtful, melancholy and absent-minded. He had held himself aloof from society, had sat for hours without speaking; had talked at other points by fits and starts; and had excited himself unusually in the discussion of subjects which apparently lay far out of the region of his own life and interests. Then there was even another region which seemed to strengthen my lady's case against this unhappy young man. He had been brought up in the frequent society of his cousin, Alicia—his pretty, genial cousin—to whom interest, and one would have thought affection, naturally pointed as his most fitting bride. More than this, the girl had shown him, in the innocent guilelessness of a transparent nature, that on her side at least, affection was not wanting; and yet, in spite of all this, he had held himself aloof, and had allowed others to propose for her hand, and to be rejected by her, and had still made no sign.

Now love is so very subtle an essence, such an undefinable metaphysical marvel, that its due force, though very cruelly felt by the sufferer himself, is never clearly understood by those who look on at its torments and wonder why he takes the common fever so badly. Sir Michael argued that because Alicia was a pretty girl and an amiable girl it was therefore extraordinary and unnatural in Robert Audley not to have duly fallen in love with her. This baronet, who close upon his sixtieth birthday, had for the first time encountered that one woman who out of all the women in the world had power to quicken the pulses of his heart, wondered why Robert failed to take the fever from the first breath of contagion that blew toward him. He forgot that there are men who go their ways unscathed amidst legions of lovely and generous women, to succumb at last before some harsh-featured virago, who knows the secret of that only philter which can intoxicate and bewitch him. He had forgot that there are certain Jacks who go through life without meeting the Jill appointed for them by Nemesis, and die old bachelors, perhaps, with poor Jill pining an old maid upon the other side of the party-wall. He forgot that love, which is a madness, and a scourge, and a fever, and a delusion, and a snare, is also a mystery, and very imperfectly understood by everyone except the individual sufferer who writhes under its

tortures. Jones, who is wildly enamored of Miss Brown, and who lies awake at night until he loathes his comfortable pillow and tumbles his sheets into two twisted rags of linen in his agonies, as if he were a prisoner and wanted to wind them into impromptu ropes; this same Jones who thinks Russell Square a magic place because his divinity inhabits it, who thinks the trees in that inclosure and the sky above it greener and bluer than other trees or sky, and who feels a pang, yes, an actual pang, of mingled hope, and joy, and expectation, and terror, when he emerges from Guilford street, descending from the heights of Islington, into those sacred precincts; this very Jones is hard and callous toward the torments of Smith, who adores Miss Robinson, and cannot imagine what the infatuated fellow can see in the girl. So it was with Sir Michael Audley. He looked at his nephew as a sample of a very large class of young men, and his daughter as a sample of an equally extensive class of feminine goods, and could not see why the two samples should not make a very respectable match. He ignored all those infinitesimal differences in nature which make the wholesome food of one man the deadly poison of another. How difficult it is to believe sometimes that a man doesn't like such and such a favorite dish. If at a dinner-party, a meek looking guest refuses early salmon and cucumbers, or green peas in February, we set him down as a poor relation whose instincts warn him off those expensive plates. If an alderman were to declare that he didn't like green fat, he would be looked upon as a social martyr, a Marcus Curtius of the dinner-table, who immolated himself for the benefit of his kind. His fellow-aldermen would believe in anything rather than an heretical distaste for the city ambrosia of the soup tureen. But there are people who dislike salmon, and white-bait, and spring ducklings, and all manner of old-established delicacies, and there are other people who affect eccentric and despicable dishes, generally stigmatized as nasty.

Alas, my pretty Alicia, your cousin did not love you! He admired your rosy English face, and had a tender affection for you which might perhaps have expanded by-and-by into something warm enough for matrimony, that every-day jog-trot species of union which demands no very passionate devotion, but for a sudden check which it had received in Dorsetshire. Yes, Robert Audley's growing affection for his cousin, a plant of very slow growth, I am fain to confess, had been suddenly dwarfed and stunted upon that bitter February day on which he had stood beneath the pine-trees talking to Clara Talboys. Since that day the young man had experienced an

unpleasant sensation in thinking of poor Alicia. He looked at her as being in some vague manner an incumbrance upon the freedom of his thoughts; he had a haunting fear that he was in some tacit way pledged to her; that she had a species of claim upon him, which forbade to him the right of thinking of another woman. I believe it was the image of Miss Audley presented to him in this light that goaded the young barrister into those outbursts of splenetic rage against the female sex which he was liable to at certain times. He was strictly honorable, so honorable that he would rather have immolated himself upon the altar of truth and Alicia than have done her the remotest wrong, though by so doing he might have secured his own comfort and happiness.

"If the poor little girl loves me," he thought, "and if she thinks that I love her, and has been led to think so by any word or act of mine, I'm in duty bound to let her think so to the end of time, and to fulfill any tacit promise which I may have unconsciously made. I thought once—I meant once to—to make her an offer by-and-by when this horrible mystery about George Talboys should have been cleared up and everything peacefully settled—but now—"

His thoughts would ordinarily wander away at this point of his reflections, carrying him where he never had intended to go; carrying him back under the pine-trees in Dorsetshire, and setting him once more face to face with the sister of his missing friend, and it was generally a very laborious journey by which he traveled back to the point from which he strayed. It was so difficult for him to tear himself away from the stunted turf and the pine-trees.

"Poor little girl!" he would think on coming back to Alicia. "How good it is of her to love me, and how grateful ought I to be for her tenderness. How many fellows would think such a generous, loving heart the highest boon that earth could give them. There's Sir Harry Towers stricken with despair at his rejection. He would give me half his estate, all his estate, twice his estate, if he had it, to be in the shoes which I am anxious to shake off my ungrateful feet. Why don't I love her? Why is it that although I know her to be pretty, and pure, and good, and truthful, I don't love her? Her image never haunts me, except reproachfully. I never see her in my dreams. I never wake up suddenly in the dead of the night with her eyes shining upon

me and her warm breath upon my cheek, or with the fingers of her soft hand clinging to mine. No, I'm not in love with her, I can't fall in love with her."

He raged and rebelled against his ingratitude. He tried to argue himself into a passionate attachment for his cousin, but he failed ignominiously, and the more he tried to think of Alicia the more he thought of Clara Talboys. I am speaking now of his feelings in the period that elapsed between his return from Dorsetshire and his visit to Grange Heath.

Sir Michael sat by the library fire after breakfast upon this wretched rainy morning, writing letters and reading the newspapers. Alicia shut herself in her own apartment to read the third volume of a novel. Lady Audley locked the door of the octagon ante-chamber, and roamed up and down the suite of rooms from the bedroom to the boudoir all through that weary morning.

She had locked the door to guard against the chance of any one coming in suddenly and observing her before she was aware—before she had had sufficient warning to enable her to face their scrutiny. Her pale face seemed to grow paler as the morning advanced. A tiny medicine-chest was open upon the dressing-table, and little stoppered bottles of red lavender, sal-volatile, chloroform, chlorodyne, and ether were scattered about. Once my lady paused before this medicine-chest, and took out the remaining bottles, half-absently, perhaps, until she came to one which was filled with a thick, dark liquid, and labeled "opium—poison."

She trifled a long time with this last bottle; holding it up to the light, and even removing the stopper and smelling the sickly liquid. But she put it from her suddenly with a shudder. "If I could!" she muttered, "if I could only do it! And yet why should I *now*?"

She clinched her small hands as she uttered the last words, and walked to the window of the dressing-room, which looked straight toward that ivied archway under which any one must come who came from Mount Stanning to the Court.

There were smaller gates in the gardens which led into the meadows behind the Court, but there was no other way of coming from Mount Stanning or Brentwood than by the principal entrance.

The solitary hand of the clock over the archway was midway between one and two when my lady looked at it.

"How slow the time is," she said, wearily; "how slow, how slow! Shall I grow old like this, I wonder, with every minute of my life seeming like an hour?"

She stood for a few minutes watching the archway, but no one passed under it while she looked, and she turned impatiently away from the window to resume her weary wandering about the rooms.

Whatever fire that had been which had reflected itself vividly in the black sky, no tidings of it had as yet come to Audley Court. The day was miserably wet and windy, altogether the very last day upon which even the most confirmed idler and gossip would care to venture out. It was not a market-day, and there were therefore very few passengers upon the road between Brentwood and Chelmsford, so that as yet no news of the fire, which had occurred in the dead of the wintry night, had reached the village of Audley, or traveled from the village to the Court.

The girl with the rose-colored ribbons came to the door of the anteroom to summon her mistress to luncheon, but Lady Audley only opened the door a little way, and intimated her intention of taking no luncheon.

"My head aches terribly, Martin," she said; "I shall go and lie down till dinner-time. You may come at five to dress me."

Lady Audley said this with the predetermination of dressing at four, and thus dispensing with the services of her attendant. Among all privileged spies, a lady's-maid has the highest privileges; it is she who bathes Lady Theresa's eyes with eau-de-cologne after her ladyship's quarrel with the colonel; it is she who administers sal-volatile to Miss Fanny when Count Beaudesert, of the Blues, has jilted her. She has a hundred methods for the finding out of her mistress' secrets. She knows by the manner in which her victim jerks her head from under the hair-brush, or chafes at the gentlest administration of the comb, what hidden tortures are racking her breast—what secret perplexities are bewildering her brain. That well-bred attendant knows how to interpret the most obscure diagnosis of all mental diseases that can afflict her mistress; she knows when the ivory complexion is bought and paid for—when the pearly teeth are foreign substances fashioned by the dentist—when the glossy plaits are the relics of the dead, rather than the property of the living; and she knows other and more sacred secrets than these; she knows when the sweet smile is more false than Madame Levison's enamel, and far less enduring—when the words that



issue from between gates of borrowed pearl are more disguised and painted than the lips which help to shape them—when the lovely fairy of the ball-room re-enters the dressing-room after the night's long revelry, and throws aside her voluminous burnous and her faded bouquet, and drops her mask, and like another Cinderella loses the glass-slipper, by whose glitter she has been distinguished, and falls back into her rags and dirt, the lady's maid is by to see the transformation. The valet who took wages from the prophet of Korazin must have seen his master sometimes unveiled, and must have laughed in his sleeve at the folly of the monster's worshipers.

Lady Audley had made no *confidante* of her new maid, and on this day of all others she wished to be alone.

She did lie down; she cast herself wearily upon the luxurious sofa in the dressing-room, and buried her face in the down pillows and tried to sleep. Sleep!—she had almost forgotten what it was, that tender restorer of tired nature, it seemed so long now since she had slept. It was only about eight-and-forty hours perhaps, but it appeared an intolerable time. Her fatigue of the night before, and her unnatural excitement, had worn her out at last. She did fall asleep; she fell into a heavy slumber that was almost like stupor. She had taken a few drops out of the opium bottle in a glass of water before lying down.

The clock over the mantelpiece chimed the quarter before four as she woke suddenly and started up, with the cold perspiration breaking out in icy drops upon her forehead. She had dreamt that every member of the household was clamoring at the door, eager to tell her of a dreadful fire that had happened in the night.

There was no sound but the flapping of the ivy-leaves against the glass, the occasional falling of a cinder, and the steady ticking of the clock.

"Perhaps I shall be always dreaming these sort of dreams," my lady thought, "until the terror of them kills me!"

The rain had ceased, and the cold spring sunshine was glittering upon the windows. Lady Audley dressed herself rapidly but carefully. I do not say that even in her supremest hour of misery she still retained her pride in her beauty. It was not so; she looked upon that beauty as a weapon, and she felt that she had now double need to be well armed. She dressed herself in her most gorgeous silk, a voluminous robe of silvery, shimmering blue, that made her look as if she had been arrayed in moonbeams. She shook out her

hair into feathery showers of glittering gold, and, with a cloak of white cashmere about her shoulders, went down-stairs into the vestibule.

She opened the door of the library and looked in. Sir Michael Audley was asleep in his easy-chair. As my lady softly closed this door Alicia descended the stairs from her own room. The turret door was open, and the sun was shining upon the wet grass-plot in the quadrangle. The firm gravel-walks were already very nearly dry, for the rain had ceased for upward of two hours.

"Will you take a walk with me in the quadrangle?" Lady Audley asked as her step-daughter approached. The armed neutrality between the two women admitted of any chance civility such as this.

"Yes, if you please, my lady," Alicia answered, rather listlessly. "I have been yawning over a stupid novel all the morning, and shall be very glad of a little fresh air."

Heaven help the novelist whose fiction Miss Audley had been perusing, if he had no better critics than that young lady. She had read page after page without knowing what she had been reading, and had flung aside the volume half a dozen times to go to the window and watch for that visitor whom she had so confidently expected.

Lady Audley led the way through the low doorway and on to the smooth gravel drive, by which carriages approached the house. She was still very pale, but the brightness of her dress and of her feathery golden ringlets, distracted an observer's eyes from her pallid face. All mental distress is, with some show of reason, associated in our minds with loose, disordered garments and dishabilled hair, and an appearance in every way the reverse of my lady's. Why had she come out into the chill sunshine of that March afternoon to wander up and down that monotonous pathway with the step-daughter she hated? She came because she was under the dominion of a horrible restlessness, which, would not suffer her to remain within the house waiting for certain tidings which she knew must too surely come. At first she had wished to ward them off—at first she had wished that strange convulsions of nature might arise to hinder their coming—that abnormal winter lightnings might wither and destroy the messenger who carried them—that the ground might tremble and yawn beneath his hastening feet, and that impassable gulfs might separate the spot from which the tidings were to come and the place to which they were to be carried. She wished that the

earth might stand still, and the paralyzed elements cease from their natural functions, that the progress of time might stop, that the Day of Judgment might come, and that she might thus be brought before an unearthly tribunal, and so escape the intervening shame and misery of any earthly judgment. In the wild chaos of her brain, every one of these thoughts had held its place, and in her short slumber on the sofa in her dressing-room she had dreamed all these things and a hundred other things, all bearing upon the same subject. She had dreamed that a brook, a tiny streamlet when she first saw it, flowed across the road between Mount Stanning and Audley, and gradually swelled into a river, and from a river became an ocean, till the village on the hill receded far away out of sight and only a great waste of waters rolled where it once had been. She dreamt that she saw the messenger, now one person, now another, but never any probable person, hindered by a hundred hinderances, now startling and terrible, now ridiculous and trivial, but never either natural or probable; and going down into the quiet house with the memory of these dreams strong upon her, she had been bewildered by the stillness which had betokened that the tidings had not yet come.

And now her mind underwent a complete change. She no longer wished to delay the dreaded intelligence. She wished the agony, whatever it was to be, over and done with, the pain suffered, and the release attained. It seemed to her as if the intolerable day would never come to an end, as if her mad wishes had been granted, and the progress of time had actually stopped.

"What a long day it has been!" exclaimed Alicia, as if taking up the burden of my lady's thoughts; "nothing but drizzle and mist and wind! And now that it's too late for anybody to go out, it must needs be fine," the young lady added, with an evident sense of injury.

Lady Audley did not answer. She was looking at the stupid one-handed clock, and waiting for the news which must come sooner or later, which could not surely fail to come very speedily.

"They have been afraid to come and tell him," she thought; "they have been afraid to break the news to Sir Michael. Who will come to tell it, at last, I wonder? The rector of Mount Stanning, perhaps, or the doctor; some important person at least."

If she could have gone out into the leafless avenues, or onto the high road beyond them; if she could have gone so far as that hill upon which she had so lately parted with Phoebe, she would have gladly done so. She would rather have suffered anything than that slow suspense, that corroding anxiety, that metaphysical dryrot in which heart and mind seemed to decay under an insufferable torture. She tried to talk, and by a painful effort contrived now and then to utter some commonplace remark. Under any ordinary circumstances her companion would have noticed her embarrassment, but Miss Audley, happening to be very much absorbed by her own vexations, was quite as well inclined to be silent as my lady herself. The monotonous walk up and down the graveled pathway suited Alicia's humor. I think that she even took a malicious pleasure in the idea that she was very likely catching cold, and that her Cousin Robert was answerable for her danger. If she could have brought upon herself inflammation of the lungs, or ruptured blood-vessels, by that exposure to the chill March atmosphere, I think she would have felt a gloomy satisfaction in her sufferings.

"Perhaps Robert might care for me, if I had inflammation of the lungs," she thought. "He couldn't insult me by calling me a bouncer then. Bouncers don't have inflammation of the lungs."

I believe she drew a picture of herself in the last stage of consumption, propped up by pillows in a great easy-chair, looking out of a window in the afternoon sunshine, with medicine bottles, a bunch of grapes and a Bible upon a table by her side, and with Robert, all contrition and tenderness, summoned to receive her farewell blessing. She preached a whole chapter to him in that parting benediction, talking a great deal longer than was in keeping with her prostrate state, and very much enjoying her dismal castle in the air. Employed in this sentimental manner, Miss Audley took very little notice of her step-mother, and the one hand of the blundering clock had slipped to six by the time Robert had been blessed and dismissed.

"Good gracious me!" she cried, suddenly—"six o'clock, and I'm not dressed."

The half-hour bell rung in a cupola upon the roof while Alicia was speaking.

"I must go in, my lady," she said. "Won't you come?"

"Presently," answered Lady Audley. "I'm dressed, you see."

Alicia ran off, but Sir Michael's wife still lingered in the quadrangle, still waited for those tidings which were so long coming.

It was nearly dark. The blue mists of evening had slowly risen from the ground. The flat meadows were filled with a gray vapor, and a stranger might have fancied Audley Court a castle on the margin of a sea. Under the archway the shadows of fastcoming night lurked darkly, like traitors waiting for an opportunity to glide stealthily into the quadrangle. Through the archway a patch of cold blue sky glimmered faintly, streaked by one line of lurid crimson, and lighted by the dim glitter of one wintry-looking star. Not a creature was stirring in the quadrangle but the restless woman who paced up and down the straight pathways, listening for a footstep whose coming was to strike terror to her soul. She heard it at last!—a footstep in the avenue upon the other side of the archway. But was it the footstep? Her sense of hearing, made unnaturally acute by excitement, told her that it was a man's footstep—told even more, that it was the tread of a gentleman, no slouching, lumbering pedestrian in hobnailed boots, but a gentleman who walked firmly and well.

Every sound fell like a lump of ice upon my lady's heart. She could not wait, she could not contain herself, she lost all self-control, all power of endurance, all capability of self-restraint, and she rushed toward the archway.

She paused beneath its shadow, for the stranger was close upon her. She saw him, oh, God! she saw him in that dim evening light. Her brain reeled, her heart stopped beating. She uttered no cry of surprise, no exclamation of terror, but staggered backward and clung for support to the ivied buttress of the archway. With her slender figure crouched into the angle formed by the buttress and the wall which it supported, she stood staring at the newcomer.

As he approached her more closely her knees sunk under her, and she dropped to the ground, not fainting, or in any manner unconscious, but sinking into a crouching attitude, and still crushed into the angle of the wall, as if she would have made a tomb for herself in the shadow of that sheltering brickwork.

"My lady!"

The speaker was Robert Audley. He whose bedroom door she had double-locked seventeen hours before at the Castle Inn.

"What is the matter with you?" he said, in a strange, constrained manner. "Get up, and let me take you indoors."

He assisted her to rise, and she obeyed him very submissively. He took her arm in his strong hand and led her across the quadrangle and into the lamp-lit hall. She shivered more violently than he had ever seen any woman shiver before, but she made no attempt at resistance to his will.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### MY LADY TELLS THE TRUTH.

"Is there any room in which I can talk to you alone?" Robert Audley asked, as he looked dubiously round the hall.

My lady only bowed her head in answer. She pushed open the door of the library, which had been left ajar. Sir Michael had gone to his dressing-room to prepare for dinner after a day of lazy enjoyment, perfectly legitimate for an invalid. The apartment was quite empty, only lighted by the blaze of the fire, as it had been upon the previous evening.

Lady Audley entered the room, followed by Robert, who closed the door behind him. The wretched, shivering woman went to the fireplace and knelt down before the blaze, as if any natural warmth, could have power to check that unnatural chill. The young man followed her, and stood beside her upon the hearth, with his arm resting upon the chimney-piece.

"Lady Audley," he said, in a voice whose icy sternness held out no hope of any tenderness or compassion, "I spoke to you last-night very plainly, but you refused to listen to me. To-night I must speak to you still more plainly, and you must no longer refuse to listen to me."

My lady, crouching before the fire with her face hidden in her hands, uttered a low, sobbing sound which was almost a moan, but made no other answer.

"There was a fire last night at Mount Stanning, Lady Audley," the pitiless voice proceeded; "the Castle Inn, the house in which I slept, was burned to the ground. Do you know how I escaped perishing in that destruction?"

"No."

"I escaped by a most providential circumstance which seems a very simple one. I did not sleep in the room which had been prepared for me. The place seemed wretchedly damp and chilly, the chimney smoked abominably when an attempt was made at lighting a fire, and I persuaded the servant to make me up a bed on the sofa in the small ground-floor sitting-room which I had occupied during the evening."

He paused for a moment, watching the crouching figure. The only change in my lady's attitude was that her head had fallen a little lower.

"Shall I tell you by whose agency the destruction of the Castle Inn was brought about, my lady?"

There was no answer.

"Shall I tell you?"

Still the same obstinate silence.

"My Lady Audley," cried Robert, suddenly, "*you* are the incendiary. It was you whose murderous hand kindled those flames. It was you who thought by that thrice-horrible deed to rid yourself of me, your enemy and denouncer. What was it to you that other lives might be sacrificed? If by a second massacre of Saint Bartholomew you could have ridded yourself of *me* you would have sacrificed an army of victims. The day is past for tenderness and mercy. For you I can no longer know pity or compunction. So far as by sparing your shame I can spare others who must suffer by your shame, I will be merciful, but no further. If there were any secret tribunal before which you might be made to answer for your crimes, I would have little scruple in being your accuser, but I would spare that generous and high-born gentleman upon whose noble name your infamy would be reflected."

His voice softened as he made this allusion, and for a moment he broke down, but he recovered himself by an effort and continued:

"No life was lost in the fire of last night. I slept lightly, my lady, for my mind was troubled, as it has been for a long time, by the misery which I knew was lowering upon this house. It was I who discovered the breaking out of the fire in time to give the alarm and to save the servant girl and the poor drunken wretch, who was very much burnt in spite of efforts, and who now lies in a precarious state at his mother's cottage. It was from him and from his wife that I learned who had visited the Castle Inn in the dead of the night. The woman was almost distracted when she saw me, and from her I discovered the particulars of last night. Heaven knows what other secrets of yours she may hold, my lady, or how easily they might be extorted from her if I wanted her aid, which I do not. My path lies very straight before me. I have sworn to bring the murderer of George Talboys to justice, and I will keep my oath. I say that it was by your agency my friend met with his death. If I have wondered sometimes, as it was only natural I should,



whether I was not the victim of some horrible hallucination, whether such an alternative was not more probable than that a young and lovely woman should be capable of so foul and treacherous a murder, all wonder is past. After last night's deed of horror, there is no crime you could commit, however vast and unnatural, which could make me wonder. Henceforth you must seem to me no longer a woman, a guilty woman with a heart which in its worst wickedness has yet some latent power to suffer and feel; I look upon you henceforth as the demoniac incarnation of some evil principle. But you shall no longer pollute this place by your presence. Unless you will confess what you are and who you are in the presence of the man you have deceived so long, and accept from him and from me such mercy as we may be inclined to extend to you, I will gather together the witnesses who shall swear to your identity, and at peril of any shame to myself and those I love, I will bring upon you the just and awful punishment of your crime."

The woman rose suddenly and stood before him erect and resolute, with her hair dashed away from her face and her eyes glittering.

"Bring Sir Michael!" she cried; "bring him here, and I will confess anything—everything. What do I care? God knows I have struggled hard enough against you, and fought the battle patiently enough; but you have conquered, Mr. Robert Audley. It is a great triumph, is it not—a wonderful victory? You have used your cool, calculating, frigid, luminous intellect to a noble purpose. You have conquered—a MAD WOMAN!"

"A mad woman!" cried Mr. Audley.

"Yes, a mad woman. When you say that I killed George Talboys, you say the truth. When you say that I murdered him treacherously and foully, you lie. I killed him because I AM MAD! because my intellect is a little way upon the wrong side of that narrow boundary-line between sanity and insanity; because, when George Talboys goaded me, as you have goaded me, and reproached me, and threatened me, my mind, never properly balanced, utterly lost its balance, and *I was mad!* Bring Sir Michael; and bring him quickly. If he is to be told one thing let him be told everything; let him hear the secret of my life!"

Robert Audley left the room to look for his uncle. He went in search of that honored kinsman with God knows how heavy a weight of anguish at his heart, for he knew he was about to shatter the day-dream of his uncle's life; and he knew that our dreams are none the less terrible to lose, because

they have never been the realities for which we have mistaken them. But even in the midst of his sorrow for Sir Michael, he could not help wondering at my lady's last words—"the secret of my life." He remembered those lines in the letter written by Helen Talboys upon the eve of her flight from Wildernsea, which had so puzzled him. He remembered those appealing sentences—"You should forgive me, for you know *why* I have been so. You know the *secret* of my life."

He met Sir Michael in the hall. He made no attempt to prepare the way for the terrible revelation which the baronet was to hear. He only drew him into the fire-lit library, and there for the first time addressed him quietly thus: "Lady Audley has a confession to make to you, sir—a confession which I know will be a most cruel surprise, a most bitter grief. But it is necessary for your present honor, and for your future peace, that you should hear it. She has deceived you, I regret to say, most basely; but it is only right that you should hear from her own lips any excuses which she may have to offer for her wickedness. May God soften this blow for you!" sobbed the young man, suddenly breaking down; "I cannot!"

Sir Michael lifted his hand as if he would command his nephew to be silent, but that imperious hand dropped feeble and impotent at his side. He stood in the center of the fire-lit room rigid and immovable.

"Lucy!" he cried, in a voice whose anguish struck like a blow upon the jarred nerves of those who heard it, as the cry of a wounded animal pains the listener—"Lucy, tell me that this man is a madman! tell me so, my love, or I shall kill him!"

There was a sudden fury in his voice as he turned upon Robert, as if he could indeed have felled his wife's accuser to the earth with the strength of his uplifted arm.

But my lady fell upon her knees at his feet, interposing herself between the baronet and his nephew, who stood leaning on the back of an easy-chair, with his face hidden by his hand.

"He has told you the truth," said my lady, "and he is not mad! I have sent him for you that I may confess everything to you. I should be sorry for you if I could, for you have been very, very good to me, much better to me than I ever deserved; but I can't, I can't—I can feel nothing but my own misery. I told you long ago that I was selfish; I am selfish still—more selfish than

ever in my misery. Happy, prosperous people may feel for others. I laugh at other people's sufferings; they seem so small compared to my own."

When first my lady had fallen on her knees, Sir Michael had attempted to raise her, and had remonstrated with her; but as she spoke he dropped into a chair close to the spot upon which she knelt, and with his hands clasped together, and with his head bent to catch every syllable of those horrible words, he listened as if his whole being had been resolved into that one sense of hearing.

"I must tell you the story of my life, in order to tell you why I have become the miserable wretch who has no better hope than to be allowed to run away and hide in some desolate corner of the earth. I must tell you the story of my life," repeated my lady, "but you need not fear that I shall dwell long upon it. It has not been so pleasant to me that I should wish to remember it. When I was a very little child I remember asking a question which it was natural enough that I should ask, God help me! I asked where my mother was. I had a faint remembrance of a face, like what my own is now, looking at me when I was very little better than a baby; but I had missed the face suddenly, and had never seen it since. They told me that mother was away. I was not happy, for the woman who had charge of me was a disagreeable woman and the place in which we lived was a lonely place, a village upon the Hampshire coast, about seven miles from Portsmouth. My father, who was in the navy, only came now and then to see me; and I was left almost entirely to the charge of this woman, who was irregularly paid, and who vented her rage upon me when my father was behindhand in remitting her money. So you see that at a very early age I found out what it was to be poor.

"Perhaps it was more from being discontented with my dreary life than from any wonderful impulse of affection, that I asked very often the same question about my mother. I always received the same answer—she was away. When I asked where, I was told that that was a secret. When I grew old enough to understand the meaning of the word death, I asked if my mother was dead, and I was told—'No, she was not dead; she was ill, and she was away.' I asked how long she had been ill, and I was told that she had been so some years, ever since I was a baby.

"At last the secret came out. I worried my foster-mother with the old question one day when the remittances had fallen very much in arrear, and

her temper had been unusually tried. She flew into a passion, and told me that my mother was a mad woman, and that she was in a madhouse forty miles away. She had scarcely said this when she repented, and told me that it was not the truth, and that I was not to believe it, or to say that she had told me such a thing. I discovered afterward that my father had made her promise most solemnly never to tell me the secret of my mother's fate.

"I brooded horribly upon the thought of my mother's madness. It haunted me by day and night. I was always picturing to myself this mad woman pacing up and down some prison cell, in a hideous garment that bound her tortured limbs. I had exaggerated ideas of the horror of her situation. I had no knowledge of the different degrees of madness, and the image that haunted me was that of a distraught and violent creature, who would fall upon me and kill me if I came within her reach. This idea grew upon me until I used to awake in the dead of night, screaming aloud in an agony of terror, from a dream in which I had felt my mother's icy grasp upon my throat, and heard her ravings in my ear.

"When I was ten years old my father came to pay up the arrears due to my protectress, and to take me to school. He had left me in Hampshire longer than he had intended, from his inability to pay this money; so there again I felt the bitterness of poverty, and ran the risk of growing up an ignorant creature among coarse rustic children, because my father was poor."

My lady paused for a moment, but only to take breath, for she had spoken rapidly, as if eager to tell this hated story, and to have done with it. She was still on her knees, but Sir Michael made no effort to raise her.

He sat silent and immovable. What was this story that he was listening to? Whose was it, and to what was it to lead? It could not be his wife's; he had heard her simple account of her youth, and had believed it as he had believed in the Gospel. She had told him a very brief story of an early orphanage, and a long, quiet, colorless youth spent in the conventional seclusion of an English boarding-school.

"My father came at last, and I told him what I had discovered. He was very much affected when I spoke of my mother. He was not what the world generally calls a good man, but I learned afterward that he had loved his wife very dearly, and that he would have willingly sacrificed his life to her, and constituted himself her guardian, had he not been compelled to earn the

daily bread of the mad woman and her child by the exercise of his profession. So here again I beheld what a bitter thing it is to be poor. My mother, who might have been tended by a devoted husband, was given over to the care of hired nurses.

"Before my father sent me to school at Torquay, he took me to see my mother. This visit served at least to dispel the idea which had so often terrified me. I saw no raving, straight-waist-coated maniac, guarded by zealous jailers, but a golden-haired, blue-eyed, girlish creature, who seemed as frivolous as a butterfly, and who skipped toward us with her yellow curls decorated with natural flowers, and saluted us with radiant smiles, and gay, ceaseless chatter.

"But she didn't know us. She would have spoken in the same manner to any stranger who had entered the gates of the garden about her prison-house. Her madness was an hereditary disease transmitted to her from her mother, who had died mad. She, my mother, had been, or had appeared sane up to the hour of my birth, but from that hour her intellect had decayed, and she had become what I saw her.

"I went away with the knowledge of this, and with the knowledge that the only inheritance I had to expect from my mother was—insanity!

"I went away with this knowledge in my mind, and with something more—a secret to keep. I was a child of ten years only, but I felt all the weight of that burden. I was to keep the secret of my mother's madness; for it was a secret that might affect me injuriously in after-life. I was to remember this.

"I did remember this; and it was, perhaps, this that made me selfish and heartless, for I suppose I am heartless. As I grew older I was told that I was pretty—beautiful—lovely—bewitching. I heard all these things at first indifferently, but by-and-by I listened to them greedily, and began to think that in spite of the secret of my life I might be more successful in the world's great lottery than my companions. I had learnt that which in some indefinite manner or other every school-girl learns sooner or later—I learned that my ultimate fate in life depended upon my marriage, and I concluded that if I was indeed prettier than my schoolfellows, I ought to marry better than any one of them.

"I left school before I was seventeen years of age, with this thought in my mind, and I went to live at the other extremity of England with my father,

who had retired upon his half-pay, and had established himself at Wildernsea, with the idea that the place was cheap and select.

"The place was indeed select. I had not been there a month before I discovered that even the prettiest girl might wait a long time for a rich husband. I wish to hurry over this part of my life. I dare say I was very despicable. You and your nephew, Sir Michael, have been rich all your lives, and can very well afford to despise me; but I knew how far poverty can affect a life, and I looked forward with a sickening dread to a life so affected. At last the rich suitor, the wandering prince came."

She paused for a moment, and shuddered convulsively. It was impossible to see any of the changes in her countenance, for her face was obstinately bent toward the floor. Throughout her long confession she never lifted it; throughout her long confession her voice was never broken by a tear. What she had to tell she told in a cold, hard tone, very much the tone in which some criminal, dogged and sullen to the last, might have confessed to a jail chaplain.

"The wandering prince came," she repeated; "he was called George Talboys."

For the first time since his wife's confession had begun, Sir Michael Audley started. He began to understand it all now. A crowd of unheeded words and forgotten circumstances that had seemed too insignificant for remark or recollection, flashed back upon him as vividly as if they had been the leading incidents of his past life.

"Mr. George Talboys was a cornet in a dragoon regiment. He was the only son of a rich country gentleman. He fell in love with me, and married me three months after my seventeenth birthday. I think I loved him as much as it was in my power to love anybody; not more than I have loved you, Sir Michael—not so much, for when you married me you elevated me to a position that he could never have given me."

The dream was broken. Sir Michael Audley remembered that summer's evening, nearly two years ago, when he had first declared his love for Mr. Dawson's governess; he remembered the sick, half-shuddering sensation of regret and disappointment that had come over him then, and he felt as if it had in some manner dimly foreshadowed the agony of to-night.

But I do not believe that even in his misery he felt that entire and unmitigated surprise, that utter revulsion of feeling that is felt when a good

woman wanders away from herself and becomes the lost creature whom her husband is bound in honor to abjure. I do not believe that Sir Michael Audley had ever *really* believed in his wife. He had loved her and admired her; he had been bewitched by her beauty and bewildered by her charms; but that sense of something wanting, that vague feeling of loss and disappointment which had come upon him on the summer's night of his betrothal had been with him more or less distinctly ever since. I cannot believe that an honest man, however pure and single may be his mind, however simply trustful his nature, is ever really deceived by falsehood. There is beneath the voluntary confidence an involuntary distrust, not to be conquered by any effort of the will.

"We were married," my lady continued, "and I loved him very well, quite well enough to be happy with him as long as his money lasted, and while we were on the Continent, traveling in the best style and always staying at the best hotels. But when we came back to Wildernsea and lived with papa, and all the money was gone, and George grew gloomy and wretched, and was always thinking of his troubles, and appeared to neglect me, I was very unhappy, and it seemed as if this fine marriage had only given me a twelvemonth's gayety and extravagance after all. I begged George to appeal to his father, but he refused. I persuaded him to try and get employment, and he failed. My baby was born, and the crisis which had been fatal to my mother arose for me. I escaped, but I was more irritable perhaps after my recovery, less inclined to fight the hard battle of the world, more disposed to complain of poverty and neglect. I did complain one day, loudly and bitterly; I upbraided George Talboys for his cruelty in having allied a helpless girl to poverty and misery, and he flew into a passion with me and ran out of the house. When I awoke the next morning, I found a letter lying on the table by my bed, telling me that he was going to the antipodes to seek his fortune, and that he would never see me again until he was a rich man.

"I looked upon this as a desertion, and I resented it bitterly—resented it by hating the man who had left me with no protector but a weak, tipsy father, and with a child to support. I had to work hard for my living, and in every hour of labor—and what labor is more wearisome than the dull slavery of a governess?—I recognized a separate wrong done me by George Talboys. His father was rich, his sister was living in luxury and respectability, and I, his wife, and the mother of his son, was a slave allied to beggary and obscurity. People pitied me, and I hated them for their pity. I did not love the child, for he had been left a burden upon my hands. The hereditary taint that was in my blood had never until this time showed itself by any one sign or token; but at this time I became subject to fits of violence and despair. At this time I think my mind first lost its balance, and for the first time I crossed that invisible line which separates reason from madness. I have seen my father's eyes fixed upon me in horror and alarm. I have known him soothe me as only mad people and children are soothed, and I have chafed against his petty devices, I have resented even his indulgence.

"At last these fits of desperation resolved themselves into a desperate purpose. I determined to run away from this wretched home which my slavery supported. I determined to desert this father who had more fear of me than love for me. I determined to go to London and lose myself in that great chaos of humanity.

"I had seen an advertisement in the *Times* while I was at Wildernsea, and I presented myself to Mrs. Vincent, the advertiser, under a feigned name. She accepted me, waiving all questions as to my antecedents. You know the rest. I came here, and you made me an offer, the acceptance of which would lift me at once into the sphere to which my ambition had pointed ever since I was a school-girl, and heard for the first time that I was pretty.

"Three years had passed, and I had received no token of my husband's existence; for, I argued, that if he had returned to England, he would have succeeded in finding me under any name and in any place. I knew the energy of his character well enough to know this.

"I said 'I have a right to think that he is dead, or that he wishes me to believe him dead, and his shadow shall not stand between me and prosperity.' I said this, and I became your wife, Sir Michael, with every resolution to be as good a wife as it was in my nature to be. The common



temptations that assail and shipwreck some women had no terror for me. I would have been your true and pure wife to the end of time, though I had been surrounded by a legion of tempters. The mad folly that the world calls love had never had any part in my madness, and here at least extremes met, and the vice of heartlessness became the virtue of constancy.

"I was very happy in the first triumph and grandeur of my new position, very grateful to the hand that had lifted me to it. In the sunshine of my own happiness I felt, for the first time in my life, for the miseries of others. I had been poor myself, and I was now rich, and could afford to pity and relieve the poverty of my neighbors. I took pleasure in acts of kindness and benevolence. I found out my father's address and sent him large sums of money, anonymously, for I did not wish him to discover what had become of me. I availed myself to the full of the privilege your generosity afforded me. I dispensed happiness on every side. I saw myself loved as well as admired, and I think I might have been a good woman for the rest of my life, if fate would have allowed me to be so.

"I believe that at this time my mind regained its just balance. I had watched myself very closely since leaving Wildernsea; I had held a check upon myself. I had often wondered while sitting in the surgeon's quiet family circle whether any suspicion of that invisible, hereditary taint had ever occurred to Mr. Dawson.

"Fate would not suffer me to be good. My destiny compelled me to be a wretch. Within a month of my marriage, I read in one of the Essex papers of the return of a certain Mr. Talboys, a fortunate gold-seeker, from Australia. The ship had sailed at the time I read the paragraph. What was to be done?

"I said just now that I knew the energy of George's character. I knew that the man who had gone to the antipodes and won a fortune for his wife would leave no stone unturned in his efforts to find her. It was hopeless to think of hiding myself from him.

"Unless he could be induced to believe that I was dead, he would never cease in his search for me.

"My brain was dazed as I thought of my peril. Again the balance trembled, again the invisible boundary was passed, again I was mad.

"I went down to Southampton and found my father, who was living there with my child. You remember how Mrs. Vincent's name was used as an excuse for this hurried journey, and how it was contrived I should go with

no other escort than Phoebe Marks, whom I left at the hotel while I went to my father's house.

"I confided to my father the whole secret of my peril. He was not very much shocked at what I had done, for poverty had perhaps blunted his sense of honor and principle. He was not very much shocked, but he was frightened, and he promised to do all in his power to assist me in my horrible emergency.

"He had received a letter addressed to me at Wildernsea, by George, and forwarded from there to my father. This letter had been written within a few days of the sailing of the *Argus*, and it announced the probable date of the ship's arrival at Liverpool. This letter gave us, therefore, data upon which to act.

"We decided at once upon the first step. This was that on the date of the probable arrival of the *Argus*, or a few days later, an advertisement of my death should be inserted in the *Times*.

"But almost immediately after deciding upon this, we saw that there were fearful difficulties in the carrying out of such a simple plan. The date of the death, and the place in which I died, must be announced, as well as the death itself. George would immediately hurry to that place, however distant it might be, however comparatively inaccessible, and the shallow falsehood would be discovered.

"I knew enough of his sanguine temperament, his courage and determination, his readiness to hope against hope, to know that unless he saw the grave in which I was buried, and the register of my death, he would never believe that I was lost to him.

"My father was utterly dumfounded and helpless. He could only shed childish tears of despair and terror. He was of no use to me in this crisis.

"I was hopeless of any issue out of my difficulties. I began to think that I must trust to the chapter of accidents, and hope that among other obscure corners of the earth, Audley Court might be undreamt of by my husband.

"I sat with my father, drinking tea with him in his miserable hovel, and playing with the child, who was pleased with my dress and jewels, but quite unconscious that I was anything but a stranger to him. I had the boy in my arms, when a woman who attended him came to fetch him that she might make him more fit to be seen by the lady, as she said.

"I was anxious to know how the boy was treated, and I detained this woman in conversation with me while my father dozed over the tea-table.

"She was a pale-faced, sandy-haired woman of about five-and-forty and she seemed very glad to get the chance of talking to me as long as I pleased to allow her. She soon left off talking of the boy, however, to tell me of her own troubles. She was in very great trouble, she told me. Her eldest daughter had been obliged to leave her situation from ill-health; in fact, the doctor said the girl was in a decline; and it was a hard thing for a poor widow who had seen better days to have a sick daughter to support, as well as a family of young children.

"I let the woman run on for a long time in this manner, telling me the girl's ailments, and the girl's age, and the girl's doctor's stuff, and piety, and sufferings, and a great deal more. But I neither listened to her nor heeded her. I heard her, but only in a far-away manner, as I heard the traffic in the street, or the ripple of the stream at the bottom of it. What were this woman's troubles to me? I had miseries of my own, and worse miseries than her coarse nature could ever have to endure. These sort of people always had sick husbands or sick children, and expected to be helped in their illness by the rich. It was nothing out of the common. I was thinking this, and I was just going to dismiss the woman with a sovereign for her sick daughter, when an idea flashed upon me with such painful suddenness that it sent the blood surging up to my brain, and set my heart beating, as it only beats when I am mad.

"I asked the woman her name. She was a Mrs. Plowson, and she kept a small general shop, she said, and only ran in now and then to look after Georgey, and to see that the little maid-of-all-work took care of him. Her daughter's name was Matilda. I asked her several questions about this girl Matilda, and I ascertained that she was four-and-twenty, that she had always been consumptive, and that she was now, as the doctor said, going off in a rapid decline. He had declared that she could not last much more than a fortnight.

"It was in three weeks that the ship that carried George Talboys was expected to anchor in the Mersey.

"I need not dwell upon this business. I visited the sick girl. She was fair and slender. Her description, carelessly given, might tally nearly enough with my own, though she bore no shadow of resemblance to me, except in

these two particulars. I was received by the girl as a rich lady who wished to do her a service. I bought the mother, who was poor and greedy, and who for a gift of money, more money than she had ever before received, consented to submit to anything I wished. Upon the second day after my introduction to this Mrs. Plowson, my father went over to Ventnor, and hired lodgings for his invalid daughter and her little boy. Early the next morning he carried over the dying girl and Georgey, who had been bribed to call her 'mamma.' She entered the house as Mrs. Talboys; she was attended by a Ventnor medical man as Mrs. Talboys; she died, and her death and burial were registered in that name.

"The advertisement was inserted in the *Times*, and upon the second day after its insertion George Talboys visited Ventnor, and ordered the tombstone which at this hour records the death of his wife, Helen Talboys."

Sir Michael Audley rose slowly, and with a stiff, constrained action, as if every physical sense had been benumbed by that one sense of misery.

"I cannot hear any more," he said, in a hoarse whisper; "if there is anything more to be told I cannot hear it. Robert, it is you who have brought about this discovery, as I understand. I want to know nothing more. Will you take upon yourself the duty of providing for the safety and comfort of this lady whom I have thought my wife? I need not ask you to remember in all you do, that I have loved her very dearly and truly. I cannot say farewell to her. I will not say it until I can think of her without bitterness—until I can pity her, as I now pray that God may pity her this night."

Sir Michael walked slowly from the room. He did not trust himself to look at that crouching figure. He did not wish to see the creature whom he had cherished. He went straight to his dressing-room, rung for his valet, and ordered him to pack a portmanteau, and make all necessary arrangements for accompanying his master by the last up-train.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE HUSH THAT SUCCEEDS THE TEMPEST.

Robert Audley followed his uncle into the vestibule after Sir Michael had spoken those few quiet words which sounded the death-knell of his hope and love. Heaven knows how much the young man had feared the coming of this day. It had come; and though there had been no great outburst of despair, no whirlwind of stormy grief, no loud tempest of anguish and tears, Robert took no comforting thought from the unnatural stillness. He knew enough to know that Sir Michael Audley went away with the barbed arrow, which his nephew's hand had sent home to its aim, rankling in his tortured heart; he knew that this strange and icy calm was the first numbness of a heart stricken by grief so unexpected as for a time to be rendered almost incomprehensible by a blank stupor of astonishment; he knew that when this dull quiet had passed away, when little by little, and one by one, each horrible feature of the sufferer's sorrow became first dimly apparent and then terribly familiar to him, the storm would burst in fatal fury, and tempests of tears and cruel thunder-claps of agony would rend that generous heart.

Robert had heard of cases in which men of his uncle's age had borne some great grief, as Sir Michael had borne this, with a strange quiet; and had gone away from those who would have comforted them, and whose anxieties have been relieved by this patient stillness, to fall down upon the ground and die under the blow which at first had only stunned him. He remembered cases in which paralysis and apoplexy had stricken men as strong as his uncle in the first hour of the horrible affliction; and he lingered in the lamp-lit vestibule, wondering whether it was not his duty to be with Sir Michael—to be near him, in case of any emergency, and to accompany him wherever he went.

Yet would it be wise to force himself upon that gray-headed sufferer in this cruel hour, in which he had been awakened from the one delusion of a blameless life to discover that he had been the dupe of a false face, and the

fool of a nature which was too coldly mercenary, too cruelly heartless, to be sensible of its own infamy?

"No," thought Robert Audley, "I will not intrude upon the anguish of this wounded heart. There is humiliation mingled with this bitter grief. It is better he should fight the battle alone. I have done what I believe to have been my solemn duty, yet I should scarcely wonder if I had rendered myself forever hateful to him. It is better he should fight the battle alone. *I* can do nothing to make the strife less terrible. Better that it should be fought alone."

While the young man stood with his hand upon the library door, still half-doubtful whether he should follow his uncle or re-enter the room in which he had left that more wretched creature whom it had been his business to unmask, Alicia Audley opened the dining-room door, and revealed to him the old-fashioned oak-paneled apartment, the long table covered with showy damask, and bright with a cheerful glitter of glass and silver.

"Is papa coming to dinner?" asked Miss Audley. "I'm so hungry; and poor Tomlins has sent up three times to say the fish will be spoiled. It must be reduced to a species of isinglass soup, by this time, I should think," added the young lady, as she came out into the vestibule with the *Times* newspaper in her hand.

She had been sitting by the fire reading the paper, and waiting for her seniors to join her at the dinner table.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Robert Audley," she remarked, indifferently. "You dine with us of course. Pray go and find papa. It must be nearly eight o'clock, and we are supposed to dine at six."

Mr. Audley answered his cousin rather sternly. Her frivolous manner jarred upon him, and he forgot in his irrational displeasure that Miss Audley had known nothing of the terrible drama which had been so long enacting under her very nose.

"Your papa has just endured a very great grief, Alicia," the young man said, gravely.

The girl's arch, laughing face changed in a moment to a tenderly earnest look of sorrow and anxiety. Alicia Audley loved her father very dearly.

"A grief?" she exclaimed; "papa grieved! Oh! Robert, what has happened?"

"I can tell you nothing yet, Alicia," Robert answered in a low voice.

He took his cousin by the wrist, and drew her into the dining-room as he spoke. He closed the door carefully behind him before he continued:

"Alicia, can I trust you?" he asked, earnestly.

"Trust me to do what?"

"To be a comfort and a friend to your poor father under a very heavy affliction."

"Yes!" cried Alicia, passionately. "How can you ask me such a question? Do you think there is anything I would not do to lighten any sorrow of my father's? Do you think there is anything I would not suffer if my suffering could lighten his?"

The rushing tears rose to Miss Audley's bright gray eyes as she spoke.

"Oh, Robert! Robert! could you think so badly of me as to think I would not try to be a comfort to my father in his grief?" she said, reproachfully.

"No, no, my dear," answered the young man, quietly; "I never doubted your affection, I only doubted your discretion. May I rely upon that?"

"You may, Robert," said Alicia, resolutely.

"Very well, then, my dear girl, I will trust you. Your father is going to leave the Court, for a time at least. The grief which he has just endured—a sudden and unlooked-for sorrow, remember—has no doubt made this place hateful to him. He is going away; but he must not go alone, must he, Alicia?"

"Alone? no! no! But I suppose my lady—"

"Lady Audley will not go with him," said Robert, gravely; "he is about to separate himself from her."

"For a time?"

"No, forever."

"Separate himself from her forever!" exclaimed Alicia. "Then this grief —"

"Is connected with Lady Audley. Lady Audley is the cause of your father's sorrow."

Alicia's face, which had been pale before, flushed crimson. Sorrow, of which my lady was the cause—a sorrow which was to separate Sir Michael

forever from his wife! There had been no quarrel between them—there had never been anything but harmony and sunshine between Lady Audley and her generous husband. This sorrow must surely then have arisen from some sudden discovery; it was, no doubt, a sorrow associated with disgrace. Robert Audley understood the meaning of that vivid blush.

"You will offer to accompany your father wherever he may choose to go, Alicia," he said. "You are his natural comforter at such a time as this, but you will best befriend him in this hour of trial by avoiding all intrusion upon his grief. Your very ignorance of the particulars of that grief will be a security for your discretion. Say nothing to your father that you might not have said to him two years ago, before he married a second wife. Try and be to him what you were before the woman in yonder room came between you and your father's love."

"I will," murmured Alicia, "I will."

"You will naturally avoid all mention of Lady Audley's name. If your father is often silent, be patient; if it sometimes seems to you that the shadow of this great sorrow will never pass away from his life, be patient still; and remember that there can be no better hope of a cure of his grief than the hope that his daughter's devotion may lead him to remember there is one woman upon this earth who will love him truly and purely until the last."

"Yes—yes, Robert, dear cousin, I will remember."

Mr. Audley, for the first time since he had been a schoolboy, took his cousin in his arms and kissed her broad forehead.

"My dear Alicia," he said, "do this and you will make me happy. I have been in some measure the means of bringing this sorrow upon your father. Let me hope that it is not an enduring one. Try and restore my uncle to happiness, Alicia, and I will love you more dearly than brother ever loved a noble-hearted sister; and a brotherly affection may be worth having, perhaps, after all, my dear, though it is very different to poor Sir Harry's enthusiastic worship."

Alicia's head was bent and her face hidden from her cousin while he spoke, but she lifted her head when he had finished, and looked him full in the face with a smile that was only the brighter for her eyes being filled with tears.



"You are a good fellow, Bob," she said; "and I've been very foolish and wicked to feel angry with you because—"

The young lady stopped suddenly.

"Because what, my dear?" asked Mr. Audley.

"Because I'm silly, Cousin Robert," Alicia said, quickly; "never mind that, Bob, I'll do all you wish, and it shall not be my fault if my dearest father doesn't forget his troubles before long. I'd go to the end of the world with him, poor darling, if I thought there was any comfort to be found for him in the journey. I'll go and get ready directly. Do you think papa will go to-night?"

"Yes, my dear; I don't think Sir Michael will rest another night under this roof yet awhile."

"The mail goes at twenty minutes past nine," said Alicia; "we must leave the house in an hour if we are to travel by it. I shall see you again before we go, Robert?"

"Yes, dear."

Miss Audley ran off to her room to summon her maid, and make all necessary preparations for the sudden journey, of whose ultimate destination she was as yet quite ignorant.

She went heart and soul into the carrying out of the duty which Robert had dictated to her. She assisted in the packing of her portmanteaus, and hopelessly bewildered her maid by stuffing silk dresses into her bonnet-boxes and satin shoes into her dressing-case. She roamed about her rooms, gathering together drawing-materials, music-books, needle-work, hair-brushes, jewelry, and perfume-bottles, very much as she might have done had she been about to sail for some savage country, devoid of all civilized resources. She was thinking all the time of her father's unknown grief, and perhaps a little of the serious face and earnest voice which had that night revealed her Cousin Robert to her in a new character.

Mr. Audley went up-stairs after his cousin, and found his way to Sir Michael's dressing-room. He knocked at the door and listened, Heaven knows how anxiously, for the expected answer. There was a moment's pause, during which the young man's heart beat loud and fast, and then the door was opened by the baronet himself. Robert saw that his uncle's valet was already hard at work preparing for his master's hurried journey.

Sir Michael came out into the corridor.

"Have you anything more to say to me, Robert?" he asked, quietly.

"I only came to ascertain if I could assist in any of your arrangements. You go to London by the mail?"

"Yes."

"Have you any idea of where you will stay."

"Yes, I shall stop at the Clarendon; I am known there. Is that all you have to say?"

"Yes; except that Alicia will accompany you?"

"Alicia!"

"She could not very well stay here, you know, just now. It would be best for her to leave the Court until—"

"Yes, yes, I understand," interrupted the baronet; "but is there nowhere else that she could go—must she be with me?"

"She could go nowhere else so immediately, and she would not be happy anywhere else."

"Let her come, then," said Sir Michael, "let her come."

He spoke in a strange, subdued voice, and with an apparent effort, as if it were painful to him to have to speak at all; as if all this ordinary business of life were a cruel torture to him, and jarred so much upon his grief as to be almost worse to bear than that grief itself.

"Very well, my dear uncle, then all is arranged; Alicia will be ready to start at nine o'clock."

"Very good, very good," muttered the baronet; "let her come if she pleases, poor child, let her come."

He sighed heavily as he spoke in that half pitying tone of his daughter. He was thinking how comparatively indifferent he had been toward that only child for the sake of the woman now shut in the fire-lit room below.

"I shall see you again before you go, sir," said Robert; "I will leave you till then."

"Stay!" said Sir Michael, suddenly; "have you told Alicia?"

"I have told her nothing, except that you are about to leave the Court for some time."

"You are very good, my boy, you are very good," the baronet murmured in a broken voice.

He stretched out his hand. His nephew took it in both his own, and pressed it to his lips.

"Oh, sir! how can I ever forgive myself?" he said; "how can I ever cease to hate myself for having brought this grief upon you?"

"No, no, Robert, you did right; I wish that God had been so merciful to me as to take my miserable life before this night; but you did right."

Sir Michael re-entered his dressing-room, and Robert slowly returned to the vestibule. He paused upon the threshold of that chamber in which he had left Lucy—Lady Audley, otherwise Helen Talboys, the wife of his lost friend.

She was lying upon the floor, upon the very spot in which she had crouched at her husband's feet telling her guilty story. Whether she was in a swoon, or whether she lay there in the utter helplessness of her misery, Robert scarcely cared to know. He went out into the vestibule, and sent one of the servants to look for her maid, the smart, be-ribboned damsel who was loud in wonder and consternation at the sight of her mistress.

"Lady Audley is very ill," he said; "take her to her room and see that she does not leave it to-night. You will be good enough to remain near her, but do not either talk to her or suffer her to excite herself by talking."

My lady had not fainted; she allowed the girl to assist her, and rose from the ground upon which she had groveled. Her golden hair fell in loose, disheveled masses about her ivory throat and shoulders, her face and lips were colorless, her eyes terrible in their unnatural light.

"Take me away," she said, "and let me sleep! Let me sleep, for my brain is on fire!"

As she was leaving the room with her maid, she turned and looked at Robert. "Is Sir Michael gone?" she asked.

"He will leave in half an hour."

"There were no lives lost in the fire at Mount Stanning?"

"None."

"I am glad of that."

"The landlord of the house, Marks, was very terribly burned, and lies in a precarious state at his mother's cottage; but he may recover."

"I am glad of that—I am glad no life was lost. Good-night, Mr. Audley."

"I shall ask to see you for half an hour's conversation in the course of to-morrow, my lady."

"Whenever you please. Good night."

"Good night."

She went away quietly leaning upon her maid's shoulder, and leaving Robert with a sense of strange bewilderment that was very painful to him.

He sat down by the broad hearth upon which the red embers were fading, and wondered at the change in that old house which, until the day of his friend's disappearance, had been so pleasant a home for all who sheltered beneath its hospitable roof. He sat brooding over the desolate hearth, and trying to decide upon what must be done in this sudden crisis. He sat helpless and powerless to determine upon any course of action, lost in a dull revery, from which he was aroused by the sound of carriage-wheels driving up to the little turret entrance.

The clock in the vestibule struck nine as Robert opened the library door. Alicia had just descended the stairs with her maid; a rosy-faced country girl.

"Good-by, Robert," said Miss Audley, holding out her hand to her cousin; "good-by, and God bless you! You may trust me to take care of papa."

"I am sure I may. God bless you, my dear."

For the second time that night Robert Audley pressed his lips to his cousin's candid forehead, and for the second time the embrace was of a brotherly or paternal character, rather than the rapturous proceeding which it would have been had Sir Harry Towers been the privileged performer.

It was five minutes past nine when Sir Michael came down-stairs, followed by his valet, grave and gray-haired like himself. The baronet was pale, but calm and self-possessed. The hand which he gave to his nephew was as cold as ice, but it was with a steady voice that he bade the young man good-by.

"I leave all in your hands, Robert," he said, as he turned to leave the house in which he had lived so long. "I may not have heard the end, but I

have heard enough. Heaven knows I have no need to hear more. I leave all to you, but you will not be cruel—you will remember how much I loved—"

His voice broke huskily before he could finish the sentence.

"I will remember you in everything, sir," the young man answered. "I will do everything for the best."

A treacherous mist of tears blinded him and shut out his uncle's face, and in another minute the carriage had driven away, and Robert Audley sat alone in the dark library, where only one red spark glowed among the pale gray ashes. He sat alone, trying to think what he ought to do, and with the awful responsibility of a wicked woman's fate upon his shoulders.

"Good Heaven!" he thought; "surely this must be God's judgment upon the purposeless, vacillating life I led up to the seventh day of last September. Surely this awful responsibility has been forced upon me in order that I may humble myself to an offended Providence, and confess that a man cannot choose his own life. He cannot say, 'I will take existence lightly, and keep out of the way of the wretched, mistaken, energetic creatures, who fight so heartily in the great battle.' He cannot say, 'I will stop in the tents while the strife is fought, and laugh at the fools who are trampled down in the useless struggle.' He cannot do this. He can only do, humbly and fearfully, that which the Maker who created him has appointed for him to do. If he has a battle to fight, let him fight it faithfully; but woe betide him if he skulks when his name is called in the mighty muster-roll, woe betide him if he hides in the tents when the tocsin summons him to the scene of war!"

One of the servants brought candles into the library and relighted the fire, but Robert Audley did not stir from his seat by the hearth. He sat as he had often sat in his chambers in Figtree Court, with his elbows resting upon the arms of his chair, and his chin upon his hand.

But he lifted his head as the servant was about to leave the room.

"Can I send a message from here to London?" he asked.

"It can be sent from Brentwood, sir—not from here."

Mr. Audley looked at his watch thoughtfully.

"One of the men can ride over to Brentwood, sir, if you wish any message to be sent."

"I do wish to send a message; will you manage it for me, Richards?"

"Certainly, sir."

"You can wait, then, while I write the message."

"Yes, sir."

The man brought writing materials from one of the side-tables, and placed them before Mr. Audley.

Robert dipped a pen in the ink, and stared thoughtfully at one of the candles for a few moments before he began to write.

The message ran thus:

"From Robert Audley, of Audley Court, Essex, to Francis Wilmington, of Paper-buildings, Temple.

"DEAR WILMINGTON—If you know any physician experienced in cases of mania, and to be trusted with a secret, be so good as to send me his address by telegraph."

Mr. Audley sealed this document in a stout envelope, and handed it to the man, with a sovereign.

"You will see that this is given to a trustworthy person, Richards," he said, "and let the man wait at the station for the return message. He ought to get it in an hour and a half."

Mr. Richards, who had known Robert Audley in jackets and turn-down collars, departed to execute his commission. Heaven forbid that we should follow him into the comfortable servants' hall at the Court, where the household sat round the blazing fire, discussing in utter bewilderment the events of the day.

Nothing could be wider from the truth than the speculations of these worthy people. What clew had they to the mystery of that firelit room in which a guilty woman had knelt at their master's feet to tell the story of her sinful life? They only knew that which Sir Michael's valet had told them of this sudden journey. How his master was as pale as a sheet, and spoke in a strange voice that didn't sound like his own, somehow, and how you might have knocked him—Mr. Parsons, the valet—down with a feather, if you had been minded to prostrate him by the aid of so feeble a weapon.

The wiseheads of the servants' hall decided that Sir Michael had received sudden intelligence through Mr. Robert—they were wise enough to connect the young man with the catastrophe—either of the death of some near and

dear relation—the elder servants decimated the Audley family in their endeavors to find a likely relation—or of some alarming fall in the funds, or of the failure of some speculation or bank in which the greater part of the baronet's money was invested. The general leaning was toward the failure of a bank, and every member of the assembly seemed to take a dismal and raven-like delight in the fancy, though such a supposition involved their own ruin in the general destruction of that liberal household.

Robert sat by the dreary hearth, which seemed dreary even now when the blaze of a great wood-fire roared in the wide chimney, and listened to the low wail of the March wind moaning round the house and lifting the shivering ivy from the walls it sheltered. He was tired and worn out, for remember that he had been awakened from his sleep at two o'clock that morning by the hot breath of blazing timber and the sharp crackling of burning woodwork. But for his presence of mind and cool decision, Mr. Luke Marks would have died a dreadful death. He still bore the traces of the night's peril, for the dark hair had been singed upon one side of his forehead, and his left hand was red and inflamed, from the effect of the scorching atmosphere out of which he had dragged the landlord of the Castle Inn. He was thoroughly exhausted with fatigue and excitement, and he fell into a heavy sleep in his easy-chair before the bright fire, from which he was only awakened by the entrance of Mr. Richards with the return message.

This return message was very brief.

"DEAR AUDLEY—Always glad to oblige. Alwyn Mosgrave, M.D., 12 Saville Row. Safe."

This with names and addresses, was all that it contained.

"I shall want another message taken to Brentwood to-morrow morning, Richards," said Mr. Audley, as he folded the telegram. "I should be glad if the man would ride over with it before breakfast. He shall have half a sovereign for his trouble."

Mr. Richards bowed.

"Thank you, sir—not necessary, sir; but as you please, of course, sir," he murmured. "At what hour might you wish the man to go?"

Mr. Audley might wish the man to go as early as he could, so it was decided that he should go at six.

"My room is ready, I suppose, Richards?" said Robert.

"Yes, sir—your old room."

"Very good. I shall go to bed at once. Bring me a glass of brandy and water as hot as you can make it, and wait for the telegram."

This second message was only a very earnest request to Doctor Mosgrave to pay an immediate visit to Audley Court on a matter of serious moment.

Having written this message, Mr. Audley felt that he had done all that he could do. He drank his brandy and water. He had actual need of the diluted alcohol, for he had been chilled to the bone by his adventures during the fire. He slowly sipped the pale golden liquid and thought of Clara Talboys, of that earnest girl whose brother's memory was now avenged, whose brother's destroyer was humiliated in the dust. Had she heard of the fire at the Castle Inn? How could she have done otherwise than hear of it in such a place as Mount Stanning? But had she heard that *he* had been in danger, and that he had distinguished himself by the rescue of a drunken boor? I fear that, even sitting by that desolate hearth, and beneath the roof whose noble was an exile from his own house, Robert Audley was weak enough to think of these things—weak enough to let his fancy wander away to the dismal fir-trees under the cold March sky, and the dark-brown eyes that were so like the eyes of his lost friend.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### DR. MOSGRAVE'S ADVICE.

My lady slept. Through that long winter night she slept soundly. Criminals have often so slept their last sleep upon earth; and have been found in the gray morning slumbering peacefully, by the jailer who came to wake them.

The game had been played and lost. I do not think that my lady had thrown away a card, or missed the making of a trick which she might by any possibility have made; but her opponent's hand had been too powerful for her, and he had won.

She looked upon herself as a species of state prisoner, who would have to be taken good care of. A second Iron Mask, who must be provided for in some comfortable place of confinement. She abandoned herself to a dull indifference. She had lived a hundred lives within the space of the last few days of her existence, and she had worn out her capacity for suffering—for a time at least.

She ate her breakfast, and took her morning bath, and emerged, with perfumed hair and in the most exquisitely careless of morning toilets, from her luxurious dressing-room. She looked at herself in the cheval-glass before she left the room. A long night's rest had brought back the delicate rose-tints of her complexion, and the natural luster of her blue eyes. That unnatural light which had burned so fearfully the day before had gone, and my lady smiled triumphantly as she contemplated the reflection of her beauty. The days were gone in which her enemies could have branded her with white-hot irons, and burned away the loveliness which had done such mischief. Whatever they did to her they must leave her her beauty, she thought. At the worst, they were powerless to rob her of that.

The March day was bright and sunny, with a cheerless sunshine certainly. My lady wrapped herself in an Indian shawl; a shawl that had cost Sir Michael a hundred guineas. I think she had an idea that it would be well to wear this costly garment; so that if hustled suddenly away, she might carry

at least one of her possessions with her. Remember how much she had periled for a fine house and gorgeous furniture, for carriages and horses, jewels and laces; and do not wonder if she clings with a desperate tenacity to gauds and gew-gaws, in the hour of her despair. If she had been Judas, she would have held to her thirty pieces of silver to the last moment of her shameful life.

Mr. Robert Audley breakfasted in the library. He sat long over his solitary cup of tea, smoking his meerschaum pipe, and meditating darkly upon the task that lay before him.

"I will appeal to the experience of this Dr. Mosgrave," he thought; "physicians and lawyers are the confessors of this prosaic nineteenth century. Surely, he will be able to help me."

The first fast train from London arrived at Audley at half-past ten o'clock, and at five minutes before eleven, Richards, the grave servant, announced Dr. Alwyn Mosgrave.

The physician from Saville Row was a tall man of about fifty years of age. He was thin and sallow, with lantern jaws, and eyes of a pale, feeble gray, that seemed as if they had once been blue, and had faded by the progress of time to their present neutral shade. However powerful the science of medicine as wielded by Dr. Alwyn Mosgrave, it had not been strong enough to put flesh upon his bones, or brightness into his face. He had a strangely expressionless, and yet strangely attentive countenance. He had the face of a man who had spent the greater part of his life in listening to other people, and who had parted with his own individuality and his own passions at the very outset of his career.

He bowed to Robert Audley, took the opposite seat indicated by him, and addressed his attentive face to the young barrister. Robert saw that the physician's glance for a moment lost its quiet look of attention, and became earnest and searching.

"He is wondering whether I am the patient," thought Mr. Audley, "and is looking for the diagnoses of madness in my face."

Dr. Mosgrave spoke as if in answer to this thought.

"Is it not about your own—health—that you wish to consult me?" he said, interrogatively.

"Oh, no!"

Dr. Mosgrave looked at his watch, a fifty-guinea Benson-made chronometer, which he carried loose in his waistcoat pocket as carelessly as if it had been a potato.

"I need not remind you that my time is precious," he said; "your telegram informed me that my services were required in a case of—danger—as I apprehend, or I should not be here this morning."

Robert Audley had sat looking gloomily at the fire, wondering how he should begin the conversation, and had needed this reminder of the physician's presence.

"You are very good, Dr. Mosgrave," he said, rousing himself by an effort, "and I thank you very much for having responded to my summons. I am about to appeal to you upon a subject which is more painful to me than words can describe. I am about to implore your advice in a most difficult case, and I trust almost blindly to your experience to rescue me, and others who are very dear to me, from a cruel and complicated position."

The business-like attention in Dr. Mosgrave's face grew into a look of interest as he listened to Robert Audley.

"The revelation made by the patient to the physician is, I believe, as sacred as the confession of a penitent to his priest?" Robert asked, gravely.

"Quite as sacred."

"A solemn confidence, to be violated under no circumstances?"

"Most certainly."

Robert Audley looked at the fire again. How much should he tell, or how little, of the dark history of his uncle's second wife?

"I have been given to understand, Dr. Mosgrave, that you have devoted much of your attention to the treatment of insanity."

"Yes, my practice is almost confined to the treatment of mental diseases."

"Such being the case, I think I may venture to conclude that you sometimes receive strange, and even terrible, revelations."

Dr. Mosgrave bowed.

He looked like a man who could have carried, safely locked in his passionless breast, the secrets of a nation, and who would have suffered no inconvenience from the weight of such a burden.

"The story which I am about to tell you is not my own story," said Robert, after a pause; "you will forgive me, therefore, if I once more remind you that I can only reveal it upon the understanding that under no circumstances, or upon no apparent justification, is that confidence to be betrayed."

Dr. Mosgrave bowed again. A little sternly, perhaps, this time.

"I am all attention, Mr. Audley," he said coldly.

Robert Audley drew his chair nearer to that of the physician, and in a low voice began the story which my lady had told upon her knees in that same chamber upon the previous night. Dr. Mosgrave's listening face, turned always toward the speaker, betrayed no surprise at that strange revelation. He smiled once, a grave, quiet smile, when Mr. Audley came to that part of the story which told of the conspiracy at Ventnor; but he was not surprised. Robert Audley ended his story at the point at which Sir Michael Audley had interrupted my lady's confession. He told nothing of the disappearance of George Talboys, nor of the horrible suspicions that had grown out of that disappearance. He told nothing of the fire at the Castle Inn.

Dr. Mosgrave shook his head, gravely, when Mr. Audley came to the end of his story.

"You have nothing further to tell me?" he said.

"No. I do not think there is anything more that need be told," Robert answered, rather evasively.

"You would wish to prove that this lady is mad, and therefore irresponsible for her actions, Mr. Audley?" said the physician.

Robert Audley stared, wondering at the mad doctor. By what process had he so rapidly arrived at the young man's secret desire?

"Yes, I would rather, if possible, think her mad; I should be glad to find that excuse for her."

"And to save the *esclandre* of a Chancery suit, I suppose, Mr. Audley," said Dr. Mosgrave.

Robert shuddered as he bowed an assent to this remark. It was something worse than a Chancery suit that he dreaded with a horrible fear. It was a trial for murder that had so long haunted his dreams. How often he had awoken, in an agony of shame, from a vision of a crowded court-house, and

his uncle's wife in a criminal dock, hemmed in on every side by a sea of eager faces.

"I fear that I shall not be of any use to you," the physician said, quietly; "I will see the lady, if you please, but I do not believe that she is mad."

"Why not?"

"Because there is no evidence of madness in anything she has done. She ran away from her home, because her home was not a pleasant one, and she left in the hope of finding a better. There is no madness in that. She committed the crime of bigamy, because by that crime she obtained fortune and position. There is no madness there. When she found herself in a desperate position, she did not grow desperate. She employed intelligent means, and she carried out a conspiracy which required coolness and deliberation in its execution. There is no madness in that."

"But the traits of hereditary insanity—"

"May descend to the third generation, and appear in the lady's children, if she have any. Madness is not necessarily transmitted from mother to daughter. I should be glad to help you, if I could, Mr. Audley, but I do not think there is any proof of insanity in the story you have told me. I do not think any jury in England would accept the plea of insanity in such a case as this. The best thing you can do with this lady is to send her back to her first husband; if he will have her."

Robert started at this sudden mention of his friend.

"Her first husband is dead," he answered, "at least, he has been missing for some time—and I have reason to believe that he is dead."

Dr. Mosgrave saw the startled movement, and heard the embarrassment in Robert Audley's voice as he spoke of George Talboys.

"The lady's first husband is missing," he said, with a strange emphasis on the word—"you think that he is dead?"

He paused for a few moments and looked at the fire, as Robert had looked before.

"Mr. Audley," he said, presently, "there must be no half-confidences between us. You have not told me all."

Robert, looking up suddenly, plainly expressed in his face the surprise he felt at these words.

"I should be very poorly able to meet the contingencies of my professional experience," said Dr. Mosgrave, "if I could not perceive where confidence ends and reservation begins. You have only told me half this lady's story, Mr. Audley. You must tell me more before I can offer you any advice. What has become of the first husband?"

He asked this question in a decisive tone, as if he knew it to be the keystone of an arch.

"I have already told you, Dr. Mosgrave, that I do not know."

"Yes," answered the physician, "but your face has told me what you have withheld from me; it has told me that you *suspect*."

Robert Audley was silent.

"If I am to be of use to you, you must trust me, Mr. Audley," said the physician. "The first husband disappeared—how and when? I want to know the history of his disappearance."

Robert paused for some time before he replied to this speech; but, by and by, he lifted his head, which had been bent in an attitude of earnest thought, and addressed the physician.

"I will trust you, Dr. Mosgrave," he said. "I will confide entirely in your honor and goodness. I do not ask you to do any wrong to society; but I ask you to save our stainless name from degradation and shame, if you can do so conscientiously."

He told the story of George's disappearance, and of his own doubts and fears, Heaven knows how reluctantly.

Dr. Mosgrave listened as quietly as he had listened before. Robert concluded with an earnest appeal to the physician's best feelings. He implored him to spare the generous old man whose fatal confidence in a wicked woman had brought much misery upon his declining years.

It was impossible to draw any conclusion, either favorable or otherwise, from Dr. Mosgrave's attentive face. He rose, when Robert had finished speaking, and looked at his watch once more.

"I can only spare you twenty minutes," he said. "I will see the lady, if you please. You say her mother died in a madhouse?"

"She did. Will you see Lady Audley alone?"

"Yes, alone, if you please."

Robert rung for my lady's maid, and under convoy of that smart young damsel the physician found his way to the octagon antechamber, and the fairy boudoir with which it communicated.

Ten minutes afterward, he returned to the library, in which Robert sat waiting for him.

"I have talked to the lady," he said, quietly, "and we understand each other very well. There is latent insanity! Insanity which might never appear; or which might appear only once or twice in a lifetime. It would be a *dementia* in its worst phase, perhaps; acute mania; but its duration would be very brief, and it would only arise under extreme mental pressure. The lady is not mad; but she has the hereditary taint in her blood. She has the cunning of madness, with the prudence of intelligence. I will tell you what she is, Mr. Audley. She is dangerous!"

Dr. Mosgrave walked up and down the room once or twice before he spoke again.

"I will not discuss the probabilities of the suspicion which distresses you, Mr. Audley," he said, presently, "but I will tell you this much, I do not advise any *esclandre*. This Mr. George Talboys has disappeared, but you have no evidence of his death. If you could produce evidence of his death, you could produce no evidence against this lady, beyond the one fact that she had a powerful motive for getting rid of him. No jury in the United Kingdom would condemn her upon such evidence as that."

Robert Audley interrupted Dr. Mosgrave, hastily.

"I assure you, my dear sir," he said, "that my greatest fear is the necessity of any exposure—any disgrace."

"Certainly, Mr. Audley," answered the physician, coolly, "but you cannot expect me to assist you to condone one of the worst offenses against society. If I saw adequate reason for believing that a murder had been committed by this woman, I should refuse to assist you in smuggling her away out of the reach of justice, although the honor of a hundred noble families might be saved by my doing so. But I do not see adequate reason for your suspicions; and I will do my best to help you."

Robert Audley grasped the physician's hands in both his own.

"I will thank you when I am better able to do so," he said, with emotion; "I will thank you in my uncle's name as well as in my own."

"I have only five minutes more, and I have a letter to write," said Dr. Mosgrave, smiling at the young man's energy.

He seated himself at a writing-table in the window, dipped his pen in the ink, and wrote rapidly for about seven minutes. He had filled three sides of a sheet of note-paper, when he threw down his pen and folded his letter.

He put this letter into an envelope, and delivered it, unsealed, to Robert Audley.

The address which it bore was:

"Monsieur Val,

"Villebrumeuse,

"Belgium."

Mr. Audley looked rather doubtfully from this address to the doctor, who was putting on his gloves as deliberately as if his life had never known a more solemn purpose than the proper adjustment of them.

"That letter," he said, in answer to Robert Audley's inquiring look, "is written to my friend Monsieur Val, the proprietor and medical superintendent of a very excellent *maison de santé* in the town of Villebrumeuse. We have known each other for many years, and he will no doubt willingly receive Lady Audley into his establishment, and charge himself with the full responsibility of her future life; it will not be a very eventful one!"

Robert Audley would have spoken, he would have once more expressed his gratitude for the help which had been given to him, but Dr. Mosgrave checked him with an authoritative gesture.

"From the moment in which Lady Audley enters that house," he said, "her life, so far as life is made up of action and variety, will be finished. Whatever secrets she may have will be secrets forever! Whatever crimes she may have committed she will be able to commit no more. If you were to dig a grave for her in the nearest churchyard and bury her alive in it, you could not more safely shut her from the world and all worldly associations. But as a physiologist and as an honest man, I believe you could do no better service to society than by doing this; for physiology is a lie if the woman I saw ten minutes ago is a woman to be trusted at large. If she could have sprung at my throat and strangled me with her little hands, as I sat talking to her just now, she would have done it."



"She suspected your purpose, then!"

"She knew it. 'You think I am mad like my mother, and you have come to question me,' she said. 'You are watching for some sign of the dreadful taint in my blood.' Good-day to you, Mr. Audley," the physician added hurriedly, "my time was up ten minutes ago; it is as much as I shall do to catch the train."

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### BURIED ALIVE.

Robert Audley sat alone in the library with the physician's letter upon the table before him, thinking of the work which was still to be done.

The young barrister had constituted himself the denouncer of this wretched woman. He had been her judge; and he was now her jailer. Not until he had delivered the letter which lay before him to its proper address, not until he had given up his charge into the safe-keeping of the foreign mad-house doctor, not until then would the dreadful burden be removed from him and his duty done.

He wrote a few lines to my lady, telling her that he was going to carry her away from Audley Court to a place from which she was not likely to return, and requesting her to lose no time in preparing for the journey. He wished to start that evening, if possible, he told her.

Miss Susan Martin, the lady's maid, thought it a very hard thing to have to pack her mistress' trunks in such a hurry, but my lady assisted in the task. She toiled resolutely in directing and assisting her servant, who scented bankruptcy and ruin in all this packing up and hurrying away, and was therefore rather languid and indifferent in the discharge of her duties; and at six o'clock in the evening she sent her attendant to tell Mr. Audley that she was ready to depart as soon as he pleased.

Robert had consulted a volume of Bradshaw, and had discovered that Villebrumeuse lay out of the track of all railway traffic, and was only approachable by diligence from Brussels. The mail for Dover left London Bridge at nine o'clock, and could be easily caught by Robert and his charge, as the seven o'clock up-train from Audley reached Shoreditch at a quarter past eight. Traveling by the Dover and Calais route, they would reach Villebrumeuse by the following afternoon or evening.

It was late in the afternoon of the next day when the diligence bumped and rattled over the uneven paving of the principal street in Villebrumeuse.

Robert Audley and my lady had had the *coupé* of the diligence to themselves for the whole of the journey, for there were not many travelers between Brussels and Villebrumeuse, and the public conveyance was supported by the force of tradition rather than any great profit attaching to it as a speculation.

My lady had not spoken during the journey, except to decline some refreshments which Robert had offered her at a halting place upon the road. Her heart sunk when they left Brussels behind, for she had hoped that city might have been the end of her journey, and she had turned with a feeling of sickness and despair from the dull Belgian landscape.

She looked up at last as the vehicle jolted into a great stony quadrangle, which had been the approach to a monastery once, but which was now the court yard of a dismal hotel, in whose cellars legions of rats skirmished and squeaked even while the broad sunshine was bright in the chambers above.

Lady Audley shuddered as she alighted from the diligence, and found herself in that dreary court yard. Robert was surrounded by chattering porters, who clamored for his "baggages," and disputed among themselves as to the hotel at which he was to rest. One of these men ran away to fetch a hackney-coach at Mr. Audley's behest, and reappeared presently, urging on a pair of horses—which were so small as to suggest the idea that they had been made out of one ordinary-sized animal—with wild shrieks and whoops that had a demoniac sound in the darkness.

Mr. Audley left my lady in a dreary coffee-room in the care of a drowsy attendant while he drove away to some distant part of the quiet city. There was official business to be gone through before Sir Michael's wife could be quietly put away in the place suggested by Dr. Mosgrave. Robert had to see all manner of important personages; and to take numerous oaths; and to exhibit the English physician's letter; and to go through much ceremony of signing and countersigning before he could take his lost friend's cruel wife to the home which was to be her last upon earth. Upward of two hours elapsed before all this was arranged, and the young man was free to return to the hotel, where he found his charge staring absently at a pair of wax-candles, with a cup of untasted coffee standing cold and stagnant before her.

Robert handed my lady into the hired vehicle, and took his seat opposite to her once more.

"Where are you going to take me?" she asked, at last. "I am tired of being treated like some naughty child, who is put into a dark cellar as a punishment for its offenses. Where are you taking me?"

"To a place in which you will have ample leisure to repent the past, Mrs. Talboys," Robert answered, gravely.

They had left the paved streets behind them, and had emerged out of a great gaunt square, in which there appeared to be about half a dozen cathedrals, into a small boulevard, a broad lamp-lit road, on which the shadows of the leafless branches went and came tremblingly, like the shadows of a paralytic skeleton. There were houses here and there upon this boulevard; stately houses, *entre cour et jardin*, and with plaster vases of geraniums on the stone pillars of the ponderous gateways. The rumbling hackney-carriage drove upward of three-quarters of a mile along this smooth roadway before it drew up against a gateway, older and more ponderous than any of those they had passed.

My lady gave a little scream as she looked out of the coach-window. The gaunt gateway was lighted by an enormous lamp; a great structure of iron and glass, in which one poor little shivering flame struggled with the March wind.

The coachman rang the bell, and a little wooden door at the side of the gate was opened by a gray-haired man, who looked out at the carriage, and then retired. He reappeared three minutes afterward behind the folding iron gates, which he unlocked and threw back to their full extent, revealing a dreary desert of stone-paved courtyard.

The coachman led his wretched horses into the courtyard, and piloted the vehicle to the principal doorway of the house, a great mansion of gray stone, with several long ranges of windows, many of which were dimly lighted, and looked out like the pale eyes of weary watchers upon the darkness of the night.

My lady, watchful and quiet as the cold stars in the wintry sky, looked up at these casements with an earnest and scrutinizing gaze. One of the windows was shrouded by a scanty curtain of faded red; and upon this curtain there went and came a dark shadow, the shadow of a woman with a fantastic head dress, the shadow of a restless creature, who paced perpetually backward and forward before the window.

Sir Michael Audley's wicked wife laid her hand suddenly upon Robert's arm, and pointed with the other hand to this curtained window.

"I know where you have brought me," she said. "This is a MAD-HOUSE."

Mr. Audley did not answer her. He had been standing at the door of the coach when she addressed him, and he quietly assisted her to alight, and led her up a couple of shallow stone steps, and into the entrance-hall of the mansion. He handed Dr. Mosgrave's letter to a neatly-dressed, cheerful-looking, middle-aged woman, who came tripping out of a little chamber which opened out of the hall, and was very much like the bureau of an hotel. This person smilingly welcome Robert and his charge: and after dispatching a servant with the letter, invited them into her pleasant little apartment, which was gayly furnished with bright amber curtains and heated by a tiny stove.

"Madam finds herself very much fatigued?" the Frenchwoman said, interrogatively, with a look of intense sympathy, as she placed an arm-chair for my lady.

"Madam" shrugged her shoulders wearily, and looked round the little chamber with a sharp glance of scrutiny that betokened no very great favor.

"WHAT is this place, Robert Audley?" she cried fiercely. "Do you think I am a baby, that you may juggle with and deceive me—what is it? It is what I said just now, is it not?"

"It is a *maison de santé*, my lady," the young man answered, gravely. "I have no wish to juggle with or to deceive you."

My lady paused for a few moments, looking reflectively at Robert.

"A *maison de santé*," she repeated. "Yes, they manage these things better in France. In England we should call it a madhouse. This a house for mad people, this, is it not, madam?" she said in French, turning upon the woman, and tapping the polished floor with her foot.

"Ah, but no, madam," the woman answered with a shrill scream of protest. "It is an establishment of the most agreeable, where one amuses one's self—"

She was interrupted by the entrance of the principal of this agreeable establishment, who came beaming into the room with a radiant smile

illuminating his countenance, and with Dr. Mosgrave's letter open in his hand.

It was impossible to say *how* enchanted he was to make the acquaintance of M'sieu. There was nothing upon earth which he was not ready to do for M'sieu in his own person, and nothing under heaven which he would not strive to accomplish for him, as the friend of his acquaintance, so very much distinguished, the English doctor. Dr. Mosgrave's letter had given him a brief synopsis of the case, he informed Robert, in an undertone, and he was quite prepared to undertake the care of the charming and very interesting "Madam—Madam—"

He rubbed his hands politely, and looked at Robert. Mr. Audley remembered, for the first time, that he had been recommended to introduce his wretched charge under a feigned name.

He affected not to hear the proprietor's question. It might seem a very easy matter to have hit upon a heap of names, any one of which would have answered his purpose; but Mr. Audley appeared suddenly to have forgotten that he had ever heard any mortal appellation except that of himself and of his lost friend.

Perhaps the proprietor perceived and understood his embarrassment. He at any rate relieved it by turning to the woman who had received them, and muttering something about No. 14, Bis. The woman took a key from a long range of others, that hung over the mantel-piece, and a wax candle from a bracket in a corner of the room, and having lighted the candle, led the way across the stone-paved hall, and up a broad, slippery staircase of polished wood.

The English physician had informed his Belgian colleague that money would be of minor consequence in any arrangements made for the comfort of the English lady who was to be committed to his care. Acting upon this hint, Monsieur Val opened the outer door of a stately suite of apartments, which included a lobby, paved with alternate diamonds of black and white marble, but of a dismal and cellar-like darkness; a saloon furnished with gloomy velvet draperies, and with a certain funereal splendor which is not peculiarly conducive to the elevation of the spirits; and a bed-chamber, containing a bed so wondrously made, as to appear to have no opening whatever in its coverings, unless the counterpane had been split asunder with a pen-knife.

My lady stared dismally round at the range of rooms, which looked dreary enough in the wan light of a single wax-candle. This solitary flame, pale and ghost-like in itself, was multiplied by paler phantoms of its ghostliness, which glimmered everywhere about the rooms; in the shadowy depths of the polished floors and wainscot, or the window-panes, in the looking-glasses, or in those great expanses of glimmering something which adorned the rooms, and which my lady mistook for costly mirrors, but which were in reality wretched mockeries of burnished tin.

Amid all the faded splendor of shabby velvet, and tarnished gilding, and polished wood, the woman dropped into an arm-chair, and covered her face with her hands. The whiteness of them, and the starry light of diamonds trembling about them, glittered in the dimly-lighted chamber. She sat silent, motionless, despairing, sullen, and angry, while Robert and the French doctor retired to an outer chamber, and talked together in undertones. Mr. Audley had very little to say that had not been already said for him, with a far better grace than he himself could have expressed it, by the English physician. He had, after great trouble of mind, hit upon the name of Taylor, as a safe and simple substitute for that other name, to which alone my lady had a right. He told the Frenchman that this Mrs. Taylor was distantly related to him—that she had inherited the seeds of madness from her mother, as indeed Dr. Mosgrave had informed Monsieur Val; and that she had shown some fearful tokens of the lurking taint that was latent in her mind; but that she was not to be called "mad." He begged that she might be treated with all tenderness and compassion; that she might receive all reasonable indulgences; but he impressed upon Monsieur Val, that under no circumstances was she to be permitted to leave the house and grounds without the protection of some reliable person, who should be answerable for her safe-keeping. He had only one other point to urge, and that was, that Monsieur Val, who, as he had understood, was himself a Protestant—the doctor bowed—would make arrangements with some kind and benevolent Protestant clergyman, through whom spiritual advice and consolation might be secured for the invalid lady; who had especial need, Robert added, gravely, of such advantages.

This—with all necessary arrangements as to pecuniary matters, which were to be settled from time to time between Mr. Audley and the doctor, unassisted by any agents whatever—was the extent of the conversation between the two men, and occupied about a quarter of an hour.

My lady sat in the same attitude when they re-entered the bedchamber in which they had left her, with her ringed hands still clasped over her face.

Robert bent over to whisper in her ear.

"Your name is Madam Taylor here," he said. "I do not think you would wish to be known by your real name."

She only shook her head in answer to him, and did not even remove her hands from over her face.

"Madam will have an attendant entirely devoted to her service." said Monsieur Val. "Madam will have all her wishes obeyed; her *reasonable* wishes, but that goes without saying," monsieur adds, with a quaint shrug. "Every effort will be made to render madam's sojourn at Villebrumeuse agreeable. The inmates dine together when it is wished. I dine with the inmates sometimes; my subordinate, a clever and a worthy man always. I reside with my wife and children in a little pavilion in the grounds; my subordinate resides in the establishment. Madam may rely upon our utmost efforts being exerted to insure her comfort."

Monsieur is saying a great deal more to the same effect, rubbing his hands and beaming radiantly upon Robert and his charge, when madam rises suddenly, erect and furious, and dropping her jeweled fingers from before her face, tells him to hold his tongue.

"Leave me alone with the man who has brought me here." she cried, between her set teeth. "Leave me!"

She points to the door with a sharp, imperious gesture; so rapid that the silken drapery about her arm makes a swooping sound as she lifts her hand. The sibilant French syllables hiss through her teeth as she utters them, and seem better fitted to her mood and to herself than the familiar English she has spoken hitherto.



The French doctor shrugs his shoulders as he goes out into the lobby, and mutters something about a "beautiful devil," and a gesture worthy of "the Mars." My lady walked with a rapid footstep to the door between the bed-chamber and the saloon; closed it, and with the handle of the door still in her hand, turned and looked at Robert Audley.

"You have brought me to my grave, Mr. Audley," she cried; "you have used your power basely and cruelly, and have brought me to a living grave."

"I have done that which I thought just to others and merciful to you," Robert answered, quietly. "I should have been a traitor to society had I suffered you to remain at liberty after—the disappearance of George Talboys and the fire at Castle Inn. I have brought you to a place in which you will be kindly treated by people who have no knowledge of your story—no power to taunt or to reproach you. You will lead a quiet and peaceful life, my lady; such a life as many a good and holy woman in this Catholic country freely takes upon herself, and happily endures until the end. The solitude of your existence in this place will be no greater than that of a king's daughter, who, flying from the evil of the time, was glad to take shelter in a house as tranquil as this. Surely, it is a small atonement which I ask you to render for your sins, a light penance which I call upon you to perform. Live here and repent; nobody will assail you, nobody will torment you. I only say to you, repent!"

"I *cannot!*" cried my lady, pushing her hair fiercely from her white forehead, and fixing her dilated eyes upon Robert Audley, "I *cannot!* Has my beauty brought me to *this*? Have I plotted and schemed to shield myself and laid awake in the long deadly nights, trembling to think of my dangers, for *this*? I had better have given up at once, since *this* was to be the end. I had better have yielded to the curse that was upon me, and given up when George Talboys first came back to England."

She plucked at the feathery golden curls as if she would have torn them from her head. It had served her so little after all, that gloriously glittering hair, that beautiful nimbus of yellow light that had contrasted so exquisitely with the melting azure of her eyes. She hated herself and her beauty.

"I would laugh at you and defy you, if I dared," she cried; "I would kill myself and defy you, if I dared. But I am a poor, pitiful coward, and have been so from the first. Afraid of my mother's horrible inheritance; afraid of poverty; afraid of George Talboys; afraid of *you*."

She was silent for a little while, but she held her place by the door, as if determined to detain Robert as long as it was her pleasure to do so.

"Do you know what I am thinking of?" she said, presently. "Do you know what I am thinking of, as I look at you in the dim light of this room? I am thinking of the day upon which George Talboys disappeared."

Robert started as she mentioned the name of his lost friend; his face turned pale in the dusky light, and his breathing grew quicker and louder.

"He was standing opposite me, as you are standing now," continued my lady. "You said that you would raze the old house to the ground; that you would root up every tree in the gardens to find your dead friend. You would have had no need to do so much: the body of George Talboys lies at the bottom of the old well, in the shrubbery beyond the lime-walk."

Robert Audley flung his hands and clasped them above his head, with one loud cry of horror.

"Oh, my God!" he said, after a dreadful pause; "have all the ghastly things that I have thought prepared me so little for the ghastly truth, that it should come upon me like this at last?"

"He came to me in the lime-walk," resumed my lady, in the same hard, dogged tone as that in which she had confessed the wicked story of her life. "I knew that he would come, and I had prepared myself, as well as I could, to meet him. I was determined to bribe him, to cajole him, to defy him; to do anything sooner than abandon the wealth and the position I had won, and go back to my old life. He came, and he reproached me for the conspiracy at Ventnor. He declared that so long as he lived he would never forgive me for the lie that had broken his heart. He told me that I had plucked his heart out of his breast and trampled upon it; and that he had now no heart in which to feel one sentiment of mercy for me. That he would have forgiven me any wrong upon earth, but that one deliberate and passionless wrong that I had done him. He said this and a great deal more, and he told me that no power on earth should turn him from his purpose, which was to take me to the man I had deceived, and make me tell my wicked story. He did not know the hidden taint that I had sucked in with my mother's milk. He did not know that it was possible to drive me mad. He goaded me as you have goaded me; he was as merciless as you have been merciless. We were in the shrubbery at the end of the lime-walk. I was seated upon the broken masonry at the mouth of the well. George Talboys was leaning upon the

disused windlass, in which the rusty iron spindle rattled loosely whenever he shifted his position. I rose at last, and turned upon him to defy him, as I had determined to defy him at the worst. I told him that if he denounced me to Sir Michael, I would declare him to be a madman or a liar, and I defied him to convince the man who loved me—blindly, as I told him—that he had any claim to me. I was going to leave him after having told him this, when he caught me by the wrist and detained me by force. You saw the bruises that his fingers made upon my wrist, and noticed them, and did not believe the account I gave of them. I could see that, Mr. Robert Audley, and I saw that you were a person I should have to fear."

She paused, as if she had expected Robert to speak; but he stood silent and motionless, waiting for the end.

"George Talboys treated me as you treated me," she said, petulantly. "He swore that if there was but one witness of my identity, and that witness was removed from Audley Court by the width of the whole earth, he would bring him there to swear to my identity, and to denounce me. It was then that I was mad, it was then that I drew the loose iron spindle from the shrunken wood, and saw my first husband sink with one horrible cry into the black mouth of the well. There is a legend of its enormous depth. I do not know how deep it is. It is dry, I suppose, for I heard no splash, only a dull thud. I looked down and I saw nothing but black emptiness. I knelt down and listened, but the cry was not repeated, though I waited for nearly a quarter of an hour—God knows how long it seemed to me!—by the mouth of the well."

Robert Audley uttered a word of horror when the story was finished. He moved a little nearer toward the door against which Helen Talboys stood. Had there been any other means of exit from the room, he would gladly have availed himself of it. He shrank from even a momentary contact with this creature.

"Let me pass you, if you please," he said, in an icy voice.

"You see I do not fear to make my confession to you," said Helen Talboys; "for two reasons. The first is, that you dare not use it against me, because you know it would kill your uncle to see me in a criminal dock; the second is, that the law could pronounce no worse sentence than this—a life-long imprisonment in a mad-house. You see I do not thank you for your mercy, Mr. Robert Audley, for I know exactly what it is worth."

She moved away from the door, and Robert passed her without a word, without a look.

Half an hour afterward he was in one of the principal hotels at Villebrumeuse, sitting at a neatly-ordered supper-table, with no power to eat; with no power to distract his mind, even for a moment, from the image of that lost friend who had been treacherously murdered in the thicket at Audley Court.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### GHOST-HAUNTED.

No feverish sleeper traveling in a strange dream ever looked out more wonderingly upon a world that seemed unreal than Robert Audley, as he stared absently at the flat swamps and dismal poplars between Villebrumeuse and Brussels. Could it be that he was returning to his uncle's house without the woman who had reigned in it for nearly two years as queen and mistress? He felt as if he had carried off my lady, and had made away with her secretly and darkly, and must now render up an account to Sir Michael of the fate of that woman, whom the baronet had so dearly loved.

"What shall I tell him?" he thought. "Shall I tell the truth—the horrible, ghastly truth? No; that would be too cruel. His generous spirit would sink under the hideous revelation. Yet, in his ignorance of the extent of this wretched woman's wickedness, he may think, perhaps, that I have been hard with her."

Brooding thus, Mr. Robert Audley absently watched the cheerless landscape from the seat in the shabby *coupé* of the diligence, and thought how great a leaf had been torn out of his life, now that the dark story of George Talboys was finished.

What had he to do next? A crowd of horrible thoughts rushed into his mind as he remembered the story that he had heard from the white lips of Helen Talboys. His friend—his murdered friend—lay hidden among the moldering ruins of the old well at Audley Court. He had lain there for six long months, unburied, unknown; hidden in the darkness of the old convent well. What was to be done?

To institute a search for the remains of the murdered man was to inevitably bring about a coroner's inquest. Should such an inquest be held, it was next to impossible that the history of my lady's crime could fail to be brought to light. To prove that George Talboys met with his death at Audley Court, was to prove almost as surely that my lady had been the instrument

of that mysterious death; for the young man had been known to follow her into the lime-walk upon the day of his disappearance.

"My God!" Robert exclaimed, as the full horror of his position became evident to him; "is my friend to rest in this unhallowed burial-place because I have condoned the offenses of the woman who murdered him?"

He felt that there was no way out of this difficulty. Sometimes he thought that it little mattered to his dead friend whether he lay entombed beneath a marble monument, whose workmanship should be the wonder of the universe, or in that obscure hiding-place in the thicket at Audley Court. At another time he would be seized with a sudden horror at the wrong that had been done to the murdered man, and would fain have traveled even more rapidly than the express between Brussels and Paris could carry him in his eagerness to reach the end of his journey, that he might set right this cruel wrong.

He was in London at dusk on the second day after that on which he had left Audley Court, and he drove straight to the Clarendon, to inquire after his uncle. He had no intention of seeing Sir Michael, as he had not yet determined how much or how little he should tell him, but he was very anxious to ascertain how the old man had sustained the cruel shock he had so lately endured.

"I will see Alicia," he thought, "she will tell me all about her father. It is only two days since he left Audley. I can scarcely expect to hear of any favorable change."

But Mr. Audley was not destined to see his cousin that evening, for the servants at the Clarendon told him that Sir Michael and his daughter had left by the morning mail for Paris, on their way to Vienna.

Robert was very well pleased to receive this intelligence; it afforded him a welcome respite, for it would be decidedly better to tell the baronet nothing of his guilty wife until he returned to England, with health unimpaired and spirits re-established, it was to be hoped.

Mr. Audley drove to the Temple. The chambers which had seemed dreary to him ever since the disappearance of George Talboys, were doubly so tonight. For that which had been only a dark suspicion had now become a horrible certainty. There was no longer room for the palest ray, the most transitory glimmer of hope. His worst terrors had been too well founded.

George Talboys had been cruelly and treacherously murdered by the wife he had loved and mourned.

There were three letters waiting for Mr. Audley at his chambers. One was from Sir Michael, and another from Alicia. The third was addressed in a hand the young barrister knew only too well, though he had seen it but once before. His face flushed redly at the sight of the superscription, and he took the letter in his hand, carefully and tenderly, as if it had been a living thing, and sentient to his touch. He turned it over and over in his hands, looking at the crest upon the envelope, at the post-mark, at the color of the paper, and then put it into the bosom of his waistcoat with a strange smile upon his face.

"What a wretched and unconscionable fool I am!" he thought. "Have I laughed at the follies of weak men all my life, and am I to be more foolish than the weakest of them at last? The beautiful brown-eyed creature! Why did I ever see her? Why did my relentless Nemesis ever point the way to that dreary house in Dorsetshire?"

He opened the first two letters. He was foolish enough to keep the last for a delicious morsel—a fairy-like dessert after the commonplace substantialities of a dinner.

Alicia's letter told him that Sir Michael had borne his agony with such a persevering tranquility that she had become at last far more alarmed by his patient calmness than by any stormy manifestation of despair. In this difficulty she had secretly called upon the physician who attended the Audley household in any cases of serious illness, and had requested this gentleman to pay Sir Michael an apparently accidental visit. He had done so, and after stopping half an hour with the baronet, had told Alicia that there was no present danger of any serious consequence from this great grief, but that it was necessary that every effort should be made to arouse Sir Michael, and to force him, however unwillingly, into action.

Alicia had immediately acted upon this advice, had resumed her old empire as a spoiled child, and reminded her father of a promise he had made of taking her through Germany. With considerable difficulty she had induced him to consent to fulfilling this old promise, and having once gained her point, she had contrived that they should leave England as soon as it was possible to do so, and she told Robert, in conclusion, that she

would not bring her father back to his old house until she had taught him to forget the sorrows associated with it.

The baronet's letter was very brief. It contained half a dozen blank checks on Sir Michael Audley's London bankers.

"You will require money, my dear Robert," he wrote, "for such arrangements as you may think fit to make for the future comfort of the person I committed to your care. I need scarcely tell you that those arrangements cannot be too liberal. But perhaps it is as well that I should tell you now, for the first and only time, that it is my earnest wish never again to hear that person's name. I have no wish to be told the nature of the arrangements you may make for her. I am sure that you will act conscientiously and mercifully. I seek to know no more. Whenever you want money, you will draw upon me for any sums that you may require; but you will have no occasion to tell me for whose use you want that money."

Robert Audley breathed a long sigh of relief as he folded this letter. It released him from a duty which it would have been most painful for him to perform, and it forever decided his course of action with regard to the murdered man.

George Talboys must lie at peace in his unknown grave, and Sir Michael Audley must never learn that the woman he had loved bore the red brand of murder on her soul.

Robert had only the third letter to open—the letter which he had placed in his bosom while he read the others; he tore open the envelope, handling it carefully and tenderly as he had done before.

The letter was as brief as Sir Michael's. It contained only these few lines:

"DEAR MR. AUDLEY—The rector of this place has been twice to see Marks, the man you saved in the fire at the Castle Inn. He lies in a very precarious state at his mother's cottage, near Audley Court, and is not expected to live many days. His wife is attending him, and both he and she have expressed a most earnest desire that you should see him before he dies. Pray come without delay.

"Yours very sincerely,

"CLARA TALBOYS.

"Mount Stanning Rectory, March 6."



Robert Audley folded this letter very reverently, and placed it underneath that part of his waistcoat which might be supposed to cover the region of his heart. Having done this, he seated himself in his favorite arm-chair, filled and lighted a pipe and smoked it out, staring reflectingly at the fire as long as his tobacco lasted. "What can that man Marks want with me," thought the barrister. "He is afraid to die until he has made confession, perhaps. He wishes to tell me that which I know already—the story of my lady's crime. I knew that he was in the secret. I was sure of it even upon the night on which I first saw him. He knew the secret, and he traded on it."

Robert Audley shrank strangely from returning to Essex. How should he meet Clara Talboys now that he knew the secret of her brother's fate? How many lies he should have to tell, or how much equivocation he must use in order to keep the truth from her? Yet would there be any mercy in telling that horrible story, the knowledge of which must cast a blight upon her youth, and blot out every hope she had even secretly cherished? He knew by his own experience how possible it was to hope against hope, and to hope unconsciously; and he could not bear that her heart should be crushed as his had been by the knowledge of the truth. "Better that she should hope vainly to the last," he thought; "better that she should go through life seeking the clew to her lost brother's fate, than that I should give that clew into her hands, and say, 'Our worst fears are realized. The brother you loved has been foully murdered in the early promise of his youth.'"

But Clara Talboys had written to him, imploring him to return to Essex without delay. Could he refuse to do her bidding, however painful its accomplishment might be? And again, the man was dying, perhaps, and had implored to see him. Would it not be cruel to refuse to go—to delay an hour unnecessarily? He looked at his watch. It wanted only five minutes to nine. There was no train to Audley after the Ipswich mail, which left London at half-past eight; but there was a train that left Shoreditch at eleven, and stopped at Brentwood between twelve and one. Robert decided upon going by this train, and walking the distance between Brentwood and Audley, which was upwards of six miles.

Fleet street was quiet and lonely at this late hour, and Robert Audley being in a ghost-seeing mood, would have been scarcely astonished had he seen Johnson's set come roystering westward in the lamp-light, or blind John Milton groping his way down the steps before Saint Bride's Church.

Mr. Audley hailed a hansom at the corner of Farrington street, and was rattled rapidly away across tenantless Smithfield market, and into a labyrinth of dingy streets that brought him out upon the broad grandeur of Finsbury Pavement.

The hansom rattled up the steep and stony approach to Shoreditch Station, and deposited Robert at the doors of that unlovely temple. There were very few people going to travel by this midnight train, and Robert walked up and down the long wooden platform, reading the huge advertisements whose gaunt lettering looked wan and ghastly in the dim lamplight.

He had the carriage in which he sat all to himself. All to himself did I say? Had he not lately summoned to his side that ghostly company which of all companionship is the most tenacious? The shadow of George Talboys pursued him, even in the comfortable first-class carriage, and was behind him when he looked out of the window, and was yet far ahead of him and the rushing engine, in that thicket toward which the train was speeding, by the side of the unhallowed hiding-place in which the mortal remains of the dead man lay, neglected and uncared for.

"I must give my lost friend decent burial," Robert thought, as the chill wind swept across the flat landscape, and struck him with such frozen breath as might have emanated from the lips of the dead. "I must do it; or I shall die of some panic like this which has seized upon me to-night. I must do it; at any peril; at any cost. Even at the price of that revelation which will bring the mad woman back from her safe hiding-place, and place her in a criminal dock." He was glad when the train stopped at Brentwood at a few minutes after twelve.

It was half-past one o'clock when the night wanderer entered the village of Audley, and it was only there that he remembered that Clara Talboys had omitted to give him any direction by which he might find the cottage in which Luke Marks lay.

"It was Dawson who recommended that the poor creature should be taken to his mother's cottage," Robert thought, by-and-by, "and, I dare say. Dawson has attended him ever since the fire. He'll be able to tell me the way to the cottage."

Acting upon this idea, Mr. Audley stopped at the house in which Helen Talboys had lived before her second marriage. The door of the little surgery

was ajar, and there was a light burning within. Robert pushed the door open and peeped in. The surgeon was standing at the mahogany counter, mixing a draught in a glass measure, with his hat close beside him. Late as it was, he had evidently only just come in. The harmonious snoring of his assistant sounded from a little room within the surgery.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Mr. Dawson," Robert said, apologetically, as the surgeon looked up and recognized him, "but I have come down to see Marks, who, I hear, is in a very bad way, and I want you to tell me the way to his mother's cottage."

"I'll show you the way, Mr. Audley," answered the surgeon, "I am going there this minute."

"The man is very bad, then?"

"So bad that he can be no worse. The change that can happen is that change which will take him beyond the reach of any earthly suffering."

"Strange!" exclaimed Robert. "He did not appear to be much burned."

"He was not much burnt. Had he been, I should never have recommended his being removed from Mount Stanning. It is the shock that has done the business. He has been in a raging fever for the last two days; but to-night he is much calmer, and I'm afraid, before to-morrow night, we shall have seen the last of him."

"He has asked to see me, I am told," said Mr. Audley.

"Yes," answered the surgeon, carelessly. "A sick man's fancy, no doubt. You dragged him out of the house, and did your best to save his life. I dare say, rough and boorish as the poor fellow is, he thinks a good deal of that."

They had left the surgery, the door of which Mr. Dawson had locked behind him. There was money in the till, perhaps, for surely the village apothecary could not have feared that the most daring housebreaker would imperil his liberty in the pursuit of blue pill and colocynth, of salts and senna.

The surgeon led the way along the silent street, and presently turned into a lane at the end of which Robert Audley saw the wan glimmer of a light; a light which told of the watch that is kept by the sick and dying; a pale, melancholy light, which always has a dismal aspect when looked upon in this silent hour betwixt night and morning. It shone from the window of the cottage in which Luke Marks lay, watched by his wife and mother.

Mr. Dawson lifted the latch, and walked into the common room of the little tenement, followed by Robert Audley. It was empty, but a feeble tallow candle, with a broken back, and a long, cauliflower-headed wick, sputtered upon the table. The sick man lay in the room above.

"Shall I tell him you are here?" asked Mr. Dawson.

"Yes, yes, if you please. But be cautious how you tell him, if you think the news likely to agitate him. I am in no hurry. I can wait. You can call me when you think I can safely come up-stairs."

The surgeon nodded, and softly ascended the narrow wooden stairs leading to the upper chamber.

Robert Audley seated himself in a Windsor chair by the cold hearthstone, and stared disconsolately about him. But he was relieved at last by the low voice of the surgeon, who looked down from the top of the little staircase to tell him that Luke Marks was awake, and would be glad to see him.

Robert immediately obeyed this summons. He crept softly up the stairs, and took off his hat before he bent his head to enter at the low doorway of the humble rustic chamber. He took off his hat in the presence of this common peasant man, because he knew that there was another and a more awful presence hovering about the room, and eager to be admitted.

Phoebe Marks was sitting at the foot of the bed, with her eyes fixed upon her husband's face—not with any very tender expression in the pale light, but with a sharp, terrified anxiety, which showed that it was the coming of death itself that she dreaded, rather than the loss of her husband. The old woman was busy at the fire-place, airing linen, and preparing some mess of broth which it was not likely the patient would ever eat. The sick man lay with his head propped up by pillows, his coarse face deadly pale, and his great hands wandering uneasily about the coverlet. Phoebe had been reading to him, for an open Testament lay among the medicine and lotion bottles upon the table near the bed. Every object in the room was neat and orderly, and bore witness of that delicate precision which had always been a distinguishing characteristic of Phoebe.

The young woman rose as Robert Audley crossed the threshold, and hurried toward him.

"Let me speak to you for a moment, sir, before you talk to Luke," she said, in an eager whisper. "Pray let me speak to you first."

"What's the gal a-sayin', there?" asked the invalid in a subdued roar, which died away hoarsely on his lips. He was feebly savage, even in his weakness. The dull glaze of death was gathering over his eyes, but they still watched Phoebe with a sharp glance of dissatisfaction. "What's she up to there?" he said. "I won't have no plottin' and no hatchin' agen me. I want to speak to Mr. Audley my own self; and whatever I done I'm goin' to answer for. If I done any mischief, I'm a-goin' to try and undo it. What's she a-sayin'?"

"She ain't a-sayin' nothin', lovey," answered the old woman, going to the bedside of her son, who even when made more interesting than usual by illness, did not seem a very fit subject for this tender appellation.

"She's only a-tellin' the gentleman how bad you've been, my pretty."

"What I'm a-goin' to tell I'm only a-goin' to tell to him, remember," growled Mr. Mark; "and ketch me a-tellin' of it to him if it warn't for what he done for me the other night."

"To be sure not, lovey," answered the old woman soothingly.

Phoebe Marks had drawn Mr. Audley out of the room and onto the narrow landing at the top of the little staircase. This landing was a platform of about three feet square, and it was as much as the two could manage to stand upon it without pushing each other against the whitewashed wall, or backward down the stairs.

"Oh, sir, I wanted to speak to you so badly," Phoebe answered, eagerly; "you know what I told you when I found you safe and well upon the night of the fire?"

"Yes, yes."

"I told you what I suspected; what I think still."

"Yes, I remember."

"But I never breathed a word of it to anybody but you, sir, and I think that Luke has forgotten all about that night; I think that what went before the fire has gone clean out of his head altogether. He was tipsy, you know, when my la—when she came to the Castle; and I think he was so dazed and scared like by the fire that it all went out of his memory. He doesn't suspect what I suspect, at any rate, or he'd have spoken of it to anybody or everybody; but

he's dreadful spiteful against my lady, for he says if she'd have let him have a place at Brentwood or Chelmsford, this wouldn't have happened. So what I wanted to beg of you, sir, is not to let a word drop before Luke."

"Yes, yes, I understand; I will be careful."

"My lady has left the Court, I hear, sir?"

"Yes."

"Never to come back, sir?"

"Never to come back."

"But she has not gone where she'll be cruelly treated; where she'll be ill-used?"

"No: she will be very kindly treated."

"I'm glad of that, sir; I beg your pardon for troubling you with the question, sir, but my lady was a kind mistress to me."

Luke's voice, husky and feeble, was heard within the little chamber at this period of the conversation, demanding angrily when "that gal would have done jawing;" upon which Phoebe put her finger to her lips, and led Mr. Audley back into the sick-room.

"I don't want *you*" said Mr. Marks, decisively, as his wife re-entered the chamber—"I don't want *you*; you've no call to hear what I've got to say—I only want Mr. Audley, and I wants to speak to him all alone, with none o' your sneakin' listenin' at doors, d'ye hear? so you may go down-stairs and keep there till you're wanted; and you may take mother—no, mother may stay, I shall want her presently."

The sick man's feeble hand pointed to the door, through which his wife departed very submissively.

"I've no wish to hear anything, Luke," she said, "but I hope you won't say anything against those that have been good and generous to you."

"I shall say what I like," answered Mr. Marks, fiercely, "and I'm not a-goin' to be ordered by you. You ain't the parson, as I've ever heerd of; nor the lawyer neither."

The landlord of the Castle Inn had undergone no moral transformation by his death-bed sufferings, fierce and rapid as they had been. Perhaps some faint glimmer of a light that had been far off from his life now struggled feebly through the black obscurities of ignorance that darkened his soul.

Perhaps a half angry, half sullen penitence urged him to make some rugged effort to atone for a life that had been selfish and drunken and wicked. Be it how it might he wiped his white lips, and turning his haggard eyes earnestly upon Robert Audley, pointed to a chair by the bedside.

"You made game of me in a general way, Mr. Audley," he said, presently, "and you've drawn me out, and you've tumbled and tossed me about like in a gentlemanly way, till I was nothink or anythink in your hands; and you've looked me through and through, and turned me inside out till you thought you knowed as much as I knowed. I'd no particular call to be grateful to you, not before the fire at the Castle t'other night. But I am grateful to you for that. I'm not grateful to folks in a general way, p'r'aps, because the things as gentlefolks have give have a'most allus been the very things I didn't want. They've give me soup, and tracks, and flannel, and coals; but, Lord, they've made such a precious noise about it that I'd have been to send 'em all back to 'em. But when a gentleman goes and puts his own life in danger to save a drunken brute like me, the drunkenest brute as ever was feels grateful like to that gentleman, and wishes to say before he dies—which he sees in the doctor's face as he ain't got long to live—'Thank ye, sir, I'm obliged to you.'"

Luke Marks stretched out his left hand—the right hand had been injured by the fire, and was wrapped in linen—and groped feebly for that of Mr. Robert Audley.

The young man took the coarse but shrunken hand in both his own, and pressed it cordially.

"I need no thanks, Luke Marks," he said; "I was very glad to be of service to you."

Mr. Marks did not speak immediately. He was lying quietly upon his side, staring reflectingly at Robert Audley.

"You was oncommon fond of that gent as disappeared at the Court, warn't you, sir?" he said at last.

Robert started at the mention of his dead friend.

"You was oncommon fond of that Mr. Talboys, I've heard say, sir," repeated Luke.

"Yes, yes," answered Robert, rather impatiently, "he was my very dear friend."

"I've heard the servants at the Court say how you took on when you couldn't find him. I've heered the landlord of the Sun Inn say how cut up you was when you first missed him. 'If the two gents had been brothers,' the landlord said, 'our gent,' meanin' you, sir, 'couldn't have been more cut up when he missed the other.'"

"Yes, yes, I know, I know," said Robert; "pray do not speak any more of this subject. I cannot tell you how much it distresses me."

Was he to be haunted forever by the ghost of his unburied friend? He came here to comfort the sick man, and even here he was pursued by this relentless shadow; even here he was reminded of the secret crime which had darkened his life.

"Listen to me, Marks," he said, earnestly; "believe me that I appreciate your grateful words, and that I am very glad to have been of service to you. But before you say anything more, let me make one most solemn request. If you have sent for me that you may tell me anything of the fate of my lost friend, I entreat you to spare yourself and to spare me that horrible story. You can tell me nothing which I do not already know. The worst you can tell me of the woman who was once in your power, has already been revealed to me by her own lips. Pray, then, be silent upon this subject; I say again, you can tell me nothing which I do not know."

Luke Marks looked musingly at the earnest face of his visitor, and some shadowy expression, which was almost like a smile, flitted feebly across the sick man's haggard features.

"I can't tell you nothin' you don't know?" he asked.

"Nothing."

"Then it ain't no good for me to try," said the invalid, thoughtfully. "Did *she* tell you?" he asked, after a pause.

"I must beg, Marks, that you will drop the subject," Robert answered, almost sternly. "I have already told you that I do not wish to hear it spoken of. Whatever discoveries you made, you made your market out of them. Whatever guilty secrets you got possession of, you were paid for keeping silence. You had better keep silence to the end."

"Had I?" cried Luke Marks, in an eager whisper. "Had I really now better hold my tongue to the last?"



"I think so, most decidedly. You traded on your secret, and you were paid to keep it. It would be more honest to hold to your bargain, and keep it still."

"Would it now?" said Mr. Marks with a ghastly grin; "but suppose my lady had one secret and I another. How then?"

"What do you mean?"

"Suppose I could have told something all along; and would have told it, perhaps, if I'd been a little better treated; if what was give to me had been give a little more liberal like, and not flung at me as if I was a dog, and was only give it to be kep' from bitin'. Suppose I could have told somethin', and would have told it but for that? How then?"

It was impossible to describe the ghastliness of the triumphant grin that lighted up the sick man's haggard face.

"His mind is wandering," Robert thought; "I had need be patient with him, poor fellow. It would be strange if I could not be patient with a dying man."

Luke marks lay staring at Mr. Audley for some moments with that triumphant grin upon his face. The old woman, wearied out with watching her dying son, had dropped into a doze, and sat nodding her sharp chin over the handful of fire, upon which the broth that was never to be eaten, still bubbled and simmered.

Mr. Audley waited very patiently until it should be the sick man's pleasure to speak. Every sound was painfully distinct in that dead hour of the night. The dropping of the ashes on the hearth, the ominous crackling of the burning coals, the slow and ponderous ticking of the sulky clock in the room below, the low moaning of the March wind (which might have been the voice of an English Banshee, screaming her dismal warning to the watchers of the dying), the hoarse breathing of the sick man--every sound held itself apart from all other sounds, and made itself into a separate voice, loud with a gloomy portent in the solemn stillness of the house.

Robert sat with his face shaded by his hands, thinking what was to become of him now that the secret of his friend's fate had been told, and the dark story of George Talboys and his wicked wife had been finished in the Belgian mad-house. What was to become of him?

He had no claim upon Clara Talboys; for he had resolved to keep the horrible secret that had been told to him. How then could he dare to meet her with that secret held back from her? How could he ever look into her earnest eyes, and yet withhold the truth? He felt that all power of reservation would fail before the searching glance of those calm brown eyes. If he was indeed to keep this secret he must never see her again. To reveal it would be to embitter her life. Could he, for any selfish motive of his own, tell her this terrible story?--or could he think that if he told her she would suffer her murdered brother to lie unavenged and forgotten in his unhallowed grave?

Hemmed in on every side by difficulties which seemed utterly insurmountable; with the easy temperament which was natural to him embittered by the gloomy burden he had borne so long, Robert Audley looked hopelessly forward to the life which lay before him, and thought that it would have been better for him had he perished among the burning ruins of the Castle Inn.

"Who would have been sorry for me? No one but my poor little Alicia," he thought, "and hers would have only been an April sorrow. Would Clara Talboys have been sorry? No! She would have only regretted me as a lost link in the mystery of her brother's death. She would only--"

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THAT WHICH THE DYING MAN HAD TO TELL.

Heaven knows whither Mr. Audley's thoughts might have wandered had he not been startled by a sudden movement of the sick man, who raised himself up in his bed, and called to his mother.

The old woman woke up with a jerk, and turned sleepily enough to look at her son.

"What is it, Luke, deary?" she asked soothingly. "It ain't time for the doctor's stuff yet. Mr. Dawson said as you weren't to have it till two hours after he went away, and he ain't been gone an hour yet."

"Who said it was the doctor's stuff I wanted?" cried Mr. Marks, impatiently. "I want to ask you something, mother. Do you remember the seventh of last September?"

Robert started, and looked eagerly at the sick man. Why did he harp upon this forbidden subject? Why did he insist upon recalling the date of George's murder? The old woman shook her head in feeble confusion of mind.

"Lord, Luke," she said, "how can'ee ask me such questions? My memory's been a failin' me this eight or nine year; and I never was one to remember the days of the month, or aught o' that sort. How should a poor workin' woman remember such things."

Luke Marks shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"You're a good un to do what's asked you, mother," he said, peevishly. "Didn't I tell you to rememer that day? Didn't I tell you as the time might come when you'd be called upon to bear witness about it, and put upon your Bible oath about it? Didn't I tell you that, mother?"

The old woman shook her head hopelessly.

"If you say so, I make no doubt you did, Luke," she said, with a conciliatory smile; "but I can't call it to mind, lovey. My memory's been

failin' me this nine yaer, sir," she added, turning to Robert Audley, "and I'm but a poor crittur."

Mr. Audley laid his hand upon the sick man's arm.

"Marks," he said, "I tell you again, you have no cause to worry yourself about this matter. I ask you no questions, I have no wish to hear anything."

"But, suppose I want to tell something," cried Luke, with feverish energy, "suppose I feel I can't die with a secret on my mind, and have asked to see you on purpose that I might tell you; suppose that, and you'll suppose nothing but the truth. I'd have been burnt alive before I'd have told *her*." He spoke these words between his set teeth, and scowled savagely as he uttered them. "I'd have been burnt alive first. I made her pay for her pretty insolent ways; I made her pay for her airs and graces; I'd never have told her—never, never! I had my power over her, and I kept it; I had my secret and was paid for it; and there wasn't a petty slight as she ever put upon me or mine that I didn't pay her out for twenty times over!"

"Marks, Marks, for Heaven's sake be calm," said Robert, earnestly. "What are you talking of? What is it that you could have told?"

"I'm a-goin to tell you," answered Luke, wiping his lips. "Give us a drink, mother."

The old woman poured out some cooling drink into a mug, and carried it to her son.

He drank it in an eager hurry, as if he felt that the brief remainder of his life must be a race with the pitiless pedestrian, Time.

"Stop where you are," he said to his mother, pointing to a chair at the foot of the bed.

The old woman obeyed, and seated herself meekly opposite to Mr. Audley.

"I'll ask you another question, mother," said Luke, "and I think it'll be strange if you can't answer it. Do you remember when I was at work upon Atkinson's farm; before I was married you know, and when I was livin' down here along of you?"

"Yes, yes," Mrs. Marks answered, nodding triumphantly, "I remember that, my dear. It were last fall, just about as the apples was bein' gathered in the orchard across our lane, and about the time as you had your new sprigged wesket. I remember, Luke, I remember."

Mr. Audley wondered where all this was to lead to, and how long he would have to sit by the sick man's bed, hearing a conversation that had no meaning to him.

"If you remember that much, maybe you'll remember more, mother," said Luke. "Can you call to mind my bringing some one home here one night, while Atkinsons was stackin' the last o' their corn?"

Once more Mr. Audley started violently, and this time he looked up earnestly at the face of the speaker, and listened, with a strange, breathless interest, that he scarcely understood himself, to what Luke Marks was saying.

"I rek'lect your bringing home Phoebe," the old woman answered, with great animation. "I rek'lect your bringin' Phoebe home to take a cup o' tea, or a little snack o' supper, a mort o' times."

"Bother Phoebe," cried Mr. Marks, "who's a talkin' of Phoebe? What's Phoebe, that anybody should go to put theirselves out about her? Do you remember my bringin' home a gentleman after ten o'clock, one September night; a gentleman as was wet through to the skin, and was covered with mud and slush, and green slime and black muck, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and had his arm broke, and his shoulder swelled up awful; and was such a object that nobody would ha' knowed him; a gentleman as had to have his clothes cut off him in some places, and as sat by the kitchen fire, starin' at the coals as if he had gone mad or stupid-like, and didn't know where he was, or who he was; and as had to be cared for like a baby, and dressed, and dried, and washed, and fed with spoonfuls of brandy, that had to be forced between his locked teeth, before any life could be got into him? Do you remember that, mother?"

The old woman nodded, and muttered something to the effect that she remembered all these circumstances most vividly, now that Luke happened to mention them.

Robert Audley uttered a wild cry, and fell down upon his knees by the side of the sick man's bed.

"My God!" he ejaculated, "I think Thee for Thy wondrous mercies. George Talboys is alive!"

"Wait a bit," said Mr. Marks, "don't you be too fast. Mother, give us down that tin box on the shelf over against the chest of drawers, will you?"

The old woman obeyed, and after fumbling among broken teacups and milk-jugs, lidless wooden cotton-boxes, and a miscellaneous litter of rags and crockery, produced a tin snuff-box with a sliding lid; a shabby, dirty-looking box enough.

Robert Audley still knelt by the bedside with his face hidden by his clasped hands. Luke Marks opened the tin box.

"There ain't no money in it, more's the pity," he said, "or if there had been it wouldn't have been let stop very long. But there's summat in it that perhaps you'll think quite as vailable as money, and that's what I'm goin' to give you as a proof that a drunken brute can feel thankful to them as is kind to him."

He took out two folded papers, which he gave into Robert Audley's hands.

They were two leaves torn out of a pocket-book, and they were written upon in pencil, and in a handwriting that was quite strange to Mr. Audley—a cramped, stiff, and yet scrawling hand, such as some plowman might have written.

"I don't know this writing," Robert said, as he eagerly unfolded the first of the two papers. "What has this to do with my friend? Why do you show me these?"

"Suppose you read 'em first," said Mr. Marks, "and ask me questions about them afterwards."

The first paper which Robert Audley had unfolded contained the following lines, written in that cramped, yet scrawling hand which was so strange to him:

"MY DEAR FRIEND—I write to you in such utter confusion of mind as perhaps no man ever before suffered. I cannot tell you what has happened to me, I can only tell you that something has happened which will drive me from England a broken-hearted man, to seek some corner of the earth in which I may live and die unknown and forgotten. I can only ask you to forget me. If your friendship could have done me any good, I would have appealed to it. If your counsel could have been any help to me, I would have confided in you. But neither friendship nor counsel can help me; and all I can say to you is this, God bless you for the past, and teach you to forget me in the future. G.T."

The second paper was addressed to another person, and its contents were briefer than those of the first.

"HELEN—May God pity and forgive you for that which you have done to-day, as truly as I do. Rest in peace. You shall never hear of me again; to you and to the world I shall henceforth be that which you wished me to be to-day. You need fear no molestation from me. I leave England never to return.

"G.T."

Robert Audley sat staring at these lines in hopeless bewilderment. They were not in his friend's familiar hand, and yet they purported to be written by him and were signed with his initials.

He looked scrutinizingly at the face of Luke Marks, thinking that perhaps some trick was being played upon him.

"This was not written by George Talboys," he said.

"It was," answered Luke Marks, "it was written by Mr. Talboys, every line of it. He wrote it with his own hand; but it was his left hand, for he couldn't use his right because of his broken arm."

Robert Audley looked up suddenly, and the shadow of suspicion passed away from his face.

"I understand," he said, "I understand. Tell me all; tell me how it was that my poor friend was saved."

"I was at work up at Atkinson's farm, last September," said Luke Marks, "helping to stack the last of the corn, and as the nighest way from the farm to mother's cottage was through the meadows at the back of the Court, I used to come that way, and Phoebe used to stand in the garden wall beyond the lime-walk sometimes, to have a chat with me, knowin' my time o' comin' home.

"I don't know what Phoebe was a-doin' upon the evenin' of the seventh o' September—I rek'lect the date because Farmer Atkinson paid me my wages all of a lump on that day, and I'd had to sign a bit of a receipt for the money he give me—I don't know what she was a-doin', but she warn't at the gate agen the lime-walk, so I went round to the other side o' the gardens and jumped across the dry ditch, for I wanted partic'ler to see her that night, as I was goin' away to work upon a farm beyond Chelmsford the next day. Audley church clock struck nine as I was crossin' the meadows between

Atkinson's and the Court, and it must have been about a quarter past nine when I got into the kitchen garden.

"I crossed the garden, and went into the lime-walk; the nighest way to the servants' hall took me through the shrubbery and past the dry well. It was a dark night, but I knew my way well enough about the old place, and the light in the window of the servants' hall looked red and comfortable through the darkness. I was close against the mouth of the dry well when I heard a sound that made my blood creep. It was a groan—a groan of a man in pain, as was lyin' somewhere hid among the bushes. I warn't afraid of ghosts and I warn't afraid of anythink in a general way, but there was somethin in hearin' this groan as chilled me to the very heart, and for a minute I was struck all of a heap, and didn't know what to do. But I heard the groan again, and then I began to search among the bushes. I found a man lyin' hidden under a lot o' laurels, and I thought at first he was up to no good, and I was a-goin' to collar him to take him to the house, when he caught me by the wrist without gettin' up from the ground, but lookin' at me very earnest, as I could see by the way his face was turned toward me in the darkness, and asked me who I was, and what I was, and what I had to do with the folks at the Court.

"There was somethin' in the way he spoke that told me he was a gentleman, though I didn't know him from Adam, and couldn't see his face; and I answered his questions civil.

"'I want to get away from this place,' he said, 'without bein' seen by any livin' creetur, remember that. I've been lyin' here ever since four o'clock to-day, and I'm half dead, but I want to get away without bein' seen, mind that.'

"I told him that was easy enough, but I began to think my first thoughts of him might have been right enough, after all, and that he couldn't have been up to no good to want to sneak away so precious quiet.

"'Can you take me to any place where I can get a change of dry clothes,' he says, 'without half a dozen people knowin' it?'

"He'd got up into a sittin' attitude by this time, and I could see that his right arm hung close by his side, and that he was in pain.

"I pointed to his arm, and asked him what was the matter with it; but he only answered, very quiet like: 'Broken, my lad, broken. Not that that's much,' he says in another tone, speaking to himself like, more than to me.



'There's broken hearts as well as broken limbs, and they're not so easy mended.'

"I told him I could take him to mother's cottage, and that he could dry his clothes there and welcome.

"'Can your mother keep a secret?' he asked.

"'Well, she could keep one well enough if she could remember it,' I told him; 'but you might tell her all the secrets of the Freemasons, and Foresters, and Buffalers and Oddfellers as ever was, to-night: and she'd have forgotten all about 'em to-morrow mornin'.'

"He seemed satisfied with this, and he got himself up by holdin' on to me, for it seemed as if his limbs was cramped, the use of 'em was almost gone. I felt as he came agen me, that his clothes was wet and mucky.

"'You haven't been and fell into the fish-pond, have you, sir?' I asked.

"He made no answer to my question; he didn't seem even to have heard it. I could see now he was standin' upon his feet that he was a tall, fine-made man, a head and shoulders higher than me.

"'Take me to your mother's cottage,' he said, 'and get me some dry clothes if you can; I'll pay you well for your trouble.'

"I knew that the key was mostly left in the wooden gate in the garden wall, so I led him that way. He could scarcely walk at first, and it was only by leanin' heavily upon my shoulder that he managed to get along. I got him through the gate, leavin' it unlocked behind me, and trustin' to the chance of that not bein' noticed by the under-gardener, who had the care of the key, and was a careless chap enough. I took him across the meadows, and brought him up here, still keepin' away from the village, and in the fields, where there wasn't a creature to see us at that time o' night; and so I got him into the room down-stairs, where mother was a-sittin' over the fire gettin' my bit o' supper ready for me.

"I put the strange chap in a chair agen the fire, and then for the first time I had a good look at him. I never see anybody in such a state before. He was all over green damp and muck, and his hands was scratched and cut to pieces. I got his clothes off him how I could, for he was like a child in my hands, and sat starin' at the fire as helpless as any baby; only givin' a long heavy sigh now and then, as if his heart was a-goin' to bust. At last he dropped into a kind of a doze, a stupid sort of sleep, and began to nod over

the fire, so I ran and got a blanket and wrapped him in it, and got him to lie down on the press bedstead in the room under this. I sent mother to bed, and I sat by the fire and watched him, and kep' the fire up till it was just upon daybreak, when he 'woke up all of a sudden with a start, and said he must go, directly this minute.

"I begged him not to think of such a thing and told him he warn't fit to move for ever so long; but he said he must go, and he got up, and though he staggered like, and at first could hardly stand steady two minutes together, he wouldn't be beat, and he got me to dress him in his clothes as I'd dried and cleaned as well as I could while he laid asleep. I did manage it at last, but the clothes was awful spoiled, and he looked a dreadful objeck, with his pale face and a great cut on his forehead that I'd washed and tied up with a handkercher. He could only get his coat on by buttoning it on round his neck, for he couldn't put a sleeve upon his broken arm. But he held out agen everything, though he groaned every now and then; and what with the scratches and bruises on his hands, and the cut upon his forehead, and his stiff limbs and broken arm, he'd plenty of call to groan; and by the time it was broad daylight he was dressed and ready to go.

"'What's the nearest town to this upon the London road?' he asked me.

"I told him as the nighest town was Brentwood.

"'Very well, then,' he says, 'if you'll go with me to Brentwood, and take me to some surgeon as'll set my arm, I'll give you a five pound note for that and all your other trouble.'

"I told him that I was ready and willin' to do anything as he wanted done; and asked him if I shouldn't go and see if I could borrow a cart from some of the neighbors to drive him over in, for I told him it was a good six miles' walk.

"He shook his head. No, no, no, he said, he didn't want anybody to know anything about him; he'd rather walk it.

"He did walk it; and he walked like a good 'un, too; though I know as every step he took o' them six miles he took in pain; but he held out as he'd held out before; I never see such a chap to hold out in all my blessed life. He had to stop sometimes and lean agen a gateway to get his breath; but he held out still, till at last we got into Brentwood, and then he says, 'Take me to the nighest surgeon's,' and I waited while he had his arm set in splints, which took a precious long time. The surgeon wanted him to stay in

Brentwood till he was better, but he said it warn't to be heard on, he must get up to London without a minute's loss of time; so the surgeon made him as comfortable as he could, considering and tied up his arm in a sling."

Robert Audley started. A circumstance connected with his visit to Liverpool dashed suddenly back upon his memory. He remembered the clerk who had called him back to say there was a passenger who took his berth on board the *Victoria Regia* within an hour or so of the vessel's sailing; a young man with his arm in a sling, who had called himself by some common name, which Robert had forgotten.

"When his arm was dressed," continued Luke, "he says to the surgeon, 'Can you give me a pencil to write something before I go away?' The surgeon smiles and shakes his head: 'You'll never be able to write with that there hand to-day,' he says, pointin' to the arm as had just been dressed. 'P'raps not,' the young chap answers, quiet enough, 'but I can write with the other,' 'Can't I write it for you?' says the surgeon. 'No, thank you,' answers the other; 'what I've got to write is private. If you can give me a couple of envelopes, I'll be obliged to you.'

"With that the surgeon goes to fetch the envelopes, and the young chap takes a pocket-book out of his coat pocket with his left hand; the cover was wet and dirty, but the inside was clean enough, and he tears out a couple of leaves and begins to write upon 'em as you see; and he writes dreadful awk'ard with his left hand, and he writes slow, but he contrives to finish what you see, and then he puts the two bits o' writin' into the envelopes as the surgeon brings him, and he seals 'em up, and he puts a pencil cross upon one of 'em, and nothing on the other: and then he pays the surgeon for his trouble, and the surgeon says, ain't there nothin' more he can do for him, and can't he persuade him to stay in Brentwood till his arm's better; but he says no, no, it ain't possible; and then he says to me, 'Come along o' me to the railway station, and I'll give you what I've promised.'

"So I went to the station with him. We was in time to catch the train as stops at Brentwood at half after eight, and we had five minutes to spare. So he takes me into a corner of the platform, and he says, 'I wants you to deliver these here letters for me,' which I told him I was willin'. 'Very well, then,' he says; 'look here; you know Audley Court?' 'Yes,' I says, 'I ought to, for my sweetheart lives lady's maid there.' 'Whose lady's maid?' he says. So I tells him, 'My lady's, the new lady what was governess at Mr. Dawson's.'

'Very well, then,' he says; 'this here letter with the cross upon the envelope is for Lady Audley, but you're to be sure to give it into her own hands; and remember to take care as nobody sees you give it.' I promises to do this, and he hands me the first letter. And then he says, 'Do you know Mr. Audley, as is nevy to Sir Michael?' and I said, 'Yes, I've heerd tell on him, and I've heerd as he was a reg'lar swell, but affable and free-spoken' (for I heerd 'em tell on you, you know)," Luke added, parenthetically. "'Now look here,' the young chap says, 'you're to give this other letter to Mr. Robert Audley, whose a-stayin' at the Sun Inn, in the village;' and I tells him it's all right, as I've know'd the Sun ever since I was a baby. So then he gives me the second letter, what's got nothing wrote upon the envelope, and he gives me a five-pound note, accordin' to promise; and then he says, 'Good-day, and thank you for all your trouble,' and he gets into a second-class carriage; and the last I sees of him is a face as white as a sheet of writin' paper, and a great patch of stickin'-plaster criss-crossed upon his forehead."

"Poor George! poor George!"

"I went back to Audley, and I went straight to the Sun Inn, and asked for you, meanin' to deliver both letters faithful, so help me God! then; but the landlord told me as you'd started off that mornin' for London, and he didn't know when you'd come back, and he didn't know the name o' the place where you lived in London, though he said he thought it was in one o' them law courts, such as Westminster Hall or Doctors' Commons, or somethin' like that. So what was I to do? I couldn't send a letter by post, not knowin' where to direct to, and I couldn't give it into your own hands, and I'd been told partickler not to let anybody else know of it; so I'd nothing to do but to wait and see if you come back, and bide my time for givin' of it to you.

"I thought I'd go over to the Court in the evenin' and see Phoebe, and find out from her when there'd be a chance of seein' her lady, for I know'd she could manage it if she liked. So I didn't go to work that day, though I ought to ha' done, and I lounged and idled about until it was nigh upon dusk, and then I goes down to the meadows behind the Court, and there I finds Phoebe sure enough, waitin' agen the wooden door in the wall, on the lookout for me.

"I hadn't been talkin' to her long before I see there was somethink wrong with her and I told her as much.

"Well,' she says, 'I ain't quite myself this evenin', for I had a upset yesterday, and I ain't got over it yet.'

"'A upset,' I says. 'You had a quarrel with your missus, I suppose.'

"She didn't answer me directly, but she smiled the queerest smile as ever I see, and presently she says:

"No, Luke, it weren't nothin' o' that kind; and what's more, nobody could be friendlier toward me than my lady. I think she'd do any think for me a'most; and I think, whether it was a bit o' farming stock and furniture or such like, or whether it was the good-will of a public-house, she wouldn't refuse me anythink as I asked her.'

"I couldn't make out this, for it was only a few days before as she'd told me her missus was selfish and extravagant, and we might wait a long time before we could get what we wanted from her.

"So I says to her, 'Why, this is rather sudden like, Phoebe;' and she says, 'Yes, it is sudden;' and she smiles again, just the same sort of smile as before. Upon that I turns round upon her sharp, and says:

"I'll tell you what it is, my gal, you're a-keepin' somethink from me; somethink you've been told, or somethink you've found out; and if you think you're a-goin' to try that game on with me, you'll find you're very much mistaken; and so I give you warnin'."

"But she laughed it off like, and says, 'Lor' Luke, what could have put such fancies into your head?'

"'Perhaps other people can keep secrets as well as you,' I said, 'and perhaps other people can make friends as well as you. There was a gentleman came here to see your missus yesterday, warn't there—a tall young gentleman with a brown beard?'

"Instead of answering of me like a Christian, my Cousin Phoebe bursts out a-cryin', and wrings her hands, and goes on awful, until I'm dashed if I can make out what she's up to.

"But little by little I got it out of her, for I wouldn't stand no nonsense; find she told me how she'd been sittin' at work at the window of her little room, which was at the top of the house, right up in one of the gables, and overlooked the lime-walk, and the shrubbery and the well, when she see my lady walking with a strange gentleman, and they walked together for a long time, until by-and-by they—"

"Stop!" cried Robert, "I know the rest."

"Well, Phoebe told me all about what she see, and she told me she'd met her lady almost directly afterward, and somethin' had passed between 'em, not much, but enough to let her missus know that the servant what she looked down upon had found out that as would put her in that servant's power to the last day of her life.

"'And she is in my power, Luke,' says Phoebe; 'and she'll do anythin' in the world for us if we keep her secret.'

"So you see both my Lady Audley and her maid thought as the gentleman as I'd seen safe off by the London train was lying dead at the bottom of the well. If I was to give the letter they'd find out the contrary of this; and if I was to give the letter, Phoebe and me would lose the chance of gettin' started in life by her missus.

"So I kep' the letter and kep' my secret, and my lady kep' hern. But I thought if she acted liberal by me, and gave me the money I wanted, free like, I'd tell her everythink, and make her mind easy.

"But she didn't. Whatever she give me she throwed me as if I'd been a dog. Whenever she spoke to me, she spoke as she might have spoken to a dog; and a dog she couldn't abide the sight of. There was no word in her mouth that was too bad for me; there was no toss as she could give her head that was too proud and scornful for me; and my blood b'iled agen her, and I kep' my secret, and let her keep hern. I opened the two letters, and I read 'em, but I couldn't make much sense out of 'em, and I hid 'em away; and not a creature but me has seen 'em until this night."

Luke Marks had finished his story, and lay quietly enough, exhausted by having talked so long. He watched Robert Audley's face, fully expecting some reproof, some grave lecture; for he had a vague consciousness that he had done wrong.

But Robert did not lecture him; he had no fancy for an office which he did not think himself fitted to perform.

Robert Audley sat until long after daybreak with the sick man, who fell into a heavy slumber a short time after he had finished his story. The old woman had dozed comfortably throughout her son's confession. Phoebe was asleep upon the press bedstead in the room below; so the young barrister was the only watcher.

He could not sleep; he could only think of the story he had heard. He could only thank God for his friend's preservation, and pray that he might be able to go to Clara Talboys, and say, "Your brother still lives, and has been found."

Phoebe came up-stairs at eight o'clock, ready to take her place at the sick-bed, and Robert Audley went away, to get a bed at the Sun Inn. It was nearly dusk when he awoke out of a long dreamless slumber, and dressed himself before dining in the little sitting-room, in which he and George had sat together a few months before.

The landlord waited upon him at dinner, and told him that Luke Marks had died at five o'clock that afternoon. "He went off rather sudden like," the man said, "but very quiet."

Robert Audley wrote a long letter that evening, addressed to Madame Taylor, care of Monsieur Val, Villebrumeuse; a long letter in which he told the wretched woman who had borne so many names, and was to bear a false one for the rest of her life, the story that the dying man had told him.

"It may be some comfort to her to hear that her husband did not perish in his youth by her wicked hand," he thought, "if her selfish soul can hold any sentiment of pity or sorrow for others."

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## CHAPTER XL.

### RESTORED.

Clara Talboys returned to Dorsetshire, to tell her father that his only son had sailed for Australia upon the 9th of September, and that it was most probable he yet lived, and would return to claim the forgiveness of the father he had never very particularly injured; except in the matter of having made that terrible matrimonial mistake which had exercised so fatal an influence upon his youth.

Mr. Harcourt-Talboys was fairly nonplused. Junius Brutus had never been placed in such a position as this, and seeing no way of getting out of this dilemma by acting after his favorite model, Mr. Talboys was fain to be natural for once in his life, and to confess that he had suffered much uneasiness and pain of mind about his only son since his conversation with Robert Audley, and that he would be heartily glad to take his poor boy to his arms, whenever he should return to England. But when was he likely to return? and how was he to be communicated with? That was the question. Robert Audley remembered the advertisements which he had caused to be inserted in the Melbourne and Sydney papers. If George had re-entered either city alive, how was it that no notice had ever been taken of that advertisement? Was it likely that his friend would be indifferent to his uneasiness? But then, again, it was just possible that George Talboys had not happened to see this advertisement; and, as he had traveled under a feigned name, neither his fellow passengers nor the captain of the vessel would have been able to identify him with the person advertised for. What was to be done? Must they wait patiently till George grew weary of his exile, and returned to his friends who loved him? or were there any means to be taken by which his return might be hastened? Robert Audley was at fault! Perhaps, in the unspeakable relief of mind which he had experienced upon the discovery of his friend's escape, he was unable to look beyond the one fact of that providential preservation.

In this state of mind he went down to Dorsetshire to pay a visit to Mr. Talboys, who had given way to a perfect torrent of generous impulses, and



had gone so far as to invite his son's friend to share the prim hospitality of the square, red brick mansion.

Mr. Talboys had only two sentiments upon the subject of George's story; one was a natural relief and happiness in the thought that his son had been saved, the other was an earnest wish that my lady had been his wife, and that he might thus have had the pleasure of making a signal example of her.

"It is not for me to blame you, Mr. Audley," he said, "for having smuggled this guilty woman out of the reach of justice, and thus, as I may say, paltered with the laws of your country. I can only remark that, had the lady fallen into my hands, she would have been very differently treated."

It was in the middle of April when Robert Audley found himself once more under those black fir-trees beneath which his wandering thoughts had so often stayed since his first meeting with Clara Talboys. There were primroses and early violets in the hedges now, and the streams, which, upon his first visit, had been hard and frost-bound as the heart of Harcourt Talboys, had thawed, like that gentleman, and ran merrily under the blackthorn bushes in the capricious April sunshine.

Robert had a prim bedroom, and an uncompromising dressing-room allotted him in the square house, and he woke every morning upon a metallic spring mattress, which always gave him the idea of sleeping upon some musical instrument, to see the sun glaring in upon him through the square, white blinds and lighting up the two lackered urns which adorned the foot of the blue iron bedstead, until they blazed like two tiny brazen lamps of the Roman period. He emulated Mr. Harcourt Talboys in the matter of shower-baths and cold water, and emerged prim and blue as that gentleman himself, as the clock in the hall struck seven, to join the master of the house in his ante-breakfast constitutional under the fir-trees in the stiff plantation.

But there was generally a third person who assisted in the constitutional promenades, and that third person was Clara Talboys, who used to walk by her father's side, more beautiful than the morning—for that was sometimes dull and cloudy, while she was always fresh and bright—in a broad-leaved straw-hat and flapping blue ribbons, one quarter of an inch of which Mr. Audley would have esteemed a prouder decoration than ever adorned a favored creature's button-hole.

At first they were very ceremonious toward each other, and were only familiar and friendly upon the one subject of George's adventures; but little by little a pleasant intimacy arose between them, and before the first three weeks of Robert's visit had elapsed, Miss Talboys made him happy, by taking him seriously in hand and lecturing him on the purposeless life he had led so long, and the little use he had made of the talents and opportunities that had been given to him.

How pleasant it was to be lectured by the woman he loved! How pleasant it was to humiliate himself and depreciate himself before her! How delightful it was to get such splendid opportunities of hinting that if his life had been sanctified by an object he might indeed have striven to be something better than an idle *flaneur* upon the smooth pathways that have no particular goal; that, blessed by the ties which would have given a solemn purpose to every hour of his existence, he might indeed have fought the battle earnestly and unflinchingly. He generally wound up with a gloomy insinuation to the effect that it was only likely he would drop quietly over the edge of the Temple Gardens some afternoon when the river was bright and placid in the low sunlight, and the little children had gone home to their tea.

"Do you think I can read French novels and smoke mild Turkish until I am three-score-and-ten, Miss Talboys?" he asked. "Do you think there will not come a day in which my meerschaums will be foul, and the French novels more than usually stupid, and life altogether such a dismal monotony that I shall want to get rid of it somehow or other?"

I am sorry to say that while this hypocritical young barrister was holding forth in this despondent way, he had mentally sold up his bachelor possessions, including all Michel Levy's publications, and half a dozen solid silver-mounted meerschaums; pensioned off Mrs. Maloney, and laid out two or three thousand pounds in the purchase of a few acres of verdant shrubbery and sloping lawn, embosomed amid which there should be a fairy cottage *ornée*, whose rustic casements should glimmer out of bowers of myrtle and clematis to see themselves reflected in the purple bosom of the lake.

Of course, Clara Talboys was far from discovering the drift of these melancholy lamentations. She recommended Mr. Audley to read hard and think seriously of his profession, and begin life in real earnest. It was a

hard, dry sort of existence, perhaps, which she recommended; a life of serious work and application, in which he should strive to be useful to his fellow-creatures, and win a reputation for himself.

"I'd do all that," he thought, "and do it earnestly, if I could be sure of a reward for my labor. If she would accept my reputation when it was won, and support me in the struggle by her beloved companionship. But what if she sends me away to fight the battle, and marries some hulking country squire while my back is turned?"

Being naturally of a vacillating and dilatory disposition, there is no saying how long Mr. Audley might have kept his secret, fearful to speak and break the charm of that uncertainty which, though not always hopeful, was very seldom quite despairing, had not he been hurried by the impulse of an unguarded moment into a full confession of the truth.

He had stayed five weeks at Grange Heath, and felt that he could not, in common decency, stay any longer; so he had packed his portmanteau one pleasant May morning, and had announced his departure.

Mr. Talboys was not the sort of man to utter any passionate lamentations at the prospect of losing his guest, but he expressed himself with a cool cordiality which served with him as the strongest demonstration of friendship.

"We have got on very well together, Mr. Audley," he said, "and you have been pleased to appear sufficiently happy in the quiet routine of our orderly household; nay, more, you have conformed to our little domestic regulations in a manner which I cannot refrain from saying I take as an especial compliment to myself."

Robert bowed. How thankful he was to the good fortune which had never suffered him to oversleep the signal of the clanging bell, or led him away beyond the ken of clocks at Mr. Talboys' luncheon hour.

"I trust as we have got on so remarkably well together," Mr. Talboys resumed, "you will do me the honor of repeating your visit to Dorsetshire whenever you feel inclined. You will find plenty of sport among my farms, and you will meet with every politeness and attention from my tenants, if you like to bring your gun with you."

Robert responded most heartily to these friendly overtures. He declared that there was no earthly occupation that was more agreeable to him than

partridge-shooting, and that he should be only too delighted to avail himself of the privilege so kindly offered to him. He could not help glancing toward Clara as he said this. The perfect lids drooped a little over the brown eyes, and the faintest shadow of a blush illuminated the beautiful face.

But this was the young barrister's last day in Elysium, and there must be a dreary interval of days and nights and weeks and months before the first of September would give him an excuse for returning to Dorsetshire; a dreary interval which fresh colored young squires or fat widowers of eight-and-forty, might use to his disadvantage. It was no wonder, therefore, that he contemplated this dismal prospect with moody despair, and was bad company for Miss Talboys that morning.

But in the evening after dinner, when the sun was low in the west, and Harcourt Talboys closeted in his library upon some judicial business with his lawyer and a tenant farmer, Mr. Audley grew a little more agreeable. He stood by Clara's side in one of the long windows of the drawing-room, watching the shadows deepening in the sky and the rosy light growing every moment rosier as the sun died out. He could not help enjoying that quiet *tête-a-tête*, though the shadow of the next morning's express which was to carry him away to London loomed darkly across the pathway of his joy. He could not help being happy in her presence; forgetful of the past, reckless of the future.

They talked of the one subject which was always a bond of union between them. They talked of her lost brother George. She spoke of him in a very melancholy tone this evening. How could she be otherwise than sad, remembering that if he lived—and she was not even sure of that—he was a lonely wanderer far away from all who loved him, and carrying the memory of a blighted life wherever he went.

"I cannot think how papa can be so resigned to my poor brother's absence," she said, "for he does love him, Mr. Audley; even you must have seen lately that he does love him. But I cannot think how he can so quietly submit to his absence. If I were a man, I would go to Australia, and find him, and bring him back; if he was still to be found among the living," she added, in a lower voice.

She turned her face away from Robert, and looked out at the darkening sky. He laid his hand upon her arm. It trembled in spite of him, and his voice trembled, too, as he spoke to her.

"Shall *I* go to look for your brother?" he said.

"*You!*" She turned her head, and looked at him earnestly through her tears. "You, Mr. Audley! Do you think that I could ask you to make such a sacrifice for me, or for those I love?"

"And do you think, Clara, that I should think any sacrifice too great a one if it were made for you? Do you think there is any voyage I would refuse to take, if I knew that you would welcome me when I came home, and thank me for having served you faithfully? I will go from one end of the continent of Australia to the other to look for your brother, if you please, Clara; and will never return alive unless I bring him with me, and will take my chance of what reward you shall give me for my labor."

Her head was bent, and it was some moments before she answered him.

"You are very good and generous, Mr. Audley," she said, at last, "and I feel this offer too much to be able to thank you for it. But what you speak of could never be. By what right could I accept such a sacrifice?"

"By the right which makes me your bounden slave forever and ever, whether you will or no. By right of the love I bear you, Clara," cried Mr. Audley, dropping on his knees—rather awkwardly, it must be confessed—and covering a soft little hand, that he had found half hidden among the folds of a silken dress, with passionate kisses.

"I love you, Clara," he said, "I love you. You may call for your father, and have me turned out of the house this moment, if you like; but I shall go on loving you all the same; and I shall love you forever and ever, whether you will or no."

The little hand was drawn away from his, but not with a sudden or angry gesture, and it rested for one moment lightly and tremulously upon his dark hair.

"Clara, Clara!" he murmured, in a low, pleading voice, "shall I go to Australia to look for your brother?"

There was no answer. I don't know how it is, but there is scarcely anything more delicious than silence in such cases. Every moment of hesitation is a tacit avowal; every pause is a tender confession.

"Shall we both go, dearest? Shall we go as man and wife? Shall we go together, my dear love, and bring our brother back between us?"

Mr. Harcourt Talboys, coming into the lamplit room a quarter of an hour afterward, found Robert Audley alone, and had to listen to a revelation which very much surprised him. Like all self-sufficient people, he was tolerably blind to everything that happened under his nose, and he had fully believed that his own society, and the Spartan regularity of his household, had been the attractions which had made Dorsetshire delightful to his guest.

He was rather disappointed, therefore; but he bore his disappointment pretty well, and expressed a placid and rather stoical satisfaction at the turn which affairs had taken.

So Robert Audley went back to London, to surrender his chambers in Figtree Court, and to make all due inquiries about such ships as sailed from Liverpool for Sydney in the month of June.

He had lingered until after luncheon at Grange Heath, and it was in the dusky twilight that he entered the shady Temple courts and found his way to his chambers. He found Mrs. Maloney scrubbing the stairs, as was her wont upon a Saturday evening, and he had to make his way upward amidst an atmosphere of soapy steam, that made the balusters greasy under his touch.

"There's lots of letters, yer honor," the laundress said, as she rose from her knees and flattened herself against the wall to enable Robert to pass her, "and there's some parcels, and there's a gentleman which has called ever so many times, and is waitin' to-night, for I towld him you'd written to me to say your rooms were to be aired."

He opened the door of his sitting-room, and walked in. The canaries were singing their farewell to the setting sun, and the faint, yellow light was flickering upon the geranium leaves. The visitor, whoever he was, sat with his back to the window and his head bent upon his breast. But he started up as Robert Audley entered the room, and the young man uttered a great cry of delight and surprise, and opened his arms to his lost friend, George Talboys.

We know how much Robert had to tell. He touched lightly and tenderly upon that subject which he knew was cruelly painful to his friends; he said very little of the wretched woman who was wearing out the remnant of her wicked life in the quiet suburb of the forgotten Belgian city.

George Talboys spoke very briefly of that sunny seventh of September, upon which he had left his friend sleeping by the trout stream while he went

to accuse his false wife of that conspiracy which had well nigh broken his heart.

"God knows that from the moment in which I sunk into the black pit, knowing the treacherous hand that had sent me to what might have been my death, my chief thought was of the safety of the woman who had betrayed me. I fell upon my feet upon a mass of slush and mire, but my shoulder was bruised, and my arm broken against the side of the well. I was stunned and dazed for a few minutes, but I roused myself by an effort, for I felt that the atmosphere I breathed was deadly. I had my Australian experiences to help me in my peril; I could climb like a cat. The stones of which the well was built were rugged and irregular, and I was able to work my way upward by planting my feet in the interstices of the stones, and resting my back at times against the opposite side of the well, helping myself as well as I could with my hands, though one arm was crippled. It was hard work, Bob, and it seems strange that a man who had long professed himself weary of his life, should take so much trouble to preserve it. I think I must have been working upward of half an hour before I got to the top; I know the time seemed an eternity of pain and peril. It was impossible for me to leave the place until after dark without being observed, so I hid myself behind a clump of laurel-bushes, and lay down on the grass faint and exhausted to wait for nightfall. The man who found me there told you the rest. Robert."

"Yes, my poor old friend.—yes, he told me all."

George had never returned to Australia after all. He had gone on board the *Victoria Regia*, but had afterward changed his berth for one in another vessel belonging to the same owners, and had gone to New York, where he had stayed as long as he could endure the loneliness of an existence which separated him from every friend he had ever known.

"Jonathan was very kind to me, Bob," he said; "I had enough money to enable me to get on pretty well in my own quiet way and I meant to have started for the California gold fields to get more when that was gone. I might have made plenty of friends had I pleased, but I carried the old bullet in my breast; and what sympathy could I have with men who knew nothing of my grief? I yearned for the strong grasp of your hand, Bob; the friendly touch of the hand which had guided me through the darkest passage of my life."

---

## CHAPTER XLI.

### AT PEACE.

Two years have passed since the May twilight in which Robert found his old friend; and Mr. Audley's dream of a fairy cottage has been realized between Teddington Locks and Hampton Bridge, where, amid a little forest of foliage, there is a fantastical dwelling place of rustic woodwork, whose latticed windows look out upon the river. Here, among the lilies and the rushes on the sloping bank, a brave boy of eight years old plays with a toddling baby, who peers wonderingly from his nurse's arms at that other baby in the purple depth of the quiet water.

Mr. Audley is a rising man upon the home circuit by this time, and has distinguished himself in the great breach of promise case of Hobbs *v.* Nobbs, and has convulsed the court by his deliciously comic rendering of the faithless Nobb's amatory correspondence. The handsome dark-eyed boy is Master George Talboys, who declines *musa* at Eton, and fishes for tadpoles in the clear water under the spreading umbrage beyond the ivied walls of the academy. But he comes very often to the fairy cottage to see his father, who lives there with his sister and his sister's husband; and he is very happy with his Uncle Robert, his Aunt Clara, and the pretty baby who has just begun to toddle on the smooth lawn that slopes down to the water's brink, upon which there is a little Swiss boat-house and landing-stage where Robert and George moor their slender wherries.

Other people come to the cottage near Teddington. A bright, merry-hearted girl, and a gray-bearded gentleman, who has survived the trouble of his life, and battled with it as a Christian should.

It is more than a year since a black-edged letter, written upon foreign paper, came to Robert Audley, to announce the death of a certain Madame Taylor, who had expired peacefully at Villebrumeuse, dying after a long illness, which Monsieur Val describes as a *maladie de langueur*.

Another visitor comes to the cottage in this bright summer of 1861—a frank, generous hearted young man, who tosses the baby and plays with



Georgey, and is especially great in the management of the boats, which are never idle when Sir Harry Towers is at Teddington.

There is a pretty rustic smoking-room over the Swiss boat-house, in which the gentlemen sit and smoke in the summer evenings, and whence they are summoned by Clara and Alicia to drink tea, and eat strawberries and cream upon the lawn.

Audley Court is shut up, and a grim old housekeeper reigns paramount in the mansion which my lady's ringing laughter once made musical. A curtain hangs before the pre-Raphaelite portrait; and the blue mold which artists dread gathers upon the Wouvermans and Poussins, the Cuyps and Tintoretis. The house is often shown to inquisitive visitors, though the baronet is not informed of that fact, and people admire my lady's rooms, and ask many questions about the pretty, fair-haired woman who died abroad.

Sir Michael has no fancy to return to the familiar dwelling-place in which he once dreamed a brief dream of impossible happiness. He remains in London until Alicia shall be Lady Towers, when he is to remove to a house he has lately bought in Hertfordshire, on the borders of his son-in-law's estate. George Talboys is very happy with his sister and his old friend. He is a young man yet, remember, and it is not quite impossible that he may, by-and-by, find some one who will console him for the past. That dark story of the past fades little by little every day, and there may come a time in which the shadow my lady's wickedness has cast upon the young man's life will utterly vanish away.

The meerschaum and the French novels have been presented to a young Templar with whom Robert Audley had been friendly in his bachelor days; and Mrs. Maloney has a little pension, paid her quarterly, for her care of the canaries and geraniums.

I hope no one will take objection to my story because the end of it leaves the good people all happy and at peace. If my experience of life has not been very long, it has at least been manifold; and I can safely subscribe to that which a mighty king and a great philosopher declared, when he said, that neither the experience of his youth nor of his age had ever shown him "the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread."

**THE END.**

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MIDDLEMARCH

BY

GEORGE ELIOT



*Books I to VIII*

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# Middlemarch

# George Eliot

New York and Boston

H. M. Caldwell Company Publishers

To my dear Husband, George Henry Lewes,  
in this nineteenth year of our blessed union.

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# Contents

PRELUDE.

## **BOOK I. MISS BROOKE.**

CHAPTER I.

CHAPTER II.

CHAPTER III.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER X.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPTER XII.

## **BOOK II. OLD AND YOUNG.**

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHAPTER XV.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHAPTER XX.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHAPTER XXII.

**BOOK III. WAITING FOR DEATH.**

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHAPTER XXXII.

**BOOK IV. THREE LOVE PROBLEMS.**

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CHAPTER XL.

CHAPTER XLI.

CHAPTER XLII.

**BOOK V. THE DEAD HAND.**

CHAPTER XLIII.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CHAPTER XLV.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CHAPTER XLVII.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

CHAPTER XLIX.

CHAPTER L.

CHAPTER LI.

CHAPTER LII.

**BOOK VI. THE WIDOW AND THE WIFE.**

CHAPTER LIII.

CHAPTER LIV.

CHAPTER LV.

CHAPTER LVI.

CHAPTER LVII.

CHAPTER LVIII.

CHAPTER LIX.

CHAPTER LX.

CHAPTER LXI.

CHAPTER LXII.

**BOOK VII. TWO TEMPTATIONS.**

CHAPTER LXIII.

CHAPTER LXIV.

CHAPTER LXV.

CHAPTER LXVI.

CHAPTER LXVII.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

CHAPTER LXIX.

CHAPTER LXX.

CHAPTER LXXI.

**BOOK VIII. SUNSET AND SUNRISE.**

CHAPTER LXXII.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

CHAPTER LXXIV.  
CHAPTER LXXV.  
CHAPTER LXXVI.  
CHAPTER LXXVII.  
CHAPTER LXXVIII.  
CHAPTER LXXIX.  
CHAPTER LXXX.  
CHAPTER LXXXI.  
CHAPTER LXXXII.  
CHAPTER LXXXIII.  
CHAPTER LXXXIV.  
CHAPTER LXXXV.  
CHAPTER LXXXVI.

FINALE.

## PRELUDE.

Who that cares much to know the history of man, and how the mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time, has not dwelt, at least briefly, on the life of Saint Theresa, has not smiled with some gentleness at the thought of the little girl walking forth one morning hand-in-hand with her still smaller brother, to go and seek martyrdom in the country of the Moors? Out they toddled from rugged Avila, wide-eyed and helpless-looking as two fawns, but with human hearts, already beating to a national idea; until domestic reality met them in the shape of uncles, and turned them back from their great resolve. That child-pilgrimage was a fit beginning. Theresa's passionate, ideal nature demanded an epic life: what were many-volumed romances of chivalry and the social conquests of a brilliant girl to her? Her flame quickly burned up that light fuel; and, fed from within, soared after some illimitable satisfaction, some object which would never justify weariness, which would reconcile self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self. She found her epos in the reform of a religious order.

That Spanish woman who lived three hundred years ago, was certainly not the last of her kind. Many Theresas have been born who found for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of far-resonant action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity; perhaps a tragic failure which found no sacred poet and sank unwept into oblivion. With dim lights and tangled circumstance they tried to shape their thought and deed in noble agreement; but after all, to common eyes their struggles seemed mere inconsistency and formlessness; for these later-born Theresas were helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul. Their ardor alternated between a vague ideal and the common yearning of



womanhood; so that the one was disapproved as extravagance, and the other condemned as a lapse.

Some have felt that these blundering lives are due to the inconvenient indefiniteness with which the Supreme Power has fashioned the natures of women: if there were one level of feminine incompetence as strict as the ability to count three and no more, the social lot of women might be treated with scientific certitude. Meanwhile the indefiniteness remains, and the limits of variation are really much wider than any one would imagine from the sameness of women's coiffure and the favorite love-stories in prose and verse. Here and there a cygnet is reared uneasily among the ducklings in the brown pond, and never finds the living stream in fellowship with its own oary-footed kind. Here and there is born a Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centring in some long-recognizable deed.

BOOK I.  
MISS BROOKE.

## CHAPTER I.

Since I can do no good because a woman,  
Reach constantly at something that is near it.

—*The Maid's Tragedy*: BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible,—or from one of our elder poets,—in a paragraph of to-day's newspaper. She was usually spoken of as being remarkably clever, but with the addition that her sister Celia had more common-sense. Nevertheless, Celia wore scarcely more trimmings; and it was only to close observers that her dress differed from her sister's, and had a shade of coquetry in its arrangements; for Miss Brooke's plain dressing was due to mixed conditions, in most of which her sister shared. The pride of being ladies had something to do with it: the Brooke connections, though not exactly aristocratic, were unquestionably "good:" if you inquired backward for a generation or two, you would not find any yard-measuring or parcel-tying forefathers—anything lower than an admiral or a clergyman; and there was even an ancestor discernible as a Puritan gentleman who served under Cromwell, but afterwards conformed, and managed to come out of all political troubles as the proprietor of a respectable family estate. Young women of such birth, living in a quiet country-house, and attending a village church hardly larger than a parlor, naturally regarded frippery as the ambition of a huckster's daughter. Then there was well-bred economy, which in those days made show in dress the first item to be deducted from, when any margin was required for expenses more distinctive of rank. Such reasons would have been enough to account for plain dress, quite apart from religious feeling; but in Miss Brooke's case, religion alone would have determined it; and Celia mildly

acquiesced in all her sister's sentiments, only infusing them with that common-sense which is able to accept momentous doctrines without any eccentric agitation. Dorothea knew many passages of Pascal's *Pensees* and of Jeremy Taylor by heart; and to her the destinies of mankind, seen by the light of Christianity, made the solitudes of feminine fashion appear an occupation for Bedlam. She could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in gimp and artificial protrusions of drapery. Her mind was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there; she was enamoured of intensity and greatness, and rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects; likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractations, and then to incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it. Certainly such elements in the character of a marriageable girl tended to interfere with her lot, and hinder it from being decided according to custom, by good looks, vanity, and merely canine affection. With all this, she, the elder of the sisters, was not yet twenty, and they had both been educated, since they were about twelve years old and had lost their parents, on plans at once narrow and promiscuous, first in an English family and afterwards in a Swiss family at Lausanne, their bachelor uncle and guardian trying in this way to remedy the disadvantages of their orphaned condition.

It was hardly a year since they had come to live at Tipton Grange with their uncle, a man nearly sixty, of acquiescent temper, miscellaneous opinions, and uncertain vote. He had travelled in his younger years, and was held in this part of the county to have contracted a too rambling habit of mind. Mr. Brooke's conclusions were as difficult to predict as the weather: it was only safe to say that he would act with benevolent intentions, and that he would spend as little money as possible in carrying them out. For the most glutinously indefinite minds enclose some hard grains of habit; and a man has been seen lax about all his own interests except the retention of his snuff-box, concerning which he was watchful, suspicious, and greedy of clutch.

In Mr. Brooke the hereditary strain of Puritan energy was clearly in abeyance; but in his niece Dorothea it glowed alike through faults and virtues, turning sometimes into impatience of her uncle's talk or his way of "letting things be" on his estate, and making her long all the more for

the time when she would be of age and have some command of money for generous schemes. She was regarded as an heiress; for not only had the sisters seven hundred a-year each from their parents, but if Dorothea married and had a son, that son would inherit Mr. Brooke's estate, presumably worth about three thousand a-year—a rental which seemed wealth to provincial families, still discussing Mr. Peel's late conduct on the Catholic question, innocent of future gold-fields, and of that gorgeous plutocracy which has so nobly exalted the necessities of genteel life.

And how should Dorothea not marry?—a girl so handsome and with such prospects? Nothing could hinder it but her love of extremes, and her insistence on regulating life according to notions which might cause a wary man to hesitate before he made her an offer, or even might lead her at last to refuse all offers. A young lady of some birth and fortune, who knelt suddenly down on a brick floor by the side of a sick laborer and prayed fervidly as if she thought herself living in the time of the Apostles—who had strange whims of fasting like a Papist, and of sitting up at night to read old theological books! Such a wife might awaken you some fine morning with a new scheme for the application of her income which would interfere with political economy and the keeping of saddle-horses: a man would naturally think twice before he risked himself in such fellowship. Women were expected to have weak opinions; but the great safeguard of society and of domestic life was, that opinions were not acted on. Sane people did what their neighbors did, so that if any lunatics were at large, one might know and avoid them.

The rural opinion about the new young ladies, even among the cottagers, was generally in favor of Celia, as being so amiable and innocent-looking, while Miss Brooke's large eyes seemed, like her religion, too unusual and striking. Poor Dorothea! compared with her, the innocent-looking Celia was knowing and worldly-wise; so much subtler is a human mind than the outside tissues which make a sort of blazonry or clock-face for it.

Yet those who approached Dorothea, though prejudiced against her by this alarming hearsay, found that she had a charm unaccountably reconcilable with it. Most men thought her bewitching when she was on horseback. She loved the fresh air and the various aspects of the country, and when her eyes and cheeks glowed with mingled pleasure she looked very little like a devotee. Riding was an indulgence which she allowed

herself in spite of conscientious qualms; she felt that she enjoyed it in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it.

She was open, ardent, and not in the least self-admiring; indeed, it was pretty to see how her imagination adorned her sister Celia with attractions altogether superior to her own, and if any gentleman appeared to come to the Grange from some other motive than that of seeing Mr. Brooke, she concluded that he must be in love with Celia: Sir James Chettam, for example, whom she constantly considered from Celia's point of view, inwardly debating whether it would be good for Celia to accept him. That he should be regarded as a suitor to herself would have seemed to her a ridiculous irrelevance. Dorothea, with all her eagerness to know the truths of life, retained very childlike ideas about marriage. She felt sure that she would have accepted the judicious Hooker, if she had been born in time to save him from that wretched mistake he made in matrimony; or John Milton when his blindness had come on; or any of the other great men whose odd habits it would have been glorious piety to endure; but an amiable handsome baronet, who said "Exactly" to her remarks even when she expressed uncertainty,—how could he affect her as a lover? The really delightful marriage must be that where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it.

These peculiarities of Dorothea's character caused Mr. Brooke to be all the more blamed in neighboring families for not securing some middle-aged lady as guide and companion to his nieces. But he himself dreaded so much the sort of superior woman likely to be available for such a position, that he allowed himself to be dissuaded by Dorothea's objections, and was in this case brave enough to defy the world—that is to say, Mrs. Cadwallader the Rector's wife, and the small group of gentry with whom he visited in the northeast corner of Loamshire. So Miss Brooke presided in her uncle's household, and did not at all dislike her new authority, with the homage that belonged to it.

Sir James Chettam was going to dine at the Grange to-day with another gentleman whom the girls had never seen, and about whom Dorothea felt some venerating expectation. This was the Reverend Edward Casaubon, noted in the county as a man of profound learning, understood for many years to be engaged on a great work concerning religious history; also as a man of wealth enough to give lustre to his piety, and having views of his

own which were to be more clearly ascertained on the publication of his book. His very name carried an impressiveness hardly to be measured without a precise chronology of scholarship.

Early in the day Dorothea had returned from the infant school which she had set going in the village, and was taking her usual place in the pretty sitting-room which divided the bedrooms of the sisters, bent on finishing a plan for some buildings (a kind of work which she delighted in), when Celia, who had been watching her with a hesitating desire to propose something, said—

“Dorothea, dear, if you don’t mind—if you are not very busy—suppose we looked at mamma’s jewels to-day, and divided them? It is exactly six months to-day since uncle gave them to you, and you have not looked at them yet.”

Celia’s face had the shadow of a pouting expression in it, the full presence of the pout being kept back by an habitual awe of Dorothea and principle; two associated facts which might show a mysterious electricity if you touched them incautiously. To her relief, Dorothea’s eyes were full of laughter as she looked up.

“What a wonderful little almanac you are, Celia! Is it six calendar or six lunar months?”

“It is the last day of September now, and it was the first of April when uncle gave them to you. You know, he said that he had forgotten them till then. I believe you have never thought of them since you locked them up in the cabinet here.”

“Well, dear, we should never wear them, you know.” Dorothea spoke in a full cordial tone, half caressing, half explanatory. She had her pencil in her hand, and was making tiny side-plans on a margin.

Celia colored, and looked very grave. “I think, dear, we are wanting in respect to mamma’s memory, to put them by and take no notice of them. And,” she added, after hesitating a little, with a rising sob of mortification, “necklaces are quite usual now; and Madame Poincon, who was stricter in some things even than you are, used to wear ornaments. And Christians generally—surely there are women in heaven now who wore jewels.” Celia was conscious of some mental strength when she really applied herself to argument.

“You would like to wear them?” exclaimed Dorothea, an air of astonished discovery animating her whole person with a dramatic action which she had caught from that very Madame Poincon who wore the ornaments. “Of course, then, let us have them out. Why did you not tell me before? But the keys, the keys!” She pressed her hands against the sides of her head and seemed to despair of her memory.

“They are here,” said Celia, with whom this explanation had been long meditated and prearranged.

“Pray open the large drawer of the cabinet and get out the jewel-box.”

The casket was soon open before them, and the various jewels spread out, making a bright parterre on the table. It was no great collection, but a few of the ornaments were really of remarkable beauty, the finest that was obvious at first being a necklace of purple amethysts set in exquisite gold work, and a pearl cross with five brilliants in it. Dorothea immediately took up the necklace and fastened it round her sister’s neck, where it fitted almost as closely as a bracelet; but the circle suited the Henrietta-Maria style of Celia’s head and neck, and she could see that it did, in the pier-glass opposite.

“There, Celia! you can wear that with your Indian muslin. But this cross you must wear with your dark dresses.”

Celia was trying not to smile with pleasure. “O Dodo, you must keep the cross yourself.”

“No, no, dear, no,” said Dorothea, putting up her hand with careless deprecation.

“Yes, indeed you must; it would suit you—in your black dress, now,” said Celia, insistingly. “You *might* wear that.”

“Not for the world, not for the world. A cross is the last thing I would wear as a trinket.” Dorothea shuddered slightly.

“Then you will think it wicked in me to wear it,” said Celia, uneasily.

“No, dear, no,” said Dorothea, stroking her sister’s cheek. “Souls have complexions too: what will suit one will not suit another.”

“But you might like to keep it for mamma’s sake.”

“No, I have other things of mamma’s—her sandal-wood box which I am so fond of—plenty of things. In fact, they are all yours, dear. We need



discuss them no longer. There—take away your property.”

Celia felt a little hurt. There was a strong assumption of superiority in this Puritanic toleration, hardly less trying to the blond flesh of an unenthusiastic sister than a Puritanic persecution.

“But how can I wear ornaments if you, who are the elder sister, will never wear them?”

“Nay, Celia, that is too much to ask, that I should wear trinkets to keep you in countenance. If I were to put on such a necklace as that, I should feel as if I had been pirouetting. The world would go round with me, and I should not know how to walk.”

Celia had unclasped the necklace and drawn it off. “It would be a little tight for your neck; something to lie down and hang would suit you better,” she said, with some satisfaction. The complete unfitness of the necklace from all points of view for Dorothea, made Celia happier in taking it. She was opening some ring-boxes, which disclosed a fine emerald with diamonds, and just then the sun passing beyond a cloud sent a bright gleam over the table.

“How very beautiful these gems are!” said Dorothea, under a new current of feeling, as sudden as the gleam. “It is strange how deeply colors seem to penetrate one, like scent. I suppose that is the reason why gems are used as spiritual emblems in the Revelation of St. John. They look like fragments of heaven. I think that emerald is more beautiful than any of them.”

“And there is a bracelet to match it,” said Celia. “We did not notice this at first.”

“They are lovely,” said Dorothea, slipping the ring and bracelet on her finely turned finger and wrist, and holding them towards the window on a level with her eyes. All the while her thought was trying to justify her delight in the colors by merging them in her mystic religious joy.

“You *would* like those, Dorothea,” said Celia, rather falteringly, beginning to think with wonder that her sister showed some weakness, and also that emeralds would suit her own complexion even better than purple amethysts. “You must keep that ring and bracelet—if nothing else. But see, these agates are very pretty and quiet.”

“Yes! I will keep these—this ring and bracelet,” said Dorothea. Then, letting her hand fall on the table, she said in another tone—“Yet what miserable men find such things, and work at them, and sell them!” She paused again, and Celia thought that her sister was going to renounce the ornaments, as in consistency she ought to do.

“Yes, dear, I will keep these,” said Dorothea, decidedly. “But take all the rest away, and the casket.”

She took up her pencil without removing the jewels, and still looking at them. She thought of often having them by her, to feed her eye at these little fountains of pure color.

“Shall you wear them in company?” said Celia, who was watching her with real curiosity as to what she would do.

Dorothea glanced quickly at her sister. Across all her imaginative adornment of those whom she loved, there darted now and then a keen discernment, which was not without a scorching quality. If Miss Brooke ever attained perfect meekness, it would not be for lack of inward fire.

“Perhaps,” she said, rather haughtily. “I cannot tell to what level I may sink.”

Celia blushed, and was unhappy: she saw that she had offended her sister, and dared not say even anything pretty about the gift of the ornaments which she put back into the box and carried away. Dorothea too was unhappy, as she went on with her plan-drawing, questioning the purity of her own feeling and speech in the scene which had ended with that little explosion.

Celia’s consciousness told her that she had not been at all in the wrong: it was quite natural and justifiable that she should have asked that question, and she repeated to herself that Dorothea was inconsistent: either she should have taken her full share of the jewels, or, after what she had said, she should have renounced them altogether.

“I am sure—at least, I trust,” thought Celia, “that the wearing of a necklace will not interfere with my prayers. And I do not see that I should be bound by Dorothea’s opinions now we are going into society, though of course she herself ought to be bound by them. But Dorothea is not always consistent.”

Thus Celia, mutely bending over her tapestry, until she heard her sister calling her.

“Here, Kitty, come and look at my plan; I shall think I am a great architect, if I have not got incompatible stairs and fireplaces.”

As Celia bent over the paper, Dorothea put her cheek against her sister’s arm caressingly. Celia understood the action. Dorothea saw that she had been in the wrong, and Celia pardoned her. Since they could remember, there had been a mixture of criticism and awe in the attitude of Celia’s mind towards her elder sister. The younger had always worn a yoke; but is there any yoked creature without its private opinions?

## CHAPTER II.

“Dime; no ves aquel caballero que hacia nosotros viene sobre un caballo rucio rodado que trae puesto en la cabeza un yelmo de oro?” ‘Lo que veo y columbro,’ respondió Sancho, ‘no es sino un hombre sobre un as no pardo como el mio, que trae sobre la cabeza una cosa que relumbra.’ ‘Pues ese es el yelmo de Mambrino,’ dijo Don Quijote.”—CERVANTES.

“Seest thou not yon cavalier who cometh toward us on a dapple-gray steed, and weareth a golden helmet?” ‘What I see,’ answered Sancho, ‘is nothing but a man on a gray ass like my own, who carries something shiny on his head.’ ‘Just so,’ answered Don Quixote: ‘and that resplendent object is the helmet of Mambrino.’”

“Sir Humphry Davy?” said Mr. Brooke, over the soup, in his easy smiling way, taking up Sir James Chettam’s remark that he was studying Davy’s Agricultural Chemistry. “Well, now, Sir Humphry Davy; I dined with him years ago at Cartwright’s, and Wordsworth was there too—the poet Wordsworth, you know. Now there was something singular. I was at Cambridge when Wordsworth was there, and I never met him—and I dined with him twenty years afterwards at Cartwright’s. There’s an oddity in things, now. But Davy was there: he was a poet too. Or, as I may say, Wordsworth was poet one, and Davy was poet two. That was true in every sense, you know.”

Dorothea felt a little more uneasy than usual. In the beginning of dinner, the party being small and the room still, these motes from the mass of a magistrate’s mind fell too noticeably. She wondered how a man like Mr. Casaubon would support such triviality. His manners, she thought, were very dignified; the set of his iron-gray hair and his deep eye-sockets made him resemble the portrait of Locke. He had the spare form and the pale complexion which became a student; as different as possible from the blooming Englishman of the red-whiskered type represented by Sir James Chettam.

“I am reading the Agricultural Chemistry,” said this excellent baronet, “because I am going to take one of the farms into my own hands, and see

if something cannot be done in setting a good pattern of farming among my tenants. Do you approve of that, Miss Brooke?"

"A great mistake, Chettam," interposed Mr. Brooke, "going into electrifying your land and that kind of thing, and making a parlor of your cow-house. It won't do. I went into science a great deal myself at one time; but I saw it would not do. It leads to everything; you can let nothing alone. No, no—see that your tenants don't sell their straw, and that kind of thing; and give them draining-tiles, you know. But your fancy farming will not do—the most expensive sort of whistle you can buy: you may as well keep a pack of hounds."

"Surely," said Dorothea, "it is better to spend money in finding out how men can make the most of the land which supports them all, than in keeping dogs and horses only to gallop over it. It is not a sin to make yourself poor in performing experiments for the good of all."

She spoke with more energy than is expected of so young a lady, but Sir James had appealed to her. He was accustomed to do so, and she had often thought that she could urge him to many good actions when he was her brother-in-law.

Mr. Casaubon turned his eyes very markedly on Dorothea while she was speaking, and seemed to observe her newly.

"Young ladies don't understand political economy, you know," said Mr. Brooke, smiling towards Mr. Casaubon. "I remember when we were all reading Adam Smith. *There* is a book, now. I took in all the new ideas at one time—human perfectibility, now. But some say, history moves in circles; and that may be very well argued; I have argued it myself. The fact is, human reason may carry you a little too far—over the hedge, in fact. It carried me a good way at one time; but I saw it would not do. I pulled up; I pulled up in time. But not too hard. I have always been in favor of a little theory: we must have Thought; else we shall be landed back in the dark ages. But talking of books, there is Southey's 'Peninsular War.' I am reading that of a morning. You know Southey?"

"No," said Mr. Casaubon, not keeping pace with Mr. Brooke's impetuous reason, and thinking of the book only. "I have little leisure for such literature just now. I have been using up my eyesight on old characters lately; the fact is, I want a reader for my evenings; but I am fastidious in voices, and I cannot endure listening to an imperfect reader. It is a

misfortune, in some senses: I feed too much on the inward sources; I live too much with the dead. My mind is something like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes. But I find it necessary to use the utmost caution about my eyesight.”

This was the first time that Mr. Casaubon had spoken at any length. He delivered himself with precision, as if he had been called upon to make a public statement; and the balanced sing-song neatness of his speech, occasionally corresponded to by a movement of his head, was the more conspicuous from its contrast with good Mr. Brooke’s scrappy slovenliness. Dorothea said to herself that Mr. Casaubon was the most interesting man she had ever seen, not excepting even Monsieur Liret, the Vaudois clergyman who had given conferences on the history of the Waldenses. To reconstruct a past world, doubtless with a view to the highest purposes of truth—what a work to be in any way present at, to assist in, though only as a lamp-holder! This elevating thought lifted her above her annoyance at being twitted with her ignorance of political economy, that never-explained science which was thrust as an extinguisher over all her lights.

“But you are fond of riding, Miss Brooke,” Sir James presently took an opportunity of saying. “I should have thought you would enter a little into the pleasures of hunting. I wish you would let me send over a chestnut horse for you to try. It has been trained for a lady. I saw you on Saturday cantering over the hill on a nag not worthy of you. My groom shall bring Corydon for you every day, if you will only mention the time.”

“Thank you, you are very good. I mean to give up riding. I shall not ride any more,” said Dorothea, urged to this brusque resolution by a little annoyance that Sir James would be soliciting her attention when she wanted to give it all to Mr. Casaubon.

“No, that is too hard,” said Sir James, in a tone of reproach that showed strong interest. “Your sister is given to self-mortification, is she not?” he continued, turning to Celia, who sat at his right hand.

“I think she is,” said Celia, feeling afraid lest she should say something that would not please her sister, and blushing as prettily as possible above her necklace. “She likes giving up.”

“If that were true, Celia, my giving-up would be self-indulgence, not self-mortification. But there may be good reasons for choosing not to do what is very agreeable,” said Dorothea.

Mr. Brooke was speaking at the same time, but it was evident that Mr. Casaubon was observing Dorothea, and she was aware of it.

“Exactly,” said Sir James. “You give up from some high, generous motive.”

“No, indeed, not exactly. I did not say that of myself,” answered Dorothea, reddening. Unlike Celia, she rarely blushed, and only from high delight or anger. At this moment she felt angry with the perverse Sir James. Why did he not pay attention to Celia, and leave her to listen to Mr. Casaubon?—if that learned man would only talk, instead of allowing himself to be talked to by Mr. Brooke, who was just then informing him that the Reformation either meant something or it did not, that he himself was a Protestant to the core, but that Catholicism was a fact; and as to refusing an acre of your ground for a Romanist chapel, all men needed the bridle of religion, which, properly speaking, was the dread of a Hereafter.

“I made a great study of theology at one time,” said Mr. Brooke, as if to explain the insight just manifested. “I know something of all schools. I knew Wilberforce in his best days. Do you know Wilberforce?”

Mr. Casaubon said, “No.”

“Well, Wilberforce was perhaps not enough of a thinker; but if I went into Parliament, as I have been asked to do, I should sit on the independent bench, as Wilberforce did, and work at philanthropy.”

Mr. Casaubon bowed, and observed that it was a wide field.

“Yes,” said Mr. Brooke, with an easy smile, “but I have documents. I began a long while ago to collect documents. They want arranging, but when a question has struck me, I have written to somebody and got an answer. I have documents at my back. But now, how do you arrange your documents?”

“In pigeon-holes partly,” said Mr. Casaubon, with rather a startled air of effort.

“Ah, pigeon-holes will not do. I have tried pigeon-holes, but everything gets mixed in pigeon-holes: I never know whether a paper is in A or Z.”

“I wish you would let me sort your papers for you, uncle,” said Dorothea. “I would letter them all, and then make a list of subjects under each letter.”

Mr. Casaubon gravely smiled approval, and said to Mr. Brooke, “You have an excellent secretary at hand, you perceive.”

“No, no,” said Mr. Brooke, shaking his head; “I cannot let young ladies meddle with my documents. Young ladies are too flighty.”

Dorothea felt hurt. Mr. Casaubon would think that her uncle had some special reason for delivering this opinion, whereas the remark lay in his mind as lightly as the broken wing of an insect among all the other fragments there, and a chance current had sent it alighting on *her*.

When the two girls were in the drawing-room alone, Celia said—

“How very ugly Mr. Casaubon is!”

“Celia! He is one of the most distinguished-looking men I ever saw. He is remarkably like the portrait of Locke. He has the same deep eye-sockets.”

“Had Locke those two white moles with hairs on them?”

“Oh, I dare say! when people of a certain sort looked at him,” said Dorothea, walking away a little.

“Mr. Casaubon is so sallow.”

“All the better. I suppose you admire a man with the complexion of a *cochon de lait*.”

“Dodo!” exclaimed Celia, looking after her in surprise. “I never heard you make such a comparison before.”

“Why should I make it before the occasion came? It is a good comparison: the match is perfect.”

Miss Brooke was clearly forgetting herself, and Celia thought so.

“I wonder you show temper, Dorothea.”

“It is so painful in you, Celia, that you will look at human beings as if they were merely animals with a toilet, and never see the great soul in a man’s face.”

“Has Mr. Casaubon a great soul?” Celia was not without a touch of naive malice.



“Yes, I believe he has,” said Dorothea, with the full voice of decision. “Everything I see in him corresponds to his pamphlet on Biblical Cosmology.”

“He talks very little,” said Celia

“There is no one for him to talk to.”

Celia thought privately, “Dorothea quite despises Sir James Chettam; I believe she would not accept him.” Celia felt that this was a pity. She had never been deceived as to the object of the baronet’s interest. Sometimes, indeed, she had reflected that Dodo would perhaps not make a husband happy who had not her way of looking at things; and stifled in the depths of her heart was the feeling that her sister was too religious for family comfort. Notions and scruples were like spilt needles, making one afraid of treading, or sitting down, or even eating.

When Miss Brooke was at the tea-table, Sir James came to sit down by her, not having felt her mode of answering him at all offensive. Why should he? He thought it probable that Miss Brooke liked him, and manners must be very marked indeed before they cease to be interpreted by preconceptions either confident or distrustful. She was thoroughly charming to him, but of course he theorized a little about his attachment. He was made of excellent human dough, and had the rare merit of knowing that his talents, even if let loose, would not set the smallest stream in the county on fire: hence he liked the prospect of a wife to whom he could say, “What shall we do?” about this or that; who could help her husband out with reasons, and would also have the property qualification for doing so. As to the excessive religiousness alleged against Miss Brooke, he had a very indefinite notion of what it consisted in, and thought that it would die out with marriage. In short, he felt himself to be in love in the right place, and was ready to endure a great deal of predominance, which, after all, a man could always put down when he liked. Sir James had no idea that he should ever like to put down the predominance of this handsome girl, in whose cleverness he delighted. Why not? A man’s mind—what there is of it—has always the advantage of being masculine,—as the smallest birch-tree is of a higher kind than the most soaring palm,—and even his ignorance is of a sounder quality. Sir James might not have originated this estimate; but a kind Providence furnishes the limpest personality with a little gum or starch in the form of tradition.

“Let me hope that you will rescind that resolution about the horse, Miss Brooke,” said the persevering admirer. “I assure you, riding is the most healthy of exercises.”

“I am aware of it,” said Dorothea, coldly. “I think it would do Celia good—if she would take to it.”

“But you are such a perfect horsewoman.”

“Excuse me; I have had very little practice, and I should be easily thrown.”

“Then that is a reason for more practice. Every lady ought to be a perfect horsewoman, that she may accompany her husband.”

“You see how widely we differ, Sir James. I have made up my mind that I ought not to be a perfect horsewoman, and so I should never correspond to your pattern of a lady.” Dorothea looked straight before her, and spoke with cold brusquerie, very much with the air of a handsome boy, in amusing contrast with the solicitous amiability of her admirer.

“I should like to know your reasons for this cruel resolution. It is not possible that you should think horsemanship wrong.”

“It is quite possible that I should think it wrong for me.”

“Oh, why?” said Sir James, in a tender tone of remonstrance.

Mr. Casaubon had come up to the table, teacup in hand, and was listening.

“We must not inquire too curiously into motives,” he interposed, in his measured way. “Miss Brooke knows that they are apt to become feeble in the utterance: the aroma is mixed with the grosser air. We must keep the germinating grain away from the light.”

Dorothea colored with pleasure, and looked up gratefully to the speaker. Here was a man who could understand the higher inward life, and with whom there could be some spiritual communion; nay, who could illuminate principle with the widest knowledge: a man whose learning almost amounted to a proof of whatever he believed!

Dorothea’s inferences may seem large; but really life could never have gone on at any period but for this liberal allowance of conclusions, which has facilitated marriage under the difficulties of civilization. Has any one

ever pinched into its pilulous smallness the cobweb of pre-matrimonial acquaintanceship?

“Certainly,” said good Sir James. “Miss Brooke shall not be urged to tell reasons she would rather be silent upon. I am sure her reasons would do her honor.”

He was not in the least jealous of the interest with which Dorothea had looked up at Mr. Casaubon: it never occurred to him that a girl to whom he was meditating an offer of marriage could care for a dried bookworm towards fifty, except, indeed, in a religious sort of way, as for a clergyman of some distinction.

However, since Miss Brooke had become engaged in a conversation with Mr. Casaubon about the Vaudois clergy, Sir James betook himself to Celia, and talked to her about her sister; spoke of a house in town, and asked whether Miss Brooke disliked London. Away from her sister, Celia talked quite easily, and Sir James said to himself that the second Miss Brooke was certainly very agreeable as well as pretty, though not, as some people pretended, more clever and sensible than the elder sister. He felt that he had chosen the one who was in all respects the superior; and a man naturally likes to look forward to having the best. He would be the very Mawworm of bachelors who pretended not to expect it.

## CHAPTER III.

“Say, goddess, what ensued, when Raphael,  
The affable archangel . . .

Eve

The story heard attentive, and was filled  
With admiration, and deep muse, to hear  
Of things so high and strange.”

—*Paradise Lost*, B. vii.

If it had really occurred to Mr. Casaubon to think of Miss Brooke as a suitable wife for him, the reasons that might induce her to accept him were already planted in her mind, and by the evening of the next day the reasons had budded and bloomed. For they had had a long conversation in the morning, while Celia, who did not like the company of Mr. Casaubon's moles and sallowness, had escaped to the vicarage to play with the curate's ill-shod but merry children.

Dorothea by this time had looked deep into the ungauged reservoir of Mr. Casaubon's mind, seeing reflected there in vague labyrinthine extension every quality she herself brought; had opened much of her own experience to him, and had understood from him the scope of his great work, also of attractively labyrinthine extent. For he had been as instructive as Milton's "affable archangel;" and with something of the archangelic manner he told her how he had undertaken to show (what indeed had been attempted before, but not with that thoroughness, justice of comparison, and effectiveness of arrangement at which Mr. Casaubon aimed) that all the mythical systems or erratic mythical fragments in the world were corruptions of a tradition originally revealed. Having once mastered the true position and taken a firm footing there, the vast field of mythical constructions became intelligible, nay, luminous with the reflected light of correspondences. But to gather in this great harvest of truth was no light or speedy work. His notes already made a formidable range of volumes, but the crowning task would be to condense these voluminous still-accumulating results and bring them, like the earlier vintage of Hippocratic books, to fit a little shelf. In explaining this to

Dorothea, Mr. Casaubon expressed himself nearly as he would have done to a fellow-student, for he had not two styles of talking at command: it is true that when he used a Greek or Latin phrase he always gave the English with scrupulous care, but he would probably have done this in any case. A learned provincial clergyman is accustomed to think of his acquaintances as of “lords, knyghtes, and other noble and worthi men, that conne Latyn but lytille.”

Dorothea was altogether captivated by the wide embrace of this conception. Here was something beyond the shallows of ladies’ school literature: here was a living Bossuet, whose work would reconcile complete knowledge with devoted piety; here was a modern Augustine who united the glories of doctor and saint.

The sanctity seemed no less clearly marked than the learning, for when Dorothea was impelled to open her mind on certain themes which she could speak of to no one whom she had before seen at Tipton, especially on the secondary importance of ecclesiastical forms and articles of belief compared with that spiritual religion, that submergence of self in communion with Divine perfection which seemed to her to be expressed in the best Christian books of widely distant ages, she found in Mr. Casaubon a listener who understood her at once, who could assure her of his own agreement with that view when duly tempered with wise conformity, and could mention historical examples before unknown to her.

“He thinks with me,” said Dorothea to herself, “or rather, he thinks a whole world of which my thought is but a poor twopenny mirror. And his feelings too, his whole experience—what a lake compared with my little pool!”

Miss Brooke argued from words and dispositions not less unhesitatingly than other young ladies of her age. Signs are small measurable things, but interpretations are illimitable, and in girls of sweet, ardent nature, every sign is apt to conjure up wonder, hope, belief, vast as a sky, and colored by a diffused thimbleful of matter in the shape of knowledge. They are not always too grossly deceived; for Sinbad himself may have fallen by good-luck on a true description, and wrong reasoning sometimes lands poor mortals in right conclusions: starting a long way off the true point, and proceeding by loops and zigzags, we now and then arrive just where we

ought to be. Because Miss Brooke was hasty in her trust, it is not therefore clear that Mr. Casaubon was unworthy of it.

He stayed a little longer than he had intended, on a slight pressure of invitation from Mr. Brooke, who offered no bait except his own documents on machine-breaking and rick-burning. Mr. Casaubon was called into the library to look at these in a heap, while his host picked up first one and then the other to read aloud from in a skipping and uncertain way, passing from one unfinished passage to another with a “Yes, now, but here!” and finally pushing them all aside to open the journal of his youthful Continental travels.

“Look here—here is all about Greece. Rhamnus, the ruins of Rhamnus—you are a great Grecian, now. I don’t know whether you have given much study to the topography. I spent no end of time in making out these things—Helicon, now. Here, now!—‘We started the next morning for Parnassus, the double-peaked Parnassus.’ All this volume is about Greece, you know,” Mr. Brooke wound up, rubbing his thumb transversely along the edges of the leaves as he held the book forward.

Mr. Casaubon made a dignified though somewhat sad audience; bowed in the right place, and avoided looking at anything documentary as far as possible, without showing disregard or impatience; mindful that this desultoriness was associated with the institutions of the country, and that the man who took him on this severe mental scamper was not only an amiable host, but a landholder and *custos rotulorum*. Was his endurance aided also by the reflection that Mr. Brooke was the uncle of Dorothea?

Certainly he seemed more and more bent on making her talk to him, on drawing her out, as Celia remarked to herself; and in looking at her his face was often lit up by a smile like pale wintry sunshine. Before he left the next morning, while taking a pleasant walk with Miss Brooke along the gravelled terrace, he had mentioned to her that he felt the disadvantage of loneliness, the need of that cheerful companionship with which the presence of youth can lighten or vary the serious toils of maturity. And he delivered this statement with as much careful precision as if he had been a diplomatic envoy whose words would be attended with results. Indeed, Mr. Casaubon was not used to expect that he should have to repeat or revise his communications of a practical or personal kind. The inclinations which he had deliberately stated on the 2d of October he would think it enough to

refer to by the mention of that date; judging by the standard of his own memory, which was a volume where a *vide supra* could serve instead of repetitions, and not the ordinary long-used blotting-book which only tells of forgotten writing. But in this case Mr. Casaubon's confidence was not likely to be falsified, for Dorothea heard and retained what he said with the eager interest of a fresh young nature to which every variety in experience is an epoch.

It was three o'clock in the beautiful breezy autumn day when Mr. Casaubon drove off to his Rectory at Lowick, only five miles from Tipton; and Dorothea, who had on her bonnet and shawl, hurried along the shrubbery and across the park that she might wander through the bordering wood with no other visible companionship than that of Monk, the Great St. Bernard dog, who always took care of the young ladies in their walks. There had risen before her the girl's vision of a possible future for herself to which she looked forward with trembling hope, and she wanted to wander on in that visionary future without interruption. She walked briskly in the brisk air, the color rose in her cheeks, and her straw bonnet (which our contemporaries might look at with conjectural curiosity as at an obsolete form of basket) fell a little backward. She would perhaps be hardly characterized enough if it were omitted that she wore her brown hair flatly braided and coiled behind so as to expose the outline of her head in a daring manner at a time when public feeling required the meagreness of nature to be dissimulated by tall barricades of frizzed curls and bows, never surpassed by any great race except the Feejeean. This was a trait of Miss Brooke's asceticism. But there was nothing of an ascetic's expression in her bright full eyes, as she looked before her, not consciously seeing, but absorbing into the intensity of her mood, the solemn glory of the afternoon with its long swathes of light between the far-off rows of limes, whose shadows touched each other.

All people, young or old (that is, all people in those ante-reform times), would have thought her an interesting object if they had referred the glow in her eyes and cheeks to the newly awakened ordinary images of young love: the illusions of Chloe about Strephon have been sufficiently consecrated in poetry, as the pathetic loveliness of all spontaneous trust ought to be. Miss Pippin adoring young Pumpkin, and dreaming along endless vistas of unwearying companionship, was a little drama which never tired our fathers and mothers, and had been put into all costumes.

Let but Pumpkin have a figure which would sustain the disadvantages of the shortwaisted swallow-tail, and everybody felt it not only natural but necessary to the perfection of womanhood, that a sweet girl should be at once convinced of his virtue, his exceptional ability, and above all, his perfect sincerity. But perhaps no persons then living—certainly none in the neighborhood of Tipton—would have had a sympathetic understanding for the dreams of a girl whose notions about marriage took their color entirely from an exalted enthusiasm about the ends of life, an enthusiasm which was lit chiefly by its own fire, and included neither the niceties of the trousseau, the pattern of plate, nor even the honors and sweet joys of the blooming matron.

It had now entered Dorothea's mind that Mr. Casaubon might wish to make her his wife, and the idea that he would do so touched her with a sort of reverential gratitude. How good of him—nay, it would be almost as if a winged messenger had suddenly stood beside her path and held out his hand towards her! For a long while she had been oppressed by the indefiniteness which hung in her mind, like a thick summer haze, over all her desire to make her life greatly effective. What could she do, what ought she to do?—she, hardly more than a budding woman, but yet with an active conscience and a great mental need, not to be satisfied by a girlish instruction comparable to the nibblings and judgments of a discursive mouse. With some endowment of stupidity and conceit, she might have thought that a Christian young lady of fortune should find her ideal of life in village charities, patronage of the humbler clergy, the perusal of "Female Scripture Characters," unfolding the private experience of Sara under the Old Dispensation, and Dorcas under the New, and the care of her soul over her embroidery in her own boudoir—with a background of prospective marriage to a man who, if less strict than herself, as being involved in affairs religiously inexplicable, might be prayed for and seasonably exhorted. From such contentment poor Dorothea was shut out. The intensity of her religious disposition, the coercion it exercised over her life, was but one aspect of a nature altogether ardent, theoretic, and intellectually consequent: and with such a nature struggling in the bands of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither, the outcome was sure to strike others as at once exaggeration and inconsistency. The thing which seemed to her best, she wanted to justify



by the completest knowledge; and not to live in a pretended admission of rules which were never acted on. Into this soul-hunger as yet all her youthful passion was poured; the union which attracted her was one that would deliver her from her girlish subjection to her own ignorance, and give her the freedom of voluntary submission to a guide who would take her along the grandest path.

“I should learn everything then,” she said to herself, still walking quickly along the bridle road through the wood. “It would be my duty to study that I might help him the better in his great works. There would be nothing trivial about our lives. Every-day things with us would mean the greatest things. It would be like marrying Pascal. I should learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by. And then I should know what to do, when I got older: I should see how it was possible to lead a grand life here—now—in England. I don’t feel sure about doing good in any way now: everything seems like going on a mission to a people whose language I don’t know;—unless it were building good cottages—there can be no doubt about that. Oh, I hope I should be able to get the people well housed in Lowick! I will draw plenty of plans while I have time.”

Dorothea checked herself suddenly with self-rebuke for the presumptuous way in which she was reckoning on uncertain events, but she was spared any inward effort to change the direction of her thoughts by the appearance of a cantering horseman round a turning of the road. The well-groomed chestnut horse and two beautiful setters could leave no doubt that the rider was Sir James Chettam. He discerned Dorothea, jumped off his horse at once, and, having delivered it to his groom, advanced towards her with something white on his arm, at which the two setters were barking in an excited manner.

“How delightful to meet you, Miss Brooke,” he said, raising his hat and showing his sleekly waving blond hair. “It has hastened the pleasure I was looking forward to.”

Miss Brooke was annoyed at the interruption. This amiable baronet, really a suitable husband for Celia, exaggerated the necessity of making himself agreeable to the elder sister. Even a prospective brother-in-law may be an oppression if he will always be presupposing too good an understanding with you, and agreeing with you even when you contradict him. The thought that he had made the mistake of paying his addresses to

herself could not take shape: all her mental activity was used up in persuasions of another kind. But he was positively obtrusive at this moment, and his dimpled hands were quite disagreeable. Her roused temper made her color deeply, as she returned his greeting with some haughtiness.

Sir James interpreted the heightened color in the way most gratifying to himself, and thought he never saw Miss Brooke looking so handsome.

“I have brought a little petitioner,” he said, “or rather, I have brought him to see if he will be approved before his petition is offered.” He showed the white object under his arm, which was a tiny Maltese puppy, one of nature’s most naive toys.

“It is painful to me to see these creatures that are bred merely as pets,” said Dorothea, whose opinion was forming itself that very moment (as opinions will) under the heat of irritation.

“Oh, why?” said Sir James, as they walked forward.

“I believe all the petting that is given them does not make them happy. They are too helpless: their lives are too frail. A weasel or a mouse that gets its own living is more interesting. I like to think that the animals about us have souls something like our own, and either carry on their own little affairs or can be companions to us, like Monk here. Those creatures are parasitic.”

“I am so glad I know that you do not like them,” said good Sir James. “I should never keep them for myself, but ladies usually are fond of these Maltese dogs. Here, John, take this dog, will you?”

The objectionable puppy, whose nose and eyes were equally black and expressive, was thus got rid of, since Miss Brooke decided that it had better not have been born. But she felt it necessary to explain.

“You must not judge of Celia’s feeling from mine. I think she likes these small pets. She had a tiny terrier once, which she was very fond of. It made me unhappy, because I was afraid of treading on it. I am rather short-sighted.”

“You have your own opinion about everything, Miss Brooke, and it is always a good opinion.”

What answer was possible to such stupid complimenting?

“Do you know, I envy you that,” Sir James said, as they continued walking at the rather brisk pace set by Dorothea.

“I don’t quite understand what you mean.”

“Your power of forming an opinion. I can form an opinion of persons. I know when I like people. But about other matters, do you know, I have often a difficulty in deciding. One hears very sensible things said on opposite sides.”

“Or that seem sensible. Perhaps we don’t always discriminate between sense and nonsense.”

Dorothea felt that she was rather rude.

“Exactly,” said Sir James. “But you seem to have the power of discrimination.”

“On the contrary, I am often unable to decide. But that is from ignorance. The right conclusion is there all the same, though I am unable to see it.”

“I think there are few who would see it more readily. Do you know, Lovegood was telling me yesterday that you had the best notion in the world of a plan for cottages—quite wonderful for a young lady, he thought. You had a real *genus*, to use his expression. He said you wanted Mr. Brooke to build a new set of cottages, but he seemed to think it hardly probable that your uncle would consent. Do you know, that is one of the things I wish to do—I mean, on my own estate. I should be so glad to carry out that plan of yours, if you would let me see it. Of course, it is sinking money; that is why people object to it. Laborers can never pay rent to make it answer. But, after all, it is worth doing.”

“Worth doing! yes, indeed,” said Dorothea, energetically, forgetting her previous small vexations. “I think we deserve to be beaten out of our beautiful houses with a scourge of small cords—all of us who let tenants live in such sties as we see round us. Life in cottages might be happier than ours, if they were real houses fit for human beings from whom we expect duties and affections.”

“Will you show me your plan?”

“Yes, certainly. I dare say it is very faulty. But I have been examining all the plans for cottages in Loudon’s book, and picked out what seem the best things. Oh what a happiness it would be to set the pattern about here! I

think instead of Lazarus at the gate, we should put the pigsty cottages outside the park-gate.”

Dorothea was in the best temper now. Sir James, as brother-in-law, building model cottages on his estate, and then, perhaps, others being built at Lowick, and more and more elsewhere in imitation—it would be as if the spirit of Oberlin had passed over the parishes to make the life of poverty beautiful!

Sir James saw all the plans, and took one away to consult upon with Lovegood. He also took away a complacent sense that he was making great progress in Miss Brooke’s good opinion. The Maltese puppy was not offered to Celia; an omission which Dorothea afterwards thought of with surprise; but she blamed herself for it. She had been engrossing Sir James. After all, it was a relief that there was no puppy to tread upon.

Celia was present while the plans were being examined, and observed Sir James’s illusion. “He thinks that Dodo cares about him, and she only cares about her plans. Yet I am not certain that she would refuse him if she thought he would let her manage everything and carry out all her notions. And how very uncomfortable Sir James would be! I cannot bear notions.”

It was Celia’s private luxury to indulge in this dislike. She dared not confess it to her sister in any direct statement, for that would be laying herself open to a demonstration that she was somehow or other at war with all goodness. But on safe opportunities, she had an indirect mode of making her negative wisdom tell upon Dorothea, and calling her down from her rhapsodic mood by reminding her that people were staring, not listening. Celia was not impulsive: what she had to say could wait, and came from her always with the same quiet staccato evenness. When people talked with energy and emphasis she watched their faces and features merely. She never could understand how well-bred persons consented to sing and open their mouths in the ridiculous manner requisite for that vocal exercise.

It was not many days before Mr. Casaubon paid a morning visit, on which he was invited again for the following week to dine and stay the night. Thus Dorothea had three more conversations with him, and was convinced that her first impressions had been just. He was all she had at first imagined him to be: almost everything he had said seemed like a specimen from a mine, or the inscription on the door of a museum which

might open on the treasures of past ages; and this trust in his mental wealth was all the deeper and more effective on her inclination because it was now obvious that his visits were made for her sake. This accomplished man condescended to think of a young girl, and take the pains to talk to her, not with absurd compliment, but with an appeal to her understanding, and sometimes with instructive correction. What delightful companionship! Mr. Casaubon seemed even unconscious that trivialities existed, and never handed round that small-talk of heavy men which is as acceptable as stale bride-cake brought forth with an odor of cupboard. He talked of what he was interested in, or else he was silent and bowed with sad civility. To Dorothea this was adorable genuineness, and religious abstinence from that artificiality which uses up the soul in the efforts of pretence. For she looked as reverently at Mr. Casaubon's religious elevation above herself as she did at his intellect and learning. He assented to her expressions of devout feeling, and usually with an appropriate quotation; he allowed himself to say that he had gone through some spiritual conflicts in his youth; in short, Dorothea saw that here she might reckon on understanding, sympathy, and guidance. On one—only one—of her favorite themes she was disappointed. Mr. Casaubon apparently did not care about building cottages, and diverted the talk to the extremely narrow accommodation which was to be had in the dwellings of the ancient Egyptians, as if to check a too high standard. After he was gone, Dorothea dwelt with some agitation on this indifference of his; and her mind was much exercised with arguments drawn from the varying conditions of climate which modify human needs, and from the admitted wickedness of pagan despots. Should she not urge these arguments on Mr. Casaubon when he came again? But further reflection told her that she was presumptuous in demanding his attention to such a subject; he would not disapprove of her occupying herself with it in leisure moments, as other women expected to occupy themselves with their dress and embroidery—would not forbid it when—Dorothea felt rather ashamed as she detected herself in these speculations. But her uncle had been invited to go to Lowick to stay a couple of days: was it reasonable to suppose that Mr. Casaubon delighted in Mr. Brooke's society for its own sake, either with or without documents?

Meanwhile that little disappointment made her delight the more in Sir James Chettam's readiness to set on foot the desired improvements. He

came much oftener than Mr. Casaubon, and Dorothea ceased to find him disagreeable since he showed himself so entirely in earnest; for he had already entered with much practical ability into Lovegood's estimates, and was charmingly docile. She proposed to build a couple of cottages, and transfer two families from their old cabins, which could then be pulled down, so that new ones could be built on the old sites. Sir James said "Exactly," and she bore the word remarkably well.

Certainly these men who had so few spontaneous ideas might be very useful members of society under good feminine direction, if they were fortunate in choosing their sisters-in-law! It is difficult to say whether there was or was not a little wilfulness in her continuing blind to the possibility that another sort of choice was in question in relation to her. But her life was just now full of hope and action: she was not only thinking of her plans, but getting down learned books from the library and reading many things hastily (that she might be a little less ignorant in talking to Mr. Casaubon), all the while being visited with conscientious questionings whether she were not exalting these poor doings above measure and contemplating them with that self-satisfaction which was the last doom of ignorance and folly.

## CHAPTER IV.

*1st Gent.* Our deeds are fetters that we forge ourselves.

*2d Gent.* Ay, truly: but I think it is the world  
That brings the iron.

“Sir James seems determined to do everything you wish,” said Celia, as they were driving home from an inspection of the new building-site.

“He is a good creature, and more sensible than any one would imagine,” said Dorothea, inconsiderately.

“You mean that he appears silly.”

“No, no,” said Dorothea, recollecting herself, and laying her hand on her sister’s a moment, “but he does not talk equally well on all subjects.”

“I should think none but disagreeable people do,” said Celia, in her usual purring way. “They must be very dreadful to live with. Only think! at breakfast, and always.”

Dorothea laughed. “O Kitty, you are a wonderful creature!” She pinched Celia’s chin, being in the mood now to think her very winning and lovely—fit hereafter to be an eternal cherub, and if it were not doctrinally wrong to say so, hardly more in need of salvation than a squirrel. “Of course people need not be always talking well. Only one tells the quality of their minds when they try to talk well.”

“You mean that Sir James tries and fails.”

“I was speaking generally. Why do you catechise me about Sir James? It is not the object of his life to please me.”

“Now, Dodo, can you really believe that?”

“Certainly. He thinks of me as a future sister—that is all.” Dorothea had never hinted this before, waiting, from a certain shyness on such subjects which was mutual between the sisters, until it should be introduced by some decisive event. Celia blushed, but said at once—

“Pray do not make that mistake any longer, Dodo. When Tantripp was brushing my hair the other day, she said that Sir James’s man knew from Mrs. Cadwallader’s maid that Sir James was to marry the eldest Miss Brooke.”

“How can you let Tantripp talk such gossip to you, Celia?” said Dorothea, indignantly, not the less angry because details asleep in her memory were now awakened to confirm the unwelcome revelation. “You must have asked her questions. It is degrading.”

“I see no harm at all in Tantripp’s talking to me. It is better to hear what people say. You see what mistakes you make by taking up notions. I am quite sure that Sir James means to make you an offer; and he believes that you will accept him, especially since you have been so pleased with him about the plans. And uncle too—I know he expects it. Every one can see that Sir James is very much in love with you.”

The revulsion was so strong and painful in Dorothea’s mind that the tears welled up and flowed abundantly. All her dear plans were embittered, and she thought with disgust of Sir James’s conceiving that she recognized him as her lover. There was vexation too on account of Celia.

“How could he expect it?” she burst forth in her most impetuous manner. “I have never agreed with him about anything but the cottages: I was barely polite to him before.”

“But you have been so pleased with him since then; he has begun to feel quite sure that you are fond of him.”

“Fond of him, Celia! How can you choose such odious expressions?” said Dorothea, passionately.

“Dear me, Dorothea, I suppose it would be right for you to be fond of a man whom you accepted for a husband.”

“It is offensive to me to say that Sir James could think I was fond of him. Besides, it is not the right word for the feeling I must have towards the man I would accept as a husband.”

“Well, I am sorry for Sir James. I thought it right to tell you, because you went on as you always do, never looking just where you are, and treading in the wrong place. You always see what nobody else sees; it is impossible to satisfy you; yet you never see what is quite plain. That’s your way, Dodo.” Something certainly gave Celia unusual courage; and



she was not sparing the sister of whom she was occasionally in awe. Who can tell what just criticisms Murr the Cat may be passing on us beings of wider speculation?

“It is very painful,” said Dorothea, feeling scourged. “I can have no more to do with the cottages. I must be uncivil to him. I must tell him I will have nothing to do with them. It is very painful.” Her eyes filled again with tears.

“Wait a little. Think about it. You know he is going away for a day or two to see his sister. There will be nobody besides Lovegood.” Celia could not help relenting. “Poor Dodo,” she went on, in an amiable staccato. “It is very hard: it is your favorite *fad* to draw plans.”

“*Fad* to draw plans! Do you think I only care about my fellow-creatures’ houses in that childish way? I may well make mistakes. How can one ever do anything nobly Christian, living among people with such petty thoughts?”

No more was said; Dorothea was too much jarred to recover her temper and behave so as to show that she admitted any error in herself. She was disposed rather to accuse the intolerable narrowness and the purblind conscience of the society around her: and Celia was no longer the eternal cherub, but a thorn in her spirit, a pink-and-white nullifidian, worse than any discouraging presence in the “Pilgrim’s Progress.” The *fad* of drawing plans! What was life worth—what great faith was possible when the whole effect of one’s actions could be withered up into such parched rubbish as that? When she got out of the carriage, her cheeks were pale and her eyelids red. She was an image of sorrow, and her uncle who met her in the hall would have been alarmed, if Celia had not been close to her looking so pretty and composed, that he at once concluded Dorothea’s tears to have their origin in her excessive religiousness. He had returned, during their absence, from a journey to the county town, about a petition for the pardon of some criminal.

“Well, my dears,” he said, kindly, as they went up to kiss him, “I hope nothing disagreeable has happened while I have been away.”

“No, uncle,” said Celia, “we have been to Freshitt to look at the cottages. We thought you would have been at home to lunch.”

“I came by Lowick to lunch—you didn’t know I came by Lowick. And I have brought a couple of pamphlets for you, Dorothea—in the library, you

know; they lie on the table in the library.”

It seemed as if an electric stream went through Dorothea, thrilling her from despair into expectation. They were pamphlets about the early Church. The oppression of Celia, Tantripp, and Sir James was shaken off, and she walked straight to the library. Celia went up-stairs. Mr. Brooke was detained by a message, but when he re-entered the library, he found Dorothea seated and already deep in one of the pamphlets which had some marginal manuscript of Mr. Casaubon's,—taking it in as eagerly as she might have taken in the scent of a fresh bouquet after a dry, hot, dreary walk.

She was getting away from Tipton and Freshitt, and her own sad liability to tread in the wrong places on her way to the New Jerusalem.

Mr. Brooke sat down in his arm-chair, stretched his legs towards the wood-fire, which had fallen into a wondrous mass of glowing dice between the dogs, and rubbed his hands gently, looking very mildly towards Dorothea, but with a neutral leisurely air, as if he had nothing particular to say. Dorothea closed her pamphlet, as soon as she was aware of her uncle's presence, and rose as if to go. Usually she would have been interested about her uncle's merciful errand on behalf of the criminal, but her late agitation had made her absent-minded.

“I came back by Lowick, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, not as if with any intention to arrest her departure, but apparently from his usual tendency to say what he had said before. This fundamental principle of human speech was markedly exhibited in Mr. Brooke. “I lunched there and saw Casaubon's library, and that kind of thing. There's a sharp air, driving. Won't you sit down, my dear? You look cold.”

Dorothea felt quite inclined to accept the invitation. Some times, when her uncle's easy way of taking things did not happen to be exasperating, it was rather soothing. She threw off her mantle and bonnet, and sat down opposite to him, enjoying the glow, but lifting up her beautiful hands for a screen. They were not thin hands, or small hands; but powerful, feminine, maternal hands. She seemed to be holding them up in propitiation for her passionate desire to know and to think, which in the unfriendly mediums of Tipton and Freshitt had issued in crying and red eyelids.

She bethought herself now of the condemned criminal. “What news have you brought about the sheep-stealer, uncle?”

“What, poor Bunch?—well, it seems we can’t get him off—he is to be hanged.”

Dorothea’s brow took an expression of reprobation and pity.

“Hanged, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, with a quiet nod. “Poor Romilly! he would have helped us. I knew Romilly. Casaubon didn’t know Romilly. He is a little buried in books, you know, Casaubon is.”

“When a man has great studies and is writing a great work, he must of course give up seeing much of the world. How can he go about making acquaintances?”

“That’s true. But a man mopes, you know. I have always been a bachelor too, but I have that sort of disposition that I never moped; it was my way to go about everywhere and take in everything. I never moped: but I can see that Casaubon does, you know. He wants a companion—a companion, you know.”

“It would be a great honor to any one to be his companion,” said Dorothea, energetically.

“You like him, eh?” said Mr. Brooke, without showing any surprise, or other emotion. “Well, now, I’ve known Casaubon ten years, ever since he came to Lowick. But I never got anything out of him—any ideas, you know. However, he is a tiptop man and may be a bishop—that kind of thing, you know, if Peel stays in. And he has a very high opinion of you, my dear.”

Dorothea could not speak.

“The fact is, he has a very high opinion indeed of you. And he speaks uncommonly well—does Casaubon. He has deferred to me, you not being of age. In short, I have promised to speak to you, though I told him I thought there was not much chance. I was bound to tell him that. I said, my niece is very young, and that kind of thing. But I didn’t think it necessary to go into everything. However, the long and the short of it is, that he has asked my permission to make you an offer of marriage—of marriage, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, with his explanatory nod. “I thought it better to tell you, my dear.”

No one could have detected any anxiety in Mr. Brooke’s manner, but he did really wish to know something of his niece’s mind, that, if there were any need for advice, he might give it in time. What feeling he, as a

magistrate who had taken in so many ideas, could make room for, was unmixedly kind. Since Dorothea did not speak immediately, he repeated, "I thought it better to tell you, my dear."

"Thank you, uncle," said Dorothea, in a clear unwavering tone. "I am very grateful to Mr. Casaubon. If he makes me an offer, I shall accept him. I admire and honor him more than any man I ever saw."

Mr. Brooke paused a little, and then said in a lingering low tone, "Ah? ... Well! He is a good match in some respects. But now, Chettam is a good match. And our land lies together. I shall never interfere against your wishes, my dear. People should have their own way in marriage, and that sort of thing—up to a certain point, you know. I have always said that, up to a certain point. I wish you to marry well; and I have good reason to believe that Chettam wishes to marry you. I mention it, you know."

"It is impossible that I should ever marry Sir James Chettam," said Dorothea. "If he thinks of marrying me, he has made a great mistake."

"That is it, you see. One never knows. I should have thought Chettam was just the sort of man a woman would like, now."

"Pray do not mention him in that light again, uncle," said Dorothea, feeling some of her late irritation revive.

Mr. Brooke wondered, and felt that women were an inexhaustible subject of study, since even he at his age was not in a perfect state of scientific prediction about them. Here was a fellow like Chettam with no chance at all.

"Well, but Casaubon, now. There is no hurry—I mean for you. It's true, every year will tell upon him. He is over five-and-forty, you know. I should say a good seven-and-twenty years older than you. To be sure,—if you like learning and standing, and that sort of thing, we can't have everything. And his income is good—he has a handsome property independent of the Church—his income is good. Still he is not young, and I must not conceal from you, my dear, that I think his health is not over-strong. I know nothing else against him."

"I should not wish to have a husband very near my own age," said Dorothea, with grave decision. "I should wish to have a husband who was above me in judgment and in all knowledge."

Mr. Brooke repeated his subdued, "Ah?—I thought you had more of your own opinion than most girls. I thought you liked your own opinion—liked it, you know."

"I cannot imagine myself living without some opinions, but I should wish to have good reasons for them, and a wise man could help me to see which opinions had the best foundation, and would help me to live according to them."

"Very true. You couldn't put the thing better—couldn't put it better, beforehand, you know. But there are oddities in things," continued Mr. Brooke, whose conscience was really roused to do the best he could for his niece on this occasion. "Life isn't cast in a mould—not cut out by rule and line, and that sort of thing. I never married myself, and it will be the better for you and yours. The fact is, I never loved any one well enough to put myself into a noose for them. It *is* a noose, you know. Temper, now. There is temper. And a husband likes to be master."

"I know that I must expect trials, uncle. Marriage is a state of higher duties. I never thought of it as mere personal ease," said poor Dorothea.

"Well, you are not fond of show, a great establishment, balls, dinners, that kind of thing. I can see that Casaubon's ways might suit you better than Chettam's. And you shall do as you like, my dear. I would not hinder Casaubon; I said so at once; for there is no knowing how anything may turn out. You have not the same tastes as every young lady; and a clergyman and scholar—who may be a bishop—that kind of thing—may suit you better than Chettam. Chettam is a good fellow, a good sound-hearted fellow, you know; but he doesn't go much into ideas. I did, when I was his age. But Casaubon's eyes, now. I think he has hurt them a little with too much reading."

"I should be all the happier, uncle, the more room there was for me to help him," said Dorothea, ardently.

"You have quite made up your mind, I see. Well, my dear, the fact is, I have a letter for you in my pocket." Mr. Brooke handed the letter to Dorothea, but as she rose to go away, he added, "There is not too much hurry, my dear. Think about it, you know."

When Dorothea had left him, he reflected that he had certainly spoken strongly: he had put the risks of marriage before her in a striking manner. It was his duty to do so. But as to pretending to be wise for young people,

—no uncle, however much he had travelled in his youth, absorbed the new ideas, and dined with celebrities now deceased, could pretend to judge what sort of marriage would turn out well for a young girl who preferred Casaubon to Chettam. In short, woman was a problem which, since Mr. Brooke's mind felt blank before it, could be hardly less complicated than the revolutions of an irregular solid.

## CHAPTER V.

“Hard students are commonly troubled with gowts, catarrhs, rheums, cachexia, bradypepsia, bad eyes, stone, and collick, crudities, oppilations, vertigo, winds, consumptions, and all such diseases as come by over-much sitting: they are most part lean, dry, ill-colored ... and all through immoderate pains and extraordinary studies. If you will not believe the truth of this, look upon great Tostatus and Thomas Aquainas’ works; and tell me whether those men took pains.”—BURTON’S *Anatomy of Melancholy*, P. I, s. 2.

This was Mr. Casaubon’s letter.

MY DEAR MISS BROOKE,—I have your guardian’s permission to address you on a subject than which I have none more at heart. I am not, I trust, mistaken in the recognition of some deeper correspondence than that of date in the fact that a consciousness of need in my own life had arisen contemporaneously with the possibility of my becoming acquainted with you. For in the first hour of meeting you, I had an impression of your eminent and perhaps exclusive fitness to supply that need (connected, I may say, with such activity of the affections as even the preoccupations of a work too special to be abdicated could not uninterruptedly dissimulate); and each succeeding opportunity for observation has given the impression an added depth by convincing me more emphatically of that fitness which I had preconceived, and thus evoking more decisively those affections to which I have but now referred. Our conversations have, I think, made sufficiently clear to you the tenor of my life and purposes: a tenor unsuited, I am aware, to the commoner order of minds. But I have discerned in you an elevation of thought and a capability of devotedness, which I had hitherto not conceived to be compatible either with the early bloom of

youth or with those graces of sex that may be said at once to win and to confer distinction when combined, as they notably are in you, with the mental qualities above indicated. It was, I confess, beyond my hope to meet with this rare combination of elements both solid and attractive, adapted to supply aid in graver labors and to cast a charm over vacant hours; and but for the event of my introduction to you (which, let me again say, I trust not to be superficially coincident with foreshadowing needs, but providentially related thereto as stages towards the completion of a life's plan), I should presumably have gone on to the last without any attempt to lighten my solitariness by a matrimonial union.

Such, my dear Miss Brooke, is the accurate statement of my feelings; and I rely on your kind indulgence in venturing now to ask you how far your own are of a nature to confirm my happy presentiment. To be accepted by you as your husband and the earthly guardian of your welfare, I should regard as the highest of providential gifts. In return I can at least offer you an affection hitherto unwasted, and the faithful consecration of a life which, however short in the sequel, has no backward pages whereon, if you choose to turn them, you will find records such as might justly cause you either bitterness or shame. I await the expression of your sentiments with an anxiety which it would be the part of wisdom (were it possible) to divert by a more arduous labor than usual. But in this order of experience I am still young, and in looking forward to an unfavorable possibility I cannot but feel that resignation to solitude will be more difficult after the temporary illumination of hope.

In any case, I shall remain,  
Yours with sincere devotion,  
EDWARD CASAUBON.

Dorothea trembled while she read this letter; then she fell on her knees, buried her face, and sobbed. She could not pray: under the rush of solemn



emotion in which thoughts became vague and images floated uncertainly, she could but cast herself, with a childlike sense of reclining, in the lap of a divine consciousness which sustained her own. She remained in that attitude till it was time to dress for dinner.

How could it occur to her to examine the letter, to look at it critically as a profession of love? Her whole soul was possessed by the fact that a fuller life was opening before her: she was a neophyte about to enter on a higher grade of initiation. She was going to have room for the energies which stirred uneasily under the dimness and pressure of her own ignorance and the petty peremptoriness of the world's habits.

Now she would be able to devote herself to large yet definite duties; now she would be allowed to live continually in the light of a mind that she could reverence. This hope was not unmixed with the glow of proud delight—the joyous maiden surprise that she was chosen by the man whom her admiration had chosen. All Dorothea's passion was transfused through a mind struggling towards an ideal life; the radiance of her transfigured girlhood fell on the first object that came within its level. The impetus with which inclination became resolution was heightened by those little events of the day which had roused her discontent with the actual conditions of her life.

After dinner, when Celia was playing an “air, with variations,” a small kind of tinkling which symbolized the aesthetic part of the young ladies' education, Dorothea went up to her room to answer Mr. Casaubon's letter. Why should she defer the answer? She wrote it over three times, not because she wished to change the wording, but because her hand was unusually uncertain, and she could not bear that Mr. Casaubon should think her handwriting bad and illegible. She piqued herself on writing a hand in which each letter was distinguishable without any large range of conjecture, and she meant to make much use of this accomplishment, to save Mr. Casaubon's eyes. Three times she wrote.

MY DEAR MR. CASAUBON,—I am very grateful to you for loving me, and thinking me worthy to be your wife. I can look forward to no better happiness than that which would be one with yours. If I said more, it would only be the same thing written out at greater length, for I cannot

now dwell on any other thought than that I may be through life

Yours devotedly,  
DOROTHEA BROOKE.

Later in the evening she followed her uncle into the library to give him the letter, that he might send it in the morning. He was surprised, but his surprise only issued in a few moments' silence, during which he pushed about various objects on his writing-table, and finally stood with his back to the fire, his glasses on his nose, looking at the address of Dorothea's letter.

"Have you thought enough about this, my dear?" he said at last.

"There was no need to think long, uncle. I know of nothing to make me vacillate. If I changed my mind, it must be because of something important and entirely new to me."

"Ah!—then you have accepted him? Then Chettam has no chance? Has Chettam offended you—offended you, you know? What is it you don't like in Chettam?"

"There is nothing that I like in him," said Dorothea, rather impetuously.

Mr. Brooke threw his head and shoulders backward as if some one had thrown a light missile at him. Dorothea immediately felt some self-rebuke, and said—

"I mean in the light of a husband. He is very kind, I think—really very good about the cottages. A well-meaning man."

"But you must have a scholar, and that sort of thing? Well, it lies a little in our family. I had it myself—that love of knowledge, and going into everything—a little too much—it took me too far; though that sort of thing doesn't often run in the female-line; or it runs underground like the rivers in Greece, you know—it comes out in the sons. Clever sons, clever mothers. I went a good deal into that, at one time. However, my dear, I have always said that people should do as they like in these things, up to a certain point. I couldn't, as your guardian, have consented to a bad match. But Casaubon stands well: his position is good. I am afraid Chettam will be hurt, though, and Mrs. Cadwallader will blame me."

That evening, of course, Celia knew nothing of what had happened. She attributed Dorothea's abstracted manner, and the evidence of further crying since they had got home, to the temper she had been in about Sir James Chettam and the buildings, and was careful not to give further offence: having once said what she wanted to say, Celia had no disposition to recur to disagreeable subjects. It had been her nature when a child never to quarrel with any one—only to observe with wonder that they quarrelled with her, and looked like turkey-cocks; whereupon she was ready to play at cat's cradle with them whenever they recovered themselves. And as to Dorothea, it had always been her way to find something wrong in her sister's words, though Celia inwardly protested that she always said just how things were, and nothing else: she never did and never could put words together out of her own head. But the best of Dodo was, that she did not keep angry for long together. Now, though they had hardly spoken to each other all the evening, yet when Celia put by her work, intending to go to bed, a proceeding in which she was always much the earlier, Dorothea, who was seated on a low stool, unable to occupy herself except in meditation, said, with the musical intonation which in moments of deep but quiet feeling made her speech like a fine bit of recitative—

“Celia, dear, come and kiss me,” holding her arms open as she spoke.

Celia knelt down to get the right level and gave her little butterfly kiss, while Dorothea encircled her with gentle arms and pressed her lips gravely on each cheek in turn.

“Don't sit up, Dodo, you are so pale to-night: go to bed soon,” said Celia, in a comfortable way, without any touch of pathos.

“No, dear, I am very, very happy,” said Dorothea, fervently.

“So much the better,” thought Celia. “But how strangely Dodo goes from one extreme to the other.”

The next day, at luncheon, the butler, handing something to Mr. Brooke, said, “Jonas is come back, sir, and has brought this letter.”

Mr. Brooke read the letter, and then, nodding toward Dorothea, said, “Casaubon, my dear: he will be here to dinner; he didn't wait to write more—didn't wait, you know.”

It could not seem remarkable to Celia that a dinner guest should be announced to her sister beforehand, but, her eyes following the same

direction as her uncle's, she was struck with the peculiar effect of the announcement on Dorothea. It seemed as if something like the reflection of a white sunlit wing had passed across her features, ending in one of her rare blushes. For the first time it entered into Celia's mind that there might be something more between Mr. Casaubon and her sister than his delight in bookish talk and her delight in listening. Hitherto she had classed the admiration for this "ugly" and learned acquaintance with the admiration for Monsieur Liret at Lausanne, also ugly and learned. Dorothea had never been tired of listening to old Monsieur Liret when Celia's feet were as cold as possible, and when it had really become dreadful to see the skin of his bald head moving about. Why then should her enthusiasm not extend to Mr. Casaubon simply in the same way as to Monsieur Liret? And it seemed probable that all learned men had a sort of schoolmaster's view of young people.

But now Celia was really startled at the suspicion which had darted into her mind. She was seldom taken by surprise in this way, her marvellous quickness in observing a certain order of signs generally preparing her to expect such outward events as she had an interest in. Not that she now imagined Mr. Casaubon to be already an accepted lover: she had only begun to feel disgust at the possibility that anything in Dorothea's mind could tend towards such an issue. Here was something really to vex her about Dodo: it was all very well not to accept Sir James Chettam, but the idea of marrying Mr. Casaubon! Celia felt a sort of shame mingled with a sense of the ludicrous. But perhaps Dodo, if she were really bordering on such an extravagance, might be turned away from it: experience had often shown that her impressibility might be calculated on. The day was damp, and they were not going to walk out, so they both went up to their sitting-room; and there Celia observed that Dorothea, instead of settling down with her usual diligent interest to some occupation, simply leaned her elbow on an open book and looked out of the window at the great cedar silvered with the damp. She herself had taken up the making of a toy for the curate's children, and was not going to enter on any subject too precipitately.

Dorothea was in fact thinking that it was desirable for Celia to know of the momentous change in Mr. Casaubon's position since he had last been in the house: it did not seem fair to leave her in ignorance of what would necessarily affect her attitude towards him; but it was impossible not to

shrink from telling her. Dorothea accused herself of some meanness in this timidity: it was always odious to her to have any small fears or contrivances about her actions, but at this moment she was seeking the highest aid possible that she might not dread the corrosiveness of Celia's pretty carnally minded prose. Her reverie was broken, and the difficulty of decision banished, by Celia's small and rather guttural voice speaking in its usual tone, of a remark aside or a "by the bye."

"Is any one else coming to dine besides Mr. Casaubon?"

"Not that I know of."

"I hope there is some one else. Then I shall not hear him eat his soup so."

"What is there remarkable about his soup-eating?"

"Really, Dodo, can't you hear how he scrapes his spoon? And he always blinks before he speaks. I don't know whether Locke blinked, but I'm sure I am sorry for those who sat opposite to him if he did."

"Celia," said Dorothea, with emphatic gravity, "pray don't make any more observations of that kind."

"Why not? They are quite true," returned Celia, who had her reasons for persevering, though she was beginning to be a little afraid.

"Many things are true which only the commonest minds observe."

"Then I think the commonest minds must be rather useful. I think it is a pity Mr. Casaubon's mother had not a commoner mind: she might have taught him better." Celia was inwardly frightened, and ready to run away, now she had hurled this light javelin.

Dorothea's feelings had gathered to an avalanche, and there could be no further preparation.

"It is right to tell you, Celia, that I am engaged to marry Mr. Casaubon."

Perhaps Celia had never turned so pale before. The paper man she was making would have had his leg injured, but for her habitual care of whatever she held in her hands. She laid the fragile figure down at once, and sat perfectly still for a few moments. When she spoke there was a tear gathering.

"Oh, Dodo, I hope you will be happy." Her sisterly tenderness could not but surmount other feelings at this moment, and her fears were the fears of

affection.

Dorothea was still hurt and agitated.

“It is quite decided, then?” said Celia, in an awed under tone. “And uncle knows?”

“I have accepted Mr. Casaubon’s offer. My uncle brought me the letter that contained it; he knew about it beforehand.”

“I beg your pardon, if I have said anything to hurt you, Dodo,” said Celia, with a slight sob. She never could have thought that she should feel as she did. There was something funereal in the whole affair, and Mr. Casaubon seemed to be the officiating clergyman, about whom it would be indecent to make remarks.

“Never mind, Kitty, do not grieve. We should never admire the same people. I often offend in something of the same way; I am apt to speak too strongly of those who don’t please me.”

In spite of this magnanimity Dorothea was still smarting: perhaps as much from Celia’s subdued astonishment as from her small criticisms. Of course all the world round Tipton would be out of sympathy with this marriage. Dorothea knew of no one who thought as she did about life and its best objects.

Nevertheless before the evening was at an end she was very happy. In an hour’s *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Casaubon she talked to him with more freedom than she had ever felt before, even pouring out her joy at the thought of devoting herself to him, and of learning how she might best share and further all his great ends. Mr. Casaubon was touched with an unknown delight (what man would not have been?) at this childlike unrestrained ardor: he was not surprised (what lover would have been?) that he should be the object of it.

“My dear young lady—Miss Brooke—Dorothea!” he said, pressing her hand between his hands, “this is a happiness greater than I had ever imagined to be in reserve for me. That I should ever meet with a mind and person so rich in the mingled graces which could render marriage desirable, was far indeed from my conception. You have all—nay, more than all—those qualities which I have ever regarded as the characteristic excellences of womanhood. The great charm of your sex is its capability of an ardent self-sacrificing affection, and herein we see its fitness to

round and complete the existence of our own. Hitherto I have known few pleasures save of the severer kind: my satisfactions have been those of the solitary student. I have been little disposed to gather flowers that would wither in my hand, but now I shall pluck them with eagerness, to place them in your bosom.”

No speech could have been more thoroughly honest in its intention: the frigid rhetoric at the end was as sincere as the bark of a dog, or the cawing of an amorous rook. Would it not be rash to conclude that there was no passion behind those sonnets to Delia which strike us as the thin music of a mandolin?

Dorothea’s faith supplied all that Mr. Casaubon’s words seemed to leave unsaid: what believer sees a disturbing omission or infelicity? The text, whether of prophet or of poet, expands for whatever we can put into it, and even his bad grammar is sublime.

“I am very ignorant—you will quite wonder at my ignorance,” said Dorothea. “I have so many thoughts that may be quite mistaken; and now I shall be able to tell them all to you, and ask you about them. But,” she added, with rapid imagination of Mr. Casaubon’s probable feeling, “I will not trouble you too much; only when you are inclined to listen to me. You must often be weary with the pursuit of subjects in your own track. I shall gain enough if you will take me with you there.”

“How should I be able now to persevere in any path without your companionship?” said Mr. Casaubon, kissing her candid brow, and feeling that heaven had vouchsafed him a blessing in every way suited to his peculiar wants. He was being unconsciously wrought upon by the charms of a nature which was entirely without hidden calculations either for immediate effects or for remoter ends. It was this which made Dorothea so childlike, and, according to some judges, so stupid, with all her reputed cleverness; as, for example, in the present case of throwing herself, metaphorically speaking, at Mr. Casaubon’s feet, and kissing his unfashionable shoe-ties as if he were a Protestant Pope. She was not in the least teaching Mr. Casaubon to ask if he were good enough for her, but merely asking herself anxiously how she could be good enough for Mr. Casaubon. Before he left the next day it had been decided that the marriage should take place within six weeks. Why not? Mr. Casaubon’s house was ready. It was not a parsonage, but a considerable mansion, with

much land attached to it. The parsonage was inhabited by the curate, who did all the duty except preaching the morning sermon.



## CHAPTER VI.

My lady's tongue is like the meadow blades,  
That cut you stroking them with idle hand.  
Nice cutting is her function: she divides  
With spiritual edge the millet-seed,  
And makes intangible savings.

As Mr. Casaubon's carriage was passing out of the gateway, it arrested the entrance of a pony phaeton driven by a lady with a servant seated behind. It was doubtful whether the recognition had been mutual, for Mr. Casaubon was looking absently before him; but the lady was quick-eyed, and threw a nod and a "How do you do?" in the nick of time. In spite of her shabby bonnet and very old Indian shawl, it was plain that the lodge-keeper regarded her as an important personage, from the low curtsy which was dropped on the entrance of the small phaeton.

"Well, Mrs. Fitchett, how are your fowls laying now?" said the high-colored, dark-eyed lady, with the clearest chiselled utterance.

"Pretty well for laying, madam, but they've ta'en to eating their eggs: I've no peace o' mind with 'em at all."

"Oh, the cannibals! Better sell them cheap at once. What will you sell them a couple? One can't eat fowls of a bad character at a high price."

"Well, madam, half-a-crown: I couldn't let 'em go, not under."

"Half-a-crown, these times! Come now—for the Rector's chicken-broth on a Sunday. He has consumed all ours that I can spare. You are half paid with the sermon, Mrs. Fitchett, remember that. Take a pair of tumbler-pigeons for them—little beauties. You must come and see them. You have no tumblers among your pigeons."

"Well, madam, Master Fitchett shall go and see 'em after work. He's very hot on new sorts; to oblige you."

"Oblige me! It will be the best bargain he ever made. A pair of church pigeons for a couple of wicked Spanish fowls that eat their own eggs! Don't you and Fitchett boast too much, that is all!"

The phaeton was driven onwards with the last words, leaving Mrs. Fitchett laughing and shaking her head slowly, with an interjectional “*Surely, surely!*”—from which it might be inferred that she would have found the country-side somewhat duller if the Rector’s lady had been less free-spoken and less of a skinflint. Indeed, both the farmers and laborers in the parishes of Freshitt and Tipton would have felt a sad lack of conversation but for the stories about what Mrs. Cadwallader said and did: a lady of immeasurably high birth, descended, as it were, from unknown earls, dim as the crowd of heroic shades—who pleaded poverty, pared down prices, and cut jokes in the most companionable manner, though with a turn of tongue that let you know who she was. Such a lady gave a neighborliness to both rank and religion, and mitigated the bitterness of uncommuted tithe. A much more exemplary character with an infusion of sour dignity would not have furthered their comprehension of the Thirty-nine Articles, and would have been less socially uniting.

Mr. Brooke, seeing Mrs. Cadwallader’s merits from a different point of view, winced a little when her name was announced in the library, where he was sitting alone.

“I see you have had our Lowick Cicero here,” she said, seating herself comfortably, throwing back her wraps, and showing a thin but well-built figure. “I suspect you and he are brewing some bad politics, else you would not be seeing so much of the lively man. I shall inform against you: remember you are both suspicious characters since you took Peel’s side about the Catholic Bill. I shall tell everybody that you are going to put up for Middlemarch on the Whig side when old Pinkerton resigns, and that Casaubon is going to help you in an underhand manner: going to bribe the voters with pamphlets, and throw open the public-houses to distribute them. Come, confess!”

“Nothing of the sort,” said Mr. Brooke, smiling and rubbing his eye-glasses, but really blushing a little at the impeachment. “Casaubon and I don’t talk politics much. He doesn’t care much about the philanthropic side of things; punishments, and that kind of thing. He only cares about Church questions. That is not my line of action, you know.”

“Ra-a-ther too much, my friend. I have heard of your doings. Who was it that sold his bit of land to the Papists at Middlemarch? I believe you bought it on purpose. You are a perfect Guy Faux. See if you are not burnt

in effigy this 5th of November coming. Humphrey would not come to quarrel with you about it, so I am come.”

“Very good. I was prepared to be persecuted for not persecuting—not persecuting, you know.”

“There you go! That is a piece of clap-trap you have got ready for the hustings. Now, *do not* let them lure you to the hustings, my dear Mr. Brooke. A man always makes a fool of himself, speechifying: there’s no excuse but being on the right side, so that you can ask a blessing on your humming and hawing. You will lose yourself, I forewarn you. You will make a Saturday pie of all parties’ opinions, and be pelted by everybody.”

“That is what I expect, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, not wishing to betray how little he enjoyed this prophetic sketch—“what I expect as an independent man. As to the Whigs, a man who goes with the thinkers is not likely to be hooked on by any party. He may go with them up to a certain point—up to a certain point, you know. But that is what you ladies never understand.”

“Where your certain point is? No. I should like to be told how a man can have any certain point when he belongs to no party—leading a roving life, and never letting his friends know his address. ‘Nobody knows where Brooke will be—there’s no counting on Brooke’—that is what people say of you, to be quite frank. Now, do turn respectable. How will you like going to Sessions with everybody looking shy on you, and you with a bad conscience and an empty pocket?”

“I don’t pretend to argue with a lady on politics,” said Mr. Brooke, with an air of smiling indifference, but feeling rather unpleasantly conscious that this attack of Mrs. Cadwallader’s had opened the defensive campaign to which certain rash steps had exposed him. “Your sex are not thinkers, you know—*varium et mutabile semper*—that kind of thing. You don’t know Virgil. I knew”—Mr. Brooke reflected in time that he had not had the personal acquaintance of the Augustan poet—“I was going to say, poor Stoddart, you know. That was what *he* said. You ladies are always against an independent attitude—a man’s caring for nothing but truth, and that sort of thing. And there is no part of the county where opinion is narrower than it is here—I don’t mean to throw stones, you know, but somebody is wanted to take the independent line; and if I don’t take it, who will?”

“Who? Why, any upstart who has got neither blood nor position. People of standing should consume their independent nonsense at home, not hawk it about. And you! who are going to marry your niece, as good as your daughter, to one of our best men. Sir James would be cruelly annoyed: it will be too hard on him if you turn round now and make yourself a Whig sign-board.”

Mr. Brooke again winced inwardly, for Dorothea’s engagement had no sooner been decided, than he had thought of Mrs. Cadwallader’s prospective taunts. It might have been easy for ignorant observers to say, “Quarrel with Mrs. Cadwallader;” but where is a country gentleman to go who quarrels with his oldest neighbors? Who could taste the fine flavor in the name of Brooke if it were delivered casually, like wine without a seal? Certainly a man can only be cosmopolitan up to a certain point.

“I hope Chettam and I shall always be good friends; but I am sorry to say there is no prospect of his marrying my niece,” said Mr. Brooke, much relieved to see through the window that Celia was coming in.

“Why not?” said Mrs. Cadwallader, with a sharp note of surprise. “It is hardly a fortnight since you and I were talking about it.”

“My niece has chosen another suitor—has chosen him, you know. I have had nothing to do with it. I should have preferred Chettam; and I should have said Chettam was the man any girl would have chosen. But there is no accounting for these things. Your sex is capricious, you know.”

“Why, whom do you mean to say that you are going to let her marry?” Mrs. Cadwallader’s mind was rapidly surveying the possibilities of choice for Dorothea.

But here Celia entered, blooming from a walk in the garden, and the greeting with her delivered Mr. Brooke from the necessity of answering immediately. He got up hastily, and saying, “By the way, I must speak to Wright about the horses,” shuffled quickly out of the room.

“My dear child, what is this?—this about your sister’s engagement?” said Mrs. Cadwallader.

“She is engaged to marry Mr. Casaubon,” said Celia, resorting, as usual, to the simplest statement of fact, and enjoying this opportunity of speaking to the Rector’s wife alone.

“This is frightful. How long has it been going on?”

“I only knew of it yesterday. They are to be married in six weeks.”

“Well, my dear, I wish you joy of your brother-in-law.”

“I am so sorry for Dorothea.”

“Sorry! It is her doing, I suppose.”

“Yes; she says Mr. Casaubon has a great soul.”

“With all my heart.”

“Oh, Mrs. Cadwallader, I don’t think it can be nice to marry a man with a great soul.”

“Well, my dear, take warning. You know the look of one now; when the next comes and wants to marry you, don’t you accept him.”

“I’m sure I never should.”

“No; one such in a family is enough. So your sister never cared about Sir James Chettam? What would you have said to *him* for a brother-in-law?”

“I should have liked that very much. I am sure he would have been a good husband. Only,” Celia added, with a slight blush (she sometimes seemed to blush as she breathed), “I don’t think he would have suited Dorothea.”

“Not high-flown enough?”

“Dodo is very strict. She thinks so much about everything, and is so particular about what one says. Sir James never seemed to please her.”

“She must have encouraged him, I am sure. That is not very creditable.”

“Please don’t be angry with Dodo; she does not see things. She thought so much about the cottages, and she was rude to Sir James sometimes; but he is so kind, he never noticed it.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Cadwallader, putting on her shawl, and rising, as if in haste, “I must go straight to Sir James and break this to him. He will have brought his mother back by this time, and I must call. Your uncle will never tell him. We are all disappointed, my dear. Young people should think of their families in marrying. I set a bad example—married a poor clergyman, and made myself a pitiable object among the De Bracys—obliged to get my coals by stratagem, and pray to heaven for my salad oil. However, Casaubon has money enough; I must do him that justice. As to his blood, I suppose the family quarterings are three cuttle-fish sable, and

a commentator rampant. By the bye, before I go, my dear, I must speak to your Mrs. Carter about pastry. I want to send my young cook to learn of her. Poor people with four children, like us, you know, can't afford to keep a good cook. I have no doubt Mrs. Carter will oblige me. Sir James's cook is a perfect dragon."

In less than an hour, Mrs. Cadwallader had circumvented Mrs. Carter and driven to Freshitt Hall, which was not far from her own parsonage, her husband being resident in Freshitt and keeping a curate in Tipton.

Sir James Chettam had returned from the short journey which had kept him absent for a couple of days, and had changed his dress, intending to ride over to Tipton Grange. His horse was standing at the door when Mrs. Cadwallader drove up, and he immediately appeared there himself, whip in hand. Lady Chettam had not yet returned, but Mrs. Cadwallader's errand could not be despatched in the presence of grooms, so she asked to be taken into the conservatory close by, to look at the new plants; and on coming to a contemplative stand, she said—

"I have a great shock for you; I hope you are not so far gone in love as you pretended to be."

It was of no use protesting against Mrs. Cadwallader's way of putting things. But Sir James's countenance changed a little. He felt a vague alarm.

"I do believe Brooke is going to expose himself after all. I accused him of meaning to stand for Middlemarch on the Liberal side, and he looked silly and never denied it—talked about the independent line, and the usual nonsense."

"Is that all?" said Sir James, much relieved.

"Why," rejoined Mrs. Cadwallader, with a sharper note, "you don't mean to say that you would like him to turn public man in that way—making a sort of political Cheap Jack of himself?"

"He might be dissuaded, I should think. He would not like the expense."

"That is what I told him. He is vulnerable to reason there—always a few grains of common-sense in an ounce of miserliness. Miserliness is a capital quality to run in families; it's the safe side for madness to dip on. And there must be a little crack in the Brooke family, else we should not see what we are to see."

“What? Brooke standing for Middlemarch?”

“Worse than that. I really feel a little responsible. I always told you Miss Brooke would be such a fine match. I knew there was a great deal of nonsense in her—a flighty sort of Methodistical stuff. But these things wear out of girls. However, I am taken by surprise for once.”

“What do you mean, Mrs. Cadwallader?” said Sir James. His fear lest Miss Brooke should have run away to join the Moravian Brethren, or some preposterous sect unknown to good society, was a little allayed by the knowledge that Mrs. Cadwallader always made the worst of things. “What has happened to Miss Brooke? Pray speak out.”

“Very well. She is engaged to be married.” Mrs. Cadwallader paused a few moments, observing the deeply hurt expression in her friend’s face, which he was trying to conceal by a nervous smile, while he whipped his boot; but she soon added, “Engaged to Casaubon.”

Sir James let his whip fall and stooped to pick it up. Perhaps his face had never before gathered so much concentrated disgust as when he turned to Mrs. Cadwallader and repeated, “Casaubon?”

“Even so. You know my errand now.”

“Good God! It is horrible! He is no better than a mummy!” (The point of view has to be allowed for, as that of a blooming and disappointed rival.)

“She says, he is a great soul.—A great bladder for dried peas to rattle in!” said Mrs. Cadwallader.

“What business has an old bachelor like that to marry?” said Sir James. “He has one foot in the grave.”

“He means to draw it out again, I suppose.”

“Brooke ought not to allow it: he should insist on its being put off till she is of age. She would think better of it then. What is a guardian for?”

“As if you could ever squeeze a resolution out of Brooke!”

“Cadwallader might talk to him.”

“Not he! Humphrey finds everybody charming. I never can get him to abuse Casaubon. He will even speak well of the bishop, though I tell him it is unnatural in a beneficed clergyman; what can one do with a husband who attends so little to the decencies? I hide it as well as I can by abusing

everybody myself. Come, come, cheer up! you are well rid of Miss Brooke, a girl who would have been requiring you to see the stars by daylight. Between ourselves, little Celia is worth two of her, and likely after all to be the better match. For this marriage to Casaubon is as good as going to a nunnery.”

“Oh, on my own account—it is for Miss Brooke’s sake I think her friends should try to use their influence.”

“Well, Humphrey doesn’t know yet. But when I tell him, you may depend on it he will say, ‘Why not? Casaubon is a good fellow—and young—young enough.’ These charitable people never know vinegar from wine till they have swallowed it and got the colic. However, if I were a man I should prefer Celia, especially when Dorothea was gone. The truth is, you have been courting one and have won the other. I can see that she admires you almost as much as a man expects to be admired. If it were any one but me who said so, you might think it exaggeration. Good-by!”

Sir James handed Mrs. Cadwallader to the phaeton, and then jumped on his horse. He was not going to renounce his ride because of his friend’s unpleasant news—only to ride the faster in some other direction than that of Tipton Grange.

Now, why on earth should Mrs. Cadwallader have been at all busy about Miss Brooke’s marriage; and why, when one match that she liked to think she had a hand in was frustrated, should she have straightway contrived the preliminaries of another? Was there any ingenious plot, any hide-and-seek course of action, which might be detected by a careful telescopic watch? Not at all: a telescope might have swept the parishes of Tipton and Freshitt, the whole area visited by Mrs. Cadwallader in her phaeton, without witnessing any interview that could excite suspicion, or any scene from which she did not return with the same unperturbed keenness of eye and the same high natural color. In fact, if that convenient vehicle had existed in the days of the Seven Sages, one of them would doubtless have remarked, that you can know little of women by following them about in their pony-phaetons. Even with a microscope directed on a water-drop we find ourselves making interpretations which turn out to be rather coarse; for whereas under a weak lens you may seem to see a creature exhibiting an active voracity into which other smaller creatures actively play as if they were so many animated tax-pennies, a stronger lens reveals to you



certain tiniest hairlets which make vortices for these victims while the swallower waits passively at his receipt of custom. In this way, metaphorically speaking, a strong lens applied to Mrs. Cadwallader's match-making will show a play of minute causes producing what may be called thought and speech vortices to bring her the sort of food she needed. Her life was rurally simple, quite free from secrets either foul, dangerous, or otherwise important, and not consciously affected by the great affairs of the world. All the more did the affairs of the great world interest her, when communicated in the letters of high-born relations: the way in which fascinating younger sons had gone to the dogs by marrying their mistresses; the fine old-blooded idiocy of young Lord Tapir, and the furious gouty humors of old Lord Megatherium; the exact crossing of genealogies which had brought a coronet into a new branch and widened the relations of scandal,—these were topics of which she retained details with the utmost accuracy, and reproduced them in an excellent pickle of epigrams, which she herself enjoyed the more because she believed as unquestionably in birth and no-birth as she did in game and vermin. She would never have disowned any one on the ground of poverty: a De Bracy reduced to take his dinner in a basin would have seemed to her an example of pathos worth exaggerating, and I fear his aristocratic vices would not have horrified her. But her feeling towards the vulgar rich was a sort of religious hatred: they had probably made all their money out of high retail prices, and Mrs. Cadwallader detested high prices for everything that was not paid in kind at the Rectory: such people were no part of God's design in making the world; and their accent was an affliction to the ears. A town where such monsters abounded was hardly more than a sort of low comedy, which could not be taken account of in a well-bred scheme of the universe. Let any lady who is inclined to be hard on Mrs. Cadwallader inquire into the comprehensiveness of her own beautiful views, and be quite sure that they afford accommodation for all the lives which have the honor to coexist with hers.

With such a mind, active as phosphorus, biting everything that came near into the form that suited it, how could Mrs. Cadwallader feel that the Miss Brookes and their matrimonial prospects were alien to her? especially as it had been the habit of years for her to scold Mr. Brooke with the friendliest frankness, and let him know in confidence that she thought him a poor creature. From the first arrival of the young ladies in

Tipton she had prearranged Dorothea's marriage with Sir James, and if it had taken place would have been quite sure that it was her doing: that it should not take place after she had preconceived it, caused her an irritation which every thinker will sympathize with. She was the diplomatist of Tipton and Freshitt, and for anything to happen in spite of her was an offensive irregularity. As to freaks like this of Miss Brooke's, Mrs. Cadwallader had no patience with them, and now saw that her opinion of this girl had been infected with some of her husband's weak charitableness: those Methodistical whims, that air of being more religious than the rector and curate together, came from a deeper and more constitutional disease than she had been willing to believe.

"However," said Mrs. Cadwallader, first to herself and afterwards to her husband, "I throw her over: there was a chance, if she had married Sir James, of her becoming a sane, sensible woman. He would never have contradicted her, and when a woman is not contradicted, she has no motive for obstinacy in her absurdities. But now I wish her joy of her hair shirt."

It followed that Mrs. Cadwallader must decide on another match for Sir James, and having made up her mind that it was to be the younger Miss Brooke, there could not have been a more skilful move towards the success of her plan than her hint to the baronet that he had made an impression on Celia's heart. For he was not one of those gentlemen who languish after the unattainable Sappho's apple that laughs from the topmost bough—the charms which

"Smile like the knot of cowslips on the cliff,  
Not to be come at by the willing hand."

He had no sonnets to write, and it could not strike him agreeably that he was not an object of preference to the woman whom he had preferred. Already the knowledge that Dorothea had chosen Mr. Casaubon had bruised his attachment and relaxed its hold. Although Sir James was a sportsman, he had some other feelings towards women than towards grouse and foxes, and did not regard his future wife in the light of prey, valuable chiefly for the excitements of the chase. Neither was he so well acquainted with the habits of primitive races as to feel that an ideal combat for her, tomahawk in hand, so to speak, was necessary to the historical continuity of the marriage-tie. On the contrary, having the amiable vanity which knits us to those who are fond of us, and disinclines

us to those who are indifferent, and also a good grateful nature, the mere idea that a woman had a kindness towards him spun little threads of tenderness from out his heart towards hers.

Thus it happened, that after Sir James had ridden rather fast for half an hour in a direction away from Tipton Grange, he slackened his pace, and at last turned into a road which would lead him back by a shorter cut. Various feelings wrought in him the determination after all to go to the Grange to-day as if nothing new had happened. He could not help rejoicing that he had never made the offer and been rejected; mere friendly politeness required that he should call to see Dorothea about the cottages, and now happily Mrs. Cadwallader had prepared him to offer his congratulations, if necessary, without showing too much awkwardness. He really did not like it: giving up Dorothea was very painful to him; but there was something in the resolve to make this visit forthwith and conquer all show of feeling, which was a sort of file-biting and counter-irritant. And without his distinctly recognizing the impulse, there certainly was present in him the sense that Celia would be there, and that he should pay her more attention than he had done before.

We mortals, men and women, devour many a disappointment between breakfast and dinner-time; keep back the tears and look a little pale about the lips, and in answer to inquiries say, "Oh, nothing!" Pride helps us; and pride is not a bad thing when it only urges us to hide our own hurts—not to hurt others.

## CHAPTER VII.

“Piacer e popone  
Vuol la sua stagione.”  
—*Italian Proverb.*

Mr. Casaubon, as might be expected, spent a great deal of his time at the Grange in these weeks, and the hindrance which courtship occasioned to the progress of his great work—the Key to all Mythologies—naturally made him look forward the more eagerly to the happy termination of courtship. But he had deliberately incurred the hindrance, having made up his mind that it was now time for him to adorn his life with the graces of female companionship, to irradiate the gloom which fatigue was apt to hang over the intervals of studious labor with the play of female fancy, and to secure in this, his culminating age, the solace of female tendance for his declining years. Hence he determined to abandon himself to the stream of feeling, and perhaps was surprised to find what an exceedingly shallow rill it was. As in droughty regions baptism by immersion could only be performed symbolically, Mr. Casaubon found that sprinkling was the utmost approach to a plunge which his stream would afford him; and he concluded that the poets had much exaggerated the force of masculine passion. Nevertheless, he observed with pleasure that Miss Brooke showed an ardent submissive affection which promised to fulfil his most agreeable previsions of marriage. It had once or twice crossed his mind that possibly there was some deficiency in Dorothea to account for the moderation of his abandonment; but he was unable to discern the deficiency, or to figure to himself a woman who would have pleased him better; so that there was clearly no reason to fall back upon but the exaggerations of human tradition.

“Could I not be preparing myself now to be more useful?” said Dorothea to him, one morning, early in the time of courtship; “could I not learn to read Latin and Greek aloud to you, as Milton’s daughters did to their father, without understanding what they read?”

“I fear that would be wearisome to you,” said Mr. Casaubon, smiling; “and, indeed, if I remember rightly, the young women you have mentioned regarded that exercise in unknown tongues as a ground for rebellion against the poet.”

“Yes; but in the first place they were very naughty girls, else they would have been proud to minister to such a father; and in the second place they might have studied privately and taught themselves to understand what they read, and then it would have been interesting. I hope you don’t expect me to be naughty and stupid?”

“I expect you to be all that an exquisite young lady can be in every possible relation of life. Certainly it might be a great advantage if you were able to copy the Greek character, and to that end it were well to begin with a little reading.”

Dorothea seized this as a precious permission. She would not have asked Mr. Casaubon at once to teach her the languages, dreading of all things to be tiresome instead of helpful; but it was not entirely out of devotion to her future husband that she wished to know Latin and Greek. Those provinces of masculine knowledge seemed to her a standing-ground from which all truth could be seen more truly. As it was, she constantly doubted her own conclusions, because she felt her own ignorance: how could she be confident that one-roomed cottages were not for the glory of God, when men who knew the classics appeared to conciliate indifference to the cottages with zeal for the glory? Perhaps even Hebrew might be necessary—at least the alphabet and a few roots—in order to arrive at the core of things, and judge soundly on the social duties of the Christian. And she had not reached that point of renunciation at which she would have been satisfied with having a wise husband: she wished, poor child, to be wise herself. Miss Brooke was certainly very naive with all her alleged cleverness. Celia, whose mind had never been thought too powerful, saw the emptiness of other people’s pretensions much more readily. To have in general but little feeling, seems to be the only security against feeling too much on any particular occasion.

However, Mr. Casaubon consented to listen and teach for an hour together, like a schoolmaster of little boys, or rather like a lover, to whom a mistress’s elementary ignorance and difficulties have a touching fitness. Few scholars would have disliked teaching the alphabet under such

circumstances. But Dorothea herself was a little shocked and discouraged at her own stupidity, and the answers she got to some timid questions about the value of the Greek accents gave her a painful suspicion that here indeed there might be secrets not capable of explanation to a woman's reason.

Mr. Brooke had no doubt on that point, and expressed himself with his usual strength upon it one day that he came into the library while the reading was going forward.

“Well, but now, Casaubon, such deep studies, classics, mathematics, that kind of thing, are too taxing for a woman—too taxing, you know.”

“Dorothea is learning to read the characters simply,” said Mr. Casaubon, evading the question. “She had the very considerate thought of saving my eyes.”

“Ah, well, without understanding, you know—that may not be so bad. But there is a lightness about the feminine mind—a touch and go—music, the fine arts, that kind of thing—they should study those up to a certain point, women should; but in a light way, you know. A woman should be able to sit down and play you or sing you a good old English tune. That is what I like; though I have heard most things—been at the opera in Vienna: Gluck, Mozart, everything of that sort. But I'm a conservative in music—it's not like ideas, you know. I stick to the good old tunes.”

“Mr. Casaubon is not fond of the piano, and I am very glad he is not,” said Dorothea, whose slight regard for domestic music and feminine fine art must be forgiven her, considering the small tinkling and smearing in which they chiefly consisted at that dark period. She smiled and looked up at her betrothed with grateful eyes. If he had always been asking her to play the “Last Rose of Summer,” she would have required much resignation. “He says there is only an old harpsichord at Lowick, and it is covered with books.”

“Ah, there you are behind Celia, my dear. Celia, now, plays very prettily, and is always ready to play. However, since Casaubon does not like it, you are all right. But it's a pity you should not have little recreations of that sort, Casaubon: the bow always strung—that kind of thing, you know—will not do.”

“I never could look on it in the light of a recreation to have my ears teased with measured noises,” said Mr. Casaubon. “A tune much iterated

has the ridiculous effect of making the words in my mind perform a sort of minuet to keep time—an effect hardly tolerable, I imagine, after boyhood. As to the grander forms of music, worthy to accompany solemn celebrations, and even to serve as an educating influence according to the ancient conception, I say nothing, for with these we are not immediately concerned.”

“No; but music of that sort I should enjoy,” said Dorothea. “When we were coming home from Lausanne my uncle took us to hear the great organ at Freiberg, and it made me sob.”

“That kind of thing is not healthy, my dear,” said Mr. Brooke. “Casaubon, she will be in your hands now: you must teach my niece to take things more quietly, eh, Dorothea?”

He ended with a smile, not wishing to hurt his niece, but really thinking that it was perhaps better for her to be early married to so sober a fellow as Casaubon, since she would not hear of Chettam.

“It is wonderful, though,” he said to himself as he shuffled out of the room—“it is wonderful that she should have liked him. However, the match is good. I should have been travelling out of my brief to have hindered it, let Mrs. Cadwallader say what she will. He is pretty certain to be a bishop, is Casaubon. That was a very seasonable pamphlet of his on the Catholic Question:—a deanery at least. They owe him a deanery.”

And here I must vindicate a claim to philosophical reflectiveness, by remarking that Mr. Brooke on this occasion little thought of the Radical speech which, at a later period, he was led to make on the incomes of the bishops. What elegant historian would neglect a striking opportunity for pointing out that his heroes did not foresee the history of the world, or even their own actions?—For example, that Henry of Navarre, when a Protestant baby, little thought of being a Catholic monarch; or that Alfred the Great, when he measured his laborious nights with burning candles, had no idea of future gentlemen measuring their idle days with watches. Here is a mine of truth, which, however vigorously it may be worked, is likely to outlast our coal.

But of Mr. Brooke I make a further remark perhaps less warranted by precedent—namely, that if he had foreknown his speech, it might not have made any great difference. To think with pleasure of his niece’s husband having a large ecclesiastical income was one thing—to make a Liberal

speech was another thing; and it is a narrow mind which cannot look at a subject from various points of view.



## CHAPTER VIII.

“Oh, rescue her! I am her brother now,  
And you her father. Every gentle maid  
Should have a guardian in each gentleman.”

It was wonderful to Sir James Chettam how well he continued to like going to the Grange after he had once encountered the difficulty of seeing Dorothea for the first time in the light of a woman who was engaged to another man. Of course the forked lightning seemed to pass through him when he first approached her, and he remained conscious throughout the interview of hiding uneasiness; but, good as he was, it must be owned that his uneasiness was less than it would have been if he had thought his rival a brilliant and desirable match. He had no sense of being eclipsed by Mr. Casaubon; he was only shocked that Dorothea was under a melancholy illusion, and his mortification lost some of its bitterness by being mingled with compassion.

Nevertheless, while Sir James said to himself that he had completely resigned her, since with the perversity of a Desdemona she had not affected a proposed match that was clearly suitable and according to nature; he could not yet be quite passive under the idea of her engagement to Mr. Casaubon. On the day when he first saw them together in the light of his present knowledge, it seemed to him that he had not taken the affair seriously enough. Brooke was really culpable; he ought to have hindered it. Who could speak to him? Something might be done perhaps even now, at least to defer the marriage. On his way home he turned into the Rectory and asked for Mr. Cadwallader. Happily, the Rector was at home, and his visitor was shown into the study, where all the fishing tackle hung. But he himself was in a little room adjoining, at work with his turning apparatus, and he called to the baronet to join him there. The two were better friends than any other landholder and clergyman in the county—a significant fact which was in agreement with the amiable expression of their faces.

Mr. Cadwallader was a large man, with full lips and a sweet smile; very plain and rough in his exterior, but with that solid imperturbable ease and

good-humor which is infectious, and like great grassy hills in the sunshine, quiets even an irritated egoism, and makes it rather ashamed of itself. "Well, how are you?" he said, showing a hand not quite fit to be grasped. "Sorry I missed you before. Is there anything particular? You look vexed."

Sir James's brow had a little crease in it, a little depression of the eyebrow, which he seemed purposely to exaggerate as he answered.

"It is only this conduct of Brooke's. I really think somebody should speak to him."

"What? meaning to stand?" said Mr. Cadwallader, going on with the arrangement of the reels which he had just been turning. "I hardly think he means it. But where's the harm, if he likes it? Any one who objects to Whiggery should be glad when the Whigs don't put up the strongest fellow. They won't overturn the Constitution with our friend Brooke's head for a battering ram."

"Oh, I don't mean that," said Sir James, who, after putting down his hat and throwing himself into a chair, had begun to nurse his leg and examine the sole of his boot with much bitterness. "I mean this marriage. I mean his letting that blooming young girl marry Casaubon."

"What is the matter with Casaubon? I see no harm in him—if the girl likes him."

"She is too young to know what she likes. Her guardian ought to interfere. He ought not to allow the thing to be done in this headlong manner. I wonder a man like you, Cadwallader—a man with daughters, can look at the affair with indifference: and with such a heart as yours! Do think seriously about it."

"I am not joking; I am as serious as possible," said the Rector, with a provoking little inward laugh. "You are as bad as Elinor. She has been wanting me to go and lecture Brooke; and I have reminded her that her friends had a very poor opinion of the match she made when she married me."

"But look at Casaubon," said Sir James, indignantly. "He must be fifty, and I don't believe he could ever have been much more than the shadow of a man. Look at his legs!"

"Confound you handsome young fellows! you think of having it all your own way in the world. You don't understand women. They don't admire

you half so much as you admire yourselves. Elinor used to tell her sisters that she married me for my ugliness—it was so various and amusing that it had quite conquered her prudence.”

“You! it was easy enough for a woman to love you. But this is no question of beauty. I don’t *like* Casaubon.” This was Sir James’s strongest way of implying that he thought ill of a man’s character.

“Why? what do you know against him?” said the Rector laying down his reels, and putting his thumbs into his armholes with an air of attention.

Sir James paused. He did not usually find it easy to give his reasons: it seemed to him strange that people should not know them without being told, since he only felt what was reasonable. At last he said—

“Now, Cadwallader, has he got any heart?”

“Well, yes. I don’t mean of the melting sort, but a sound kernel, *that* you may be sure of. He is very good to his poor relations: pensions several of the women, and is educating a young fellow at a good deal of expense. Casaubon acts up to his sense of justice. His mother’s sister made a bad match—a Pole, I think—lost herself—at any rate was disowned by her family. If it had not been for that, Casaubon would not have had so much money by half. I believe he went himself to find out his cousins, and see what he could do for them. Every man would not ring so well as that, if you tried his metal. *You* would, Chettam; but not every man.”

“I don’t know,” said Sir James, coloring. “I am not so sure of myself.” He paused a moment, and then added, “That was a right thing for Casaubon to do. But a man may wish to do what is right, and yet be a sort of parchment code. A woman may not be happy with him. And I think when a girl is so young as Miss Brooke is, her friends ought to interfere a little to hinder her from doing anything foolish. You laugh, because you fancy I have some feeling on my own account. But upon my honor, it is not that. I should feel just the same if I were Miss Brooke’s brother or uncle.”

“Well, but what should you do?”

“I should say that the marriage must not be decided on until she was of age. And depend upon it, in that case, it would never come off. I wish you saw it as I do—I wish you would talk to Brooke about it.”

Sir James rose as he was finishing his sentence, for he saw Mrs. Cadwallader entering from the study. She held by the hand her youngest girl, about five years old, who immediately ran to papa, and was made comfortable on his knee.

“I hear what you are talking about,” said the wife. “But you will make no impression on Humphrey. As long as the fish rise to his bait, everybody is what he ought to be. Bless you, Casaubon has got a trout-stream, and does not care about fishing in it himself: could there be a better fellow?”

“Well, there is something in that,” said the Rector, with his quiet, inward laugh. “It is a very good quality in a man to have a trout-stream.”

“But seriously,” said Sir James, whose vexation had not yet spent itself, “don’t you think the Rector might do some good by speaking?”

“Oh, I told you beforehand what he would say,” answered Mrs. Cadwallader, lifting up her eyebrows. “I have done what I could: I wash my hands of the marriage.”

“In the first place,” said the Rector, looking rather grave, “it would be nonsensical to expect that I could convince Brooke, and make him act accordingly. Brooke is a very good fellow, but pulpy; he will run into any mould, but he won’t keep shape.”

“He might keep shape long enough to defer the marriage,” said Sir James.

“But, my dear Chettam, why should I use my influence to Casaubon’s disadvantage, unless I were much surer than I am that I should be acting for the advantage of Miss Brooke? I know no harm of Casaubon. I don’t care about his Xisuthrus and Fee-fo-fum and the rest; but then he doesn’t care about my fishing-tackle. As to the line he took on the Catholic Question, that was unexpected; but he has always been civil to me, and I don’t see why I should spoil his sport. For anything I can tell, Miss Brooke may be happier with him than she would be with any other man.”

“Humphrey! I have no patience with you. You know you would rather dine under the hedge than with Casaubon alone. You have nothing to say to each other.”

“What has that to do with Miss Brooke’s marrying him? She does not do it for my amusement.”

“He has got no good red blood in his body,” said Sir James.

“No. Somebody put a drop under a magnifying-glass and it was all semicolons and parentheses,” said Mrs. Cadwallader.

“Why does he not bring out his book, instead of marrying,” said Sir James, with a disgust which he held warranted by the sound feeling of an English layman.

“Oh, he dreams footnotes, and they run away with all his brains. They say, when he was a little boy, he made an abstract of ‘Hop o’ my Thumb,’ and he has been making abstracts ever since. Ugh! And that is the man Humphrey goes on saying that a woman may be happy with.”

“Well, he is what Miss Brooke likes,” said the Rector. “I don’t profess to understand every young lady’s taste.”

“But if she were your own daughter?” said Sir James.

“That would be a different affair. She is *not* my daughter, and I don’t feel called upon to interfere. Casaubon is as good as most of us. He is a scholarly clergyman, and creditable to the cloth. Some Radical fellow speechifying at Middlemarch said Casaubon was the learned straw-chopping incumbent, and Freke was the brick-and-mortar incumbent, and I was the angling incumbent. And upon my word, I don’t see that one is worse or better than the other.” The Rector ended with his silent laugh. He always saw the joke of any satire against himself. His conscience was large and easy, like the rest of him: it did only what it could do without any trouble.

Clearly, there would be no interference with Miss Brooke’s marriage through Mr. Cadwallader; and Sir James felt with some sadness that she was to have perfect liberty of misjudgment. It was a sign of his good disposition that he did not slacken at all in his intention of carrying out Dorothea’s design of the cottages. Doubtless this persistence was the best course for his own dignity: but pride only helps us to be generous; it never makes us so, any more than vanity makes us witty. She was now enough aware of Sir James’s position with regard to her, to appreciate the rectitude of his perseverance in a landlord’s duty, to which he had at first been urged by a lover’s complaisance, and her pleasure in it was great enough to count for something even in her present happiness. Perhaps she gave to Sir James Chettam’s cottages all the interest she could spare from Mr. Casaubon, or rather from the symphony of hopeful dreams, admiring trust, and passionate self devotion which that learned gentleman had set playing

in her soul. Hence it happened that in the good baronet's succeeding visits, while he was beginning to pay small attentions to Celia, he found himself talking with more and more pleasure to Dorothea. She was perfectly unconstrained and without irritation towards him now, and he was gradually discovering the delight there is in frank kindness and companionship between a man and a woman who have no passion to hide or confess.

## CHAPTER IX.

*1st Gent.* An ancient land in ancient oracles  
Is called "law-thirsty": all the struggle there  
Was after order and a perfect rule.  
Pray, where lie such lands now? . . .

*2d Gent.* Why, where they lay of old—in human souls.

Mr. Casaubon's behavior about settlements was highly satisfactory to Mr. Brooke, and the preliminaries of marriage rolled smoothly along, shortening the weeks of courtship. The betrothed bride must see her future home, and dictate any changes that she would like to have made there. A woman dictates before marriage in order that she may have an appetite for submission afterwards. And certainly, the mistakes that we male and female mortals make when we have our own way might fairly raise some wonder that we are so fond of it.

On a gray but dry November morning Dorothea drove to Lowick in company with her uncle and Celia. Mr. Casaubon's home was the manor-house. Close by, visible from some parts of the garden, was the little church, with the old parsonage opposite. In the beginning of his career, Mr. Casaubon had only held the living, but the death of his brother had put him in possession of the manor also. It had a small park, with a fine old oak here and there, and an avenue of limes towards the southwest front, with a sunk fence between park and pleasure-ground, so that from the drawing-room windows the glance swept uninterruptedly along a slope of greensward till the limes ended in a level of corn and pastures, which often seemed to melt into a lake under the setting sun. This was the happy side of the house, for the south and east looked rather melancholy even under the brightest morning. The grounds here were more confined, the flower-beds showed no very careful tendance, and large clumps of trees, chiefly of sombre yews, had risen high, not ten yards from the windows. The building, of greenish stone, was in the old English style, not ugly, but small-windowed and melancholy-looking: the sort of house that must have children, many flowers, open windows, and little vistas of bright things, to

make it seem a joyous home. In this latter end of autumn, with a sparse remnant of yellow leaves falling slowly athwart the dark evergreens in a stillness without sunshine, the house too had an air of autumnal decline, and Mr. Casaubon, when he presented himself, had no bloom that could be thrown into relief by that background.

“Oh dear!” Celia said to herself, “I am sure Freshitt Hall would have been pleasanter than this.” She thought of the white freestone, the pillared portico, and the terrace full of flowers, Sir James smiling above them like a prince issuing from his enchantment in a rose-bush, with a handkerchief swiftly metamorphosed from the most delicately odorous petals—Sir James, who talked so agreeably, always about things which had common-sense in them, and not about learning! Celia had those light young feminine tastes which grave and weatherworn gentlemen sometimes prefer in a wife; but happily Mr. Casaubon’s bias had been different, for he would have had no chance with Celia.

Dorothea, on the contrary, found the house and grounds all that she could wish: the dark book-shelves in the long library, the carpets and curtains with colors subdued by time, the curious old maps and bird’s-eye views on the walls of the corridor, with here and there an old vase below, had no oppression for her, and seemed more cheerful than the casts and pictures at the Grange, which her uncle had long ago brought home from his travels—they being probably among the ideas he had taken in at one time. To poor Dorothea these severe classical nudities and smirking Renaissance-Correggiosities were painfully inexplicable, staring into the midst of her Puritanic conceptions: she had never been taught how she could bring them into any sort of relevance with her life. But the owners of Lowick apparently had not been travellers, and Mr. Casaubon’s studies of the past were not carried on by means of such aids.

Dorothea walked about the house with delightful emotion. Everything seemed hallowed to her: this was to be the home of her wifhood, and she looked up with eyes full of confidence to Mr. Casaubon when he drew her attention specially to some actual arrangement and asked her if she would like an alteration. All appeals to her taste she met gratefully, but saw nothing to alter. His efforts at exact courtesy and formal tenderness had no defect for her. She filled up all blanks with unmanifested perfections, interpreting him as she interpreted the works of Providence, and



accounting for seeming discords by her own deafness to the higher harmonies. And there are many blanks left in the weeks of courtship which a loving faith fills with happy assurance.

“Now, my dear Dorothea, I wish you to favor me by pointing out which room you would like to have as your boudoir,” said Mr. Casaubon, showing that his views of the womanly nature were sufficiently large to include that requirement.

“It is very kind of you to think of that,” said Dorothea, “but I assure you I would rather have all those matters decided for me. I shall be much happier to take everything as it is—just as you have been used to have it, or as you will yourself choose it to be. I have no motive for wishing anything else.”

“Oh, Dodo,” said Celia, “will you not have the bow-windowed room upstairs?”

Mr. Casaubon led the way thither. The bow-window looked down the avenue of limes; the furniture was all of a faded blue, and there were miniatures of ladies and gentlemen with powdered hair hanging in a group. A piece of tapestry over a door also showed a blue-green world with a pale stag in it. The chairs and tables were thin-legged and easy to upset. It was a room where one might fancy the ghost of a tight-laced lady revisiting the scene of her embroidery. A light bookcase contained duodecimo volumes of polite literature in calf, completing the furniture.

“Yes,” said Mr. Brooke, “this would be a pretty room with some new hangings, sofas, and that sort of thing. A little bare now.”

“No, uncle,” said Dorothea, eagerly. “Pray do not speak of altering anything. There are so many other things in the world that want altering—I like to take these things as they are. And you like them as they are, don’t you?” she added, looking at Mr. Casaubon. “Perhaps this was your mother’s room when she was young.”

“It was,” he said, with his slow bend of the head.

“This is your mother,” said Dorothea, who had turned to examine the group of miniatures. “It is like the tiny one you brought me; only, I should think, a better portrait. And this one opposite, who is this?”

“Her elder sister. They were, like you and your sister, the only two children of their parents, who hang above them, you see.”

“The sister is pretty,” said Celia, implying that she thought less favorably of Mr. Casaubon’s mother. It was a new opening to Celia’s imagination, that he came of a family who had all been young in their time—the ladies wearing necklaces.

“It is a peculiar face,” said Dorothea, looking closely. “Those deep gray eyes rather near together—and the delicate irregular nose with a sort of ripple in it—and all the powdered curls hanging backward. Altogether it seems to me peculiar rather than pretty. There is not even a family likeness between her and your mother.”

“No. And they were not alike in their lot.”

“You did not mention her to me,” said Dorothea.

“My aunt made an unfortunate marriage. I never saw her.”

Dorothea wondered a little, but felt that it would be indelicate just then to ask for any information which Mr. Casaubon did not proffer, and she turned to the window to admire the view. The sun had lately pierced the gray, and the avenue of limes cast shadows.

“Shall we not walk in the garden now?” said Dorothea.

“And you would like to see the church, you know,” said Mr. Brooke. “It is a droll little church. And the village. It all lies in a nut-shell. By the way, it will suit you, Dorothea; for the cottages are like a row of alms-houses—little gardens, gilly-flowers, that sort of thing.”

“Yes, please,” said Dorothea, looking at Mr. Casaubon, “I should like to see all that.” She had got nothing from him more graphic about the Lowick cottages than that they were “not bad.”

They were soon on a gravel walk which led chiefly between grassy borders and clumps of trees, this being the nearest way to the church, Mr. Casaubon said. At the little gate leading into the churchyard there was a pause while Mr. Casaubon went to the parsonage close by to fetch a key. Celia, who had been hanging a little in the rear, came up presently, when she saw that Mr. Casaubon was gone away, and said in her easy staccato, which always seemed to contradict the suspicion of any malicious intent—

“Do you know, Dorothea, I saw some one quite young coming up one of the walks.”

“Is that astonishing, Celia?”

“There may be a young gardener, you know—why not?” said Mr. Brooke. “I told Casaubon he should change his gardener.”

“No, not a gardener,” said Celia; “a gentleman with a sketch-book. He had light-brown curls. I only saw his back. But he was quite young.”

“The curate’s son, perhaps,” said Mr. Brooke. “Ah, there is Casaubon again, and Tucker with him. He is going to introduce Tucker. You don’t know Tucker yet.”

Mr. Tucker was the middle-aged curate, one of the “inferior clergy,” who are usually not wanting in sons. But after the introduction, the conversation did not lead to any question about his family, and the startling apparition of youthfulness was forgotten by every one but Celia. She inwardly declined to believe that the light-brown curls and slim figure could have any relationship to Mr. Tucker, who was just as old and musty-looking as she would have expected Mr. Casaubon’s curate to be; doubtless an excellent man who would go to heaven (for Celia wished not to be unprincipled), but the corners of his mouth were so unpleasant. Celia thought with some dismalness of the time she should have to spend as bridesmaid at Lowick, while the curate had probably no pretty little children whom she could like, irrespective of principle.

Mr. Tucker was invaluable in their walk; and perhaps Mr. Casaubon had not been without foresight on this head, the curate being able to answer all Dorothea’s questions about the villagers and the other parishioners. Everybody, he assured her, was well off in Lowick: not a cottager in those double cottages at a low rent but kept a pig, and the strips of garden at the back were well tended. The small boys wore excellent corduroy, the girls went out as tidy servants, or did a little straw-plaiting at home: no looms here, no Dissent; and though the public disposition was rather towards laying by money than towards spirituality, there was not much vice. The speckled fowls were so numerous that Mr. Brooke observed, “Your farmers leave some barley for the women to glean, I see. The poor folks here might have a fowl in their pot, as the good French king used to wish for all his people. The French eat a good many fowls—skinny fowls, you know.”

“I think it was a very cheap wish of his,” said Dorothea, indignantly. “Are kings such monsters that a wish like that must be reckoned a royal virtue?”

“And if he wished them a skinny fowl,” said Celia, “that would not be nice. But perhaps he wished them to have fat fowls.”

“Yes, but the word has dropped out of the text, or perhaps was subauditum; that is, present in the king’s mind, but not uttered,” said Mr. Casaubon, smiling and bending his head towards Celia, who immediately dropped backward a little, because she could not bear Mr. Casaubon to blink at her.

Dorothea sank into silence on the way back to the house. She felt some disappointment, of which she was yet ashamed, that there was nothing for her to do in Lowick; and in the next few minutes her mind had glanced over the possibility, which she would have preferred, of finding that her home would be in a parish which had a larger share of the world’s misery, so that she might have had more active duties in it. Then, recurring to the future actually before her, she made a picture of more complete devotion to Mr. Casaubon’s aims in which she would await new duties. Many such might reveal themselves to the higher knowledge gained by her in that companionship.

Mr. Tucker soon left them, having some clerical work which would not allow him to lunch at the Hall; and as they were re-entering the garden through the little gate, Mr. Casaubon said—

“You seem a little sad, Dorothea. I trust you are pleased with what you have seen.”

“I am feeling something which is perhaps foolish and wrong,” answered Dorothea, with her usual openness—“almost wishing that the people wanted more to be done for them here. I have known so few ways of making my life good for anything. Of course, my notions of usefulness must be narrow. I must learn new ways of helping people.”

“Doubtless,” said Mr. Casaubon. “Each position has its corresponding duties. Yours, I trust, as the mistress of Lowick, will not leave any yearning unfulfilled.”

“Indeed, I believe that,” said Dorothea, earnestly. “Do not suppose that I am sad.”

“That is well. But, if you are not tired, we will take another way to the house than that by which we came.”

Dorothea was not at all tired, and a little circuit was made towards a fine yew-tree, the chief hereditary glory of the grounds on this side of the house. As they approached it, a figure, conspicuous on a dark background of evergreens, was seated on a bench, sketching the old tree. Mr. Brooke, who was walking in front with Celia, turned his head, and said—

“Who is that youngster, Casaubon?”

They had come very near when Mr. Casaubon answered—

“That is a young relative of mine, a second cousin: the grandson, in fact,” he added, looking at Dorothea, “of the lady whose portrait you have been noticing, my aunt Julia.”

The young man had laid down his sketch-book and risen. His bushy light-brown curls, as well as his youthfulness, identified him at once with Celia’s apparition.

“Dorothea, let me introduce to you my cousin, Mr. Ladislaw. Will, this is Miss Brooke.”

The cousin was so close now, that, when he lifted his hat, Dorothea could see a pair of gray eyes rather near together, a delicate irregular nose with a little ripple in it, and hair falling backward; but there was a mouth and chin of a more prominent, threatening aspect than belonged to the type of the grandmother’s miniature. Young Ladislaw did not feel it necessary to smile, as if he were charmed with this introduction to his future second cousin and her relatives; but wore rather a pouting air of discontent.

“You are an artist, I see,” said Mr. Brooke, taking up the sketch-book and turning it over in his unceremonious fashion.

“No, I only sketch a little. There is nothing fit to be seen there,” said young Ladislaw, coloring, perhaps with temper rather than modesty.

“Oh, come, this is a nice bit, now. I did a little in this way myself at one time, you know. Look here, now; this is what I call a nice thing, done with what we used to call *brio*.” Mr. Brooke held out towards the two girls a large colored sketch of stony ground and trees, with a pool.

“I am no judge of these things,” said Dorothea, not coldly, but with an eager deprecation of the appeal to her. “You know, uncle, I never see the beauty of those pictures which you say are so much praised. They are a language I do not understand. I suppose there is some relation between pictures and nature which I am too ignorant to feel—just as you see what a

Greek sentence stands for which means nothing to me.” Dorothea looked up at Mr. Casaubon, who bowed his head towards her, while Mr. Brooke said, smiling nonchalantly—

“Bless me, now, how different people are! But you had a bad style of teaching, you know—else this is just the thing for girls—sketching, fine art and so on. But you took to drawing plans; you don’t understand *morbidezza*, and that kind of thing. You will come to my house, I hope, and I will show you what I did in this way,” he continued, turning to young Ladislaw, who had to be recalled from his preoccupation in observing Dorothea. Ladislaw had made up his mind that she must be an unpleasant girl, since she was going to marry Casaubon, and what she said of her stupidity about pictures would have confirmed that opinion even if he had believed her. As it was, he took her words for a covert judgment, and was certain that she thought his sketch detestable. There was too much cleverness in her apology: she was laughing both at her uncle and himself. But what a voice! It was like the voice of a soul that had once lived in an Aeolian harp. This must be one of Nature’s inconsistencies. There could be no sort of passion in a girl who would marry Casaubon. But he turned from her, and bowed his thanks for Mr. Brooke’s invitation.

“We will turn over my Italian engravings together,” continued that good-natured man. “I have no end of those things, that I have laid by for years. One gets rusty in this part of the country, you know. Not you, Casaubon; you stick to your studies; but my best ideas get undermost—out of use, you know. You clever young men must guard against indolence. I was too indolent, you know: else I might have been anywhere at one time.”

“That is a seasonable admonition,” said Mr. Casaubon; “but now we will pass on to the house, lest the young ladies should be tired of standing.”

When their backs were turned, young Ladislaw sat down to go on with his sketching, and as he did so his face broke into an expression of amusement which increased as he went on drawing, till at last he threw back his head and laughed aloud. Partly it was the reception of his own artistic production that tickled him; partly the notion of his grave cousin as the lover of that girl; and partly Mr. Brooke’s definition of the place he might have held but for the impediment of indolence. Mr. Will Ladislaw’s sense of the ludicrous lit up his features very agreeably: it was the pure

enjoyment of comicality, and had no mixture of sneering and self-exaltation.

“What is your nephew going to do with himself, Casaubon?” said Mr. Brooke, as they went on.

“My cousin, you mean—not my nephew.”

“Yes, yes, cousin. But in the way of a career, you know.”

“The answer to that question is painfully doubtful. On leaving Rugby he declined to go to an English university, where I would gladly have placed him, and chose what I must consider the anomalous course of studying at Heidelberg. And now he wants to go abroad again, without any special object, save the vague purpose of what he calls culture, preparation for he knows not what. He declines to choose a profession.”

“He has no means but what you furnish, I suppose.”

“I have always given him and his friends reason to understand that I would furnish in moderation what was necessary for providing him with a scholarly education, and launching him respectably. I am therefore bound to fulfil the expectation so raised,” said Mr. Casaubon, putting his conduct in the light of mere rectitude: a trait of delicacy which Dorothea noticed with admiration.

“He has a thirst for travelling; perhaps he may turn out a Bruce or a Mungo Park,” said Mr. Brooke. “I had a notion of that myself at one time.”

“No, he has no bent towards exploration, or the enlargement of our geognosis: that would be a special purpose which I could recognize with some approbation, though without felicitating him on a career which so often ends in premature and violent death. But so far is he from having any desire for a more accurate knowledge of the earth’s surface, that he said he should prefer not to know the sources of the Nile, and that there should be some unknown regions preserved as hunting grounds for the poetic imagination.”

“Well, there is something in that, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, who had certainly an impartial mind.

“It is, I fear, nothing more than a part of his general inaccuracy and indisposition to thoroughness of all kinds, which would be a bad augury for him in any profession, civil or sacred, even were he so far submissive to ordinary rule as to choose one.”

“Perhaps he has conscientious scruples founded on his own unfitness,” said Dorothea, who was interesting herself in finding a favorable explanation. “Because the law and medicine should be very serious professions to undertake, should they not? People’s lives and fortunes depend on them.”

“Doubtless; but I fear that my young relative Will Ladislaw is chiefly determined in his aversion to these callings by a dislike to steady application, and to that kind of acquirement which is needful instrumentally, but is not charming or immediately inviting to self-indulgent taste. I have insisted to him on what Aristotle has stated with admirable brevity, that for the achievement of any work regarded as an end there must be a prior exercise of many energies or acquired facilities of a secondary order, demanding patience. I have pointed to my own manuscript volumes, which represent the toil of years preparatory to a work not yet accomplished. But in vain. To careful reasoning of this kind he replies by calling himself Pegasus, and every form of prescribed work ‘harness.’”

Celia laughed. She was surprised to find that Mr. Casaubon could say something quite amusing.

“Well, you know, he may turn out a Byron, a Chatterton, a Churchill—that sort of thing—there’s no telling,” said Mr. Brooke. “Shall you let him go to Italy, or wherever else he wants to go?”

“Yes; I have agreed to furnish him with moderate supplies for a year or so; he asks no more. I shall let him be tried by the test of freedom.”

“That is very kind of you,” said Dorothea, looking up at Mr. Casaubon with delight. “It is noble. After all, people may really have in them some vocation which is not quite plain to themselves, may they not? They may seem idle and weak because they are growing. We should be very patient with each other, I think.”

“I suppose it is being engaged to be married that has made you think patience good,” said Celia, as soon as she and Dorothea were alone together, taking off their wrappings.

“You mean that I am very impatient, Celia.”

“Yes; when people don’t do and say just what you like.” Celia had become less afraid of “saying things” to Dorothea since this engagement:



cleverness seemed to her more pitiable than ever.

## CHAPTER X.

“He had caught a great cold, had he had no other clothes to wear than the skin of a bear not yet killed.”—FULLER.

Young Ladislaw did not pay that visit to which Mr. Brooke had invited him, and only six days afterwards Mr. Casaubon mentioned that his young relative had started for the Continent, seeming by this cold vagueness to waive inquiry. Indeed, Will had declined to fix on any more precise destination than the entire area of Europe. Genius, he held, is necessarily intolerant of fetters: on the one hand it must have the utmost play for its spontaneity; on the other, it may confidently await those messages from the universe which summon it to its peculiar work, only placing itself in an attitude of receptivity towards all sublime chances. The attitudes of receptivity are various, and Will had sincerely tried many of them. He was not excessively fond of wine, but he had several times taken too much, simply as an experiment in that form of ecstasy; he had fasted till he was faint, and then supped on lobster; he had made himself ill with doses of opium. Nothing greatly original had resulted from these measures; and the effects of the opium had convinced him that there was an entire dissimilarity between his constitution and De Quincey's. The superadded circumstance which would evolve the genius had not yet come; the universe had not yet beckoned. Even Caesar's fortune at one time was but a grand presentiment. We know what a masquerade all development is, and what effective shapes may be disguised in helpless embryos. In fact, the world is full of hopeful analogies and handsome dubious eggs called possibilities. Will saw clearly enough the pitiable instances of long incubation producing no chick, and but for gratitude would have laughed at Casaubon, whose plodding application, rows of note-books, and small taper of learned theory exploring the tossed ruins of the world, seemed to enforce a moral entirely encouraging to Will's generous reliance on the intentions of the universe with regard to himself. He held that reliance to be a mark of genius; and certainly it is no mark to the contrary; genius

consisting neither in self-conceit nor in humility, but in a power to make or do, not anything in general, but something in particular. Let him start for the Continent, then, without our pronouncing on his future. Among all forms of mistake, prophecy is the most gratuitous.

But at present this caution against a too hasty judgment interests me more in relation to Mr. Casaubon than to his young cousin. If to Dorothea Mr. Casaubon had been the mere occasion which had set alight the fine inflammable material of her youthful illusions, does it follow that he was fairly represented in the minds of those less impassioned personages who have hitherto delivered their judgments concerning him? I protest against any absolute conclusion, any prejudice derived from Mrs. Cadwallader's contempt for a neighboring clergyman's alleged greatness of soul, or Sir James Chettam's poor opinion of his rival's legs,—from Mr. Brooke's failure to elicit a companion's ideas, or from Celia's criticism of a middle-aged scholar's personal appearance. I am not sure that the greatest man of his age, if ever that solitary superlative existed, could escape these unfavorable reflections of himself in various small mirrors; and even Milton, looking for his portrait in a spoon, must submit to have the facial angle of a bumpkin. Moreover, if Mr. Casaubon, speaking for himself, has rather a chilling rhetoric, it is not therefore certain that there is no good work or fine feeling in him. Did not an immortal physicist and interpreter of hieroglyphs write detestable verses? Has the theory of the solar system been advanced by graceful manners and conversational tact? Suppose we turn from outside estimates of a man, to wonder, with keener interest, what is the report of his own consciousness about his doings or capacity: with what hindrances he is carrying on his daily labors; what fading of hopes, or what deeper fixity of self-delusion the years are marking off within him; and with what spirit he wrestles against universal pressure, which will one day be too heavy for him, and bring his heart to its final pause. Doubtless his lot is important in his own eyes; and the chief reason that we think he asks too large a place in our consideration must be our want of room for him, since we refer him to the Divine regard with perfect confidence; nay, it is even held sublime for our neighbor to expect the utmost there, however little he may have got from us. Mr. Casaubon, too, was the centre of his own world; if he was liable to think that others were providentially made for him, and especially to consider them in the light of their fitness for the author of a "Key to all Mythologies," this trait is

not quite alien to us, and, like the other mendicant hopes of mortals, claims some of our pity.

Certainly this affair of his marriage with Miss Brooke touched him more nearly than it did any one of the persons who have hitherto shown their disapproval of it, and in the present stage of things I feel more tenderly towards his experience of success than towards the disappointment of the amiable Sir James. For in truth, as the day fixed for his marriage came nearer, Mr. Casaubon did not find his spirits rising; nor did the contemplation of that matrimonial garden scene, where, as all experience showed, the path was to be bordered with flowers, prove persistently more enchanting to him than the accustomed vaults where he walked taper in hand. He did not confess to himself, still less could he have breathed to another, his surprise that though he had won a lovely and noble-hearted girl he had not won delight,—which he had also regarded as an object to be found by search. It is true that he knew all the classical passages implying the contrary; but knowing classical passages, we find, is a mode of motion, which explains why they leave so little extra force for their personal application.

Poor Mr. Casaubon had imagined that his long studious bachelorhood had stored up for him a compound interest of enjoyment, and that large drafts on his affections would not fail to be honored; for we all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors, and act fatally on the strength of them. And now he was in danger of being saddened by the very conviction that his circumstances were unusually happy: there was nothing external by which he could account for a certain blankness of sensibility which came over him just when his expectant gladness should have been most lively, just when he exchanged the accustomed dulness of his Lowick library for his visits to the Grange. Here was a weary experience in which he was as utterly condemned to loneliness as in the despair which sometimes threatened him while toiling in the morass of authorship without seeming nearer to the goal. And his was that worst loneliness which would shrink from sympathy. He could not but wish that Dorothea should think him not less happy than the world would expect her successful suitor to be; and in relation to his authorship he leaned on her young trust and veneration, he liked to draw forth her fresh interest in listening, as a means of encouragement to himself: in talking to her he presented all his performance and intention with the reflected confidence

of the pedagogue, and rid himself for the time of that chilling ideal audience which crowded his laborious uncreative hours with the vaporous pressure of Tartarean shades.

For to Dorothea, after that toy-box history of the world adapted to young ladies which had made the chief part of her education, Mr. Casaubon's talk about his great book was full of new vistas; and this sense of revelation, this surprise of a nearer introduction to Stoics and Alexandrians, as people who had ideas not totally unlike her own, kept in abeyance for the time her usual eagerness for a binding theory which could bring her own life and doctrine into strict connection with that amazing past, and give the remotest sources of knowledge some bearing on her actions. That more complete teaching would come—Mr. Casaubon would tell her all that: she was looking forward to higher initiation in ideas, as she was looking forward to marriage, and blending her dim conceptions of both. It would be a great mistake to suppose that Dorothea would have cared about any share in Mr. Casaubon's learning as mere accomplishment; for though opinion in the neighborhood of Freshitt and Tipton had pronounced her clever, that epithet would not have described her to circles in whose more precise vocabulary cleverness implies mere aptitude for knowing and doing, apart from character. All her eagerness for acquirement lay within that full current of sympathetic motive in which her ideas and impulses were habitually swept along. She did not want to deck herself with knowledge—to wear it loose from the nerves and blood that fed her action; and if she had written a book she must have done it as Saint Theresa did, under the command of an authority that constrained her conscience. But something she yearned for by which her life might be filled with action at once rational and ardent; and since the time was gone by for guiding visions and spiritual directors, since prayer heightened yearning but not instruction, what lamp was there but knowledge? Surely learned men kept the only oil; and who more learned than Mr. Casaubon?

Thus in these brief weeks Dorothea's joyous grateful expectation was unbroken, and however her lover might occasionally be conscious of flatness, he could never refer it to any slackening of her affectionate interest.

The season was mild enough to encourage the project of extending the wedding journey as far as Rome, and Mr. Casaubon was anxious for this

because he wished to inspect some manuscripts in the Vatican.

“I still regret that your sister is not to accompany us,” he said one morning, some time after it had been ascertained that Celia objected to go, and that Dorothea did not wish for her companionship. “You will have many lonely hours, Dorothea, for I shall be constrained to make the utmost use of my time during our stay in Rome, and I should feel more at liberty if you had a companion.”

The words “I should feel more at liberty” grated on Dorothea. For the first time in speaking to Mr. Casaubon she colored from annoyance.

“You must have misunderstood me very much,” she said, “if you think I should not enter into the value of your time—if you think that I should not willingly give up whatever interfered with your using it to the best purpose.”

“That is very amiable in you, my dear Dorothea,” said Mr. Casaubon, not in the least noticing that she was hurt; “but if you had a lady as your companion, I could put you both under the care of a cicerone, and we could thus achieve two purposes in the same space of time.”

“I beg you will not refer to this again,” said Dorothea, rather haughtily. But immediately she feared that she was wrong, and turning towards him she laid her hand on his, adding in a different tone, “Pray do not be anxious about me. I shall have so much to think of when I am alone. And Tantripp will be a sufficient companion, just to take care of me. I could not bear to have Celia: she would be miserable.”

It was time to dress. There was to be a dinner-party that day, the last of the parties which were held at the Grange as proper preliminaries to the wedding, and Dorothea was glad of a reason for moving away at once on the sound of the bell, as if she needed more than her usual amount of preparation. She was ashamed of being irritated from some cause she could not define even to herself; for though she had no intention to be untruthful, her reply had not touched the real hurt within her. Mr. Casaubon’s words had been quite reasonable, yet they had brought a vague instantaneous sense of aloofness on his part.

“Surely I am in a strangely selfish weak state of mind,” she said to herself. “How can I have a husband who is so much above me without knowing that he needs me less than I need him?”

Having convinced herself that Mr. Casaubon was altogether right, she recovered her equanimity, and was an agreeable image of serene dignity when she came into the drawing-room in her silver-gray dress—the simple lines of her dark-brown hair parted over her brow and coiled massively behind, in keeping with the entire absence from her manner and expression of all search after mere effect. Sometimes when Dorothea was in company, there seemed to be as complete an air of repose about her as if she had been a picture of Santa Barbara looking out from her tower into the clear air; but these intervals of quietude made the energy of her speech and emotion the more remarked when some outward appeal had touched her.

She was naturally the subject of many observations this evening, for the dinner-party was large and rather more miscellaneous as to the male portion than any which had been held at the Grange since Mr. Brooke's nieces had resided with him, so that the talking was done in duos and trios more or less inharmonious. There was the newly elected mayor of Middlemarch, who happened to be a manufacturer; the philanthropic banker his brother-in-law, who predominated so much in the town that some called him a Methodist, others a hypocrite, according to the resources of their vocabulary; and there were various professional men. In fact, Mrs. Cadwallader said that Brooke was beginning to treat the Middlemarchers, and that she preferred the farmers at the tithe-dinner, who drank her health unpretentiously, and were not ashamed of their grandfathers' furniture. For in that part of the country, before reform had done its notable part in developing the political consciousness, there was a clearer distinction of ranks and a dimmer distinction of parties; so that Mr. Brooke's miscellaneous invitations seemed to belong to that general laxity which came from his inordinate travel and habit of taking too much in the form of ideas.

Already, as Miss Brooke passed out of the dining-room, opportunity was found for some interjectional "asides."

"A fine woman, Miss Brooke! an uncommonly fine woman, by God!" said Mr. Standish, the old lawyer, who had been so long concerned with the landed gentry that he had become landed himself, and used that oath in a deep-mouthed manner as a sort of armorial bearings, stamping the speech of a man who held a good position.

Mr. Bulstrode, the banker, seemed to be addressed, but that gentleman disliked coarseness and profanity, and merely bowed. The remark was taken up by Mr. Chichely, a middle-aged bachelor and courting celebrity, who had a complexion something like an Easter egg, a few hairs carefully arranged, and a carriage implying the consciousness of a distinguished appearance.

“Yes, but not my style of woman: I like a woman who lays herself out a little more to please us. There should be a little filigree about a woman—something of the coquette. A man likes a sort of challenge. The more of a dead set she makes at you the better.”

“There’s some truth in that,” said Mr. Standish, disposed to be genial. “And, by God, it’s usually the way with them. I suppose it answers some wise ends: Providence made them so, eh, Bulstrode?”

“I should be disposed to refer coquetry to another source,” said Mr. Bulstrode. “I should rather refer it to the devil.”

“Ay, to be sure, there should be a little devil in a woman,” said Mr. Chichely, whose study of the fair sex seemed to have been detrimental to his theology. “And I like them blond, with a certain gait, and a swan neck. Between ourselves, the mayor’s daughter is more to my taste than Miss Brooke or Miss Celia either. If I were a marrying man I should choose Miss Vincy before either of them.”

“Well, make up, make up,” said Mr. Standish, jocosely; “you see the middle-aged fellows carry the day.”

Mr. Chichely shook his head with much meaning: he was not going to incur the certainty of being accepted by the woman he would choose.

The Miss Vincy who had the honor of being Mr. Chichely’s ideal was of course not present; for Mr. Brooke, always objecting to go too far, would not have chosen that his nieces should meet the daughter of a Middlemarch manufacturer, unless it were on a public occasion. The feminine part of the company included none whom Lady Chettam or Mrs. Cadwallader could object to; for Mrs. Renfrew, the colonel’s widow, was not only unexceptionable in point of breeding, but also interesting on the ground of her complaint, which puzzled the doctors, and seemed clearly a case wherein the fulness of professional knowledge might need the supplement of quackery. Lady Chettam, who attributed her own remarkable health to home-made bitters united with constant medical



attendance, entered with much exercise of the imagination into Mrs. Renfrew's account of symptoms, and into the amazing futility in her case of all strengthening medicines.

"Where can all the strength of those medicines go, my dear?" said the mild but stately dowager, turning to Mrs. Cadwallader reflectively, when Mrs. Renfrew's attention was called away.

"It strengthens the disease," said the Rector's wife, much too well-born not to be an amateur in medicine. "Everything depends on the constitution: some people make fat, some blood, and some bile—that's my view of the matter; and whatever they take is a sort of grist to the mill."

"Then she ought to take medicines that would reduce—reduce the disease, you know, if you are right, my dear. And I think what you say is reasonable."

"Certainly it is reasonable. You have two sorts of potatoes, fed on the same soil. One of them grows more and more watery—"

"Ah! like this poor Mrs. Renfrew—that is what I think. Dropsy! There is no swelling yet—it is inward. I should say she ought to take drying medicines, shouldn't you?—or a dry hot-air bath. Many things might be tried, of a drying nature."

"Let her try a certain person's pamphlets," said Mrs. Cadwallader in an undertone, seeing the gentlemen enter. "He does not want drying."

"Who, my dear?" said Lady Chettam, a charming woman, not so quick as to nullify the pleasure of explanation.

"The bridegroom—Casaubon. He has certainly been drying up faster since the engagement: the flame of passion, I suppose."

"I should think he is far from having a good constitution," said Lady Chettam, with a still deeper undertone. "And then his studies—so very dry, as you say."

"Really, by the side of Sir James, he looks like a death's head skinned over for the occasion. Mark my words: in a year from this time that girl will hate him. She looks up to him as an oracle now, and by-and-by she will be at the other extreme. All flightiness!"

"How very shocking! I fear she is headstrong. But tell me—you know all about him—is there anything very bad? What is the truth?"

“The truth? he is as bad as the wrong physic—nasty to take, and sure to disagree.”

“There could not be anything worse than that,” said Lady Chettam, with so vivid a conception of the physic that she seemed to have learned something exact about Mr. Casaubon’s disadvantages. “However, James will hear nothing against Miss Brooke. He says she is the mirror of women still.”

“That is a generous make-believe of his. Depend upon it, he likes little Celia better, and she appreciates him. I hope you like my little Celia?”

“Certainly; she is fonder of geraniums, and seems more docile, though not so fine a figure. But we were talking of physic. Tell me about this new young surgeon, Mr. Lydgate. I am told he is wonderfully clever: he certainly looks it—a fine brow indeed.”

“He is a gentleman. I heard him talking to Humphrey. He talks well.”

“Yes. Mr. Brooke says he is one of the Lydgates of Northumberland, really well connected. One does not expect it in a practitioner of that kind. For my own part, I like a medical man more on a footing with the servants; they are often all the cleverer. I assure you I found poor Hicks’s judgment unflinching; I never knew him wrong. He was coarse and butcher-like, but he knew my constitution. It was a loss to me his going off so suddenly. Dear me, what a very animated conversation Miss Brooke seems to be having with this Mr. Lydgate!”

“She is talking cottages and hospitals with him,” said Mrs. Cadwallader, whose ears and power of interpretation were quick. “I believe he is a sort of philanthropist, so Brooke is sure to take him up.”

“James,” said Lady Chettam when her son came near, “bring Mr. Lydgate and introduce him to me. I want to test him.”

The affable dowager declared herself delighted with this opportunity of making Mr. Lydgate’s acquaintance, having heard of his success in treating fever on a new plan.

Mr. Lydgate had the medical accomplishment of looking perfectly grave whatever nonsense was talked to him, and his dark steady eyes gave him impressiveness as a listener. He was as little as possible like the lamented Hicks, especially in a certain careless refinement about his toilet and utterance. Yet Lady Chettam gathered much confidence in him. He

confirmed her view of her own constitution as being peculiar, by admitting that all constitutions might be called peculiar, and he did not deny that hers might be more peculiar than others. He did not approve of a too lowering system, including reckless cupping, nor, on the other hand, of incessant port wine and bark. He said "I think so" with an air of so much deference accompanying the insight of agreement, that she formed the most cordial opinion of his talents.

"I am quite pleased with your protege," she said to Mr. Brooke before going away.

"My protege?—dear me!—who is that?" said Mr. Brooke.

"This young Lydgate, the new doctor. He seems to me to understand his profession admirably."

"Oh, Lydgate! he is not my protege, you know; only I knew an uncle of his who sent me a letter about him. However, I think he is likely to be first-rate—has studied in Paris, knew Broussais; has ideas, you know—wants to raise the profession."

"Lydgate has lots of ideas, quite new, about ventilation and diet, that sort of thing," resumed Mr. Brooke, after he had handed out Lady Chettam, and had returned to be civil to a group of Middlemarchers.

"Hang it, do you think that is quite sound?—upsetting the old treatment, which has made Englishmen what they are?" said Mr. Standish.

"Medical knowledge is at a low ebb among us," said Mr. Bulstrode, who spoke in a subdued tone, and had rather a sickly air. "I, for my part, hail the advent of Mr. Lydgate. I hope to find good reason for confiding the new hospital to his management."

"That is all very fine," replied Mr. Standish, who was not fond of Mr. Bulstrode; "if you like him to try experiments on your hospital patients, and kill a few people for charity I have no objection. But I am not going to hand money out of my purse to have experiments tried on me. I like treatment that has been tested a little."

"Well, you know, Standish, every dose you take is an experiment—an experiment, you know," said Mr. Brooke, nodding towards the lawyer.

"Oh, if you talk in that sense!" said Mr. Standish, with as much disgust at such non-legal quibbling as a man can well betray towards a valuable client.

“I should be glad of any treatment that would cure me without reducing me to a skeleton, like poor Grainger,” said Mr. Vincy, the mayor, a florid man, who would have served for a study of flesh in striking contrast with the Franciscan tints of Mr. Bulstrode. “It’s an uncommonly dangerous thing to be left without any padding against the shafts of disease, as somebody said,—and I think it a very good expression myself.”

Mr. Lydgate, of course, was out of hearing. He had quitted the party early, and would have thought it altogether tedious but for the novelty of certain introductions, especially the introduction to Miss Brooke, whose youthful bloom, with her approaching marriage to that faded scholar, and her interest in matters socially useful, gave her the piquancy of an unusual combination.

“She is a good creature—that fine girl—but a little too earnest,” he thought. “It is troublesome to talk to such women. They are always wanting reasons, yet they are too ignorant to understand the merits of any question, and usually fall back on their moral sense to settle things after their own taste.”

Evidently Miss Brooke was not Mr. Lydgate’s style of woman any more than Mr. Chichely’s. Considered, indeed, in relation to the latter, whose mind was matured, she was altogether a mistake, and calculated to shock his trust in final causes, including the adaptation of fine young women to purplefaced bachelors. But Lydgate was less ripe, and might possibly have experience before him which would modify his opinion as to the most excellent things in woman.

Miss Brooke, however, was not again seen by either of these gentlemen under her maiden name. Not long after that dinner-party she had become Mrs. Casaubon, and was on her way to Rome.

## CHAPTER XI.

But deeds and language such as men do use,  
And persons such as comedy would choose,  
When she would show an image of the times,  
And sport with human follies, not with crimes.  
—BEN JONSON.

Lydgate, in fact, was already conscious of being fascinated by a woman strikingly different from Miss Brooke: he did not in the least suppose that he had lost his balance and fallen in love, but he had said of that particular woman, "She is grace itself; she is perfectly lovely and accomplished. That is what a woman ought to be: she ought to produce the effect of exquisite music." Plain women he regarded as he did the other severe facts of life, to be faced with philosophy and investigated by science. But Rosamond Vincy seemed to have the true melodic charm; and when a man has seen the woman whom he would have chosen if he had intended to marry speedily, his remaining a bachelor will usually depend on her resolution rather than on his. Lydgate believed that he should not marry for several years: not marry until he had trodden out a good clear path for himself away from the broad road which was quite ready made. He had seen Miss Vincy above his horizon almost as long as it had taken Mr. Casaubon to become engaged and married: but this learned gentleman was possessed of a fortune; he had assembled his voluminous notes, and had made that sort of reputation which precedes performance,—often the larger part of a man's fame. He took a wife, as we have seen, to adorn the remaining quadrant of his course, and be a little moon that would cause hardly a calculable perturbation. But Lydgate was young, poor, ambitious. He had his half-century before him instead of behind him, and he had come to Middlemarch bent on doing many things that were not directly fitted to make his fortune or even secure him a good income. To a man under such circumstances, taking a wife is something more than a question of adornment, however highly he may rate this; and Lydgate was disposed to give it the first place among wifely functions. To his taste, guided by a single conversation, here was the point on which Miss Brooke would be

found wanting, notwithstanding her undeniable beauty. She did not look at things from the proper feminine angle. The society of such women was about as relaxing as going from your work to teach the second form, instead of reclining in a paradise with sweet laughs for bird-notes, and blue eyes for a heaven.

Certainly nothing at present could seem much less important to Lydgate than the turn of Miss Brooke's mind, or to Miss Brooke than the qualities of the woman who had attracted this young surgeon. But any one watching keenly the stealthy convergence of human lots, sees a slow preparation of effects from one life on another, which tells like a calculated irony on the indifference or the frozen stare with which we look at our un-introduced neighbor. Destiny stands by sarcastic with our *dramatis personae* folded in her hand.

Old provincial society had its share of this subtle movement: had not only its striking downfalls, its brilliant young professional dandies who ended by living up an entry with a drab and six children for their establishment, but also those less marked vicissitudes which are constantly shifting the boundaries of social intercourse, and begetting new consciousness of interdependence. Some slipped a little downward, some got higher footing: people denied aspirates, gained wealth, and fastidious gentlemen stood for boroughs; some were caught in political currents, some in ecclesiastical, and perhaps found themselves surprisingly grouped in consequence; while a few personages or families that stood with rocky firmness amid all this fluctuation, were slowly presenting new aspects in spite of solidity, and altering with the double change of self and beholder. Municipal town and rural parish gradually made fresh threads of connection—gradually, as the old stocking gave way to the savings-bank, and the worship of the solar guinea became extinct; while squires and baronets, and even lords who had once lived blamelessly afar from the civic mind, gathered the faultiness of closer acquaintanceship. Settlers, too, came from distant counties, some with an alarming novelty of skill, others with an offensive advantage in cunning. In fact, much the same sort of movement and mixture went on in old England as we find in older Herodotus, who also, in telling what had been, thought it well to take a woman's lot for his starting-point; though Io, as a maiden apparently beguiled by attractive merchandise, was the reverse of Miss Brooke, and in this respect perhaps bore more resemblance to Rosamond Vincy, who

had excellent taste in costume, with that nymph-like figure and pure blindness which give the largest range to choice in the flow and color of drapery. But these things made only part of her charm. She was admitted to be the flower of Mrs. Lemon's school, the chief school in the county, where the teaching included all that was demanded in the accomplished female—even to extras, such as the getting in and out of a carriage. Mrs. Lemon herself had always held up Miss Vincy as an example: no pupil, she said, exceeded that young lady for mental acquisition and propriety of speech, while her musical execution was quite exceptional. We cannot help the way in which people speak of us, and probably if Mrs. Lemon had undertaken to describe Juliet or Imogen, these heroines would not have seemed poetical. The first vision of Rosamond would have been enough with most judges to dispel any prejudice excited by Mrs. Lemon's praise.

Lydgate could not be long in Middlemarch without having that agreeable vision, or even without making the acquaintance of the Vincy family; for though Mr. Peacock, whose practice he had paid something to enter on, had not been their doctor (Mrs. Vincy not liking the lowering system adopted by him), he had many patients among their connections and acquaintances. For who of any consequence in Middlemarch was not connected or at least acquainted with the Vincys? They were old manufacturers, and had kept a good house for three generations, in which there had naturally been much intermarrying with neighbors more or less decidedly genteel. Mr. Vincy's sister had made a wealthy match in accepting Mr. Bulstrode, who, however, as a man not born in the town, and altogether of dimly known origin, was considered to have done well in uniting himself with a real Middlemarch family; on the other hand, Mr. Vincy had descended a little, having taken an innkeeper's daughter. But on this side too there was a cheering sense of money; for Mrs. Vincy's sister had been second wife to rich old Mr. Featherstone, and had died childless years ago, so that her nephews and nieces might be supposed to touch the affections of the widower. And it happened that Mr. Bulstrode and Mr. Featherstone, two of Peacock's most important patients, had, from different causes, given an especially good reception to his successor, who had raised some partisanship as well as discussion. Mr. Wrench, medical attendant to the Vincy family, very early had grounds for thinking lightly of Lydgate's professional discretion, and there was no report about him which was not retailed at the Vincys', where visitors were frequent. Mr.

Vincy was more inclined to general good-fellowship than to taking sides, but there was no need for him to be hasty in making any new man acquaintance. Rosamond silently wished that her father would invite Mr. Lydgate. She was tired of the faces and figures she had always been used to—the various irregular profiles and gaits and turns of phrase distinguishing those Middlemarch young men whom she had known as boys. She had been at school with girls of higher position, whose brothers, she felt sure, it would have been possible for her to be more interested in, than in these inevitable Middlemarch companions. But she would not have chosen to mention her wish to her father; and he, for his part, was in no hurry on the subject. An alderman about to be mayor must by-and-by enlarge his dinner-parties, but at present there were plenty of guests at his well-spread table.

That table often remained covered with the relics of the family breakfast long after Mr. Vincy had gone with his second son to the warehouse, and when Miss Morgan was already far on in morning lessons with the younger girls in the schoolroom. It awaited the family laggard, who found any sort of inconvenience (to others) less disagreeable than getting up when he was called. This was the case one morning of the October in which we have lately seen Mr. Casaubon visiting the Grange; and though the room was a little overheated with the fire, which had sent the spaniel panting to a remote corner, Rosamond, for some reason, continued to sit at her embroidery longer than usual, now and then giving herself a little shake, and laying her work on her knee to contemplate it with an air of hesitating weariness. Her mamma, who had returned from an excursion to the kitchen, sat on the other side of the small work-table with an air of more entire placidity, until, the clock again giving notice that it was going to strike, she looked up from the lace-mending which was occupying her plump fingers and rang the bell.

“Knock at Mr. Fred’s door again, Pritchard, and tell him it has struck half-past ten.”

This was said without any change in the radiant good-humor of Mrs. Vincy’s face, in which forty-five years had delved neither angles nor parallels; and pushing back her pink capstrings, she let her work rest on her lap, while she looked admiringly at her daughter.



“Mamma,” said Rosamond, “when Fred comes down I wish you would not let him have red herrings. I cannot bear the smell of them all over the house at this hour of the morning.”

“Oh, my dear, you are so hard on your brothers! It is the only fault I have to find with you. You are the sweetest temper in the world, but you are so tetchy with your brothers.”

“Not tetchy, mamma: you never hear me speak in an unladylike way.”

“Well, but you want to deny them things.”

“Brothers are so unpleasant.”

“Oh, my dear, you must allow for young men. Be thankful if they have good hearts. A woman must learn to put up with little things. You will be married some day.”

“Not to any one who is like Fred.”

“Don’t decry your own brother, my dear. Few young men have less against them, although he couldn’t take his degree—I’m sure I can’t understand why, for he seems to me most clever. And you know yourself he was thought equal to the best society at college. So particular as you are, my dear, I wonder you are not glad to have such a gentlemanly young man for a brother. You are always finding fault with Bob because he is not Fred.”

“Oh no, mamma, only because he is Bob.”

“Well, my dear, you will not find any Middlemarch young man who has not something against him.”

“But”—here Rosamond’s face broke into a smile which suddenly revealed two dimples. She herself thought unfavorably of these dimples and smiled little in general society. “But I shall not marry any Middlemarch young man.”

“So it seems, my love, for you have as good as refused the pick of them; and if there’s better to be had, I’m sure there’s no girl better deserves it.”

“Excuse me, mamma—I wish you would not say, ‘the pick of them.’”

“Why, what else are they?”

“I mean, mamma, it is rather a vulgar expression.”

“Very likely, my dear; I never was a good speaker. What should I say?”

“The best of them.”

“Why, that seems just as plain and common. If I had had time to think, I should have said, ‘the most superior young men.’ But with your education you must know.”

“What must Rosy know, mother?” said Mr. Fred, who had slid in unobserved through the half-open door while the ladies were bending over their work, and now going up to the fire stood with his back towards it, warming the soles of his slippers.

“Whether it’s right to say ‘superior young men,’” said Mrs. Vincy, ringing the bell.

“Oh, there are so many superior teas and sugars now. Superior is getting to be shopkeepers’ slang.”

“Are you beginning to dislike slang, then?” said Rosamond, with mild gravity.

“Only the wrong sort. All choice of words is slang. It marks a class.”

“There is correct English: that is not slang.”

“I beg your pardon: correct English is the slang of prigs who write history and essays. And the strongest slang of all is the slang of poets.”

“You will say anything, Fred, to gain your point.”

“Well, tell me whether it is slang or poetry to call an ox a *leg-plaiter*.”

“Of course you can call it poetry if you like.”

“Aha, Miss Rosy, you don’t know Homer from slang. I shall invent a new game; I shall write bits of slang and poetry on slips, and give them to you to separate.”

“Dear me, how amusing it is to hear young people talk!” said Mrs. Vincy, with cheerful admiration.

“Have you got nothing else for my breakfast, Pritchard?” said Fred, to the servant who brought in coffee and buttered toast; while he walked round the table surveying the ham, potted beef, and other cold remnants, with an air of silent rejection, and polite forbearance from signs of disgust.

“Should you like eggs, sir?”

“Eggs, no! Bring me a grilled bone.”

“Really, Fred,” said Rosamond, when the servant had left the room, “if you must have hot things for breakfast, I wish you would come down

earlier. You can get up at six o'clock to go out hunting; I cannot understand why you find it so difficult to get up on other mornings."

"That is your want of understanding, Rosy. I can get up to go hunting because I like it."

"What would you think of me if I came down two hours after every one else and ordered grilled bone?"

"I should think you were an uncommonly fast young lady," said Fred, eating his toast with the utmost composure.

"I cannot see why brothers are to make themselves disagreeable, any more than sisters."

"I don't make myself disagreeable; it is you who find me so. Disagreeable is a word that describes your feelings and not my actions."

"I think it describes the smell of grilled bone."

"Not at all. It describes a sensation in your little nose associated with certain finicking notions which are the classics of Mrs. Lemon's school. Look at my mother; you don't see her objecting to everything except what she does herself. She is my notion of a pleasant woman."

"Bless you both, my dears, and don't quarrel," said Mrs. Vincy, with motherly cordiality. "Come, Fred, tell us all about the new doctor. How is your uncle pleased with him?"

"Pretty well, I think. He asks Lydgate all sorts of questions and then screws up his face while he hears the answers, as if they were pinching his toes. That's his way. Ah, here comes my grilled bone."

"But how came you to stay out so late, my dear? You only said you were going to your uncle's."

"Oh, I dined at Plymdale's. We had whist. Lydgate was there too."

"And what do you think of him? He is very gentlemanly, I suppose. They say he is of excellent family—his relations quite county people."

"Yes," said Fred. "There was a Lydgate at John's who spent no end of money. I find this man is a second cousin of his. But rich men may have very poor devils for second cousins."

"It always makes a difference, though, to be of good family," said Rosamond, with a tone of decision which showed that she had thought on this subject. Rosamond felt that she might have been happier if she had not

been the daughter of a Middlemarch manufacturer. She disliked anything which reminded her that her mother's father had been an innkeeper. Certainly any one remembering the fact might think that Mrs. Vincy had the air of a very handsome good-humored landlady, accustomed to the most capricious orders of gentlemen.

"I thought it was odd his name was Tertius," said the bright-faced matron, "but of course it's a name in the family. But now, tell us exactly what sort of man he is."

"Oh, tallish, dark, clever—talks well—rather a prig, I think."

"I never can make out what you mean by a prig," said Rosamond.

"A fellow who wants to show that he has opinions."

"Why, my dear, doctors must have opinions," said Mrs. Vincy. "What are they there for else?"

"Yes, mother, the opinions they are paid for. But a prig is a fellow who is always making you a present of his opinions."

"I suppose Mary Garth admires Mr. Lydgate," said Rosamond, not without a touch of innuendo.

"Really, I can't say," said Fred, rather glumly, as he left the table, and taking up a novel which he had brought down with him, threw himself into an arm-chair. "If you are jealous of her, go oftener to Stone Court yourself and eclipse her."

"I wish you would not be so vulgar, Fred. If you have finished, pray ring the bell."

"It is true, though—what your brother says, Rosamond," Mrs. Vincy began, when the servant had cleared the table. "It is a thousand pities you haven't patience to go and see your uncle more, so proud of you as he is, and wanted you to live with him. There's no knowing what he might have done for you as well as for Fred. God knows, I'm fond of having you at home with me, but I can part with my children for their good. And now it stands to reason that your uncle Featherstone will do something for Mary Garth."

"Mary Garth can bear being at Stone Court, because she likes that better than being a governess," said Rosamond, folding up her work. "I would rather not have anything left to me if I must earn it by enduring much of my uncle's cough and his ugly relations."

“He can’t be long for this world, my dear; I wouldn’t hasten his end, but what with asthma and that inward complaint, let us hope there is something better for him in another. And I have no ill-will towards Mary Garth, but there’s justice to be thought of. And Mr. Featherstone’s first wife brought him no money, as my sister did. Her nieces and nephews can’t have so much claim as my sister’s. And I must say I think Mary Garth a dreadful plain girl—more fit for a governess.”

“Every one would not agree with you there, mother,” said Fred, who seemed to be able to read and listen too.

“Well, my dear,” said Mrs. Vincy, wheeling skilfully, “if she *had* some fortune left her,—a man marries his wife’s relations, and the Garths are so poor, and live in such a small way. But I shall leave you to your studies, my dear; for I must go and do some shopping.”

“Fred’s studies are not very deep,” said Rosamond, rising with her mamma, “he is only reading a novel.”

“Well, well, by-and-by he’ll go to his Latin and things,” said Mrs. Vincy, soothingly, stroking her son’s head. “There’s a fire in the smoking-room on purpose. It’s your father’s wish, you know—Fred, my dear—and I always tell him you will be good, and go to college again to take your degree.”

Fred drew his mother’s hand down to his lips, but said nothing.

“I suppose you are not going out riding to-day?” said Rosamond, lingering a little after her mamma was gone.

“No; why?”

“Papa says I may have the chestnut to ride now.”

“You can go with me to-morrow, if you like. Only I am going to Stone Court, remember.”

“I want to ride so much, it is indifferent to me where we go.” Rosamond really wished to go to Stone Court, of all other places.

“Oh, I say, Rosy,” said Fred, as she was passing out of the room, “if you are going to the piano, let me come and play some airs with you.”

“Pray do not ask me this morning.”

“Why not this morning?”

“Really, Fred, I wish you would leave off playing the flute. A man looks very silly playing the flute. And you play so out of tune.”

“When next any one makes love to you, Miss Rosamond, I will tell him how obliging you are.”

“Why should you expect me to oblige you by hearing you play the flute, any more than I should expect you to oblige me by not playing it?”

“And why should you expect me to take you out riding?”

This question led to an adjustment, for Rosamond had set her mind on that particular ride.

So Fred was gratified with nearly an hour’s practice of “Ar hyd y nos,” “Ye banks and braes,” and other favorite airs from his “Instructor on the Flute;” a wheezy performance, into which he threw much ambition and an irrepressible hopefulness.

## CHAPTER XII.

He had more tow on his distaffe  
Than Gerveis knew.  
—CHAUCER.

The ride to Stone Court, which Fred and Rosamond took the next morning, lay through a pretty bit of midland landscape, almost all meadows and pastures, with hedgerows still allowed to grow in bushy beauty and to spread out coral fruit for the birds. Little details gave each field a particular physiognomy, dear to the eyes that have looked on them from childhood: the pool in the corner where the grasses were dank and trees leaned whisperingly; the great oak shadowing a bare place in mid-pasture; the high bank where the ash-trees grew; the sudden slope of the old marl-pit making a red background for the burdock; the huddled roofs and ricks of the homestead without a traceable way of approach; the gray gate and fences against the depths of the bordering wood; and the stray hovel, its old, old thatch full of mossy hills and valleys with wondrous modulations of light and shadow such as we travel far to see in later life, and see larger, but not more beautiful. These are the things that make the gamut of joy in landscape to midland-bred souls—the things they toddled among, or perhaps learned by heart standing between their father's knees while he drove leisurely.

But the road, even the byroad, was excellent; for Lowick, as we have seen, was not a parish of muddy lanes and poor tenants; and it was into Lowick parish that Fred and Rosamond entered after a couple of miles' riding. Another mile would bring them to Stone Court, and at the end of the first half, the house was already visible, looking as if it had been arrested in its growth toward a stone mansion by an unexpected budding of farm-buildings on its left flank, which had hindered it from becoming anything more than the substantial dwelling of a gentleman farmer. It was not the less agreeable an object in the distance for the cluster of pinnacled corn-ricks which balanced the fine row of walnuts on the right.

Presently it was possible to discern something that might be a gig on the circular drive before the front door.

“Dear me,” said Rosamond, “I hope none of my uncle’s horrible relations are there.”

“They are, though. That is Mrs. Waule’s gig—the last yellow gig left, I should think. When I see Mrs. Waule in it, I understand how yellow can have been worn for mourning. That gig seems to me more funereal than a hearse. But then Mrs. Waule always has black crape on. How does she manage it, Rosy? Her friends can’t always be dying.”

“I don’t know at all. And she is not in the least evangelical,” said Rosamond, reflectively, as if that religious point of view would have fully accounted for perpetual crape. “And, not poor,” she added, after a moment’s pause.

“No, by George! They are as rich as Jews, those Waules and Featherstones; I mean, for people like them, who don’t want to spend anything. And yet they hang about my uncle like vultures, and are afraid of a farthing going away from their side of the family. But I believe he hates them all.”

The Mrs. Waule who was so far from being admirable in the eyes of these distant connections, had happened to say this very morning (not at all with a defiant air, but in a low, muffled, neutral tone, as of a voice heard through cotton wool) that she did not wish “to enjoy their good opinion.” She was seated, as she observed, on her own brother’s hearth, and had been Jane Featherstone five-and-twenty years before she had been Jane Waule, which entitled her to speak when her own brother’s name had been made free with by those who had no right to it.

“What are you driving at there?” said Mr. Featherstone, holding his stick between his knees and settling his wig, while he gave her a momentary sharp glance, which seemed to react on him like a draught of cold air and set him coughing.

Mrs. Waule had to defer her answer till he was quiet again, till Mary Garth had supplied him with fresh syrup, and he had begun to rub the gold knob of his stick, looking bitterly at the fire. It was a bright fire, but it made no difference to the chill-looking purplish tint of Mrs. Waule’s face, which was as neutral as her voice; having mere chinks for eyes, and lips that hardly moved in speaking.



“The doctors can’t master that cough, brother. It’s just like what I have; for I’m your own sister, constitution and everything. But, as I was saying, it’s a pity Mrs. Vincy’s family can’t be better conducted.”

“Tchah! you said nothing o’ the sort. You said somebody had made free with my name.”

“And no more than can be proved, if what everybody says is true. My brother Solomon tells me it’s the talk up and down in Middlemarch how unsteady young Vincy is, and has been forever gambling at billiards since home he came.”

“Nonsense! What’s a game at billiards? It’s a good gentlemanly game; and young Vincy is not a clodhopper. If your son John took to billiards, now, he’d make a fool of himself.”

“Your nephew John never took to billiards or any other game, brother, and is far from losing hundreds of pounds, which, if what everybody says is true, must be found somewhere else than out of Mr. Vincy the father’s pocket. For they say he’s been losing money for years, though nobody would think so, to see him go coursing and keeping open house as they do. And I’ve heard say Mr. Bulstrode condemns Mrs. Vincy beyond anything for her flightiness, and spoiling her children so.”

“What’s Bulstrode to me? I don’t bank with him.”

“Well, Mrs. Bulstrode is Mr. Vincy’s own sister, and they do say that Mr. Vincy mostly trades on the Bank money; and you may see yourself, brother, when a woman past forty has pink strings always flying, and that light way of laughing at everything, it’s very unbecoming. But indulging your children is one thing, and finding money to pay their debts is another. And it’s openly said that young Vincy has raised money on his expectations. I don’t say what expectations. Miss Garth hears me, and is welcome to tell again. I know young people hang together.”

“No, thank you, Mrs. Waule,” said Mary Garth. “I dislike hearing scandal too much to wish to repeat it.”

Mr. Featherstone rubbed the knob of his stick and made a brief convulsive show of laughter, which had much the same genuineness as an old whist-player’s chuckle over a bad hand. Still looking at the fire, he said—

“And who pretends to say Fred Vincy hasn’t got expectations? Such a fine, spirited fellow is like enough to have ’em.”

There was a slight pause before Mrs. Waule replied, and when she did so, her voice seemed to be slightly moistened with tears, though her face was still dry.

“Whether or no, brother, it is naturally painful to me and my brother Solomon to hear your name made free with, and your complaint being such as may carry you off sudden, and people who are no more Featherstones than the Merry-Andrew at the fair, openly reckoning on your property coming to *them*. And me your own sister, and Solomon your own brother! And if that’s to be it, what has it pleased the Almighty to make families for?” Here Mrs. Waule’s tears fell, but with moderation.

“Come, out with it, Jane!” said Mr. Featherstone, looking at her. “You mean to say, Fred Vincy has been getting somebody to advance him money on what he says he knows about my will, eh?”

“I never said so, brother” (Mrs. Waule’s voice had again become dry and unshaken). “It was told me by my brother Solomon last night when he called coming from market to give me advice about the old wheat, me being a widow, and my son John only three-and-twenty, though steady beyond anything. And he had it from most undeniable authority, and not one, but many.”

“Stuff and nonsense! I don’t believe a word of it. It’s all a got-up story. Go to the window, missy; I thought I heard a horse. See if the doctor’s coming.”

“Not got up by me, brother, nor yet by Solomon, who, whatever else he may be—and I don’t deny he has oddities—has made his will and parted his property equal between such kin as he’s friends with; though, for my part, I think there are times when some should be considered more than others. But Solomon makes it no secret what he means to do.”

“The more fool he!” said Mr. Featherstone, with some difficulty; breaking into a severe fit of coughing that required Mary Garth to stand near him, so that she did not find out whose horses they were which presently paused stamping on the gravel before the door.

Before Mr. Featherstone’s cough was quiet, Rosamond entered, bearing up her riding-habit with much grace. She bowed ceremoniously to Mrs.

Waule, who said stiffly, "How do you do, miss?" smiled and nodded silently to Mary, and remained standing till the coughing should cease, and allow her uncle to notice her.

"Heyday, miss!" he said at last, "you have a fine color. Where's Fred?"

"Seeing about the horses. He will be in presently."

"Sit down, sit down. Mrs. Waule, you'd better go."

Even those neighbors who had called Peter Featherstone an old fox, had never accused him of being insincerely polite, and his sister was quite used to the peculiar absence of ceremony with which he marked his sense of blood-relationship. Indeed, she herself was accustomed to think that entire freedom from the necessity of behaving agreeably was included in the Almighty's intentions about families. She rose slowly without any sign of resentment, and said in her usual muffled monotone, "Brother, I hope the new doctor will be able to do something for you. Solomon says there's great talk of his cleverness. I'm sure it's my wish you should be spared. And there's none more ready to nurse you than your own sister and your own nieces, if you'd only say the word. There's Rebecca, and Joanna, and Elizabeth, you know."

"Ay, ay, I remember—you'll see I've remembered 'em all—all dark and ugly. They'd need have some money, eh? There never was any beauty in the women of our family; but the Featherstones have always had some money, and the Waules too. Waule had money too. A warm man was Waule. Ay, ay; money's a good egg; and if you've got money to leave behind you, lay it in a warm nest. Good-by, Mrs. Waule." Here Mr. Featherstone pulled at both sides of his wig as if he wanted to deafen himself, and his sister went away ruminating on this oracular speech of his. Notwithstanding her jealousy of the Vincys and of Mary Garth, there remained as the nethermost sediment in her mental shallows a persuasion that her brother Peter Featherstone could never leave his chief property away from his blood-relations:—else, why had the Almighty carried off his two wives both childless, after he had gained so much by manganese and things, turning up when nobody expected it?—and why was there a Lowick parish church, and the Waules and Powderells all sitting in the same pew for generations, and the Featherstone pew next to them, if, the Sunday after her brother Peter's death, everybody was to know that the property was gone out of the family? The human mind has at no period

accepted a moral chaos; and so preposterous a result was not strictly conceivable. But we are frightened at much that is not strictly conceivable.

When Fred came in the old man eyed him with a peculiar twinkle, which the younger had often had reason to interpret as pride in the satisfactory details of his appearance.

“You two misses go away,” said Mr. Featherstone. “I want to speak to Fred.”

“Come into my room, Rosamond, you will not mind the cold for a little while,” said Mary. The two girls had not only known each other in childhood, but had been at the same provincial school together (Mary as an articulated pupil), so that they had many memories in common, and liked very well to talk in private. Indeed, this *tête-à-tête* was one of Rosamond’s objects in coming to Stone Court.

Old Featherstone would not begin the dialogue till the door had been closed. He continued to look at Fred with the same twinkle and with one of his habitual grimaces, alternately screwing and widening his mouth; and when he spoke, it was in a low tone, which might be taken for that of an informer ready to be bought off, rather than for the tone of an offended senior. He was not a man to feel any strong moral indignation even on account of trespasses against himself. It was natural that others should want to get an advantage over him, but then, he was a little too cunning for them.

“So, sir, you’ve been paying ten per cent for money which you’ve promised to pay off by mortgaging my land when I’m dead and gone, eh? You put my life at a twelvemonth, say. But I can alter my will yet.”

Fred blushed. He had not borrowed money in that way, for excellent reasons. But he was conscious of having spoken with some confidence (perhaps with more than he exactly remembered) about his prospect of getting Featherstone’s land as a future means of paying present debts.

“I don’t know what you refer to, sir. I have certainly never borrowed any money on such an insecurity. Please do explain.”

“No, sir, it’s you must explain. I can alter my will yet, let me tell you. I’m of sound mind—can reckon compound interest in my head, and remember every fool’s name as well as I could twenty years ago. What the deuce? I’m under eighty. I say, you must contradict this story.”

“I have contradicted it, sir,” Fred answered, with a touch of impatience, not remembering that his uncle did not verbally discriminate contradicting from disproving, though no one was further from confounding the two ideas than old Featherstone, who often wondered that so many fools took his own assertions for proofs. “But I contradict it again. The story is a silly lie.”

“Nonsense! you must bring dockiments. It comes from authority.”

“Name the authority, and make him name the man of whom I borrowed the money, and then I can disprove the story.”

“It’s pretty good authority, I think—a man who knows most of what goes on in Middlemarch. It’s that fine, religious, charitable uncle o’ yours. Come now!” Here Mr. Featherstone had his peculiar inward shake which signified merriment.

“Mr. Bulstrode?”

“Who else, eh?”

“Then the story has grown into this lie out of some sermonizing words he may have let fall about me. Do they pretend that he named the man who lent me the money?”

“If there is such a man, depend upon it Bulstrode knows him. But, supposing you only tried to get the money lent, and didn’t get it—Bulstrode ’ud know that too. You bring me a writing from Bulstrode to say he doesn’t believe you’ve ever promised to pay your debts out o’ my land. Come now!”

Mr. Featherstone’s face required its whole scale of grimaces as a muscular outlet to his silent triumph in the soundness of his faculties.

Fred felt himself to be in a disgusting dilemma.

“You must be joking, sir. Mr. Bulstrode, like other men, believes scores of things that are not true, and he has a prejudice against me. I could easily get him to write that he knew no facts in proof of the report you speak of, though it might lead to unpleasantness. But I could hardly ask him to write down what he believes or does not believe about me.” Fred paused an instant, and then added, in politic appeal to his uncle’s vanity, “That is hardly a thing for a gentleman to ask.” But he was disappointed in the result.

“Ay, I know what you mean. You’d sooner offend me than Bulstrode. And what’s he?—he’s got no land hereabout that ever I heard tell of. A speckilating fellow! He may come down any day, when the devil leaves off backing him. And that’s what his religion means: he wants God A’mighty to come in. That’s nonsense! There’s one thing I made out pretty clear when I used to go to church—and it’s this: God A’mighty sticks to the land. He promises land, and He gives land, and He makes chaps rich with corn and cattle. But you take the other side. You like Bulstrode and speckilation better than Featherstone and land.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said Fred, rising, standing with his back to the fire and beating his boot with his whip. “I like neither Bulstrode nor speculation.” He spoke rather sulkily, feeling himself stalemated.

“Well, well, you can do without me, that’s pretty clear,” said old Featherstone, secretly disliking the possibility that Fred would show himself at all independent. “You neither want a bit of land to make a squire of you instead of a starving parson, nor a lift of a hundred pound by the way. It’s all one to me. I can make five codicils if I like, and I shall keep my bank-notes for a nest-egg. It’s all one to me.”

Fred colored again. Featherstone had rarely given him presents of money, and at this moment it seemed almost harder to part with the immediate prospect of bank-notes than with the more distant prospect of the land.

“I am not ungrateful, sir. I never meant to show disregard for any kind intentions you might have towards me. On the contrary.”

“Very good. Then prove it. You bring me a letter from Bulstrode saying he doesn’t believe you’ve been cracking and promising to pay your debts out o’ my land, and then, if there’s any scrape you’ve got into, we’ll see if I can’t back you a bit. Come now! That’s a bargain. Here, give me your arm. I’ll try and walk round the room.”

Fred, in spite of his irritation, had kindness enough in him to be a little sorry for the unloved, unvenerated old man, who with his dropsical legs looked more than usually pitiable in walking. While giving his arm, he thought that he should not himself like to be an old fellow with his constitution breaking up; and he waited good-temperedly, first before the window to hear the wonted remarks about the guinea-fowls and the weather-cock, and then before the scanty book-shelves, of which the chief

glories in dark calf were Josephus, Culpepper, Klopstock's "Messiah," and several volumes of the "Gentleman's Magazine."

"Read me the names o' the books. Come now! you're a college man."

Fred gave him the titles.

"What did missy want with more books? What must you be bringing her more books for?"

"They amuse her, sir. She is very fond of reading."

"A little too fond," said Mr. Featherstone, captiously. "She was for reading when she sat with me. But I put a stop to that. She's got the newspaper to read out loud. That's enough for one day, I should think. I can't abide to see her reading to herself. You mind and not bring her any more books, do you hear?"

"Yes, sir, I hear." Fred had received this order before, and had secretly disobeyed it. He intended to disobey it again.

"Ring the bell," said Mr. Featherstone; "I want missy to come down."

Rosamond and Mary had been talking faster than their male friends. They did not think of sitting down, but stood at the toilet-table near the window while Rosamond took off her hat, adjusted her veil, and applied little touches of her finger-tips to her hair—hair of infantine fairness, neither flaxen nor yellow. Mary Garth seemed all the plainer standing at an angle between the two nymphs—the one in the glass, and the one out of it, who looked at each other with eyes of heavenly blue, deep enough to hold the most exquisite meanings an ingenious beholder could put into them, and deep enough to hide the meanings of the owner if these should happen to be less exquisite. Only a few children in Middlemarch looked blond by the side of Rosamond, and the slim figure displayed by her riding-habit had delicate undulations. In fact, most men in Middlemarch, except her brothers, held that Miss Vincy was the best girl in the world, and some called her an angel. Mary Garth, on the contrary, had the aspect of an ordinary sinner: she was brown; her curly dark hair was rough and stubborn; her stature was low; and it would not be true to declare, in satisfactory antithesis, that she had all the virtues. Plainness has its peculiar temptations and vices quite as much as beauty; it is apt either to feign amiability, or, not feigning it, to show all the repulsiveness of discontent: at any rate, to be called an ugly thing in contrast with that

lovely creature your companion, is apt to produce some effect beyond a sense of fine veracity and fitness in the phrase. At the age of two-and-twenty Mary had certainly not attained that perfect good sense and good principle which are usually recommended to the less fortunate girl, as if they were to be obtained in quantities ready mixed, with a flavor of resignation as required. Her shrewdness had a streak of satiric bitterness continually renewed and never carried utterly out of sight, except by a strong current of gratitude towards those who, instead of telling her that she ought to be contented, did something to make her so. Advancing womanhood had tempered her plainness, which was of a good human sort, such as the mothers of our race have very commonly worn in all latitudes under a more or less becoming headgear. Rembrandt would have painted her with pleasure, and would have made her broad features look out of the canvas with intelligent honesty. For honesty, truth-telling fairness, was Mary's reigning virtue: she neither tried to create illusions, nor indulged in them for her own behoof, and when she was in a good mood she had humor enough in her to laugh at herself. When she and Rosamond happened both to be reflected in the glass, she said, laughingly—

“What a brown patch I am by the side of you, Rosy! You are the most unbecoming companion.”

“Oh no! No one thinks of your appearance, you are so sensible and useful, Mary. Beauty is of very little consequence in reality,” said Rosamond, turning her head towards Mary, but with eyes swerving towards the new view of her neck in the glass.

“You mean *my* beauty,” said Mary, rather sardonically.

Rosamond thought, “Poor Mary, she takes the kindest things ill.” Aloud she said, “What have you been doing lately?”

“I? Oh, minding the house—pouring out syrup—pretending to be amiable and contented—learning to have a bad opinion of everybody.”

“It is a wretched life for you.”

“No,” said Mary, curtly, with a little toss of her head. “I think my life is pleasanter than your Miss Morgan's.”

“Yes; but Miss Morgan is so uninteresting, and not young.”

“She is interesting to herself, I suppose; and I am not at all sure that everything gets easier as one gets older.”



“No,” said Rosamond, reflectively; “one wonders what such people do, without any prospect. To be sure, there is religion as a support. But,” she added, dimpling, “it is very different with you, Mary. You may have an offer.”

“Has any one told you he means to make me one?”

“Of course not. I mean, there is a gentleman who may fall in love with you, seeing you almost every day.”

A certain change in Mary’s face was chiefly determined by the resolve not to show any change.

“Does that always make people fall in love?” she answered, carelessly; “it seems to me quite as often a reason for detesting each other.”

“Not when they are interesting and agreeable. I hear that Mr. Lydgate is both.”

“Oh, Mr. Lydgate!” said Mary, with an unmistakable lapse into indifference. “You want to know something about him,” she added, not choosing to indulge Rosamond’s indirectness.

“Merely, how you like him.”

“There is no question of liking at present. My liking always wants some little kindness to kindle it. I am not magnanimous enough to like people who speak to me without seeming to see me.”

“Is he so haughty?” said Rosamond, with heightened satisfaction. “You know that he is of good family?”

“No; he did not give that as a reason.”

“Mary! you are the oddest girl. But what sort of looking man is he? Describe him to me.”

“How can one describe a man? I can give you an inventory: heavy eyebrows, dark eyes, a straight nose, thick dark hair, large solid white hands—and—let me see—oh, an exquisite cambric pocket-handkerchief. But you will see him. You know this is about the time of his visits.”

Rosamond blushed a little, but said, meditatively, “I rather like a haughty manner. I cannot endure a rattling young man.”

“I did not tell you that Mr. Lydgate was haughty; but *il y en a pour tous les goûts*, as little Mamselle used to say, and if any girl can choose the particular sort of conceit she would like, I should think it is you, Rosy.”

“Haughtiness is not conceit; I call Fred conceited.”

“I wish no one said any worse of him. He should be more careful. Mrs. Waule has been telling uncle that Fred is very unsteady.” Mary spoke from a girlish impulse which got the better of her judgment. There was a vague uneasiness associated with the word “unsteady” which she hoped Rosamond might say something to dissipate. But she purposely abstained from mentioning Mrs. Waule’s more special insinuation.

“Oh, Fred is horrid!” said Rosamond. She would not have allowed herself so unsuitable a word to any one but Mary.

“What do you mean by horrid?”

“He is so idle, and makes papa so angry, and says he will not take orders.”

“I think Fred is quite right.”

“How can you say he is quite right, Mary? I thought you had more sense of religion.”

“He is not fit to be a clergyman.”

“But he ought to be fit.”—“Well, then, he is not what he ought to be. I know some other people who are in the same case.”

“But no one approves of them. I should not like to marry a clergyman; but there must be clergymen.”

“It does not follow that Fred must be one.”

“But when papa has been at the expense of educating him for it! And only suppose, if he should have no fortune left him?”

“I can suppose that very well,” said Mary, dryly.

“Then I wonder you can defend Fred,” said Rosamond, inclined to push this point.

“I don’t defend him,” said Mary, laughing; “I would defend any parish from having him for a clergyman.”

“But of course if he were a clergyman, he must be different.”

“Yes, he would be a great hypocrite; and he is not that yet.”

“It is of no use saying anything to you, Mary. You always take Fred’s part.”

“Why should I not take his part?” said Mary, lighting up. “He would take mine. He is the only person who takes the least trouble to oblige me.”

“You make me feel very uncomfortable, Mary,” said Rosamond, with her gravest mildness; “I would not tell mamma for the world.”

“What would you not tell her?” said Mary, angrily.

“Pray do not go into a rage, Mary,” said Rosamond, mildly as ever.

“If your mamma is afraid that Fred will make me an offer, tell her that I would not marry him if he asked me. But he is not going to do so, that I am aware. He certainly never has asked me.”

“Mary, you are always so violent.”

“And you are always so exasperating.”

“I? What can you blame me for?”

“Oh, blameless people are always the most exasperating. There is the bell—I think we must go down.”

“I did not mean to quarrel,” said Rosamond, putting on her hat.

“Quarrel? Nonsense; we have not quarrelled. If one is not to get into a rage sometimes, what is the good of being friends?”

“Am I to repeat what you have said?”

“Just as you please. I never say what I am afraid of having repeated. But let us go down.”

Mr. Lydgate was rather late this morning, but the visitors stayed long enough to see him; for Mr. Featherstone asked Rosamond to sing to him, and she herself was so kind as to propose a second favorite song of his—“Flow on, thou shining river”—after she had sung “Home, sweet home” (which she detested). This hard-headed old Overreach approved of the sentimental song, as the suitable garnish for girls, and also as fundamentally fine, sentiment being the right thing for a song.

Mr. Featherstone was still applauding the last performance, and assuring missy that her voice was as clear as a blackbird’s, when Mr. Lydgate’s horse passed the window.

His dull expectation of the usual disagreeable routine with an aged patient—who can hardly believe that medicine would not “set him up” if the doctor were only clever enough—added to his general disbelief in Middlemarch charms, made a doubly effective background to this vision

of Rosamond, whom old Featherstone made haste ostentatiously to introduce as his niece, though he had never thought it worth while to speak of Mary Garth in that light. Nothing escaped Lydgate in Rosamond's graceful behavior: how delicately she waived the notice which the old man's want of taste had thrust upon her by a quiet gravity, not showing her dimples on the wrong occasion, but showing them afterwards in speaking to Mary, to whom she addressed herself with so much good-natured interest, that Lydgate, after quickly examining Mary more fully than he had done before, saw an adorable kindness in Rosamond's eyes. But Mary from some cause looked rather out of temper.

"Miss Rosy has been singing me a song—you've nothing to say against that, eh, doctor?" said Mr. Featherstone. "I like it better than your physic."

"That has made me forget how the time was going," said Rosamond, rising to reach her hat, which she had laid aside before singing, so that her flower-like head on its white stem was seen in perfection above her riding-habit. "Fred, we must really go."

"Very good," said Fred, who had his own reasons for not being in the best spirits, and wanted to get away.

"Miss Vincy is a musician?" said Lydgate, following her with his eyes. (Every nerve and muscle in Rosamond was adjusted to the consciousness that she was being looked at. She was by nature an actress of parts that entered into her *physique*: she even acted her own character, and so well, that she did not know it to be precisely her own.)

"The best in Middlemarch, I'll be bound," said Mr. Featherstone, "let the next be who she will. Eh, Fred? Speak up for your sister."

"I'm afraid I'm out of court, sir. My evidence would be good for nothing."

"Middlemarch has not a very high standard, uncle," said Rosamond, with a pretty lightness, going towards her whip, which lay at a distance.

Lydgate was quick in anticipating her. He reached the whip before she did, and turned to present it to her. She bowed and looked at him: he of course was looking at her, and their eyes met with that peculiar meeting which is never arrived at by effort, but seems like a sudden divine clearance of haze. I think Lydgate turned a little paler than usual, but Rosamond blushed deeply and felt a certain astonishment. After that, she

was really anxious to go, and did not know what sort of stupidity her uncle was talking of when she went to shake hands with him.

Yet this result, which she took to be a mutual impression, called falling in love, was just what Rosamond had contemplated beforehand. Ever since that important new arrival in Middlemarch she had woven a little future, of which something like this scene was the necessary beginning. Strangers, whether wrecked and clinging to a raft, or duly escorted and accompanied by portmanteaus, have always had a circumstantial fascination for the virgin mind, against which native merit has urged itself in vain. And a stranger was absolutely necessary to Rosamond's social romance, which had always turned on a lover and bridegroom who was not a Middlemarcher, and who had no connections at all like her own: of late, indeed, the construction seemed to demand that he should somehow be related to a baronet. Now that she and the stranger had met, reality proved much more moving than anticipation, and Rosamond could not doubt that this was the great epoch of her life. She judged of her own symptoms as those of awakening love, and she held it still more natural that Mr. Lydgate should have fallen in love at first sight of her. These things happened so often at balls, and why not by the morning light, when the complexion showed all the better for it? Rosamond, though no older than Mary, was rather used to being fallen in love with; but she, for her part, had remained indifferent and fastidiously critical towards both fresh sprig and faded bachelor. And here was Mr. Lydgate suddenly corresponding to her ideal, being altogether foreign to Middlemarch, carrying a certain air of distinction congruous with good family, and possessing connections which offered vistas of that middle-class heaven, rank; a man of talent, also, whom it would be especially delightful to enslave: in fact, a man who had touched her nature quite newly, and brought a vivid interest into her life which was better than any fancied "might-be" such as she was in the habit of opposing to the actual.

Thus, in riding home, both the brother and the sister were preoccupied and inclined to be silent. Rosamond, whose basis for her structure had the usual airy slightness, was of remarkably detailed and realistic imagination when the foundation had been once presupposed; and before they had ridden a mile she was far on in the costume and introductions of her wedded life, having determined on her house in Middlemarch, and foreseen the visits she would pay to her husband's high-bred relatives at a

distance, whose finished manners she could appropriate as thoroughly as she had done her school accomplishments, preparing herself thus for vaguer elevations which might ultimately come. There was nothing financial, still less sordid, in her provisions: she cared about what were considered refinements, and not about the money that was to pay for them.

Fred's mind, on the other hand, was busy with an anxiety which even his ready hopefulness could not immediately quell. He saw no way of eluding Featherstone's stupid demand without incurring consequences which he liked less even than the task of fulfilling it. His father was already out of humor with him, and would be still more so if he were the occasion of any additional coolness between his own family and the Bulstrodes. Then, he himself hated having to go and speak to his uncle Bulstrode, and perhaps after drinking wine he had said many foolish things about Featherstone's property, and these had been magnified by report. Fred felt that he made a wretched figure as a fellow who bragged about expectations from a queer old miser like Featherstone, and went to beg for certificates at his bidding. But—those expectations! He really had them, and he saw no agreeable alternative if he gave them up; besides, he had lately made a debt which galled him extremely, and old Featherstone had almost bargained to pay it off. The whole affair was miserably small: his debts were small, even his expectations were not anything so very magnificent. Fred had known men to whom he would have been ashamed of confessing the smallness of his scrapes. Such ruminations naturally produced a streak of misanthropic bitterness. To be born the son of a Middlemarch manufacturer, and inevitable heir to nothing in particular, while such men as Mainwaring and Vyan—certainly life was a poor business, when a spirited young fellow, with a good appetite for the best of everything, had so poor an outlook.

It had not occurred to Fred that the introduction of Bulstrode's name in the matter was a fiction of old Featherstone's; nor could this have made any difference to his position. He saw plainly enough that the old man wanted to exercise his power by tormenting him a little, and also probably to get some satisfaction out of seeing him on unpleasant terms with Bulstrode. Fred fancied that he saw to the bottom of his uncle Featherstone's soul, though in reality half what he saw there was no more than the reflex of his own inclinations. The difficult task of knowing another soul is not for young gentlemen whose consciousness is chiefly made up of their own wishes.

Fred's main point of debate with himself was, whether he should tell his father, or try to get through the affair without his father's knowledge. It was probably Mrs. Waule who had been talking about him; and if Mary Garth had repeated Mrs. Waule's report to Rosamond, it would be sure to reach his father, who would as surely question him about it. He said to Rosamond, as they slackened their pace—

“Rosy, did Mary tell you that Mrs. Waule had said anything about me?”

“Yes, indeed, she did.”

“What?”

“That you were very unsteady.”

“Was that all?”

“I should think that was enough, Fred.”

“You are sure she said no more?”

“Mary mentioned nothing else. But really, Fred, I think you ought to be ashamed.”

“Oh, fudge! Don't lecture me. What did Mary say about it?”

“I am not obliged to tell you. You care so very much what Mary says, and you are too rude to allow me to speak.”

“Of course I care what Mary says. She is the best girl I know.”

“I should never have thought she was a girl to fall in love with.”

“How do you know what men would fall in love with? Girls never know.”

“At least, Fred, let me advise *you* not to fall in love with her, for she says she would not marry you if you asked her.”

“She might have waited till I did ask her.”

“I knew it would nettle you, Fred.”

“Not at all. She would not have said so if you had not provoked her.”  
Before reaching home, Fred concluded that he would tell the whole affair as simply as possible to his father, who might perhaps take on himself the unpleasant business of speaking to Bulstrode.

BOOK II.  
OLD AND YOUNG.



## CHAPTER XIII.

*1st Gent.* How class your man?—as better than the most,  
Or, seeming better, worse beneath that cloak?  
As saint or knave, pilgrim or hypocrite?

*2d Gent.* Nay, tell me how you class your wealth of books  
The drifted relics of all time.  
As well sort them at once by size and livery:  
Vellum, tall copies, and the common calf  
Will hardly cover more diversity  
Than all your labels cunningly devised  
To class your unread authors.

In consequence of what he had heard from Fred, Mr. Vincy determined to speak with Mr. Bulstrode in his private room at the Bank at half-past one, when he was usually free from other callers. But a visitor had come in at one o'clock, and Mr. Bulstrode had so much to say to him, that there was little chance of the interview being over in half an hour. The banker's speech was fluent, but it was also copious, and he used up an appreciable amount of time in brief meditative pauses. Do not imagine his sickly aspect to have been of the yellow, black-haired sort: he had a pale blond skin, thin gray-besprinkled brown hair, light-gray eyes, and a large forehead. Loud men called his subdued tone an undertone, and sometimes implied that it was inconsistent with openness; though there seems to be no reason why a loud man should not be given to concealment of anything except his own voice, unless it can be shown that Holy Writ has placed the seat of candor in the lungs. Mr. Bulstrode had also a deferential bending attitude in listening, and an apparently fixed attentiveness in his eyes which made those persons who thought themselves worth hearing infer that he was seeking the utmost improvement from their discourse. Others, who expected to make no great figure, disliked this kind of moral lantern turned on them. If you are not proud of your cellar, there is no thrill of satisfaction in seeing your guest hold up his wine-glass to the light and look judicial. Such joys are reserved for conscious merit. Hence Mr. Bulstrode's close attention was not agreeable to the publicans and sinners

in Middlemarch; it was attributed by some to his being a Pharisee, and by others to his being Evangelical. Less superficial reasoners among them wished to know who his father and grandfather were, observing that five-and-twenty years ago nobody had ever heard of a Bulstrode in Middlemarch. To his present visitor, Lydgate, the scrutinizing look was a matter of indifference: he simply formed an unfavorable opinion of the banker's constitution, and concluded that he had an eager inward life with little enjoyment of tangible things.

"I shall be exceedingly obliged if you will look in on me here occasionally, Mr. Lydgate," the banker observed, after a brief pause. "If, as I dare to hope, I have the privilege of finding you a valuable coadjutor in the interesting matter of hospital management, there will be many questions which we shall need to discuss in private. As to the new hospital, which is nearly finished, I shall consider what you have said about the advantages of the special destination for fevers. The decision will rest with me, for though Lord Medlicote has given the land and timber for the building, he is not disposed to give his personal attention to the object."

"There are few things better worth the pains in a provincial town like this," said Lydgate. "A fine fever hospital in addition to the old infirmary might be the nucleus of a medical school here, when once we get our medical reforms; and what would do more for medical education than the spread of such schools over the country? A born provincial man who has a grain of public spirit as well as a few ideas, should do what he can to resist the rush of everything that is a little better than common towards London. Any valid professional aims may often find a freer, if not a richer field, in the provinces."

One of Lydgate's gifts was a voice habitually deep and sonorous, yet capable of becoming very low and gentle at the right moment. About his ordinary bearing there was a certain fling, a fearless expectation of success, a confidence in his own powers and integrity much fortified by contempt for petty obstacles or seductions of which he had had no experience. But this proud openness was made lovable by an expression of unaffected good-will. Mr. Bulstrode perhaps liked him the better for the difference between them in pitch and manners; he certainly liked him the better, as Rosamond did, for being a stranger in Middlemarch. One can begin so many things with a new person!—even begin to be a better man.

“I shall rejoice to furnish your zeal with fuller opportunities,” Mr. Bulstrode answered; “I mean, by confiding to you the superintendence of my new hospital, should a maturer knowledge favor that issue, for I am determined that so great an object shall not be shackled by our two physicians. Indeed, I am encouraged to consider your advent to this town as a gracious indication that a more manifest blessing is now to be awarded to my efforts, which have hitherto been much withstood. With regard to the old infirmary, we have gained the initial point—I mean your election. And now I hope you will not shrink from incurring a certain amount of jealousy and dislike from your professional brethren by presenting yourself as a reformer.”

“I will not profess bravery,” said Lydgate, smiling, “but I acknowledge a good deal of pleasure in fighting, and I should not care for my profession, if I did not believe that better methods were to be found and enforced there as well as everywhere else.”

“The standard of that profession is low in Middlemarch, my dear sir,” said the banker. “I mean in knowledge and skill; not in social status, for our medical men are most of them connected with respectable townspeople here. My own imperfect health has induced me to give some attention to those palliative resources which the divine mercy has placed within our reach. I have consulted eminent men in the metropolis, and I am painfully aware of the backwardness under which medical treatment labors in our provincial districts.”

“Yes;—with our present medical rules and education, one must be satisfied now and then to meet with a fair practitioner. As to all the higher questions which determine the starting-point of a diagnosis—as to the philosophy of medical evidence—any glimmering of these can only come from a scientific culture of which country practitioners have usually no more notion than the man in the moon.”

Mr. Bulstrode, bending and looking intently, found the form which Lydgate had given to his agreement not quite suited to his comprehension. Under such circumstances a judicious man changes the topic and enters on ground where his own gifts may be more useful.

“I am aware,” he said, “that the peculiar bias of medical ability is towards material means. Nevertheless, Mr. Lydgate, I hope we shall not vary in sentiment as to a measure in which you are not likely to be actively

concerned, but in which your sympathetic concurrence may be an aid to me. You recognize, I hope; the existence of spiritual interests in your patients?"

"Certainly I do. But those words are apt to cover different meanings to different minds."

"Precisely. And on such subjects wrong teaching is as fatal as no teaching. Now a point which I have much at heart to secure is a new regulation as to clerical attendance at the old infirmary. The building stands in Mr. Farebrother's parish. You know Mr. Farebrother?"

"I have seen him. He gave me his vote. I must call to thank him. He seems a very bright pleasant little fellow. And I understand he is a naturalist."

"Mr. Farebrother, my dear sir, is a man deeply painful to contemplate. I suppose there is not a clergyman in this country who has greater talents." Mr. Bulstrode paused and looked meditative.

"I have not yet been pained by finding any excessive talent in Middlemarch," said Lydgate, bluntly.

"What I desire," Mr. Bulstrode continued, looking still more serious, "is that Mr. Farebrother's attendance at the hospital should be superseded by the appointment of a chaplain—of Mr. Tyke, in fact—and that no other spiritual aid should be called in."

"As a medical man I could have no opinion on such a point unless I knew Mr. Tyke, and even then I should require to know the cases in which he was applied." Lydgate smiled, but he was bent on being circumspect.

"Of course you cannot enter fully into the merits of this measure at present. But"—here Mr. Bulstrode began to speak with a more chiselled emphasis—"the subject is likely to be referred to the medical board of the infirmary, and what I trust I may ask of you is, that in virtue of the cooperation between us which I now look forward to, you will not, so far as you are concerned, be influenced by my opponents in this matter."

"I hope I shall have nothing to do with clerical disputes," said Lydgate. "The path I have chosen is to work well in my own profession."

"My responsibility, Mr. Lydgate, is of a broader kind. With me, indeed, this question is one of sacred accountableness; whereas with my opponents, I have good reason to say that it is an occasion for gratifying a

spirit of worldly opposition. But I shall not therefore drop one iota of my convictions, or cease to identify myself with that truth which an evil generation hates. I have devoted myself to this object of hospital-improvement, but I will boldly confess to you, Mr. Lydgate, that I should have no interest in hospitals if I believed that nothing more was concerned therein than the cure of mortal diseases. I have another ground of action, and in the face of persecution I will not conceal it.”

Mr. Bulstrode’s voice had become a loud and agitated whisper as he said the last words.

“There we certainly differ,” said Lydgate. But he was not sorry that the door was now opened, and Mr. Vincy was announced. That florid sociable personage was become more interesting to him since he had seen Rosamond. Not that, like her, he had been weaving any future in which their lots were united; but a man naturally remembers a charming girl with pleasure, and is willing to dine where he may see her again. Before he took leave, Mr. Vincy had given that invitation which he had been “in no hurry about,” for Rosamond at breakfast had mentioned that she thought her uncle Featherstone had taken the new doctor into great favor.

Mr. Bulstrode, alone with his brother-in-law, poured himself out a glass of water, and opened a sandwich-box.

“I cannot persuade you to adopt my regimen, Vincy?”

“No, no; I’ve no opinion of that system. Life wants padding,” said Mr. Vincy, unable to omit his portable theory. “However,” he went on, accenting the word, as if to dismiss all irrelevance, “what I came here to talk about was a little affair of my young scapegrace, Fred’s.”

“That is a subject on which you and I are likely to take quite as different views as on diet, Vincy.”

“I hope not this time.” (Mr. Vincy was resolved to be good-humored.) “The fact is, it’s about a whim of old Featherstone’s. Somebody has been cooking up a story out of spite, and telling it to the old man, to try to set him against Fred. He’s very fond of Fred, and is likely to do something handsome for him; indeed he has as good as told Fred that he means to leave him his land, and that makes other people jealous.”

“Vincy, I must repeat, that you will not get any concurrence from me as to the course you have pursued with your eldest son. It was entirely from

worldly vanity that you destined him for the Church: with a family of three sons and four daughters, you were not warranted in devoting money to an expensive education which has succeeded in nothing but in giving him extravagant idle habits. You are now reaping the consequences.”

To point out other people’s errors was a duty that Mr. Bulstrode rarely shrank from, but Mr. Vincy was not equally prepared to be patient. When a man has the immediate prospect of being mayor, and is ready, in the interests of commerce, to take up a firm attitude on politics generally, he has naturally a sense of his importance to the framework of things which seems to throw questions of private conduct into the background. And this particular reproof irritated him more than any other. It was eminently superfluous to him to be told that he was reaping the consequences. But he felt his neck under Bulstrode’s yoke; and though he usually enjoyed kicking, he was anxious to refrain from that relief.

“As to that, Bulstrode, it’s no use going back. I’m not one of your pattern men, and I don’t pretend to be. I couldn’t foresee everything in the trade; there wasn’t a finer business in Middlemarch than ours, and the lad was clever. My poor brother was in the Church, and would have done well—had got preferment already, but that stomach fever took him off: else he might have been a dean by this time. I think I was justified in what I tried to do for Fred. If you come to religion, it seems to me a man shouldn’t want to carve out his meat to an ounce beforehand:—one must trust a little to Providence and be generous. It’s a good British feeling to try and raise your family a little: in my opinion, it’s a father’s duty to give his sons a fine chance.”

“I don’t wish to act otherwise than as your best friend, Vincy, when I say that what you have been uttering just now is one mass of worldliness and inconsistent folly.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Vincy, kicking in spite of resolutions, “I never professed to be anything but worldly; and, what’s more, I don’t see anybody else who is not worldly. I suppose you don’t conduct business on what you call unworldly principles. The only difference I see is that one worldliness is a little bit honester than another.”

“This kind of discussion is unfruitful, Vincy,” said Mr. Bulstrode, who, finishing his sandwich, had thrown himself back in his chair, and shaded his eyes as if weary. “You had some more particular business.”

“Yes, yes. The long and short of it is, somebody has told old Featherstone, giving you as the authority, that Fred has been borrowing or trying to borrow money on the prospect of his land. Of course you never said any such nonsense. But the old fellow will insist on it that Fred should bring him a denial in your handwriting; that is, just a bit of a note saying you don’t believe a word of such stuff, either of his having borrowed or tried to borrow in such a fool’s way. I suppose you can have no objection to do that.”

“Pardon me. I have an objection. I am by no means sure that your son, in his recklessness and ignorance—I will use no severer word—has not tried to raise money by holding out his future prospects, or even that some one may not have been foolish enough to supply him on so vague a presumption: there is plenty of such lax money-lending as of other folly in the world.”

“But Fred gives me his honor that he has never borrowed money on the pretence of any understanding about his uncle’s land. He is not a liar. I don’t want to make him better than he is. I have blown him up well—nobody can say I wink at what he does. But he is not a liar. And I should have thought—but I may be wrong—that there was no religion to hinder a man from believing the best of a young fellow, when you don’t know worse. It seems to me it would be a poor sort of religion to put a spoke in his wheel by refusing to say you don’t believe such harm of him as you’ve got no good reason to believe.”

“I am not at all sure that I should be befriending your son by smoothing his way to the future possession of Featherstone’s property. I cannot regard wealth as a blessing to those who use it simply as a harvest for this world. You do not like to hear these things, Vincy, but on this occasion I feel called upon to tell you that I have no motive for furthering such a disposition of property as that which you refer to. I do not shrink from saying that it will not tend to your son’s eternal welfare or to the glory of God. Why then should you expect me to pen this kind of affidavit, which has no object but to keep up a foolish partiality and secure a foolish bequest?”

“If you mean to hinder everybody from having money but saints and evangelists, you must give up some profitable partnerships, that’s all I can say,” Mr. Vincy burst out very bluntly. “It may be for the glory of God, but

it is not for the glory of the Middlemarch trade, that Plymdale's house uses those blue and green dyes it gets from the Brassing manufactory; they rot the silk, that's all I know about it. Perhaps if other people knew so much of the profit went to the glory of God, they might like it better. But I don't mind so much about that—I could get up a pretty row, if I chose."

Mr. Bulstrode paused a little before he answered. "You pain me very much by speaking in this way, Vincy. I do not expect you to understand my grounds of action—it is not an easy thing even to thread a path for principles in the intricacies of the world—still less to make the thread clear for the careless and the scoffing. You must remember, if you please, that I stretch my tolerance towards you as my wife's brother, and that it little becomes you to complain of me as withholding material help towards the worldly position of your family. I must remind you that it is not your own prudence or judgment that has enabled you to keep your place in the trade."

"Very likely not; but you have been no loser by my trade yet," said Mr. Vincy, thoroughly nettled (a result which was seldom much retarded by previous resolutions). "And when you married Harriet, I don't see how you could expect that our families should not hang by the same nail. If you've changed your mind, and want my family to come down in the world, you'd better say so. I've never changed; I'm a plain Churchman now, just as I used to be before doctrines came up. I take the world as I find it, in trade and everything else. I'm contented to be no worse than my neighbors. But if you want us to come down in the world, say so. I shall know better what to do then."

"You talk unreasonably. Shall you come down in the world for want of this letter about your son?"

"Well, whether or not, I consider it very unhandsome of you to refuse it. Such doings may be lined with religion, but outside they have a nasty, dog-in-the-manger look. You might as well slander Fred: it comes pretty near to it when you refuse to say you didn't set a slander going. It's this sort of thing—this tyrannical spirit, wanting to play bishop and banker everywhere—it's this sort of thing makes a man's name stink."

"Vincy, if you insist on quarrelling with me, it will be exceedingly painful to Harriet as well as myself," said Mr. Bulstrode, with a trifle more eagerness and paleness than usual.



“I don’t want to quarrel. It’s for my interest—and perhaps for yours too—that we should be friends. I bear you no grudge; I think no worse of you than I do of other people. A man who half starves himself, and goes the length in family prayers, and so on, that you do, believes in his religion whatever it may be: you could turn over your capital just as fast with cursing and swearing:—plenty of fellows do. You like to be master, there’s no denying that; you must be first chop in heaven, else you won’t like it much. But you’re my sister’s husband, and we ought to stick together; and if I know Harriet, she’ll consider it your fault if we quarrel because you strain at a gnat in this way, and refuse to do Fred a good turn. And I don’t mean to say I shall bear it well. I consider it unhandsome.”

Mr. Vincy rose, began to button his great-coat, and looked steadily at his brother-in-law, meaning to imply a demand for a decisive answer.

This was not the first time that Mr. Bulstrode had begun by admonishing Mr. Vincy, and had ended by seeing a very unsatisfactory reflection of himself in the coarse unflattering mirror which that manufacturer’s mind presented to the subtler lights and shadows of his fellow-men; and perhaps his experience ought to have warned him how the scene would end. But a full-fed fountain will be generous with its waters even in the rain, when they are worse than useless; and a fine fount of admonition is apt to be equally irrepressible.

It was not in Mr. Bulstrode’s nature to comply directly in consequence of uncomfortable suggestions. Before changing his course, he always needed to shape his motives and bring them into accord with his habitual standard. He said, at last—

“I will reflect a little, Vincy. I will mention the subject to Harriet. I shall probably send you a letter.”

“Very well. As soon as you can, please. I hope it will all be settled before I see you to-morrow.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

“Follows here the strict receipt  
For that sauce to dainty meat,  
Named Idleness, which many eat  
By preference, and call it sweet:  
*First watch for morsels, like a hound  
Mix well with buffets, stir them round  
With good thick oil of flatteries, And froth with mean self-lauding lies.  
Serve warm: the vessels you must choose  
To keep it in are dead men’s shoes.*”

Mr. Bulstrode’s consultation of Harriet seemed to have had the effect desired by Mr. Vincy, for early the next morning a letter came which Fred could carry to Mr. Featherstone as the required testimony.

The old gentleman was staying in bed on account of the cold weather, and as Mary Garth was not to be seen in the sitting-room, Fred went upstairs immediately and presented the letter to his uncle, who, propped up comfortably on a bed-rest, was not less able than usual to enjoy his consciousness of wisdom in distrusting and frustrating mankind. He put on his spectacles to read the letter, pursing up his lips and drawing down their corners.

“*Under the circumstances I will not decline to state my conviction—tchah! what fine words the fellow puts! He’s as fine as an auctioneer—that your son Frederic has not obtained any advance of money on bequests promised by Mr. Featherstone—promised? who said I had ever promised? I promise nothing—I shall make codicils as long as I like—and that considering the nature of such a proceeding, it is unreasonable to presume that a young man of sense and character would attempt it—ah, but the gentleman doesn’t say you are a young man of sense and character, mark you that, sir!—As to my own concern with any report of such a nature, I distinctly affirm that I never made any statement to the effect that your son had borrowed money on any property that might accrue to him on Mr. Featherstone’s demise—bless my heart! ‘property’—accrue—demise! Lawyer Standish is nothing to him. He couldn’t speak finer if he wanted to*

borrow. Well,” Mr. Featherstone here looked over his spectacles at Fred, while he handed back the letter to him with a contemptuous gesture, “you don’t suppose I believe a thing because Bulstrode writes it out fine, eh?”

Fred colored. “You wished to have the letter, sir. I should think it very likely that Mr. Bulstrode’s denial is as good as the authority which told you what he denies.”

“Every bit. I never said I believed either one or the other. And now what d’ you expect?” said Mr. Featherstone, curtly, keeping on his spectacles, but withdrawing his hands under his wraps.

“I expect nothing, sir.” Fred with difficulty restrained himself from venting his irritation. “I came to bring you the letter. If you like I will bid you good morning.”

“Not yet, not yet. Ring the bell; I want missy to come.”

It was a servant who came in answer to the bell.

“Tell missy to come!” said Mr. Featherstone, impatiently. “What business had she to go away?” He spoke in the same tone when Mary came.

“Why couldn’t you sit still here till I told you to go? I want my waistcoat now. I told you always to put it on the bed.”

Mary’s eyes looked rather red, as if she had been crying. It was clear that Mr. Featherstone was in one of his most snappish humors this morning, and though Fred had now the prospect of receiving the much-needed present of money, he would have preferred being free to turn round on the old tyrant and tell him that Mary Garth was too good to be at his beck. Though Fred had risen as she entered the room, she had barely noticed him, and looked as if her nerves were quivering with the expectation that something would be thrown at her. But she never had anything worse than words to dread. When she went to reach the waistcoat from a peg, Fred went up to her and said, “Allow me.”

“Let it alone! You bring it, missy, and lay it down here,” said Mr. Featherstone. “Now you go away again till I call you,” he added, when the waistcoat was laid down by him. It was usual with him to season his pleasure in showing favor to one person by being especially disagreeable to another, and Mary was always at hand to furnish the condiment. When his own relatives came she was treated better. Slowly he took out a bunch

of keys from the waistcoat pocket, and slowly he drew forth a tin box which was under the bed-clothes.

“You expect I am going to give you a little fortune, eh?” he said, looking above his spectacles and pausing in the act of opening the lid.

“Not at all, sir. You were good enough to speak of making me a present the other day, else, of course, I should not have thought of the matter.” But Fred was of a hopeful disposition, and a vision had presented itself of a sum just large enough to deliver him from a certain anxiety. When Fred got into debt, it always seemed to him highly probable that something or other—he did not necessarily conceive what—would come to pass enabling him to pay in due time. And now that the providential occurrence was apparently close at hand, it would have been sheer absurdity to think that the supply would be short of the need: as absurd as a faith that believed in half a miracle for want of strength to believe in a whole one.

The deep-veined hands fingered many bank-notes one after the other, laying them down flat again, while Fred leaned back in his chair, scorning to look eager. He held himself to be a gentleman at heart, and did not like courting an old fellow for his money. At last, Mr. Featherstone eyed him again over his spectacles and presented him with a little sheaf of notes: Fred could see distinctly that there were but five, as the less significant edges gaped towards him. But then, each might mean fifty pounds. He took them, saying—

“I am very much obliged to you, sir,” and was going to roll them up without seeming to think of their value. But this did not suit Mr. Featherstone, who was eying him intently.

“Come, don’t you think it worth your while to count ’em? You take money like a lord; I suppose you lose it like one.”

“I thought I was not to look a gift-horse in the mouth, sir. But I shall be very happy to count them.”

Fred was not so happy, however, after he had counted them. For they actually presented the absurdity of being less than his hopefulness had decided that they must be. What can the fitness of things mean, if not their fitness to a man’s expectations? Failing this, absurdity and atheism gape behind him. The collapse for Fred was severe when he found that he held no more than five twenties, and his share in the higher education of this

country did not seem to help him. Nevertheless he said, with rapid changes in his fair complexion—

“It is very handsome of you, sir.”

“I should think it is,” said Mr. Featherstone, locking his box and replacing it, then taking off his spectacles deliberately, and at length, as if his inward meditation had more deeply convinced him, repeating, “I should think it handsome.”

“I assure you, sir, I am very grateful,” said Fred, who had had time to recover his cheerful air.

“So you ought to be. You want to cut a figure in the world, and I reckon Peter Featherstone is the only one you’ve got to trust to.” Here the old man’s eyes gleamed with a curiously mingled satisfaction in the consciousness that this smart young fellow relied upon him, and that the smart young fellow was rather a fool for doing so.

“Yes, indeed: I was not born to very splendid chances. Few men have been more cramped than I have been,” said Fred, with some sense of surprise at his own virtue, considering how hardly he was dealt with. “It really seems a little too bad to have to ride a broken-winded hunter, and see men, who, are not half such good judges as yourself, able to throw away any amount of money on buying bad bargains.”

“Well, you can buy yourself a fine hunter now. Eighty pound is enough for that, I reckon—and you’ll have twenty pound over to get yourself out of any little scrape,” said Mr. Featherstone, chuckling slightly.

“You are very good, sir,” said Fred, with a fine sense of contrast between the words and his feeling.

“Ay, rather a better uncle than your fine uncle Bulstrode. You won’t get much out of his spekulations, I think. He’s got a pretty strong string round your father’s leg, by what I hear, eh?”

“My father never tells me anything about his affairs, sir.”

“Well, he shows some sense there. But other people find ’em out without his telling. *He’ll* never have much to leave you: he’ll most-like die without a will—he’s the sort of man to do it—let ’em make him mayor of Middlemarch as much as they like. But you won’t get much by his dying without a will, though you *are* the eldest son.”

Fred thought that Mr. Featherstone had never been so disagreeable before. True, he had never before given him quite so much money at once.

“Shall I destroy this letter of Mr. Bulstrode’s, sir?” said Fred, rising with the letter as if he would put it in the fire.

“Ay, ay, I don’t want it. It’s worth no money to me.”

Fred carried the letter to the fire, and thrust the poker through it with much zest. He longed to get out of the room, but he was a little ashamed before his inner self, as well as before his uncle, to run away immediately after pocketing the money. Presently, the farm-bailiff came up to give his master a report, and Fred, to his unspeakable relief, was dismissed with the injunction to come again soon.

He had longed not only to be set free from his uncle, but also to find Mary Garth. She was now in her usual place by the fire, with sewing in her hands and a book open on the little table by her side. Her eyelids had lost some of their redness now, and she had her usual air of self-command.

“Am I wanted up-stairs?” she said, half rising as Fred entered.

“No; I am only dismissed, because Simmons is gone up.”

Mary sat down again, and resumed her work. She was certainly treating him with more indifference than usual: she did not know how affectionately indignant he had felt on her behalf up-stairs.

“May I stay here a little, Mary, or shall I bore you?”

“Pray sit down,” said Mary; “you will not be so heavy a bore as Mr. John Waule, who was here yesterday, and he sat down without asking my leave.”

“Poor fellow! I think he is in love with you.”

“I am not aware of it. And to me it is one of the most odious things in a girl’s life, that there must always be some supposition of falling in love coming between her and any man who is kind to her, and to whom she is grateful. I should have thought that I, at least, might have been safe from all that. I have no ground for the nonsensical vanity of fancying everybody who comes near me is in love with me.”

Mary did not mean to betray any feeling, but in spite of herself she ended in a tremulous tone of vexation.

“Confound John Waule! I did not mean to make you angry. I didn’t know you had any reason for being grateful to me. I forgot what a great service you think it if any one snuffs a candle for you.” Fred also had his pride, and was not going to show that he knew what had called forth this outburst of Mary’s.

“Oh, I am not angry, except with the ways of the world. I do like to be spoken to as if I had common-sense. I really often feel as if I could understand a little more than I ever hear even from young gentlemen who have been to college.” Mary had recovered, and she spoke with a suppressed rippling under-current of laughter pleasant to hear.

“I don’t care how merry you are at my expense this morning,” said Fred, “I thought you looked so sad when you came up-stairs. It is a shame you should stay here to be bullied in that way.”

“Oh, I have an easy life—by comparison. I have tried being a teacher, and I am not fit for that: my mind is too fond of wandering on its own way. I think any hardship is better than pretending to do what one is paid for, and never really doing it. Everything here I can do as well as any one else could; perhaps better than some—Rosy, for example. Though she is just the sort of beautiful creature that is imprisoned with ogres in fairy tales.”

“*Rosy!*” cried Fred, in a tone of profound brotherly scepticism.

“Come, Fred!” said Mary, emphatically; “you have no right to be so critical.”

“Do you mean anything particular—just now?”

“No, I mean something general—always.”

“Oh, that I am idle and extravagant. Well, I am not fit to be a poor man. I should not have made a bad fellow if I had been rich.”

“You would have done your duty in that state of life to which it has not pleased God to call you,” said Mary, laughing.

“Well, I couldn’t do my duty as a clergyman, any more than you could do yours as a governess. You ought to have a little fellow-feeling there, Mary.”

“I never said you ought to be a clergyman. There are other sorts of work. It seems to me very miserable not to resolve on some course and act accordingly.”

“So I could, if—” Fred broke off, and stood up, leaning against the mantel-piece.

“If you were sure you should not have a fortune?”

“I did not say that. You want to quarrel with me. It is too bad of you to be guided by what other people say about me.”

“How can I want to quarrel with you? I should be quarrelling with all my new books,” said Mary, lifting the volume on the table. “However naughty you may be to other people, you are good to me.”

“Because I like you better than any one else. But I know you despise me.”

“Yes, I do—a little,” said Mary, nodding, with a smile.

“You would admire a stupendous fellow, who would have wise opinions about everything.”

“Yes, I should.” Mary was sewing swiftly, and seemed provokingly mistress of the situation. When a conversation has taken a wrong turn for us, we only get farther and farther into the swamp of awkwardness. This was what Fred Vincy felt.

“I suppose a woman is never in love with any one she has always known—ever since she can remember; as a man often is. It is always some new fellow who strikes a girl.”

“Let me see,” said Mary, the corners of her mouth curling archly; “I must go back on my experience. There is Juliet—she seems an example of what you say. But then Ophelia had probably known Hamlet a long while; and Brenda Troil—she had known Mordaunt Merton ever since they were children; but then he seems to have been an estimable young man; and Minna was still more deeply in love with Cleveland, who was a stranger. Waverley was new to Flora MacIvor; but then she did not fall in love with him. And there are Olivia and Sophia Primrose, and Corinne—they may be said to have fallen in love with new men. Altogether, my experience is rather mixed.”

Mary looked up with some roguishness at Fred, and that look of hers was very dear to him, though the eyes were nothing more than clear windows where observation sat laughingly. He was certainly an affectionate fellow, and as he had grown from boy to man, he had grown in



love with his old playmate, notwithstanding that share in the higher education of the country which had exalted his views of rank and income.

“When a man is not loved, it is no use for him to say that he could be a better fellow—could do anything—I mean, if he were sure of being loved in return.”

“Not of the least use in the world for him to say he *could* be better. Might, could, would—they are contemptible auxiliaries.”

“I don’t see how a man is to be good for much unless he has some one woman to love him dearly.”

“I think the goodness should come before he expects that.”

“You know better, Mary. Women don’t love men for their goodness.”

“Perhaps not. But if they love them, they never think them bad.”

“It is hardly fair to say I am bad.”

“I said nothing at all about you.”

“I never shall be good for anything, Mary, if you will not say that you love me—if you will not promise to marry me—I mean, when I am able to marry.”

“If I did love you, I would not marry you: I would certainly not promise ever to marry you.”

“I think that is quite wicked, Mary. If you love me, you ought to promise to marry me.”

“On the contrary, I think it would be wicked in me to marry you even if I did love you.”

“You mean, just as I am, without any means of maintaining a wife. Of course: I am but three-and-twenty.”

“In that last point you will alter. But I am not so sure of any other alteration. My father says an idle man ought not to exist, much less, be married.”

“Then I am to blow my brains out?”

“No; on the whole I should think you would do better to pass your examination. I have heard Mr. Farebrother say it is disgracefully easy.”

“That is all very fine. Anything is easy to him. Not that cleverness has anything to do with it. I am ten times cleverer than many men who pass.”

“Dear me!” said Mary, unable to repress her sarcasm; “that accounts for the curates like Mr. Crowse. Divide your cleverness by ten, and the quotient—dear me!—is able to take a degree. But that only shows you are ten times more idle than the others.”

“Well, if I did pass, you would not want me to go into the Church?”

“That is not the question—what I want you to do. You have a conscience of your own, I suppose. There! there is Mr. Lydgate. I must go and tell my uncle.”

“Mary,” said Fred, seizing her hand as she rose; “if you will not give me some encouragement, I shall get worse instead of better.”

“I will not give you any encouragement,” said Mary, reddening. “Your friends would dislike it, and so would mine. My father would think it a disgrace to me if I accepted a man who got into debt, and would not work!”

Fred was stung, and released her hand. She walked to the door, but there she turned and said: “Fred, you have always been so good, so generous to me. I am not ungrateful. But never speak to me in that way again.”

“Very well,” said Fred, sulkily, taking up his hat and whip. His complexion showed patches of pale pink and dead white. Like many a plucked idle young gentleman, he was thoroughly in love, and with a plain girl, who had no money! But having Mr. Featherstone’s land in the background, and a persuasion that, let Mary say what she would, she really did care for him, Fred was not utterly in despair.

When he got home, he gave four of the twenties to his mother, asking her to keep them for him. “I don’t want to spend that money, mother. I want it to pay a debt with. So keep it safe away from my fingers.”

“Bless you, my dear,” said Mrs. Vincy. She doted on her eldest son and her youngest girl (a child of six), whom others thought her two naughtiest children. The mother’s eyes are not always deceived in their partiality: she at least can best judge who is the tender, filial-hearted child. And Fred was certainly very fond of his mother. Perhaps it was his fondness for another person also that made him particularly anxious to take some security against his own liability to spend the hundred pounds. For the creditor to whom he owed a hundred and sixty held a firmer security in the shape of a bill signed by Mary’s father.

## CHAPTER XV.

“Black eyes you have left, you say,  
Blue eyes fail to draw you;  
Yet you seem more rapt to-day,  
Than of old we saw you.

“Oh, I track the fairest fair  
Through new haunts of pleasure;  
Footprints here and echoes there  
Guide me to my treasure:

“Lo! she turns—immortal youth  
Wrought to mortal stature,  
Fresh as starlight’s aged truth—  
Many-named Nature!”

A great historian, as he insisted on calling himself, who had the happiness to be dead a hundred and twenty years ago, and so to take his place among the colossi whose huge legs our living pettiness is observed to walk under, glories in his copious remarks and digressions as the least imitable part of his work, and especially in those initial chapters to the successive books of his history, where he seems to bring his armchair to the proscenium and chat with us in all the lusty ease of his fine English. But Fielding lived when the days were longer (for time, like money, is measured by our needs), when summer afternoons were spacious, and the clock ticked slowly in the winter evenings. We belated historians must not linger after his example; and if we did so, it is probable that our chat would be thin and eager, as if delivered from a campstool in a parrot-house. I at least have so much to do in unraveling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe.

At present I have to make the new settler Lydgate better known to any one interested in him than he could possibly be even to those who had seen the most of him since his arrival in Middlemarch. For surely all must

admit that a man may be puffed and belauded, envied, ridiculed, counted upon as a tool and fallen in love with, or at least selected as a future husband, and yet remain virtually unknown—known merely as a cluster of signs for his neighbors' false suppositions. There was a general impression, however, that Lydgate was not altogether a common country doctor, and in Middlemarch at that time such an impression was significant of great things being expected from him. For everybody's family doctor was remarkably clever, and was understood to have immeasurable skill in the management and training of the most skittish or vicious diseases. The evidence of his cleverness was of the higher intuitive order, lying in his lady-patients' immovable conviction, and was unassailable by any objection except that their intuitions were opposed by others equally strong; each lady who saw medical truth in Wrench and "the strengthening treatment" regarding Toller and "the lowering system" as medical perdition. For the heroic times of copious bleeding and blistering had not yet departed, still less the times of thorough-going theory, when disease in general was called by some bad name, and treated accordingly without shilly-shally—as if, for example, it were to be called insurrection, which must not be fired on with blank-cartridge, but have its blood drawn at once. The strengtheners and the lowerers were all "clever" men in somebody's opinion, which is really as much as can be said for any living talents. Nobody's imagination had gone so far as to conjecture that Mr. Lydgate could know as much as Dr. Sprague and Dr. Minchin, the two physicians, who alone could offer any hope when danger was extreme, and when the smallest hope was worth a guinea. Still, I repeat, there was a general impression that Lydgate was something rather more uncommon than any general practitioner in Middlemarch. And this was true. He was but seven-and-twenty, an age at which many men are not quite common—at which they are hopeful of achievement, resolute in avoidance, thinking that Mammon shall never put a bit in their mouths and get astride their backs, but rather that Mammon, if they have anything to do with him, shall draw their chariot.

He had been left an orphan when he was fresh from a public school. His father, a military man, had made but little provision for three children, and when the boy Tertius asked to have a medical education, it seemed easier to his guardians to grant his request by apprenticing him to a country practitioner than to make any objections on the score of family dignity. He

was one of the rarer lads who early get a decided bent and make up their minds that there is something particular in life which they would like to do for its own sake, and not because their fathers did it. Most of us who turn to any subject with love remember some morning or evening hour when we got on a high stool to reach down an untried volume, or sat with parted lips listening to a new talker, or for very lack of books began to listen to the voices within, as the first traceable beginning of our love. Something of that sort happened to Lydgate. He was a quick fellow, and when hot from play, would toss himself in a corner, and in five minutes be deep in any sort of book that he could lay his hands on: if it were *Rasselas* or *Gulliver*, so much the better, but *Bailey's Dictionary* would do, or the Bible with the Apocrypha in it. Something he must read, when he was not riding the pony, or running and hunting, or listening to the talk of men. All this was true of him at ten years of age; he had then read through "*Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea*," which was neither milk for babes, nor any chalky mixture meant to pass for milk, and it had already occurred to him that books were stuff, and that life was stupid. His school studies had not much modified that opinion, for though he "did" his classics and mathematics, he was not pre-eminent in them. It was said of him, that Lydgate could do anything he liked, but he had certainly not yet liked to do anything remarkable. He was a vigorous animal with a ready understanding, but no spark had yet kindled in him an intellectual passion; knowledge seemed to him a very superficial affair, easily mastered: judging from the conversation of his elders, he had apparently got already more than was necessary for mature life. Probably this was not an exceptional result of expensive teaching at that period of short-waisted coats, and other fashions which have not yet recurred. But, one vacation, a wet day sent him to the small home library to hunt once more for a book which might have some freshness for him: in vain! unless, indeed, he took down a dusty row of volumes with gray-paper backs and dingy labels—the volumes of an old Cyclopaedia which he had never disturbed. It would at least be a novelty to disturb them. They were on the highest shelf, and he stood on a chair to get them down. But he opened the volume which he first took from the shelf: somehow, one is apt to read in a makeshift attitude, just where it might seem inconvenient to do so. The page he opened on was under the head of Anatomy, and the first passage that drew his eyes was on the valves of the heart. He was not much acquainted with

valves of any sort, but he knew that valvae were folding-doors, and through this crevice came a sudden light startling him with his first vivid notion of finely adjusted mechanism in the human frame. A liberal education had of course left him free to read the indecent passages in the school classics, but beyond a general sense of secrecy and obscenity in connection with his internal structure, had left his imagination quite unbiassed, so that for anything he knew his brains lay in small bags at his temples, and he had no more thought of representing to himself how his blood circulated than how paper served instead of gold. But the moment of vocation had come, and before he got down from his chair, the world was made new to him by a presentiment of endless processes filling the vast spaces planked out of his sight by that wordy ignorance which he had supposed to be knowledge. From that hour Lydgate felt the growth of an intellectual passion.

We are not afraid of telling over and over again how a man comes to fall in love with a woman and be wedded to her, or else be fatally parted from her. Is it due to excess of poetry or of stupidity that we are never weary of describing what King James called a woman's "makdom and her fairnesse," never weary of listening to the twanging of the old Troubadour strings, and are comparatively uninterested in that other kind of "makdom and fairnesse" which must be wooed with industrious thought and patient renunciation of small desires? In the story of this passion, too, the development varies: sometimes it is the glorious marriage, sometimes frustration and final parting. And not seldom the catastrophe is bound up with the other passion, sung by the Troubadours. For in the multitude of middle-aged men who go about their vocations in a daily course determined for them much in the same way as the tie of their cravats, there is always a good number who once meant to shape their own deeds and alter the world a little. The story of their coming to be shapen after the average and fit to be packed by the gross, is hardly ever told even in their consciousness; for perhaps their ardor in generous unpaid toil cooled as imperceptibly as the ardor of other youthful loves, till one day their earlier self walked like a ghost in its old home and made the new furniture ghastly. Nothing in the world more subtle than the process of their gradual change! In the beginning they inhaled it unknowingly: you and I may have sent some of our breath towards infecting them, when we uttered our

conforming falsities or drew our silly conclusions: or perhaps it came with the vibrations from a woman's glance.

Lydgate did not mean to be one of those failures, and there was the better hope of him because his scientific interest soon took the form of a professional enthusiasm: he had a youthful belief in his bread-winning work, not to be stifled by that initiation in makeshift called his 'prentice days; and he carried to his studies in London, Edinburgh, and Paris, the conviction that the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good. Lydgate's nature demanded this combination: he was an emotional creature, with a flesh-and-blood sense of fellowship which withstood all the abstractions of special study. He cared not only for "cases," but for John and Elizabeth, especially Elizabeth.

There was another attraction in his profession: it wanted reform, and gave a man an opportunity for some indignant resolve to reject its venal decorations and other humbug, and to be the possessor of genuine though undemanded qualifications. He went to study in Paris with the determination that when he came home again he would settle in some provincial town as a general practitioner, and resist the irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge in the interest of his own scientific pursuits, as well as of the general advance: he would keep away from the range of London intrigues, jealousies, and social truckling, and win celebrity, however slowly, as Jenner had done, by the independent value of his work. For it must be remembered that this was a dark period; and in spite of venerable colleges which used great efforts to secure purity of knowledge by making it scarce, and to exclude error by a rigid exclusiveness in relation to fees and appointments, it happened that very ignorant young gentlemen were promoted in town, and many more got a legal right to practise over large areas in the country. Also, the high standard held up to the public mind by the College of Physicians, which gave its peculiar sanction to the expensive and highly rarefied medical instruction obtained by graduates of Oxford and Cambridge, did not hinder quackery from having an excellent time of it; for since professional practice chiefly consisted in giving a great many drugs, the public inferred that it might be better off with more drugs still, if they could only be got cheaply, and hence swallowed large cubic measures of physic prescribed

by unscrupulous ignorance which had taken no degrees. Considering that statistics had not yet embraced a calculation as to the number of ignorant or canting doctors which absolutely must exist in the teeth of all changes, it seemed to Lydgate that a change in the units was the most direct mode of changing the numbers. He meant to be a unit who would make a certain amount of difference towards that spreading change which would one day tell appreciably upon the averages, and in the mean time have the pleasure of making an advantageous difference to the viscera of his own patients. But he did not simply aim at a more genuine kind of practice than was common. He was ambitious of a wider effect: he was fired with the possibility that he might work out the proof of an anatomical conception and make a link in the chain of discovery.

Does it seem incongruous to you that a Middlemarch surgeon should dream of himself as a discoverer? Most of us, indeed, know little of the great originators until they have been lifted up among the constellations and already rule our fates. But that Herschel, for example, who “broke the barriers of the heavens”—did he not once play a provincial church-organ, and give music-lessons to stumbling pianists? Each of those Shining Ones had to walk on the earth among neighbors who perhaps thought much more of his gait and his garments than of anything which was to give him a title to everlasting fame: each of them had his little local personal history sprinkled with small temptations and sordid cares, which made the retarding friction of his course towards final companionship with the immortals. Lydgate was not blind to the dangers of such friction, but he had plenty of confidence in his resolution to avoid it as far as possible: being seven-and-twenty, he felt himself experienced. And he was not going to have his vanities provoked by contact with the showy worldly successes of the capital, but to live among people who could hold no rivalry with that pursuit of a great idea which was to be a twin object with the assiduous practice of his profession. There was fascination in the hope that the two purposes would illuminate each other: the careful observation and inference which was his daily work, the use of the lens to further his judgment in special cases, would further his thought as an instrument of larger inquiry. Was not this the typical pre-eminence of his profession? He would be a good Middlemarch doctor, and by that very means keep himself in the track of far-reaching investigation. On one point he may fairly claim approval at this particular stage of his career: he did not mean



to imitate those philanthropic models who make a profit out of poisonous pickles to support themselves while they are exposing adulteration, or hold shares in a gambling-hell that they may have leisure to represent the cause of public morality. He intended to begin in his own case some particular reforms which were quite certainly within his reach, and much less of a problem than the demonstrating of an anatomical conception. One of these reforms was to act stoutly on the strength of a recent legal decision, and simply prescribe, without dispensing drugs or taking percentage from druggists. This was an innovation for one who had chosen to adopt the style of general practitioner in a country town, and would be felt as offensive criticism by his professional brethren. But Lydgate meant to innovate in his treatment also, and he was wise enough to see that the best security for his practising honestly according to his belief was to get rid of systematic temptations to the contrary.

Perhaps that was a more cheerful time for observers and theorizers than the present; we are apt to think it the finest era of the world when America was beginning to be discovered, when a bold sailor, even if he were wrecked, might alight on a new kingdom; and about 1829 the dark territories of Pathology were a fine America for a spirited young adventurer. Lydgate was ambitious above all to contribute towards enlarging the scientific, rational basis of his profession. The more he became interested in special questions of disease, such as the nature of fever or fevers, the more keenly he felt the need for that fundamental knowledge of structure which just at the beginning of the century had been illuminated by the brief and glorious career of Bichat, who died when he was only one-and-thirty, but, like another Alexander, left a realm large enough for many heirs. That great Frenchman first carried out the conception that living bodies, fundamentally considered, are not associations of organs which can be understood by studying them first apart, and then as it were federally; but must be regarded as consisting of certain primary webs or tissues, out of which the various organs—brain, heart, lungs, and so on—are compacted, as the various accommodations of a house are built up in various proportions of wood, iron, stone, brick, zinc, and the rest, each material having its peculiar composition and proportions. No man, one sees, can understand and estimate the entire structure or its parts—what are its frailties and what its repairs, without knowing the nature of the materials. And the conception wrought out by

Bichat, with his detailed study of the different tissues, acted necessarily on medical questions as the turning of gas-light would act on a dim, oil-lit street, showing new connections and hitherto hidden facts of structure which must be taken into account in considering the symptoms of maladies and the action of medicaments. But results which depend on human conscience and intelligence work slowly, and now at the end of 1829, most medical practice was still strutting or shambling along the old paths, and there was still scientific work to be done which might have seemed to be a direct sequence of Bichat's. This great seer did not go beyond the consideration of the tissues as ultimate facts in the living organism, marking the limit of anatomical analysis; but it was open to another mind to say, have not these structures some common basis from which they have all started, as your sarsnet, gauze, net, satin, and velvet from the raw cocoon? Here would be another light, as of oxy-hydrogen, showing the very grain of things, and revising all former explanations. Of this sequence to Bichat's work, already vibrating along many currents of the European mind, Lydgate was enamoured; he longed to demonstrate the more intimate relations of living structure, and help to define men's thought more accurately after the true order. The work had not yet been done, but only prepared for those who knew how to use the preparation. What was the primitive tissue? In that way Lydgate put the question—not quite in the way required by the awaiting answer; but such missing of the right word befalls many seekers. And he counted on quiet intervals to be watchfully seized, for taking up the threads of investigation—on many hints to be won from diligent application, not only of the scalpel, but of the microscope, which research had begun to use again with new enthusiasm of reliance. Such was Lydgate's plan of his future: to do good small work for Middlemarch, and great work for the world.

He was certainly a happy fellow at this time: to be seven-and-twenty, without any fixed vices, with a generous resolution that his action should be beneficent, and with ideas in his brain that made life interesting quite apart from the cultus of horseflesh and other mystic rites of costly observance, which the eight hundred pounds left him after buying his practice would certainly not have gone far in paying for. He was at a starting-point which makes many a man's career a fine subject for betting, if there were any gentlemen given to that amusement who could appreciate the complicated probabilities of an arduous purpose, with all the possible

thwartings and furtherings of circumstance, all the niceties of inward balance, by which a man swims and makes his point or else is carried headlong. The risk would remain even with close knowledge of Lydgate's character; for character too is a process and an unfolding. The man was still in the making, as much as the Middlemarch doctor and immortal discoverer, and there were both virtues and faults capable of shrinking or expanding. The faults will not, I hope, be a reason for the withdrawal of your interest in him. Among our valued friends is there not some one or other who is a little too self-confident and disdainful; whose distinguished mind is a little spotted with commonness; who is a little pinched here and protuberant there with native prejudices; or whose better energies are liable to lapse down the wrong channel under the influence of transient solicitations? All these things might be alleged against Lydgate, but then, they are the periphrases of a polite preacher, who talks of Adam, and would not like to mention anything painful to the pew-renters. The particular faults from which these delicate generalities are distilled have distinguishable physiognomies, diction, accent, and grimaces; filling up parts in very various dramas. Our vanities differ as our noses do: all conceit is not the same conceit, but varies in correspondence with the minutiae of mental make in which one of us differs from another. Lydgate's conceit was of the arrogant sort, never simpering, never impertinent, but massive in its claims and benevolently contemptuous. He would do a great deal for noodles, being sorry for them, and feeling quite sure that they could have no power over him: he had thought of joining the Saint Simonians when he was in Paris, in order to turn them against some of their own doctrines. All his faults were marked by kindred traits, and were those of a man who had a fine baritone, whose clothes hung well upon him, and who even in his ordinary gestures had an air of inbred distinction. Where then lay the spots of commonness? says a young lady enamoured of that careless grace. How could there be any commonness in a man so well-bred, so ambitious of social distinction, so generous and unusual in his views of social duty? As easily as there may be stupidity in a man of genius if you take him unawares on the wrong subject, or as many a man who has the best will to advance the social millennium might be ill-inspired in imagining its lighter pleasures; unable to go beyond Offenbach's music, or the brilliant punning in the last burlesque. Lydgate's spots of commonness lay in the complexion of his prejudices, which, in

spite of noble intention and sympathy, were half of them such as are found in ordinary men of the world: that distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardor, did not penetrate his feeling and judgment about furniture, or women, or the desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than other country surgeons. He did not mean to think of furniture at present; but whenever he did so it was to be feared that neither biology nor schemes of reform would lift him above the vulgarity of feeling that there would be an incompatibility in his furniture not being of the best.

As to women, he had once already been drawn headlong by impetuous folly, which he meant to be final, since marriage at some distant period would of course not be impetuous. For those who want to be acquainted with Lydgate it will be good to know what was that case of impetuous folly, for it may stand as an example of the fitful swerving of passion to which he was prone, together with the chivalrous kindness which helped to make him morally lovable. The story can be told without many words. It happened when he was studying in Paris, and just at the time when, over and above his other work, he was occupied with some galvanic experiments. One evening, tired with his experimenting, and not being able to elicit the facts he needed, he left his frogs and rabbits to some repose under their trying and mysterious dispensation of unexplained shocks, and went to finish his evening at the theatre of the Porte Saint Martin, where there was a melodrama which he had already seen several times; attracted, not by the ingenious work of the collaborating authors, but by an actress whose part it was to stab her lover, mistaking him for the evil-designing duke of the piece. Lydgate was in love with this actress, as a man is in love with a woman whom he never expects to speak to. She was a Provencale, with dark eyes, a Greek profile, and rounded majestic form, having that sort of beauty which carries a sweet matronliness even in youth, and her voice was a soft cooing. She had but lately come to Paris, and bore a virtuous reputation, her husband acting with her as the unfortunate lover. It was her acting which was "no better than it should be," but the public was satisfied. Lydgate's only relaxation now was to go and look at this woman, just as he might have thrown himself under the breath of the sweet south on a bank of violets for a while, without prejudice to his galvanism, to which he would presently return. But this evening the old drama had a new catastrophe. At the moment when the

heroine was to act the stabbing of her lover, and he was to fall gracefully, the wife veritably stabbed her husband, who fell as death willed. A wild shriek pierced the house, and the Provencale fell swooning: a shriek and a swoon were demanded by the play, but the swooning too was real this time. Lydgate leaped and climbed, he hardly knew how, on to the stage, and was active in help, making the acquaintance of his heroine by finding a contusion on her head and lifting her gently in his arms. Paris rang with the story of this death:—was it a murder? Some of the actress's warmest admirers were inclined to believe in her guilt, and liked her the better for it (such was the taste of those times); but Lydgate was not one of these. He vehemently contended for her innocence, and the remote impersonal passion for her beauty which he had felt before, had passed now into personal devotion, and tender thought of her lot. The notion of murder was absurd: no motive was discoverable, the young couple being understood to dote on each other; and it was not unprecedented that an accidental slip of the foot should have brought these grave consequences. The legal investigation ended in Madame Laure's release. Lydgate by this time had had many interviews with her, and found her more and more adorable. She talked little; but that was an additional charm. She was melancholy, and seemed grateful; her presence was enough, like that of the evening light. Lydgate was madly anxious about her affection, and jealous lest any other man than himself should win it and ask her to marry him. But instead of reopening her engagement at the Porte Saint Martin, where she would have been all the more popular for the fatal episode, she left Paris without warning, forsaking her little court of admirers. Perhaps no one carried inquiry far except Lydgate, who felt that all science had come to a standstill while he imagined the unhappy Laure, stricken by ever-wandering sorrow, herself wandering, and finding no faithful comforter. Hidden actresses, however, are not so difficult to find as some other hidden facts, and it was not long before Lydgate gathered indications that Laure had taken the route to Lyons. He found her at last acting with great success at Avignon under the same name, looking more majestic than ever as a forsaken wife carrying her child in her arms. He spoke to her after the play, was received with the usual quietude which seemed to him beautiful as clear depths of water, and obtained leave to visit her the next day; when he was bent on telling her that he adored her, and on asking her to marry him. He knew that this was like the sudden impulse of a madman—

incongruous even with his habitual foibles. No matter! It was the one thing which he was resolved to do. He had two selves within him apparently, and they must learn to accommodate each other and bear reciprocal impediments. Strange, that some of us, with quick alternate vision, see beyond our infatuations, and even while we rave on the heights, behold the wide plain where our persistent self pauses and awaits us.

To have approached Laure with any suit that was not reverentially tender would have been simply a contradiction of his whole feeling towards her.

“You have come all the way from Paris to find me?” she said to him the next day, sitting before him with folded arms, and looking at him with eyes that seemed to wonder as an untamed ruminating animal wonders. “Are all Englishmen like that?”

“I came because I could not live without trying to see you. You are lonely; I love you; I want you to consent to be my wife; I will wait, but I want you to promise that you will marry me—no one else.”

Laure looked at him in silence with a melancholy radiance from under her grand eyelids, until he was full of rapturous certainty, and knelt close to her knees.

“I will tell you something,” she said, in her cooing way, keeping her arms folded. “My foot really slipped.”

“I know, I know,” said Lydgate, deprecatingly. “It was a fatal accident—a dreadful stroke of calamity that bound me to you the more.”

Again Laure paused a little and then said, slowly, “*I meant to do it.*”

Lydgate, strong man as he was, turned pale and trembled: moments seemed to pass before he rose and stood at a distance from her.

“There was a secret, then,” he said at last, even vehemently. “He was brutal to you: you hated him.”

“No! he wearied me; he was too fond: he would live in Paris, and not in my country; that was not agreeable to me.”

“Great God!” said Lydgate, in a groan of horror. “And you planned to murder him?”

“I did not plan: it came to me in the play—*I meant to do it.*”

Lydgate stood mute, and unconsciously pressed his hat on while he looked at her. He saw this woman—the first to whom he had given his young adoration—amid the throng of stupid criminals.

“You are a good young man,” she said. “But I do not like husbands. I will never have another.”

Three days afterwards Lydgate was at his galvanism again in his Paris chambers, believing that illusions were at an end for him. He was saved from hardening effects by the abundant kindness of his heart and his belief that human life might be made better. But he had more reason than ever for trusting his judgment, now that it was so experienced; and henceforth he would take a strictly scientific view of woman, entertaining no expectations but such as were justified beforehand.

No one in Middlemarch was likely to have such a notion of Lydgate's past as has here been faintly shadowed, and indeed the respectable townsfolk there were not more given than mortals generally to any eager attempt at exactness in the representation to themselves of what did not come under their own senses. Not only young virgins of that town, but gray-bearded men also, were often in haste to conjecture how a new acquaintance might be wrought into their purposes, contented with very vague knowledge as to the way in which life had been shaping him for that instrumentality. Middlemarch, in fact, counted on swallowing Lydgate and assimilating him very comfortably.

## CHAPTER XVI.

“All that in woman is adored  
In thy fair self I find—  
For the whole sex can but afford  
The handsome and the kind.”  
—SIR CHARLES SEDLEY.

The question whether Mr. Tyke should be appointed as salaried chaplain to the hospital was an exciting topic to the Middlemarchers; and Lydgate heard it discussed in a way that threw much light on the power exercised in the town by Mr. Bulstrode. The banker was evidently a ruler, but there was an opposition party, and even among his supporters there were some who allowed it to be seen that their support was a compromise, and who frankly stated their impression that the general scheme of things, and especially the casualties of trade, required you to hold a candle to the devil.

Mr. Bulstrode's power was not due simply to his being a country banker, who knew the financial secrets of most traders in the town and could touch the springs of their credit; it was fortified by a beneficence that was at once ready and severe—ready to confer obligations, and severe in watching the result. He had gathered, as an industrious man always at his post, a chief share in administering the town charities, and his private charities were both minute and abundant. He would take a great deal of pains about apprenticing Tegg the shoemaker's son, and he would watch over Tegg's church-going; he would defend Mrs. Strype the washerwoman against Stubbs's unjust exaction on the score of her drying-ground, and he would himself scrutinize a calumny against Mrs. Strype. His private minor loans were numerous, but he would inquire strictly into the circumstances both before and after. In this way a man gathers a domain in his neighbors' hope and fear as well as gratitude; and power, when once it has got into that subtle region, propagates itself, spreading out of all proportion to its external means. It was a principle with Mr. Bulstrode to gain as much power as possible, that he might use it for the glory of God. He went



through a great deal of spiritual conflict and inward argument in order to adjust his motives, and make clear to himself what God's glory required. But, as we have seen, his motives were not always rightly appreciated. There were many crass minds in Middlemarch whose reflective scales could only weigh things in the lump; and they had a strong suspicion that since Mr. Bulstrode could not enjoy life in their fashion, eating and drinking so little as he did, and worreting himself about everything, he must have a sort of vampire's feast in the sense of mastery.

The subject of the chaplaincy came up at Mr. Vincy's table when Lydgate was dining there, and the family connection with Mr. Bulstrode did not, he observed, prevent some freedom of remark even on the part of the host himself, though his reasons against the proposed arrangement turned entirely on his objection to Mr. Tyke's sermons, which were all doctrine, and his preference for Mr. Farebrother, whose sermons were free from that taint. Mr. Vincy liked well enough the notion of the chaplain's having a salary, supposing it were given to Farebrother, who was as good a little fellow as ever breathed, and the best preacher anywhere, and companionable too.

"What line shall you take, then?" said Mr. Chichely, the coroner, a great coursing comrade of Mr. Vincy's.

"Oh, I'm precious glad I'm not one of the Directors now. I shall vote for referring the matter to the Directors and the Medical Board together. I shall roll some of my responsibility on your shoulders, Doctor," said Mr. Vincy, glancing first at Dr. Sprague, the senior physician of the town, and then at Lydgate who sat opposite. "You medical gentlemen must consult which sort of black draught you will prescribe, eh, Mr. Lydgate?"

"I know little of either," said Lydgate; "but in general, appointments are apt to be made too much a question of personal liking. The fittest man for a particular post is not always the best fellow or the most agreeable. Sometimes, if you wanted to get a reform, your only way would be to pension off the good fellows whom everybody is fond of, and put them out of the question."

Dr. Sprague, who was considered the physician of most "weight," though Dr. Minchin was usually said to have more "penetration," divested his large heavy face of all expression, and looked at his wine-glass while Lydgate was speaking. Whatever was not problematical and suspected

about this young man—for example, a certain showiness as to foreign ideas, and a disposition to unsettle what had been settled and forgotten by his elders—was positively unwelcome to a physician whose standing had been fixed thirty years before by a treatise on Meningitis, of which at least one copy marked “own” was bound in calf. For my part I have some fellow-feeling with Dr. Sprague: one’s self-satisfaction is an untaxed kind of property which it is very unpleasant to find deprecated.

Lydgate’s remark, however, did not meet the sense of the company. Mr. Vincy said, that if he could have *his* way, he would not put disagreeable fellows anywhere.

“Hang your reforms!” said Mr. Chichely. “There’s no greater humbug in the world. You never hear of a reform, but it means some trick to put in new men. I hope you are not one of the ‘Lancet’s’ men, Mr. Lydgate—wanting to take the coronership out of the hands of the legal profession: your words appear to point that way.”

“I disapprove of Wakley,” interposed Dr. Sprague, “no man more: he is an ill-intentioned fellow, who would sacrifice the respectability of the profession, which everybody knows depends on the London Colleges, for the sake of getting some notoriety for himself. There are men who don’t mind about being kicked blue if they can only get talked about. But Wakley is right sometimes,” the Doctor added, judicially. “I could mention one or two points in which Wakley is in the right.”

“Oh, well,” said Mr. Chichely, “I blame no man for standing up in favor of his own cloth; but, coming to argument, I should like to know how a coroner is to judge of evidence if he has not had a legal training?”

“In my opinion,” said Lydgate, “legal training only makes a man more incompetent in questions that require knowledge of another kind. People talk about evidence as if it could really be weighed in scales by a blind Justice. No man can judge what is good evidence on any particular subject, unless he knows that subject well. A lawyer is no better than an old woman at a post-mortem examination. How is he to know the action of a poison? You might as well say that scanning verse will teach you to scan the potato crops.”

“You are aware, I suppose, that it is not the coroner’s business to conduct the *post-mortem*, but only to take the evidence of the medical witness?” said Mr. Chichely, with some scorn.

“Who is often almost as ignorant as the coroner himself,” said Lydgate. “Questions of medical jurisprudence ought not to be left to the chance of decent knowledge in a medical witness, and the coroner ought not to be a man who will believe that strychnine will destroy the coats of the stomach if an ignorant practitioner happens to tell him so.”

Lydgate had really lost sight of the fact that Mr. Chichely was his Majesty’s coroner, and ended innocently with the question, “Don’t you agree with me, Dr. Sprague?”

“To a certain extent—with regard to populous districts, and in the metropolis,” said the Doctor. “But I hope it will be long before this part of the country loses the services of my friend Chichely, even though it might get the best man in our profession to succeed him. I am sure Vincy will agree with me.”

“Yes, yes, give me a coroner who is a good coursing man,” said Mr. Vincy, jovially. “And in my opinion, you’re safest with a lawyer. Nobody can know everything. Most things are ‘visitation of God.’ And as to poisoning, why, what you want to know is the law. Come, shall we join the ladies?”

Lydgate’s private opinion was that Mr. Chichely might be the very coroner without bias as to the coats of the stomach, but he had not meant to be personal. This was one of the difficulties of moving in good Middlemarch society: it was dangerous to insist on knowledge as a qualification for any salaried office. Fred Vincy had called Lydgate a prig, and now Mr. Chichely was inclined to call him prick-eared; especially when, in the drawing-room, he seemed to be making himself eminently agreeable to Rosamond, whom he had easily monopolized in a *tête-à-tête*, since Mrs. Vincy herself sat at the tea-table. She resigned no domestic function to her daughter; and the matron’s blooming good-natured face, with the two volatile pink strings floating from her fine throat, and her cheery manners to husband and children, was certainly among the great attractions of the Vincy house—attractions which made it all the easier to fall in love with the daughter. The tinge of unpretentious, inoffensive vulgarity in Mrs. Vincy gave more effect to Rosamond’s refinement, which was beyond what Lydgate had expected.

Certainly, small feet and perfectly turned shoulders aid the impression of refined manners, and the right thing said seems quite astonishingly

right when it is accompanied with exquisite curves of lip and eyelid. And Rosamond could say the right thing; for she was clever with that sort of cleverness which catches every tone except the humorous. Happily she never attempted to joke, and this perhaps was the most decisive mark of her cleverness.

She and Lydgate readily got into conversation. He regretted that he had not heard her sing the other day at Stone Court. The only pleasure he allowed himself during the latter part of his stay in Paris was to go and hear music.

“You have studied music, probably?” said Rosamond.

“No, I know the notes of many birds, and I know many melodies by ear; but the music that I don’t know at all, and have no notion about, delights me—affects me. How stupid the world is that it does not make more use of such a pleasure within its reach!”

“Yes, and you will find Middlemarch very tuneless. There are hardly any good musicians. I only know two gentlemen who sing at all well.”

“I suppose it is the fashion to sing comic songs in a rhythmic way, leaving you to fancy the tune—very much as if it were tapped on a drum?”

“Ah, you have heard Mr. Bowyer,” said Rosamond, with one of her rare smiles. “But we are speaking very ill of our neighbors.”

Lydgate was almost forgetting that he must carry on the conversation, in thinking how lovely this creature was, her garment seeming to be made out of the faintest blue sky, herself so immaculately blond, as if the petals of some gigantic flower had just opened and disclosed her; and yet with this infantine blondness showing so much ready, self-possessed grace. Since he had had the memory of Laure, Lydgate had lost all taste for large-eyed silence: the divine cow no longer attracted him, and Rosamond was her very opposite. But he recalled himself.

“You will let me hear some music to-night, I hope.”

“I will let you hear my attempts, if you like,” said Rosamond. “Papa is sure to insist on my singing. But I shall tremble before you, who have heard the best singers in Paris. I have heard very little: I have only once been to London. But our organist at St. Peter’s is a good musician, and I go on studying with him.”

“Tell me what you saw in London.”

“Very little.” (A more naive girl would have said, “Oh, everything!” But Rosamond knew better.) “A few of the ordinary sights, such as raw country girls are always taken to.”

“Do you call yourself a raw country girl?” said Lydgate, looking at her with an involuntary emphasis of admiration, which made Rosamond blush with pleasure. But she remained simply serious, turned her long neck a little, and put up her hand to touch her wondrous hair-plaits—an habitual gesture with her as pretty as any movements of a kitten’s paw. Not that Rosamond was in the least like a kitten: she was a sylph caught young and educated at Mrs. Lemon’s.

“I assure you my mind is raw,” she said immediately; “I pass at Middlemarch. I am not afraid of talking to our old neighbors. But I am really afraid of you.”

“An accomplished woman almost always knows more than we men, though her knowledge is of a different sort. I am sure you could teach me a thousand things—as an exquisite bird could teach a bear if there were any common language between them. Happily, there is a common language between women and men, and so the bears can get taught.”

“Ah, there is Fred beginning to strum! I must go and hinder him from jarring all your nerves,” said Rosamond, moving to the other side of the room, where Fred having opened the piano, at his father’s desire, that Rosamond might give them some music, was parenthetically performing “Cherry Ripe!” with one hand. Able men who have passed their examinations will do these things sometimes, not less than the plucked Fred.

“Fred, pray defer your practising till to-morrow; you will make Mr. Lydgate ill,” said Rosamond. “He has an ear.”

Fred laughed, and went on with his tune to the end.

Rosamond turned to Lydgate, smiling gently, and said, “You perceive, the bears will not always be taught.”

“Now then, Rosy!” said Fred, springing from the stool and twisting it upward for her, with a hearty expectation of enjoyment. “Some good rousing tunes first.”

Rosamond played admirably. Her master at Mrs. Lemon’s school (close to a county town with a memorable history that had its relics in church and

castle) was one of those excellent musicians here and there to be found in our provinces, worthy to compare with many a noted Kapellmeister in a country which offers more plentiful conditions of musical celebrity. Rosamond, with the executant's instinct, had seized his manner of playing, and gave forth his large rendering of noble music with the precision of an echo. It was almost startling, heard for the first time. A hidden soul seemed to be flowing forth from Rosamond's fingers; and so indeed it was, since souls live on in perpetual echoes, and to all fine expression there goes somewhere an originating activity, if it be only that of an interpreter. Lydgate was taken possession of, and began to believe in her as something exceptional. After all, he thought, one need not be surprised to find the rare conjunctions of nature under circumstances apparently unfavorable: come where they may, they always depend on conditions that are not obvious. He sat looking at her, and did not rise to pay her any compliments, leaving that to others, now that his admiration was deepened.

Her singing was less remarkable, but also well trained, and sweet to hear as a chime perfectly in tune. It is true she sang "Meet me by moonlight," and "I've been roaming"; for mortals must share the fashions of their time, and none but the ancients can be always classical. But Rosamond could also sing "Black-eyed Susan" with effect, or Haydn's canzonets, or "Voi, che sapete," or "Batti, batti"—she only wanted to know what her audience liked.

Her father looked round at the company, delighting in their admiration. Her mother sat, like a Niobe before her troubles, with her youngest little girl on her lap, softly beating the child's hand up and down in time to the music. And Fred, notwithstanding his general scepticism about Rosy, listened to her music with perfect allegiance, wishing he could do the same thing on his flute. It was the pleasantest family party that Lydgate had seen since he came to Middlemarch. The Vincys had the readiness to enjoy, the rejection of all anxiety, and the belief in life as a merry lot, which made a house exceptional in most county towns at that time, when Evangelicalism had cast a certain suspicion as of plague-infection over the few amusements which survived in the provinces. At the Vincys' there was always whist, and the card-tables stood ready now, making some of the company secretly impatient of the music. Before it ceased Mr. Farebrother came in—a handsome, broad-chested but otherwise small man, about

forty, whose black was very threadbare: the brilliancy was all in his quick gray eyes. He came like a pleasant change in the light, arresting little Louisa with fatherly nonsense as she was being led out of the room by Miss Morgan, greeting everybody with some special word, and seeming to condense more talk into ten minutes than had been held all through the evening. He claimed from Lydgate the fulfilment of a promise to come and see him. "I can't let you off, you know, because I have some beetles to show you. We collectors feel an interest in every new man till he has seen all we have to show him."

But soon he swerved to the whist-table, rubbing his hands and saying, "Come now, let us be serious! Mr. Lydgate? not play? Ah! you are too young and light for this kind of thing."

Lydgate said to himself that the clergyman whose abilities were so painful to Mr. Bulstrode, appeared to have found an agreeable resort in this certainly not erudite household. He could half understand it: the good-humor, the good looks of elder and younger, and the provision for passing the time without any labor of intelligence, might make the house beguiling to people who had no particular use for their odd hours.

Everything looked blooming and joyous except Miss Morgan, who was brown, dull, and resigned, and altogether, as Mrs. Vincy often said, just the sort of person for a governess. Lydgate did not mean to pay many such visits himself. They were a wretched waste of the evenings; and now, when he had talked a little more to Rosamond, he meant to excuse himself and go.

"You will not like us at Middlemarch, I feel sure," she said, when the whist-players were settled. "We are very stupid, and you have been used to something quite different."

"I suppose all country towns are pretty much alike," said Lydgate. "But I have noticed that one always believes one's own town to be more stupid than any other. I have made up my mind to take Middlemarch as it comes, and shall be much obliged if the town will take me in the same way. I have certainly found some charms in it which are much greater than I had expected."

"You mean the rides towards Tipton and Lowick; every one is pleased with those," said Rosamond, with simplicity.

"No, I mean something much nearer to me."

Rosamond rose and reached her netting, and then said, "Do you care about dancing at all? I am not quite sure whether clever men ever dance."

"I would dance with you if you would allow me."

"Oh!" said Rosamond, with a slight deprecatory laugh. "I was only going to say that we sometimes have dancing, and I wanted to know whether you would feel insulted if you were asked to come."

"Not on the condition I mentioned."

After this chat Lydgate thought that he was going, but on moving towards the whist-tables, he got interested in watching Mr. Farebrother's play, which was masterly, and also his face, which was a striking mixture of the shrewd and the mild. At ten o'clock supper was brought in (such were the customs of Middlemarch) and there was punch-drinking; but Mr. Farebrother had only a glass of water. He was winning, but there seemed to be no reason why the renewal of rubbers should end, and Lydgate at last took his leave.

But as it was not eleven o'clock, he chose to walk in the brisk air towards the tower of St. Botolph's, Mr. Farebrother's church, which stood out dark, square, and massive against the starlight. It was the oldest church in Middlemarch; the living, however, was but a vicarage worth barely four hundred a-year. Lydgate had heard that, and he wondered now whether Mr. Farebrother cared about the money he won at cards; thinking, "He seems a very pleasant fellow, but Bulstrode may have his good reasons." Many things would be easier to Lydgate if it should turn out that Mr. Bulstrode was generally justifiable. "What is his religious doctrine to me, if he carries some good notions along with it? One must use such brains as are to be found."

These were actually Lydgate's first meditations as he walked away from Mr. Vincy's, and on this ground I fear that many ladies will consider him hardly worthy of their attention. He thought of Rosamond and her music only in the second place; and though, when her turn came, he dwelt on the image of her for the rest of his walk, he felt no agitation, and had no sense that any new current had set into his life. He could not marry yet; he wished not to marry for several years; and therefore he was not ready to entertain the notion of being in love with a girl whom he happened to admire. He did admire Rosamond exceedingly; but that madness which had once beset him about Laure was not, he thought, likely to recur in



relation to any other woman. Certainly, if falling in love had been at all in question, it would have been quite safe with a creature like this Miss Vincy, who had just the kind of intelligence one would desire in a woman—polished, refined, docile, lending itself to finish in all the delicacies of life, and enshrined in a body which expressed this with a force of demonstration that excluded the need for other evidence. Lydgate felt sure that if ever he married, his wife would have that feminine radiance, that distinctive womanhood which must be classed with flowers and music, that sort of beauty which by its very nature was virtuous, being moulded only for pure and delicate joys.

But since he did not mean to marry for the next five years—his more pressing business was to look into Louis' new book on Fever, which he was specially interested in, because he had known Louis in Paris, and had followed many anatomical demonstrations in order to ascertain the specific differences of typhus and typhoid. He went home and read far into the smallest hour, bringing a much more testing vision of details and relations into this pathological study than he had ever thought it necessary to apply to the complexities of love and marriage, these being subjects on which he felt himself amply informed by literature, and that traditional wisdom which is handed down in the genial conversation of men. Whereas Fever had obscure conditions, and gave him that delightful labor of the imagination which is not mere arbitrariness, but the exercise of disciplined power—combining and constructing with the clearest eye for probabilities and the fullest obedience to knowledge; and then, in yet more energetic alliance with impartial Nature, standing aloof to invent tests by which to try its own work.

Many men have been praised as vividly imaginative on the strength of their profuseness in indifferent drawing or cheap narration:—reports of very poor talk going on in distant orbs; or portraits of Lucifer coming down on his bad errands as a large ugly man with bat's wings and spurts of phosphorescence; or exaggerations of wantonness that seem to reflect life in a diseased dream. But these kinds of inspiration Lydgate regarded as rather vulgar and vinous compared with the imagination that reveals subtle actions inaccessible by any sort of lens, but tracked in that outer darkness through long pathways of necessary sequence by the inward light which is the last refinement of Energy, capable of bathing even the ethereal atoms in its ideally illuminated space. He for his part had tossed away all cheap

inventions where ignorance finds itself able and at ease: he was enamoured of that arduous invention which is the very eye of research, provisionally framing its object and correcting it to more and more exactness of relation; he wanted to pierce the obscurity of those minute processes which prepare human misery and joy, those invisible thoroughfares which are the first lurking-places of anguish, mania, and crime, that delicate poise and transition which determine the growth of happy or unhappy consciousness.

As he threw down his book, stretched his legs towards the embers in the grate, and clasped his hands at the back of his head, in that agreeable afterglow of excitement when thought lapses from examination of a specific object into a suffusive sense of its connections with all the rest of our existence—seems, as it were, to throw itself on its back after vigorous swimming and float with the repose of unexhausted strength—Lydgate felt a triumphant delight in his studies, and something like pity for those less lucky men who were not of his profession.

“If I had not taken that turn when I was a lad,” he thought, “I might have got into some stupid draught-horse work or other, and lived always in blinkers. I should never have been happy in any profession that did not call forth the highest intellectual strain, and yet keep me in good warm contact with my neighbors. There is nothing like the medical profession for that: one can have the exclusive scientific life that touches the distance and befriend the old fogies in the parish too. It is rather harder for a clergyman: Farebrother seems to be an anomaly.”

This last thought brought back the Vincys and all the pictures of the evening. They floated in his mind agreeably enough, and as he took up his bed-candle his lips were curled with that incipient smile which is apt to accompany agreeable recollections. He was an ardent fellow, but at present his ardor was absorbed in love of his work and in the ambition of making his life recognized as a factor in the better life of mankind—like other heroes of science who had nothing but an obscure country practice to begin with.

Poor Lydgate! or shall I say, Poor Rosamond! Each lived in a world of which the other knew nothing. It had not occurred to Lydgate that he had been a subject of eager meditation to Rosamond, who had neither any reason for throwing her marriage into distant perspective, nor any

pathological studies to divert her mind from that ruminating habit, that inward repetition of looks, words, and phrases, which makes a large part in the lives of most girls. He had not meant to look at her or speak to her with more than the inevitable amount of admiration and compliment which a man must give to a beautiful girl; indeed, it seemed to him that his enjoyment of her music had remained almost silent, for he feared falling into the rudeness of telling her his great surprise at her possession of such accomplishment. But Rosamond had registered every look and word, and estimated them as the opening incidents of a preconceived romance—incidents which gather value from the foreseen development and climax. In Rosamond's romance it was not necessary to imagine much about the inward life of the hero, or of his serious business in the world: of course, he had a profession and was clever, as well as sufficiently handsome; but the piquant fact about Lydgate was his good birth, which distinguished him from all Middlemarch admirers, and presented marriage as a prospect of rising in rank and getting a little nearer to that celestial condition on earth in which she would have nothing to do with vulgar people, and perhaps at last associate with relatives quite equal to the county people who looked down on the Middlemarchers. It was part of Rosamond's cleverness to discern very subtly the faintest aroma of rank, and once when she had seen the Miss Brookes accompanying their uncle at the county assizes, and seated among the aristocracy, she had envied them, notwithstanding their plain dress.

If you think it incredible that to imagine Lydgate as a man of family could cause thrills of satisfaction which had anything to do with the sense that she was in love with him, I will ask you to use your power of comparison a little more effectively, and consider whether red cloth and epaulets have never had an influence of that sort. Our passions do not live apart in locked chambers, but, dressed in their small wardrobe of notions, bring their provisions to a common table and mess together, feeding out of the common store according to their appetite.

Rosamond, in fact, was entirely occupied not exactly with Tertius Lydgate as he was in himself, but with his relation to her; and it was excusable in a girl who was accustomed to hear that all young men might, could, would be, or actually were in love with her, to believe at once that Lydgate could be no exception. His looks and words meant more to her than other men's, because she cared more for them: she thought of them

diligently, and diligently attended to that perfection of appearance, behavior, sentiments, and all other elegancies, which would find in Lydgate a more adequate admirer than she had yet been conscious of.

For Rosamond, though she would never do anything that was disagreeable to her, was industrious; and now more than ever she was active in sketching her landscapes and market-carts and portraits of friends, in practising her music, and in being from morning till night her own standard of a perfect lady, having always an audience in her own consciousness, with sometimes the not unwelcome addition of a more variable external audience in the numerous visitors of the house. She found time also to read the best novels, and even the second best, and she knew much poetry by heart. Her favorite poem was "Lalla Rookh."

"The best girl in the world! He will be a happy fellow who gets her!" was the sentiment of the elderly gentlemen who visited the Vincys; and the rejected young men thought of trying again, as is the fashion in country towns where the horizon is not thick with coming rivals. But Mrs. Plymdale thought that Rosamond had been educated to a ridiculous pitch, for what was the use of accomplishments which would be all laid aside as soon as she was married? While her aunt Bulstrode, who had a sisterly faithfulness towards her brother's family, had two sincere wishes for Rosamond—that she might show a more serious turn of mind, and that she might meet with a husband whose wealth corresponded to her habits.

## CHAPTER XVII.

“The clerkly person smiled and said  
Promise was a pretty maid,  
But being poor she died unwed.”

The Rev. Camden Farebrother, whom Lydgate went to see the next evening, lived in an old parsonage, built of stone, venerable enough to match the church which it looked out upon. All the furniture too in the house was old, but with another grade of age—that of Mr. Farebrother’s father and grandfather. There were painted white chairs, with gilding and wreaths on them, and some lingering red silk damask with slits in it. There were engraved portraits of Lord Chancellors and other celebrated lawyers of the last century; and there were old pier-glasses to reflect them, as well as the little satin-wood tables and the sofas resembling a prolongation of uneasy chairs, all standing in relief against the dark wainscot. This was the physiognomy of the drawing-room into which Lydgate was shown; and there were three ladies to receive him, who were also old-fashioned, and of a faded but genuine respectability: Mrs. Farebrother, the Vicar’s white-haired mother, befrilled and kerchiefed with dainty cleanliness, upright, quick-eyed, and still under seventy; Miss Noble, her sister, a tiny old lady of meeker aspect, with frills and kerchief decidedly more worn and mended; and Miss Winifred Farebrother, the Vicar’s elder sister, well-looking like himself, but nipped and subdued as single women are apt to be who spend their lives in uninterrupted subjection to their elders. Lydgate had not expected to see so quaint a group: knowing simply that Mr. Farebrother was a bachelor, he had thought of being ushered into a snuggerly where the chief furniture would probably be books and collections of natural objects. The Vicar himself seemed to wear rather a changed aspect, as most men do when acquaintances made elsewhere see them for the first time in their own homes; some indeed showing like an actor of genial parts disadvantageously cast for the curmudgeon in a new piece. This was not the case with Mr. Farebrother: he seemed a trifle milder and more silent, the chief talker being his mother, while he only

put in a good-humored moderating remark here and there. The old lady was evidently accustomed to tell her company what they ought to think, and to regard no subject as quite safe without her steering. She was afforded leisure for this function by having all her little wants attended to by Miss Winifred. Meanwhile tiny Miss Noble carried on her arm a small basket, into which she diverted a bit of sugar, which she had first dropped in her saucer as if by mistake; looking round furtively afterwards, and reverting to her teacup with a small innocent noise as of a tiny timid quadruped. Pray think no ill of Miss Noble. That basket held small savings from her more portable food, destined for the children of her poor friends among whom she trotted on fine mornings; fostering and petting all needy creatures being so spontaneous a delight to her, that she regarded it much as if it had been a pleasant vice that she was addicted to. Perhaps she was conscious of being tempted to steal from those who had much that she might give to those who had nothing, and carried in her conscience the guilt of that repressed desire. One must be poor to know the luxury of giving!

Mrs. Farebrother welcomed the guest with a lively formality and precision. She presently informed him that they were not often in want of medical aid in that house. She had brought up her children to wear flannel and not to over-eat themselves, which last habit she considered the chief reason why people needed doctors. Lydgate pleaded for those whose fathers and mothers had over-eaten themselves, but Mrs. Farebrother held that view of things dangerous: Nature was more just than that; it would be easy for any felon to say that his ancestors ought to have been hanged instead of him. If those who had bad fathers and mothers were bad themselves, they were hanged for that. There was no need to go back on what you couldn't see.

“My mother is like old George the Third,” said the Vicar, “she objects to metaphysics.”

“I object to what is wrong, Camden. I say, keep hold of a few plain truths, and make everything square with them. When I was young, Mr. Lydgate, there never was any question about right and wrong. We knew our catechism, and that was enough; we learned our creed and our duty. Every respectable Church person had the same opinions. But now, if you speak out of the Prayer-book itself, you are liable to be contradicted.”

“That makes rather a pleasant time of it for those who like to maintain their own point,” said Lydgate.

“But my mother always gives way,” said the Vicar, slyly.

“No, no, Camden, you must not lead Mr. Lydgate into a mistake about *me*. I shall never show that disrespect to my parents, to give up what they taught me. Any one may see what comes of turning. If you change once, why not twenty times?”

“A man might see good arguments for changing once, and not see them for changing again,” said Lydgate, amused with the decisive old lady.

“Excuse me there. If you go upon arguments, they are never wanting, when a man has no constancy of mind. My father never changed, and he preached plain moral sermons without arguments, and was a good man—few better. When you get me a good man made out of arguments, I will get you a good dinner with reading you the cookery-book. That’s my opinion, and I think anybody’s stomach will bear me out.”

“About the dinner certainly, mother,” said Mr. Farebrother.

“It is the same thing, the dinner or the man. I am nearly seventy, Mr. Lydgate, and I go upon experience. I am not likely to follow new lights, though there are plenty of them here as elsewhere. I say, they came in with the mixed stuffs that will neither wash nor wear. It was not so in my youth: a Churchman was a Churchman, and a clergyman, you might be pretty sure, was a gentleman, if nothing else. But now he may be no better than a Dissenter, and want to push aside my son on pretence of doctrine. But whoever may wish to push him aside, I am proud to say, Mr. Lydgate, that he will compare with any preacher in this kingdom, not to speak of this town, which is but a low standard to go by; at least, to my thinking, for I was born and bred at Exeter.”

“A mother is never partial,” said Mr. Farebrother, smiling. “What do you think Tyke’s mother says about him?”

“Ah, poor creature! what indeed?” said Mrs. Farebrother, her sharpness blunted for the moment by her confidence in maternal judgments. “She says the truth to herself, depend upon it.”

“And what is the truth?” said Lydgate. “I am curious to know.”

“Oh, nothing bad at all,” said Mr. Farebrother. “He is a zealous fellow: not very learned, and not very wise, I think—because I don’t agree with

him.”

“Why, Camden!” said Miss Winifred, “Griffin and his wife told me only to-day, that Mr. Tyke said they should have no more coals if they came to hear you preach.”

Mrs. Farebrother laid down her knitting, which she had resumed after her small allowance of tea and toast, and looked at her son as if to say “You hear that?” Miss Noble said, “Oh poor things! poor things!” in reference, probably, to the double loss of preaching and coal. But the Vicar answered quietly—

“That is because they are not my parishioners. And I don’t think my sermons are worth a load of coals to them.”

“Mr. Lydgate,” said Mrs. Farebrother, who could not let this pass, “you don’t know my son: he always undervalues himself. I tell him he is undervaluing the God who made him, and made him a most excellent preacher.”

“That must be a hint for me to take Mr. Lydgate away to my study, mother,” said the Vicar, laughing. “I promised to show you my collection,” he added, turning to Lydgate; “shall we go?”

All three ladies remonstrated. Mr. Lydgate ought not to be hurried away without being allowed to accept another cup of tea: Miss Winifred had abundance of good tea in the pot. Why was Camden in such haste to take a visitor to his den? There was nothing but pickled vermin, and drawers full of blue-bottles and moths, with no carpet on the floor. Mr. Lydgate must excuse it. A game at cribbage would be far better. In short, it was plain that a vicar might be adored by his womankind as the king of men and preachers, and yet be held by them to stand in much need of their direction. Lydgate, with the usual shallowness of a young bachelor, wondered that Mr. Farebrother had not taught them better.

“My mother is not used to my having visitors who can take any interest in my hobbies,” said the Vicar, as he opened the door of his study, which was indeed as bare of luxuries for the body as the ladies had implied, unless a short porcelain pipe and a tobacco-box were to be excepted.

“Men of your profession don’t generally smoke,” he said. Lydgate smiled and shook his head. “Nor of mine either, properly, I suppose. You



will hear that pipe alleged against me by Bulstrode and Company. They don't know how pleased the devil would be if I gave it up."

"I understand. You are of an excitable temper and want a sedative. I am heavier, and should get idle with it. I should rush into idleness, and stagnate there with all my might."

"And you mean to give it all to your work. I am some ten or twelve years older than you, and have come to a compromise. I feed a weakness or two lest they should get clamorous. See," continued the Vicar, opening several small drawers, "I fancy I have made an exhaustive study of the entomology of this district. I am going on both with the fauna and flora; but I have at least done my insects well. We are singularly rich in orthoptera: I don't know whether—Ah! you have got hold of that glass jar—you are looking into that instead of my drawers. You don't really care about these things?"

"Not by the side of this lovely anencephalous monster. I have never had time to give myself much to natural history. I was early bitten with an interest in structure, and it is what lies most directly in my profession. I have no hobby besides. I have the sea to swim in there."

"Ah! you are a happy fellow," said Mr. Farebrother, turning on his heel and beginning to fill his pipe. "You don't know what it is to want spiritual tobacco—bad emendations of old texts, or small items about a variety of *Aphis Brassicae*, with the well-known signature of Philomicron, for the 'Twaddler's Magazine;' or a learned treatise on the entomology of the Pentateuch, including all the insects not mentioned, but probably met with by the Israelites in their passage through the desert; with a monograph on the Ant, as treated by Solomon, showing the harmony of the Book of Proverbs with the results of modern research. You don't mind my fumigating you?"

Lydgate was more surprised at the openness of this talk than at its implied meaning—that the Vicar felt himself not altogether in the right vocation. The neat fitting-up of drawers and shelves, and the bookcase filled with expensive illustrated books on Natural History, made him think again of the winnings at cards and their destination. But he was beginning to wish that the very best construction of everything that Mr. Farebrother did should be the true one. The Vicar's frankness seemed not of the repulsive sort that comes from an uneasy consciousness seeking to

forestall the judgment of others, but simply the relief of a desire to do with as little pretence as possible. Apparently he was not without a sense that his freedom of speech might seem premature, for he presently said—

“I have not yet told you that I have the advantage of you, Mr. Lydgate, and know you better than you know me. You remember Trawley who shared your apartment at Paris for some time? I was a correspondent of his, and he told me a good deal about you. I was not quite sure when you first came that you were the same man. I was very glad when I found that you were. Only I don’t forget that you have not had the like prologue about me.”

Lydgate divined some delicacy of feeling here, but did not half understand it. “By the way,” he said, “what has become of Trawley? I have quite lost sight of him. He was hot on the French social systems, and talked of going to the Backwoods to found a sort of Pythagorean community. Is he gone?”

“Not at all. He is practising at a German bath, and has married a rich patient.”

“Then my notions wear the best, so far,” said Lydgate, with a short scornful laugh. “He would have it, the medical profession was an inevitable system of humbug. I said, the fault was in the men—men who truckle to lies and folly. Instead of preaching against humbug outside the walls, it might be better to set up a disinfecting apparatus within. In short—I am reporting my own conversation—you may be sure I had all the good sense on my side.”

“Your scheme is a good deal more difficult to carry out than the Pythagorean community, though. You have not only got the old Adam in yourself against you, but you have got all those descendants of the original Adam who form the society around you. You see, I have paid twelve or thirteen years more than you for my knowledge of difficulties. But”—Mr. Farebrother broke off a moment, and then added, “you are eying that glass vase again. Do you want to make an exchange? You shall not have it without a fair barter.”

“I have some sea-mice—fine specimens—in spirits. And I will throw in Robert Brown’s new thing—‘Microscopic Observations on the Pollen of Plants’—if you don’t happen to have it already.”

“Why, seeing how you long for the monster, I might ask a higher price. Suppose I ask you to look through my drawers and agree with me about all my new species?” The Vicar, while he talked in this way, alternately moved about with his pipe in his mouth, and returned to hang rather fondly over his drawers. “That would be good discipline, you know, for a young doctor who has to please his patients in Middlemarch. You must learn to be bored, remember. However, you shall have the monster on your own terms.”

“Don’t you think men overrate the necessity for humoring everybody’s nonsense, till they get despised by the very fools they humor?” said Lydgate, moving to Mr. Farebrother’s side, and looking rather absently at the insects ranged in fine gradation, with names subscribed in exquisite writing. “The shortest way is to make your value felt, so that people must put up with you whether you flatter them or not.”

“With all my heart. But then you must be sure of having the value, and you must keep yourself independent. Very few men can do that. Either you slip out of service altogether, and become good for nothing, or you wear the harness and draw a good deal where your yoke-fellows pull you. But do look at these delicate orthoptera!”

Lydgate had after all to give some scrutiny to each drawer, the Vicar laughing at himself, and yet persisting in the exhibition.

“Apropos of what you said about wearing harness,” Lydgate began, after they had sat down, “I made up my mind some time ago to do with as little of it as possible. That was why I determined not to try anything in London, for a good many years at least. I didn’t like what I saw when I was studying there—so much empty bigwiggism, and obstructive trickery. In the country, people have less pretension to knowledge, and are less of companions, but for that reason they affect one’s amour-propre less: one makes less bad blood, and can follow one’s own course more quietly.”

“Yes—well—you have got a good start; you are in the right profession, the work you feel yourself most fit for. Some people miss that, and repent too late. But you must not be too sure of keeping your independence.”

“You mean of family ties?” said Lydgate, conceiving that these might press rather tightly on Mr. Farebrother.

“Not altogether. Of course they make many things more difficult. But a good wife—a good unworldly woman—may really help a man, and keep

him more independent. There's a parishioner of mine—a fine fellow, but who would hardly have pulled through as he has done without his wife. Do you know the Garths? I think they were not Peacock's patients."

"No; but there is a Miss Garth at old Featherstone's, at Lowick."

"Their daughter: an excellent girl."

"She is very quiet—I have hardly noticed her."

"She has taken notice of you, though, depend upon it."

"I don't understand," said Lydgate; he could hardly say "Of course."

"Oh, she gauges everybody. I prepared her for confirmation—she is a favorite of mine."

Mr. Farebrother puffed a few moments in silence, Lydgate not caring to know more about the Garths. At last the Vicar laid down his pipe, stretched out his legs, and turned his bright eyes with a smile towards Lydgate, saying—

"But we Middlemarchers are not so tame as you take us to be. We have our intrigues and our parties. I am a party man, for example, and Bulstrode is another. If you vote for me you will offend Bulstrode."

"What is there against Bulstrode?" said Lydgate, emphatically.

"I did not say there was anything against him except that. If you vote against him you will make him your enemy."

"I don't know that I need mind about that," said Lydgate, rather proudly; "but he seems to have good ideas about hospitals, and he spends large sums on useful public objects. He might help me a good deal in carrying out my ideas. As to his religious notions—why, as Voltaire said, incantations will destroy a flock of sheep if administered with a certain quantity of arsenic. I look for the man who will bring the arsenic, and don't mind about his incantations."

"Very good. But then you must not offend your arsenic-man. You will not offend me, you know," said Mr. Farebrother, quite unaffectedly. "I don't translate my own convenience into other people's duties. I am opposed to Bulstrode in many ways. I don't like the set he belongs to: they are a narrow ignorant set, and do more to make their neighbors uncomfortable than to make them better. Their system is a sort of worldly-spiritual cliqueism: they really look on the rest of mankind as a doomed

carcass which is to nourish them for heaven. But,” he added, smilingly, “I don’t say that Bulstrode’s new hospital is a bad thing; and as to his wanting to oust me from the old one—why, if he thinks me a mischievous fellow, he is only returning a compliment. And I am not a model clergyman—only a decent makeshift.”

Lydgate was not at all sure that the Vicar maligned himself. A model clergyman, like a model doctor, ought to think his own profession the finest in the world, and take all knowledge as mere nourishment to his moral pathology and therapeutics. He only said, “What reason does Bulstrode give for superseding you?”

“That I don’t teach his opinions—which he calls spiritual religion; and that I have no time to spare. Both statements are true. But then I could make time, and I should be glad of the forty pounds. That is the plain fact of the case. But let us dismiss it. I only wanted to tell you that if you vote for your arsenic-man, you are not to cut me in consequence. I can’t spare you. You are a sort of circumnavigator come to settle among us, and will keep up my belief in the antipodes. Now tell me all about them in Paris.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“Oh, sir, the loftiest hopes on earth  
Draw lots with meaner hopes: heroic breasts,  
Breathing bad air, run risk of pestilence;  
Or, lacking lime-juice when they cross the Line,  
May languish with the scurvy.”

Some weeks passed after this conversation before the question of the chaplaincy gathered any practical import for Lydgate, and without telling himself the reason, he deferred the predetermination on which side he should give his vote. It would really have been a matter of total indifference to him—that is to say, he would have taken the more convenient side, and given his vote for the appointment of Tyke without any hesitation—if he had not cared personally for Mr. Farebrother.

But his liking for the Vicar of St. Botolph's grew with growing acquaintanceship. That, entering into Lydgate's position as a new-comer who had his own professional objects to secure, Mr. Farebrother should have taken pains rather to warn off than to obtain his interest, showed an unusual delicacy and generosity, which Lydgate's nature was keenly alive to. It went along with other points of conduct in Mr. Farebrother which were exceptionally fine, and made his character resemble those southern landscapes which seem divided between natural grandeur and social slovenliness. Very few men could have been as filial and chivalrous as he was to the mother, aunt, and sister, whose dependence on him had in many ways shaped his life rather uneasily for himself; few men who feel the pressure of small needs are so nobly resolute not to dress up their inevitably self-interested desires in a pretext of better motives. In these matters he was conscious that his life would bear the closest scrutiny; and perhaps the consciousness encouraged a little defiance towards the critical strictness of persons whose celestial intimacies seemed not to improve their domestic manners, and whose lofty aims were not needed to account for their actions. Then, his preaching was ingenious and pithy, like the preaching of the English Church in its robust age, and his sermons were

delivered without book. People outside his parish went to hear him; and, since to fill the church was always the most difficult part of a clergyman's function, here was another ground for a careless sense of superiority. Besides, he was a likable man: sweet-tempered, ready-witted, frank, without grins of suppressed bitterness or other conversational flavors which make half of us an affliction to our friends. Lydgate liked him heartily, and wished for his friendship.

With this feeling uppermost, he continued to waive the question of the chaplaincy, and to persuade himself that it was not only no proper business of his, but likely enough never to vex him with a demand for his vote. Lydgate, at Mr. Bulstrode's request, was laying down plans for the internal arrangements of the new hospital, and the two were often in consultation. The banker was always presupposing that he could count in general on Lydgate as a coadjutor, but made no special recurrence to the coming decision between Tyke and Farebrother. When the General Board of the Infirmary had met, however, and Lydgate had notice that the question of the chaplaincy was thrown on a council of the directors and medical men, to meet on the following Friday, he had a vexed sense that he must make up his mind on this trivial Middlemarch business. He could not help hearing within him the distinct declaration that Bulstrode was prime minister, and that the Tyke affair was a question of office or no office; and he could not help an equally pronounced dislike to giving up the prospect of office. For his observation was constantly confirming Mr. Farebrother's assurance that the banker would not overlook opposition. "Confound their petty politics!" was one of his thoughts for three mornings in the meditative process of shaving, when he had begun to feel that he must really hold a court of conscience on this matter. Certainly there were valid things to be said against the election of Mr. Farebrother: he had too much on his hands already, especially considering how much time he spent on non-clerical occupations. Then again it was a continually repeated shock, disturbing Lydgate's esteem, that the Vicar should obviously play for the sake of money, liking the play indeed, but evidently liking some end which it served. Mr. Farebrother contended on theory for the desirability of all games, and said that Englishmen's wit was stagnant for want of them; but Lydgate felt certain that he would have played very much less but for the money. There was a billiard-room at the Green Dragon, which some anxious mothers and wives regarded as the chief temptation in

Middlemarch. The Vicar was a first-rate billiard-player, and though he did not frequent the Green Dragon, there were reports that he had sometimes been there in the daytime and had won money. And as to the chaplaincy, he did not pretend that he cared for it, except for the sake of the forty pounds. Lydgate was no Puritan, but he did not care for play, and winning money at it had always seemed a meanness to him; besides, he had an ideal of life which made this subservience of conduct to the gaining of small sums thoroughly hateful to him. Hitherto in his own life his wants had been supplied without any trouble to himself, and his first impulse was always to be liberal with half-crowns as matters of no importance to a gentleman; it had never occurred to him to devise a plan for getting half-crowns. He had always known in a general way that he was not rich, but he had never felt poor, and he had no power of imagining the part which the want of money plays in determining the actions of men. Money had never been a motive to him. Hence he was not ready to frame excuses for this deliberate pursuit of small gains. It was altogether repulsive to him, and he never entered into any calculation of the ratio between the Vicar's income and his more or less necessary expenditure. It was possible that he would not have made such a calculation in his own case.

And now, when the question of voting had come, this repulsive fact told more strongly against Mr. Farebrother than it had done before. One would know much better what to do if men's characters were more consistent, and especially if one's friends were invariably fit for any function they desired to undertake! Lydgate was convinced that if there had been no valid objection to Mr. Farebrother, he would have voted for him, whatever Bulstrode might have felt on the subject: he did not intend to be a vassal of Bulstrode's. On the other hand, there was Tyke, a man entirely given to his clerical office, who was simply curate at a chapel of ease in St. Peter's parish, and had time for extra duty. Nobody had anything to say against Mr. Tyke, except that they could not bear him, and suspected him of cant. Really, from his point of view, Bulstrode was thoroughly justified.

But whichever way Lydgate began to incline, there was something to make him wince; and being a proud man, he was a little exasperated at being obliged to wince. He did not like frustrating his own best purposes by getting on bad terms with Bulstrode; he did not like voting against Farebrother, and helping to deprive him of function and salary; and the question occurred whether the additional forty pounds might not leave the



Vicar free from that ignoble care about winning at cards. Moreover, Lydgate did not like the consciousness that in voting for Tyke he should be voting on the side obviously convenient for himself. But would the end really be his own convenience? Other people would say so, and would allege that he was currying favor with Bulstrode for the sake of making himself important and getting on in the world. What then? He for his own part knew that if his personal prospects simply had been concerned, he would not have cared a rotten nut for the banker's friendship or enmity. What he really cared for was a medium for his work, a vehicle for his ideas; and after all, was he not bound to prefer the object of getting a good hospital, where he could demonstrate the specific distinctions of fever and test therapeutic results, before anything else connected with this chaplaincy? For the first time Lydgate was feeling the hampering threadlike pressure of small social conditions, and their frustrating complexity. At the end of his inward debate, when he set out for the hospital, his hope was really in the chance that discussion might somehow give a new aspect to the question, and make the scale dip so as to exclude the necessity for voting. I think he trusted a little also to the energy which is begotten by circumstances—some feeling rushing warmly and making resolve easy, while debate in cool blood had only made it more difficult. However it was, he did not distinctly say to himself on which side he would vote; and all the while he was inwardly resenting the subjection which had been forced upon him. It would have seemed beforehand like a ridiculous piece of bad logic that he, with his unmixed resolutions of independence and his select purposes, would find himself at the very outset in the grasp of petty alternatives, each of which was repugnant to him. In his student's chambers, he had prearranged his social action quite differently.

Lydgate was late in setting out, but Dr. Sprague, the two other surgeons, and several of the directors had arrived early; Mr. Bulstrode, treasurer and chairman, being among those who were still absent. The conversation seemed to imply that the issue was problematical, and that a majority for Tyke was not so certain as had been generally supposed. The two physicians, for a wonder, turned out to be unanimous, or rather, though of different minds, they concurred in action. Dr. Sprague, the rugged and weighty, was, as every one had foreseen, an adherent of Mr. Farebrother. The Doctor was more than suspected of having no religion, but somehow

Middlemarch tolerated this deficiency in him as if he had been a Lord Chancellor; indeed it is probable that his professional weight was the more believed in, the world-old association of cleverness with the evil principle being still potent in the minds even of lady-patients who had the strictest ideas of frilling and sentiment. It was perhaps this negation in the Doctor which made his neighbors call him hard-headed and dry-witted; conditions of texture which were also held favorable to the storing of judgments connected with drugs. At all events, it is certain that if any medical man had come to Middlemarch with the reputation of having very definite religious views, of being given to prayer, and of otherwise showing an active piety, there would have been a general presumption against his medical skill.

On this ground it was (professionally speaking) fortunate for Dr. Minchin that his religious sympathies were of a general kind, and such as gave a distant medical sanction to all serious sentiment, whether of Church or Dissent, rather than any adhesion to particular tenets. If Mr. Bulstrode insisted, as he was apt to do, on the Lutheran doctrine of justification, as that by which a Church must stand or fall, Dr. Minchin in return was quite sure that man was not a mere machine or a fortuitous conjunction of atoms; if Mrs. Wimple insisted on a particular providence in relation to her stomach complaint, Dr. Minchin for his part liked to keep the mental windows open and objected to fixed limits; if the Unitarian brewer jested about the Athanasian Creed, Dr. Minchin quoted Pope's "Essay on Man." He objected to the rather free style of anecdote in which Dr. Sprague indulged, preferring well-sanctioned quotations, and liking refinement of all kinds: it was generally known that he had some kinship to a bishop, and sometimes spent his holidays at "the palace."

Dr. Minchin was soft-handed, pale-complexioned, and of rounded outline, not to be distinguished from a mild clergyman in appearance: whereas Dr. Sprague was superfluously tall; his trousers got creased at the knees, and showed an excess of boot at a time when straps seemed necessary to any dignity of bearing; you heard him go in and out, and up and down, as if he had come to see after the roofing. In short, he had weight, and might be expected to grapple with a disease and throw it; while Dr. Minchin might be better able to detect it lurking and to circumvent it. They enjoyed about equally the mysterious privilege of medical reputation, and concealed with much etiquette their contempt for

each other's skill. Regarding themselves as Middlemarch institutions, they were ready to combine against all innovators, and against non-professionals given to interference. On this ground they were both in their hearts equally averse to Mr. Bulstrode, though Dr. Minchin had never been in open hostility with him, and never differed from him without elaborate explanation to Mrs. Bulstrode, who had found that Dr. Minchin alone understood her constitution. A layman who pried into the professional conduct of medical men, and was always obtruding his reforms,—though he was less directly embarrassing to the two physicians than to the surgeon-apothecaries who attended paupers by contract, was nevertheless offensive to the professional nostril as such; and Dr. Minchin shared fully in the new pique against Bulstrode, excited by his apparent determination to patronize Lydgate. The long-established practitioners, Mr. Wrench and Mr. Toller; were just now standing apart and having a friendly colloquy, in which they agreed that Lydgate was a jackanapes, just made to serve Bulstrode's purpose. To non-medical friends they had already concurred in praising the other young practitioner, who had come into the town on Mr. Peacock's retirement without further recommendation than his own merits and such argument for solid professional acquirement as might be gathered from his having apparently wasted no time on other branches of knowledge. It was clear that Lydgate, by not dispensing drugs, intended to cast imputations on his equals, and also to obscure the limit between his own rank as a general practitioner and that of the physicians, who, in the interest of the profession, felt bound to maintain its various grades,—especially against a man who had not been to either of the English universities and enjoyed the absence of anatomical and bedside study there, but came with a libellous pretension to experience in Edinburgh and Paris, where observation might be abundant indeed, but hardly sound.

Thus it happened that on this occasion Bulstrode became identified with Lydgate, and Lydgate with Tyke; and owing to this variety of interchangeable names for the chaplaincy question, diverse minds were enabled to form the same judgment concerning it.

Dr. Sprague said at once bluntly to the group assembled when he entered, "I go for Farebrother. A salary, with all my heart. But why take it from the Vicar? He has none too much—has to insure his life, besides keeping house, and doing a vicar's charities. Put forty pounds in his pocket

and you'll do no harm. He's a good fellow, is Farebrother, with as little of the parson about him as will serve to carry orders."

"Ho, ho! Doctor," said old Mr. Powderell, a retired iron-monger of some standing—his interjection being something between a laugh and a Parliamentary disapproval; "we must let you have your say. But what we have to consider is not anybody's income—it's the souls of the poor sick people"—here Mr. Powderell's voice and face had a sincere pathos in them. "He is a real Gospel preacher, is Mr. Tyke. I should vote against my conscience if I voted against Mr. Tyke—I should indeed."

"Mr. Tyke's opponents have not asked any one to vote against his conscience, I believe," said Mr. Hackbutt, a rich tanner of fluent speech, whose glittering spectacles and erect hair were turned with some severity towards innocent Mr. Powderell. "But in my judgment it behoves us, as Directors, to consider whether we will regard it as our whole business to carry out propositions emanating from a single quarter. Will any member of the committee aver that he would have entertained the idea of displacing the gentleman who has always discharged the function of chaplain here, if it had not been suggested to him by parties whose disposition it is to regard every institution of this town as a machinery for carrying out their own views? I tax no man's motives: let them lie between himself and a higher Power; but I do say, that there are influences at work here which are incompatible with genuine independence, and that a crawling servility is usually dictated by circumstances which gentlemen so conducting themselves could not afford either morally or financially to avow. I myself am a layman, but I have given no inconsiderable attention to the divisions in the Church and—"

"Oh, damn the divisions!" burst in Mr. Frank Hawley, lawyer and town-clerk, who rarely presented himself at the board, but now looked in hurriedly, whip in hand. "We have nothing to do with them here. Farebrother has been doing the work—what there was—without pay, and if pay is to be given, it should be given to him. I call it a confounded job to take the thing away from Farebrother."

"I think it would be as well for gentlemen not to give their remarks a personal bearing," said Mr. Plymdale. "I shall vote for the appointment of Mr. Tyke, but I should not have known, if Mr. Hackbutt hadn't hinted it, that I was a Servile Crawler."

“I disclaim any personalities. I expressly said, if I may be allowed to repeat, or even to conclude what I was about to say—”

“Ah, here’s Minchin!” said Mr. Frank Hawley; at which everybody turned away from Mr. Hackbutt, leaving him to feel the uselessness of superior gifts in Middlemarch. “Come, Doctor, I must have you on the right side, eh?”

“I hope so,” said Dr. Minchin, nodding and shaking hands here and there; “at whatever cost to my feelings.”

“If there’s any feeling here, it should be feeling for the man who is turned out, I think,” said Mr. Frank Hawley.

“I confess I have feelings on the other side also. I have a divided esteem,” said Dr. Minchin, rubbing his hands. “I consider Mr. Tyke an exemplary man—none more so—and I believe him to be proposed from unimpeachable motives. I, for my part, wish that I could give him my vote. But I am constrained to take a view of the case which gives the preponderance to Mr. Farebrother’s claims. He is an amiable man, an able preacher, and has been longer among us.”

Old Mr. Powderell looked on, sad and silent. Mr. Plymdale settled his cravat, uneasily.

“You don’t set up Farebrother as a pattern of what a clergyman ought to be, I hope,” said Mr. Larcher, the eminent carrier, who had just come in. “I have no ill-will towards him, but I think we owe something to the public, not to speak of anything higher, in these appointments. In my opinion Farebrother is too lax for a clergyman. I don’t wish to bring up particulars against him; but he will make a little attendance here go as far as he can.”

“And a devilish deal better than too much,” said Mr. Hawley, whose bad language was notorious in that part of the county. “Sick people can’t bear so much praying and preaching. And that methodistical sort of religion is bad for the spirits—bad for the inside, eh?” he added, turning quickly round to the four medical men who were assembled.

But any answer was dispensed with by the entrance of three gentlemen, with whom there were greetings more or less cordial. These were the Reverend Edward Thesiger, Rector of St. Peter’s, Mr. Bulstrode, and our friend Mr. Brooke of Tipton, who had lately allowed himself to be put on the board of directors in his turn, but had never before attended, his

attendance now being due to Mr. Bulstrode's exertions. Lydgate was the only person still expected.

Every one now sat down, Mr. Bulstrode presiding, pale and self-restrained as usual. Mr. Thesiger, a moderate evangelical, wished for the appointment of his friend Mr. Tyke, a zealous able man, who, officiating at a chapel of ease, had not a cure of souls too extensive to leave him ample time for the new duty. It was desirable that chaplaincies of this kind should be entered on with a fervent intention: they were peculiar opportunities for spiritual influence; and while it was good that a salary should be allotted, there was the more need for scrupulous watching lest the office should be perverted into a mere question of salary. Mr. Thesiger's manner had so much quiet propriety that objectors could only simmer in silence.

Mr. Brooke believed that everybody meant well in the matter. He had not himself attended to the affairs of the Infirmary, though he had a strong interest in whatever was for the benefit of Middlemarch, and was most happy to meet the gentlemen present on any public question—"any public question, you know," Mr. Brooke repeated, with his nod of perfect understanding. "I am a good deal occupied as a magistrate, and in the collection of documentary evidence, but I regard my time as being at the disposal of the public—and, in short, my friends have convinced me that a chaplain with a salary—a salary, you know—is a very good thing, and I am happy to be able to come here and vote for the appointment of Mr. Tyke, who, I understand, is an unexceptionable man, apostolic and eloquent and everything of that kind—and I am the last man to withhold my vote—under the circumstances, you know."

"It seems to me that you have been crammed with one side of the question, Mr. Brooke," said Mr. Frank Hawley, who was afraid of nobody, and was a Tory suspicious of electioneering intentions. "You don't seem to know that one of the worthiest men we have has been doing duty as chaplain here for years without pay, and that Mr. Tyke is proposed to supersede him."

"Excuse me, Mr. Hawley," said Mr. Bulstrode. "Mr. Brooke has been fully informed of Mr. Farebrother's character and position."

"By his enemies," flashed out Mr. Hawley.

"I trust there is no personal hostility concerned here," said Mr. Thesiger.

"I'll swear there is, though," retorted Mr. Hawley.

“Gentlemen,” said Mr. Bulstrode, in a subdued tone, “the merits of the question may be very briefly stated, and if any one present doubts that every gentleman who is about to give his vote has not been fully informed, I can now recapitulate the considerations that should weigh on either side.”

“I don’t see the good of that,” said Mr. Hawley. “I suppose we all know whom we mean to vote for. Any man who wants to do justice does not wait till the last minute to hear both sides of the question. I have no time to lose, and I propose that the matter be put to the vote at once.”

A brief but still hot discussion followed before each person wrote “Tyke” or “Farebrother” on a piece of paper and slipped it into a glass tumbler; and in the mean time Mr. Bulstrode saw Lydgate enter.

“I perceive that the votes are equally divided at present,” said Mr. Bulstrode, in a clear biting voice. Then, looking up at Lydgate—

“There is a casting-vote still to be given. It is yours, Mr. Lydgate: will you be good enough to write?”

“The thing is settled now,” said Mr. Wrench, rising. “We all know how Mr. Lydgate will vote.”

“You seem to speak with some peculiar meaning, sir,” said Lydgate, rather defiantly, and keeping his pencil suspended.

“I merely mean that you are expected to vote with Mr. Bulstrode. Do you regard that meaning as offensive?”

“It may be offensive to others. But I shall not desist from voting with him on that account.” Lydgate immediately wrote down “Tyke.”

So the Rev. Walter Tyke became chaplain to the Infirmary, and Lydgate continued to work with Mr. Bulstrode. He was really uncertain whether Tyke were not the more suitable candidate, and yet his consciousness told him that if he had been quite free from indirect bias he should have voted for Mr. Farebrother. The affair of the chaplaincy remained a sore point in his memory as a case in which this petty medium of Middlemarch had been too strong for him. How could a man be satisfied with a decision between such alternatives and under such circumstances? No more than he can be satisfied with his hat, which he has chosen from among such shapes

as the resources of the age offer him, wearing it at best with a resignation which is chiefly supported by comparison.

But Mr. Farebrother met him with the same friendliness as before. The character of the publican and sinner is not always practically incompatible with that of the modern Pharisee, for the majority of us scarcely see more distinctly the faultiness of our own conduct than the faultiness of our own arguments, or the dulness of our own jokes. But the Vicar of St. Botolph's had certainly escaped the slightest tincture of the Pharisee, and by dint of admitting to himself that he was too much as other men were, he had become remarkably unlike them in this—that he could excuse others for thinking slightly of him, and could judge impartially of their conduct even when it told against him.

“The world has been too strong for *me*, I know,” he said one day to Lydgate. “But then I am not a mighty man—I shall never be a man of renown. The choice of Hercules is a pretty fable; but Prodicus makes it easy work for the hero, as if the first resolves were enough. Another story says that he came to hold the distaff, and at last wore the Nessus shirt. I suppose one good resolve might keep a man right if everybody else's resolve helped him.”

The Vicar's talk was not always inspiring: he had escaped being a Pharisee, but he had not escaped that low estimate of possibilities which we rather hastily arrive at as an inference from our own failure. Lydgate thought that there was a pitiable infirmity of will in Mr. Farebrother.



## CHAPTER XIX.

“L’ altra vedete ch’ha fatto alla guancia  
Della sua palma, sospirando, letto.”  
—*Purgatorio*, vii.

When George the Fourth was still reigning over the privacies of Windsor, when the Duke of Wellington was Prime Minister, and Mr. Vincy was mayor of the old corporation in Middlemarch, Mrs. Casaubon, born Dorothea Brooke, had taken her wedding journey to Rome. In those days the world in general was more ignorant of good and evil by forty years than it is at present. Travellers did not often carry full information on Christian art either in their heads or their pockets; and even the most brilliant English critic of the day mistook the flower-flushed tomb of the ascended Virgin for an ornamental vase due to the painter’s fancy. Romanticism, which has helped to fill some dull blanks with love and knowledge, had not yet penetrated the times with its leaven and entered into everybody’s food; it was fermenting still as a distinguishable vigorous enthusiasm in certain long-haired German artists at Rome, and the youth of other nations who worked or idled near them were sometimes caught in the spreading movement.

One fine morning a young man whose hair was not immoderately long, but abundant and curly, and who was otherwise English in his equipment, had just turned his back on the Belvedere Torso in the Vatican and was looking out on the magnificent view of the mountains from the adjoining round vestibule. He was sufficiently absorbed not to notice the approach of a dark-eyed, animated German who came up to him and placing a hand on his shoulder, said with a strong accent, “Come here, quick! else she will have changed her pose.”

Quickness was ready at the call, and the two figures passed lightly along by the Meleager, towards the hall where the reclining Ariadne, then called the Cleopatra, lies in the marble voluptuousness of her beauty, the drapery folding around her with a petal-like ease and tenderness. They were just in time to see another figure standing against a pedestal near the reclining

marble: a breathing blooming girl, whose form, not shamed by the Ariadne, was clad in Quakerish gray drapery; her long cloak, fastened at the neck, was thrown backward from her arms, and one beautiful unglowed hand pillowed her cheek, pushing somewhat backward the white beaver bonnet which made a sort of halo to her face around the simply braided dark-brown hair. She was not looking at the sculpture, probably not thinking of it: her large eyes were fixed dreamily on a streak of sunlight which fell across the floor. But she became conscious of the two strangers who suddenly paused as if to contemplate the Cleopatra, and, without looking at them, immediately turned away to join a maid-servant and courier who were loitering along the hall at a little distance off.

“What do you think of that for a fine bit of antithesis?” said the German, searching in his friend’s face for responding admiration, but going on volubly without waiting for any other answer. “There lies antique beauty, not corpse-like even in death, but arrested in the complete contentment of its sensuous perfection: and here stands beauty in its breathing life, with the consciousness of Christian centuries in its bosom. But she should be dressed as a nun; I think she looks almost what you call a Quaker; I would dress her as a nun in my picture. However, she is married; I saw her wedding-ring on that wonderful left hand, otherwise I should have thought the sallow *Geistlicher* was her father. I saw him parting from her a good while ago, and just now I found her in that magnificent pose. Only think! he is perhaps rich, and would like to have her portrait taken. Ah! it is no use looking after her—there she goes! Let us follow her home!”

“No, no,” said his companion, with a little frown.

“You are singular, Ladislav. You look struck together. Do you know her?”

“I know that she is married to my cousin,” said Will Ladislav, sauntering down the hall with a preoccupied air, while his German friend kept at his side and watched him eagerly.

“What! the *Geistlicher*? He looks more like an uncle—a more useful sort of relation.”

“He is not my uncle. I tell you he is my second cousin,” said Ladislav, with some irritation.

“Schön, schön. Don’t be snappish. You are not angry with me for thinking Mrs. Second-Cousin the most perfect young Madonna I ever saw?”

“Angry? nonsense. I have only seen her once before, for a couple of minutes, when my cousin introduced her to me, just before I left England. They were not married then. I didn’t know they were coming to Rome.”

“But you will go to see them now—you will find out what they have for an address—since you know the name. Shall we go to the post? And you could speak about the portrait.”

“Confound you, Naumann! I don’t know what I shall do. I am not so brazen as you.”

“Bah! that is because you are dilettantish and amateurish. If you were an artist, you would think of Mistress Second-Cousin as antique form animated by Christian sentiment—a sort of Christian Antigone—sensuous force controlled by spiritual passion.”

“Yes, and that your painting her was the chief outcome of her existence—the divinity passing into higher completeness and all but exhausted in the act of covering your bit of canvas. I am amateurish if you like: I do *not* think that all the universe is straining towards the obscure significance of your pictures.”

“But it is, my dear!—so far as it is straining through me, Adolf Naumann: that stands firm,” said the good-natured painter, putting a hand on Ladislav’s shoulder, and not in the least disturbed by the unaccountable touch of ill-humor in his tone. “See now! My existence presupposes the existence of the whole universe—does it *not*? and my function is to paint—and as a painter I have a conception which is altogether *genialisch*, of your great-aunt or second grandmother as a subject for a picture; therefore, the universe is straining towards that picture through that particular hook or claw which it puts forth in the shape of me—not true?”

“But how if another claw in the shape of me is straining to thwart it?—the case is a little less simple then.”

“Not at all: the result of the struggle is the same thing—picture or no picture—logically.”

Will could not resist this imperturbable temper, and the cloud in his face broke into sunshiny laughter.

“Come now, my friend—you will help?” said Naumann, in a hopeful tone.

“No; nonsense, Naumann! English ladies are not at everybody’s service as models. And you want to express too much with your painting. You would only have made a better or worse portrait with a background which every connoisseur would give a different reason for or against. And what is a portrait of a woman? Your painting and Plastik are poor stuff after all. They perturb and dull conceptions instead of raising them. Language is a finer medium.”

“Yes, for those who can’t paint,” said Naumann. “There you have perfect right. I did not recommend you to paint, my friend.”

The amiable artist carried his sting, but Ladislaw did not choose to appear stung. He went on as if he had not heard.

“Language gives a fuller image, which is all the better for being vague. After all, the true seeing is within; and painting stares at you with an insistent imperfection. I feel that especially about representations of women. As if a woman were a mere colored superficies! You must wait for movement and tone. There is a difference in their very breathing: they change from moment to moment.—This woman whom you have just seen, for example: how would you paint her voice, pray? But her voice is much diviner than anything you have seen of her.”

“I see, I see. You are jealous. No man must presume to think that he can paint your ideal. This is serious, my friend! Your great-aunt! ‘Der Neffe als Onkel’ in a tragic sense—*ungeheuer!*”

“You and I shall quarrel, Naumann, if you call that lady my aunt again.”

“How is she to be called then?”

“Mrs. Casaubon.”

“Good. Suppose I get acquainted with her in spite of you, and find that she very much wishes to be painted?”

“Yes, suppose!” said Will Ladislaw, in a contemptuous undertone, intended to dismiss the subject. He was conscious of being irritated by ridiculously small causes, which were half of his own creation. Why was he making any fuss about Mrs. Casaubon? And yet he felt as if something had happened to him with regard to her. There are characters which are continually creating collisions and nodes for themselves in dramas which

nobody is prepared to act with them. Their susceptibilities will clash against objects that remain innocently quiet.

## CHAPTER XX.

“A child forsaken, waking suddenly,  
Whose gaze afeard on all things round doth rove,  
And seeth only that it cannot see  
The meeting eyes of love.”

Two hours later, Dorothea was seated in an inner room or boudoir of a handsome apartment in the Via Sistina.

I am sorry to add that she was sobbing bitterly, with such abandonment to this relief of an oppressed heart as a woman habitually controlled by pride on her own account and thoughtfulness for others will sometimes allow herself when she feels securely alone. And Mr. Casaubon was certain to remain away for some time at the Vatican.

Yet Dorothea had no distinctly shapen grievance that she could state even to herself; and in the midst of her confused thought and passion, the mental act that was struggling forth into clearness was a self-accusing cry that her feeling of desolation was the fault of her own spiritual poverty. She had married the man of her choice, and with the advantage over most girls that she had contemplated her marriage chiefly as the beginning of new duties: from the very first she had thought of Mr. Casaubon as having a mind so much above her own, that he must often be claimed by studies which she could not entirely share; moreover, after the brief narrow experience of her girlhood she was beholding Rome, the city of visible history, where the past of a whole hemisphere seems moving in funeral procession with strange ancestral images and trophies gathered from afar.

But this stupendous fragmentariness heightened the dreamlike strangeness of her bridal life. Dorothea had now been five weeks in Rome, and in the kindly mornings when autumn and winter seemed to go hand in hand like a happy aged couple one of whom would presently survive in chiller loneliness, she had driven about at first with Mr. Casaubon, but of late chiefly with Tantripp and their experienced courier. She had been led through the best galleries, had been taken to the chief points of view, had been shown the grandest ruins and the most glorious churches, and she had

ended by oftenest choosing to drive out to the Campagna where she could feel alone with the earth and sky, away-from the oppressive masquerade of ages, in which her own life too seemed to become a masque with enigmatical costumes.

To those who have looked at Rome with the quickening power of a knowledge which breathes a growing soul into all historic shapes, and traces out the suppressed transitions which unite all contrasts, Rome may still be the spiritual centre and interpreter of the world. But let them conceive one more historical contrast: the gigantic broken revelations of that Imperial and Papal city thrust abruptly on the notions of a girl who had been brought up in English and Swiss Puritanism, fed on meagre Protestant histories and on art chiefly of the hand-screen sort; a girl whose ardent nature turned all her small allowance of knowledge into principles, fusing her actions into their mould, and whose quick emotions gave the most abstract things the quality of a pleasure or a pain; a girl who had lately become a wife, and from the enthusiastic acceptance of untried duty found herself plunged in tumultuous preoccupation with her personal lot. The weight of unintelligible Rome might lie easily on bright nymphs to whom it formed a background for the brilliant picnic of Anglo-foreign society; but Dorothea had no such defence against deep impressions. Ruins and basilicas, palaces and colossi, set in the midst of a sordid present, where all that was living and warm-blooded seemed sunk in the deep degeneracy of a superstition divorced from reverence; the dimmer but yet eager Titanic life gazing and struggling on walls and ceilings; the long vistas of white forms whose marble eyes seemed to hold the monotonous light of an alien world: all this vast wreck of ambitious ideals, sensuous and spiritual, mixed confusedly with the signs of breathing forgetfulness and degradation, at first jarred her as with an electric shock, and then urged themselves on her with that ache belonging to a glut of confused ideas which check the flow of emotion. Forms both pale and glowing took possession of her young sense, and fixed themselves in her memory even when she was not thinking of them, preparing strange associations which remained through her after-years. Our moods are apt to bring with them images which succeed each other like the magic-lantern pictures of a doze; and in certain states of dull forlornness Dorothea all her life continued to see the vastness of St. Peter's, the huge bronze canopy, the excited intention in the attitudes and garments of the prophets and evangelists in

the mosaics above, and the red drapery which was being hung for Christmas spreading itself everywhere like a disease of the retina.

Not that this inward amazement of Dorothea's was anything very exceptional: many souls in their young nudity are tumbled out among incongruities and left to "find their feet" among them, while their elders go about their business. Nor can I suppose that when Mrs. Casaubon is discovered in a fit of weeping six weeks after her wedding, the situation will be regarded as tragic. Some discouragement, some faintness of heart at the new real future which replaces the imaginary, is not unusual, and we do not expect people to be deeply moved by what is not unusual. That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency, has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity.

However, Dorothea was crying, and if she had been required to state the cause, she could only have done so in some such general words as I have already used: to have been driven to be more particular would have been like trying to give a history of the lights and shadows, for that new real future which was replacing the imaginary drew its material from the endless minutiae by which her view of Mr. Casaubon and her wifely relation, now that she was married to him, was gradually changing with the secret motion of a watch-hand from what it had been in her maiden dream. It was too early yet for her fully to recognize or at least admit the change, still more for her to have readjusted that devotedness which was so necessary a part of her mental life that she was almost sure sooner or later to recover it. Permanent rebellion, the disorder of a life without some loving reverent resolve, was not possible to her; but she was now in an interval when the very force of her nature heightened its confusion. In this way, the early months of marriage often are times of critical tumult—whether that of a shrimp-pool or of deeper waters—which afterwards subsides into cheerful peace.

But was not Mr. Casaubon just as learned as before? Had his forms of expression changed, or his sentiments become less laudable? Oh



waywardness of womanhood! did his chronology fail him, or his ability to state not only a theory but the names of those who held it; or his provision for giving the heads of any subject on demand? And was not Rome the place in all the world to give free play to such accomplishments? Besides, had not Dorothea's enthusiasm especially dwelt on the prospect of relieving the weight and perhaps the sadness with which great tasks lie on him who has to achieve them?— And that such weight pressed on Mr. Casaubon was only plainer than before.

All these are crushing questions; but whatever else remained the same, the light had changed, and you cannot find the pearly dawn at noonday. The fact is unalterable, that a fellow-mortal with whose nature you are acquainted solely through the brief entrances and exits of a few imaginative weeks called courtship, may, when seen in the continuity of married companionship, be disclosed as something better or worse than what you have preconceived, but will certainly not appear altogether the same. And it would be astonishing to find how soon the change is felt if we had no kindred changes to compare with it. To share lodgings with a brilliant dinner-companion, or to see your favorite politician in the Ministry, may bring about changes quite as rapid: in these cases too we begin by knowing little and believing much, and we sometimes end by inverting the quantities.

Still, such comparisons might mislead, for no man was more incapable of flashy make-believe than Mr. Casaubon: he was as genuine a character as any ruminant animal, and he had not actively assisted in creating any illusions about himself. How was it that in the weeks since her marriage, Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression, that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband's mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither? I suppose it was that in courtship everything is regarded as provisional and preliminary, and the smallest sample of virtue or accomplishment is taken to guarantee delightful stores which the broad leisure of marriage will reveal. But the door-sill of marriage once crossed, expectation is concentrated on the present. Having once embarked on your marital voyage, it is impossible not to be aware that you make no way and that the sea is not within sight—that, in fact, you are exploring an enclosed basin.

In their conversation before marriage, Mr. Casaubon had often dwelt on some explanation or questionable detail of which Dorothea did not see the bearing; but such imperfect coherence seemed due to the brokenness of their intercourse, and, supported by her faith in their future, she had listened with fervid patience to a recitation of possible arguments to be brought against Mr. Casaubon's entirely new view of the Philistine god Dagon and other fish-deities, thinking that hereafter she should see this subject which touched him so nearly from the same high ground whence doubtless it had become so important to him. Again, the matter-of-course statement and tone of dismissal with which he treated what to her were the most stirring thoughts, was easily accounted for as belonging to the sense of haste and preoccupation in which she herself shared during their engagement. But now, since they had been in Rome, with all the depths of her emotion roused to tumultuous activity, and with life made a new problem by new elements, she had been becoming more and more aware, with a certain terror, that her mind was continually sliding into inward fits of anger and repulsion, or else into forlorn weariness. How far the judicious Hooker or any other hero of erudition would have been the same at Mr. Casaubon's time of life, she had no means of knowing, so that he could not have the advantage of comparison; but her husband's way of commenting on the strangely impressive objects around them had begun to affect her with a sort of mental shiver: he had perhaps the best intention of acquitting himself worthily, but only of acquitting himself. What was fresh to her mind was worn out to his; and such capacity of thought and feeling as had ever been stimulated in him by the general life of mankind had long shrunk to a sort of dried preparation, a lifeless embalment of knowledge.

When he said, "Does this interest you, Dorothea? Shall we stay a little longer? I am ready to stay if you wish it,"—it seemed to her as if going or staying were alike dreary. Or, "Should you like to go to the Farnesina, Dorothea? It contains celebrated frescos designed or painted by Raphael, which most persons think it worth while to visit."

"But do you care about them?" was always Dorothea's question.

"They are, I believe, highly esteemed. Some of them represent the fable of Cupid and Psyche, which is probably the romantic invention of a literary period, and cannot, I think, be reckoned as a genuine mythical product. But if you like these wall-paintings we can easily drive thither;

and you will then, I think, have seen the chief works of Raphael, any of which it were a pity to omit in a visit to Rome. He is the painter who has been held to combine the most complete grace of form with sublimity of expression. Such at least I have gathered to be the opinion of cognoscenti.”

This kind of answer given in a measured official tone, as of a clergyman reading according to the rubric, did not help to justify the glories of the Eternal City, or to give her the hope that if she knew more about them the world would be joyously illuminated for her. There is hardly any contact more depressing to a young ardent creature than that of a mind in which years full of knowledge seem to have issued in a blank absence of interest or sympathy.

On other subjects indeed Mr. Casaubon showed a tenacity of occupation and an eagerness which are usually regarded as the effect of enthusiasm, and Dorothea was anxious to follow this spontaneous direction of his thoughts, instead of being made to feel that she dragged him away from it. But she was gradually ceasing to expect with her former delightful confidence that she should see any wide opening where she followed him. Poor Mr. Casaubon himself was lost among small closets and winding stairs, and in an agitated dimness about the Cabeiri, or in an exposure of other mythologists' ill-considered parallels, easily lost sight of any purpose which had prompted him to these labors. With his taper stuck before him he forgot the absence of windows, and in bitter manuscript remarks on other men's notions about the solar deities, he had become indifferent to the sunlight.

These characteristics, fixed and unchangeable as bone in Mr. Casaubon, might have remained longer unfelt by Dorothea if she had been encouraged to pour forth her girlish and womanly feeling—if he would have held her hands between his and listened with the delight of tenderness and understanding to all the little histories which made up her experience, and would have given her the same sort of intimacy in return, so that the past life of each could be included in their mutual knowledge and affection—or if she could have fed her affection with those childlike caresses which are the bent of every sweet woman, who has begun by showering kisses on the hard pate of her bald doll, creating a happy soul within that woodenness from the wealth of her own love. That was Dorothea's bent. With all her yearning to know what was afar from her and

to be widely benignant, she had ardor enough for what was near, to have kissed Mr. Casaubon's coat-sleeve, or to have caressed his shoe-latchet, if he would have made any other sign of acceptance than pronouncing her, with his unfailing propriety, to be of a most affectionate and truly feminine nature, indicating at the same time by politely reaching a chair for her that he regarded these manifestations as rather crude and startling. Having made his clerical toilet with due care in the morning, he was prepared only for those amenities of life which were suited to the well-adjusted stiff cravat of the period, and to a mind weighted with unpublished matter.

And by a sad contradiction Dorothea's ideas and resolves seemed like melting ice floating and lost in the warm flood of which they had been but another form. She was humiliated to find herself a mere victim of feeling, as if she could know nothing except through that medium: all her strength was scattered in fits of agitation, of struggle, of despondency, and then again in visions of more complete renunciation, transforming all hard conditions into duty. Poor Dorothea! she was certainly troublesome—to herself chiefly; but this morning for the first time she had been troublesome to Mr. Casaubon.

She had begun, while they were taking coffee, with a determination to shake off what she inwardly called her selfishness, and turned a face all cheerful attention to her husband when he said, "My dear Dorothea, we must now think of all that is yet left undone, as a preliminary to our departure. I would fain have returned home earlier that we might have been at Lowick for the Christmas; but my inquiries here have been protracted beyond their anticipated period. I trust, however, that the time here has not been passed unpleasantly to you. Among the sights of Europe, that of Rome has ever been held one of the most striking and in some respects edifying. I well remember that I considered it an epoch in my life when I visited it for the first time; after the fall of Napoleon, an event which opened the Continent to travellers. Indeed I think it is one among several cities to which an extreme hyperbole has been applied—'See Rome and die:' but in your case I would propose an emendation and say, See Rome as a bride, and live henceforth as a happy wife."

Mr. Casaubon pronounced this little speech with the most conscientious intention, blinking a little and swaying his head up and down, and

concluding with a smile. He had not found marriage a rapturous state, but he had no idea of being anything else than an irreproachable husband, who would make a charming young woman as happy as she deserved to be.

“I hope you are thoroughly satisfied with our stay—I mean, with the result so far as your studies are concerned,” said Dorothea, trying to keep her mind fixed on what most affected her husband.

“Yes,” said Mr. Casaubon, with that peculiar pitch of voice which makes the word half a negative. “I have been led farther than I had foreseen, and various subjects for annotation have presented themselves which, though I have no direct need of them, I could not pretermitt. The task, notwithstanding the assistance of my amanuensis, has been a somewhat laborious one, but your society has happily prevented me from that too continuous prosecution of thought beyond the hours of study which has been the snare of my solitary life.”

“I am very glad that my presence has made any difference to you,” said Dorothea, who had a vivid memory of evenings in which she had supposed that Mr. Casaubon’s mind had gone too deep during the day to be able to get to the surface again. I fear there was a little temper in her reply. “I hope when we get to Lowick, I shall be more useful to you, and be able to enter a little more into what interests you.”

“Doubtless, my dear,” said Mr. Casaubon, with a slight bow. “The notes I have here made will want sifting, and you can, if you please, extract them under my direction.”

“And all your notes,” said Dorothea, whose heart had already burned within her on this subject, so that now she could not help speaking with her tongue. “All those rows of volumes—will you not now do what you used to speak of?—will you not make up your mind what part of them you will use, and begin to write the book which will make your vast knowledge useful to the world? I will write to your dictation, or I will copy and extract what you tell me: I can be of no other use.” Dorothea, in a most unaccountable, darkly feminine manner, ended with a slight sob and eyes full of tears.

The excessive feeling manifested would alone have been highly disturbing to Mr. Casaubon, but there were other reasons why Dorothea’s words were among the most cutting and irritating to him that she could have been impelled to use. She was as blind to his inward troubles as he to

hers: she had not yet learned those hidden conflicts in her husband which claim our pity. She had not yet listened patiently to his heartbeats, but only felt that her own was beating violently. In Mr. Casaubon's ear, Dorothea's voice gave loud emphatic iteration to those muffled suggestions of consciousness which it was possible to explain as mere fancy, the illusion of exaggerated sensitiveness: always when such suggestions are unmistakably repeated from without, they are resisted as cruel and unjust. We are angered even by the full acceptance of our humiliating confessions—how much more by hearing in hard distinct syllables from the lips of a near observer, those confused murmurs which we try to call morbid, and strive against as if they were the oncoming of numbness! And this cruel outward accuser was there in the shape of a wife—nay, of a young bride, who, instead of observing his abundant pen-scratches and amplitude of paper with the uncritical awe of an elegant-minded canary-bird, seemed to present herself as a spy watching everything with a malign power of inference. Here, towards this particular point of the compass, Mr. Casaubon had a sensitiveness to match Dorothea's, and an equal quickness to imagine more than the fact. He had formerly observed with approbation her capacity for worshipping the right object; he now foresaw with sudden terror that this capacity might be replaced by presumption, this worship by the most exasperating of all criticism,—that which sees vaguely a great many fine ends, and has not the least notion what it costs to reach them.

For the first time since Dorothea had known him, Mr. Casaubon's face had a quick angry flush upon it.

“My love,” he said, with irritation reined in by propriety, “you may rely upon me for knowing the times and the seasons, adapted to the different stages of a work which is not to be measured by the facile conjectures of ignorant onlookers. It had been easy for me to gain a temporary effect by a mirage of baseless opinion; but it is ever the trial of the scrupulous explorer to be saluted with the impatient scorn of chatterers who attempt only the smallest achievements, being indeed equipped for no other. And it were well if all such could be admonished to discriminate judgments of which the true subject-matter lies entirely beyond their reach, from those of which the elements may be compassed by a narrow and superficial survey.”

This speech was delivered with an energy and readiness quite unusual with Mr. Casaubon. It was not indeed entirely an improvisation, but had taken shape in inward colloquy, and rushed out like the round grains from a fruit when sudden heat cracks it. Dorothea was not only his wife: she was a personification of that shallow world which surrounds the appreciated or desponding author.

Dorothea was indignant in her turn. Had she not been repressing everything in herself except the desire to enter into some fellowship with her husband's chief interests?

"My judgment *was* a very superficial one—such as I am capable of forming," she answered, with a prompt resentment, that needed no rehearsal. "You showed me the rows of notebooks—you have often spoken of them—you have often said that they wanted digesting. But I never heard you speak of the writing that is to be published. Those were very simple facts, and my judgment went no farther. I only begged you to let me be of some good to you."

Dorothea rose to leave the table and Mr. Casaubon made no reply, taking up a letter which lay beside him as if to re-peruse it. Both were shocked at their mutual situation—that each should have betrayed anger towards the other. If they had been at home, settled at Lowick in ordinary life among their neighbors, the clash would have been less embarrassing: but on a wedding journey, the express object of which is to isolate two people on the ground that they are all the world to each other, the sense of disagreement is, to say the least, confounding and stultifying. To have changed your longitude extensively and placed yourselves in a moral solitude in order to have small explosions, to find conversation difficult and to hand a glass of water without looking, can hardly be regarded as satisfactory fulfilment even to the toughest minds. To Dorothea's inexperienced sensitiveness, it seemed like a catastrophe, changing all prospects; and to Mr. Casaubon it was a new pain, he never having been on a wedding journey before, or found himself in that close union which was more of a subjection than he had been able to imagine, since this charming young bride not only obliged him to much consideration on her behalf (which he had sedulously given), but turned out to be capable of agitating him cruelly just where he most needed soothing. Instead of getting a soft

fence against the cold, shadowy, unapplaudive audience of his life, had he only given it a more substantial presence?

Neither of them felt it possible to speak again at present. To have reversed a previous arrangement and declined to go out would have been a show of persistent anger which Dorothea's conscience shrank from, seeing that she already began to feel herself guilty. However just her indignation might be, her ideal was not to claim justice, but to give tenderness. So when the carriage came to the door, she drove with Mr. Casaubon to the Vatican, walked with him through the stony avenue of inscriptions, and when she parted with him at the entrance to the Library, went on through the Museum out of mere listlessness as to what was around her. She had not spirit to turn round and say that she would drive anywhere. It was when Mr. Casaubon was quitting her that Naumann had first seen her, and he had entered the long gallery of sculpture at the same time with her; but here Naumann had to await Ladislaw with whom he was to settle a bet of champagne about an enigmatical mediaeval-looking figure there. After they had examined the figure, and had walked on finishing their dispute, they had parted, Ladislaw lingering behind while Naumann had gone into the Hall of Statues where he again saw Dorothea, and saw her in that brooding abstraction which made her pose remarkable. She did not really see the streak of sunlight on the floor more than she saw the statues: she was inwardly seeing the light of years to come in her own home and over the English fields and elms and hedge-bordered highroads; and feeling that the way in which they might be filled with joyful devotedness was not so clear to her as it had been. But in Dorothea's mind there was a current into which all thought and feeling were apt sooner or later to flow—the reaching forward of the whole consciousness towards the fullest truth, the least partial good. There was clearly something better than anger and despondency.



## CHAPTER XXI.

“Hire facounde eke full womanly and plain,  
No contrefeted termes had she  
To semen wise.”  
—CHAUCER.

It was in that way Dorothea came to be sobbing as soon as she was securely alone. But she was presently roused by a knock at the door, which made her hastily dry her eyes before saying, “Come in.” Tantripp had brought a card, and said that there was a gentleman waiting in the lobby. The courier had told him that only Mrs. Casaubon was at home, but he said he was a relation of Mr. Casaubon’s: would she see him?

“Yes,” said Dorothea, without pause; “show him into the salon.” Her chief impressions about young Ladislaw were that when she had seen him at Lowick she had been made aware of Mr. Casaubon’s generosity towards him, and also that she had been interested in his own hesitation about his career. She was alive to anything that gave her an opportunity for active sympathy, and at this moment it seemed as if the visit had come to shake her out of her self-absorbed discontent—to remind her of her husband’s goodness, and make her feel that she had now the right to be his helpmate in all kind deeds. She waited a minute or two, but when she passed into the next room there were just signs enough that she had been crying to make her open face look more youthful and appealing than usual. She met Ladislaw with that exquisite smile of good-will which is unmixed with vanity, and held out her hand to him. He was the elder by several years, but at that moment he looked much the younger, for his transparent complexion flushed suddenly, and he spoke with a shyness extremely unlike the ready indifference of his manner with his male companion, while Dorothea became all the calmer with a wondering desire to put him at ease.

“I was not aware that you and Mr. Casaubon were in Rome, until this morning, when I saw you in the Vatican Museum,” he said. “I knew you at once—but—I mean, that I concluded Mr. Casaubon’s address would be

found at the Poste Restante, and I was anxious to pay my respects to him and you as early as possible.”

“Pray sit down. He is not here now, but he will be glad to hear of you, I am sure,” said Dorothea, seating herself unthinkingly between the fire and the light of the tall window, and pointing to a chair opposite, with the quietude of a benignant matron. The signs of girlish sorrow in her face were only the more striking. “Mr. Casaubon is much engaged; but you will leave your address—will you not?—and he will write to you.”

“You are very good,” said Ladislav, beginning to lose his diffidence in the interest with which he was observing the signs of weeping which had altered her face. “My address is on my card. But if you will allow me I will call again to-morrow at an hour when Mr. Casaubon is likely to be at home.”

“He goes to read in the Library of the Vatican every day, and you can hardly see him except by an appointment. Especially now. We are about to leave Rome, and he is very busy. He is usually away almost from breakfast till dinner. But I am sure he will wish you to dine with us.”

Will Ladislav was struck mute for a few moments. He had never been fond of Mr. Casaubon, and if it had not been for the sense of obligation, would have laughed at him as a Bat of erudition. But the idea of this dried-up pedant, this elaborator of small explanations about as important as the surplus stock of false antiquities kept in a vendor’s back chamber, having first got this adorable young creature to marry him, and then passing his honeymoon away from her, groping after his mouldy futilities (Will was given to hyperbole)—this sudden picture stirred him with a sort of comic disgust: he was divided between the impulse to laugh aloud and the equally unseasonable impulse to burst into scornful invective.

For an instant he felt that the struggle was causing a queer contortion of his mobile features, but with a good effort he resolved it into nothing more offensive than a merry smile.

Dorothea wondered; but the smile was irresistible, and shone back from her face too. Will Ladislav’s smile was delightful, unless you were angry with him beforehand: it was a gush of inward light illuminating the transparent skin as well as the eyes, and playing about every curve and line as if some Ariel were touching them with a new charm, and banishing forever the traces of moodiness. The reflection of that smile could not but

have a little merriment in it too, even under dark eyelashes still moist, as Dorothea said inquiringly, "Something amuses you?"

"Yes," said Will, quick in finding resources. "I am thinking of the sort of figure I cut the first time I saw you, when you annihilated my poor sketch with your criticism."

"My criticism?" said Dorothea, wondering still more. "Surely not. I always feel particularly ignorant about painting."

"I suspected you of knowing so much, that you knew how to say just what was most cutting. You said—I dare say you don't remember it as I do—that the relation of my sketch to nature was quite hidden from you. At least, you implied that." Will could laugh now as well as smile.

"That was really my ignorance," said Dorothea, admiring Will's good-humor. "I must have said so only because I never could see any beauty in the pictures which my uncle told me all judges thought very fine. And I have gone about with just the same ignorance in Rome. There are comparatively few paintings that I can really enjoy. At first when I enter a room where the walls are covered with frescos, or with rare pictures, I feel a kind of awe—like a child present at great ceremonies where there are grand robes and processions; I feel myself in the presence of some higher life than my own. But when I begin to examine the pictures one by one the life goes out of them, or else is something violent and strange to me. It must be my own dulness. I am seeing so much all at once, and not understanding half of it. That always makes one feel stupid. It is painful to be told that anything is very fine and not be able to feel that it is fine—something like being blind, while people talk of the sky."

"Oh, there is a great deal in the feeling for art which must be acquired," said Will. (It was impossible now to doubt the directness of Dorothea's confession.) "Art is an old language with a great many artificial affected styles, and sometimes the chief pleasure one gets out of knowing them is the mere sense of knowing. I enjoy the art of all sorts here immensely; but I suppose if I could pick my enjoyment to pieces I should find it made up of many different threads. There is something in daubing a little one's self, and having an idea of the process."

"You mean perhaps to be a painter?" said Dorothea, with a new direction of interest. "You mean to make painting your profession? Mr. Casaubon will like to hear that you have chosen a profession."

“No, oh no,” said Will, with some coldness. “I have quite made up my mind against it. It is too one-sided a life. I have been seeing a great deal of the German artists here: I travelled from Frankfort with one of them. Some are fine, even brilliant fellows—but I should not like to get into their way of looking at the world entirely from the studio point of view.”

“That I can understand,” said Dorothea, cordially. “And in Rome it seems as if there were so many things which are more wanted in the world than pictures. But if you have a genius for painting, would it not be right to take that as a guide? Perhaps you might do better things than these—or different, so that there might not be so many pictures almost all alike in the same place.”

There was no mistaking this simplicity, and Will was won by it into frankness. “A man must have a very rare genius to make changes of that sort. I am afraid mine would not carry me even to the pitch of doing well what has been done already, at least not so well as to make it worth while. And I should never succeed in anything by dint of drudgery. If things don’t come easily to me I never get them.”

“I have heard Mr. Casaubon say that he regrets your want of patience,” said Dorothea, gently. She was rather shocked at this mode of taking all life as a holiday.

“Yes, I know Mr. Casaubon’s opinion. He and I differ.”

The slight streak of contempt in this hasty reply offended Dorothea. She was all the more susceptible about Mr. Casaubon because of her morning’s trouble.

“Certainly you differ,” she said, rather proudly. “I did not think of comparing you: such power of persevering devoted labor as Mr. Casaubon’s is not common.”

Will saw that she was offended, but this only gave an additional impulse to the new irritation of his latent dislike towards Mr. Casaubon. It was too intolerable that Dorothea should be worshipping this husband: such weakness in a woman is pleasant to no man but the husband in question. Mortals are easily tempted to pinch the life out of their neighbor’s buzzing glory, and think that such killing is no murder.

“No, indeed,” he answered, promptly. “And therefore it is a pity that it should be thrown away, as so much English scholarship is, for want of

knowing what is being done by the rest of the world. If Mr. Casaubon read German he would save himself a great deal of trouble.”

“I do not understand you,” said Dorothea, startled and anxious.

“I merely mean,” said Will, in an offhand way, “that the Germans have taken the lead in historical inquiries, and they laugh at results which are got by groping about in woods with a pocket-compass while they have made good roads. When I was with Mr. Casaubon I saw that he deafened himself in that direction: it was almost against his will that he read a Latin treatise written by a German. I was very sorry.”

Will only thought of giving a good pinch that would annihilate that vaunted laboriousness, and was unable to imagine the mode in which Dorothea would be wounded. Young Mr. Ladislaw was not at all deep himself in German writers; but very little achievement is required in order to pity another man’s shortcomings.

Poor Dorothea felt a pang at the thought that the labor of her husband’s life might be void, which left her no energy to spare for the question whether this young relative who was so much obliged to him ought not to have repressed his observation. She did not even speak, but sat looking at her hands, absorbed in the piteousness of that thought.

Will, however, having given that annihilating pinch, was rather ashamed, imagining from Dorothea’s silence that he had offended her still more; and having also a conscience about plucking the tail-feathers from a benefactor.

“I regretted it especially,” he resumed, taking the usual course from detraction to insincere eulogy, “because of my gratitude and respect towards my cousin. It would not signify so much in a man whose talents and character were less distinguished.”

Dorothea raised her eyes, brighter than usual with excited feeling, and said in her saddest recitative, “How I wish I had learned German when I was at Lausanne! There were plenty of German teachers. But now I can be of no use.”

There was a new light, but still a mysterious light, for Will in Dorothea’s last words. The question how she had come to accept Mr. Casaubon—which he had dismissed when he first saw her by saying that she must be disagreeable in spite of appearances—was not now to be

answered on any such short and easy method. Whatever else she might be, she was not disagreeable. She was not coldly clever and indirectly satirical, but adorably simple and full of feeling. She was an angel beguiled. It would be a unique delight to wait and watch for the melodious fragments in which her heart and soul came forth so directly and ingenuously. The Aeolian harp again came into his mind.

She must have made some original romance for herself in this marriage. And if Mr. Casaubon had been a dragon who had carried her off to his lair with his talons simply and without legal forms, it would have been an unavoidable feat of heroism to release her and fall at her feet. But he was something more unmanageable than a dragon: he was a benefactor with collective society at his back, and he was at that moment entering the room in all the unimpeachable correctness of his demeanor, while Dorothea was looking animated with a newly roused alarm and regret, and Will was looking animated with his admiring speculation about her feelings.

Mr. Casaubon felt a surprise which was quite unmixed with pleasure, but he did not swerve from his usual politeness of greeting, when Will rose and explained his presence. Mr. Casaubon was less happy than usual, and this perhaps made him look all the dimmer and more faded; else, the effect might easily have been produced by the contrast of his young cousin's appearance. The first impression on seeing Will was one of sunny brightness, which added to the uncertainty of his changing expression. Surely, his very features changed their form, his jaw looked sometimes large and sometimes small; and the little ripple in his nose was a preparation for metamorphosis. When he turned his head quickly his hair seemed to shake out light, and some persons thought they saw decided genius in this coruscation. Mr. Casaubon, on the contrary, stood rayless.

As Dorothea's eyes were turned anxiously on her husband she was perhaps not insensible to the contrast, but it was only mingled with other causes in making her more conscious of that new alarm on his behalf which was the first stirring of a pitying tenderness fed by the realities of his lot and not by her own dreams. Yet it was a source of greater freedom to her that Will was there; his young equality was agreeable, and also perhaps his openness to conviction. She felt an immense need of some one

to speak to, and she had never before seen any one who seemed so quick and pliable, so likely to understand everything.

Mr. Casaubon gravely hoped that Will was passing his time profitably as well as pleasantly in Rome—had thought his intention was to remain in South Germany—but begged him to come and dine to-morrow, when he could converse more at large: at present he was somewhat weary. Ladislaw understood, and accepting the invitation immediately took his leave.

Dorothea's eyes followed her husband anxiously, while he sank down wearily at the end of a sofa, and resting his elbow supported his head and looked on the floor. A little flushed, and with bright eyes, she seated herself beside him, and said—

“Forgive me for speaking so hastily to you this morning. I was wrong. I fear I hurt you and made the day more burdensome.”

“I am glad that you feel that, my dear,” said Mr. Casaubon. He spoke quietly and bowed his head a little, but there was still an uneasy feeling in his eyes as he looked at her.

“But you do forgive me?” said Dorothea, with a quick sob. In her need for some manifestation of feeling she was ready to exaggerate her own fault. Would not love see returning penitence afar off, and fall on its neck and kiss it?

“My dear Dorothea—‘who with repentance is not satisfied, is not of heaven nor earth:’—you do not think me worthy to be banished by that severe sentence,” said Mr. Casaubon, exerting himself to make a strong statement, and also to smile faintly.

Dorothea was silent, but a tear which had come up with the sob would insist on falling.

“You are excited, my dear. And I also am feeling some unpleasant consequences of too much mental disturbance,” said Mr. Casaubon. In fact, he had it in his thought to tell her that she ought not to have received young Ladislaw in his absence: but he abstained, partly from the sense that it would be ungracious to bring a new complaint in the moment of her penitent acknowledgment, partly because he wanted to avoid further agitation of himself by speech, and partly because he was too proud to betray that jealousy of disposition which was not so exhausted on his scholarly compeers that there was none to spare in other directions. There

is a sort of jealousy which needs very little fire: it is hardly a passion, but a blight bred in the cloudy, damp despondency of uneasy egoism.

“I think it is time for us to dress,” he added, looking at his watch. They both rose, and there was never any further allusion between them to what had passed on this day.

But Dorothea remembered it to the last with the vividness with which we all remember epochs in our experience when some dear expectation dies, or some new motive is born. Today she had begun to see that she had been under a wild illusion in expecting a response to her feeling from Mr. Casaubon, and she had felt the waking of a presentiment that there might be a sad consciousness in his life which made as great a need on his side as on her own.

We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves: Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to imagine how she would devote herself to Mr. Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling—an idea wrought back to the directness of sense, like the solidity of objects—that he had an equivalent centre of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference.



## CHAPTER XXII.

“Nous câusames longtemps; elle était simple et bonne.  
Ne sachant pas le mal, elle faisait le bien;  
Des richesses du coeur elle me fit l’aumône,  
Et tout en écoutant comme le coeur se donne,  
Sans oser y penser je lui donnai le mien;  
Elle emporta ma vie, et n’en sut jamais rien.”  
—ALFRED DE MUSSET.

Will Ladislaw was delightfully agreeable at dinner the next day, and gave no opportunity for Mr. Casaubon to show disapprobation. On the contrary it seemed to Dorothea that Will had a happier way of drawing her husband into conversation and of deferentially listening to him than she had ever observed in any one before. To be sure, the listeners about Tipton were not highly gifted! Will talked a good deal himself, but what he said was thrown in with such rapidity, and with such an unimportant air of saying something by the way, that it seemed a gay little chime after the great bell. If Will was not always perfect, this was certainly one of his good days. He described touches of incident among the poor people in Rome, only to be seen by one who could move about freely; he found himself in agreement with Mr. Casaubon as to the unsound opinions of Middleton concerning the relations of Judaism and Catholicism; and passed easily to a half-enthusiastic half-playful picture of the enjoyment he got out of the very miscellaneousness of Rome, which made the mind flexible with constant comparison, and saved you from seeing the world’s ages as a set of box-like partitions without vital connection. Mr. Casaubon’s studies, Will observed, had always been of too broad a kind for that, and he had perhaps never felt any such sudden effect, but for himself he confessed that Rome had given him quite a new sense of history as a whole: the fragments stimulated his imagination and made him constructive. Then occasionally, but not too often, he appealed to Dorothea, and discussed what she said, as if her sentiment were an item to be considered in the final judgment even of the Madonna di Foligno or the Laocoon. A sense of contributing to form the world’s opinion makes

conversation particularly cheerful; and Mr. Casaubon too was not without his pride in his young wife, who spoke better than most women, as indeed he had perceived in choosing her.

Since things were going on so pleasantly, Mr. Casaubon's statement that his labors in the Library would be suspended for a couple of days, and that after a brief renewal he should have no further reason for staying in Rome, encouraged Will to urge that Mrs. Casaubon should not go away without seeing a studio or two. Would not Mr. Casaubon take her? That sort of thing ought not to be missed: it was quite special: it was a form of life that grew like a small fresh vegetation with its population of insects on huge fossils. Will would be happy to conduct them—not to anything wearisome, only to a few examples.

Mr. Casaubon, seeing Dorothea look earnestly towards him, could not but ask her if she would be interested in such visits: he was now at her service during the whole day; and it was agreed that Will should come on the morrow and drive with them.

Will could not omit Thorwaldsen, a living celebrity about whom even Mr. Casaubon inquired, but before the day was far advanced he led the way to the studio of his friend Adolf Naumann, whom he mentioned as one of the chief renovators of Christian art, one of those who had not only revived but expanded that grand conception of supreme events as mysteries at which the successive ages were spectators, and in relation to which the great souls of all periods became as it were contemporaries. Will added that he had made himself Naumann's pupil for the nonce.

"I have been making some oil-sketches under him," said Will. "I hate copying. I must put something of my own in. Naumann has been painting the Saints drawing the Car of the Church, and I have been making a sketch of Marlowe's Tamburlaine Driving the Conquered Kings in his Chariot. I am not so ecclesiastical as Naumann, and I sometimes twit him with his excess of meaning. But this time I mean to outdo him in breadth of intention. I take Tamburlaine in his chariot for the tremendous course of the world's physical history lashing on the harnessed dynasties. In my opinion, that is a good mythical interpretation." Will here looked at Mr. Casaubon, who received this offhand treatment of symbolism very uneasily, and bowed with a neutral air.

“The sketch must be very grand, if it conveys so much,” said Dorothea. “I should need some explanation even of the meaning you give. Do you intend Tamburlaine to represent earthquakes and volcanoes?”

“Oh yes,” said Will, laughing, “and migrations of races and clearings of forests—and America and the steam-engine. Everything you can imagine!”

“What a difficult kind of shorthand!” said Dorothea, smiling towards her husband. “It would require all your knowledge to be able to read it.”

Mr. Casaubon blinked furtively at Will. He had a suspicion that he was being laughed at. But it was not possible to include Dorothea in the suspicion.

They found Naumann painting industriously, but no model was present; his pictures were advantageously arranged, and his own plain vivacious person set off by a dove-colored blouse and a maroon velvet cap, so that everything was as fortunate as if he had expected the beautiful young English lady exactly at that time.

The painter in his confident English gave little dissertations on his finished and unfinished subjects, seeming to observe Mr. Casaubon as much as he did Dorothea. Will burst in here and there with ardent words of praise, marking out particular merits in his friend’s work; and Dorothea felt that she was getting quite new notions as to the significance of Madonnas seated under inexplicable canopied thrones with the simple country as a background, and of saints with architectural models in their hands, or knives accidentally wedged in their skulls. Some things which had seemed monstrous to her were gathering intelligibility and even a natural meaning: but all this was apparently a branch of knowledge in which Mr. Casaubon had not interested himself.

“I think I would rather feel that painting is beautiful than have to read it as an enigma; but I should learn to understand these pictures sooner than yours with the very wide meaning,” said Dorothea, speaking to Will.

“Don’t speak of my painting before Naumann,” said Will. “He will tell you, it is all *pfuscherei*, which is his most opprobrious word!”

“Is that true?” said Dorothea, turning her sincere eyes on Naumann, who made a slight grimace and said—

“Oh, he does not mean it seriously with painting. His walk must be *belles-lettres*. That is wi-ide.”

Naumann’s pronunciation of the vowel seemed to stretch the word satirically. Will did not half like it, but managed to laugh: and Mr. Casaubon, while he felt some disgust at the artist’s German accent, began to entertain a little respect for his judicious severity.

The respect was not diminished when Naumann, after drawing Will aside for a moment and looking, first at a large canvas, then at Mr. Casaubon, came forward again and said—

“My friend Ladislaw thinks you will pardon me, sir, if I say that a sketch of your head would be invaluable to me for the St. Thomas Aquinas in my picture there. It is too much to ask; but I so seldom see just what I want—the idealistic in the real.”

“You astonish me greatly, sir,” said Mr. Casaubon, his looks improved with a glow of delight; “but if my poor physiognomy, which I have been accustomed to regard as of the commonest order, can be of any use to you in furnishing some traits for the angelical doctor, I shall feel honored. That is to say, if the operation will not be a lengthy one; and if Mrs. Casaubon will not object to the delay.”

As for Dorothea, nothing could have pleased her more, unless it had been a miraculous voice pronouncing Mr. Casaubon the wisest and worthiest among the sons of men. In that case her tottering faith would have become firm again.

Naumann’s apparatus was at hand in wonderful completeness, and the sketch went on at once as well as the conversation. Dorothea sat down and subsided into calm silence, feeling happier than she had done for a long while before. Every one about her seemed good, and she said to herself that Rome, if she had only been less ignorant, would have been full of beauty: its sadness would have been winged with hope. No nature could be less suspicious than hers: when she was a child she believed in the gratitude of wasps and the honorable susceptibility of sparrows, and was proportionately indignant when their baseness was made manifest.

The adroit artist was asking Mr. Casaubon questions about English politics, which brought long answers, and, Will meanwhile had perched himself on some steps in the background overlooking all.

Presently Naumann said—"Now if I could lay this by for half an hour and take it up again—come and look, Ladislav—I think it is perfect so far."

Will vented those adjuring interjections which imply that admiration is too strong for syntax; and Naumann said in a tone of piteous regret—

"Ah—now—if I could but have had more—but you have other engagements—I could not ask it—or even to come again to-morrow."

"Oh, let us stay!" said Dorothea. "We have nothing to do to-day except go about, have we?" she added, looking entreatingly at Mr. Casaubon. "It would be a pity not to make the head as good as possible."

"I am at your service, sir, in the matter," said Mr. Casaubon, with polite condescension. "Having given up the interior of my head to idleness, it is as well that the exterior should work in this way."

"You are unspeakably good—now I am happy!" said Naumann, and then went on in German to Will, pointing here and there to the sketch as if he were considering that. Putting it aside for a moment, he looked round vaguely, as if seeking some occupation for his visitors, and afterwards turning to Mr. Casaubon, said—

"Perhaps the beautiful bride, the gracious lady, would not be unwilling to let me fill up the time by trying to make a slight sketch of her—not, of course, as you see, for that picture—only as a single study."

Mr. Casaubon, bowing, doubted not that Mrs. Casaubon would oblige him, and Dorothea said, at once, "Where shall I put myself?"

Naumann was all apologies in asking her to stand, and allow him to adjust her attitude, to which she submitted without any of the affected airs and laughs frequently thought necessary on such occasions, when the painter said, "It is as Santa Clara that I want you to stand—leaning so, with your cheek against your hand—so—looking at that stool, please, so!"

Will was divided between the inclination to fall at the Saint's feet and kiss her robe, and the temptation to knock Naumann down while he was adjusting her arm. All this was impudence and desecration, and he repented that he had brought her.

The artist was diligent, and Will recovering himself moved about and occupied Mr. Casaubon as ingeniously as he could; but he did not in the end prevent the time from seeming long to that gentleman, as was clear

from his expressing a fear that Mrs. Casaubon would be tired. Naumann took the hint and said—

“Now, sir, if you can oblige me again; I will release the lady-wife.”

So Mr. Casaubon’s patience held out further, and when after all it turned out that the head of Saint Thomas Aquinas would be more perfect if another sitting could be had, it was granted for the morrow. On the morrow Santa Clara too was retouched more than once. The result of all was so far from displeasing to Mr. Casaubon, that he arranged for the purchase of the picture in which Saint Thomas Aquinas sat among the doctors of the Church in a disputation too abstract to be represented, but listened to with more or less attention by an audience above. The Santa Clara, which was spoken of in the second place, Naumann declared himself to be dissatisfied with—he could not, in conscience, engage to make a worthy picture of it; so about the Santa Clara the arrangement was conditional.

I will not dwell on Naumann’s jokes at the expense of Mr. Casaubon that evening, or on his dithyrambs about Dorothea’s charm, in all which Will joined, but with a difference. No sooner did Naumann mention any detail of Dorothea’s beauty, than Will got exasperated at his presumption: there was grossness in his choice of the most ordinary words, and what business had he to talk of her lips? She was not a woman to be spoken of as other women were. Will could not say just what he thought, but he became irritable. And yet, when after some resistance he had consented to take the Casaubons to his friend’s studio, he had been allured by the gratification of his pride in being the person who could grant Naumann such an opportunity of studying her loveliness—or rather her divineness, for the ordinary phrases which might apply to mere bodily prettiness were not applicable to her. (Certainly all Tipton and its neighborhood, as well as Dorothea herself, would have been surprised at her beauty being made so much of. In that part of the world Miss Brooke had been only a “fine young woman.”)

“Oblige me by letting the subject drop, Naumann. Mrs. Casaubon is not to be talked of as if she were a model,” said Will. Naumann stared at him.

“Schön! I will talk of my Aquinas. The head is not a bad type, after all. I dare say the great scholastic himself would have been flattered to have his portrait asked for. Nothing like these starchy doctors for vanity! It was as I thought: he cared much less for her portrait than his own.”

“He’s a cursed white-blooded pedantic coxcomb,” said Will, with gnashing impetuosity. His obligations to Mr. Casaubon were not known to his hearer, but Will himself was thinking of them, and wishing that he could discharge them all by a check.

Naumann gave a shrug and said, “It is good they go away soon, my dear. They are spoiling your fine temper.”

All Will’s hope and contrivance were now concentrated on seeing Dorothea when she was alone. He only wanted her to take more emphatic notice of him; he only wanted to be something more special in her remembrance than he could yet believe himself likely to be. He was rather impatient under that open ardent good-will, which he saw was her usual state of feeling. The remote worship of a woman throned out of their reach plays a great part in men’s lives, but in most cases the worshipper longs for some queenly recognition, some approving sign by which his soul’s sovereign may cheer him without descending from her high place. That was precisely what Will wanted. But there were plenty of contradictions in his imaginative demands. It was beautiful to see how Dorothea’s eyes turned with wifely anxiety and beseeching to Mr. Casaubon: she would have lost some of her halo if she had been without that duteous preoccupation; and yet at the next moment the husband’s sandy absorption of such nectar was too intolerable; and Will’s longing to say damaging things about him was perhaps not the less tormenting because he felt the strongest reasons for restraining it.

Will had not been invited to dine the next day. Hence he persuaded himself that he was bound to call, and that the only eligible time was the middle of the day, when Mr. Casaubon would not be at home.

Dorothea, who had not been made aware that her former reception of Will had displeased her husband, had no hesitation about seeing him, especially as he might be come to pay a farewell visit. When he entered she was looking at some cameos which she had been buying for Celia. She greeted Will as if his visit were quite a matter of course, and said at once, having a cameo bracelet in her hand—

“I am so glad you are come. Perhaps you understand all about cameos, and can tell me if these are really good. I wished to have you with us in choosing them, but Mr. Casaubon objected: he thought there was not time.

He will finish his work to-morrow, and we shall go away in three days. I have been uneasy about these cameos. Pray sit down and look at them.”

“I am not particularly knowing, but there can be no great mistake about these little Homeric bits: they are exquisitely neat. And the color is fine: it will just suit you.”

“Oh, they are for my sister, who has quite a different complexion. You saw her with me at Lowick: she is light-haired and very pretty—at least I think so. We were never so long away from each other in our lives before. She is a great pet and never was naughty in her life. I found out before I came away that she wanted me to buy her some cameos, and I should be sorry for them not to be good—after their kind.” Dorothea added the last words with a smile.

“You seem not to care about cameos,” said Will, seating himself at some distance from her, and observing her while she closed the cases.

“No, frankly, I don’t think them a great object in life,” said Dorothea.

“I fear you are a heretic about art generally. How is that? I should have expected you to be very sensitive to the beautiful everywhere.”

“I suppose I am dull about many things,” said Dorothea, simply. “I should like to make life beautiful—I mean everybody’s life. And then all this immense expense of art, that seems somehow to lie outside life and make it no better for the world, pains one. It spoils my enjoyment of anything when I am made to think that most people are shut out from it.”

“I call that the fanaticism of sympathy,” said Will, impetuously. “You might say the same of landscape, of poetry, of all refinement. If you carried it out you ought to be miserable in your own goodness, and turn evil that you might have no advantage over others. The best piety is to enjoy—when you can. You are doing the most then to save the earth’s character as an agreeable planet. And enjoyment radiates. It is of no use to try and take care of all the world; that is being taken care of when you feel delight—in art or in anything else. Would you turn all the youth of the world into a tragic chorus, wailing and moralizing over misery? I suspect that you have some false belief in the virtues of misery, and want to make your life a martyrdom.” Will had gone further than he intended, and checked himself. But Dorothea’s thought was not taking just the same direction as his own, and she answered without any special emotion—



“Indeed you mistake me. I am not a sad, melancholy creature. I am never unhappy long together. I am angry and naughty—not like Celia: I have a great outburst, and then all seems glorious again. I cannot help believing in glorious things in a blind sort of way. I should be quite willing to enjoy the art here, but there is so much that I don’t know the reason of—so much that seems to me a consecration of ugliness rather than beauty. The painting and sculpture may be wonderful, but the feeling is often low and brutal, and sometimes even ridiculous. Here and there I see what takes me at once as noble—something that I might compare with the Alban Mountains or the sunset from the Pincian Hill; but that makes it the greater pity that there is so little of the best kind among all that mass of things over which men have toiled so.”

“Of course there is always a great deal of poor work: the rarer things want that soil to grow in.”

“Oh dear,” said Dorothea, taking up that thought into the chief current of her anxiety; “I see it must be very difficult to do anything good. I have often felt since I have been in Rome that most of our lives would look much uglier and more bungling than the pictures, if they could be put on the wall.”

Dorothea parted her lips again as if she were going to say more, but changed her mind and paused.

“You are too young—it is an anachronism for you to have such thoughts,” said Will, energetically, with a quick shake of the head habitual to him. “You talk as if you had never known any youth. It is monstrous—as if you had had a vision of Hades in your childhood, like the boy in the legend. You have been brought up in some of those horrible notions that choose the sweetest women to devour—like Minotaurs. And now you will go and be shut up in that stone prison at Lowick: you will be buried alive. It makes me savage to think of it! I would rather never have seen you than think of you with such a prospect.”

Will again feared that he had gone too far; but the meaning we attach to words depends on our feeling, and his tone of angry regret had so much kindness in it for Dorothea’s heart, which had always been giving out ardor and had never been fed with much from the living beings around her, that she felt a new sense of gratitude and answered with a gentle smile—

“It is very good of you to be anxious about me. It is because you did not like Lowick yourself: you had set your heart on another kind of life. But Lowick is my chosen home.”

The last sentence was spoken with an almost solemn cadence, and Will did not know what to say, since it would not be useful for him to embrace her slippers, and tell her that he would die for her: it was clear that she required nothing of the sort; and they were both silent for a moment or two, when Dorothea began again with an air of saying at last what had been in her mind beforehand.

“I wanted to ask you again about something you said the other day. Perhaps it was half of it your lively way of speaking: I notice that you like to put things strongly; I myself often exaggerate when I speak hastily.”

“What was it?” said Will, observing that she spoke with a timidity quite new in her. “I have a hyperbolical tongue: it catches fire as it goes. I dare say I shall have to retract.”

“I mean what you said about the necessity of knowing German—I mean, for the subjects that Mr. Casaubon is engaged in. I have been thinking about it; and it seems to me that with Mr. Casaubon’s learning he must have before him the same materials as German scholars—has he not?” Dorothea’s timidity was due to an indistinct consciousness that she was in the strange situation of consulting a third person about the adequacy of Mr. Casaubon’s learning.

“Not exactly the same materials,” said Will, thinking that he would be duly reserved. “He is not an Orientalist, you know. He does not profess to have more than second-hand knowledge there.”

“But there are very valuable books about antiquities which were written a long while ago by scholars who knew nothing about these modern things; and they are still used. Why should Mr. Casaubon’s not be valuable, like theirs?” said Dorothea, with more remonstrant energy. She was impelled to have the argument aloud, which she had been having in her own mind.

“That depends on the line of study taken,” said Will, also getting a tone of rejoinder. “The subject Mr. Casaubon has chosen is as changing as chemistry: new discoveries are constantly making new points of view. Who wants a system on the basis of the four elements, or a book to refute Paracelsus? Do you not see that it is no use now to be crawling a little way after men of the last century—men like Bryant—and correcting their

mistakes?—living in a lumber-room and furbishing up broken-legged theories about Chus and Mizraim?”

“How can you bear to speak so lightly?” said Dorothea, with a look between sorrow and anger. “If it were as you say, what could be sadder than so much ardent labor all in vain? I wonder it does not affect you more painfully, if you really think that a man like Mr. Casaubon, of so much goodness, power, and learning, should in any way fail in what has been the labor of his best years.” She was beginning to be shocked that she had got to such a point of supposition, and indignant with Will for having led her to it.

“You questioned me about the matter of fact, not of feeling,” said Will. “But if you wish to punish me for the fact, I submit. I am not in a position to express my feeling toward Mr. Casaubon: it would be at best a pensioner’s eulogy.”

“Pray excuse me,” said Dorothea, coloring deeply. “I am aware, as you say, that I am in fault in having introduced the subject. Indeed, I am wrong altogether. Failure after long perseverance is much grander than never to have a striving good enough to be called a failure.”

“I quite agree with you,” said Will, determined to change the situation—“so much so that I have made up my mind not to run that risk of never attaining a failure. Mr. Casaubon’s generosity has perhaps been dangerous to me, and I mean to renounce the liberty it has given me. I mean to go back to England shortly and work my own way—depend on nobody else than myself.”

“That is fine—I respect that feeling,” said Dorothea, with returning kindness. “But Mr. Casaubon, I am sure, has never thought of anything in the matter except what was most for your welfare.”

“She has obstinacy and pride enough to serve instead of love, now she has married him,” said Will to himself. Aloud he said, rising—

“I shall not see you again.”

“Oh, stay till Mr. Casaubon comes,” said Dorothea, earnestly. “I am so glad we met in Rome. I wanted to know you.”

“And I have made you angry,” said Will. “I have made you think ill of me.”

“Oh no. My sister tells me I am always angry with people who do not say just what I like. But I hope I am not given to think ill of them. In the end I am usually obliged to think ill of myself for being so impatient.”

“Still, you don’t like me; I have made myself an unpleasant thought to you.”

“Not at all,” said Dorothea, with the most open kindness. “I like you very much.”

Will was not quite contented, thinking that he would apparently have been of more importance if he had been disliked. He said nothing, but looked dull, not to say sulky.

“And I am quite interested to see what you will do,” Dorothea went on cheerfully. “I believe devoutly in a natural difference of vocation. If it were not for that belief, I suppose I should be very narrow—there are so many things, besides painting, that I am quite ignorant of. You would hardly believe how little I have taken in of music and literature, which you know so much of. I wonder what your vocation will turn out to be: perhaps you will be a poet?”

“That depends. To be a poet is to have a soul so quick to discern that no shade of quality escapes it, and so quick to feel, that discernment is but a hand playing with finely ordered variety on the chords of emotion—a soul in which knowledge passes instantaneously into feeling, and feeling flashes back as a new organ of knowledge. One may have that condition by fits only.”

“But you leave out the poems,” said Dorothea. “I think they are wanted to complete the poet. I understand what you mean about knowledge passing into feeling, for that seems to be just what I experience. But I am sure I could never produce a poem.”

“You *are* a poem—and that is to be the best part of a poet—what makes up the poet’s consciousness in his best moods,” said Will, showing such originality as we all share with the morning and the spring-time and other endless renewals.

“I am very glad to hear it,” said Dorothea, laughing out her words in a bird-like modulation, and looking at Will with playful gratitude in her eyes. “What very kind things you say to me!”

“I wish I could ever do anything that would be what you call kind—that I could ever be of the slightest service to you. I fear I shall never have the opportunity.” Will spoke with fervor.

“Oh yes,” said Dorothea, cordially. “It will come; and I shall remember how well you wish me. I quite hoped that we should be friends when I first saw you—because of your relationship to Mr. Casaubon.” There was a certain liquid brightness in her eyes, and Will was conscious that his own were obeying a law of nature and filling too. The allusion to Mr. Casaubon would have spoiled all if anything at that moment could have spoiled the subduing power, the sweet dignity, of her noble unsuspecting inexperience.

“And there is one thing even now that you can do,” said Dorothea, rising and walking a little way under the strength of a recurring impulse. “Promise me that you will not again, to any one, speak of that subject—I mean about Mr. Casaubon’s writings—I mean in that kind of way. It was I who led to it. It was my fault. But promise me.”

She had returned from her brief pacing and stood opposite Will, looking gravely at him.

“Certainly, I will promise you,” said Will, reddening however. If he never said a cutting word about Mr. Casaubon again and left off receiving favors from him, it would clearly be permissible to hate him the more. The poet must know how to hate, says Goethe; and Will was at least ready with that accomplishment. He said that he must go now without waiting for Mr. Casaubon, whom he would come to take leave of at the last moment. Dorothea gave him her hand, and they exchanged a simple “Good-by.”

But going out of the *porte cochere* he met Mr. Casaubon, and that gentleman, expressing the best wishes for his cousin, politely waived the pleasure of any further leave-taking on the morrow, which would be sufficiently crowded with the preparations for departure.

“I have something to tell you about our cousin Mr. Ladislaw, which I think will heighten your opinion of him,” said Dorothea to her husband in the course of the evening. She had mentioned immediately on his entering that Will had just gone away, and would come again, but Mr. Casaubon had said, “I met him outside, and we made our final adieux, I believe,” saying this with the air and tone by which we imply that any subject, whether private or public, does not interest us enough to wish for a further remark upon it. So Dorothea had waited.

“What is that, my love?” said Mr Casaubon (he always said “my love” when his manner was the coldest).

“He has made up his mind to leave off wandering at once, and to give up his dependence on your generosity. He means soon to go back to England, and work his own way. I thought you would consider that a good sign,” said Dorothea, with an appealing look into her husband’s neutral face.

“Did he mention the precise order of occupation to which he would addict himself?”

“No. But he said that he felt the danger which lay for him in your generosity. Of course he will write to you about it. Do you not think better of him for his resolve?”

“I shall await his communication on the subject,” said Mr. Casaubon.

“I told him I was sure that the thing you considered in all you did for him was his own welfare. I remembered your goodness in what you said about him when I first saw him at Lowick,” said Dorothea, putting her hand on her husband’s.

“I had a duty towards him,” said Mr. Casaubon, laying his other hand on Dorothea’s in conscientious acceptance of her caress, but with a glance which he could not hinder from being uneasy. “The young man, I confess, is not otherwise an object of interest to me, nor need we, I think, discuss his future course, which it is not ours to determine beyond the limits which I have sufficiently indicated.” Dorothea did not mention Will again.

BOOK III.  
WAITING FOR DEATH.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

“Your horses of the Sun,” he said,  
“And first-rate whip Apollo!  
Whate’er they be, I’ll eat my head,  
But I will beat them hollow.”

Fred Vincy, we have seen, had a debt on his mind, and though no such immaterial burthen could depress that buoyant-hearted young gentleman for many hours together, there were circumstances connected with this debt which made the thought of it unusually importunate. The creditor was Mr. Bambridge, a horse-dealer of the neighborhood, whose company was much sought in Middlemarch by young men understood to be “addicted to pleasure.” During the vacations Fred had naturally required more amusements than he had ready money for, and Mr. Bambridge had been accommodating enough not only to trust him for the hire of horses and the accidental expense of ruining a fine hunter, but also to make a small advance by which he might be able to meet some losses at billiards. The total debt was a hundred and sixty pounds. Bambridge was in no alarm about his money, being sure that young Vincy had backers; but he had required something to show for it, and Fred had at first given a bill with his own signature. Three months later he had renewed this bill with the signature of Caleb Garth. On both occasions Fred had felt confident that he should meet the bill himself, having ample funds at disposal in his own hopefulness. You will hardly demand that his confidence should have a basis in external facts; such confidence, we know, is something less coarse and materialistic: it is a comfortable disposition leading us to expect that the wisdom of providence or the folly of our friends, the mysteries of luck or the still greater mystery of our high individual value in the universe, will bring about agreeable issues, such as are consistent with our good taste in costume, and our general preference for the best style of thing. Fred felt sure that he should have a present from his uncle, that he should have a run of luck, that by dint of “swapping” he should gradually metamorphose a horse worth forty pounds into a horse that would fetch a



hundred at any moment—"judgment" being always equivalent to an unspecified sum in hard cash. And in any case, even supposing negations which only a morbid distrust could imagine, Fred had always (at that time) his father's pocket as a last resource, so that his assets of hopefulness had a sort of gorgeous superfluity about them. Of what might be the capacity of his father's pocket, Fred had only a vague notion: was not trade elastic? And would not the deficiencies of one year be made up for by the surplus of another? The Vincys lived in an easy profuse way, not with any new ostentation, but according to the family habits and traditions, so that the children had no standard of economy, and the elder ones retained some of their infantine notion that their father might pay for anything if he would. Mr. Vincy himself had expensive Middlemarch habits—spent money on coursing, on his cellar, and on dinner-giving, while mamma had those running accounts with tradespeople, which give a cheerful sense of getting everything one wants without any question of payment. But it was in the nature of fathers, Fred knew, to bully one about expenses: there was always a little storm over his extravagance if he had to disclose a debt, and Fred disliked bad weather within doors. He was too filial to be disrespectful to his father, and he bore the thunder with the certainty that it was transient; but in the mean time it was disagreeable to see his mother cry, and also to be obliged to look sulky instead of having fun; for Fred was so good-tempered that if he looked glum under scolding, it was chiefly for propriety's sake. The easier course plainly, was to renew the bill with a friend's signature. Why not? With the superfluous securities of hope at his command, there was no reason why he should not have increased other people's liabilities to any extent, but for the fact that men whose names were good for anything were usually pessimists, indisposed to believe that the universal order of things would necessarily be agreeable to an agreeable young gentleman.

With a favor to ask we review our list of friends, do justice to their more amiable qualities, forgive their little offenses, and concerning each in turn, try to arrive at the conclusion that he will be eager to oblige us, our own eagerness to be obliged being as communicable as other warmth. Still there is always a certain number who are dismissed as but moderately eager until the others have refused; and it happened that Fred checked off all his friends but one, on the ground that applying to them would be disagreeable; being implicitly convinced that he at least (whatever might

be maintained about mankind generally) had a right to be free from anything disagreeable. That he should ever fall into a thoroughly unpleasant position—wear trousers shrunk with washing, eat cold mutton, have to walk for want of a horse, or to “duck under” in any sort of way—was an absurdity irreconcilable with those cheerful intuitions implanted in him by nature. And Fred winced under the idea of being looked down upon as wanting funds for small debts. Thus it came to pass that the friend whom he chose to apply to was at once the poorest and the kindest—namely, Caleb Garth.

The Garths were very fond of Fred, as he was of them; for when he and Rosamond were little ones, and the Garths were better off, the slight connection between the two families through Mr. Featherstone’s double marriage (the first to Mr. Garth’s sister, and the second to Mrs. Vincy’s) had led to an acquaintance which was carried on between the children rather than the parents: the children drank tea together out of their toy teacups, and spent whole days together in play. Mary was a little hoyden, and Fred at six years old thought her the nicest girl in the world, making her his wife with a brass ring which he had cut from an umbrella. Through all the stages of his education he had kept his affection for the Garths, and his habit of going to their house as a second home, though any intercourse between them and the elders of his family had long ceased. Even when Caleb Garth was prosperous, the Vincys were on condescending terms with him and his wife, for there were nice distinctions of rank in Middlemarch; and though old manufacturers could not any more than dukes be connected with none but equals, they were conscious of an inherent social superiority which was defined with great nicety in practice, though hardly expressible theoretically. Since then Mr. Garth had failed in the building business, which he had unfortunately added to his other avocations of surveyor, valuer, and agent, had conducted that business for a time entirely for the benefit of his assignees, and had been living narrowly, exerting himself to the utmost that he might after all pay twenty shillings in the pound. He had now achieved this, and from all who did not think it a bad precedent, his honorable exertions had won him due esteem; but in no part of the world is genteel visiting founded on esteem, in the absence of suitable furniture and complete dinner-service. Mrs. Vincy had never been at her ease with Mrs. Garth, and frequently spoke of her as a woman who had had to work for her bread—meaning that Mrs. Garth had been a teacher before her

marriage; in which case an intimacy with Lindley Murray and Mangnall's Questions was something like a draper's discrimination of calico trademarks, or a courier's acquaintance with foreign countries: no woman who was better off needed that sort of thing. And since Mary had been keeping Mr. Featherstone's house, Mrs. Vincy's want of liking for the Garths had been converted into something more positive, by alarm lest Fred should engage himself to this plain girl, whose parents "lived in such a small way." Fred, being aware of this, never spoke at home of his visits to Mrs. Garth, which had of late become more frequent, the increasing ardor of his affection for Mary inclining him the more towards those who belonged to her.

Mr. Garth had a small office in the town, and to this Fred went with his request. He obtained it without much difficulty, for a large amount of painful experience had not sufficed to make Caleb Garth cautious about his own affairs, or distrustful of his fellow-men when they had not proved themselves untrustworthy; and he had the highest opinion of Fred, was "sure the lad would turn out well—an open affectionate fellow, with a good bottom to his character—you might trust him for anything." Such was Caleb's psychological argument. He was one of those rare men who are rigid to themselves and indulgent to others. He had a certain shame about his neighbors' errors, and never spoke of them willingly; hence he was not likely to divert his mind from the best mode of hardening timber and other ingenious devices in order to preconceive those errors. If he had to blame any one, it was necessary for him to move all the papers within his reach, or describe various diagrams with his stick, or make calculations with the odd money in his pocket, before he could begin; and he would rather do other men's work than find fault with their doing. I fear he was a bad disciplinarian.

When Fred stated the circumstances of his debt, his wish to meet it without troubling his father, and the certainty that the money would be forthcoming so as to cause no one any inconvenience, Caleb pushed his spectacles upward, listened, looked into his favorite's clear young eyes, and believed him, not distinguishing confidence about the future from veracity about the past; but he felt that it was an occasion for a friendly hint as to conduct, and that before giving his signature he must give a rather strong admonition. Accordingly, he took the paper and lowered his spectacles, measured the space at his command, reached his pen and

examined it, dipped it in the ink and examined it again, then pushed the paper a little way from him, lifted up his spectacles again, showed a deepened depression in the outer angle of his bushy eyebrows, which gave his face a peculiar mildness (pardon these details for once—you would have learned to love them if you had known Caleb Garth), and said in a comfortable tone,—

“It was a misfortune, eh, that breaking the horse’s knees? And then, these exchanges, they don’t answer when you have ’cute jockeys to deal with. You’ll be wiser another time, my boy.”

Whereupon Caleb drew down his spectacles, and proceeded to write his signature with the care which he always gave to that performance; for whatever he did in the way of business he did well. He contemplated the large well-proportioned letters and final flourish, with his head a trifle on one side for an instant, then handed it to Fred, said “Good-by,” and returned forthwith to his absorption in a plan for Sir James Chettam’s new farm-buildings.

Either because his interest in this work thrust the incident of the signature from his memory, or for some reason of which Caleb was more conscious, Mrs. Garth remained ignorant of the affair.

Since it occurred, a change had come over Fred’s sky, which altered his view of the distance, and was the reason why his uncle Featherstone’s present of money was of importance enough to make his color come and go, first with a too definite expectation, and afterwards with a proportionate disappointment. His failure in passing his examination, had made his accumulation of college debts the more unpardonable by his father, and there had been an unprecedented storm at home. Mr. Vincy had sworn that if he had anything more of that sort to put up with, Fred should turn out and get his living how he could; and he had never yet quite recovered his good-humored tone to his son, who had especially enraged him by saying at this stage of things that he did not want to be a clergyman, and would rather not “go on with that.” Fred was conscious that he would have been yet more severely dealt with if his family as well as himself had not secretly regarded him as Mr. Featherstone’s heir; that old gentleman’s pride in him, and apparent fondness for him, serving in the stead of more exemplary conduct—just as when a youthful nobleman steals jewellery we call the act kleptomania, speak of it with a

philosophical smile, and never think of his being sent to the house of correction as if he were a ragged boy who had stolen turnips. In fact, tacit expectations of what would be done for him by uncle Featherstone determined the angle at which most people viewed Fred Vincy in Middlemarch; and in his own consciousness, what uncle Featherstone would do for him in an emergency, or what he would do simply as an incorporated luck, formed always an immeasurable depth of aerial perspective. But that present of bank-notes, once made, was measurable, and being applied to the amount of the debt, showed a deficit which had still to be filled up either by Fred's "judgment" or by luck in some other shape. For that little episode of the alleged borrowing, in which he had made his father the agent in getting the Bulstrode certificate, was a new reason against going to his father for money towards meeting his actual debt. Fred was keen enough to foresee that anger would confuse distinctions, and that his denial of having borrowed expressly on the strength of his uncle's will would be taken as a falsehood. He had gone to his father and told him one vexatious affair, and he had left another untold: in such cases the complete revelation always produces the impression of a previous duplicity. Now Fred piqued himself on keeping clear of lies, and even fibs; he often shrugged his shoulders and made a significant grimace at what he called Rosamond's fibs (it is only brothers who can associate such ideas with a lovely girl); and rather than incur the accusation of falsehood he would even incur some trouble and self-restraint. It was under strong inward pressure of this kind that Fred had taken the wise step of depositing the eighty pounds with his mother. It was a pity that he had not at once given them to Mr. Garth; but he meant to make the sum complete with another sixty, and with a view to this, he had kept twenty pounds in his own pocket as a sort of seed-corn, which, planted by judgment, and watered by luck, might yield more than threefold—a very poor rate of multiplication when the field is a young gentleman's infinite soul, with all the numerals at command.

Fred was not a gambler: he had not that specific disease in which the suspension of the whole nervous energy on a chance or risk becomes as necessary as the dram to the drunkard; he had only the tendency to that diffusive form of gambling which has no alcoholic intensity, but is carried on with the healthiest chyle-fed blood, keeping up a joyous imaginative activity which fashions events according to desire, and having no fears

about its own weather, only sees the advantage there must be to others in going aboard with it. Hopefulness has a pleasure in making a throw of any kind, because the prospect of success is certain; and only a more generous pleasure in offering as many as possible a share in the stake. Fred liked play, especially billiards, as he liked hunting or riding a steeple-chase; and he only liked it the better because he wanted money and hoped to win. But the twenty pounds' worth of seed-corn had been planted in vain in the seductive green plot—all of it at least which had not been dispersed by the roadside—and Fred found himself close upon the term of payment with no money at command beyond the eighty pounds which he had deposited with his mother. The broken-winded horse which he rode represented a present which had been made to him a long while ago by his uncle Featherstone: his father always allowed him to keep a horse, Mr. Vincy's own habits making him regard this as a reasonable demand even for a son who was rather exasperating. This horse, then, was Fred's property, and in his anxiety to meet the imminent bill he determined to sacrifice a possession without which life would certainly be worth little. He made the resolution with a sense of heroism—heroism forced on him by the dread of breaking his word to Mr. Garth, by his love for Mary and awe of her opinion. He would start for Houndsley horse-fair which was to be held the next morning, and—simply sell his horse, bringing back the money by coach?—Well, the horse would hardly fetch more than thirty pounds, and there was no knowing what might happen; it would be folly to balk himself of luck beforehand. It was a hundred to one that some good chance would fall in his way; the longer he thought of it, the less possible it seemed that he should not have a good chance, and the less reasonable that he should not equip himself with the powder and shot for bringing it down. He would ride to Houndsley with Bambridge and with Horrock “the vet,” and without asking them anything expressly, he should virtually get the benefit of their opinion. Before he set out, Fred got the eighty pounds from his mother.

Most of those who saw Fred riding out of Middlemarch in company with Bambridge and Horrock, on his way of course to Houndsley horse-fair, thought that young Vincy was pleasure-seeking as usual; and but for an unwonted consciousness of grave matters on hand, he himself would have had a sense of dissipation, and of doing what might be expected of a gay young fellow. Considering that Fred was not at all coarse, that he

rather looked down on the manners and speech of young men who had not been to the university, and that he had written stanzas as pastoral and unvoluptuous as his flute-playing, his attraction towards Bambridge and Horrock was an interesting fact which even the love of horse-flesh would not wholly account for without that mysterious influence of Naming which determinates so much of mortal choice. Under any other name than “pleasure” the society of Messieurs Bambridge and Horrock must certainly have been regarded as monotonous; and to arrive with them at Houndsley on a drizzling afternoon, to get down at the Red Lion in a street shaded with coal-dust, and dine in a room furnished with a dirt-enamelled map of the county, a bad portrait of an anonymous horse in a stable, His Majesty George the Fourth with legs and cravat, and various leaden spittoons, might have seemed a hard business, but for the sustaining power of nomenclature which determined that the pursuit of these things was “gay.”

In Mr. Horrock there was certainly an apparent unfathomableness which offered play to the imagination. Costume, at a glance, gave him a thrilling association with horses (enough to specify the hat-brim which took the slightest upward angle just to escape the suspicion of bending downwards), and nature had given him a face which by dint of Mongolian eyes, and a nose, mouth, and chin seeming to follow his hat-brim in a moderate inclination upwards, gave the effect of a subdued unchangeable sceptical smile, of all expressions the most tyrannous over a susceptible mind, and, when accompanied by adequate silence, likely to create the reputation of an invincible understanding, an infinite fund of humor—too dry to flow, and probably in a state of immovable crust,—and a critical judgment which, if you could ever be fortunate enough to know it, would be *the* thing and no other. It is a physiognomy seen in all vocations, but perhaps it has never been more powerful over the youth of England than in a judge of horses.

Mr. Horrock, at a question from Fred about his horse’s fetlock, turned sideways in his saddle, and watched the horse’s action for the space of three minutes, then turned forward, twitched his own bridle, and remained silent with a profile neither more nor less sceptical than it had been.

The part thus played in dialogue by Mr. Horrock was terribly effective. A mixture of passions was excited in Fred—a mad desire to thrash

Horrock's opinion into utterance, restrained by anxiety to retain the advantage of his friendship. There was always the chance that Horrock might say something quite invaluable at the right moment.

Mr. Bambridge had more open manners, and appeared to give forth his ideas without economy. He was loud, robust, and was sometimes spoken of as being "given to indulgence"—chiefly in swearing, drinking, and beating his wife. Some people who had lost by him called him a vicious man; but he regarded horse-dealing as the finest of the arts, and might have argued plausibly that it had nothing to do with morality. He was undeniably a prosperous man, bore his drinking better than others bore their moderation, and, on the whole, flourished like the green bay-tree. But his range of conversation was limited, and like the fine old tune, "Drops of brandy," gave you after a while a sense of returning upon itself in a way that might make weak heads dizzy. But a slight infusion of Mr. Bambridge was felt to give tone and character to several circles in Middlemarch; and he was a distinguished figure in the bar and billiard-room at the Green Dragon. He knew some anecdotes about the heroes of the turf, and various clever tricks of Marquesses and Viscounts which seemed to prove that blood asserted its pre-eminence even among black-legs; but the minute retentiveness of his memory was chiefly shown about the horses he had himself bought and sold; the number of miles they would trot you in no time without turning a hair being, after the lapse of years, still a subject of passionate asseveration, in which he would assist the imagination of his hearers by solemnly swearing that they never saw anything like it. In short, Mr. Bambridge was a man of pleasure and a gay companion.

Fred was subtle, and did not tell his friends that he was going to Houndsley bent on selling his horse: he wished to get indirectly at their genuine opinion of its value, not being aware that a genuine opinion was the last thing likely to be extracted from such eminent critics. It was not Mr. Bambridge's weakness to be a gratuitous flatterer. He had never before been so much struck with the fact that this unfortunate bay was a roarer to a degree which required the roundest word for perdition to give you any idea of it.

"You made a bad hand at swapping when you went to anybody but me, Vincy! Why, you never threw your leg across a finer horse than that chestnut, and you gave him for this brute. If you set him cantering, he goes



on like twenty sawyers. I never heard but one worse roarer in my life, and that was a roan: it belonged to Pegwell, the corn-factor; he used to drive him in his gig seven years ago, and he wanted me to take him, but I said, 'Thank you, Peg, I don't deal in wind-instruments.' That was what I said. It went the round of the country, that joke did. But, what the hell! the horse was a penny trumpet to that roarer of yours."

"Why, you said just now his was worse than mine," said Fred, more irritable than usual.

"I said a lie, then," said Mr. Bambridge, emphatically. "There wasn't a penny to choose between 'em."

Fred spurred his horse, and they trotted on a little way. When they slackened again, Mr. Bambridge said—

"Not but what the roan was a better trotter than yours."

"I'm quite satisfied with his paces, I know," said Fred, who required all the consciousness of being in gay company to support him; "I say his trot is an uncommonly clean one, eh, Horrock?"

Mr. Horrock looked before him with as complete a neutrality as if he had been a portrait by a great master.

Fred gave up the fallacious hope of getting a genuine opinion; but on reflection he saw that Bambridge's depreciation and Horrock's silence were both virtually encouraging, and indicated that they thought better of the horse than they chose to say.

That very evening, indeed, before the fair had set in, Fred thought he saw a favorable opening for disposing advantageously of his horse, but an opening which made him congratulate himself on his foresight in bringing with him his eighty pounds. A young farmer, acquainted with Mr. Bambridge, came into the Red Lion, and entered into conversation about parting with a hunter, which he introduced at once as Diamond, implying that it was a public character. For himself he only wanted a useful hack, which would draw upon occasion; being about to marry and to give up hunting. The hunter was in a friend's stable at some little distance; there was still time for gentlemen to see it before dark. The friend's stable had to be reached through a back street where you might as easily have been poisoned without expense of drugs as in any grim street of that unsanitary period. Fred was not fortified against disgust by brandy, as his companions

were, but the hope of having at last seen the horse that would enable him to make money was exhilarating enough to lead him over the same ground again the first thing in the morning. He felt sure that if he did not come to a bargain with the farmer, Bambridge would; for the stress of circumstances, Fred felt, was sharpening his acuteness and endowing him with all the constructive power of suspicion. Bambridge had run down Diamond in a way that he never would have done (the horse being a friend's) if he had not thought of buying it; every one who looked at the animal—even Horrock—was evidently impressed with its merit. To get all the advantage of being with men of this sort, you must know how to draw your inferences, and not be a spoon who takes things literally. The color of the horse was a dappled gray, and Fred happened to know that Lord Medlicote's man was on the look-out for just such a horse. After all his running down, Bambridge let it out in the course of the evening, when the farmer was absent, that he had seen worse horses go for eighty pounds. Of course he contradicted himself twenty times over, but when you know what is likely to be true you can test a man's admissions. And Fred could not but reckon his own judgment of a horse as worth something. The farmer had paused over Fred's respectable though broken-winded steed long enough to show that he thought it worth consideration, and it seemed probable that he would take it, with five-and-twenty pounds in addition, as the equivalent of Diamond. In that case Fred, when he had parted with his new horse for at least eighty pounds, would be fifty-five pounds in pocket by the transaction, and would have a hundred and thirty-five pounds towards meeting the bill; so that the deficit temporarily thrown on Mr. Garth would at the utmost be twenty-five pounds. By the time he was hurrying on his clothes in the morning, he saw so clearly the importance of not losing this rare chance, that if Bambridge and Horrock had both dissuaded him, he would not have been deluded into a direct interpretation of their purpose: he would have been aware that those deep hands held something else than a young fellow's interest. With regard to horses, distrust was your only clew. But scepticism, as we know, can never be thoroughly applied, else life would come to a standstill: something we must believe in and do, and whatever that something may be called, it is virtually our own judgment, even when it seems like the most slavish reliance on another. Fred believed in the excellence of his bargain, and even before the fair had well set in, had got possession of the dappled gray,

at the price of his old horse and thirty pounds in addition—only five pounds more than he had expected to give.

But he felt a little worried and wearied, perhaps with mental debate, and without waiting for the further gayeties of the horse-fair, he set out alone on his fourteen miles' journey, meaning to take it very quietly and keep his horse fresh.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

“The offender’s sorrow brings but small relief  
To him who wears the strong offence’s cross.”

—SHAKESPEARE: *Sonnets*.

I am sorry to say that only the third day after the propitious events at Houndsley Fred Vincy had fallen into worse spirits than he had known in his life before. Not that he had been disappointed as to the possible market for his horse, but that before the bargain could be concluded with Lord Medlicote’s man, this Diamond, in which hope to the amount of eighty pounds had been invested, had without the slightest warning exhibited in the stable a most vicious energy in kicking, had just missed killing the groom, and had ended in laming himself severely by catching his leg in a rope that overhung the stable-board. There was no more redress for this than for the discovery of bad temper after marriage—which of course old companions were aware of before the ceremony. For some reason or other, Fred had none of his usual elasticity under this stroke of ill-fortune: he was simply aware that he had only fifty pounds, that there was no chance of his getting any more at present, and that the bill for a hundred and sixty would be presented in five days. Even if he had applied to his father on the plea that Mr. Garth should be saved from loss, Fred felt smartingly that his father would angrily refuse to rescue Mr. Garth from the consequence of what he would call encouraging extravagance and deceit. He was so utterly downcast that he could frame no other project than to go straight to Mr. Garth and tell him the sad truth, carrying with him the fifty pounds, and getting that sum at least safely out of his own hands. His father, being at the warehouse, did not yet know of the accident: when he did, he would storm about the vicious brute being brought into his stable; and before meeting that lesser annoyance Fred wanted to get away with all his courage to face the greater. He took his father’s nag, for he had made up his mind that when he had told Mr. Garth, he would ride to Stone Court and confess all to Mary. In fact, it is probable that but for Mary’s existence and Fred’s love for her, his conscience would have been much less active

both in previously urging the debt on his thought and impelling him not to spare himself after his usual fashion by deferring an unpleasant task, but to act as directly and simply as he could. Even much stronger mortals than Fred Vincy hold half their rectitude in the mind of the being they love best. "The theatre of all my actions is fallen," said an antique personage when his chief friend was dead; and they are fortunate who get a theatre where the audience demands their best. Certainly it would have made a considerable difference to Fred at that time if Mary Garth had had no decided notions as to what was admirable in character.

Mr. Garth was not at the office, and Fred rode on to his house, which was a little way outside the town—a homely place with an orchard in front of it, a rambling, old-fashioned, half-timbered building, which before the town had spread had been a farm-house, but was now surrounded with the private gardens of the townsmen. We get the fonder of our houses if they have a physiognomy of their own, as our friends have. The Garth family, which was rather a large one, for Mary had four brothers and one sister, were very fond of their old house, from which all the best furniture had long been sold. Fred liked it too, knowing it by heart even to the attic which smelt deliciously of apples and quinces, and until to-day he had never come to it without pleasant expectations; but his heart beat uneasily now with the sense that he should probably have to make his confession before Mrs. Garth, of whom he was rather more in awe than of her husband. Not that she was inclined to sarcasm and to impulsive sallies, as Mary was. In her present matronly age at least, Mrs. Garth never committed herself by over-hasty speech; having, as she said, borne the yoke in her youth, and learned self-control. She had that rare sense which discerns what is unalterable, and submits to it without murmuring. Adoring her husband's virtues, she had very early made up her mind to his incapacity of minding his own interests, and had met the consequences cheerfully. She had been magnanimous enough to renounce all pride in teapots or children's frilling, and had never poured any pathetic confidences into the ears of her feminine neighbors concerning Mr. Garth's want of prudence and the sums he might have had if he had been like other men. Hence these fair neighbors thought her either proud or eccentric, and sometimes spoke of her to their husbands as "your fine Mrs. Garth." She was not without her criticism of them in return, being more accurately instructed than most matrons in Middlemarch, and—where is the

blameless woman?—apt to be a little severe towards her own sex, which in her opinion was framed to be entirely subordinate. On the other hand, she was disproportionately indulgent towards the failings of men, and was often heard to say that these were natural. Also, it must be admitted that Mrs. Garth was a trifle too emphatic in her resistance to what she held to be follies: the passage from governess into housewife had wrought itself a little too strongly into her consciousness, and she rarely forgot that while her grammar and accent were above the town standard, she wore a plain cap, cooked the family dinner, and darned all the stockings. She had sometimes taken pupils in a peripatetic fashion, making them follow her about in the kitchen with their book or slate. She thought it good for them to see that she could make an excellent lather while she corrected their blunders “without looking,”—that a woman with her sleeves tucked up above her elbows might know all about the Subjunctive Mood or the Torrid Zone—that, in short, she might possess “education” and other good things ending in “tion,” and worthy to be pronounced emphatically, without being a useless doll. When she made remarks to this edifying effect, she had a firm little frown on her brow, which yet did not hinder her face from looking benevolent, and her words which came forth like a procession were uttered in a fervid agreeable contralto. Certainly, the exemplary Mrs. Garth had her droll aspects, but her character sustained her oddities, as a very fine wine sustains a flavor of skin.

Towards Fred Vincy she had a motherly feeling, and had always been disposed to excuse his errors, though she would probably not have excused Mary for engaging herself to him, her daughter being included in that more rigorous judgment which she applied to her own sex. But this very fact of her exceptional indulgence towards him made it the harder to Fred that he must now inevitably sink in her opinion. And the circumstances of his visit turned out to be still more unpleasant than he had expected; for Caleb Garth had gone out early to look at some repairs not far off. Mrs. Garth at certain hours was always in the kitchen, and this morning she was carrying on several occupations at once there—making her pies at the well-scoured deal table on one side of that airy room, observing Sally’s movements at the oven and dough-tub through an open door, and giving lessons to her youngest boy and girl, who were standing opposite to her at the table with their books and slates before them. A tub and a clothes-

horse at the other end of the kitchen indicated an intermittent wash of small things also going on.

Mrs. Garth, with her sleeves turned above her elbows, deftly handling her pastry—applying her rolling-pin and giving ornamental pinches, while she expounded with grammatical fervor what were the right views about the concord of verbs and pronouns with “nouns of multitude or signifying many,” was a sight agreeably amusing. She was of the same curly-haired, square-faced type as Mary, but handsomer, with more delicacy of feature, a pale skin, a solid matronly figure, and a remarkable firmness of glance. In her snowy-frilled cap she reminded one of that delightful Frenchwoman whom we have all seen marketing, basket on arm. Looking at the mother, you might hope that the daughter would become like her, which is a prospective advantage equal to a dowry—the mother too often standing behind the daughter like a malignant prophecy—“Such as I am, she will shortly be.”

“Now let us go through that once more,” said Mrs. Garth, pinching an apple-puff which seemed to distract Ben, an energetic young male with a heavy brow, from due attention to the lesson. “Not without regard to the import of the word as conveying unity or plurality of idea’—tell me again what that means, Ben.”

(Mrs. Garth, like more celebrated educators, had her favorite ancient paths, and in a general wreck of society would have tried to hold her “Lindley Murray” above the waves.)

“Oh—it means—you must think what you mean,” said Ben, rather peevishly. “I hate grammar. What’s the use of it?”

“To teach you to speak and write correctly, so that you can be understood,” said Mrs. Garth, with severe precision. “Should you like to speak as old Job does?”

“Yes,” said Ben, stoutly; “it’s funnier. He says, ‘Yo goo’—that’s just as good as ‘You go.’”

“But he says, ‘A ship’s in the garden,’ instead of ‘a sheep,’” said Letty, with an air of superiority. “You might think he meant a ship off the sea.”

“No, you mightn’t, if you weren’t silly,” said Ben. “How could a ship off the sea come there?”

“These things belong only to pronunciation, which is the least part of grammar,” said Mrs. Garth. “That apple-peel is to be eaten by the pigs, Ben; if you eat it, I must give them your piece of pasty. Job has only to speak about very plain things. How do you think you would write or speak about anything more difficult, if you knew no more of grammar than he does? You would use wrong words, and put words in the wrong places, and instead of making people understand you, they would turn away from you as a tiresome person. What would you do then?”

“I shouldn’t care, I should leave off,” said Ben, with a sense that this was an agreeable issue where grammar was concerned.

“I see you are getting tired and stupid, Ben,” said Mrs. Garth, accustomed to these obstructive arguments from her male offspring. Having finished her pies, she moved towards the clothes-horse, and said, “Come here and tell me the story I told you on Wednesday, about Cincinnatus.”

“I know! he was a farmer,” said Ben.

“Now, Ben, he was a Roman—let *me* tell,” said Letty, using her elbow contentiously.

“You silly thing, he was a Roman farmer, and he was ploughing.”

“Yes, but before that—that didn’t come first—people wanted him,” said Letty.

“Well, but you must say what sort of a man he was first,” insisted Ben. “He was a wise man, like my father, and that made the people want his advice. And he was a brave man, and could fight. And so could my father—couldn’t he, mother?”

“Now, Ben, let me tell the story straight on, as mother told it us,” said Letty, frowning. “Please, mother, tell Ben not to speak.”

“Letty, I am ashamed of you,” said her mother, wringing out the caps from the tub. “When your brother began, you ought to have waited to see if he could not tell the story. How rude you look, pushing and frowning, as if you wanted to conquer with your elbows! Cincinnatus, I am sure, would have been sorry to see his daughter behave so.” (Mrs. Garth delivered this awful sentence with much majesty of enunciation, and Letty felt that between repressed volubility and general disesteem, that of the Romans inclusive, life was already a painful affair.) “Now, Ben.”



“Well—oh—well—why, there was a great deal of fighting, and they were all blockheads, and—I can’t tell it just how you told it—but they wanted a man to be captain and king and everything—”

“Dictator, now,” said Letty, with injured looks, and not without a wish to make her mother repent.

“Very well, dictator!” said Ben, contemptuously. “But that isn’t a good word: he didn’t tell them to write on slates.”

“Come, come, Ben, you are not so ignorant as that,” said Mrs. Garth, carefully serious. “Hark, there is a knock at the door! Run, Letty, and open it.”

The knock was Fred’s; and when Letty said that her father was not in yet, but that her mother was in the kitchen, Fred had no alternative. He could not depart from his usual practice of going to see Mrs. Garth in the kitchen if she happened to be at work there. He put his arm round Letty’s neck silently, and led her into the kitchen without his usual jokes and caresses.

Mrs. Garth was surprised to see Fred at this hour, but surprise was not a feeling that she was given to express, and she only said, quietly continuing her work—

“You, Fred, so early in the day? You look quite pale. Has anything happened?”

“I want to speak to Mr. Garth,” said Fred, not yet ready to say more—“and to you also,” he added, after a little pause, for he had no doubt that Mrs. Garth knew everything about the bill, and he must in the end speak of it before her, if not to her solely.

“Caleb will be in again in a few minutes,” said Mrs. Garth, who imagined some trouble between Fred and his father. “He is sure not to be long, because he has some work at his desk that must be done this morning. Do you mind staying with me, while I finish my matters here?”

“But we needn’t go on about Cincinnatus, need we?” said Ben, who had taken Fred’s whip out of his hand, and was trying its efficiency on the cat.

“No, go out now. But put that whip down. How very mean of you to whip poor old Tortoise! Pray take the whip from him, Fred.”

“Come, old boy, give it me,” said Fred, putting out his hand.

“Will you let me ride on your horse to-day?” said Ben, rendering up the whip, with an air of not being obliged to do it.

“Not to-day—another time. I am not riding my own horse.”

“Shall you see Mary to-day?”

“Yes, I think so,” said Fred, with an unpleasant twinge.

“Tell her to come home soon, and play at forfeits, and make fun.”

“Enough, enough, Ben! run away,” said Mrs. Garth, seeing that Fred was teased.

“Are Letty and Ben your only pupils now, Mrs. Garth?” said Fred, when the children were gone and it was needful to say something that would pass the time. He was not yet sure whether he should wait for Mr. Garth, or use any good opportunity in conversation to confess to Mrs. Garth herself, give her the money and ride away.

“One—only one. Fanny Hackbutt comes at half past eleven. I am not getting a great income now,” said Mrs. Garth, smiling. “I am at a low ebb with pupils. But I have saved my little purse for Alfred’s premium: I have ninety-two pounds. He can go to Mr. Hanmer’s now; he is just at the right age.”

This did not lead well towards the news that Mr. Garth was on the brink of losing ninety-two pounds and more. Fred was silent. “Young gentlemen who go to college are rather more costly than that,” Mrs. Garth innocently continued, pulling out the edging on a cap-border. “And Caleb thinks that Alfred will turn out a distinguished engineer: he wants to give the boy a good chance. There he is! I hear him coming in. We will go to him in the parlor, shall we?”

When they entered the parlor Caleb had thrown down his hat and was seated at his desk.

“What! Fred, my boy!” he said, in a tone of mild surprise, holding his pen still undipped; “you are here betimes.” But missing the usual expression of cheerful greeting in Fred’s face, he immediately added, “Is there anything up at home?—anything the matter?”

“Yes, Mr. Garth, I am come to tell something that I am afraid will give you a bad opinion of me. I am come to tell you and Mrs. Garth that I can’t keep my word. I can’t find the money to meet the bill after all. I have been

unfortunate; I have only got these fifty pounds towards the hundred and sixty.”

While Fred was speaking, he had taken out the notes and laid them on the desk before Mr. Garth. He had burst forth at once with the plain fact, feeling boyishly miserable and without verbal resources. Mrs. Garth was mutely astonished, and looked at her husband for an explanation. Caleb blushed, and after a little pause said—

“Oh, I didn’t tell you, Susan: I put my name to a bill for Fred; it was for a hundred and sixty pounds. He made sure he could meet it himself.”

There was an evident change in Mrs. Garth’s face, but it was like a change below the surface of water which remains smooth. She fixed her eyes on Fred, saying—

“I suppose you have asked your father for the rest of the money and he has refused you.”

“No,” said Fred, biting his lip, and speaking with more difficulty; “but I know it will be of no use to ask him; and unless it were of use, I should not like to mention Mr. Garth’s name in the matter.”

“It has come at an unfortunate time,” said Caleb, in his hesitating way, looking down at the notes and nervously fingering the paper, “Christmas upon us—I’m rather hard up just now. You see, I have to cut out everything like a tailor with short measure. What can we do, Susan? I shall want every farthing we have in the bank. It’s a hundred and ten pounds, the deuce take it!”

“I must give you the ninety-two pounds that I have put by for Alfred’s premium,” said Mrs. Garth, gravely and decisively, though a nice ear might have discerned a slight tremor in some of the words. “And I have no doubt that Mary has twenty pounds saved from her salary by this time. She will advance it.”

Mrs. Garth had not again looked at Fred, and was not in the least calculating what words she should use to cut him the most effectively. Like the eccentric woman she was, she was at present absorbed in considering what was to be done, and did not fancy that the end could be better achieved by bitter remarks or explosions. But she had made Fred feel for the first time something like the tooth of remorse. Curiously enough, his pain in the affair beforehand had consisted almost entirely in

the sense that he must seem dishonorable, and sink in the opinion of the Garths: he had not occupied himself with the inconvenience and possible injury that his breach might occasion them, for this exercise of the imagination on other people's needs is not common with hopeful young gentlemen. Indeed we are most of us brought up in the notion that the highest motive for not doing a wrong is something irrespective of the beings who would suffer the wrong. But at this moment he suddenly saw himself as a pitiful rascal who was robbing two women of their savings.

"I shall certainly pay it all, Mrs. Garth—ultimately," he stammered out.

"Yes, ultimately," said Mrs. Garth, who having a special dislike to fine words on ugly occasions, could not now repress an epigram. "But boys cannot well be apprenticed ultimately: they should be apprenticed at fifteen." She had never been so little inclined to make excuses for Fred.

"I was the most in the wrong, Susan," said Caleb. "Fred made sure of finding the money. But I'd no business to be fingering bills. I suppose you have looked all round and tried all honest means?" he added, fixing his merciful gray eyes on Fred. Caleb was too delicate to specify Mr. Featherstone.

"Yes, I have tried everything—I really have. I should have had a hundred and thirty pounds ready but for a misfortune with a horse which I was about to sell. My uncle had given me eighty pounds, and I paid away thirty with my old horse in order to get another which I was going to sell for eighty or more—I meant to go without a horse—but now it has turned out vicious and lamed itself. I wish I and the horses too had been at the devil, before I had brought this on you. There's no one else I care so much for: you and Mrs. Garth have always been so kind to me. However, it's no use saying that. You will always think me a rascal now."

Fred turned round and hurried out of the room, conscious that he was getting rather womanish, and feeling confusedly that his being sorry was not of much use to the Garths. They could see him mount, and quickly pass through the gate.

"I am disappointed in Fred Vincy," said Mrs. Garth. "I would not have believed beforehand that he would have drawn you into his debts. I knew he was extravagant, but I did not think that he would be so mean as to hang his risks on his oldest friend, who could the least afford to lose."

"I was a fool, Susan."

“That you were,” said the wife, nodding and smiling. “But I should not have gone to publish it in the market-place. Why should you keep such things from me? It is just so with your buttons: you let them burst off without telling me, and go out with your wristband hanging. If I had only known I might have been ready with some better plan.”

“You are sadly cut up, I know, Susan,” said Caleb, looking feelingly at her. “I can’t abide your losing the money you’ve scraped together for Alfred.”

“It is very well that I *had* scraped it together; and it is you who will have to suffer, for you must teach the boy yourself. You must give up your bad habits. Some men take to drinking, and you have taken to working without pay. You must indulge yourself a little less in that. And you must ride over to Mary, and ask the child what money she has.”

Caleb had pushed his chair back, and was leaning forward, shaking his head slowly, and fitting his finger-tips together with much nicety.

“Poor Mary!” he said. “Susan,” he went on in a lowered tone, “I’m afraid she may be fond of Fred.”

“Oh no! She always laughs at him; and he is not likely to think of her in any other than a brotherly way.”

Caleb made no rejoinder, but presently lowered his spectacles, drew up his chair to the desk, and said, “Deuce take the bill—I wish it was at Hanover! These things are a sad interruption to business!”

The first part of this speech comprised his whole store of maledictory expression, and was uttered with a slight snarl easy to imagine. But it would be difficult to convey to those who never heard him utter the word “business,” the peculiar tone of fervid veneration, of religious regard, in which he wrapped it, as a consecrated symbol is wrapped in its gold-fringed linen.

Caleb Garth often shook his head in meditation on the value, the indispensable might of that myriad-headed, myriad-handed labor by which the social body is fed, clothed, and housed. It had laid hold of his imagination in boyhood. The echoes of the great hammer where roof or keel were a-making, the signal-shouts of the workmen, the roar of the furnace, the thunder and plash of the engine, were a sublime music to him; the felling and lading of timber, and the huge trunk vibrating star-like in

the distance along the highway, the crane at work on the wharf, the piled-up produce in warehouses, the precision and variety of muscular effort wherever exact work had to be turned out,—all these sights of his youth had acted on him as poetry without the aid of the poets, had made a philosophy for him without the aid of philosophers, a religion without the aid of theology. His early ambition had been to have as effective a share as possible in this sublime labor, which was peculiarly dignified by him with the name of “business;” and though he had only been a short time under a surveyor, and had been chiefly his own teacher, he knew more of land, building, and mining than most of the special men in the county.

His classification of human employments was rather crude, and, like the categories of more celebrated men, would not be acceptable in these advanced times. He divided them into “business, politics, preaching, learning, and amusement.” He had nothing to say against the last four; but he regarded them as a reverential pagan regarded other gods than his own. In the same way, he thought very well of all ranks, but he would not himself have liked to be of any rank in which he had not such close contact with “business” as to get often honorably decorated with marks of dust and mortar, the damp of the engine, or the sweet soil of the woods and fields. Though he had never regarded himself as other than an orthodox Christian, and would argue on convenient grace if the subject were proposed to him, I think his virtual divinities were good practical schemes, accurate work, and the faithful completion of undertakings: his prince of darkness was a slack workman. But there was no spirit of denial in Caleb, and the world seemed so wondrous to him that he was ready to accept any number of systems, like any number of firmaments, if they did not obviously interfere with the best land-drainage, solid building, correct measuring, and judicious boring (for coal). In fact, he had a reverential soul with a strong practical intelligence. But he could not manage finance: he knew values well, but he had no keenness of imagination for monetary results in the shape of profit and loss: and having ascertained this to his cost, he determined to give up all forms of his beloved “business” which required that talent. He gave himself up entirely to the many kinds of work which he could do without handling capital, and was one of those precious men within his own district whom everybody would choose to work for them, because he did his work well, charged very little, and often declined to

charge at all. It is no wonder, then, that the Garths were poor, and “lived in a small way.” However, they did not mind it.

## CHAPTER XXV.

“Love seeketh not itself to please,  
Nor for itself hath any care  
But for another gives its ease  
And builds a heaven in hell’s despair.

.....  
Love seeketh only self to please,  
To bind another to its delight,  
Joys in another’s loss of ease,  
And builds a hell in heaven’s despite.”  
—W. BLAKE: *Songs of Experience*.

Fred Vincy wanted to arrive at Stone Court when Mary could not expect him, and when his uncle was not downstairs: in that case she might be sitting alone in the wainscoted parlor. He left his horse in the yard to avoid making a noise on the gravel in front, and entered the parlor without other notice than the noise of the door-handle. Mary was in her usual corner, laughing over Mrs. Piozzi’s recollections of Johnson, and looked up with the fun still in her face. It gradually faded as she saw Fred approach her without speaking, and stand before her with his elbow on the mantel-piece, looking ill. She too was silent, only raising her eyes to him inquiringly.

“Mary,” he began, “I am a good-for-nothing blackguard.”

“I should think one of those epithets would do at a time,” said Mary, trying to smile, but feeling alarmed.

“I know you will never think well of me any more. You will think me a liar. You will think me dishonest. You will think I didn’t care for you, or your father and mother. You always do make the worst of me, I know.”

“I cannot deny that I shall think all that of you, Fred, if you give me good reasons. But please to tell me at once what you have done. I would rather know the painful truth than imagine it.”

“I owed money—a hundred and sixty pounds. I asked your father to put his name to a bill. I thought it would not signify to him. I made sure of paying the money myself, and I have tried as hard as I could. And now, I have been so unlucky—a horse has turned out badly—I can only pay fifty



pounds. And I can't ask my father for the money: he would not give me a farthing. And my uncle gave me a hundred a little while ago. So what can I do? And now your father has no ready money to spare, and your mother will have to pay away her ninety-two pounds that she has saved, and she says your savings must go too. You see what a—”

“Oh, poor mother, poor father!” said Mary, her eyes filling with tears, and a little sob rising which she tried to repress. She looked straight before her and took no notice of Fred, all the consequences at home becoming present to her. He too remained silent for some moments, feeling more miserable than ever. “I wouldn't have hurt you for the world, Mary,” he said at last. “You can never forgive me.”

“What does it matter whether I forgive you?” said Mary, passionately. “Would that make it any better for my mother to lose the money she has been earning by lessons for four years, that she might send Alfred to Mr. Hanmer's? Should you think all that pleasant enough if I forgave you?”

“Say what you like, Mary. I deserve it all.”

“I don't want to say anything,” said Mary, more quietly, “and my anger is of no use.” She dried her eyes, threw aside her book, rose and fetched her sewing.

Fred followed her with his eyes, hoping that they would meet hers, and in that way find access for his imploring penitence. But no! Mary could easily avoid looking upward.

“I do care about your mother's money going,” he said, when she was seated again and sewing quickly. “I wanted to ask you, Mary—don't you think that Mr. Featherstone—if you were to tell him—tell him, I mean, about apprenticing Alfred—would advance the money?”

“My family is not fond of begging, Fred. We would rather work for our money. Besides, you say that Mr. Featherstone has lately given you a hundred pounds. He rarely makes presents; he has never made presents to us. I am sure my father will not ask him for anything; and even if I chose to beg of him, it would be of no use.”

“I am so miserable, Mary—if you knew how miserable I am, you would be sorry for me.”

“There are other things to be more sorry for than that. But selfish people always think their own discomfort of more importance than anything else

in the world. I see enough of that every day.”

“It is hardly fair to call me selfish. If you knew what things other young men do, you would think me a good way off the worst.”

“I know that people who spend a great deal of money on themselves without knowing how they shall pay, must be selfish. They are always thinking of what they can get for themselves, and not of what other people may lose.”

“Any man may be unfortunate, Mary, and find himself unable to pay when he meant it. There is not a better man in the world than your father, and yet he got into trouble.”

“How dare you make any comparison between my father and you, Fred?” said Mary, in a deep tone of indignation. “He never got into trouble by thinking of his own idle pleasures, but because he was always thinking of the work he was doing for other people. And he has fared hard, and worked hard to make good everybody’s loss.”

“And you think that I shall never try to make good anything, Mary. It is not generous to believe the worst of a man. When you have got any power over him, I think you might try and use it to make him better; but that is what you never do. However, I’m going,” Fred ended, languidly. “I shall never speak to you about anything again. I’m very sorry for all the trouble I’ve caused—that’s all.”

Mary had dropped her work out of her hand and looked up. There is often something maternal even in a girlish love, and Mary’s hard experience had wrought her nature to an impressibility very different from that hard slight thing which we call girlishness. At Fred’s last words she felt an instantaneous pang, something like what a mother feels at the imagined sobs or cries of her naughty truant child, which may lose itself and get harm. And when, looking up, her eyes met his dull despairing glance, her pity for him surmounted her anger and all her other anxieties.

“Oh, Fred, how ill you look! Sit down a moment. Don’t go yet. Let me tell uncle that you are here. He has been wondering that he has not seen you for a whole week.” Mary spoke hurriedly, saying the words that came first without knowing very well what they were, but saying them in a half-soothing half-beseeking tone, and rising as if to go away to Mr. Featherstone. Of course Fred felt as if the clouds had parted and a gleam had come: he moved and stood in her way.

“Say one word, Mary, and I will do anything. Say you will not think the worst of me—will not give me up altogether.”

“As if it were any pleasure to me to think ill of you,” said Mary, in a mournful tone. “As if it were not very painful to me to see you an idle frivolous creature. How can you bear to be so contemptible, when others are working and striving, and there are so many things to be done—how can you bear to be fit for nothing in the world that is useful? And with so much good in your disposition, Fred,—you might be worth a great deal.”

“I will try to be anything you like, Mary, if you will say that you love me.”

“I should be ashamed to say that I loved a man who must always be hanging on others, and reckoning on what they would do for him. What will you be when you are forty? Like Mr. Bowyer, I suppose—just as idle, living in Mrs. Beck’s front parlor—fat and shabby, hoping somebody will invite you to dinner—spending your morning in learning a comic song—oh no! learning a tune on the flute.”

Mary’s lips had begun to curl with a smile as soon as she had asked that question about Fred’s future (young souls are mobile), and before she ended, her face had its full illumination of fun. To him it was like the cessation of an ache that Mary could laugh at him, and with a passive sort of smile he tried to reach her hand; but she slipped away quickly towards the door and said, “I shall tell uncle. You *must* see him for a moment or two.”

Fred secretly felt that his future was guaranteed against the fulfilment of Mary’s sarcastic prophecies, apart from that “anything” which he was ready to do if she would define it. He never dared in Mary’s presence to approach the subject of his expectations from Mr. Featherstone, and she always ignored them, as if everything depended on himself. But if ever he actually came into the property, she must recognize the change in his position. All this passed through his mind somewhat languidly, before he went up to see his uncle. He stayed but a little while, excusing himself on the ground that he had a cold; and Mary did not reappear before he left the house. But as he rode home, he began to be more conscious of being ill, than of being melancholy.

When Caleb Garth arrived at Stone Court soon after dusk, Mary was not surprised, although he seldom had leisure for paying her a visit, and was

not at all fond of having to talk with Mr. Featherstone. The old man, on the other hand, felt himself ill at ease with a brother-in-law whom he could not annoy, who did not mind about being considered poor, had nothing to ask of him, and understood all kinds of farming and mining business better than he did. But Mary had felt sure that her parents would want to see her, and if her father had not come, she would have obtained leave to go home for an hour or two the next day. After discussing prices during tea with Mr. Featherstone, Caleb rose to bid him good-by, and said, "I want to speak to you, Mary."

She took a candle into another large parlor, where there was no fire, and setting down the feeble light on the dark mahogany table, turned round to her father, and putting her arms round his neck kissed him with childish kisses which he delighted in,—the expression of his large brows softening as the expression of a great beautiful dog softens when it is caressed. Mary was his favorite child, and whatever Susan might say, and right as she was on all other subjects, Caleb thought it natural that Fred or any one else should think Mary more lovable than other girls.

"I've got something to tell you, my dear," said Caleb in his hesitating way. "No very good news; but then it might be worse."

"About money, father? I think I know what it is."

"Ay? how can that be? You see, I've been a bit of a fool again, and put my name to a bill, and now it comes to paying; and your mother has got to part with her savings, that's the worst of it, and even they won't quite make things even. We wanted a hundred and ten pounds: your mother has ninety-two, and I have none to spare in the bank; and she thinks that you have some savings."

"Oh yes; I have more than four-and-twenty pounds. I thought you would come, father, so I put it in my bag. See! beautiful white notes and gold."

Mary took out the folded money from her reticule and put it into her father's hand.

"Well, but how—we only want eighteen—here, put the rest back, child,—but how did you know about it?" said Caleb, who, in his unconquerable indifference to money, was beginning to be chiefly concerned about the relation the affair might have to Mary's affections.

"Fred told me this morning."

“Ah! Did he come on purpose?”

“Yes, I think so. He was a good deal distressed.”

“I’m afraid Fred is not to be trusted, Mary,” said the father, with hesitating tenderness. “He means better than he acts, perhaps. But I should think it a pity for any body’s happiness to be wrapped up in him, and so would your mother.”

“And so should I, father,” said Mary, not looking up, but putting the back of her father’s hand against her cheek.

“I don’t want to pry, my dear. But I was afraid there might be something between you and Fred, and I wanted to caution you. You see, Mary”—here Caleb’s voice became more tender; he had been pushing his hat about on the table and looking at it, but finally he turned his eyes on his daughter—“a woman, let her be as good as she may, has got to put up with the life her husband makes for her. Your mother has had to put up with a good deal because of me.”

Mary turned the back of her father’s hand to her lips and smiled at him.

“Well, well, nobody’s perfect, but”—here Mr. Garth shook his head to help out the inadequacy of words—“what I am thinking of is—what it must be for a wife when she’s never sure of her husband, when he hasn’t got a principle in him to make him more afraid of doing the wrong thing by others than of getting his own toes pinched. That’s the long and the short of it, Mary. Young folks may get fond of each other before they know what life is, and they may think it all holiday if they can only get together; but it soon turns into working day, my dear. However, you have more sense than most, and you haven’t been kept in cotton-wool: there may be no occasion for me to say this, but a father trembles for his daughter, and you are all by yourself here.”

“Don’t fear for me, father,” said Mary, gravely meeting her father’s eyes; “Fred has always been very good to me; he is kind-hearted and affectionate, and not false, I think, with all his self-indulgence. But I will never engage myself to one who has no manly independence, and who goes on loitering away his time on the chance that others will provide for him. You and my mother have taught me too much pride for that.”

“That’s right—that’s right. Then I am easy,” said Mr. Garth, taking up his hat. “But it’s hard to run away with your earnings, eh child.”

“Father!” said Mary, in her deepest tone of remonstrance. “Take pocketfuls of love besides to them all at home,” was her last word before he closed the outer door on himself.

“I suppose your father wanted your earnings,” said old Mr. Featherstone, with his usual power of unpleasant surmise, when Mary returned to him. “He makes but a tight fit, I reckon. You’re of age now; you ought to be saving for yourself.”

“I consider my father and mother the best part of myself, sir,” said Mary, coldly.

Mr. Featherstone grunted: he could not deny that an ordinary sort of girl like her might be expected to be useful, so he thought of another rejoinder, disagreeable enough to be always apropos. “If Fred Vincy comes tomorrow, now, don’t you keep him chattering: let him come up to me.”

## CHAPTER XXVI.

He beats me and I rail at him: O worthy satisfaction! would it were otherwise—that I could beat him while he railed at me.—*Troilus and Cressida*.

But Fred did not go to Stone Court the next day, for reasons that were quite peremptory. From those visits to unsanitary Houndsley streets in search of Diamond, he had brought back not only a bad bargain in horse-flesh, but the further misfortune of some ailment which for a day or two had deemed mere depression and headache, but which got so much worse when he returned from his visit to Stone Court that, going into the dining-room, he threw himself on the sofa, and in answer to his mother's anxious question, said, "I feel very ill: I think you must send for Wrench."

Wrench came, but did not apprehend anything serious, spoke of a "slight derangement," and did not speak of coming again on the morrow. He had a due value for the Vincys' house, but the wariest men are apt to be dulled by routine, and on worried mornings will sometimes go through their business with the zest of the daily bell-ringer. Mr. Wrench was a small, neat, bilious man, with a well-dressed wig: he had a laborious practice, an irascible temper, a lymphatic wife and seven children; and he was already rather late before setting out on a four-miles drive to meet Dr. Minchin on the other side of Tipton, the decease of Hicks, a rural practitioner, having increased Middlemarch practice in that direction. Great statesmen err, and why not small medical men? Mr. Wrench did not neglect sending the usual white parcels, which this time had black and drastic contents. Their effect was not alleviating to poor Fred, who, however, unwilling as he said to believe that he was "in for an illness," rose at his usual easy hour the next morning and went down-stairs meaning to breakfast, but succeeded in nothing but in sitting and shivering by the fire. Mr. Wrench was again sent for, but was gone on his rounds, and Mrs. Vincy seeing her darling's changed looks and general misery, began to cry and said she would send for Dr. Sprague.

“Oh, nonsense, mother! It’s nothing,” said Fred, putting out his hot dry hand to her, “I shall soon be all right. I must have taken cold in that nasty damp ride.”

“Mamma!” said Rosamond, who was seated near the window (the dining-room windows looked on that highly respectable street called Lowick Gate), “there is Mr. Lydgate, stopping to speak to some one. If I were you I would call him in. He has cured Ellen Bulstrode. They say he cures every one.”

Mrs. Vincy sprang to the window and opened it in an instant, thinking only of Fred and not of medical etiquette. Lydgate was only two yards off on the other side of some iron palisading, and turned round at the sudden sound of the sash, before she called to him. In two minutes he was in the room, and Rosamond went out, after waiting just long enough to show a pretty anxiety conflicting with her sense of what was becoming.

Lydgate had to hear a narrative in which Mrs. Vincy’s mind insisted with remarkable instinct on every point of minor importance, especially on what Mr. Wrench had said and had not said about coming again. That there might be an awkward affair with Wrench, Lydgate saw at once; but the case was serious enough to make him dismiss that consideration: he was convinced that Fred was in the pink-skinned stage of typhoid fever, and that he had taken just the wrong medicines. He must go to bed immediately, must have a regular nurse, and various appliances and precautions must be used, about which Lydgate was particular. Poor Mrs. Vincy’s terror at these indications of danger found vent in such words as came most easily. She thought it “very ill usage on the part of Mr. Wrench, who had attended their house so many years in preference to Mr. Peacock, though Mr. Peacock was equally a friend. Why Mr. Wrench should neglect her children more than others, she could not for the life of her understand. He had not neglected Mrs. Larcher’s when they had the measles, nor indeed would Mrs. Vincy have wished that he should. And if anything should happen—”

Here poor Mrs. Vincy’s spirit quite broke down, and her Niobe throat and good-humored face were sadly convulsed. This was in the hall out of Fred’s hearing, but Rosamond had opened the drawing-room door, and now came forward anxiously. Lydgate apologized for Mr. Wrench, said that the symptoms yesterday might have been disguising, and that this



form of fever was very equivocal in its beginnings: he would go immediately to the druggist's and have a prescription made up in order to lose no time, but he would write to Mr. Wrench and tell him what had been done.

“But you must come again—you must go on attending Fred. I can't have my boy left to anybody who may come or not. I bear nobody ill-will, thank God, and Mr. Wrench saved me in the pleurisy, but he'd better have let me die—if—if—”

“I will meet Mr. Wrench here, then, shall I?” said Lydgate, really believing that Wrench was not well prepared to deal wisely with a case of this kind.

“Pray make that arrangement, Mr. Lydgate,” said Rosamond, coming to her mother's aid, and supporting her arm to lead her away.

When Mr. Vincy came home he was very angry with Wrench, and did not care if he never came into his house again. Lydgate should go on now, whether Wrench liked it or not. It was no joke to have fever in the house. Everybody must be sent to now, not to come to dinner on Thursday. And Pritchard needn't get up any wine: brandy was the best thing against infection. “I shall drink brandy,” added Mr. Vincy, emphatically—as much as to say, this was not an occasion for firing with blank-cartridges. “He's an uncommonly unfortunate lad, is Fred. He'd need have some luck by and by to make up for all this—else I don't know who'd have an eldest son.”

“Don't say so, Vincy,” said the mother, with a quivering lip, “if you don't want him to be taken from me.”

“It will worret you to death, Lucy; *that* I can see,” said Mr. Vincy, more mildly. “However, Wrench shall know what I think of the matter.” (What Mr. Vincy thought confusedly was, that the fever might somehow have been hindered if Wrench had shown the proper solicitude about his—the Mayor's—family.) “I'm the last man to give in to the cry about new doctors, or new parsons either—whether they're Bulstrode's men or not. But Wrench shall know what I think, take it as he will.”

Wrench did not take it at all well. Lydgate was as polite as he could be in his offhand way, but politeness in a man who has placed you at a disadvantage is only an additional exasperation, especially if he happens to have been an object of dislike beforehand. Country practitioners used to be an irritable species, susceptible on the point of honor; and Mr. Wrench

was one of the most irritable among them. He did not refuse to meet Lydgate in the evening, but his temper was somewhat tried on the occasion. He had to hear Mrs. Vincy say—

“Oh, Mr. Wrench, what have I ever done that you should use me so?— To go away, and never to come again! And my boy might have been stretched a corpse!”

Mr. Vincy, who had been keeping up a sharp fire on the enemy Infection, and was a good deal heated in consequence, started up when he heard Wrench come in, and went into the hall to let him know what he thought.

“I’ll tell you what, Wrench, this is beyond a joke,” said the Mayor, who of late had had to rebuke offenders with an official air, and now broadened himself by putting his thumbs in his armpits. “To let fever get unawares into a house like this. There are some things that ought to be actionable, and are not so— that’s my opinion.”

But irrational reproaches were easier to bear than the sense of being instructed, or rather the sense that a younger man, like Lydgate, inwardly considered him in need of instruction, for “in point of fact,” Mr. Wrench afterwards said, Lydgate paraded flighty, foreign notions, which would not wear. He swallowed his ire for the moment, but he afterwards wrote to decline further attendance in the case. The house might be a good one, but Mr. Wrench was not going to truckle to anybody on a professional matter. He reflected, with much probability on his side, that Lydgate would by-and-by be caught tripping too, and that his ungentlemanly attempts to discredit the sale of drugs by his professional brethren, would by-and-by recoil on himself. He threw out biting remarks on Lydgate’s tricks, worthy only of a quack, to get himself a factitious reputation with credulous people. That cant about cures was never got up by sound practitioners.

This was a point on which Lydgate smarted as much as Wrench could desire. To be puffed by ignorance was not only humiliating, but perilous, and not more enviable than the reputation of the weather-prophet. He was impatient of the foolish expectations amidst which all work must be carried on, and likely enough to damage himself as much as Mr. Wrench could wish, by an unprofessional openness.

However, Lydgate was installed as medical attendant on the Vincys, and the event was a subject of general conversation in Middlemarch. Some said, that the Vincys had behaved scandalously, that Mr. Vincy had

threatened Wrench, and that Mrs. Vincy had accused him of poisoning her son. Others were of opinion that Mr. Lydgate's passing by was providential, that he was wonderfully clever in fevers, and that Bulstrode was in the right to bring him forward. Many people believed that Lydgate's coming to the town at all was really due to Bulstrode; and Mrs. Taft, who was always counting stitches and gathered her information in misleading fragments caught between the rows of her knitting, had got it into her head that Mr. Lydgate was a natural son of Bulstrode's, a fact which seemed to justify her suspicions of evangelical laymen.

She one day communicated this piece of knowledge to Mrs. Farebrother, who did not fail to tell her son of it, observing—

“I should not be surprised at anything in Bulstrode, but I should be sorry to think it of Mr. Lydgate.”

“Why, mother,” said Mr. Farebrother, after an explosive laugh, “you know very well that Lydgate is of a good family in the North. He never heard of Bulstrode before he came here.”

“That is satisfactory so far as Mr. Lydgate is concerned, Camden,” said the old lady, with an air of precision.—“But as to Bulstrode—the report may be true of some other son.”

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Let the high Muse chant loves Olympian:  
We are but mortals, and must sing of man.

An eminent philosopher among my friends, who can dignify even your ugly furniture by lifting it into the serene light of science, has shown me this pregnant little fact. Your pier-glass or extensive surface of polished steel made to be rubbed by a housemaid, will be minutely and multitudinously scratched in all directions; but place now against it a lighted candle as a centre of illumination, and lo! the scratches will seem to arrange themselves in a fine series of concentric circles round that little sun. It is demonstrable that the scratches are going everywhere impartially and it is only your candle which produces the flattering illusion of a concentric arrangement, its light falling with an exclusive optical selection. These things are a parable. The scratches are events, and the candle is the egoism of any person now absent—of Miss Vincy, for example. Rosamond had a Providence of her own who had kindly made her more charming than other girls, and who seemed to have arranged Fred's illness and Mr. Wrench's mistake in order to bring her and Lydgate within effective proximity. It would have been to contravene these arrangements if Rosamond had consented to go away to Stone Court or elsewhere, as her parents wished her to do, especially since Mr. Lydgate thought the precaution needless. Therefore, while Miss Morgan and the children were sent away to a farmhouse the morning after Fred's illness had declared itself, Rosamond refused to leave papa and mamma.

Poor mamma indeed was an object to touch any creature born of woman; and Mr. Vincy, who doted on his wife, was more alarmed on her account than on Fred's. But for his insistence she would have taken no rest: her brightness was all bedimmed; unconscious of her costume which had always been so fresh and gay, she was like a sick bird with languid eye and plumage ruffled, her senses dulled to the sights and sounds that used most to interest her. Fred's delirium, in which he seemed to be wandering out of her reach, tore her heart. After her first outburst against Mr. Wrench

she went about very quietly: her one low cry was to Lydgate. She would follow him out of the room and put her hand on his arm moaning out, "Save my boy." Once she pleaded, "He has always been good to me, Mr. Lydgate: he never had a hard word for his mother,"—as if poor Fred's suffering were an accusation against him. All the deepest fibres of the mother's memory were stirred, and the young man whose voice took a gentler tone when he spoke to her, was one with the babe whom she had loved, with a love new to her, before he was born.

"I have good hope, Mrs. Vincy," Lydgate would say. "Come down with me and let us talk about the food." In that way he led her to the parlor where Rosamond was, and made a change for her, surprising her into taking some tea or broth which had been prepared for her. There was a constant understanding between him and Rosamond on these matters. He almost always saw her before going to the sickroom, and she appealed to him as to what she could do for mamma. Her presence of mind and adroitness in carrying out his hints were admirable, and it is not wonderful that the idea of seeing Rosamond began to mingle itself with his interest in the case. Especially when the critical stage was passed, and he began to feel confident of Fred's recovery. In the more doubtful time, he had advised calling in Dr. Sprague (who, if he could, would rather have remained neutral on Wrench's account); but after two consultations, the conduct of the case was left to Lydgate, and there was every reason to make him assiduous. Morning and evening he was at Mr. Vincy's, and gradually the visits became cheerful as Fred became simply feeble, and lay not only in need of the utmost petting but conscious of it, so that Mrs. Vincy felt as if, after all, the illness had made a festival for her tenderness.

Both father and mother held it an added reason for good spirits, when old Mr. Featherstone sent messages by Lydgate, saying that Fred must make haste and get well, as he, Peter Featherstone, could not do without him, and missed his visits sadly. The old man himself was getting bedridden. Mrs. Vincy told these messages to Fred when he could listen, and he turned towards her his delicate, pinched face, from which all the thick blond hair had been cut away, and in which the eyes seemed to have got larger, yearning for some word about Mary—wondering what she felt about his illness. No word passed his lips; but "to hear with eyes belongs to love's rare wit," and the mother in the fulness of her heart not only

divined Fred's longing, but felt ready for any sacrifice in order to satisfy him.

"If I can only see my boy strong again," she said, in her loving folly; "and who knows?—perhaps master of Stone Court! and he can marry anybody he likes then."

"Not if they won't have me, mother," said Fred. The illness had made him childish, and tears came as he spoke.

"Oh, take a bit of jelly, my dear," said Mrs. Vincy, secretly incredulous of any such refusal.

She never left Fred's side when her husband was not in the house, and thus Rosamond was in the unusual position of being much alone. Lydgate, naturally, never thought of staying long with her, yet it seemed that the brief impersonal conversations they had together were creating that peculiar intimacy which consists in shyness. They were obliged to look at each other in speaking, and somehow the looking could not be carried through as the matter of course which it really was. Lydgate began to feel this sort of consciousness unpleasant and one day looked down, or anywhere, like an ill-worked puppet. But this turned out badly: the next day, Rosamond looked down, and the consequence was that when their eyes met again, both were more conscious than before. There was no help for this in science, and as Lydgate did not want to flirt, there seemed to be no help for it in folly. It was therefore a relief when neighbors no longer considered the house in quarantine, and when the chances of seeing Rosamond alone were very much reduced.

But that intimacy of mutual embarrassment, in which each feels that the other is feeling something, having once existed, its effect is not to be done away with. Talk about the weather and other well-bred topics is apt to seem a hollow device, and behavior can hardly become easy unless it frankly recognizes a mutual fascination—which of course need not mean anything deep or serious. This was the way in which Rosamond and Lydgate slid gracefully into ease, and made their intercourse lively again. Visitors came and went as usual, there was once more music in the drawing-room, and all the extra hospitality of Mr. Vincy's mayoralty returned. Lydgate, whenever he could, took his seat by Rosamond's side, and lingered to hear her music, calling himself her captive—meaning, all the while, not to be her captive. The preposterousness of the notion that he

could at once set up a satisfactory establishment as a married man was a sufficient guarantee against danger. This play at being a little in love was agreeable, and did not interfere with graver pursuits. Flirtation, after all, was not necessarily a singeing process. Rosamond, for her part, had never enjoyed the days so much in her life before: she was sure of being admired by some one worth captivating, and she did not distinguish flirtation from love, either in herself or in another. She seemed to be sailing with a fair wind just whither she would go, and her thoughts were much occupied with a handsome house in Lowick Gate which she hoped would by-and-by be vacant. She was quite determined, when she was married, to rid herself adroitly of all the visitors who were not agreeable to her at her father's; and she imagined the drawing-room in her favorite house with various styles of furniture.

Certainly her thoughts were much occupied with Lydgate himself; he seemed to her almost perfect: if he had known his notes so that his enchantment under her music had been less like an emotional elephant's, and if he had been able to discriminate better the refinements of her taste in dress, she could hardly have mentioned a deficiency in him. How different he was from young Plymdale or Mr. Caius Larcher! Those young men had not a notion of French, and could speak on no subject with striking knowledge, except perhaps the dyeing and carrying trades, which of course they were ashamed to mention; they were Middlemarch gentry, elated with their silver-headed whips and satin stocks, but embarrassed in their manners, and timidly jocose: even Fred was above them, having at least the accent and manner of a university man. Whereas Lydgate was always listened to, bore himself with the careless politeness of conscious superiority, and seemed to have the right clothes on by a certain natural affinity, without ever having to think about them. Rosamond was proud when he entered the room, and when he approached her with a distinguishing smile, she had a delicious sense that she was the object of enviable homage. If Lydgate had been aware of all the pride he excited in that delicate bosom, he might have been just as well pleased as any other man, even the most densely ignorant of humoral pathology or fibrous tissue: he held it one of the prettiest attitudes of the feminine mind to adore a man's pre-eminence without too precise a knowledge of what it consisted in. But Rosamond was not one of those helpless girls who betray themselves unawares, and whose behavior is awkwardly driven by their

impulses, instead of being steered by wary grace and propriety. Do you imagine that her rapid forecast and rumination concerning house-furniture and society were ever discernible in her conversation, even with her mamma? On the contrary, she would have expressed the prettiest surprise and disapprobation if she had heard that another young lady had been detected in that immodest prematureness—indeed, would probably have disbelieved in its possibility. For Rosamond never showed any unbecoming knowledge, and was always that combination of correct sentiments, music, dancing, drawing, elegant note-writing, private album for extracted verse, and perfect blond loveliness, which made the irresistible woman for the doomed man of that date. Think no unfair evil of her, pray: she had no wicked plots, nothing sordid or mercenary; in fact, she never thought of money except as something necessary which other people would always provide. She was not in the habit of devising falsehoods, and if her statements were no direct clew to fact, why, they were not intended in that light—they were among her elegant accomplishments, intended to please. Nature had inspired many arts in finishing Mrs. Lemon's favorite pupil, who by general consent (Fred's excepted) was a rare compound of beauty, cleverness, and amiability.

Lydgate found it more and more agreeable to be with her, and there was no constraint now, there was a delightful interchange of influence in their eyes, and what they said had that superfluity of meaning for them, which is observable with some sense of flatness by a third person; still they had no interviews or asides from which a third person need have been excluded. In fact, they flirted; and Lydgate was secure in the belief that they did nothing else. If a man could not love and be wise, surely he could flirt and be wise at the same time? Really, the men in Middlemarch, except Mr. Farebrother, were great bores, and Lydgate did not care about commercial politics or cards: what was he to do for relaxation? He was often invited to the Bulstrodes'; but the girls there were hardly out of the schoolroom; and Mrs. Bulstrode's *naive* way of conciliating piety and worldliness, the nothingness of this life and the desirability of cut glass, the consciousness at once of filthy rags and the best damask, was not a sufficient relief from the weight of her husband's invariable seriousness. The Vincys' house, with all its faults, was the pleasanter by contrast; besides, it nourished Rosamond—sweet to look at as a half-opened blush-



rose, and adorned with accomplishments for the refined amusement of man.

But he made some enemies, other than medical, by his success with Miss Vincy. One evening he came into the drawing-room rather late, when several other visitors were there. The card-table had drawn off the elders, and Mr. Ned Plymdale (one of the good matches in Middlemarch, though not one of its leading minds) was in *tête-à-tête* with Rosamond. He had brought the last "Keepsake," the gorgeous watered-silk publication which marked modern progress at that time; and he considered himself very fortunate that he could be the first to look over it with her, dwelling on the ladies and gentlemen with shiny copper-plate cheeks and copper-plate smiles, and pointing to comic verses as capital and sentimental stories as interesting. Rosamond was gracious, and Mr. Ned was satisfied that he had the very best thing in art and literature as a medium for "paying addresses"—the very thing to please a nice girl. He had also reasons, deep rather than ostensible, for being satisfied with his own appearance. To superficial observers his chin had too vanishing an aspect, looking as if it were being gradually reabsorbed. And it did indeed cause him some difficulty about the fit of his satin stocks, for which chins were at that time useful.

"I think the Honorable Mrs. S. is something like you," said Mr. Ned. He kept the book open at the bewitching portrait, and looked at it rather languishingly.

"Her back is very large; she seems to have sat for that," said Rosamond, not meaning any satire, but thinking how red young Plymdale's hands were, and wondering why Lydgate did not come. She went on with her tatting all the while.

"I did not say she was as beautiful as you are," said Mr. Ned, venturing to look from the portrait to its rival.

"I suspect you of being an adroit flatterer," said Rosamond, feeling sure that she should have to reject this young gentleman a second time.

But now Lydgate came in; the book was closed before he reached Rosamond's corner, and as he took his seat with easy confidence on the other side of her, young Plymdale's jaw fell like a barometer towards the cheerless side of change. Rosamond enjoyed not only Lydgate's presence but its effect: she liked to excite jealousy.

“What a late comer you are!” she said, as they shook hands. “Mamma had given you up a little while ago. How do you find Fred?”

“As usual; going on well, but slowly. I want him to go away—to Stone Court, for example. But your mamma seems to have some objection.”

“Poor fellow!” said Rosamond, prettily. “You will see Fred so changed,” she added, turning to the other suitor; “we have looked to Mr. Lydgate as our guardian angel during this illness.”

Mr. Ned smiled nervously, while Lydgate, drawing the “Keepsake” towards him and opening it, gave a short scornful laugh and tossed up his chin, as if in wonderment at human folly.

“What are you laughing at so profanely?” said Rosamond, with bland neutrality.

“I wonder which would turn out to be the silliest—the engravings or the writing here,” said Lydgate, in his most convinced tone, while he turned over the pages quickly, seeming to see all through the book in no time, and showing his large white hands to much advantage, as Rosamond thought. “Do look at this bridegroom coming out of church: did you ever see such a ‘sugared invention’—as the Elizabethans used to say? Did any haberdasher ever look so smirking? Yet I will answer for it the story makes him one of the first gentlemen in the land.”

“You are so severe, I am frightened at you,” said Rosamond, keeping her amusement duly moderate. Poor young Plymdale had lingered with admiration over this very engraving, and his spirit was stirred.

“There are a great many celebrated people writing in the ‘Keepsake,’ at all events,” he said, in a tone at once piqued and timid. “This is the first time I have heard it called silly.”

“I think I shall turn round on you and accuse you of being a Goth,” said Rosamond, looking at Lydgate with a smile. “I suspect you know nothing about Lady Blessington and L. E. L.” Rosamond herself was not without relish for these writers, but she did not readily commit herself by admiration, and was alive to the slightest hint that anything was not, according to Lydgate, in the very highest taste.

“But Sir Walter Scott—I suppose Mr. Lydgate knows him,” said young Plymdale, a little cheered by this advantage.

“Oh, I read no literature now,” said Lydgate, shutting the book, and pushing it away. “I read so much when I was a lad, that I suppose it will last me all my life. I used to know Scott’s poems by heart.”

“I should like to know when you left off,” said Rosamond, “because then I might be sure that I knew something which you did not know.”

“Mr. Lydgate would say that was not worth knowing,” said Mr. Ned, purposely caustic.

“On the contrary,” said Lydgate, showing no smart; but smiling with exasperating confidence at Rosamond. “It would be worth knowing by the fact that Miss Vincy could tell it me.”

Young Plymdale soon went to look at the whist-playing, thinking that Lydgate was one of the most conceited, unpleasant fellows it had ever been his ill-fortune to meet.

“How rash you are!” said Rosamond, inwardly delighted. “Do you see that you have given offence?”

“What! is it Mr. Plymdale’s book? I am sorry. I didn’t think about it.”

“I shall begin to admit what you said of yourself when you first came here—that you are a bear, and want teaching by the birds.”

“Well, there is a bird who can teach me what she will. Don’t I listen to her willingly?”

To Rosamond it seemed as if she and Lydgate were as good as engaged. That they were some time to be engaged had long been an idea in her mind; and ideas, we know, tend to a more solid kind of existence, the necessary materials being at hand. It is true, Lydgate had the counter-idea of remaining unengaged; but this was a mere negative, a shadow cast by other resolves which themselves were capable of shrinking. Circumstance was almost sure to be on the side of Rosamond’s idea, which had a shaping activity and looked through watchful blue eyes, whereas Lydgate’s lay blind and unconcerned as a jelly-fish which gets melted without knowing it.

That evening when he went home, he looked at his phials to see how a process of maceration was going on, with undisturbed interest; and he wrote out his daily notes with as much precision as usual. The reveries from which it was difficult for him to detach himself were ideal constructions of something else than Rosamond’s virtues, and the

primitive tissue was still his fair unknown. Moreover, he was beginning to feel some zest for the growing though half-suppressed feud between him and the other medical men, which was likely to become more manifest, now that Bulstrode's method of managing the new hospital was about to be declared; and there were various inspiriting signs that his non-acceptance by some of Peacock's patients might be counterbalanced by the impression he had produced in other quarters. Only a few days later, when he had happened to overtake Rosamond on the Lowick road and had got down from his horse to walk by her side until he had quite protected her from a passing drove, he had been stopped by a servant on horseback with a message calling him in to a house of some importance where Peacock had never attended; and it was the second instance of this kind. The servant was Sir James Chettam's, and the house was Lowick Manor.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*1st Gent.* All times are good to seek your wedded home  
Bringing a mutual delight.

*2d Gent.* Why, true.  
The calendar hath not an evil day  
For souls made one by love, and even death  
Were sweetness, if it came like rolling waves  
While they two clasped each other, and foresaw  
No life apart.

Mr. and Mrs. Casaubon, returning from their wedding journey, arrived at Lowick Manor in the middle of January. A light snow was falling as they descended at the door, and in the morning, when Dorothea passed from her dressing-room into the blue-green boudoir that we know of, she saw the long avenue of limes lifting their trunks from a white earth, and spreading white branches against the dun and motionless sky. The distant flat shrank in uniform whiteness and low-hanging uniformity of cloud. The very furniture in the room seemed to have shrunk since she saw it before: the stag in the tapestry looked more like a ghost in his ghostly blue-green world; the volumes of polite literature in the bookcase looked more like immovable imitations of books. The bright fire of dry oak-boughs burning on the logs seemed an incongruous renewal of life and glow—like the figure of Dorothea herself as she entered carrying the red-leather cases containing the cameos for Celia.

She was glowing from her morning toilet as only healthful youth can glow: there was gem-like brightness on her coiled hair and in her hazel eyes; there was warm red life in her lips; her throat had a breathing whiteness above the differing white of the fur which itself seemed to wind about her neck and cling down her blue-gray pelisse with a tenderness gathered from her own, a sentient commingled innocence which kept its loveliness against the crystalline purity of the outdoor snow. As she laid the cameo-cases on the table in the bow-window, she unconsciously kept

her hands on them, immediately absorbed in looking out on the still, white enclosure which made her visible world.

Mr. Casaubon, who had risen early complaining of palpitation, was in the library giving audience to his curate Mr. Tucker. By-and-by Celia would come in her quality of bridesmaid as well as sister, and through the next weeks there would be wedding visits received and given; all in continuance of that transitional life understood to correspond with the excitement of bridal felicity, and keeping up the sense of busy ineffectiveness, as of a dream which the dreamer begins to suspect. The duties of her married life, contemplated as so great beforehand, seemed to be shrinking with the furniture and the white vapor-walled landscape. The clear heights where she expected to walk in full communion had become difficult to see even in her imagination; the delicious repose of the soul on a complete superior had been shaken into uneasy effort and alarmed with dim presentiment. When would the days begin of that active wifely devotion which was to strengthen her husband's life and exalt her own? Never perhaps, as she had preconceived them; but somehow—still somehow. In this solemnly pledged union of her life, duty would present itself in some new form of inspiration and give a new meaning to wifely love.

Meanwhile there was the snow and the low arch of dun vapor—there was the stifling oppression of that gentlewoman's world, where everything was done for her and none asked for her aid—where the sense of connection with a manifold pregnant existence had to be kept up painfully as an inward vision, instead of coming from without in claims that would have shaped her energies.—“What shall I do?” “Whatever you please, my dear:” that had been her brief history since she had left off learning morning lessons and practising silly rhythms on the hated piano. Marriage, which was to bring guidance into worthy and imperative occupation, had not yet freed her from the gentlewoman's oppressive liberty: it had not even filled her leisure with the ruminant joy of unchecked tenderness. Her blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in a moral imprisonment which made itself one with the chill, colorless, narrowed landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read books, and the ghostly stag in a pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight.

In the first minutes when Dorothea looked out she felt nothing but the dreary oppression; then came a keen remembrance, and turning away from the window she walked round the room. The ideas and hopes which were living in her mind when she first saw this room nearly three months before were present now only as memories: she judged them as we judge transient and departed things. All existence seemed to beat with a lower pulse than her own, and her religious faith was a solitary cry, the struggle out of a nightmare in which every object was withering and shrinking away from her. Each remembered thing in the room was disenchanted, was deadened as an unlit transparency, till her wandering gaze came to the group of miniatures, and there at last she saw something which had gathered new breath and meaning: it was the miniature of Mr. Casaubon's aunt Julia, who had made the unfortunate marriage—of Will Ladislaw's grandmother. Dorothea could fancy that it was alive now—the delicate woman's face which yet had a headstrong look, a peculiarity difficult to interpret. Was it only her friends who thought her marriage unfortunate? or did she herself find it out to be a mistake, and taste the salt bitterness of her tears in the merciful silence of the night? What breadths of experience Dorothea seemed to have passed over since she first looked at this miniature! She felt a new companionship with it, as if it had an ear for her and could see how she was looking at it. Here was a woman who had known some difficulty about marriage. Nay, the colors deepened, the lips and chin seemed to get larger, the hair and eyes seemed to be sending out light, the face was masculine and beamed on her with that full gaze which tells her on whom it falls that she is too interesting for the slightest movement of her eyelid to pass unnoticed and uninterpreted. The vivid presentation came like a pleasant glow to Dorothea: she felt herself smiling, and turning from the miniature sat down and looked up as if she were again talking to a figure in front of her. But the smile disappeared as she went on meditating, and at last she said aloud—

“Oh, it was cruel to speak so! How sad—how dreadful!”

She rose quickly and went out of the room, hurrying along the corridor, with the irresistible impulse to go and see her husband and inquire if she could do anything for him. Perhaps Mr. Tucker was gone and Mr. Casaubon was alone in the library. She felt as if all her morning's gloom would vanish if she could see her husband glad because of her presence.

But when she reached the head of the dark oak there was Celia coming up, and below there was Mr. Brooke, exchanging welcomes and congratulations with Mr. Casaubon.

“Dodo!” said Celia, in her quiet staccato; then kissed her sister, whose arms encircled her, and said no more. I think they both cried a little in a furtive manner, while Dorothea ran down-stairs to greet her uncle.

“I need not ask how you are, my dear,” said Mr. Brooke, after kissing her forehead. “Rome has agreed with you, I see—happiness, frescos, the antique—that sort of thing. Well, it’s very pleasant to have you back again, and you understand all about art now, eh? But Casaubon is a little pale, I tell him—a little pale, you know. Studying hard in his holidays is carrying it rather too far. I overdid it at one time”—Mr. Brooke still held Dorothea’s hand, but had turned his face to Mr. Casaubon—“about topography, ruins, temples—I thought I had a clew, but I saw it would carry me too far, and nothing might come of it. You may go any length in that sort of thing, and nothing may come of it, you know.”

Dorothea’s eyes also were turned up to her husband’s face with some anxiety at the idea that those who saw him afresh after absence might be aware of signs which she had not noticed.

“Nothing to alarm you, my dear,” said Mr. Brooke, observing her expression. “A little English beef and mutton will soon make a difference. It was all very well to look pale, sitting for the portrait of Aquinas, you know—we got your letter just in time. But Aquinas, now—he was a little too subtle, wasn’t he? Does anybody read Aquinas?”

“He is not indeed an author adapted to superficial minds,” said Mr. Casaubon, meeting these timely questions with dignified patience.

“You would like coffee in your own room, uncle?” said Dorothea, coming to the rescue.

“Yes; and you must go to Celia: she has great news to tell you, you know. I leave it all to her.”

The blue-green boudoir looked much more cheerful when Celia was seated there in a pelisse exactly like her sister’s, surveying the cameos with a placid satisfaction, while the conversation passed on to other topics.

“Do you think it nice to go to Rome on a wedding journey?” said Celia, with her ready delicate blush which Dorothea was used to on the smallest



occasions.

“It would not suit all—not you, dear, for example,” said Dorothea, quietly. No one would ever know what she thought of a wedding journey to Rome.

“Mrs. Cadwallader says it is nonsense, people going a long journey when they are married. She says they get tired to death of each other, and can’t quarrel comfortably, as they would at home. And Lady Chettam says she went to Bath.” Celia’s color changed again and again—seemed

“To come and go with tidings from the heart,  
As it a running messenger had been.”

It must mean more than Celia’s blushing usually did.

“Celia! has something happened?” said Dorothea, in a tone full of sisterly feeling. “Have you really any great news to tell me?”

“It was because you went away, Dodo. Then there was nobody but me for Sir James to talk to,” said Celia, with a certain roguishness in her eyes.

“I understand. It is as I used to hope and believe,” said Dorothea, taking her sister’s face between her hands, and looking at her half anxiously. Celia’s marriage seemed more serious than it used to do.

“It was only three days ago,” said Celia. “And Lady Chettam is very kind.”

“And you are very happy?”

“Yes. We are not going to be married yet. Because every thing is to be got ready. And I don’t want to be married so very soon, because I think it is nice to be engaged. And we shall be married all our lives after.”

“I do believe you could not marry better, Kitty. Sir James is a good, honorable man,” said Dorothea, warmly.

“He has gone on with the cottages, Dodo. He will tell you about them when he comes. Shall you be glad to see him?”

“Of course I shall. How can you ask me?”

“Only I was afraid you would be getting so learned,” said Celia, regarding Mr. Casaubon’s learning as a kind of damp which might in due time saturate a neighboring body.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

I found that no genius in another could please me. My unfortunate paradoxes had entirely dried up that source of comfort.—GOLDSMITH.

One morning, some weeks after her arrival at Lowick, Dorothea—but why always Dorothea? Was her point of view the only possible one with regard to this marriage? I protest against all our interest, all our effort at understanding being given to the young skins that look blooming in spite of trouble; for these too will get faded, and will know the older and more eating griefs which we are helping to neglect. In spite of the blinking eyes and white moles objectionable to Celia, and the want of muscular curve which was morally painful to Sir James, Mr. Casaubon had an intense consciousness within him, and was spiritually a-hungred like the rest of us. He had done nothing exceptional in marrying—nothing but what society sanctions, and considers an occasion for wreaths and bouquets. It had occurred to him that he must not any longer defer his intention of matrimony, and he had reflected that in taking a wife, a man of good position should expect and carefully choose a blooming young lady—the younger the better, because more educable and submissive—of a rank equal to his own, of religious principles, virtuous disposition, and good understanding. On such a young lady he would make handsome settlements, and he would neglect no arrangement for her happiness: in return, he should receive family pleasures and leave behind him that copy of himself which seemed so urgently required of a man—to the sonneteers of the sixteenth century. Times had altered since then, and no sonneteer had insisted on Mr. Casaubon's leaving a copy of himself; moreover, he had not yet succeeded in issuing copies of his mythological key; but he had always intended to acquit himself by marriage, and the sense that he was fast leaving the years behind him, that the world was getting dimmer and that he felt lonely, was a reason to him for losing no more time in overtaking domestic delights before they too were left behind by the years.

And when he had seen Dorothea he believed that he had found even more than he demanded: she might really be such a helpmate to him as would enable him to dispense with a hired secretary, an aid which Mr. Casaubon had never yet employed and had a suspicious dread of. (Mr. Casaubon was nervously conscious that he was expected to manifest a powerful mind.) Providence, in its kindness, had supplied him with the wife he needed. A wife, a modest young lady, with the purely appreciative, unambitious abilities of her sex, is sure to think her husband's mind powerful. Whether Providence had taken equal care of Miss Brooke in presenting her with Mr. Casaubon was an idea which could hardly occur to him. Society never made the preposterous demand that a man should think as much about his own qualifications for making a charming girl happy as he thinks of hers for making himself happy. As if a man could choose not only his wife but his wife's husband! Or as if he were bound to provide charms for his posterity in his own person!—When Dorothea accepted him with effusion, that was only natural; and Mr. Casaubon believed that his happiness was going to begin.

He had not had much foretaste of happiness in his previous life. To know intense joy without a strong bodily frame, one must have an enthusiastic soul. Mr. Casaubon had never had a strong bodily frame, and his soul was sensitive without being enthusiastic: it was too languid to thrill out of self-consciousness into passionate delight; it went on fluttering in the swampy ground where it was hatched, thinking of its wings and never flying. His experience was of that pitiable kind which shrinks from pity, and fears most of all that it should be known: it was that proud narrow sensitiveness which has not mass enough to spare for transformation into sympathy, and quivers thread-like in small currents of self-preoccupation or at best of an egoistic scrupulosity. And Mr. Casaubon had many scruples: he was capable of a severe self-restraint; he was resolute in being a man of honor according to the code; he would be unimpeachable by any recognized opinion. In conduct these ends had been attained; but the difficulty of making his Key to all Mythologies unimpeachable weighed like lead upon his mind; and the pamphlets—or “Parerga” as he called them—by which he tested his public and deposited small monumental records of his march, were far from having been seen in all their significance. He suspected the Archdeacon of not having read them; he was in painful doubt as to what was really thought of them by the

leading minds of Brasenose, and bitterly convinced that his old acquaintance Carp had been the writer of that depreciatory recension which was kept locked in a small drawer of Mr. Casaubon's desk, and also in a dark closet of his verbal memory. These were heavy impressions to struggle against, and brought that melancholy embitterment which is the consequence of all excessive claim: even his religious faith wavered with his wavering trust in his own authorship, and the consolations of the Christian hope in immortality seemed to lean on the immortality of the still unwritten Key to all Mythologies. For my part I am very sorry for him. It is an uneasy lot at best, to be what we call highly taught and yet not to enjoy: to be present at this great spectacle of life and never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self—never to be fully possessed by the glory we behold, never to have our consciousness rapturously transformed into the vividness of a thought, the ardor of a passion, the energy of an action, but always to be scholarly and uninspired, ambitious and timid, scrupulous and dim-sighted. Becoming a dean or even a bishop would make little difference, I fear, to Mr. Casaubon's uneasiness. Doubtless some ancient Greek has observed that behind the big mask and the speaking-trumpet, there must always be our poor little eyes peeping as usual and our timorous lips more or less under anxious control.

To this mental estate mapped out a quarter of a century before, to sensibilities thus fenced in, Mr. Casaubon had thought of annexing happiness with a lovely young bride; but even before marriage, as we have seen, he found himself under a new depression in the consciousness that the new bliss was not blissful to him. Inclination yearned back to its old, easier custom. And the deeper he went in domesticity the more did the sense of acquitting himself and acting with propriety predominate over any other satisfaction. Marriage, like religion and erudition, nay, like authorship itself, was fated to become an outward requirement, and Edward Casaubon was bent on fulfilling unimpeachably all requirements. Even drawing Dorothea into use in his study, according to his own intention before marriage, was an effort which he was always tempted to defer, and but for her pleading insistence it might never have begun. But she had succeeded in making it a matter of course that she should take her place at an early hour in the library and have work either of reading aloud or copying assigned her. The work had been easier to define because Mr. Casaubon had adopted an immediate intention: there was to be a new

Parergon, a small monograph on some lately traced indications concerning the Egyptian mysteries whereby certain assertions of Warburton's could be corrected. References were extensive even here, but not altogether shoreless; and sentences were actually to be written in the shape wherein they would be scanned by Brasenose and a less formidable posterity. These minor monumental productions were always exciting to Mr. Casaubon; digestion was made difficult by the interference of citations, or by the rivalry of dialectical phrases ringing against each other in his brain. And from the first there was to be a Latin dedication about which everything was uncertain except that it was not to be addressed to Carp: it was a poisonous regret to Mr. Casaubon that he had once addressed a dedication to Carp in which he had numbered that member of the animal kingdom among the *viros nullo ævo perituros*, a mistake which would infallibly lay the dedicator open to ridicule in the next age, and might even be chuckled over by Pike and Tench in the present.

Thus Mr. Casaubon was in one of his busiest epochs, and as I began to say a little while ago, Dorothea joined him early in the library where he had breakfasted alone. Celia at this time was on a second visit to Lowick, probably the last before her marriage, and was in the drawing-room expecting Sir James.

Dorothea had learned to read the signs of her husband's mood, and she saw that the morning had become more foggy there during the last hour. She was going silently to her desk when he said, in that distant tone which implied that he was discharging a disagreeable duty—

“Dorothea, here is a letter for you, which was enclosed in one addressed to me.”

It was a letter of two pages, and she immediately looked at the signature.

“Mr. Ladislaw! What can he have to say to me?” she exclaimed, in a tone of pleased surprise. “But,” she added, looking at Mr. Casaubon, “I can imagine what he has written to you about.”

“You can, if you please, read the letter,” said Mr. Casaubon, severely pointing to it with his pen, and not looking at her. “But I may as well say beforehand, that I must decline the proposal it contains to pay a visit here. I trust I may be excused for desiring an interval of complete freedom from

such distractions as have been hitherto inevitable, and especially from guests whose desultory vivacity makes their presence a fatigue.”

There had been no clashing of temper between Dorothea and her husband since that little explosion in Rome, which had left such strong traces in her mind that it had been easier ever since to quell emotion than to incur the consequence of venting it. But this ill-tempered anticipation that she could desire visits which might be disagreeable to her husband, this gratuitous defence of himself against selfish complaint on her part, was too sharp a sting to be meditated on until after it had been resented. Dorothea had thought that she could have been patient with John Milton, but she had never imagined him behaving in this way; and for a moment Mr. Casaubon seemed to be stupidly undiscerning and odiously unjust. Pity, that “new-born babe” which was by-and-by to rule many a storm within her, did not “stride the blast” on this occasion. With her first words, uttered in a tone that shook him, she startled Mr. Casaubon into looking at her, and meeting the flash of her eyes.

“Why do you attribute to me a wish for anything that would annoy you? You speak to me as if I were something you had to contend against. Wait at least till I appear to consult my own pleasure apart from yours.”

“Dorothea, you are hasty,” answered Mr. Casaubon, nervously.

Decidedly, this woman was too young to be on the formidable level of wifehood—unless she had been pale and featureless and taken everything for granted.

“I think it was you who were first hasty in your false suppositions about my feeling,” said Dorothea, in the same tone. The fire was not dissipated yet, and she thought it was ignoble in her husband not to apologize to her.

“We will, if you please, say no more on this subject, Dorothea. I have neither leisure nor energy for this kind of debate.”

Here Mr. Casaubon dipped his pen and made as if he would return to his writing, though his hand trembled so much that the words seemed to be written in an unknown character. There are answers which, in turning away wrath, only send it to the other end of the room, and to have a discussion coolly waived when you feel that justice is all on your own side is even more exasperating in marriage than in philosophy.

Dorothea left Ladislaw's two letters unread on her husband's writing-table and went to her own place, the scorn and indignation within her rejecting the reading of these letters, just as we hurl away any trash towards which we seem to have been suspected of mean cupidity. She did not in the least divine the subtle sources of her husband's bad temper about these letters: she only knew that they had caused him to offend her. She began to work at once, and her hand did not tremble; on the contrary, in writing out the quotations which had been given to her the day before, she felt that she was forming her letters beautifully, and it seemed to her that she saw the construction of the Latin she was copying, and which she was beginning to understand, more clearly than usual. In her indignation there was a sense of superiority, but it went out for the present in firmness of stroke, and did not compress itself into an inward articulate voice pronouncing the once "affable archangel" a poor creature.

There had been this apparent quiet for half an hour, and Dorothea had not looked away from her own table, when she heard the loud bang of a book on the floor, and turning quickly saw Mr. Casaubon on the library steps clinging forward as if he were in some bodily distress. She started up and bounded towards him in an instant: he was evidently in great straits for breath. Jumping on a stool she got close to his elbow and said with her whole soul melted into tender alarm—

"Can you lean on me, dear?"

He was still for two or three minutes, which seemed endless to her, unable to speak or move, gasping for breath. When at last he descended the three steps and fell backward in the large chair which Dorothea had drawn close to the foot of the ladder, he no longer gasped but seemed helpless and about to faint. Dorothea rang the bell violently, and presently Mr. Casaubon was helped to the couch: he did not faint, and was gradually reviving, when Sir James Chettam came in, having been met in the hall with the news that Mr. Casaubon had "had a fit in the library."

"Good God! this is just what might have been expected," was his immediate thought. If his prophetic soul had been urged to particularize, it seemed to him that "fits" would have been the definite expression alighted upon. He asked his informant, the butler, whether the doctor had been sent for. The butler never knew his master to want the doctor before; but would it not be right to send for a physician?

When Sir James entered the library, however, Mr. Casaubon could make some signs of his usual politeness, and Dorothea, who in the reaction from her first terror had been kneeling and sobbing by his side now rose and herself proposed that some one should ride off for a medical man.

“I recommend you to send for Lydgate,” said Sir James. “My mother has called him in, and she has found him uncommonly clever. She has had a poor opinion of the physicians since my father’s death.”

Dorothea appealed to her husband, and he made a silent sign of approval. So Mr. Lydgate was sent for and he came wonderfully soon, for the messenger, who was Sir James Chettam’s man and knew Mr. Lydgate, met him leading his horse along the Lowick road and giving his arm to Miss Vincy.

Celia, in the drawing-room, had known nothing of the trouble till Sir James told her of it. After Dorothea’s account, he no longer considered the illness a fit, but still something “of that nature.”

“Poor dear Dodo—how dreadful!” said Celia, feeling as much grieved as her own perfect happiness would allow. Her little hands were clasped, and enclosed by Sir James’s as a bud is enfolded by a liberal calyx. “It is very shocking that Mr. Casaubon should be ill; but I never did like him. And I think he is not half fond enough of Dorothea; and he ought to be, for I am sure no one else would have had him—do you think they would?”

“I always thought it a horrible sacrifice of your sister,” said Sir James.

“Yes. But poor Dodo never did do what other people do, and I think she never will.”

“She is a noble creature,” said the loyal-hearted Sir James. He had just had a fresh impression of this kind, as he had seen Dorothea stretching her tender arm under her husband’s neck and looking at him with unspeakable sorrow. He did not know how much penitence there was in the sorrow.

“Yes,” said Celia, thinking it was very well for Sir James to say so, but *he* would not have been comfortable with Dodo. “Shall I go to her? Could I help her, do you think?”

“I think it would be well for you just to go and see her before Lydgate comes,” said Sir James, magnanimously. “Only don’t stay long.”

While Celia was gone he walked up and down remembering what he had originally felt about Dorothea’s engagement, and feeling a revival of his



disgust at Mr. Brooke's indifference. If Cadwallader—if every one else had regarded the affair as he, Sir James, had done, the marriage might have been hindered. It was wicked to let a young girl blindly decide her fate in that way, without any effort to save her. Sir James had long ceased to have any regrets on his own account: his heart was satisfied with his engagement to Celia. But he had a chivalrous nature (was not the disinterested service of woman among the ideal glories of old chivalry?): his disregarded love had not turned to bitterness; its death had made sweet odors—floating memories that clung with a consecrating effect to Dorothea. He could remain her brotherly friend, interpreting her actions with generous trustfulness.

## CHAPTER XXX.

Qui veut délasser hors de propos, lasse.—PASCAL.

Mr. Casaubon had no second attack of equal severity with the first, and in a few days began to recover his usual condition. But Lydgate seemed to think the case worth a great deal of attention. He not only used his stethoscope (which had not become a matter of course in practice at that time), but sat quietly by his patient and watched him. To Mr. Casaubon's questions about himself, he replied that the source of the illness was the common error of intellectual men—a too eager and monotonous application: the remedy was, to be satisfied with moderate work, and to seek variety of relaxation. Mr. Brooke, who sat by on one occasion, suggested that Mr. Casaubon should go fishing, as Cadwallader did, and have a turning-room, make toys, table-legs, and that kind of thing.

“In short, you recommend me to anticipate the arrival of my second childhood,” said poor Mr. Casaubon, with some bitterness. “These things,” he added, looking at Lydgate, “would be to me such relaxation as tow-picking is to prisoners in a house of correction.”

“I confess,” said Lydgate, smiling, “amusement is rather an unsatisfactory prescription. It is something like telling people to keep up their spirits. Perhaps I had better say, that you must submit to be mildly bored rather than to go on working.”

“Yes, yes,” said Mr. Brooke. “Get Dorothea to play backgammon with you in the evenings. And shuttlecock, now—I don't know a finer game than shuttlecock for the daytime. I remember it all the fashion. To be sure, your eyes might not stand that, Casaubon. But you must unbend, you know. Why, you might take to some light study: conchology, now: I always think that must be a light study. Or get Dorothea to read you light things, Smollett—‘Roderick Random,’ ‘Humphrey Clinker:’ they are a little broad, but she may read anything now she's married, you know. I remember they made me laugh uncommonly—there's a droll bit about a

postilion's breeches. We have no such humor now. I have gone through all these things, but they might be rather new to you."

"As new as eating thistles," would have been an answer to represent Mr. Casaubon's feelings. But he only bowed resignedly, with due respect to his wife's uncle, and observed that doubtless the works he mentioned had "served as a resource to a certain order of minds."

"You see," said the able magistrate to Lydgate, when they were outside the door, "Casaubon has been a little narrow: it leaves him rather at a loss when you forbid him his particular work, which I believe is something very deep indeed—in the line of research, you know. I would never give way to that; I was always versatile. But a clergyman is tied a little tight. If they would make him a bishop, now!—he did a very good pamphlet for Peel. He would have more movement then, more show; he might get a little flesh. But I recommend you to talk to Mrs. Casaubon. She is clever enough for anything, is my niece. Tell her, her husband wants liveliness, diversion: put her on amusing tactics."

Without Mr. Brooke's advice, Lydgate had determined on speaking to Dorothea. She had not been present while her uncle was throwing out his pleasant suggestions as to the mode in which life at Lowick might be enlivened, but she was usually by her husband's side, and the unaffected signs of intense anxiety in her face and voice about whatever touched his mind or health, made a drama which Lydgate was inclined to watch. He said to himself that he was only doing right in telling her the truth about her husband's probable future, but he certainly thought also that it would be interesting to talk confidentially with her. A medical man likes to make psychological observations, and sometimes in the pursuit of such studies is too easily tempted into momentous prophecy which life and death easily set at nought. Lydgate had often been satirical on this gratuitous prediction, and he meant now to be guarded.

He asked for Mrs. Casaubon, but being told that she was out walking, he was going away, when Dorothea and Celia appeared, both glowing from their struggle with the March wind. When Lydgate begged to speak with her alone, Dorothea opened the library door which happened to be the nearest, thinking of nothing at the moment but what he might have to say about Mr. Casaubon. It was the first time she had entered this room since her husband had been taken ill, and the servant had chosen not to open the

shutters. But there was light enough to read by from the narrow upper panes of the windows.

“You will not mind this sombre light,” said Dorothea, standing in the middle of the room. “Since you forbade books, the library has been out of the question. But Mr. Casaubon will soon be here again, I hope. Is he not making progress?”

“Yes, much more rapid progress than I at first expected. Indeed, he is already nearly in his usual state of health.”

“You do not fear that the illness will return?” said Dorothea, whose quick ear had detected some significance in Lydgate’s tone.

“Such cases are peculiarly difficult to pronounce upon,” said Lydgate. “The only point on which I can be confident is that it will be desirable to be very watchful on Mr. Casaubon’s account, lest he should in any way strain his nervous power.”

“I beseech you to speak quite plainly,” said Dorothea, in an imploring tone. “I cannot bear to think that there might be something which I did not know, and which, if I had known it, would have made me act differently.” The words came out like a cry: it was evident that they were the voice of some mental experience which lay not very far off.

“Sit down,” she added, placing herself on the nearest chair, and throwing off her bonnet and gloves, with an instinctive discarding of formality where a great question of destiny was concerned.

“What you say now justifies my own view,” said Lydgate. “I think it is one’s function as a medical man to hinder regrets of that sort as far as possible. But I beg you to observe that Mr. Casaubon’s case is precisely of the kind in which the issue is most difficult to pronounce upon. He may possibly live for fifteen years or more, without much worse health than he has had hitherto.”

Dorothea had turned very pale, and when Lydgate paused she said in a low voice, “You mean if we are very careful.”

“Yes—careful against mental agitation of all kinds, and against excessive application.”

“He would be miserable, if he had to give up his work,” said Dorothea, with a quick prevision of that wretchedness.

“I am aware of that. The only course is to try by all means, direct and indirect, to moderate and vary his occupations. With a happy concurrence of circumstances, there is, as I said, no immediate danger from that affection of the heart, which I believe to have been the cause of his late attack. On the other hand, it is possible that the disease may develop itself more rapidly: it is one of those cases in which death is sometimes sudden. Nothing should be neglected which might be affected by such an issue.”

There was silence for a few moments, while Dorothea sat as if she had been turned to marble, though the life within her was so intense that her mind had never before swept in brief time over an equal range of scenes and motives.

“Help me, pray,” she said, at last, in the same low voice as before. “Tell me what I can do.”

“What do you think of foreign travel? You have been lately in Rome, I think.”

The memories which made this resource utterly hopeless were a new current that shook Dorothea out of her pallid immobility.

“Oh, that would not do—that would be worse than anything,” she said with a more childlike despondency, while the tears rolled down. “Nothing will be of any use that he does not enjoy.”

“I wish that I could have spared you this pain,” said Lydgate, deeply touched, yet wondering about her marriage. Women just like Dorothea had not entered into his traditions.

“It was right of you to tell me. I thank you for telling me the truth.”

“I wish you to understand that I shall not say anything to enlighten Mr. Casaubon himself. I think it desirable for him to know nothing more than that he must not overwork himself, and must observe certain rules. Anxiety of any kind would be precisely the most unfavorable condition for him.”

Lydgate rose, and Dorothea mechanically rose at the same time, unclasping her cloak and throwing it off as if it stifled her. He was bowing and quitting her, when an impulse which if she had been alone would have turned into a prayer, made her say with a sob in her voice—

“Oh, you are a wise man, are you not? You know all about life and death. Advise me. Think what I can do. He has been laboring all his life

and looking forward. He minds about nothing else.— And I mind about nothing else—”

For years after Lydgate remembered the impression produced in him by this involuntary appeal—this cry from soul to soul, without other consciousness than their moving with kindred natures in the same embroiled medium, the same troublous fitfully illuminated life. But what could he say now except that he should see Mr. Casaubon again tomorrow?

When he was gone, Dorothea's tears gushed forth, and relieved her stifling oppression. Then she dried her eyes, reminded that her distress must not be betrayed to her husband; and looked round the room thinking that she must order the servant to attend to it as usual, since Mr. Casaubon might now at any moment wish to enter. On his writing-table there were letters which had lain untouched since the morning when he was taken ill, and among them, as Dorothea well remembered, there were young Ladislaw's letters, the one addressed to her still unopened. The associations of these letters had been made the more painful by that sudden attack of illness which she felt that the agitation caused by her anger might have helped to bring on: it would be time enough to read them when they were again thrust upon her, and she had had no inclination to fetch them from the library. But now it occurred to her that they should be put out of her husband's sight: whatever might have been the sources of his annoyance about them, he must, if possible, not be annoyed again; and she ran her eyes first over the letter addressed to him to assure herself whether or not it would be necessary to write in order to hinder the offensive visit.

Will wrote from Rome, and began by saying that his obligations to Mr. Casaubon were too deep for all thanks not to seem impertinent. It was plain that if he were not grateful, he must be the poorest-spirited rascal who had ever found a generous friend. To expand in wordy thanks would be like saying, "I am honest." But Will had come to perceive that his defects—defects which Mr. Casaubon had himself often pointed to—needed for their correction that more strenuous position which his relative's generosity had hitherto prevented from being inevitable. He trusted that he should make the best return, if return were possible, by showing the effectiveness of the education for which he was indebted, and

by ceasing in future to need any diversion towards himself of funds on which others might have a better claim. He was coming to England, to try his fortune, as many other young men were obliged to do whose only capital was in their brains. His friend Naumann had desired him to take charge of the "Dispute"—the picture painted for Mr. Casaubon, with whose permission, and Mrs. Casaubon's, Will would convey it to Lowick in person. A letter addressed to the Poste Restante in Paris within the fortnight would hinder him, if necessary, from arriving at an inconvenient moment. He enclosed a letter to Mrs. Casaubon in which he continued a discussion about art, begun with her in Rome.

Opening her own letter Dorothea saw that it was a lively continuation of his remonstrance with her fanatical sympathy and her want of sturdy neutral delight in things as they were—an outpouring of his young vivacity which it was impossible to read just now. She had immediately to consider what was to be done about the other letter: there was still time perhaps to prevent Will from coming to Lowick. Dorothea ended by giving the letter to her uncle, who was still in the house, and begging him to let Will know that Mr. Casaubon had been ill, and that his health would not allow the reception of any visitors.

No one more ready than Mr. Brooke to write a letter: his only difficulty was to write a short one, and his ideas in this case expanded over the three large pages and the inward foldings. He had simply said to Dorothea—

"To be sure, I will write, my dear. He's a very clever young fellow—this young Ladislav—I dare say will be a rising young man. It's a good letter—marks his sense of things, you know. However, I will tell him about Casaubon."

But the end of Mr. Brooke's pen was a thinking organ, evolving sentences, especially of a benevolent kind, before the rest of his mind could well overtake them. It expressed regrets and proposed remedies, which, when Mr. Brooke read them, seemed felicitously worded—surprisingly the right thing, and determined a sequel which he had never before thought of. In this case, his pen found it such a pity young Ladislav should not have come into the neighborhood just at that time, in order that Mr. Brooke might make his acquaintance more fully, and that they might go over the long-neglected Italian drawings together—it also felt such an interest in a young man who was starting in life with a stock of ideas—that

by the end of the second page it had persuaded Mr. Brooke to invite young Ladislaw, since he could not be received at Lowick, to come to Tipton Grange. Why not? They could find a great many things to do together, and this was a period of peculiar growth—the political horizon was expanding, and—in short, Mr. Brooke’s pen went off into a little speech which it had lately reported for that imperfectly edited organ the “Middlemarch Pioneer.” While Mr. Brooke was sealing this letter, he felt elated with an influx of dim projects:—a young man capable of putting ideas into form, the “Pioneer” purchased to clear the pathway for a new candidate, documents utilized—who knew what might come of it all? Since Celia was going to marry immediately, it would be very pleasant to have a young fellow at table with him, at least for a time.

But he went away without telling Dorothea what he had put into the letter, for she was engaged with her husband, and—in fact, these things were of no importance to her.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

How will you know the pitch of that great bell  
Too large for you to stir? Let but a flute  
Play 'neath the fine-mixed metal: listen close  
Till the right note flows forth, a silvery rill:  
Then shall the huge bell tremble—then the mass  
With myriad waves concurrent shall respond  
In low soft unison.

Lydgate that evening spoke to Miss Vincy of Mrs. Casaubon, and laid some emphasis on the strong feeling she appeared to have for that formal studious man thirty years older than herself.

“Of course she is devoted to her husband,” said Rosamond, implying a notion of necessary sequence which the scientific man regarded as the prettiest possible for a woman; but she was thinking at the same time that it was not so very melancholy to be mistress of Lowick Manor with a husband likely to die soon. “Do you think her very handsome?”

“She certainly is handsome, but I have not thought about it,” said Lydgate.

“I suppose it would be unprofessional,” said Rosamond, dimpling. “But how your practice is spreading! You were called in before to the Chettams, I think; and now, the Casaubons.”

“Yes,” said Lydgate, in a tone of compulsory admission. “But I don’t really like attending such people so well as the poor. The cases are more monotonous, and one has to go through more fuss and listen more deferentially to nonsense.”

“Not more than in Middlemarch,” said Rosamond. “And at least you go through wide corridors and have the scent of rose-leaves everywhere.”

“That is true, Mademoiselle de Montmorenci,” said Lydgate, just bending his head to the table and lifting with his fourth finger her delicate handkerchief which lay at the mouth of her reticule, as if to enjoy its scent, while he looked at her with a smile.

But this agreeable holiday freedom with which Lydgate hovered about the flower of Middlemarch, could not continue indefinitely. It was not more possible to find social isolation in that town than elsewhere, and two people persistently flirting could by no means escape from “the various entanglements, weights, blows, clashings, motions, by which things severally go on.” Whatever Miss Vincy did must be remarked, and she was perhaps the more conspicuous to admirers and critics because just now Mrs. Vincy, after some struggle, had gone with Fred to stay a little while at Stone Court, there being no other way of at once gratifying old Featherstone and keeping watch against Mary Garth, who appeared a less tolerable daughter-in-law in proportion as Fred’s illness disappeared.

Aunt Bulstrode, for example, came a little oftener into Lowick Gate to see Rosamond, now she was alone. For Mrs. Bulstrode had a true sisterly feeling for her brother; always thinking that he might have married better, but wishing well to the children. Now Mrs. Bulstrode had a long-standing intimacy with Mrs. Plymdale. They had nearly the same preferences in silks, patterns for underclothing, china-ware, and clergymen; they confided their little troubles of health and household management to each other, and various little points of superiority on Mrs. Bulstrode’s side, namely, more decided seriousness, more admiration for mind, and a house outside the town, sometimes served to give color to their conversation without dividing them—well-meaning women both, knowing very little of their own motives.

Mrs. Bulstrode, paying a morning visit to Mrs. Plymdale, happened to say that she could not stay longer, because she was going to see poor Rosamond.

“Why do you say ‘poor Rosamond’?” said Mrs. Plymdale, a round-eyed sharp little woman, like a tamed falcon.

“She is so pretty, and has been brought up in such thoughtlessness. The mother, you know, had always that levity about her, which makes me anxious for the children.”

“Well, Harriet, if I am to speak my mind,” said Mrs. Plymdale, with emphasis, “I must say, anybody would suppose you and Mr. Bulstrode would be delighted with what has happened, for you have done everything to put Mr. Lydgate forward.”

“Selina, what do you mean?” said Mrs. Bulstrode, in genuine surprise.

“Not but what I am truly thankful for Ned’s sake,” said Mrs. Plymdale. “He could certainly better afford to keep such a wife than some people can; but I should wish him to look elsewhere. Still a mother has anxieties, and some young men would take to a bad life in consequence. Besides, if I was obliged to speak, I should say I was not fond of strangers coming into a town.”

“I don’t know, Selina,” said Mrs. Bulstrode, with a little emphasis in her turn. “Mr. Bulstrode was a stranger here at one time. Abraham and Moses were strangers in the land, and we are told to entertain strangers. And especially,” she added, after a slight pause, “when they are unexceptionable.”

“I was not speaking in a religious sense, Harriet. I spoke as a mother.”

“Selina, I am sure you have never heard me say anything against a niece of mine marrying your son.”

“Oh, it is pride in Miss Vincy—I am sure it is nothing else,” said Mrs. Plymdale, who had never before given all her confidence to “Harriet” on this subject. “No young man in Middlemarch was good enough for her: I have heard her mother say as much. That is not a Christian spirit, I think. But now, from all I hear, she has found a man as proud as herself.”

“You don’t mean that there is anything between Rosamond and Mr. Lydgate?” said Mrs. Bulstrode, rather mortified at finding out her own ignorance.

“Is it possible you don’t know, Harriet?”

“Oh, I go about so little; and I am not fond of gossip; I really never hear any. You see so many people that I don’t see. Your circle is rather different from ours.”

“Well, but your own niece and Mr. Bulstrode’s great favorite—and yours too, I am sure, Harriet! I thought, at one time, you meant him for Kate, when she is a little older.”

“I don’t believe there can be anything serious at present,” said Mrs. Bulstrode. “My brother would certainly have told me.”

“Well, people have different ways, but I understand that nobody can see Miss Vincy and Mr. Lydgate together without taking them to be engaged. However, it is not my business. Shall I put up the pattern of mittens?”

After this Mrs. Bulstrode drove to her niece with a mind newly weighted. She was herself handsomely dressed, but she noticed with a little more regret than usual that Rosamond, who was just come in and met her in walking-dress, was almost as expensively equipped. Mrs. Bulstrode was a feminine smaller edition of her brother, and had none of her husband's low-toned pallor. She had a good honest glance and used no circumlocution.

"You are alone, I see, my dear," she said, as they entered the drawing-room together, looking round gravely. Rosamond felt sure that her aunt had something particular to say, and they sat down near each other. Nevertheless, the quilling inside Rosamond's bonnet was so charming that it was impossible not to desire the same kind of thing for Kate, and Mrs. Bulstrode's eyes, which were rather fine, rolled round that ample quilled circuit, while she spoke.

"I have just heard something about you that has surprised me very much, Rosamond."

"What is that, aunt?" Rosamond's eyes also were roaming over her aunt's large embroidered collar.

"I can hardly believe it—that you should be engaged without my knowing it—without your father's telling me." Here Mrs. Bulstrode's eyes finally rested on Rosamond's, who blushed deeply, and said—

"I am not engaged, aunt."

"How is it that every one says so, then—that it is the town's talk?"

"The town's talk is of very little consequence, I think," said Rosamond, inwardly gratified.

"Oh, my dear, be more thoughtful; don't despise your neighbors so. Remember you are turned twenty-two now, and you will have no fortune: your father, I am sure, will not be able to spare you anything. Mr. Lydgate is very intellectual and clever; I know there is an attraction in that. I like talking to such men myself; and your uncle finds him very useful. But the profession is a poor one here. To be sure, this life is not everything; but it is seldom a medical man has true religious views—there is too much pride of intellect. And you are not fit to marry a poor man.

"Mr. Lydgate is not a poor man, aunt. He has very high connections."

"He told me himself he was poor."

“That is because he is used to people who have a high style of living.”

“My dear Rosamond, *you* must not think of living in high style.”

Rosamond looked down and played with her reticule. She was not a fiery young lady and had no sharp answers, but she meant to live as she pleased.

“Then it is really true?” said Mrs. Bulstrode, looking very earnestly at her niece. “You are thinking of Mr. Lydgate—there is some understanding between you, though your father doesn’t know. Be open, my dear Rosamond: Mr. Lydgate has really made you an offer?”

Poor Rosamond’s feelings were very unpleasant. She had been quite easy as to Lydgate’s feeling and intention, but now when her aunt put this question she did not like being unable to say Yes. Her pride was hurt, but her habitual control of manner helped her.

“Pray excuse me, aunt. I would rather not speak on the subject.”

“You would not give your heart to a man without a decided prospect, I trust, my dear. And think of the two excellent offers I know of that you have refused!—and one still within your reach, if you will not throw it away. I knew a very great beauty who married badly at last, by doing so. Mr. Ned Plymdale is a nice young man—some might think good-looking; and an only son; and a large business of that kind is better than a profession. Not that marrying is everything. I would have you seek first the kingdom of God. But a girl should keep her heart within her own power.”

“I should never give it to Mr. Ned Plymdale, if it were. I have already refused him. If I loved, I should love at once and without change,” said Rosamond, with a great sense of being a romantic heroine, and playing the part prettily.

“I see how it is, my dear,” said Mrs. Bulstrode, in a melancholy voice, rising to go. “You have allowed your affections to be engaged without return.”

“No, indeed, aunt,” said Rosamond, with emphasis.

“Then you are quite confident that Mr. Lydgate has a serious attachment to you?”

Rosamond’s cheeks by this time were persistently burning, and she felt much mortification. She chose to be silent, and her aunt went away all the

more convinced.

Mr. Bulstrode in things worldly and indifferent was disposed to do what his wife bade him, and she now, without telling her reasons, desired him on the next opportunity to find out in conversation with Mr. Lydgate whether he had any intention of marrying soon. The result was a decided negative. Mr. Bulstrode, on being cross-questioned, showed that Lydgate had spoken as no man would who had any attachment that could issue in matrimony. Mrs. Bulstrode now felt that she had a serious duty before her, and she soon managed to arrange a *tête-à-tête* with Lydgate, in which she passed from inquiries about Fred Vincy's health, and expressions of her sincere anxiety for her brother's large family, to general remarks on the dangers which lay before young people with regard to their settlement in life. Young men were often wild and disappointing, making little return for the money spent on them, and a girl was exposed to many circumstances which might interfere with her prospects.

"Especially when she has great attractions, and her parents see much company," said Mrs. Bulstrode. "Gentlemen pay her attention, and engross her all to themselves, for the mere pleasure of the moment, and that drives off others. I think it is a heavy responsibility, Mr. Lydgate, to interfere with the prospects of any girl." Here Mrs. Bulstrode fixed her eyes on him, with an unmistakable purpose of warning, if not of rebuke.

"Clearly," said Lydgate, looking at her—perhaps even staring a little in return. "On the other hand, a man must be a great coxcomb to go about with a notion that he must not pay attention to a young lady lest she should fall in love with him, or lest others should think she must."

"Oh, Mr. Lydgate, you know well what your advantages are. You know that our young men here cannot cope with you. Where you frequent a house it may militate very much against a girl's making a desirable settlement in life, and prevent her from accepting offers even if they are made."

Lydgate was less flattered by his advantage over the Middlemarch Orlandos than he was annoyed by the perception of Mrs. Bulstrode's meaning. She felt that she had spoken as impressively as it was necessary to do, and that in using the superior word "militate" she had thrown a noble drapery over a mass of particulars which were still evident enough.

Lydgate was fuming a little, pushed his hair back with one hand, felt curiously in his waistcoat-pocket with the other, and then stooped to beckon the tiny black spaniel, which had the insight to decline his hollow caresses. It would not have been decent to go away, because he had been dining with other guests, and had just taken tea. But Mrs. Bulstrode, having no doubt that she had been understood, turned the conversation.

Solomon's Proverbs, I think, have omitted to say, that as the sore palate findeth grit, so an uneasy consciousness heareth innuendoes. The next day Mr. Farebrother, parting from Lydgate in the street, supposed that they should meet at Vincy's in the evening. Lydgate answered curtly, no—he had work to do—he must give up going out in the evening.

“What! you are going to get lashed to the mast, eh, and are stopping your ears?” said the Vicar. “Well, if you don't mean to be won by the sirens, you are right to take precautions in time.”

A few days before, Lydgate would have taken no notice of these words as anything more than the Vicar's usual way of putting things. They seemed now to convey an innuendo which confirmed the impression that he had been making a fool of himself and behaving so as to be misunderstood: not, he believed, by Rosamond herself; she, he felt sure, took everything as lightly as he intended it. She had an exquisite tact and insight in relation to all points of manners; but the people she lived among were blunderers and busybodies. However, the mistake should go no farther. He resolved—and kept his resolution—that he would not go to Mr. Vincy's except on business.

Rosamond became very unhappy. The uneasiness first stirred by her aunt's questions grew and grew till at the end of ten days that she had not seen Lydgate, it grew into terror at the blank that might possibly come—into foreboding of that ready, fatal sponge which so cheaply wipes out the hopes of mortals. The world would have a new dreariness for her, as a wilderness that a magician's spells had turned for a little while into a garden. She felt that she was beginning to know the pang of disappointed love, and that no other man could be the occasion of such delightful aerial building as she had been enjoying for the last six months. Poor Rosamond lost her appetite and felt as forlorn as Ariadne—as a charming stage Ariadne left behind with all her boxes full of costumes and no hope of a coach.

There are many wonderful mixtures in the world which are all alike called love, and claim the privileges of a sublime rage which is an apology for everything (in literature and the drama). Happily Rosamond did not think of committing any desperate act: she plaited her fair hair as beautifully as usual, and kept herself proudly calm. Her most cheerful supposition was that her aunt Bulstrode had interfered in some way to hinder Lydgate's visits: everything was better than a spontaneous indifference in him. Any one who imagines ten days too short a time—not for falling into leanness, lightness, or other measurable effects of passion, but—for the whole spiritual circuit of alarmed conjecture and disappointment, is ignorant of what can go on in the elegant leisure of a young lady's mind.

On the eleventh day, however, Lydgate when leaving Stone Court was requested by Mrs. Vincy to let her husband know that there was a marked change in Mr. Featherstone's health, and that she wished him to come to Stone Court on that day. Now Lydgate might have called at the warehouse, or might have written a message on a leaf of his pocket-book and left it at the door. Yet these simple devices apparently did not occur to him, from which we may conclude that he had no strong objection to calling at the house at an hour when Mr. Vincy was not at home, and leaving the message with Miss Vincy. A man may, from various motives, decline to give his company, but perhaps not even a sage would be gratified that nobody missed him. It would be a graceful, easy way of piecing on the new habits to the old, to have a few playful words with Rosamond about his resistance to dissipation, and his firm resolve to take long fasts even from sweet sounds. It must be confessed, also, that momentary speculations as to all the possible grounds for Mrs. Bulstrode's hints had managed to get woven like slight clinging hairs into the more substantial web of his thoughts.

Miss Vincy was alone, and blushed so deeply when Lydgate came in that he felt a corresponding embarrassment, and instead of any playfulness, he began at once to speak of his reason for calling, and to beg her, almost formally, to deliver the message to her father. Rosamond, who at the first moment felt as if her happiness were returning, was keenly hurt by Lydgate's manner; her blush had departed, and she assented coldly, without adding an unnecessary word, some trivial chain-work which she had in her hands enabling her to avoid looking at Lydgate higher than his chin. In all



failures, the beginning is certainly the half of the whole. After sitting two long moments while he moved his whip and could say nothing, Lydgate rose to go, and Rosamond, made nervous by her struggle between mortification and the wish not to betray it, dropped her chain as if startled, and rose too, mechanically. Lydgate instantaneously stooped to pick up the chain. When he rose he was very near to a lovely little face set on a fair long neck which he had been used to see turning about under the most perfect management of self-contented grace. But as he raised his eyes now he saw a certain helpless quivering which touched him quite newly, and made him look at Rosamond with a questioning flash. At this moment she was as natural as she had ever been when she was five years old: she felt that her tears had risen, and it was no use to try to do anything else than let them stay like water on a blue flower or let them fall over her cheeks, even as they would.

That moment of naturalness was the crystallizing feather-touch: it shook flirtation into love. Remember that the ambitious man who was looking at those Forget-me-nots under the water was very warm-hearted and rash. He did not know where the chain went; an idea had thrilled through the recesses within him which had a miraculous effect in raising the power of passionate love lying buried there in no sealed sepulchre, but under the lightest, easily pierced mould. His words were quite abrupt and awkward; but the tone made them sound like an ardent, appealing avowal.

“What is the matter? you are distressed. Tell me, pray.”

Rosamond had never been spoken to in such tones before. I am not sure that she knew what the words were: but she looked at Lydgate and the tears fell over her cheeks. There could have been no more complete answer than that silence, and Lydgate, forgetting everything else, completely mastered by the outrush of tenderness at the sudden belief that this sweet young creature depended on him for her joy, actually put his arms round her, folding her gently and protectingly—he was used to being gentle with the weak and suffering—and kissed each of the two large tears. This was a strange way of arriving at an understanding, but it was a short way. Rosamond was not angry, but she moved backward a little in timid happiness, and Lydgate could now sit near her and speak less incompletely. Rosamond had to make her little confession, and he poured out words of gratitude and tenderness with impulsive lavishness. In half an hour he left

the house an engaged man, whose soul was not his own, but the woman's to whom he had bound himself.

He came again in the evening to speak with Mr. Vincy, who, just returned from Stone Court, was feeling sure that it would not be long before he heard of Mr. Featherstone's demise. The felicitous word "demise," which had seasonably occurred to him, had raised his spirits even above their usual evening pitch. The right word is always a power, and communicates its definiteness to our action. Considered as a demise, old Featherstone's death assumed a merely legal aspect, so that Mr. Vincy could tap his snuff-box over it and be jovial, without even an intermittent affectation of solemnity; and Mr. Vincy hated both solemnity and affectation. Who was ever awe struck about a testator, or sang a hymn on the title to real property? Mr. Vincy was inclined to take a jovial view of all things that evening: he even observed to Lydgate that Fred had got the family constitution after all, and would soon be as fine a fellow as ever again; and when his approbation of Rosamond's engagement was asked for, he gave it with astonishing facility, passing at once to general remarks on the desirableness of matrimony for young men and maidens, and apparently deducing from the whole the appropriateness of a little more punch.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk.  
—SHAKESPEARE: *Tempest*.

The triumphant confidence of the Mayor founded on Mr. Featherstone's insistent demand that Fred and his mother should not leave him, was a feeble emotion compared with all that was agitating the breasts of the old man's blood-relations, who naturally manifested more their sense of the family tie and were more visibly numerous now that he had become bedridden. Naturally: for when "poor Peter" had occupied his arm-chair in the wainscoted parlor, no assiduous beetles for whom the cook prepares boiling water could have been less welcome on a hearth which they had reasons for preferring, than those persons whose Featherstone blood was ill-nourished, not from penuriousness on their part, but from poverty. Brother Solomon and Sister Jane were rich, and the family candor and total abstinence from false politeness with which they were always received seemed to them no argument that their brother in the solemn act of making his will would overlook the superior claims of wealth. Themselves at least he had never been unnatural enough to banish from his house, and it seemed hardly eccentric that he should have kept away Brother Jonah, Sister Martha, and the rest, who had no shadow of such claims. They knew Peter's maxim, that money was a good egg, and should be laid in a warm nest.

But Brother Jonah, Sister Martha, and all the needy exiles, held a different point of view. Probabilities are as various as the faces to be seen at will in fretwork or paper-hangings: every form is there, from Jupiter to Judy, if you only look with creative inclination. To the poorer and least favored it seemed likely that since Peter had done nothing for them in his life, he would remember them at the last. Jonah argued that men liked to make a surprise of their wills, while Martha said that nobody need be surprised if he left the best part of his money to those who least expected it. Also it was not to be thought but that an own brother "lying there" with dropsy in his legs must come to feel that blood was thicker than water, and

if he didn't alter his will, he might have money by him. At any rate some blood-relations should be on the premises and on the watch against those who were hardly relations at all. Such things had been known as forged wills and disputed wills, which seemed to have the golden-hazy advantage of somehow enabling non-legatees to live out of them. Again, those who were no blood-relations might be caught making away with things—and poor Peter “lying there” helpless! Somebody should be on the watch. But in this conclusion they were at one with Solomon and Jane; also, some nephews, nieces, and cousins, arguing with still greater subtilty as to what might be done by a man able to “will away” his property and give himself large treats of oddity, felt in a handsome sort of way that there was a family interest to be attended to, and thought of Stone Court as a place which it would be nothing but right for them to visit. Sister Martha, otherwise Mrs. Cranch, living with some wheeziness in the Chalky Flats, could not undertake the journey; but her son, as being poor Peter's own nephew, could represent her advantageously, and watch lest his uncle Jonah should make an unfair use of the improbable things which seemed likely to happen. In fact there was a general sense running in the Featherstone blood that everybody must watch everybody else, and that it would be well for everybody else to reflect that the Almighty was watching him.

Thus Stone Court continually saw one or other blood-relation alighting or departing, and Mary Garth had the unpleasant task of carrying their messages to Mr. Featherstone, who would see none of them, and sent her down with the still more unpleasant task of telling them so. As manager of the household she felt bound to ask them in good provincial fashion to stay and eat; but she chose to consult Mrs. Vincy on the point of extra downstairs consumption now that Mr. Featherstone was laid up.

“Oh, my dear, you must do things handsomely where there's last illness and a property. God knows, I don't grudge them every ham in the house—only, save the best for the funeral. Have some stuffed veal always, and a fine cheese in cut. You must expect to keep open house in these last illnesses,” said liberal Mrs. Vincy, once more of cheerful note and bright plumage.

But some of the visitors alighted and did not depart after the handsome treating to veal and ham. Brother Jonah, for example (there are such

unpleasant people in most families; perhaps even in the highest aristocracy there are Brobdingnag specimens, gigantically in debt and bloated at greater expense)—Brother Jonah, I say, having come down in the world, was mainly supported by a calling which he was modest enough not to boast of, though it was much better than swindling either on exchange or turf, but which did not require his presence at Brassing so long as he had a good corner to sit in and a supply of food. He chose the kitchen-corner, partly because he liked it best, and partly because he did not want to sit with Solomon, concerning whom he had a strong brotherly opinion. Seated in a famous arm-chair and in his best suit, constantly within sight of good cheer, he had a comfortable consciousness of being on the premises, mingled with fleeting suggestions of Sunday and the bar at the Green Man; and he informed Mary Garth that he should not go out of reach of his brother Peter while that poor fellow was above ground. The troublesome ones in a family are usually either the wits or the idiots. Jonah was the wit among the Featherstones, and joked with the maid-servants when they came about the hearth, but seemed to consider Miss Garth a suspicious character, and followed her with cold eyes.

Mary would have borne this one pair of eyes with comparative ease, but unfortunately there was young Cranch, who, having come all the way from the Chalky Flats to represent his mother and watch his uncle Jonah, also felt it his duty to stay and to sit chiefly in the kitchen to give his uncle company. Young Cranch was not exactly the balancing point between the wit and the idiot,—verging slightly towards the latter type, and squinting so as to leave everything in doubt about his sentiments except that they were not of a forcible character. When Mary Garth entered the kitchen and Mr. Jonah Featherstone began to follow her with his cold detective eyes, young Cranch turning his head in the same direction seemed to insist on it that she should remark how he was squinting, as if he did it with design, like the gypsies when Borrow read the New Testament to them. This was rather too much for poor Mary; sometimes it made her bilious, sometimes it upset her gravity. One day that she had an opportunity she could not resist describing the kitchen scene to Fred, who would not be hindered from immediately going to see it, affecting simply to pass through. But no sooner did he face the four eyes than he had to rush through the nearest door which happened to lead to the dairy, and there under the high roof and among the pans he gave way to laughter which made a hollow resonance

perfectly audible in the kitchen. He fled by another doorway, but Mr. Jonah, who had not before seen Fred's white complexion, long legs, and pinched delicacy of face, prepared many sarcasms in which these points of appearance were wittily combined with the lowest moral attributes.

“Why, Tom, *you* don't wear such gentlemanly trousers—you haven't got half such fine long legs,” said Jonah to his nephew, winking at the same time, to imply that there was something more in these statements than their undeniableness. Tom looked at his legs, but left it uncertain whether he preferred his moral advantages to a more vicious length of limb and reprehensible gentility of trouser.

In the large wainscoted parlor too there were constantly pairs of eyes on the watch, and own relatives eager to be “sitters-up.” Many came, lunched, and departed, but Brother Solomon and the lady who had been Jane Featherstone for twenty-five years before she was Mrs. Waule found it good to be there every day for hours, without other calculable occupation than that of observing the cunning Mary Garth (who was so deep that she could be found out in nothing) and giving occasional dry wrinkly indications of crying—as if capable of torrents in a wetter season—at the thought that they were not allowed to go into Mr. Featherstone's room. For the old man's dislike of his own family seemed to get stronger as he got less able to amuse himself by saying biting things to them. Too languid to sting, he had the more venom refluxed in his blood.

Not fully believing the message sent through Mary Garth, they had presented themselves together within the door of the bedroom, both in black—Mrs. Waule having a white handkerchief partially unfolded in her hand—and both with faces in a sort of half-mourning purple; while Mrs. Vincy with her pink cheeks and pink ribbons flying was actually administering a cordial to their own brother, and the light-complexioned Fred, his short hair curling as might be expected in a gambler's, was lolling at his ease in a large chair.

Old Featherstone no sooner caught sight of these funereal figures appearing in spite of his orders than rage came to strengthen him more successfully than the cordial. He was propped up on a bed-rest, and always had his gold-headed stick lying by him. He seized it now and swept it backwards and forwards in as large an area as he could, apparently to ban these ugly spectres, crying in a hoarse sort of screech—

“Back, back, Mrs. Waule! Back, Solomon!”

“Oh, Brother. Peter,” Mrs. Waule began—but Solomon put his hand before her repressingly. He was a large-cheeked man, nearly seventy, with small furtive eyes, and was not only of much blander temper but thought himself much deeper than his brother Peter; indeed not likely to be deceived in any of his fellow-men, inasmuch as they could not well be more greedy and deceitful than he suspected them of being. Even the invisible powers, he thought, were likely to be soothed by a bland parenthesis here and there—coming from a man of property, who might have been as impious as others.

“Brother Peter,” he said, in a wheedling yet gravely official tone, “It’s nothing but right I should speak to you about the Three Crofts and the Manganese. The Almighty knows what I’ve got on my mind—”

“Then he knows more than I want to know,” said Peter, laying down his stick with a show of truce which had a threat in it too, for he reversed the stick so as to make the gold handle a club in case of closer fighting, and looked hard at Solomon’s bald head.

“There’s things you might repent of, Brother, for want of speaking to me,” said Solomon, not advancing, however. “I could sit up with you to-night, and Jane with me, willingly, and you might take your own time to speak, or let me speak.”

“Yes, I shall take my own time—you needn’t offer me yours,” said Peter.

“But you can’t take your own time to die in, Brother,” began Mrs. Waule, with her usual woolly tone. “And when you lie speechless you may be tired of having strangers about you, and you may think of me and my children”—but here her voice broke under the touching thought which she was attributing to her speechless brother; the mention of ourselves being naturally affecting.

“No, I shan’t,” said old Featherstone, contradictiously. “I shan’t think of any of you. I’ve made my will, I tell you, I’ve made my will.” Here he turned his head towards Mrs. Vincy, and swallowed some more of his cordial.

“Some people would be ashamed to fill up a place belonging by rights to others,” said Mrs. Waule, turning her narrow eyes in the same direction.

“Oh, sister,” said Solomon, with ironical softness, “you and me are not fine, and handsome, and clever enough: we must be humble and let smart people push themselves before us.”

Fred’s spirit could not bear this: rising and looking at Mr. Featherstone, he said, “Shall my mother and I leave the room, sir, that you may be alone with your friends?”

“Sit down, I tell you,” said old Featherstone, snappishly. “Stop where you are. Good-by, Solomon,” he added, trying to wield his stick again, but failing now that he had reversed the handle. “Good-by, Mrs. Waule. Don’t you come again.”

“I shall be down-stairs, Brother, whether or no,” said Solomon. “I shall do my duty, and it remains to be seen what the Almighty will allow.”

“Yes, in property going out of families,” said Mrs. Waule, in continuation,—“and where there’s steady young men to carry on. But I pity them who are not such, and I pity their mothers. Good-by, Brother Peter.”

“Remember, I’m the eldest after you, Brother, and prospered from the first, just as you did, and have got land already by the name of Featherstone,” said Solomon, relying much on that reflection, as one which might be suggested in the watches of the night. “But I bid you good-by for the present.”

Their exit was hastened by their seeing old Mr. Featherstone pull his wig on each side and shut his eyes with his mouth-widening grimace, as if he were determined to be deaf and blind.

None the less they came to Stone Court daily and sat below at the post of duty, sometimes carrying on a slow dialogue in an undertone in which the observation and response were so far apart, that any one hearing them might have imagined himself listening to speaking automata, in some doubt whether the ingenious mechanism would really work, or wind itself up for a long time in order to stick and be silent. Solomon and Jane would have been sorry to be quick: what that led to might be seen on the other side of the wall in the person of Brother Jonah.

But their watch in the wainscoted parlor was sometimes varied by the presence of other guests from far or near. Now that Peter Featherstone was up-stairs, his property could be discussed with all that local enlightenment



to be found on the spot: some rural and Middlemarch neighbors expressed much agreement with the family and sympathy with their interest against the Vincys, and feminine visitors were even moved to tears, in conversation with Mrs. Waule, when they recalled the fact that they themselves had been disappointed in times past by codicils and marriages for spite on the part of ungrateful elderly gentlemen, who, it might have been supposed, had been spared for something better. Such conversation paused suddenly, like an organ when the bellows are let drop, if Mary Garth came into the room; and all eyes were turned on her as a possible legatee, or one who might get access to iron chests.

But the younger men who were relatives or connections of the family, were disposed to admire her in this problematic light, as a girl who showed much conduct, and who among all the chances that were flying might turn out to be at least a moderate prize. Hence she had her share of compliments and polite attentions.

Especially from Mr. Borthrop Trumbull, a distinguished bachelor and auctioneer of those parts, much concerned in the sale of land and cattle: a public character, indeed, whose name was seen on widely distributed placards, and who might reasonably be sorry for those who did not know of him. He was second cousin to Peter Featherstone, and had been treated by him with more amenity than any other relative, being useful in matters of business; and in that programme of his funeral which the old man had himself dictated, he had been named as a Bearer. There was no odious cupidity in Mr. Borthrop Trumbull—nothing more than a sincere sense of his own merit, which, he was aware, in case of rivalry might tell against competitors; so that if Peter Featherstone, who so far as he, Trumbull, was concerned, had behaved like as good a soul as ever breathed, should have done anything handsome by him, all he could say was, that he had never fished and fawned, but had advised him to the best of his experience, which now extended over twenty years from the time of his apprenticeship at fifteen, and was likely to yield a knowledge of no surreptitious kind. His admiration was far from being confined to himself, but was accustomed professionally as well as privately to delight in estimating things at a high rate. He was an amateur of superior phrases, and never used poor language without immediately correcting himself—which was fortunate, as he was rather loud, and given to predominate, standing or walking about frequently, pulling down his waistcoat with the air of a man who is very

much of his own opinion, trimming himself rapidly with his fore-finger, and marking each new series in these movements by a busy play with his large seals. There was occasionally a little fierceness in his demeanor, but it was directed chiefly against false opinion, of which there is so much to correct in the world that a man of some reading and experience necessarily has his patience tried. He felt that the Featherstone family generally was of limited understanding, but being a man of the world and a public character, took everything as a matter of course, and even went to converse with Mr. Jonah and young Cranch in the kitchen, not doubting that he had impressed the latter greatly by his leading questions concerning the Chalky Flats. If anybody had observed that Mr. Borthrop Trumbull, being an auctioneer, was bound to know the nature of everything, he would have smiled and trimmed himself silently with the sense that he came pretty near that. On the whole, in an auctioneering way, he was an honorable man, not ashamed of his business, and feeling that “the celebrated Peel, now Sir Robert,” if introduced to him, would not fail to recognize his importance.

“I don’t mind if I have a slice of that ham, and a glass of that ale, Miss Garth, if you will allow me,” he said, coming into the parlor at half-past eleven, after having had the exceptional privilege of seeing old Featherstone, and standing with his back to the fire between Mrs. Waule and Solomon.

“It’s not necessary for you to go out;—let me ring the bell.”

“Thank you,” said Mary, “I have an errand.”

“Well, Mr. Trumbull, you’re highly favored,” said Mrs. Waule.

“What! seeing the old man?” said the auctioneer, playing with his seals dispassionately. “Ah, you see he has relied on me considerably.” Here he pressed his lips together, and frowned meditatively.

“Might anybody ask what their brother has been saying?” said Solomon, in a soft tone of humility, in which he had a sense of luxurious cunning, he being a rich man and not in need of it.

“Oh yes, anybody may ask,” said Mr. Trumbull, with loud and good-humored though cutting sarcasm. “Anybody may interrogate. Any one may give their remarks an interrogative turn,” he continued, his sonorousness rising with his style. “This is constantly done by good speakers, even when they anticipate no answer. It is what we call a figure

of speech—speech at a high figure, as one may say.” The eloquent auctioneer smiled at his own ingenuity.

“I shouldn’t be sorry to hear he’d remembered you, Mr. Trumbull,” said Solomon. “I never was against the deserving. It’s the undeserving I’m against.”

“Ah, there it is, you see, there it is,” said Mr. Trumbull, significantly. “It can’t be denied that undeserving people have been legatees, and even residuary legatees. It is so, with testamentary dispositions.” Again he pursed up his lips and frowned a little.

“Do you mean to say for certain, Mr. Trumbull, that my brother has left his land away from our family?” said Mrs. Waule, on whom, as an unhopeful woman, those long words had a depressing effect.

“A man might as well turn his land into charity land at once as leave it to some people,” observed Solomon, his sister’s question having drawn no answer.

“What, Blue-Coat land?” said Mrs. Waule, again. “Oh, Mr. Trumbull, you never can mean to say that. It would be flying in the face of the Almighty that’s prospered him.”

While Mrs. Waule was speaking, Mr. Borthrop Trumbull walked away from the fireplace towards the window, patrolling with his fore-finger round the inside of his stock, then along his whiskers and the curves of his hair. He now walked to Miss Garth’s work-table, opened a book which lay there and read the title aloud with pompous emphasis as if he were offering it for sale:

“‘Anne of Geierstein’ (pronounced Jeersteen) or the ‘Maiden of the Mist, by the author of Waverley.’” Then turning the page, he began sonorously—“The course of four centuries has well-nigh elapsed since the series of events which are related in the following chapters took place on the Continent.” He pronounced the last truly admirable word with the accent on the last syllable, not as unaware of vulgar usage, but feeling that this novel delivery enhanced the sonorous beauty which his reading had given to the whole.

And now the servant came in with the tray, so that the moments for answering Mrs. Waule’s question had gone by safely, while she and Solomon, watching Mr. Trumbull’s movements, were thinking that high

learning interfered sadly with serious affairs. Mr. Borthrop Trumbull really knew nothing about old Featherstone's will; but he could hardly have been brought to declare any ignorance unless he had been arrested for misprision of treason.

"I shall take a mere mouthful of ham and a glass of ale," he said, reassuringly. "As a man with public business, I take a snack when I can. I will back this ham," he added, after swallowing some morsels with alarming haste, "against any ham in the three kingdoms. In my opinion it is better than the hams at Freshitt Hall—and I think I am a tolerable judge."

"Some don't like so much sugar in their hams," said Mrs. Waule. "But my poor brother would always have sugar."

"If any person demands better, he is at liberty to do so; but, God bless me, what an aroma! I should be glad to buy in that quality, I know. There is some gratification to a gentleman"—here Mr. Trumbull's voice conveyed an emotional remonstrance—"in having this kind of ham set on his table."

He pushed aside his plate, poured out his glass of ale and drew his chair a little forward, profiting by the occasion to look at the inner side of his legs, which he stroked approvingly—Mr. Trumbull having all those less frivolous airs and gestures which distinguish the predominant races of the north.

"You have an interesting work there, I see, Miss Garth," he observed, when Mary re-entered. "It is by the author of 'Waverley': that is Sir Walter Scott. I have bought one of his works myself—a very nice thing, a very superior publication, entitled 'Ivanhoe.' You will not get any writer to beat him in a hurry, I think—he will not, in my opinion, be speedily surpassed. I have just been reading a portion at the commencement of 'Anne of Jeersteen.' It commences well." (Things never began with Mr. Borthrop Trumbull: they always commenced, both in private life and on his handbills.) "You are a reader, I see. Do you subscribe to our Middlemarch library?"

"No," said Mary. "Mr. Fred Vincy brought this book."

"I am a great bookman myself," returned Mr. Trumbull. "I have no less than two hundred volumes in calf, and I flatter myself they are well selected. Also pictures by Murillo, Rubens, Teniers, Titian, Vandyck, and

others. I shall be happy to lend you any work you like to mention, Miss Garth.”

“I am much obliged,” said Mary, hastening away again, “but I have little time for reading.”

“I should say my brother has done something for *her* in his will,” said Mr. Solomon, in a very low undertone, when she had shut the door behind her, pointing with his head towards the absent Mary.

“His first wife was a poor match for him, though,” said Mrs. Waule. “She brought him nothing: and this young woman is only her niece,—and very proud. And my brother has always paid her wage.”

“A sensible girl though, in my opinion,” said Mr. Trumbull, finishing his ale and starting up with an emphatic adjustment of his waistcoat. “I have observed her when she has been mixing medicine in drops. She minds what she is doing, sir. That is a great point in a woman, and a great point for our friend up-stairs, poor dear old soul. A man whose life is of any value should think of his wife as a nurse: that is what I should do, if I married; and I believe I have lived single long enough not to make a mistake in that line. Some men must marry to elevate themselves a little, but when I am in need of that, I hope some one will tell me so—I hope some individual will apprise me of the fact. I wish you good morning, Mrs. Waule. Good morning, Mr. Solomon. I trust we shall meet under less melancholy auspices.”

When Mr. Trumbull had departed with a fine bow, Solomon, leaning forward, observed to his sister, “You may depend, Jane, my brother has left that girl a lumping sum.”

“Anybody would think so, from the way Mr. Trumbull talks,” said Jane. Then, after a pause, “He talks as if my daughters wasn’t to be trusted to give drops.”

“Auctioneers talk wild,” said Solomon. “Not but what Trumbull has made money.”

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

“Close up his eyes and draw the curtain close;  
And let us all to meditation.”  
—2 *Henry VI.*

That night after twelve o'clock Mary Garth relieved the watch in Mr. Featherstone's room, and sat there alone through the small hours. She often chose this task, in which she found some pleasure, notwithstanding the old man's testiness whenever he demanded her attentions. There were intervals in which she could sit perfectly still, enjoying the outer stillness and the subdued light. The red fire with its gently audible movement seemed like a solemn existence calmly independent of the petty passions, the imbecile desires, the straining after worthless uncertainties, which were daily moving her contempt. Mary was fond of her own thoughts, and could amuse herself well sitting in twilight with her hands in her lap; for, having early had strong reason to believe that things were not likely to be arranged for her peculiar satisfaction, she wasted no time in astonishment and annoyance at that fact. And she had already come to take life very much as a comedy in which she had a proud, nay, a generous resolution not to act the mean or treacherous part. Mary might have become cynical if she had not had parents whom she honored, and a well of affectionate gratitude within her, which was all the fuller because she had learned to make no unreasonable claims.

She sat to-night revolving, as she was wont, the scenes of the day, her lips often curling with amusement at the oddities to which her fancy added fresh drollery: people were so ridiculous with their illusions, carrying their fool's caps unawares, thinking their own lies opaque while everybody else's were transparent, making themselves exceptions to everything, as if when all the world looked yellow under a lamp they alone were rosy. Yet there were some illusions under Mary's eyes which were not quite comic to her. She was secretly convinced, though she had no other grounds than her close observation of old Featherstone's nature, that in spite of his fondness for having the Vincys about him, they were as likely to be

disappointed as any of the relations whom he kept at a distance. She had a good deal of disdain for Mrs. Vincy's evident alarm lest she and Fred should be alone together, but it did not hinder her from thinking anxiously of the way in which Fred would be affected, if it should turn out that his uncle had left him as poor as ever. She could make a butt of Fred when he was present, but she did not enjoy his follies when he was absent.

Yet she liked her thoughts: a vigorous young mind not overbalanced by passion, finds a good in making acquaintance with life, and watches its own powers with interest. Mary had plenty of merriment within.

Her thought was not veined by any solemnity or pathos about the old man on the bed: such sentiments are easier to affect than to feel about an aged creature whose life is not visibly anything but a remnant of vices. She had always seen the most disagreeable side of Mr. Featherstone: he was not proud of her, and she was only useful to him. To be anxious about a soul that is always snapping at you must be left to the saints of the earth; and Mary was not one of them. She had never returned him a harsh word, and had waited on him faithfully: that was her utmost. Old Featherstone himself was not in the least anxious about his soul, and had declined to see Mr. Tucker on the subject.

To-night he had not snapped, and for the first hour or two he lay remarkably still, until at last Mary heard him rattling his bunch of keys against the tin box which he always kept in the bed beside him. About three o'clock he said, with remarkable distinctness, "Missy, come here!"

Mary obeyed, and found that he had already drawn the tin box from under the clothes, though he usually asked to have this done for him; and he had selected the key. He now unlocked the box, and, drawing from it another key, looked straight at her with eyes that seemed to have recovered all their sharpness and said, "How many of 'em are in the house?"

"You mean of your own relations, sir," said Mary, well used to the old man's way of speech. He nodded slightly and she went on.

"Mr. Jonah Featherstone and young Cranch are sleeping here."

"Oh ay, they stick, do they? and the rest—they come every day, I'll warrant—Solomon and Jane, and all the young uns? They come peeping, and counting and casting up?"

“Not all of them every day. Mr. Solomon and Mrs. Waule are here every day, and the others come often.”

The old man listened with a grimace while she spoke, and then said, relaxing his face, “The more fools they. You hearken, missy. It’s three o’clock in the morning, and I’ve got all my faculties as well as ever I had in my life. I know all my property, and where the money’s put out, and everything. And I’ve made everything ready to change my mind, and do as I like at the last. Do you hear, missy? I’ve got my faculties.”

“Well, sir?” said Mary, quietly.

He now lowered his tone with an air of deeper cunning. “I’ve made two wills, and I’m going to burn one. Now you do as I tell you. This is the key of my iron chest, in the closet there. You push well at the side of the brass plate at the top, till it goes like a bolt: then you can put the key in the front lock and turn it. See and do that; and take out the topmost paper—Last Will and Testament—big printed.”

“No, sir,” said Mary, in a firm voice, “I cannot do that.”

“Not do it? I tell you, you must,” said the old man, his voice beginning to shake under the shock of this resistance.

“I cannot touch your iron chest or your will. I must refuse to do anything that might lay me open to suspicion.”

“I tell you, I’m in my right mind. Shan’t I do as I like at the last? I made two wills on purpose. Take the key, I say.”

“No, sir, I will not,” said Mary, more resolutely still. Her repulsion was getting stronger.

“I tell you, there’s no time to lose.”

“I cannot help that, sir. I will not let the close of your life soil the beginning of mine. I will not touch your iron chest or your will.” She moved to a little distance from the bedside.

The old man paused with a blank stare for a little while, holding the one key erect on the ring; then with an agitated jerk he began to work with his bony left hand at emptying the tin box before him.

“Missy,” he began to say, hurriedly, “look here! take the money—the notes and gold—look here—take it—you shall have it all—do as I tell you.”



He made an effort to stretch out the key towards her as far as possible, and Mary again retreated.

“I will not touch your key or your money, sir. Pray don’t ask me to do it again. If you do, I must go and call your brother.”

He let his hand fall, and for the first time in her life Mary saw old Peter Featherstone begin to cry childishly. She said, in as gentle a tone as she could command, “Pray put up your money, sir;” and then went away to her seat by the fire, hoping this would help to convince him that it was useless to say more. Presently he rallied and said eagerly—

“Look here, then. Call the young chap. Call Fred Vincy.”

Mary’s heart began to beat more quickly. Various ideas rushed through her mind as to what the burning of a second will might imply. She had to make a difficult decision in a hurry.

“I will call him, if you will let me call Mr. Jonah and others with him.”

“Nobody else, I say. The young chap. I shall do as I like.”

“Wait till broad daylight, sir, when every one is stirring. Or let me call Simmons now, to go and fetch the lawyer? He can be here in less than two hours.”

“Lawyer? What do I want with the lawyer? Nobody shall know—I say, nobody shall know. I shall do as I like.”

“Let me call some one else, sir,” said Mary, persuasively. She did not like her position—alone with the old man, who seemed to show a strange flaring of nervous energy which enabled him to speak again and again without falling into his usual cough; yet she desired not to push unnecessarily the contradiction which agitated him. “Let me, pray, call some one else.”

“You let me alone, I say. Look here, missy. Take the money. You’ll never have the chance again. It’s pretty nigh two hundred—there’s more in the box, and nobody knows how much there was. Take it and do as I tell you.”

Mary, standing by the fire, saw its red light falling on the old man, propped up on his pillows and bed-rest, with his bony hand holding out the key, and the money lying on the quilt before him. She never forgot that vision of a man wanting to do as he liked at the last. But the way in which he had put the offer of the money urged her to speak with harder resolution than ever.

“It is of no use, sir. I will not do it. Put up your money. I will not touch your money. I will do anything else I can to comfort you; but I will not touch your keys or your money.”

“Anything else—anything else!” said old Featherstone, with hoarse rage, which, as if in a nightmare, tried to be loud, and yet was only just audible. “I want nothing else. You come here—you come here.”

Mary approached him cautiously, knowing him too well. She saw him dropping his keys and trying to grasp his stick, while he looked at her like an aged hyena, the muscles of his face getting distorted with the effort of his hand. She paused at a safe distance.

“Let me give you some cordial,” she said, quietly, “and try to compose yourself. You will perhaps go to sleep. And to-morrow by daylight you can do as you like.”

He lifted the stick, in spite of her being beyond his reach, and threw it with a hard effort which was but impotence. It fell, slipping over the foot of the bed. Mary let it lie, and retreated to her chair by the fire. By-and-by she would go to him with the cordial. Fatigue would make him passive. It was getting towards the chilliest moment of the morning, the fire had got low, and she could see through the chink between the moreen window-curtains the light whitened by the blind. Having put some wood on the fire and thrown a shawl over her, she sat down, hoping that Mr. Featherstone might now fall asleep. If she went near him the irritation might be kept up. He had said nothing after throwing the stick, but she had seen him taking his keys again and laying his right hand on the money. He did not put it up, however, and she thought that he was dropping off to sleep.

But Mary herself began to be more agitated by the remembrance of what she had gone through, than she had been by the reality—questioning those acts of hers which had come imperatively and excluded all question in the critical moment.

Presently the dry wood sent out a flame which illuminated every crevice, and Mary saw that the old man was lying quietly with his head turned a little on one side. She went towards him with inaudible steps, and thought that his face looked strangely motionless; but the next moment the movement of the flame communicating itself to all objects made her uncertain. The violent beating of her heart rendered her perceptions so doubtful that even when she touched him and listened for his breathing,

she could not trust her conclusions. She went to the window and gently propped aside the curtain and blind, so that the still light of the sky fell on the bed.

The next moment she ran to the bell and rang it energetically. In a very little while there was no longer any doubt that Peter Featherstone was dead, with his right hand clasping the keys, and his left hand lying on the heap of notes and gold.

BOOK IV.  
THREE LOVE PROBLEMS.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

*1st Gent.* Such men as this are feathers, chips, and straws,  
Carry no weight, no force.

*2d Gent.* But levity

Is causal too, and makes the sum of weight.  
For power finds its place in lack of power;  
Advance is cession, and the driven ship  
May run aground because the helmsman's thought  
Lacked force to balance opposites."

It was on a morning of May that Peter Featherstone was buried. In the prosaic neighborhood of Middlemarch, May was not always warm and sunny, and on this particular morning a chill wind was blowing the blossoms from the surrounding gardens on to the green mounds of Lowick churchyard. Swiftly moving clouds only now and then allowed a gleam to light up any object, whether ugly or beautiful, that happened to stand within its golden shower. In the churchyard the objects were remarkably various, for there was a little country crowd waiting to see the funeral. The news had spread that it was to be a "big burying;" the old gentleman had left written directions about everything and meant to have a funeral "beyond his betters." This was true; for old Featherstone had not been a Harpagon whose passions had all been devoured by the ever-lean and ever-hungry passion of saving, and who would drive a bargain with his undertaker beforehand. He loved money, but he also loved to spend it in gratifying his peculiar tastes, and perhaps he loved it best of all as a means of making others feel his power more or less uncomfortably. If any one will here contend that there must have been traits of goodness in old Featherstone, I will not presume to deny this; but I must observe that goodness is of a modest nature, easily discouraged, and when much privacy, elbowed in early life by unabashed vices, is apt to retire into extreme privacy, so that it is more easily believed in by those who construct a selfish old gentleman theoretically, than by those who form the narrower judgments based on his personal acquaintance. In any case, he

had been bent on having a handsome funeral, and on having persons “bid” to it who would rather have stayed at home. He had even desired that female relatives should follow him to the grave, and poor sister Martha had taken a difficult journey for this purpose from the Chalky Flats. She and Jane would have been altogether cheered (in a tearful manner) by this sign that a brother who disliked seeing them while he was living had been prospectively fond of their presence when he should have become a testator, if the sign had not been made equivocal by being extended to Mrs. Vincy, whose expense in handsome crape seemed to imply the most presumptuous hopes, aggravated by a bloom of complexion which told pretty plainly that she was not a blood-relation, but of that generally objectionable class called wife’s kin.

We are all of us imaginative in some form or other, for images are the brood of desire; and poor old Featherstone, who laughed much at the way in which others cajoled themselves, did not escape the fellowship of illusion. In writing the programme for his burial he certainly did not make clear to himself that his pleasure in the little drama of which it formed a part was confined to anticipation. In chuckling over the vexations he could inflict by the rigid clutch of his dead hand, he inevitably mingled his consciousness with that livid stagnant presence, and so far as he was preoccupied with a future life, it was with one of gratification inside his coffin. Thus old Featherstone was imaginative, after his fashion.

However, the three mourning-coaches were filled according to the written orders of the deceased. There were pall-bearers on horseback, with the richest scarfs and hatbands, and even the under-bearers had trappings of woe which were of a good well-priced quality. The black procession, when dismounted, looked the larger for the smallness of the churchyard; the heavy human faces and the black draperies shivering in the wind seemed to tell of a world strangely incongruous with the lightly dropping blossoms and the gleams of sunshine on the daisies. The clergyman who met the procession was Mr. Cadwallader—also according to the request of Peter Featherstone, prompted as usual by peculiar reasons. Having a contempt for curates, whom he always called understrappers, he was resolved to be buried by a beneficed clergyman. Mr. Casaubon was out of the question, not merely because he declined duty of this sort, but because Featherstone had an especial dislike to him as the rector of his own parish, who had a lien on the land in the shape of tithe, also as the deliverer of

morning sermons, which the old man, being in his pew and not at all sleepy, had been obliged to sit through with an inward snarl. He had an objection to a parson stuck up above his head preaching to him. But his relations with Mr. Cadwallader had been of a different kind: the trout-stream which ran through Mr. Casaubon's land took its course through Featherstone's also, so that Mr. Cadwallader was a parson who had had to ask a favor instead of preaching. Moreover, he was one of the high gentry living four miles away from Lowick, and was thus exalted to an equal sky with the sheriff of the county and other dignities vaguely regarded as necessary to the system of things. There would be a satisfaction in being buried by Mr. Cadwallader, whose very name offered a fine opportunity for pronouncing wrongly if you liked.

This distinction conferred on the Rector of Tipton and Freshitt was the reason why Mrs. Cadwallader made one of the group that watched old Featherstone's funeral from an upper window of the manor. She was not fond of visiting that house, but she liked, as she said, to see collections of strange animals such as there would be at this funeral; and she had persuaded Sir James and the young Lady Chettam to drive the Rector and herself to Lowick in order that the visit might be altogether pleasant.

"I will go anywhere with you, Mrs. Cadwallader," Celia had said; "but I don't like funerals."

"Oh, my dear, when you have a clergyman in your family you must accommodate your tastes: I did that very early. When I married Humphrey I made up my mind to like sermons, and I set out by liking the end very much. That soon spread to the middle and the beginning, because I couldn't have the end without them."

"No, to be sure not," said the Dowager Lady Chettam, with stately emphasis.

The upper window from which the funeral could be well seen was in the room occupied by Mr. Casaubon when he had been forbidden to work; but he had resumed nearly his habitual style of life now in spite of warnings and prescriptions, and after politely welcoming Mrs. Cadwallader had slipped again into the library to chew a cud of erudite mistake about Cush and Mizraim.

But for her visitors Dorothea too might have been shut up in the library, and would not have witnessed this scene of old Featherstone's funeral,

which, aloof as it seemed to be from the tenor of her life, always afterwards came back to her at the touch of certain sensitive points in memory, just as the vision of St. Peter's at Rome was inwoven with moods of despondency. Scenes which make vital changes in our neighbors' lot are but the background of our own, yet, like a particular aspect of the fields and trees, they become associated for us with the epochs of our own history, and make a part of that unity which lies in the selection of our keenest consciousness.

The dream-like association of something alien and ill-understood with the deepest secrets of her experience seemed to mirror that sense of loneliness which was due to the very ardor of Dorothea's nature. The country gentry of old time lived in a rarefied social air: dotted apart on their stations up the mountain they looked down with imperfect discrimination on the belts of thicker life below. And Dorothea was not at ease in the perspective and chilliness of that height.

"I shall not look any more," said Celia, after the train had entered the church, placing herself a little behind her husband's elbow so that she could slyly touch his coat with her cheek. "I dare say Dodo likes it: she is fond of melancholy things and ugly people."

"I am fond of knowing something about the people I live among," said Dorothea, who had been watching everything with the interest of a monk on his holiday tour. "It seems to me we know nothing of our neighbors, unless they are cottagers. One is constantly wondering what sort of lives other people lead, and how they take things. I am quite obliged to Mrs. Cadwallader for coming and calling me out of the library."

"Quite right to feel obliged to me," said Mrs. Cadwallader. "Your rich Lowick farmers are as curious as any buffaloes or bisons, and I dare say you don't half see them at church. They are quite different from your uncle's tenants or Sir James's—monsters—farmers without landlords—one can't tell how to class them."

"Most of these followers are not Lowick people," said Sir James; "I suppose they are legatees from a distance, or from Middlemarch. Lovegood tells me the old fellow has left a good deal of money as well as land."

"Think of that now! when so many younger sons can't dine at their own expense," said Mrs. Cadwallader. "Ah," turning round at the sound of the



opening door, “here is Mr. Brooke. I felt that we were incomplete before, and here is the explanation. You are come to see this odd funeral, of course?”

“No, I came to look after Casaubon—to see how he goes on, you know. And to bring a little news—a little news, my dear,” said Mr. Brooke, nodding at Dorothea as she came towards him. “I looked into the library, and I saw Casaubon over his books. I told him it wouldn’t do: I said, ‘This will never do, you know: think of your wife, Casaubon.’ And he promised me to come up. I didn’t tell him my news: I said, he must come up.”

“Ah, now they are coming out of church,” Mrs. Cadwallader exclaimed. “Dear me, what a wonderfully mixed set! Mr. Lydgate as doctor, I suppose. But that is really a good looking woman, and the fair young man must be her son. Who are they, Sir James, do you know?”

“I see Vincy, the Mayor of Middlemarch; they are probably his wife and son,” said Sir James, looking interrogatively at Mr. Brooke, who nodded and said—

“Yes, a very decent family—a very good fellow is Vincy; a credit to the manufacturing interest. You have seen him at my house, you know.”

“Ah, yes: one of your secret committee,” said Mrs. Cadwallader, provokingly.

“A coursing fellow, though,” said Sir James, with a fox-hunter’s disgust.

“And one of those who suck the life out of the wretched handloom weavers in Tipton and Freshitt. That is how his family look so fair and sleek,” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “Those dark, purple-faced people are an excellent foil. Dear me, they are like a set of jugs! Do look at Humphrey: one might fancy him an ugly archangel towering above them in his white surplice.”

“It’s a solemn thing, though, a funeral,” said Mr. Brooke, “if you take it in that light, you know.”

“But I am not taking it in that light. I can’t wear my solemnity too often, else it will go to rags. It was time the old man died, and none of these people are sorry.”

“How piteous!” said Dorothea. “This funeral seems to me the most dismal thing I ever saw. It is a blot on the morning. I cannot bear to think that any one should die and leave no love behind.”

She was going to say more, but she saw her husband enter and seat himself a little in the background. The difference his presence made to her was not always a happy one: she felt that he often inwardly objected to her speech.

“Positively,” exclaimed Mrs. Cadwallader, “there is a new face come out from behind that broad man queerer than any of them: a little round head with bulging eyes—a sort of frog-face—do look. He must be of another blood, I think.”

“Let me see!” said Celia, with awakened curiosity, standing behind Mrs. Cadwallader and leaning forward over her head. “Oh, what an odd face!” Then with a quick change to another sort of surprised expression, she added, “Why, Dodo, you never told me that Mr. Ladislaw was come again!”

Dorothea felt a shock of alarm: every one noticed her sudden paleness as she looked up immediately at her uncle, while Mr. Casaubon looked at her.

“He came with me, you know; he is my guest—puts up with me at the Grange,” said Mr. Brooke, in his easiest tone, nodding at Dorothea, as if the announcement were just what she might have expected. “And we have brought the picture at the top of the carriage. I knew you would be pleased with the surprise, Casaubon. There you are to the very life—as Aquinas, you know. Quite the right sort of thing. And you will hear young Ladislaw talk about it. He talks uncommonly well—points out this, that, and the other—knows art and everything of that kind—companionable, you know—is up with you in any track—what I’ve been wanting a long while.”

Mr. Casaubon bowed with cold politeness, mastering his irritation, but only so far as to be silent. He remembered Will’s letter quite as well as Dorothea did; he had noticed that it was not among the letters which had been reserved for him on his recovery, and secretly concluding that Dorothea had sent word to Will not to come to Lowick, he had shrunk with proud sensitiveness from ever recurring to the subject. He now inferred that she had asked her uncle to invite Will to the Grange; and she felt it impossible at that moment to enter into any explanation.

Mrs. Cadwallader’s eyes, diverted from the churchyard, saw a good deal of dumb show which was not so intelligible to her as she could have desired, and could not repress the question, “Who is Mr. Ladislaw?”

“A young relative of Mr. Casaubon’s,” said Sir James, promptly. His good-nature often made him quick and clear-seeing in personal matters, and he had divined from Dorothea’s glance at her husband that there was some alarm in her mind.

“A very nice young fellow—Casaubon has done everything for him,” explained Mr. Brooke. “He repays your expense in him, Casaubon,” he went on, nodding encouragingly. “I hope he will stay with me a long while and we shall make something of my documents. I have plenty of ideas and facts, you know, and I can see he is just the man to put them into shape—remembers what the right quotations are, *omne tulit punctum*, and that sort of thing—gives subjects a kind of turn. I invited him some time ago when you were ill, Casaubon; Dorothea said you couldn’t have anybody in the house, you know, and she asked me to write.”

Poor Dorothea felt that every word of her uncle’s was about as pleasant as a grain of sand in the eye to Mr. Casaubon. It would be altogether unfitting now to explain that she had not wished her uncle to invite Will Ladislaw. She could not in the least make clear to herself the reasons for her husband’s dislike to his presence—a dislike painfully impressed on her by the scene in the library; but she felt the unbecomingness of saying anything that might convey a notion of it to others. Mr. Casaubon, indeed, had not thoroughly represented those mixed reasons to himself; irritated feeling with him, as with all of us, seeking rather for justification than for self-knowledge. But he wished to repress outward signs, and only Dorothea could discern the changes in her husband’s face before he observed with more of dignified bending and sing-song than usual—

“You are exceedingly hospitable, my dear sir; and I owe you acknowledgments for exercising your hospitality towards a relative of mine.”

The funeral was ended now, and the churchyard was being cleared.

“Now you can see him, Mrs. Cadwallader,” said Celia. “He is just like a miniature of Mr. Casaubon’s aunt that hangs in Dorothea’s boudoir—quite nice-looking.”

“A very pretty sprig,” said Mrs. Cadwallader, dryly. “What is your nephew to be, Mr. Casaubon?”

“Pardon me, he is not my nephew. He is my cousin.”

“Well, you know,” interposed Mr. Brooke, “he is trying his wings. He is just the sort of young fellow to rise. I should be glad to give him an opportunity. He would make a good secretary, now, like Hobbes, Milton, Swift—that sort of man.”

“I understand,” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “One who can write speeches.”

“I’ll fetch him in now, eh, Casaubon?” said Mr. Brooke. “He wouldn’t come in till I had announced him, you know. And we’ll go down and look at the picture. There you are to the life: a deep subtle sort of thinker with his fore-finger on the page, while Saint Bonaventure or somebody else, rather fat and florid, is looking up at the Trinity. Everything is symbolical, you know—the higher style of art: I like that up to a certain point, but not too far—it’s rather straining to keep up with, you know. But you are at home in that, Casaubon. And your painter’s flesh is good—solidity, transparency, everything of that sort. I went into that a great deal at one time. However, I’ll go and fetch Ladislav.”

## CHAPTER XXXV.

“Non, je ne comprends pas de plus charmant plaisir  
Que de voir d’héritiers une troupe affligée  
Le maintien interdit, et la mine allongée,  
Lire un long testament où pales, étonnés  
On leur laisse un bonsoir avec un pied de nez.  
Pour voir au naturel leur tristesse profonde  
Je reviendrais, je crois, exprès de l’autre monde.”  
—REGNARD: *Le Légataire Universel*.

When the animals entered the Ark in pairs, one may imagine that allied species made much private remark on each other, and were tempted to think that so many forms feeding on the same store of fodder were eminently superfluous, as tending to diminish the rations. (I fear the part played by the vultures on that occasion would be too painful for art to represent, those birds being disadvantageously naked about the gullet, and apparently without rites and ceremonies.)

The same sort of temptation befell the Christian Carnivora who formed Peter Featherstone’s funeral procession; most of them having their minds bent on a limited store which each would have liked to get the most of. The long-recognized blood-relations and connections by marriage made already a goodly number, which, multiplied by possibilities, presented a fine range for jealous conjecture and pathetic hopefulness. Jealousy of the Vincys had created a fellowship in hostility among all persons of the Featherstone blood, so that in the absence of any decided indication that one of themselves was to have more than the rest, the dread lest that long-legged Fred Vincy should have the land was necessarily dominant, though it left abundant feeling and leisure for vaguer jealousies, such as were entertained towards Mary Garth. Solomon found time to reflect that Jonah was undeserving, and Jonah to abuse Solomon as greedy; Jane, the elder sister, held that Martha’s children ought not to expect so much as the young Waules; and Martha, more lax on the subject of primogeniture, was sorry to think that Jane was so “having.” These nearest of kin were naturally impressed with the unreasonableness of expectations in cousins

and second cousins, and used their arithmetic in reckoning the large sums that small legacies might mount to, if there were too many of them. Two cousins were present to hear the will, and a second cousin besides Mr. Trumbull. This second cousin was a Middlemarch mercer of polite manners and superfluous aspirates. The two cousins were elderly men from Brassing, one of them conscious of claims on the score of inconvenient expense sustained by him in presents of oysters and other eatables to his rich cousin Peter; the other entirely saturnine, leaning his hands and chin on a stick, and conscious of claims based on no narrow performance but on merit generally: both blameless citizens of Brassing, who wished that Jonah Featherstone did not live there. The wit of a family is usually best received among strangers.

“Why, Trumbull himself is pretty sure of five hundred—*that* you may depend,—I shouldn’t wonder if my brother promised him,” said Solomon, musing aloud with his sisters, the evening before the funeral.

“Dear, dear!” said poor sister Martha, whose imagination of hundreds had been habitually narrowed to the amount of her unpaid rent.

But in the morning all the ordinary currents of conjecture were disturbed by the presence of a strange mourner who had plashed among them as if from the moon. This was the stranger described by Mrs. Cadwallader as frog-faced: a man perhaps about two or three and thirty, whose prominent eyes, thin-lipped, downward-curved mouth, and hair sleekly brushed away from a forehead that sank suddenly above the ridge of the eyebrows, certainly gave his face a batrachian unchangeableness of expression. Here, clearly, was a new legatee; else why was he bidden as a mourner? Here were new possibilities, raising a new uncertainty, which almost checked remark in the mourning-coaches. We are all humiliated by the sudden discovery of a fact which has existed very comfortably and perhaps been staring at us in private while we have been making up our world entirely without it. No one had seen this questionable stranger before except Mary Garth, and she knew nothing more of him than that he had twice been to Stone Court when Mr. Featherstone was down-stairs, and had sat alone with him for several hours. She had found an opportunity of mentioning this to her father, and perhaps Caleb’s were the only eyes, except the lawyer’s, which examined the stranger with more of inquiry than of disgust or suspicion. Caleb Garth, having little expectation and less

cupidity, was interested in the verification of his own guesses, and the calmness with which he half smilingly rubbed his chin and shot intelligent glances much as if he were valuing a tree, made a fine contrast with the alarm or scorn visible in other faces when the unknown mourner, whose name was understood to be Rigg, entered the wainscoted parlor and took his seat near the door to make part of the audience when the will should be read. Just then Mr. Solomon and Mr. Jonah were gone up-stairs with the lawyer to search for the will; and Mrs. Waule, seeing two vacant seats between herself and Mr. Borthrop Trumbull, had the spirit to move next to that great authority, who was handling his watch-seals and trimming his outlines with a determination not to show anything so compromising to a man of ability as wonder or surprise.

“I suppose you know everything about what my poor brother’s done, Mr. Trumbull,” said Mrs. Waule, in the lowest of her woolly tones, while she turned her crape-shadowed bonnet towards Mr. Trumbull’s ear.

“My good lady, whatever was told me was told in confidence,” said the auctioneer, putting his hand up to screen that secret.

“Them who’ve made sure of their good-luck may be disappointed yet,” Mrs. Waule continued, finding some relief in this communication.

“Hopes are often delusive,” said Mr. Trumbull, still in confidence.

“Ah!” said Mrs. Waule, looking across at the Vincys, and then moving back to the side of her sister Martha.

“It’s wonderful how close poor Peter was,” she said, in the same undertones. “We none of us know what he might have had on his mind. I only hope and trust he wasn’t a worse liver than we think of, Martha.”

Poor Mrs. Cranch was bulky, and, breathing asthmatically, had the additional motive for making her remarks unexceptionable and giving them a general bearing, that even her whispers were loud and liable to sudden bursts like those of a deranged barrel-organ.

“I never *was* covetous, Jane,” she replied; “but I have six children and have buried three, and I didn’t marry into money. The eldest, that sits there, is but nineteen—so I leave you to guess. And stock always short, and land most awkward. But if ever I’ve begged and prayed; it’s been to God above; though where there’s one brother a bachelor and the other childless after twice marrying—anybody might think!”

Meanwhile, Mr. Vincy had glanced at the passive face of Mr. Rigg, and had taken out his snuff-box and tapped it, but had put it again unopened as an indulgence which, however clarifying to the judgment, was unsuited to the occasion. "I shouldn't wonder if Featherstone had better feelings than any of us gave him credit for," he observed, in the ear of his wife. "This funeral shows a thought about everybody: it looks well when a man wants to be followed by his friends, and if they are humble, not to be ashamed of them. I should be all the better pleased if he'd left lots of small legacies. They may be uncommonly useful to fellows in a small way."

"Everything is as handsome as could be, crape and silk and everything," said Mrs. Vincy, contentedly.

But I am sorry to say that Fred was under some difficulty in repressing a laugh, which would have been more unsuitable than his father's snuff-box. Fred had overheard Mr. Jonah suggesting something about a "love-child," and with this thought in his mind, the stranger's face, which happened to be opposite him, affected him too ludicrously. Mary Garth, discerning his distress in the twitchings of his mouth, and his recourse to a cough, came cleverly to his rescue by asking him to change seats with her, so that he got into a shadowy corner. Fred was feeling as good-naturedly as possible towards everybody, including Rigg; and having some relenting towards all these people who were less lucky than he was aware of being himself, he would not for the world have behaved amiss; still, it was particularly easy to laugh.

But the entrance of the lawyer and the two brothers drew every one's attention. The lawyer was Mr. Standish, and he had come to Stone Court this morning believing that he knew thoroughly well who would be pleased and who disappointed before the day was over. The will he expected to read was the last of three which he had drawn up for Mr. Featherstone. Mr. Standish was not a man who varied his manners: he behaved with the same deep-voiced, off-hand civility to everybody, as if he saw no difference in them, and talked chiefly of the hay-crop, which would be "very fine, by God!" of the last bulletins concerning the King, and of the Duke of Clarence, who was a sailor every inch of him, and just the man to rule over an island like Britain.

Old Featherstone had often reflected as he sat looking at the fire that Standish would be surprised some day: it is true that if he had done as he



liked at the last, and burnt the will drawn up by another lawyer, he would not have secured that minor end; still he had had his pleasure in ruminating on it. And certainly Mr. Standish was surprised, but not at all sorry; on the contrary, he rather enjoyed the zest of a little curiosity in his own mind, which the discovery of a second will added to the prospective amazement on the part of the Featherstone family.

As to the sentiments of Solomon and Jonah, they were held in utter suspense: it seemed to them that the old will would have a certain validity, and that there might be such an interlacement of poor Peter's former and latter intentions as to create endless "lawing" before anybody came by their own—an inconvenience which would have at least the advantage of going all round. Hence the brothers showed a thoroughly neutral gravity as they re-entered with Mr. Standish; but Solomon took out his white handkerchief again with a sense that in any case there would be affecting passages, and crying at funerals, however dry, was customarily served up in lawn.

Perhaps the person who felt the most throbbing excitement at this moment was Mary Garth, in the consciousness that it was she who had virtually determined the production of this second will, which might have momentous effects on the lot of some persons present. No soul except herself knew what had passed on that final night.

"The will I hold in my hand," said Mr. Standish, who, seated at the table in the middle of the room, took his time about everything, including the coughs with which he showed a disposition to clear his voice, "was drawn up by myself and executed by our deceased friend on the 9th of August, 1825. But I find that there is a subsequent instrument hitherto unknown to me, bearing date the 20th of July, 1826, hardly a year later than the previous one. And there is farther, I see"—Mr. Standish was cautiously travelling over the document with his spectacles—"a codicil to this latter will, bearing date March 1, 1828."

"Dear, dear!" said sister Martha, not meaning to be audible, but driven to some articulation under this pressure of dates.

"I shall begin by reading the earlier will," continued Mr. Standish, "since such, as appears by his not having destroyed the document, was the intention of deceased."

The preamble was felt to be rather long, and several besides Solomon shook their heads pathetically, looking on the ground: all eyes avoided meeting other eyes, and were chiefly fixed either on the spots in the tablecloth or on Mr. Standish's bald head; excepting Mary Garth's. When all the rest were trying to look nowhere in particular, it was safe for her to look at them. And at the sound of the first "give and bequeath" she could see all complexions changing subtly, as if some faint vibration were passing through them, save that of Mr. Rigg. He sat in unaltered calm, and, in fact, the company, preoccupied with more important problems, and with the complication of listening to bequests which might or might not be revoked, had ceased to think of him. Fred blushed, and Mr. Vincy found it impossible to do without his snuff-box in his hand, though he kept it closed.

The small bequests came first, and even the recollection that there was another will and that poor Peter might have thought better of it, could not quell the rising disgust and indignation. One likes to be done well by in every tense, past, present, and future. And here was Peter capable five years ago of leaving only two hundred apiece to his own brothers and sisters, and only a hundred apiece to his own nephews and nieces: the Garths were not mentioned, but Mrs. Vincy and Rosamond were each to have a hundred. Mr. Trumbull was to have the gold-headed cane and fifty pounds; the other second cousins and the cousins present were each to have the like handsome sum, which, as the saturnine cousin observed, was a sort of legacy that left a man nowhere; and there was much more of such offensive dribbling in favor of persons not present—problematical, and, it was to be feared, low connections. Altogether, reckoning hastily, here were about three thousand disposed of. Where then had Peter meant the rest of the money to go—and where the land? and what was revoked and what not revoked—and was the revocation for better or for worse? All emotion must be conditional, and might turn out to be the wrong thing. The men were strong enough to bear up and keep quiet under this confused suspense; some letting their lower lip fall, others pursing it up, according to the habit of their muscles. But Jane and Martha sank under the rush of questions, and began to cry; poor Mrs. Cranch being half moved with the consolation of getting any hundreds at all without working for them, and half aware that her share was scanty; whereas Mrs. Waule's mind was entirely flooded with the sense of being an own sister and getting little,

while somebody else was to have much. The general expectation now was that the “much” would fall to Fred Vincy, but the Vincys themselves were surprised when ten thousand pounds in specified investments were declared to be bequeathed to him:—was the land coming too? Fred bit his lips: it was difficult to help smiling, and Mrs. Vincy felt herself the happiest of women—possible revocation shrinking out of sight in this dazzling vision.

There was still a residue of personal property as well as the land, but the whole was left to one person, and that person was—O possibilities! O expectations founded on the favor of “close” old gentlemen! O endless vocatives that would still leave expression slipping helpless from the measurement of mortal folly!—that residuary legatee was Joshua Rigg, who was also sole executor, and who was to take thenceforth the name of Featherstone.

There was a rustling which seemed like a shudder running round the room. Every one stared afresh at Mr. Rigg, who apparently experienced no surprise.

“A most singular testamentary disposition!” exclaimed Mr. Trumbull, preferring for once that he should be considered ignorant in the past. “But there is a second will—there is a further document. We have not yet heard the final wishes of the deceased.”

Mary Garth was feeling that what they had yet to hear were not the final wishes. The second will revoked everything except the legacies to the low persons before mentioned (some alterations in these being the occasion of the codicil), and the bequest of all the land lying in Lowick parish with all the stock and household furniture, to Joshua Rigg. The residue of the property was to be devoted to the erection and endowment of almshouses for old men, to be called Featherstone’s Alms-Houses, and to be built on a piece of land near Middlemarch already bought for the purpose by the testator, he wishing—so the document declared—to please God Almighty. Nobody present had a farthing; but Mr. Trumbull had the gold-headed cane. It took some time for the company to recover the power of expression. Mary dared not look at Fred.

Mr. Vincy was the first to speak—after using his snuff-box energetically—and he spoke with loud indignation. “The most unaccountable will I ever heard! I should say he was not in his right mind when he made it. I

should say this last will was void,” added Mr. Vincy, feeling that this expression put the thing in the true light. “Eh Standish?”

“Our deceased friend always knew what he was about, I think,” said Mr. Standish. “Everything is quite regular. Here is a letter from Clemmens of Brassing tied with the will. He drew it up. A very respectable solicitor.”

“I never noticed any alienation of mind—any aberration of intellect in the late Mr. Featherstone,” said Borthrop Trumbull, “but I call this will eccentric. I was always willingly of service to the old soul; and he intimated pretty plainly a sense of obligation which would show itself in his will. The gold-headed cane is farcical considered as an acknowledgment to me; but happily I am above mercenary considerations.”

“There’s nothing very surprising in the matter that I can see,” said Caleb Garth. “Anybody might have had more reason for wondering if the will had been what you might expect from an open-minded straightforward man. For my part, I wish there was no such thing as a will.”

“That’s a strange sentiment to come from a Christian man, by God!” said the lawyer. “I should like to know how you will back that up, Garth!”

“Oh,” said Caleb, leaning forward, adjusting his finger-tips with nicety and looking meditatively on the ground. It always seemed to him that words were the hardest part of “business.”

But here Mr. Jonah Featherstone made himself heard. “Well, he always was a fine hypocrite, was my brother Peter. But this will cuts out everything. If I’d known, a wagon and six horses shouldn’t have drawn me from Brassing. I’ll put a white hat and drab coat on to-morrow.”

“Dear, dear,” wept Mrs. Cranch, “and we’ve been at the expense of travelling, and that poor lad sitting idle here so long! It’s the first time I ever heard my brother Peter was so wishful to please God Almighty; but if I was to be struck helpless I must say it’s hard—I can think no other.”

“It’ll do him no good where he’s gone, that’s my belief,” said Solomon, with a bitterness which was remarkably genuine, though his tone could not help being sly. “Peter was a bad liver, and almshouses won’t cover it, when he’s had the impudence to show it at the last.”

“And all the while had got his own lawful family—brothers and sisters and nephews and nieces—and has sat in church with ’em whenever he

thought well to come,” said Mrs. Waule. “And might have left his property so respectable, to them that’s never been used to extravagance or unsteadiness in no manner of way—and not so poor but what they could have saved every penny and made more of it. And me—the trouble I’ve been at, times and times, to come here and be sisterly—and him with things on his mind all the while that might make anybody’s flesh creep. But if the Almighty’s allowed it, he means to punish him for it. Brother Solomon, I shall be going, if you’ll drive me.”

“I’ve no desire to put my foot on the premises again,” said Solomon. “I’ve got land of my own and property of my own to will away.”

“It’s a poor tale how luck goes in the world,” said Jonah. “It never answers to have a bit of spirit in you. You’d better be a dog in the manger. But those above ground might learn a lesson. One fool’s will is enough in a family.”

“There’s more ways than one of being a fool,” said Solomon. “I shan’t leave my money to be poured down the sink, and I shan’t leave it to foundlings from Africay. I like Featherstones that were brewed such, and not turned Featherstones with sticking the name on ’em.”

Solomon addressed these remarks in a loud aside to Mrs. Waule as he rose to accompany her. Brother Jonah felt himself capable of much more stinging wit than this, but he reflected that there was no use in offending the new proprietor of Stone Court, until you were certain that he was quite without intentions of hospitality towards witty men whose name he was about to bear.

Mr. Joshua Rigg, in fact, appeared to trouble himself little about any innuendoes, but showed a notable change of manner, walking coolly up to Mr. Standish and putting business questions with much coolness. He had a high chirping voice and a vile accent. Fred, whom he no longer moved to laughter, thought him the lowest monster he had ever seen. But Fred was feeling rather sick. The Middlemarch mercer waited for an opportunity of engaging Mr. Rigg in conversation: there was no knowing how many pairs of legs the new proprietor might require hose for, and profits were more to be relied on than legacies. Also, the mercer, as a second cousin, was dispassionate enough to feel curiosity.

Mr. Vincy, after his one outburst, had remained proudly silent, though too much preoccupied with unpleasant feelings to think of moving, till he

observed that his wife had gone to Fred's side and was crying silently while she held her darling's hand. He rose immediately, and turning his back on the company while he said to her in an undertone,—“Don't give way, Lucy; don't make a fool of yourself, my dear, before these people,” he added in his usual loud voice—“Go and order the phaeton, Fred; I have no time to waste.”

Mary Garth had before this been getting ready to go home with her father. She met Fred in the hall, and now for the first time had the courage to look at him. He had that withered sort of paleness which will sometimes come on young faces, and his hand was very cold when she shook it. Mary too was agitated; she was conscious that fatally, without will of her own, she had perhaps made a great difference to Fred's lot.

“Good-by,” she said, with affectionate sadness. “Be brave, Fred. I do believe you are better without the money. What was the good of it to Mr. Featherstone?”

“That's all very fine,” said Fred, pettishly. “What is a fellow to do? I must go into the Church now.” (He knew that this would vex Mary: very well; then she must tell him what else he could do.) “And I thought I should be able to pay your father at once and make everything right. And you have not even a hundred pounds left you. What shall you do now, Mary?”

“Take another situation, of course, as soon as I can get one. My father has enough to do to keep the rest, without me. Good-by.”

In a very short time Stone Court was cleared of well-brewed Featherstones and other long-accustomed visitors. Another stranger had been brought to settle in the neighborhood of Middlemarch, but in the case of Mr. Rigg Featherstone there was more discontent with immediate visible consequences than speculation as to the effect which his presence might have in the future. No soul was prophetic enough to have any foreboding as to what might appear on the trial of Joshua Rigg.

And here I am naturally led to reflect on the means of elevating a low subject. Historical parallels are remarkably efficient in this way. The chief objection to them is, that the diligent narrator may lack space, or (what is often the same thing) may not be able to think of them with any degree of particularity, though he may have a philosophical confidence that if known they would be illustrative. It seems an easier and shorter way to dignity, to

observe that—since there never was a true story which could not be told in parables, where you might put a monkey for a margrave, and vice versa—whatever has been or is to be narrated by me about low people, may be ennobled by being considered a parable; so that if any bad habits and ugly consequences are brought into view, the reader may have the relief of regarding them as not more than figuratively ungentleel, and may feel himself virtually in company with persons of some style. Thus while I tell the truth about loobies, my reader's imagination need not be entirely excluded from an occupation with lords; and the petty sums which any bankrupt of high standing would be sorry to retire upon, may be lifted to the level of high commercial transactions by the inexpensive addition of proportional ciphers.

As to any provincial history in which the agents are all of high moral rank, that must be of a date long posterior to the first Reform Bill, and Peter Featherstone, you perceive, was dead and buried some months before Lord Grey came into office.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

'T is strange to see the humors of these men,  
These great aspiring spirits, that should be wise:

.....  
For being the nature of great spirits to love  
To be where they may be most eminent;  
They, rating of themselves so farre above  
Us in conceit, with whom they do frequent,  
Imagine how we wonder and esteeme  
All that they do or say; which makes them strive  
To make our admiration more extreme,  
Which they suppose they cannot, 'less they give  
Notice of their extreme and highest thoughts.

—DANIEL: *Tragedy of Philotas.*

Mr. Vincy went home from the reading of the will with his point of view considerably changed in relation to many subjects. He was an open-minded man, but given to indirect modes of expressing himself: when he was disappointed in a market for his silk braids, he swore at the groom; when his brother-in-law Bulstrode had vexed him, he made cutting remarks on Methodism; and it was now apparent that he regarded Fred's idleness with a sudden increase of severity, by his throwing an embroidered cap out of the smoking-room on to the hall-floor.

"Well, sir," he observed, when that young gentleman was moving off to bed, "I hope you've made up your mind now to go up next term and pass your examination. I've taken my resolution, so I advise you to lose no time in taking yours."

Fred made no answer: he was too utterly depressed. Twenty-four hours ago he had thought that instead of needing to know what he should do, he should by this time know that he needed to do nothing: that he should hunt in pink, have a first-rate hunter, ride to cover on a fine hack, and be generally respected for doing so; moreover, that he should be able at once to pay Mr. Garth, and that Mary could no longer have any reason for not marrying him. And all this was to have come without study or other inconvenience, purely by the favor of providence in the shape of an old



gentleman's caprice. But now, at the end of the twenty-four hours, all those firm expectations were upset. It was "rather hard lines" that while he was smarting under this disappointment he should be treated as if he could have helped it. But he went away silently and his mother pleaded for him.

"Don't be hard on the poor boy, Vincy. He'll turn out well yet, though that wicked man has deceived him. I feel as sure as I sit here, Fred will turn out well—else why was he brought back from the brink of the grave? And I call it a robbery: it was like giving him the land, to promise it; and what is promising, if making everybody believe is not promising? And you see he did leave him ten thousand pounds, and then took it away again."

"Took it away again!" said Mr. Vincy, pettishly. "I tell you the lad's an unlucky lad, Lucy. And you've always spoiled him."

"Well, Vincy, he was my first, and you made a fine fuss with him when he came. You were as proud as proud," said Mrs. Vincy, easily recovering her cheerful smile.

"Who knows what babies will turn to? I was fool enough, I dare say," said the husband—more mildly, however.

"But who has handsomer, better children than ours? Fred is far beyond other people's sons: you may hear it in his speech, that he has kept college company. And Rosamond—where is there a girl like her? She might stand beside any lady in the land, and only look the better for it. You see—Mr. Lydgate has kept the highest company and been everywhere, and he fell in love with her at once. Not but what I could have wished Rosamond had not engaged herself. She might have met somebody on a visit who would have been a far better match; I mean at her schoolfellow Miss Willoughby's. There are relations in that family quite as high as Mr. Lydgate's."

"Damn relations!" said Mr. Vincy; "I've had enough of them. I don't want a son-in-law who has got nothing but his relations to recommend him."

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Vincy, "you seemed as pleased as could be about it. It's true, I wasn't at home; but Rosamond told me you hadn't a word to say against the engagement. And she has begun to buy in the best linen and cambric for her underclothing."

"Not by my will," said Mr. Vincy. "I shall have enough to do this year, with an idle scamp of a son, without paying for wedding-clothes. The

times are as tight as can be; everybody is being ruined; and I don't believe Lydgate has got a farthing. I shan't give my consent to their marrying. Let 'em wait, as their elders have done before 'em."

"Rosamond will take it hard, Vincy, and you know you never could bear to cross her."

"Yes, I could. The sooner the engagement's off, the better. I don't believe he'll ever make an income, the way he goes on. He makes enemies; that's all I hear of his making."

"But he stands very high with Mr. Bulstrode, my dear. The marriage would please *him*, I should think."

"Please the deuce!" said Mr. Vincy. "Bulstrode won't pay for their keep. And if Lydgate thinks I'm going to give money for them to set up housekeeping, he's mistaken, that's all. I expect I shall have to put down my horses soon. You'd better tell Rosy what I say."

This was a not infrequent procedure with Mr. Vincy—to be rash in jovial assent, and on becoming subsequently conscious that he had been rash, to employ others in making the offensive retractation. However, Mrs. Vincy, who never willingly opposed her husband, lost no time the next morning in letting Rosamond know what he had said. Rosamond, examining some muslin-work, listened in silence, and at the end gave a certain turn of her graceful neck, of which only long experience could teach you that it meant perfect obstinacy.

"What do you say, my dear?" said her mother, with affectionate deference.

"Papa does not mean anything of the kind," said Rosamond, quite calmly. "He has always said that he wished me to marry the man I loved. And I shall marry Mr. Lydgate. It is seven weeks now since papa gave his consent. And I hope we shall have Mrs. Bretton's house."

"Well, my dear, I shall leave you to manage your papa. You always do manage everybody. But if we ever do go and get damask, Sadler's is the place—far better than Hopkins's. Mrs. Bretton's is very large, though: I should love you to have such a house; but it will take a great deal of furniture—carpeting and everything, besides plate and glass. And you hear, your papa says he will give no money. Do you think Mr. Lydgate expects it?"

“You cannot imagine that I should ask him, mamma. Of course he understands his own affairs.”

“But he may have been looking for money, my dear, and we all thought of your having a pretty legacy as well as Fred;—and now everything is so dreadful—there’s no pleasure in thinking of anything, with that poor boy disappointed as he is.”

“That has nothing to do with my marriage, mamma. Fred must leave off being idle. I am going up-stairs to take this work to Miss Morgan: she does the open hemming very well. Mary Garth might do some work for me now, I should think. Her sewing is exquisite; it is the nicest thing I know about Mary. I should so like to have all my cambric frilling double-hemmed. And it takes a long time.”

Mrs. Vincy’s belief that Rosamond could manage her papa was well founded. Apart from his dinners and his coursing, Mr. Vincy, blustering as he was, had as little of his own way as if he had been a prime minister: the force of circumstances was easily too much for him, as it is for most pleasure-loving florid men; and the circumstance called Rosamond was particularly forcible by means of that mild persistence which, as we know, enables a white soft living substance to make its way in spite of opposing rock. Papa was not a rock: he had no other fixity than that fixity of alternating impulses sometimes called habit, and this was altogether unfavorable to his taking the only decisive line of conduct in relation to his daughter’s engagement—namely, to inquire thoroughly into Lydgate’s circumstances, declare his own inability to furnish money, and forbid alike either a speedy marriage or an engagement which must be too lengthy. That seems very simple and easy in the statement; but a disagreeable resolve formed in the chill hours of the morning had as many conditions against it as the early frost, and rarely persisted under the warming influences of the day. The indirect though emphatic expression of opinion to which Mr. Vincy was prone suffered much restraint in this case: Lydgate was a proud man towards whom innuendoes were obviously unsafe, and throwing his hat on the floor was out of the question. Mr. Vincy was a little in awe of him, a little vain that he wanted to marry Rosamond, a little indisposed to raise a question of money in which his own position was not advantageous, a little afraid of being worsted in dialogue with a man better educated and more highly bred than himself, and a little afraid of doing

what his daughter would not like. The part Mr. Vincy preferred playing was that of the generous host whom nobody criticises. In the earlier half of the day there was business to hinder any formal communication of an adverse resolve; in the later there was dinner, wine, whist, and general satisfaction. And in the mean while the hours were each leaving their little deposit and gradually forming the final reason for inaction, namely, that action was too late. The accepted lover spent most of his evenings in Lowick Gate, and a love-making not at all dependent on money-advances from fathers-in-law, or prospective income from a profession, went on flourishingly under Mr. Vincy's own eyes. Young love-making—that gossamer web! Even the points it clings to—the things whence its subtle interlacings are swung—are scarcely perceptible: momentary touches of fingertips, meetings of rays from blue and dark orbs, unfinished phrases, lightest changes of cheek and lip, faintest tremors. The web itself is made of spontaneous beliefs and indefinable joys, yearnings of one life towards another, visions of completeness, indefinite trust. And Lydgate fell to spinning that web from his inward self with wonderful rapidity, in spite of experience supposed to be finished off with the drama of Laure—in spite too of medicine and biology; for the inspection of macerated muscle or of eyes presented in a dish (like Santa Lucia's), and other incidents of scientific inquiry, are observed to be less incompatible with poetic love than a native dulness or a lively addiction to the lowest prose. As for Rosamond, she was in the water-lily's expanding wonderment at its own fuller life, and she too was spinning industriously at the mutual web. All this went on in the corner of the drawing-room where the piano stood, and subtle as it was, the light made it a sort of rainbow visible to many observers besides Mr. Farebrother. The certainty that Miss Vincy and Mr. Lydgate were engaged became general in Middlemarch without the aid of formal announcement.

Aunt Bulstrode was again stirred to anxiety; but this time she addressed herself to her brother, going to the warehouse expressly to avoid Mrs. Vincy's volatility. His replies were not satisfactory.

“Walter, you never mean to tell me that you have allowed all this to go on without inquiry into Mr. Lydgate's prospects?” said Mrs. Bulstrode, opening her eyes with wider gravity at her brother, who was in his peevish warehouse humor. “Think of this girl brought up in luxury—in too worldly a way, I am sorry to say—what will she do on a small income?”

“Oh, confound it, Harriet! What can I do when men come into the town without any asking of mine? Did you shut your house up against Lydgate? Bulstrode has pushed him forward more than anybody. I never made any fuss about the young fellow. You should go and talk to your husband about it, not me.”

“Well, really, Walter, how can Mr. Bulstrode be to blame? I am sure he did not wish for the engagement.”

“Oh, if Bulstrode had not taken him by the hand, I should never have invited him.”

“But you called him in to attend on Fred, and I am sure that was a mercy,” said Mrs. Bulstrode, losing her clew in the intricacies of the subject.

“I don’t know about mercy,” said Mr. Vincy, testily. “I know I am worried more than I like with my family. I was a good brother to you, Harriet, before you married Bulstrode, and I must say he doesn’t always show that friendly spirit towards your family that might have been expected of him.” Mr. Vincy was very little like a Jesuit, but no accomplished Jesuit could have turned a question more adroitly. Harriet had to defend her husband instead of blaming her brother, and the conversation ended at a point as far from the beginning as some recent sparring between the brothers-in-law at a vestry meeting.

Mrs. Bulstrode did not repeat her brother’s complaints to her husband, but in the evening she spoke to him of Lydgate and Rosamond. He did not share her warm interest, however; and only spoke with resignation of the risks attendant on the beginning of medical practice and the desirability of prudence.

“I am sure we are bound to pray for that thoughtless girl—brought up as she has been,” said Mrs. Bulstrode, wishing to rouse her husband’s feelings.

“Truly, my dear,” said Mr. Bulstrode, assentingly. “Those who are not of this world can do little else to arrest the errors of the obstinately worldly. That is what we must accustom ourselves to recognize with regard to your brother’s family. I could have wished that Mr. Lydgate had not entered into such a union; but my relations with him are limited to that use of his gifts for God’s purposes which is taught us by the divine government under each dispensation.”

Mrs. Bulstrode said no more, attributing some dissatisfaction which she felt to her own want of spirituality. She believed that her husband was one of those men whose memoirs should be written when they died.

As to Lydgate himself, having been accepted, he was prepared to accept all the consequences which he believed himself to foresee with perfect clearness. Of course he must be married in a year—perhaps even in half a year. This was not what he had intended; but other schemes would not be hindered: they would simply adjust themselves anew. Marriage, of course, must be prepared for in the usual way. A house must be taken instead of the rooms he at present occupied; and Lydgate, having heard Rosamond speak with admiration of old Mrs. Bretton's house (situated in Lowick Gate), took notice when it fell vacant after the old lady's death, and immediately entered into treaty for it.

He did this in an episodic way, very much as he gave orders to his tailor for every requisite of perfect dress, without any notion of being extravagant. On the contrary, he would have despised any ostentation of expense; his profession had familiarized him with all grades of poverty, and he cared much for those who suffered hardships. He would have behaved perfectly at a table where the sauce was served in a jug with the handle off, and he would have remembered nothing about a grand dinner except that a man was there who talked well. But it had never occurred to him that he should live in any other than what he would have called an ordinary way, with green glasses for hock, and excellent waiting at table. In warming himself at French social theories he had brought away no smell of scorching. We may handle even extreme opinions with impunity while our furniture, our dinner-giving, and preference for armorial bearings in our own case, link us indissolubly with the established order. And Lydgate's tendency was not towards extreme opinions: he would have liked no barefooted doctrines, being particular about his boots: he was no radical in relation to anything but medical reform and the prosecution of discovery. In the rest of practical life he walked by hereditary habit; half from that personal pride and unreflecting egoism which I have already called commonness, and half from that naivete which belonged to preoccupation with favorite ideas.

Any inward debate Lydgate had as to the consequences of this engagement which had stolen upon him, turned on the paucity of time

rather than of money. Certainly, being in love and being expected continually by some one who always turned out to be prettier than memory could represent her to be, did interfere with the diligent use of spare hours which might serve some “plodding fellow of a German” to make the great, imminent discovery. This was really an argument for not deferring the marriage too long, as he implied to Mr. Farebrother, one day that the Vicar came to his room with some pond-products which he wanted to examine under a better microscope than his own, and, finding Lydgate’s tableful of apparatus and specimens in confusion, said sarcastically—

“Eros has degenerated; he began by introducing order and harmony, and now he brings back chaos.”

“Yes, at some stages,” said Lydgate, lifting his brows and smiling, while he began to arrange his microscope. “But a better order will begin after.”

“Soon?” said the Vicar.

“I hope so, really. This unsettled state of affairs uses up the time, and when one has notions in science, every moment is an opportunity. I feel sure that marriage must be the best thing for a man who wants to work steadily. He has everything at home then—no teasing with personal speculations—he can get calmness and freedom.”

“You are an enviable dog,” said the Vicar, “to have such a prospect—Rosamond, calmness and freedom, all to your share. Here am I with nothing but my pipe and pond-animalcules. Now, are you ready?”

Lydgate did not mention to the Vicar another reason he had for wishing to shorten the period of courtship. It was rather irritating to him, even with the wine of love in his veins, to be obliged to mingle so often with the family party at the Vincys’, and to enter so much into Middlemarch gossip, protracted good cheer, whist-playing, and general futility. He had to be deferential when Mr. Vincy decided questions with trenchant ignorance, especially as to those liquors which were the best inward pickle, preserving you from the effects of bad air. Mrs. Vincy’s openness and simplicity were quite unstreaked with suspicion as to the subtle offence she might give to the taste of her intended son-in-law; and altogether Lydgate had to confess to himself that he was descending a little in relation to Rosamond’s family. But that exquisite creature herself suffered in the same sort of way:—it was at least one delightful thought that in marrying her, he could give her a much-needed transplantation.

“Dear!” he said to her one evening, in his gentlest tone, as he sat down by her and looked closely at her face—

But I must first say that he had found her alone in the drawing-room, where the great old-fashioned window, almost as large as the side of the room, was opened to the summer scents of the garden at the back of the house. Her father and mother were gone to a party, and the rest were all out with the butterflies.

“Dear! your eyelids are red.”

“Are they?” said Rosamond. “I wonder why.” It was not in her nature to pour forth wishes or grievances. They only came forth gracefully on solicitation.

“As if you could hide it from me!” said Lydgate, laying his hand tenderly on both of hers. “Don’t I see a tiny drop on one of the lashes? Things trouble you, and you don’t tell me. That is unloving.”

“Why should I tell you what you cannot alter? They are every-day things:—perhaps they have been a little worse lately.”

“Family annoyances. Don’t fear speaking. I guess them.”

“Papa has been more irritable lately. Fred makes him angry, and this morning there was a fresh quarrel because Fred threatens to throw his whole education away, and do something quite beneath him. And besides —”

Rosamond hesitated, and her cheeks were gathering a slight flush. Lydgate had never seen her in trouble since the morning of their engagement, and he had never felt so passionately towards her as at this moment. He kissed the hesitating lips gently, as if to encourage them.

“I feel that papa is not quite pleased about our engagement,” Rosamond continued, almost in a whisper; “and he said last night that he should certainly speak to you and say it must be given up.”

“Will you give it up?” said Lydgate, with quick energy—almost angrily.

“I never give up anything that I choose to do,” said Rosamond, recovering her calmness at the touching of this chord.

“God bless you!” said Lydgate, kissing her again. This constancy of purpose in the right place was adorable. He went on:—



“It is too late now for your father to say that our engagement must be given up. You are of age, and I claim you as mine. If anything is done to make you unhappy,—that is a reason for hastening our marriage.”

An unmistakable delight shone forth from the blue eyes that met his, and the radiance seemed to light up all his future with mild sunshine. Ideal happiness (of the kind known in the Arabian Nights, in which you are invited to step from the labor and discord of the street into a paradise where everything is given to you and nothing claimed) seemed to be an affair of a few weeks’ waiting, more or less.

“Why should we defer it?” he said, with ardent insistence. “I have taken the house now: everything else can soon be got ready—can it not? You will not mind about new clothes. Those can be bought afterwards.”

“What original notions you clever men have!” said Rosamond, dimpling with more thorough laughter than usual at this humorous incongruity. “This is the first time I ever heard of wedding-clothes being bought after marriage.”

“But you don’t mean to say you would insist on my waiting months for the sake of clothes?” said Lydgate, half thinking that Rosamond was tormenting him prettily, and half fearing that she really shrank from speedy marriage. “Remember, we are looking forward to a better sort of happiness even than this—being continually together, independent of others, and ordering our lives as we will. Come, dear, tell me how soon you can be altogether mine.”

There was a serious pleading in Lydgate’s tone, as if he felt that she would be injuring him by any fantastic delays. Rosamond became serious too, and slightly meditative; in fact, she was going through many intricacies of lace-edging and hosiery and petticoat-tucking, in order to give an answer that would at least be approximative.

“Six weeks would be ample—say so, Rosamond,” insisted Lydgate, releasing her hands to put his arm gently round her.

One little hand immediately went to pat her hair, while she gave her neck a meditative turn, and then said seriously—

“There would be the house-linen and the furniture to be prepared. Still, mamma could see to those while we were away.”

“Yes, to be sure. We must be away a week or so.”

“Oh, more than that!” said Rosamond, earnestly. She was thinking of her evening dresses for the visit to Sir Godwin Lydgate’s, which she had long been secretly hoping for as a delightful employment of at least one quarter of the honeymoon, even if she deferred her introduction to the uncle who was a doctor of divinity (also a pleasing though sober kind of rank, when sustained by blood). She looked at her lover with some wondering remonstrance as she spoke, and he readily understood that she might wish to lengthen the sweet time of double solitude.

“Whatever you wish, my darling, when the day is fixed. But let us take a decided course, and put an end to any discomfort you may be suffering. Six weeks!—I am sure they would be ample.”

“I could certainly hasten the work,” said Rosamond. “Will you, then, mention it to papa?—I think it would be better to write to him.” She blushed and looked at him as the garden flowers look at us when we walk forth happily among them in the transcendent evening light: is there not a soul beyond utterance, half nymph, half child, in those delicate petals which glow and breathe about the centres of deep color?

He touched her ear and a little bit of neck under it with his lips, and they sat quite still for many minutes which flowed by them like a small gurgling brook with the kisses of the sun upon it. Rosamond thought that no one could be more in love than she was; and Lydgate thought that after all his wild mistakes and absurd credulity, he had found perfect womanhood—felt as if already breathed upon by exquisite wedded affection such as would be bestowed by an accomplished creature who venerated his high musings and momentous labors and would never interfere with them; who would create order in the home and accounts with still magic, yet keep her fingers ready to touch the lute and transform life into romance at any moment; who was instructed to the true womanly limit and not a hair’s-breadth beyond—docile, therefore, and ready to carry out behests which came from that limit. It was plainer now than ever that his notion of remaining much longer a bachelor had been a mistake: marriage would not be an obstruction but a furtherance. And happening the next day to accompany a patient to Brassing, he saw a dinner-service there which struck him as so exactly the right thing that he bought it at once. It saved time to do these things just when you thought of them, and Lydgate hated ugly crockery. The dinner-service in question was expensive, but

that might be in the nature of dinner-services. Furnishing was necessarily expensive; but then it had to be done only once.

“It must be lovely,” said Mrs. Vincy, when Lydgate mentioned his purchase with some descriptive touches. “Just what Rosy ought to have. I trust in heaven it won’t be broken!”

“One must hire servants who will not break things,” said Lydgate. (Certainly, this was reasoning with an imperfect vision of sequences. But at that period there was no sort of reasoning which was not more or less sanctioned by men of science.)

Of course it was unnecessary to defer the mention of anything to mamma, who did not readily take views that were not cheerful, and being a happy wife herself, had hardly any feeling but pride in her daughter’s marriage. But Rosamond had good reasons for suggesting to Lydgate that papa should be appealed to in writing. She prepared for the arrival of the letter by walking with her papa to the warehouse the next morning, and telling him on the way that Mr. Lydgate wished to be married soon.

“Nonsense, my dear!” said Mr. Vincy. “What has he got to marry on? You’d much better give up the engagement. I’ve told you so pretty plainly before this. What have you had such an education for, if you are to go and marry a poor man? It’s a cruel thing for a father to see.”

“Mr. Lydgate is not poor, papa. He bought Mr. Peacock’s practice, which, they say, is worth eight or nine hundred a-year.”

“Stuff and nonsense! What’s buying a practice? He might as well buy next year’s swallows. It’ll all slip through his fingers.”

“On the contrary, papa, he will increase the practice. See how he has been called in by the Chettams and Casaubons.”

“I hope he knows I shan’t give anything—with this disappointment about Fred, and Parliament going to be dissolved, and machine-breaking everywhere, and an election coming on—”

“Dear papa! what can that have to do with my marriage?”

“A pretty deal to do with it! We may all be ruined for what I know—the country’s in that state! Some say it’s the end of the world, and be hanged if I don’t think it looks like it! Anyhow, it’s not a time for me to be drawing money out of my business, and I should wish Lydgate to know that.”

“I am sure he expects nothing, papa. And he has such very high connections: he is sure to rise in one way or another. He is engaged in making scientific discoveries.”

Mr. Vincy was silent.

“I cannot give up my only prospect of happiness, papa. Mr. Lydgate is a gentleman. I could never love any one who was not a perfect gentleman. You would not like me to go into a consumption, as Arabella Hawley did. And you know that I never change my mind.”

Again papa was silent.

“Promise me, papa, that you will consent to what we wish. We shall never give each other up; and you know that you have always objected to long courtships and late marriages.”

There was a little more urgency of this kind, till Mr. Vincy said, “Well, well, child, he must write to me first before I can answer him,”—and Rosamond was certain that she had gained her point.

Mr. Vincy’s answer consisted chiefly in a demand that Lydgate should insure his life—a demand immediately conceded. This was a delightfully reassuring idea supposing that Lydgate died, but in the mean time not a self-supporting idea. However, it seemed to make everything comfortable about Rosamond’s marriage; and the necessary purchases went on with much spirit. Not without prudential considerations, however. A bride (who is going to visit at a baronet’s) must have a few first-rate pocket-handkerchiefs; but beyond the absolutely necessary half-dozen, Rosamond contented herself without the very highest style of embroidery and Valenciennes. Lydgate also, finding that his sum of eight hundred pounds had been considerably reduced since he had come to Middlemarch, restrained his inclination for some plate of an old pattern which was shown to him when he went into Kibble’s establishment at Brassing to buy forks and spoons. He was too proud to act as if he presupposed that Mr. Vincy would advance money to provide furniture; and though, since it would not be necessary to pay for everything at once, some bills would be left standing over, he did not waste time in conjecturing how much his father-in-law would give in the form of dowry, to make payment easy. He was not going to do anything extravagant, but the requisite things must be bought, and it would be bad economy to buy them of a poor quality. All these matters were by the bye. Lydgate foresaw that science and his

profession were the objects he should alone pursue enthusiastically; but he could not imagine himself pursuing them in such a home as Wrench had—the doors all open, the oil-cloth worn, the children in soiled pinafores, and lunch lingering in the form of bones, black-handled knives, and willow-pattern. But Wrench had a wretched lymphatic wife who made a mummy of herself indoors in a large shawl; and he must have altogether begun with an ill-chosen domestic apparatus.

Rosamond, however, was on her side much occupied with conjectures, though her quick imitative perception warned her against betraying them too crudely.

“I shall like so much to know your family,” she said one day, when the wedding journey was being discussed. “We might perhaps take a direction that would allow us to see them as we returned. Which of your uncles do you like best?”

“Oh,—my uncle Godwin, I think. He is a good-natured old fellow.”

“You were constantly at his house at Quallingham, when you were a boy, were you not? I should so like to see the old spot and everything you were used to. Does he know you are going to be married?”

“No,” said Lydgate, carelessly, turning in his chair and rubbing his hair up.

“Do send him word of it, you naughty undutiful nephew. He will perhaps ask you to take me to Quallingham; and then you could show me about the grounds, and I could imagine you there when you were a boy. Remember, you see me in my home, just as it has been since I was a child. It is not fair that I should be so ignorant of yours. But perhaps you would be a little ashamed of me. I forgot that.”

Lydgate smiled at her tenderly, and really accepted the suggestion that the proud pleasure of showing so charming a bride was worth some trouble. And now he came to think of it, he would like to see the old spots with Rosamond.

“I will write to him, then. But my cousins are bores.”

It seemed magnificent to Rosamond to be able to speak so slightly of a baronet’s family, and she felt much contentment in the prospect of being able to estimate them contemptuously on her own account.

But mamma was near spoiling all, a day or two later, by saying—

“I hope your uncle Sir Godwin will not look down on Rosy, Mr. Lydgate. I should think he would do something handsome. A thousand or two can be nothing to a baronet.”

“Mamma!” said Rosamond, blushing deeply; and Lydgate pitied her so much that he remained silent and went to the other end of the room to examine a print curiously, as if he had been absent-minded. Mamma had a little filial lecture afterwards, and was docile as usual. But Rosamond reflected that if any of those high-bred cousins who were bores, should be induced to visit Middlemarch, they would see many things in her own family which might shock them. Hence it seemed desirable that Lydgate should by-and-by get some first-rate position elsewhere than in Middlemarch; and this could hardly be difficult in the case of a man who had a titled uncle and could make discoveries. Lydgate, you perceive, had talked fervidly to Rosamond of his hopes as to the highest uses of his life, and had found it delightful to be listened to by a creature who would bring him the sweet furtherance of satisfying affection—beauty—repose—such help as our thoughts get from the summer sky and the flower-fringed meadows.

Lydgate relied much on the psychological difference between what for the sake of variety I will call goose and gander: especially on the innate submissiveness of the goose as beautifully corresponding to the strength of the gander.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

Thrice happy she that is so well assured  
Unto herself and settled so in heart  
That neither will for better be allured  
Ne fears to worse with any chance to start,  
But like a steady ship doth strongly part  
The raging waves and keeps her course aright;  
Ne aught for tempest doth from it depart,  
Ne aught for fairer weather's false delight.  
Such self-assurance need not fear the spight  
Of grudging foes; ne favour seek of friends;  
But in the stay of her own stedfast might  
Neither to one herself nor other bends.

Most happy she that most assured doth rest,  
But he most happy who such one loves best.  
—SPENSER.

The doubt hinted by Mr. Vincy whether it were only the general election or the end of the world that was coming on, now that George the Fourth was dead, Parliament dissolved, Wellington and Peel generally depreciated and the new King apologetic, was a feeble type of the uncertainties in provincial opinion at that time. With the glow-worm lights of country places, how could men see which were their own thoughts in the confusion of a Tory Ministry passing Liberal measures, of Tory nobles and electors being anxious to return Liberals rather than friends of the recreant Ministers, and of outcries for remedies which seemed to have a mysteriously remote bearing on private interest, and were made suspicious by the advocacy of disagreeable neighbors? Buyers of the *Middlemarch* newspapers found themselves in an anomalous position: during the agitation on the Catholic Question many had given up the "Pioneer"—which had a motto from Charles James Fox and was in the van of progress—because it had taken Peel's side about the Papists, and had thus blotted its Liberalism with a toleration of Jesuitry and Baal; but they were ill-satisfied with the "Trumpet," which—since its blasts against Rome, and in the general flaccidity of the public mind (nobody knowing who would support whom)—had become feeble in its blowing.

It was a time, according to a noticeable article in the "Pioneer," when the crying needs of the country might well counteract a reluctance to public action on the part of men whose minds had from long experience acquired breadth as well as concentration, decision of judgment as well as tolerance, dispassionateness as well as energy—in fact, all those qualities which in the melancholy experience of mankind have been the least disposed to share lodgings.

Mr. Hackbutt, whose fluent speech was at that time floating more widely than usual, and leaving much uncertainty as to its ultimate channel, was heard to say in Mr. Hawley's office that the article in question "emanated" from Brooke of Tipton, and that Brooke had secretly bought the "Pioneer" some months ago.

"That means mischief, eh?" said Mr. Hawley. "He's got the freak of being a popular man now, after dangling about like a stray tortoise. So much the worse for him. I've had my eye on him for some time. He shall be prettily pumped upon. He's a damned bad landlord. What business has an old county man to come currying favor with a low set of dark-blue freemen? As to his paper, I only hope he may do the writing himself. It would be worth our paying for."

"I understand he has got a very brilliant young fellow to edit it, who can write the highest style of leading article, quite equal to anything in the London papers. And he means to take very high ground on Reform."

"Let Brooke reform his rent-roll. He's a cursed old screw, and the buildings all over his estate are going to rack. I suppose this young fellow is some loose fish from London."

"His name is Ladislaw. He is said to be of foreign extraction."

"I know the sort," said Mr. Hawley; "some emissary. He'll begin with flourishing about the Rights of Man and end with murdering a wench. That's the style."

"You must concede that there are abuses, Hawley," said Mr. Hackbutt, foreseeing some political disagreement with his family lawyer. "I myself should never favor immoderate views—in fact I take my stand with Huskisson—but I cannot blind myself to the consideration that the non-representation of large towns—"



“Large towns be damned!” said Mr. Hawley, impatient of exposition. “I know a little too much about Middlemarch elections. Let ’em quash every pocket borough to-morrow, and bring in every mushroom town in the kingdom—they’ll only increase the expense of getting into Parliament. I go upon facts.”

Mr. Hawley’s disgust at the notion of the “Pioneer” being edited by an emissary, and of Brooke becoming actively political—as if a tortoise of desultory pursuits should protrude its small head ambitiously and become rampant—was hardly equal to the annoyance felt by some members of Mr. Brooke’s own family. The result had oozed forth gradually, like the discovery that your neighbor has set up an unpleasant kind of manufacture which will be permanently under your nostrils without legal remedy. The “Pioneer” had been secretly bought even before Will Ladislaw’s arrival, the expected opportunity having offered itself in the readiness of the proprietor to part with a valuable property which did not pay; and in the interval since Mr. Brooke had written his invitation, those germinal ideas of making his mind tell upon the world at large which had been present in him from his younger years, but had hitherto lain in some obstruction, had been sprouting under cover.

The development was much furthered by a delight in his guest which proved greater even than he had anticipated. For it seemed that Will was not only at home in all those artistic and literary subjects which Mr. Brooke had gone into at one time, but that he was strikingly ready at seizing the points of the political situation, and dealing with them in that large spirit which, aided by adequate memory, lends itself to quotation and general effectiveness of treatment.

“He seems to me a kind of Shelley, you know,” Mr. Brooke took an opportunity of saying, for the gratification of Mr. Casaubon. “I don’t mean as to anything objectionable—laxities or atheism, or anything of that kind, you know—Ladislaw’s sentiments in every way I am sure are good—indeed, we were talking a great deal together last night. But he has the same sort of enthusiasm for liberty, freedom, emancipation—a fine thing under guidance—under guidance, you know. I think I shall be able to put him on the right tack; and I am the more pleased because he is a relation of yours, Casaubon.”

If the right tack implied anything more precise than the rest of Mr. Brooke's speech, Mr. Casaubon silently hoped that it referred to some occupation at a great distance from Lowick. He had disliked Will while he helped him, but he had begun to dislike him still more now that Will had declined his help. That is the way with us when we have any uneasy jealousy in our disposition: if our talents are chiefly of the burrowing kind, our honey-sipping cousin (whom we have grave reasons for objecting to) is likely to have a secret contempt for us, and any one who admires him passes an oblique criticism on ourselves. Having the scruples of rectitude in our souls, we are above the meanness of injuring him—rather we meet all his claims on us by active benefits; and the drawing of cheques for him, being a superiority which he must recognize, gives our bitterness a milder infusion. Now Mr. Casaubon had been deprived of that superiority (as anything more than a remembrance) in a sudden, capricious manner. His antipathy to Will did not spring from the common jealousy of a winter-worn husband: it was something deeper, bred by his lifelong claims and discontents; but Dorothea, now that she was present—Dorothea, as a young wife who herself had shown an offensive capability of criticism, necessarily gave concentration to the uneasiness which had before been vague.

Will Ladislaw on his side felt that his dislike was flourishing at the expense of his gratitude, and spent much inward discourse in justifying the dislike. Casaubon hated him—he knew that very well; on his first entrance he could discern a bitterness in the mouth and a venom in the glance which would almost justify declaring war in spite of past benefits. He was much obliged to Casaubon in the past, but really the act of marrying this wife was a set-off against the obligation. It was a question whether gratitude which refers to what is done for one's self ought not to give way to indignation at what is done against another. And Casaubon had done a wrong to Dorothea in marrying her. A man was bound to know himself better than that, and if he chose to grow gray crunching bones in a cavern, he had no business to be luring a girl into his companionship. "It is the most horrible of virgin-sacrifices," said Will; and he painted to himself what were Dorothea's inward sorrows as if he had been writing a choric wail. But he would never lose sight of her: he would watch over her—if he gave up everything else in life he would watch over her, and she should know that she had one slave in the world. Will had—to use Sir Thomas

Browne's phrase—a "passionate prodigality" of statement both to himself and others. The simple truth was that nothing then invited him so strongly as the presence of Dorothea.

Invitations of the formal kind had been wanting, however, for Will had never been asked to go to Lowick. Mr. Brooke, indeed, confident of doing everything agreeable which Casaubon, poor fellow, was too much absorbed to think of, had arranged to bring Ladislaw to Lowick several times (not neglecting meanwhile to introduce him elsewhere on every opportunity as "a young relative of Casaubon's"). And though Will had not seen Dorothea alone, their interviews had been enough to restore her former sense of young companionship with one who was cleverer than herself, yet seemed ready to be swayed by her. Poor Dorothea before her marriage had never found much room in other minds for what she cared most to say; and she had not, as we know, enjoyed her husband's superior instruction so much as she had expected. If she spoke with any keenness of interest to Mr. Casaubon, he heard her with an air of patience as if she had given a quotation from the *Delectus* familiar to him from his tender years, and sometimes mentioned curtly what ancient sects or personages had held similar ideas, as if there were too much of that sort in stock already; at other times he would inform her that she was mistaken, and reassert what her remark had questioned.

But Will Ladislaw always seemed to see more in what she said than she herself saw. Dorothea had little vanity, but she had the ardent woman's need to rule beneficently by making the joy of another soul. Hence the mere chance of seeing Will occasionally was like a lunette opened in the wall of her prison, giving her a glimpse of the sunny air; and this pleasure began to nullify her original alarm at what her husband might think about the introduction of Will as her uncle's guest. On this subject Mr. Casaubon had remained dumb.

But Will wanted to talk with Dorothea alone, and was impatient of slow circumstance. However slight the terrestrial intercourse between Dante and Beatrice or Petrarch and Laura, time changes the proportion of things, and in later days it is preferable to have fewer sonnets and more conversation. Necessity excused stratagem, but stratagem was limited by the dread of offending Dorothea. He found out at last that he wanted to take a particular sketch at Lowick; and one morning when Mr. Brooke had

to drive along the Lowick road on his way to the county town, Will asked to be set down with his sketch-book and camp-stool at Lowick, and without announcing himself at the Manor settled himself to sketch in a position where he must see Dorothea if she came out to walk—and he knew that she usually walked an hour in the morning.

But the stratagem was defeated by the weather. Clouds gathered with treacherous quickness, the rain came down, and Will was obliged to take shelter in the house. He intended, on the strength of relationship, to go into the drawing-room and wait there without being announced; and seeing his old acquaintance the butler in the hall, he said, “Don’t mention that I am here, Pratt; I will wait till luncheon; I know Mr. Casaubon does not like to be disturbed when he is in the library.”

“Master is out, sir; there’s only Mrs. Casaubon in the library. I’d better tell her you’re here, sir,” said Pratt, a red-cheeked man given to lively converse with Tantripp, and often agreeing with her that it must be dull for Madam.

“Oh, very well; this confounded rain has hindered me from sketching,” said Will, feeling so happy that he affected indifference with delightful ease.

In another minute he was in the library, and Dorothea was meeting him with her sweet unconstrained smile.

“Mr. Casaubon has gone to the Archdeacon’s,” she said, at once. “I don’t know whether he will be at home again long before dinner. He was uncertain how long he should be. Did you want to say anything particular to him?”

“No; I came to sketch, but the rain drove me in. Else I would not have disturbed you yet. I supposed that Mr. Casaubon was here, and I know he dislikes interruption at this hour.”

“I am indebted to the rain, then. I am so glad to see you.” Dorothea uttered these common words with the simple sincerity of an unhappy child, visited at school.

“I really came for the chance of seeing you alone,” said Will, mysteriously forced to be just as simple as she was. He could not stay to ask himself, why not? “I wanted to talk about things, as we did in Rome. It always makes a difference when other people are present.”

“Yes,” said Dorothea, in her clear full tone of assent. “Sit down.” She seated herself on a dark ottoman with the brown books behind her, looking in her plain dress of some thin woollen-white material, without a single ornament on her besides her wedding-ring, as if she were under a vow to be different from all other women; and Will sat down opposite her at two yards’ distance, the light falling on his bright curls and delicate but rather petulant profile, with its defiant curves of lip and chin. Each looked at the other as if they had been two flowers which had opened then and there. Dorothea for the moment forgot her husband’s mysterious irritation against Will: it seemed fresh water at her thirsty lips to speak without fear to the one person whom she had found receptive; for in looking backward through sadness she exaggerated a past solace.

“I have often thought that I should like to talk to you again,” she said, immediately. “It seems strange to me how many things I said to you.”

“I remember them all,” said Will, with the unspeakable content in his soul of feeling that he was in the presence of a creature worthy to be perfectly loved. I think his own feelings at that moment were perfect, for we mortals have our divine moments, when love is satisfied in the completeness of the beloved object.

“I have tried to learn a great deal since we were in Rome,” said Dorothea. “I can read Latin a little, and I am beginning to understand just a little Greek. I can help Mr. Casaubon better now. I can find out references for him and save his eyes in many ways. But it is very difficult to be learned; it seems as if people were worn out on the way to great thoughts, and can never enjoy them because they are too tired.”

“If a man has a capacity for great thoughts, he is likely to overtake them before he is decrepit,” said Will, with irrepressible quickness. But through certain sensibilities Dorothea was as quick as he, and seeing her face change, he added, immediately, “But it is quite true that the best minds have been sometimes overstrained in working out their ideas.”

“You correct me,” said Dorothea. “I expressed myself ill. I should have said that those who have great thoughts get too much worn in working them out. I used to feel about that, even when I was a little girl; and it always seemed to me that the use I should like to make of my life would be to help some one who did great works, so that his burthen might be lighter.”

Dorothea was led on to this bit of autobiography without any sense of making a revelation. But she had never before said anything to Will which threw so strong a light on her marriage. He did not shrug his shoulders; and for want of that muscular outlet he thought the more irritably of beautiful lips kissing holy skulls and other emptinesses ecclesiastically enshrined. Also he had to take care that his speech should not betray that thought.

“But you may easily carry the help too far,” he said, “and get overwrought yourself. Are you not too much shut up? You already look paler. It would be better for Mr. Casaubon to have a secretary; he could easily get a man who would do half his work for him. It would save him more effectually, and you need only help him in lighter ways.”

“How can you think of that?” said Dorothea, in a tone of earnest remonstrance. “I should have no happiness if I did not help him in his work. What could I do? There is no good to be done in Lowick. The only thing I desire is to help him more. And he objects to a secretary: please not to mention that again.”

“Certainly not, now I know your feeling. But I have heard both Mr. Brooke and Sir James Chettam express the same wish.”

“Yes,” said Dorothea, “but they don’t understand—they want me to be a great deal on horseback, and have the garden altered and new conservatories, to fill up my days. I thought you could understand that one’s mind has other wants,” she added, rather impatiently—“besides, Mr. Casaubon cannot bear to hear of a secretary.”

“My mistake is excusable,” said Will. “In old days I used to hear Mr. Casaubon speak as if he looked forward to having a secretary. Indeed he held out the prospect of that office to me. But I turned out to be—not good enough for it.”

Dorothea was trying to extract out of this an excuse for her husband’s evident repulsion, as she said, with a playful smile, “You were not a steady worker enough.”

“No,” said Will, shaking his head backward somewhat after the manner of a spirited horse. And then, the old irritable demon prompting him to give another good pinch at the moth-wings of poor Mr. Casaubon’s glory, he went on, “And I have seen since that Mr. Casaubon does not like any one to overlook his work and know thoroughly what he is doing. He is too

doubtful—too uncertain of himself. I may not be good for much, but he dislikes me because I disagree with him.”

Will was not without his intentions to be always generous, but our tongues are little triggers which have usually been pulled before general intentions can be brought to bear. And it was too intolerable that Casaubon’s dislike of him should not be fairly accounted for to Dorothea. Yet when he had spoken he was rather uneasy as to the effect on her.

But Dorothea was strangely quiet—not immediately indignant, as she had been on a like occasion in Rome. And the cause lay deep. She was no longer struggling against the perception of facts, but adjusting herself to their clearest perception; and now when she looked steadily at her husband’s failure, still more at his possible consciousness of failure, she seemed to be looking along the one track where duty became tenderness. Will’s want of reticence might have been met with more severity, if he had not already been recommended to her mercy by her husband’s dislike, which must seem hard to her till she saw better reason for it.

She did not answer at once, but after looking down ruminatingly she said, with some earnestness, “Mr. Casaubon must have overcome his dislike of you so far as his actions were concerned: and that is admirable.”

“Yes; he has shown a sense of justice in family matters. It was an abominable thing that my grandmother should have been disinherited because she made what they called a *mesalliance*, though there was nothing to be said against her husband except that he was a Polish refugee who gave lessons for his bread.”

“I wish I knew all about her!” said Dorothea. “I wonder how she bore the change from wealth to poverty: I wonder whether she was happy with her husband! Do you know much about them?”

“No; only that my grandfather was a patriot—a bright fellow—could speak many languages—musical—got his bread by teaching all sorts of things. They both died rather early. And I never knew much of my father, beyond what my mother told me; but he inherited the musical talents. I remember his slow walk and his long thin hands; and one day remains with me when he was lying ill, and I was very hungry, and had only a little bit of bread.”

“Ah, what a different life from mine!” said Dorothea, with keen interest, clasping her hands on her lap. “I have always had too much of everything.

But tell me how it was—Mr. Casaubon could not have known about you then.”

“No; but my father had made himself known to Mr. Casaubon, and that was my last hungry day. My father died soon after, and my mother and I were well taken care of. Mr. Casaubon always expressly recognized it as his duty to take care of us because of the harsh injustice which had been shown to his mother’s sister. But now I am telling you what is not new to you.”

In his inmost soul Will was conscious of wishing to tell Dorothea what was rather new even in his own construction of things—namely, that Mr. Casaubon had never done more than pay a debt towards him. Will was much too good a fellow to be easy under the sense of being ungrateful. And when gratitude has become a matter of reasoning there are many ways of escaping from its bonds.

“No,” answered Dorothea; “Mr. Casaubon has always avoided dwelling on his own honorable actions.” She did not feel that her husband’s conduct was depreciated; but this notion of what justice had required in his relations with Will Ladislaw took strong hold on her mind. After a moment’s pause, she added, “He had never told me that he supported your mother. Is she still living?”

“No; she died by an accident—a fall—four years ago. It is curious that my mother, too, ran away from her family, but not for the sake of her husband. She never would tell me anything about her family, except that she forsook them to get her own living—went on the stage, in fact. She was a dark-eyed creature, with crisp ringlets, and never seemed to be getting old. You see I come of rebellious blood on both sides,” Will ended, smiling brightly at Dorothea, while she was still looking with serious intentness before her, like a child seeing a drama for the first time.

But her face, too, broke into a smile as she said, “That is your apology, I suppose, for having yourself been rather rebellious; I mean, to Mr. Casaubon’s wishes. You must remember that you have not done what he thought best for you. And if he dislikes you—you were speaking of dislike a little while ago—but I should rather say, if he has shown any painful feelings towards you, you must consider how sensitive he has become from the wearing effect of study. Perhaps,” she continued, getting into a pleading tone, “my uncle has not told you how serious Mr. Casaubon’s



illness was. It would be very petty of us who are well and can bear things, to think much of small offences from those who carry a weight of trial.”

“You teach me better,” said Will. “I will never grumble on that subject again.” There was a gentleness in his tone which came from the unutterable contentment of perceiving—what Dorothea was hardly conscious of—that she was travelling into the remoteness of pure pity and loyalty towards her husband. Will was ready to adore her pity and loyalty, if she would associate himself with her in manifesting them. “I have really sometimes been a perverse fellow,” he went on, “but I will never again, if I can help it, do or say what you would disapprove.”

“That is very good of you,” said Dorothea, with another open smile. “I shall have a little kingdom then, where I shall give laws. But you will soon go away, out of my rule, I imagine. You will soon be tired of staying at the Grange.”

“That is a point I wanted to mention to you—one of the reasons why I wished to speak to you alone. Mr. Brooke proposes that I should stay in this neighborhood. He has bought one of the Middlemarch newspapers, and he wishes me to conduct that, and also to help him in other ways.”

“Would not that be a sacrifice of higher prospects for you?” said Dorothea.

“Perhaps; but I have always been blamed for thinking of prospects, and not settling to anything. And here is something offered to me. If you would not like me to accept it, I will give it up. Otherwise I would rather stay in this part of the country than go away. I belong to nobody anywhere else.”

“I should like you to stay very much,” said Dorothea, at once, as simply and readily as she had spoken at Rome. There was not the shadow of a reason in her mind at the moment why she should not say so.

“Then I *will* stay,” said Ladislav, shaking his head backward, rising and going towards the window, as if to see whether the rain had ceased.

But the next moment, Dorothea, according to a habit which was getting continually stronger, began to reflect that her husband felt differently from herself, and she colored deeply under the double embarrassment of having expressed what might be in opposition to her husband’s feeling, and of

having to suggest this opposition to Will. His face was not turned towards her, and this made it easier to say—

“But my opinion is of little consequence on such a subject. I think you should be guided by Mr. Casaubon. I spoke without thinking of anything else than my own feeling, which has nothing to do with the real question. But it now occurs to me—perhaps Mr. Casaubon might see that the proposal was not wise. Can you not wait now and mention it to him?”

“I can’t wait to-day,” said Will, inwardly seared by the possibility that Mr. Casaubon would enter. “The rain is quite over now. I told Mr. Brooke not to call for me: I would rather walk the five miles. I shall strike across Halsell Common, and see the gleams on the wet grass. I like that.”

He approached her to shake hands quite hurriedly, longing but not daring to say, “Don’t mention the subject to Mr. Casaubon.” No, he dared not, could not say it. To ask her to be less simple and direct would be like breathing on the crystal that you want to see the light through. And there was always the other great dread—of himself becoming dimmed and forever ray-shorn in her eyes.

“I wish you could have stayed,” said Dorothea, with a touch of mournfulness, as she rose and put out her hand. She also had her thought which she did not like to express:—Will certainly ought to lose no time in consulting Mr. Casaubon’s wishes, but for her to urge this might seem an undue dictation.

So they only said “Good-by,” and Will quitted the house, striking across the fields so as not to run any risk of encountering Mr. Casaubon’s carriage, which, however, did not appear at the gate until four o’clock. That was an unpropitious hour for coming home: it was too early to gain the moral support under ennui of dressing his person for dinner, and too late to undress his mind of the day’s frivolous ceremony and affairs, so as to be prepared for a good plunge into the serious business of study. On such occasions he usually threw into an easy-chair in the library, and allowed Dorothea to read the London papers to him, closing his eyes the while. To-day, however, he declined that relief, observing that he had already had too many public details urged upon him; but he spoke more cheerfully than usual, when Dorothea asked about his fatigue, and added with that air of formal effort which never forsook him even when he spoke without his waistcoat and cravat—

“I have had the gratification of meeting my former acquaintance, Dr. Spanning, to-day, and of being praised by one who is himself a worthy recipient of praise. He spoke very handsomely of my late tractate on the Egyptian Mysteries,—using, in fact, terms which it would not become me to repeat.” In uttering the last clause, Mr. Casaubon leaned over the elbow of his chair, and swayed his head up and down, apparently as a muscular outlet instead of that recapitulation which would not have been becoming.

“I am very glad you have had that pleasure,” said Dorothea, delighted to see her husband less weary than usual at this hour. “Before you came I had been regretting that you happened to be out to-day.”

“Why so, my dear?” said Mr. Casaubon, throwing himself backward again.

“Because Mr. Ladislaw has been here; and he has mentioned a proposal of my uncle’s which I should like to know your opinion of.” Her husband she felt was really concerned in this question. Even with her ignorance of the world she had a vague impression that the position offered to Will was out of keeping with his family connections, and certainly Mr. Casaubon had a claim to be consulted. He did not speak, but merely bowed.

“Dear uncle, you know, has many projects. It appears that he has bought one of the Middlemarch newspapers, and he has asked Mr. Ladislaw to stay in this neighborhood and conduct the paper for him, besides helping him in other ways.”

Dorothea looked at her husband while she spoke, but he had at first blinked and finally closed his eyes, as if to save them; while his lips became more tense. “What is your opinion?” she added, rather timidly, after a slight pause.

“Did Mr. Ladislaw come on purpose to ask my opinion?” said Mr. Casaubon, opening his eyes narrowly with a knife-edged look at Dorothea. She was really uncomfortable on the point he inquired about, but she only became a little more serious, and her eyes did not swerve.

“No,” she answered immediately, “he did not say that he came to ask your opinion. But when he mentioned the proposal, he of course expected me to tell you of it.”

Mr. Casaubon was silent.

“I feared that you might feel some objection. But certainly a young man with so much talent might be very useful to my uncle—might help him to do good in a better way. And Mr. Ladislaw wishes to have some fixed occupation. He has been blamed, he says, for not seeking something of that kind, and he would like to stay in this neighborhood because no one cares for him elsewhere.”

Dorothea felt that this was a consideration to soften her husband. However, he did not speak, and she presently recurred to Dr. Spanning and the Archdeacon’s breakfast. But there was no longer sunshine on these subjects.

The next morning, without Dorothea’s knowledge, Mr. Casaubon despatched the following letter, beginning “Dear Mr. Ladislaw” (he had always before addressed him as “Will”):—

“Mrs. Casaubon informs me that a proposal has been made to you, and (according to an inference by no means stretched) has on your part been in some degree entertained, which involves your residence in this neighborhood in a capacity which I am justified in saying touches my own position in such a way as renders it not only natural and warrantable in me when that effect is viewed under the influence of legitimate feeling, but incumbent on me when the same effect is considered in the light of my responsibilities, to state at once that your acceptance of the proposal above indicated would be highly offensive to me. That I have some claim to the exercise of a veto here, would not, I believe, be denied by any reasonable person cognizant of the relations between us: relations which, though thrown into the past by your recent procedure, are not thereby annulled in their character of determining antecedents. I will not here make reflections on any person’s judgment. It is enough for me to point out to yourself that there are certain social fitnesses and proprieties which should hinder a somewhat near relative of mine from becoming any wise conspicuous in this vicinity in a status not only much beneath my own, but associated at best with the sciolism of literary or political adventurers.

At any rate, the contrary issue must exclude you from further reception at my house.

Yours faithfully,  
“EDWARD CASAUBON.”

Meanwhile Dorothea’s mind was innocently at work towards the further embitterment of her husband; dwelling, with a sympathy that grew to agitation, on what Will had told her about his parents and grandparents. Any private hours in her day were usually spent in her blue-green boudoir, and she had come to be very fond of its pallid quaintness. Nothing had been outwardly altered there; but while the summer had gradually advanced over the western fields beyond the avenue of elms, the bare room had gathered within it those memories of an inward life which fill the air as with a cloud of good or bad angels, the invisible yet active forms of our spiritual triumphs or our spiritual falls. She had been so used to struggle for and to find resolve in looking along the avenue towards the arch of western light that the vision itself had gained a communicating power. Even the pale stag seemed to have reminding glances and to mean mutely, “Yes, we know.” And the group of delicately touched miniatures had made an audience as of beings no longer disturbed about their own earthly lot, but still humanly interested. Especially the mysterious “Aunt Julia” about whom Dorothea had never found it easy to question her husband.

And now, since her conversation with Will, many fresh images had gathered round that Aunt Julia who was Will’s grandmother; the presence of that delicate miniature, so like a living face that she knew, helping to concentrate her feelings. What a wrong, to cut off the girl from the family protection and inheritance only because she had chosen a man who was poor! Dorothea, early troubling her elders with questions about the facts around her, had wrought herself into some independent clearness as to the historical, political reasons why eldest sons had superior rights, and why land should be entailed: those reasons, impressing her with a certain awe, might be weightier than she knew, but here was a question of ties which left them unfringed. Here was a daughter whose child—even according to the ordinary aping of aristocratic institutions by people who are no more aristocratic than retired grocers, and who have no more land to “keep

together” than a lawn and a paddock—would have a prior claim. Was inheritance a question of liking or of responsibility? All the energy of Dorothea’s nature went on the side of responsibility—the fulfilment of claims founded on our own deeds, such as marriage and parentage.

It was true, she said to herself, that Mr. Casaubon had a debt to the Ladislaws—that he had to pay back what the Ladislaws had been wronged of. And now she began to think of her husband’s will, which had been made at the time of their marriage, leaving the bulk of his property to her, with proviso in case of her having children. That ought to be altered; and no time ought to be lost. This very question which had just arisen about Will Ladislaw’s occupation, was the occasion for placing things on a new, right footing. Her husband, she felt sure, according to all his previous conduct, would be ready to take the just view, if she proposed it—she, in whose interest an unfair concentration of the property had been urged. His sense of right had surmounted and would continue to surmount anything that might be called antipathy. She suspected that her uncle’s scheme was disapproved by Mr. Casaubon, and this made it seem all the more opportune that a fresh understanding should be begun, so that instead of Will’s starting penniless and accepting the first function that offered itself, he should find himself in possession of a rightful income which should be paid by her husband during his life, and, by an immediate alteration of the will, should be secured at his death. The vision of all this as what ought to be done seemed to Dorothea like a sudden letting in of daylight, waking her from her previous stupidity and incurious self-absorbed ignorance about her husband’s relation to others. Will Ladislaw had refused Mr. Casaubon’s future aid on a ground that no longer appeared right to her; and Mr. Casaubon had never himself seen fully what was the claim upon him. “But he will!” said Dorothea. “The great strength of his character lies here. And what are we doing with our money? We make no use of half of our income. My own money buys me nothing but an uneasy conscience.”

There was a peculiar fascination for Dorothea in this division of property intended for herself, and always regarded by her as excessive. She was blind, you see, to many things obvious to others—likely to tread in the wrong places, as Celia had warned her; yet her blindness to whatever did not lie in her own pure purpose carried her safely by the side of precipices where vision would have been perilous with fear.

The thoughts which had gathered vividness in the solitude of her boudoir occupied her incessantly through the day on which Mr. Casaubon had sent his letter to Will. Everything seemed hindrance to her till she could find an opportunity of opening her heart to her husband. To his preoccupied mind all subjects were to be approached gently, and she had never since his illness lost from her consciousness the dread of agitating him. But when young ardor is set brooding over the conception of a prompt deed, the deed itself seems to start forth with independent life, mastering ideal obstacles. The day passed in a sombre fashion, not unusual, though Mr. Casaubon was perhaps unusually silent; but there were hours of the night which might be counted on as opportunities of conversation; for Dorothea, when aware of her husband's sleeplessness, had established a habit of rising, lighting a candle, and reading him to sleep again. And this night she was from the beginning sleepless, excited by resolves. He slept as usual for a few hours, but she had risen softly and had sat in the darkness for nearly an hour before he said—

“Dorothea, since you are up, will you light a candle?”

“Do you feel ill, dear?” was her first question, as she obeyed him.

“No, not at all; but I shall be obliged, since you are up, if you will read me a few pages of Lowth.”

“May I talk to you a little instead?” said Dorothea.

“Certainly.”

“I have been thinking about money all day—that I have always had too much, and especially the prospect of too much.”

“These, my dear Dorothea, are providential arrangements.”

“But if one has too much in consequence of others being wronged, it seems to me that the divine voice which tells us to set that wrong right must be obeyed.”

“What, my love, is the bearing of your remark?”

“That you have been too liberal in arrangements for me—I mean, with regard to property; and that makes me unhappy.”

“How so? I have none but comparatively distant connections.”

“I have been led to think about your aunt Julia, and how she was left in poverty only because she married a poor man, an act which was not

disgraceful, since he was not unworthy. It was on that ground, I know, that you educated Mr. Ladislav and provided for his mother.”

Dorothea waited a few moments for some answer that would help her onward. None came, and her next words seemed the more forcible to her, falling clear upon the dark silence.

“But surely we should regard his claim as a much greater one, even to the half of that property which I know that you have destined for me. And I think he ought at once to be provided for on that understanding. It is not right that he should be in the dependence of poverty while we are rich. And if there is any objection to the proposal he mentioned, the giving him his true place and his true share would set aside any motive for his accepting it.”

“Mr. Ladislav has probably been speaking to you on this subject?” said Mr. Casaubon, with a certain biting quickness not habitual to him.

“Indeed, no!” said Dorothea, earnestly. “How can you imagine it, since he has so lately declined everything from you? I fear you think too hardly of him, dear. He only told me a little about his parents and grandparents, and almost all in answer to my questions. You are so good, so just—you have done everything you thought to be right. But it seems to me clear that more than that is right; and I must speak about it, since I am the person who would get what is called benefit by that ‘more’ not being done.”

There was a perceptible pause before Mr. Casaubon replied, not quickly as before, but with a still more biting emphasis.

“Dorothea, my love, this is not the first occasion, but it were well that it should be the last, on which you have assumed a judgment on subjects beyond your scope. Into the question how far conduct, especially in the matter of alliances, constitutes a forfeiture of family claims, I do not now enter. Suffice it, that you are not here qualified to discriminate. What I now wish you to understand is, that I accept no revision, still less dictation within that range of affairs which I have deliberated upon as distinctly and properly mine. It is not for you to interfere between me and Mr. Ladislav, and still less to encourage communications from him to you which constitute a criticism on my procedure.”

Poor Dorothea, shrouded in the darkness, was in a tumult of conflicting emotions. Alarm at the possible effect on himself of her husband’s strongly manifested anger, would have checked any expression of her own



resentment, even if she had been quite free from doubt and compunction under the consciousness that there might be some justice in his last insinuation. Hearing him breathe quickly after he had spoken, she sat listening, frightened, wretched—with a dumb inward cry for help to bear this nightmare of a life in which every energy was arrested by dread. But nothing else happened, except that they both remained a long while sleepless, without speaking again.

The next day, Mr. Casaubon received the following answer from Will Ladislaw:—

“DEAR MR. CASAUBON,—I have given all due consideration to your letter of yesterday, but I am unable to take precisely your view of our mutual position. With the fullest acknowledgment of your generous conduct to me in the past, I must still maintain that an obligation of this kind cannot fairly fetter me as you appear to expect that it should. Granted that a benefactor’s wishes may constitute a claim; there must always be a reservation as to the quality of those wishes. They may possibly clash with more imperative considerations. Or a benefactor’s veto might impose such a negation on a man’s life that the consequent blank might be more cruel than the benefaction was generous. I am merely using strong illustrations. In the present case I am unable to take your view of the bearing which my acceptance of occupation—not enriching certainly, but not dishonorable—will have on your own position which seems to me too substantial to be affected in that shadowy manner. And though I do not believe that any change in our relations will occur (certainly none has yet occurred) which can nullify the obligations imposed on me by the past, pardon me for not seeing that those obligations should restrain me from using the ordinary freedom of living where I choose, and maintaining myself by any lawful occupation I may choose. Regretting that there exists this difference between us as to a relation in which the conferring of benefits has been entirely on your side—

I remain, yours with persistent obligation,  
WILL LADISLAW.”

Poor Mr. Casaubon felt (and must not we, being impartial, feel with him a little?) that no man had juster cause for disgust and suspicion than he. Young Ladislaw, he was sure, meant to defy and annoy him, meant to win Dorothea's confidence and sow her mind with disrespect, and perhaps aversion, towards her husband. Some motive beneath the surface had been needed to account for Will's sudden change of course in rejecting Mr. Casaubon's aid and quitting his travels; and this defiant determination to fix himself in the neighborhood by taking up something so much at variance with his former choice as Mr. Brooke's Middlemarch projects, revealed clearly enough that the undeclared motive had relation to Dorothea. Not for one moment did Mr. Casaubon suspect Dorothea of any doubleness: he had no suspicions of her, but he had (what was little less uncomfortable) the positive knowledge that her tendency to form opinions about her husband's conduct was accompanied with a disposition to regard Will Ladislaw favorably and be influenced by what he said. His own proud reticence had prevented him from ever being undeceived in the supposition that Dorothea had originally asked her uncle to invite Will to his house.

And now, on receiving Will's letter, Mr. Casaubon had to consider his duty. He would never have been easy to call his action anything else than duty; but in this case, contending motives thrust him back into negations.

Should he apply directly to Mr. Brooke, and demand of that troublesome gentleman to revoke his proposal? Or should he consult Sir James Chettam, and get him to concur in remonstrance against a step which touched the whole family? In either case Mr. Casaubon was aware that failure was just as probable as success. It was impossible for him to mention Dorothea's name in the matter, and without some alarming urgency Mr. Brooke was as likely as not, after meeting all representations with apparent assent, to wind up by saying, "Never fear, Casaubon! Depend upon it, young Ladislaw will do you credit. Depend upon it, I have put my finger on the right thing." And Mr. Casaubon shrank nervously from communicating on the subject with Sir James Chettam, between whom and himself there had never been any cordiality, and who would immediately think of Dorothea without any mention of her.

Poor Mr. Casaubon was distrustful of everybody's feeling towards him, especially as a husband. To let any one suppose that he was jealous would be to admit their (suspected) view of his disadvantages: to let them know that he did not find marriage particularly blissful would imply his conversion to their (probably) earlier disapproval. It would be as bad as letting Carp, and Brasenose generally, know how backward he was in organizing the matter for his "Key to all Mythologies." All through his life Mr. Casaubon had been trying not to admit even to himself the inward sores of self-doubt and jealousy. And on the most delicate of all personal subjects, the habit of proud suspicious reticence told doubly.

Thus Mr. Casaubon remained proudly, bitterly silent. But he had forbidden Will to come to Lowick Manor, and he was mentally preparing other measures of frustration.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“C’est beaucoup que le jugement des hommes sur les actions humaines; tôt ou tard il devient efficace.”—GUIZOT.

Sir James Chettam could not look with any satisfaction on Mr. Brooke’s new courses; but it was easier to object than to hinder. Sir James accounted for his having come in alone one day to lunch with the Cadwalladers by saying—

“I can’t talk to you as I want, before Celia: it might hurt her. Indeed, it would not be right.”

“I know what you mean—the ‘Pioneer’ at the Grange!” darted in Mrs. Cadwallader, almost before the last word was off her friend’s tongue. “It is frightful—this taking to buying whistles and blowing them in everybody’s hearing. Lying in bed all day and playing at dominoes, like poor Lord Plessy, would be more private and bearable.”

“I see they are beginning to attack our friend Brooke in the ‘Trumpet,’” said the Rector, lounging back and smiling easily, as he would have done if he had been attacked himself. “There are tremendous sarcasms against a landlord not a hundred miles from Middlemarch, who receives his own rents, and makes no returns.”

“I do wish Brooke would leave that off,” said Sir James, with his little frown of annoyance.

“Is he really going to be put in nomination, though?” said Mr. Cadwallader. “I saw Farebrother yesterday—he’s Whiggish himself, hoists Brougham and Useful Knowledge; that’s the worst I know of him;—and he says that Brooke is getting up a pretty strong party. Bulstrode, the banker, is his foremost man. But he thinks Brooke would come off badly at a nomination.”

“Exactly,” said Sir James, with earnestness. “I have been inquiring into the thing, for I’ve never known anything about Middlemarch politics before—the county being my business. What Brooke trusts to, is that they

are going to turn out Oliver because he is a Peelite. But Hawley tells me that if they send up a Whig at all it is sure to be Bagster, one of those candidates who come from heaven knows where, but dead against Ministers, and an experienced Parliamentary man. Hawley's rather rough: he forgot that he was speaking to me. He said if Brooke wanted a pelting, he could get it cheaper than by going to the hustings."

"I warned you all of it," said Mrs. Cadwallader, waving her hands outward. "I said to Humphrey long ago, Mr. Brooke is going to make a splash in the mud. And now he has done it."

"Well, he might have taken it into his head to marry," said the Rector. "That would have been a graver mess than a little flirtation with politics."

"He may do that afterwards," said Mrs. Cadwallader—"when he has come out on the other side of the mud with an ague."

"What I care for most is his own dignity," said Sir James. "Of course I care the more because of the family. But he's getting on in life now, and I don't like to think of his exposing himself. They will be raking up everything against him."

"I suppose it's no use trying any persuasion," said the Rector. "There's such an odd mixture of obstinacy and changeableness in Brooke. Have you tried him on the subject?"

"Well, no," said Sir James; "I feel a delicacy in appearing to dictate. But I have been talking to this young Ladislav that Brooke is making a factotum of. Ladislav seems clever enough for anything. I thought it as well to hear what he had to say; and he is against Brooke's standing this time. I think he'll turn him round: I think the nomination may be staved off."

"I know," said Mrs. Cadwallader, nodding. "The independent member hasn't got his speeches well enough by heart."

"But this Ladislav—there again is a vexatious business," said Sir James. "We have had him two or three times to dine at the Hall (you have met him, by the bye) as Brooke's guest and a relation of Casaubon's, thinking he was only on a flying visit. And now I find he's in everybody's mouth in Middlemarch as the editor of the 'Pioneer.' There are stories going about him as a quill-driving alien, a foreign emissary, and what not."

"Casaubon won't like that," said the Rector.

“There *is* some foreign blood in Ladislaw,” returned Sir James. “I hope he won’t go into extreme opinions and carry Brooke on.”

“Oh, he’s a dangerous young sprig, that Mr. Ladislaw,” said Mrs. Cadwallader, “with his opera songs and his ready tongue. A sort of Byronic hero—an amorous conspirator, it strikes me. And Thomas Aquinas is not fond of him. I could see that, the day the picture was brought.”

“I don’t like to begin on the subject with Casaubon,” said Sir James. “He has more right to interfere than I. But it’s a disagreeable affair all round. What a character for anybody with decent connections to show himself in!—one of those newspaper fellows! You have only to look at Keck, who manages the ‘Trumpet.’ I saw him the other day with Hawley. His writing is sound enough, I believe, but he’s such a low fellow, that I wished he had been on the wrong side.”

“What can you expect with these peddling Middlemarch papers?” said the Rector. “I don’t suppose you could get a high style of man anywhere to be writing up interests he doesn’t really care about, and for pay that hardly keeps him in at elbows.”

“Exactly: that makes it so annoying that Brooke should have put a man who has a sort of connection with the family in a position of that kind. For my part, I think Ladislaw is rather a fool for accepting.”

“It is Aquinas’s fault,” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “Why didn’t he use his interest to get Ladislaw made an *attache* or sent to India? That is how families get rid of troublesome sprigs.”

“There is no knowing to what lengths the mischief may go,” said Sir James, anxiously. “But if Casaubon says nothing, what can I do?”

“Oh my dear Sir James,” said the Rector, “don’t let us make too much of all this. It is likely enough to end in mere smoke. After a month or two Brooke and this Master Ladislaw will get tired of each other; Ladislaw will take wing; Brooke will sell the ‘Pioneer,’ and everything will settle down again as usual.”

“There is one good chance—that he will not like to feel his money oozing away,” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “If I knew the items of election expenses I could scare him. It’s no use plying him with wide words like Expenditure: I wouldn’t talk of phlebotomy, I would empty a pot of

leeches upon him. What we good stingy people don't like, is having our sixpences sucked away from us."

"And he will not like having things raked up against him," said Sir James. "There is the management of his estate. They have begun upon that already. And it really is painful for me to see. It is a nuisance under one's very nose. I do think one is bound to do the best for one's land and tenants, especially in these hard times."

"Perhaps the 'Trumpet' may rouse him to make a change, and some good may come of it all," said the Rector. "I know I should be glad. I should hear less grumbling when my tithe is paid. I don't know what I should do if there were not a modus in Tipton."

"I want him to have a proper man to look after things—I want him to take on Garth again," said Sir James. "He got rid of Garth twelve years ago, and everything has been going wrong since. I think of getting Garth to manage for me—he has made such a capital plan for my buildings; and Lovegood is hardly up to the mark. But Garth would not undertake the Tipton estate again unless Brooke left it entirely to him."

"In the right of it too," said the Rector. "Garth is an independent fellow: an original, simple-minded fellow. One day, when he was doing some valuation for me, he told me point-blank that clergymen seldom understood anything about business, and did mischief when they meddled; but he said it as quietly and respectfully as if he had been talking to me about sailors. He would make a different parish of Tipton, if Brooke would let him manage. I wish, by the help of the 'Trumpet,' you could bring that round."

"If Dorothea had kept near her uncle, there would have been some chance," said Sir James. "She might have got some power over him in time, and she was always uneasy about the estate. She had wonderfully good notions about such things. But now Casaubon takes her up entirely. Celia complains a good deal. We can hardly get her to dine with us, since he had that fit." Sir James ended with a look of pitying disgust, and Mrs. Cadwallader shrugged her shoulders as much as to say that *she* was not likely to see anything new in that direction.

"Poor Casaubon!" the Rector said. "That was a nasty attack. I thought he looked shattered the other day at the Archdeacon's."

“In point of fact,” resumed Sir James, not choosing to dwell on “fits,” “Brooke doesn’t mean badly by his tenants or any one else, but he has got that way of paring and clipping at expenses.”

“Come, that’s a blessing,” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “That helps him to find himself in a morning. He may not know his own opinions, but he does know his own pocket.”

“I don’t believe a man is in pocket by stinginess on his land,” said Sir James.

“Oh, stinginess may be abused like other virtues: it will not do to keep one’s own pigs lean,” said Mrs. Cadwallader, who had risen to look out of the window. “But talk of an independent politician and he will appear.”

“What! Brooke?” said her husband.

“Yes. Now, you ply him with the ‘Trumpet,’ Humphrey; and I will put the leeches on him. What will you do, Sir James?”

“The fact is, I don’t like to begin about it with Brooke, in our mutual position; the whole thing is so unpleasant. I do wish people would behave like gentlemen,” said the good baronet, feeling that this was a simple and comprehensive programme for social well-being.

“Here you all are, eh?” said Mr. Brooke, shuffling round and shaking hands. “I was going up to the Hall by-and-by, Chettam. But it’s pleasant to find everybody, you know. Well, what do you think of things?—going on a little fast! It was true enough, what Lafitte said—‘Since yesterday, a century has passed away:’—they’re in the next century, you know, on the other side of the water. Going on faster than we are.”

“Why, yes,” said the Rector, taking up the newspaper. “Here is the ‘Trumpet’ accusing you of lagging behind—did you see?”

“Eh? no,” said Mr. Brooke, dropping his gloves into his hat and hastily adjusting his eye-glass. But Mr. Cadwallader kept the paper in his hand, saying, with a smile in his eyes—

“Look here! all this is about a landlord not a hundred miles from Middlemarch, who receives his own rents. They say he is the most retrogressive man in the county. I think you must have taught them that word in the ‘Pioneer.’”

“Oh, that is Keck—an illiterate fellow, you know. Retrogressive, now! Come, that’s capital. He thinks it means destructive: they want to make me



out a destructive, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, with that cheerfulness which is usually sustained by an adversary’s ignorance.

“I think he knows the meaning of the word. Here is a sharp stroke or two. *If we had to describe a man who is retrogressive in the most evil sense of the word—we should say, he is one who would dub himself a reformer of our constitution, while every interest for which he is immediately responsible is going to decay: a philanthropist who cannot bear one rogue to be hanged, but does not mind five honest tenants being half-starved: a man who shrieks at corruption, and keeps his farms at rack-rent: who roars himself red at rotten boroughs, and does not mind if every field on his farms has a rotten gate: a man very open-hearted to Leeds and Manchester, no doubt; he would give any number of representatives who will pay for their seats out of their own pockets: what he objects to giving, is a little return on rent-days to help a tenant to buy stock, or an outlay on repairs to keep the weather out at a tenant’s barn-door or make his house look a little less like an Irish cottier’s. But we all know the wag’s definition of a philanthropist: a man whose charity increases directly as the square of the distance. And so on. All the rest is to show what sort of legislator a philanthropist is likely to make,*” ended the Rector, throwing down the paper, and clasping his hands at the back of his head, while he looked at Mr. Brooke with an air of amused neutrality.

“Come, that’s rather good, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, taking up the paper and trying to bear the attack as easily as his neighbor did, but coloring and smiling rather nervously; “that about roaring himself red at rotten boroughs—I never made a speech about rotten boroughs in my life. And as to roaring myself red and that kind of thing—these men never understand what is good satire. Satire, you know, should be true up to a certain point. I recollect they said that in ‘The Edinburgh’ somewhere—it must be true up to a certain point.”

“Well, that is really a hit about the gates,” said Sir James, anxious to tread carefully. “Dagley complained to me the other day that he hadn’t got a decent gate on his farm. Garth has invented a new pattern of gate—I wish you would try it. One ought to use some of one’s timber in that way.”

“You go in for fancy farming, you know, Chettam,” said Mr. Brooke, appearing to glance over the columns of the “Trumpet.” “That’s your hobby, and you don’t mind the expense.”

“I thought the most expensive hobby in the world was standing for Parliament,” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “They said the last unsuccessful candidate at Middlemarch—Giles, wasn’t his name?—spent ten thousand pounds and failed because he did not bribe enough. What a bitter reflection for a man!”

“Somebody was saying,” said the Rector, laughingly, “that East Retford was nothing to Middlemarch, for bribery.”

“Nothing of the kind,” said Mr. Brooke. “The Tories bribe, you know: Hawley and his set bribe with treating, hot codlings, and that sort of thing; and they bring the voters drunk to the poll. But they are not going to have it their own way in future—not in future, you know. Middlemarch is a little backward, I admit—the freemen are a little backward. But we shall educate them—we shall bring them on, you know. The best people there are on our side.”

“Hawley says you have men on your side who will do you harm,” remarked Sir James. “He says Bulstrode the banker will do you harm.”

“And that if you got pelted,” interposed Mrs. Cadwallader, “half the rotten eggs would mean hatred of your committee-man. Good heavens! Think what it must be to be pelted for wrong opinions. And I seem to remember a story of a man they pretended to chair and let him fall into a dust-heap on purpose!”

“Pelting is nothing to their finding holes in one’s coat,” said the Rector. “I confess that’s what I should be afraid of, if we parsons had to stand at the hustings for preferment. I should be afraid of their reckoning up all my fishing days. Upon my word, I think the truth is the hardest missile one can be pelted with.”

“The fact is,” said Sir James, “if a man goes into public life he must be prepared for the consequences. He must make himself proof against calumny.”

“My dear Chettam, that is all very fine, you know,” said Mr. Brooke. “But how will you make yourself proof against calumny? You should read history—look at ostracism, persecution, martyrdom, and that kind of thing. They always happen to the best men, you know. But what is that in Horace?—*fiat justitia, ruat* ... something or other.”

“Exactly,” said Sir James, with a little more heat than usual. “What I mean by being proof against calumny is being able to point to the fact as a contradiction.”

“And it is not martyrdom to pay bills that one has run into one’s self,” said Mrs. Cadwallader.

But it was Sir James’s evident annoyance that most stirred Mr. Brooke. “Well, you know, Chettam,” he said, rising, taking up his hat and leaning on his stick, “you and I have a different system. You are all for outlay with your farms. I don’t want to make out that my system is good under all circumstances—under all circumstances, you know.”

“There ought to be a new valuation made from time to time,” said Sir James. “Returns are very well occasionally, but I like a fair valuation. What do you say, Cadwallader?”

“I agree with you. If I were Brooke, I would choke the ‘Trumpet’ at once by getting Garth to make a new valuation of the farms, and giving him *carte blanche* about gates and repairs: that’s my view of the political situation,” said the Rector, broadening himself by sticking his thumbs in his armholes, and laughing towards Mr. Brooke.

“That’s a showy sort of thing to do, you know,” said Mr. Brooke. “But I should like you to tell me of another landlord who has distressed his tenants for arrears as little as I have. I let the old tenants stay on. I’m uncommonly easy, let me tell you, uncommonly easy. I have my own ideas, and I take my stand on them, you know. A man who does that is always charged with eccentricity, inconsistency, and that kind of thing. When I change my line of action, I shall follow my own ideas.”

After that, Mr. Brooke remembered that there was a packet which he had omitted to send off from the Grange, and he bade everybody hurriedly good-by.

“I didn’t want to take a liberty with Brooke,” said Sir James; “I see he is nettled. But as to what he says about old tenants, in point of fact no new tenant would take the farms on the present terms.”

“I have a notion that he will be brought round in time,” said the Rector. “But you were pulling one way, Elinor, and we were pulling another. You wanted to frighten him away from expense, and we want to frighten him into it. Better let him try to be popular and see that his character as a

landlord stands in his way. I don't think it signifies two straws about the 'Pioneer,' or Ladislaw, or Brooke's speechifying to the Middlemarchers. But it does signify about the parishioners in Tipton being comfortable."

"Excuse me, it is you two who are on the wrong tack," said Mrs. Cadwallader. "You should have proved to him that he loses money by bad management, and then we should all have pulled together. If you put him a-horseback on politics, I warn you of the consequences. It was all very well to ride on sticks at home and call them ideas."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

“If, as I have, you also doe,  
Vertue attired in woman see,  
And dare love that, and say so too,  
And forget the He and She;

And if this love, though placed so,  
From prophane men you hide,  
Which will no faith on this bestow,  
Or, if they doe, deride:

Then you have done a braver thing  
Than all the Worthies did,  
And a braver thence will spring,  
Which is, to keep that hid.”  
—DR. DONNE.

Sir James Chettam’s mind was not fruitful in devices, but his growing anxiety to “act on Brooke,” once brought close to his constant belief in Dorothea’s capacity for influence, became formative, and issued in a little plan; namely, to plead Celia’s indisposition as a reason for fetching Dorothea by herself to the Hall, and to leave her at the Grange with the carriage on the way, after making her fully aware of the situation concerning the management of the estate.

In this way it happened that one day near four o’clock, when Mr. Brooke and Ladislaw were seated in the library, the door opened and Mrs. Casaubon was announced.

Will, the moment before, had been low in the depths of boredom, and, obliged to help Mr. Brooke in arranging “documents” about hanging sheep-stealers, was exemplifying the power our minds have of riding several horses at once by inwardly arranging measures towards getting a lodging for himself in Middlemarch and cutting short his constant residence at the Grange; while there flitted through all these steadier images a tickling vision of a sheep-stealing epic written with Homeric particularity. When Mrs. Casaubon was announced he started up as from

an electric shock, and felt a tingling at his finger-ends. Any one observing him would have seen a change in his complexion, in the adjustment of his facial muscles, in the vividness of his glance, which might have made them imagine that every molecule in his body had passed the message of a magic touch. And so it had. For effective magic is transcendent nature; and who shall measure the subtlety of those touches which convey the quality of soul as well as body, and make a man's passion for one woman differ from his passion for another as joy in the morning light over valley and river and white mountain-top differs from joy among Chinese lanterns and glass panels? Will, too, was made of very impressible stuff. The bow of a violin drawn near him cleverly, would at one stroke change the aspect of the world for him, and his point of view shifted as easily as his mood. Dorothea's entrance was the freshness of morning.

"Well, my dear, this is pleasant, now," said Mr. Brooke, meeting and kissing her. "You have left Casaubon with his books, I suppose. That's right. We must not have you getting too learned for a woman, you know."

"There is no fear of that, uncle," said Dorothea, turning to Will and shaking hands with open cheerfulness, while she made no other form of greeting, but went on answering her uncle. "I am very slow. When I want to be busy with books, I am often playing truant among my thoughts. I find it is not so easy to be learned as to plan cottages."

She seated herself beside her uncle opposite to Will, and was evidently preoccupied with something that made her almost unmindful of him. He was ridiculously disappointed, as if he had imagined that her coming had anything to do with him.

"Why, yes, my dear, it was quite your hobby to draw plans. But it was good to break that off a little. Hobbies are apt to run away with us, you know; it doesn't do to be run away with. We must keep the reins. I have never let myself be run away with; I always pulled up. That is what I tell Ladislaw. He and I are alike, you know: he likes to go into everything. We are working at capital punishment. We shall do a great deal together, Ladislaw and I."

"Yes," said Dorothea, with characteristic directness, "Sir James has been telling me that he is in hope of seeing a great change made soon in your management of the estate—that you are thinking of having the farms valued, and repairs made, and the cottages improved, so that Tipton may

look quite another place. Oh, how happy!”—she went on, clasping her hands, with a return to that more childlike impetuous manner, which had been subdued since her marriage. “If I were at home still, I should take to riding again, that I might go about with you and see all that! And you are going to engage Mr. Garth, who praised my cottages, Sir James says.”

“Chettam is a little hasty, my dear,” said Mr. Brooke, coloring slightly; “a little hasty, you know. I never said I should do anything of the kind. I never said I should *not* do it, you know.”

“He only feels confident that you will do it,” said Dorothea, in a voice as clear and unhesitating as that of a young chorister chanting a credo, “because you mean to enter Parliament as a member who cares for the improvement of the people, and one of the first things to be made better is the state of the land and the laborers. Think of Kit Downes, uncle, who lives with his wife and seven children in a house with one sitting room and one bedroom hardly larger than this table!—and those poor Dagleys, in their tumble-down farmhouse, where they live in the back kitchen and leave the other rooms to the rats! That is one reason why I did not like the pictures here, dear uncle—which you think me stupid about. I used to come from the village with all that dirt and coarse ugliness like a pain within me, and the simpering pictures in the drawing-room seemed to me like a wicked attempt to find delight in what is false, while we don’t mind how hard the truth is for the neighbors outside our walls. I think we have no right to come forward and urge wider changes for good, until we have tried to alter the evils which lie under our own hands.”

Dorothea had gathered emotion as she went on, and had forgotten everything except the relief of pouring forth her feelings, unchecked: an experience once habitual with her, but hardly ever present since her marriage, which had been a perpetual struggle of energy with fear. For the moment, Will’s admiration was accompanied with a chilling sense of remoteness. A man is seldom ashamed of feeling that he cannot love a woman so well when he sees a certain greatness in her: nature having intended greatness for men. But nature has sometimes made sad oversights in carrying out her intention; as in the case of good Mr. Brooke, whose masculine consciousness was at this moment in rather a stammering condition under the eloquence of his niece. He could not immediately find

any other mode of expressing himself than that of rising, fixing his eye-glass, and fingering the papers before him. At last he said—

“There is something in what you say, my dear, something in what you say—but not everything—eh, Ladislaw? You and I don’t like our pictures and statues being found fault with. Young ladies are a little ardent, you know—a little one-sided, my dear. Fine art, poetry, that kind of thing, elevates a nation—*emollit mores*—you understand a little Latin now. But—eh? what?”

These interrogatives were addressed to the footman who had come in to say that the keeper had found one of Dagley’s boys with a leveret in his hand just killed.

“I’ll come, I’ll come. I shall let him off easily, you know,” said Mr. Brooke aside to Dorothea, shuffling away very cheerfully.

“I hope you feel how right this change is that I—that Sir James wishes for,” said Dorothea to Will, as soon as her uncle was gone.

“I do, now I have heard you speak about it. I shall not forget what you have said. But can you think of something else at this moment? I may not have another opportunity of speaking to you about what has occurred,” said Will, rising with a movement of impatience, and holding the back of his chair with both hands.

“Pray tell me what it is,” said Dorothea, anxiously, also rising and going to the open window, where Monk was looking in, panting and wagging his tail. She leaned her back against the window-frame, and laid her hand on the dog’s head; for though, as we know, she was not fond of pets that must be held in the hands or trodden on, she was always attentive to the feelings of dogs, and very polite if she had to decline their advances.

Will followed her only with his eyes and said, “I presume you know that Mr. Casaubon has forbidden me to go to his house.”

“No, I did not,” said Dorothea, after a moment’s pause. She was evidently much moved. “I am very, very sorry,” she added, mournfully. She was thinking of what Will had no knowledge of—the conversation between her and her husband in the darkness; and she was anew smitten with hopelessness that she could influence Mr. Casaubon’s action. But the marked expression of her sorrow convinced Will that it was not all given to him personally, and that Dorothea had not been visited by the idea that



Mr. Casaubon's dislike and jealousy of him turned upon herself. He felt an odd mixture of delight and vexation: of delight that he could dwell and be cherished in her thought as in a pure home, without suspicion and without stint—of vexation because he was of too little account with her, was not formidable enough, was treated with an unhesitating benevolence which did not flatter him. But his dread of any change in Dorothea was stronger than his discontent, and he began to speak again in a tone of mere explanation.

“Mr. Casaubon's reason is, his displeasure at my taking a position here which he considers unsuited to my rank as his cousin. I have told him that I cannot give way on this point. It is a little too hard on me to expect that my course in life is to be hampered by prejudices which I think ridiculous. Obligation may be stretched till it is no better than a brand of slavery stamped on us when we were too young to know its meaning. I would not have accepted the position if I had not meant to make it useful and honorable. I am not bound to regard family dignity in any other light.”

Dorothea felt wretched. She thought her husband altogether in the wrong, on more grounds than Will had mentioned.

“It is better for us not to speak on the subject,” she said, with a tremulousness not common in her voice, “since you and Mr. Casaubon disagree. You intend to remain?” She was looking out on the lawn, with melancholy meditation.

“Yes; but I shall hardly ever see you now,” said Will, in a tone of almost boyish complaint.

“No,” said Dorothea, turning her eyes full upon him, “hardly ever. But I shall hear of you. I shall know what you are doing for my uncle.”

“I shall know hardly anything about you,” said Will. “No one will tell me anything.”

“Oh, my life is very simple,” said Dorothea, her lips curling with an exquisite smile, which irradiated her melancholy. “I am always at Lowick.”

“That is a dreadful imprisonment,” said Will, impetuously.

“No, don't think that,” said Dorothea. “I have no longings.”

He did not speak, but she replied to some change in his expression. “I mean, for myself. Except that I should like not to have so much more than

my share without doing anything for others. But I have a belief of my own, and it comforts me.”

“What is that?” said Will, rather jealous of the belief.

“That by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don’t quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil—widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower.”

“That is a beautiful mysticism—it is a—”

“Please not to call it by any name,” said Dorothea, putting out her hands entreatingly. “You will say it is Persian, or something else geographical. It is my life. I have found it out, and cannot part with it. I have always been finding out my religion since I was a little girl. I used to pray so much—now I hardly ever pray. I try not to have desires merely for myself, because they may not be good for others, and I have too much already. I only told you, that you might know quite well how my days go at Lowick.”

“God bless you for telling me!” said Will, ardently, and rather wondering at himself. They were looking at each other like two fond children who were talking confidentially of birds.

“What is *your* religion?” said Dorothea. “I mean—not what you know about religion, but the belief that helps you most?”

“To love what is good and beautiful when I see it,” said Will. “But I am a rebel: I don’t feel bound, as you do, to submit to what I don’t like.”

“But if you like what is good, that comes to the same thing,” said Dorothea, smiling.

“Now you are subtle,” said Will.

“Yes; Mr. Casaubon often says I am too subtle. I don’t feel as if I were subtle,” said Dorothea, playfully. “But how long my uncle is! I must go and look for him. I must really go on to the Hall. Celia is expecting me.”

Will offered to tell Mr. Brooke, who presently came and said that he would step into the carriage and go with Dorothea as far as Dagley’s, to speak about the small delinquent who had been caught with the leveret. Dorothea renewed the subject of the estate as they drove along, but Mr. Brooke, not being taken unawares, got the talk under his own control.

“Chettam, now,” he replied; “he finds fault with me, my dear; but I should not preserve my game if it were not for Chettam, and he can’t say that that expense is for the sake of the tenants, you know. It’s a little against my feeling:—poaching, now, if you come to look into it—I have often thought of getting up the subject. Not long ago, Flavell, the Methodist preacher, was brought up for knocking down a hare that came across his path when he and his wife were walking out together. He was pretty quick, and knocked it on the neck.”

“That was very brutal, I think,” said Dorothea.

“Well, now, it seemed rather black to me, I confess, in a Methodist preacher, you know. And Johnson said, ‘You may judge what a hypocrite he is.’ And upon my word, I thought Flavell looked very little like ‘the highest style of man’—as somebody calls the Christian—Young, the poet Young, I think—you know Young? Well, now, Flavell in his shabby black gaiters, pleading that he thought the Lord had sent him and his wife a good dinner, and he had a right to knock it down, though not a mighty hunter before the Lord, as Nimrod was—I assure you it was rather comic: Fielding would have made something of it—or Scott, now—Scott might have worked it up. But really, when I came to think of it, I couldn’t help liking that the fellow should have a bit of hare to say grace over. It’s all a matter of prejudice—prejudice with the law on its side, you know—about the stick and the gaiters, and so on. However, it doesn’t do to reason about things; and law is law. But I got Johnson to be quiet, and I hushed the matter up. I doubt whether Chettam would not have been more severe, and yet he comes down on me as if I were the hardest man in the county. But here we are at Dagley’s.”

Mr. Brooke got down at a farmyard-gate, and Dorothea drove on. It is wonderful how much uglier things will look when we only suspect that we are blamed for them. Even our own persons in the glass are apt to change their aspect for us after we have heard some frank remark on their less admirable points; and on the other hand it is astonishing how pleasantly conscience takes our encroachments on those who never complain or have nobody to complain for them. Dagley’s homestead never before looked so dismal to Mr. Brooke as it did today, with his mind thus sore about the fault-finding of the “Trumpet,” echoed by Sir James.

It is true that an observer, under that softening influence of the fine arts which makes other people's hardships picturesque, might have been delighted with this homestead called Freeman's End: the old house had dormer-windows in the dark red roof, two of the chimneys were choked with ivy, the large porch was blocked up with bundles of sticks, and half the windows were closed with gray worm-eaten shutters about which the jasmine-boughs grew in wild luxuriance; the mouldering garden wall with hollyhocks peeping over it was a perfect study of highly mingled subdued color, and there was an aged goat (kept doubtless on interesting superstitious grounds) lying against the open back-kitchen door. The mossy thatch of the cow-shed, the broken gray barn-doors, the pauper laborers in ragged breeches who had nearly finished unloading a wagon of corn into the barn ready for early thrashing; the scanty dairy of cows being tethered for milking and leaving one half of the shed in brown emptiness; the very pigs and white ducks seeming to wander about the uneven neglected yard as if in low spirits from feeding on a too meagre quality of rinsings,—all these objects under the quiet light of a sky marbled with high clouds would have made a sort of picture which we have all paused over as a "charming bit," touching other sensibilities than those which are stirred by the depression of the agricultural interest, with the sad lack of farming capital, as seen constantly in the newspapers of that time. But these troublesome associations were just now strongly present to Mr. Brooke, and spoiled the scene for him. Mr. Dagley himself made a figure in the landscape, carrying a pitchfork and wearing his milking-hat—a very old beaver flattened in front. His coat and breeches were the best he had, and he would not have been wearing them on this weekday occasion if he had not been to market and returned later than usual, having given himself the rare treat of dining at the public table of the Blue Bull. How he came to fall into this extravagance would perhaps be matter of wonderment to himself on the morrow; but before dinner something in the state of the country, a slight pause in the harvest before the Far Dips were cut, the stories about the new King and the numerous handbills on the walls, had seemed to warrant a little recklessness. It was a maxim about Middlemarch, and regarded as self-evident, that good meat should have good drink, which last Dagley interpreted as plenty of table ale well followed up by rum-and-water. These liquors have so far truth in them that they were not false enough to make poor Dagley seem merry: they only

made his discontent less tongue-tied than usual. He had also taken too much in the shape of muddy political talk, a stimulant dangerously disturbing to his farming conservatism, which consisted in holding that whatever is, is bad, and any change is likely to be worse. He was flushed, and his eyes had a decidedly quarrelsome stare as he stood still grasping his pitchfork, while the landlord approached with his easy shuffling walk, one hand in his trouser-pocket and the other swinging round a thin walking-stick.

“Dagley, my good fellow,” began Mr. Brooke, conscious that he was going to be very friendly about the boy.

“Oh, ay, I’m a good feller, am I? Thank ye, sir, thank ye,” said Dagley, with a loud snarling irony which made Fag the sheep-dog stir from his seat and prick his ears; but seeing Monk enter the yard after some outside loitering, Fag seated himself again in an attitude of observation. “I’m glad to hear I’m a good feller.”

Mr. Brooke reflected that it was market-day, and that his worthy tenant had probably been dining, but saw no reason why he should not go on, since he could take the precaution of repeating what he had to say to Mrs. Dagley.

“Your little lad Jacob has been caught killing a leveret, Dagley: I have told Johnson to lock him up in the empty stable an hour or two, just to frighten him, you know. But he will be brought home by-and-by, before night: and you’ll just look after him, will you, and give him a reprimand, you know?”

“No, I woon’t: I’ll be dee’d if I’ll leather my boy to please you or anybody else, not if you was twenty landlords istid o’ one, and that a bad un.”

Dagley’s words were loud enough to summon his wife to the back-kitchen door—the only entrance ever used, and one always open except in bad weather—and Mr. Brooke, saying soothingly, “Well, well, I’ll speak to your wife—I didn’t mean beating, you know,” turned to walk to the house. But Dagley, only the more inclined to “have his say” with a gentleman who walked away from him, followed at once, with Fag slouching at his heels and sullenly evading some small and probably charitable advances on the part of Monk.

“How do you do, Mrs. Dagley?” said Mr. Brooke, making some haste. “I came to tell you about your boy: I don’t want you to give him the stick, you know.” He was careful to speak quite plainly this time.

Overworked Mrs. Dagley—a thin, worn woman, from whose life pleasure had so entirely vanished that she had not even any Sunday clothes which could give her satisfaction in preparing for church—had already had a misunderstanding with her husband since he had come home, and was in low spirits, expecting the worst. But her husband was beforehand in answering.

“No, nor he woon’t hev the stick, whether you want it or no,” pursued Dagley, throwing out his voice, as if he wanted it to hit hard. “You’ve got no call to come an’ talk about sticks o’ these primises, as you woon’t give a stick tow’rt mending. Go to Middlemarch to ax for *your* charrickter.”

“You’d far better hold your tongue, Dagley,” said the wife, “and not kick your own trough over. When a man as is father of a family has been an’ spent money at market and made himself the worse for liquor, he’s done enough mischief for one day. But I should like to know what my boy’s done, sir.”

“Niver do you mind what he’s done,” said Dagley, more fiercely, “it’s my business to speak, an’ not yourn. An’ I wull speak, too. I’ll hev my say—supper or no. An’ what I say is, as I’ve lived upo’ your ground from my father and grandfather afore me, an’ hev dropped our money into’t, an’ me an’ my children might lie an’ rot on the ground for top-dressin’ as we can’t find the money to buy, if the King wasn’t to put a stop.”

“My good fellow, you’re drunk, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, confidentially but not judiciously. “Another day, another day,” he added, turning as if to go.

But Dagley immediately fronted him, and Fag at his heels growled low, as his master’s voice grew louder and more insulting, while Monk also drew close in silent dignified watch. The laborers on the wagon were pausing to listen, and it seemed wiser to be quite passive than to attempt a ridiculous flight pursued by a bawling man.

“I’m no more drunk nor you are, nor so much,” said Dagley. “I can carry my liquor, an’ I know what I meean. An’ I meean as the King ’ull put a stop to ’t, for them say it as knows it, as there’s to be a Rinform, and them landlords as never done the right thing by their tenants ’ull be treated i’

that way as they'll hev to scuttle off. An' there's them i' Middlemarch knows what the Rinform is—an' as knows who'll hev to scuttle. Says they, 'I know who *your* landlord is.' An' says I, 'I hope you're the better for knowin' him, I arn't.' Says they, 'He's a close-fisted un.' 'Ay ay,' says I. 'He's a man for the Rinform,' says they. That's what they says. An' I made out what the Rinform were—an' it were to send you an' your likes a-scuttlin' an' wi' pretty strong-smellin' things too. An' you may do as you like now, for I'm none afeard on you. An' you'd better let my boy aloan, an' look to yoursen, afore the Rinform has got upo' your back. That's what I'n got to say," concluded Mr. Dagley, striking his fork into the ground with a firmness which proved inconvenient as he tried to draw it up again.

At this last action Monk began to bark loudly, and it was a moment for Mr. Brooke to escape. He walked out of the yard as quickly as he could, in some amazement at the novelty of his situation. He had never been insulted on his own land before, and had been inclined to regard himself as a general favorite (we are all apt to do so, when we think of our own amiability more than of what other people are likely to want of us). When he had quarrelled with Caleb Garth twelve years before he had thought that the tenants would be pleased at the landlord's taking everything into his own hands.

Some who follow the narrative of his experience may wonder at the midnight darkness of Mr. Dagley; but nothing was easier in those times than for an hereditary farmer of his grade to be ignorant, in spite somehow of having a rector in the twin parish who was a gentleman to the backbone, a curate nearer at hand who preached more learnedly than the rector, a landlord who had gone into everything, especially fine art and social improvement, and all the lights of Middlemarch only three miles off. As to the facility with which mortals escape knowledge, try an average acquaintance in the intellectual blaze of London, and consider what that eligible person for a dinner-party would have been if he had learned scant skill in "summing" from the parish-clerk of Tipton, and read a chapter in the Bible with immense difficulty, because such names as Isaiah or Apollos remained unmanageable after twice spelling. Poor Dagley read a few verses sometimes on a Sunday evening, and the world was at least not darker to him than it had been before. Some things he knew thoroughly, namely, the slovenly habits of farming, and the awkwardness of weather, stock and crops, at Freeman's End—so called apparently by way of

sarcasm, to imply that a man was free to quit it if he chose, but that there was no earthly “beyond” open to him.



## CHAPTER XL.

Wise in his daily work was he:  
To fruits of diligence,  
And not to faiths or polity,  
He plied his utmost sense.  
These perfect in their little parts,  
Whose work is all their prize—  
Without them how could laws, or arts,  
Or towered cities rise?

In watching effects, if only of an electric battery, it is often necessary to change our place and examine a particular mixture or group at some distance from the point where the movement we are interested in was set up. The group I am moving towards is at Caleb Garth's breakfast-table in the large parlor where the maps and desk were: father, mother, and five of the children. Mary was just now at home waiting for a situation, while Christy, the boy next to her, was getting cheap learning and cheap fare in Scotland, having to his father's disappointment taken to books instead of that sacred calling "business."

The letters had come—nine costly letters, for which the postman had been paid three and twopence, and Mr. Garth was forgetting his tea and toast while he read his letters and laid them open one above the other, sometimes swaying his head slowly, sometimes screwing up his mouth in inward debate, but not forgetting to cut off a large red seal unbroken, which Letty snatched up like an eager terrier.

The talk among the rest went on unrestrainedly, for nothing disturbed Caleb's absorption except shaking the table when he was writing.

Two letters of the nine had been for Mary. After reading them, she had passed them to her mother, and sat playing with her tea-spoon absently, till with a sudden recollection she returned to her sewing, which she had kept on her lap during breakfast.

"Oh, don't sew, Mary!" said Ben, pulling her arm down. "Make me a peacock with this bread-crumbs." He had been kneading a small mass for

the purpose.

“No, no, Mischief!” said Mary, good-humoredly, while she pricked his hand lightly with her needle. “Try and mould it yourself: you have seen me do it often enough. I must get this sewing done. It is for Rosamond Vincy: she is to be married next week, and she can’t be married without this handkerchief.” Mary ended merrily, amused with the last notion.

“Why can’t she, Mary?” said Letty, seriously interested in this mystery, and pushing her head so close to her sister that Mary now turned the threatening needle towards Letty’s nose.

“Because this is one of a dozen, and without it there would only be eleven,” said Mary, with a grave air of explanation, so that Letty sank back with a sense of knowledge.

“Have you made up your mind, my dear?” said Mrs. Garth, laying the letters down.

“I shall go to the school at York,” said Mary. “I am less unfit to teach in a school than in a family. I like to teach classes best. And, you see, I must teach: there is nothing else to be done.”

“Teaching seems to me the most delightful work in the world,” said Mrs. Garth, with a touch of rebuke in her tone. “I could understand your objection to it if you had not knowledge enough, Mary, or if you disliked children.”

“I suppose we never quite understand why another dislikes what we like, mother,” said Mary, rather curtly. “I am not fond of a schoolroom: I like the outside world better. It is a very inconvenient fault of mine.”

“It must be very stupid to be always in a girls’ school,” said Alfred. “Such a set of nincompoops, like Mrs. Ballard’s pupils walking two and two.”

“And they have no games worth playing at,” said Jim. “They can neither throw nor leap. I don’t wonder at Mary’s not liking it.”

“What is that Mary doesn’t like, eh?” said the father, looking over his spectacles and pausing before he opened his next letter.

“Being among a lot of nincompoop girls,” said Alfred.

“Is it the situation you had heard of, Mary?” said Caleb, gently, looking at his daughter.

“Yes, father: the school at York. I have determined to take it. It is quite the best. Thirty-five pounds a-year, and extra pay for teaching the smallest strummers at the piano.”

“Poor child! I wish she could stay at home with us, Susan,” said Caleb, looking plaintively at his wife.

“Mary would not be happy without doing her duty,” said Mrs. Garth, magisterially, conscious of having done her own.

“It wouldn’t make me happy to do such a nasty duty as that,” said Alfred—at which Mary and her father laughed silently, but Mrs. Garth said, gravely—

“Do find a fitter word than nasty, my dear Alfred, for everything that you think disagreeable. And suppose that Mary could help you to go to Mr. Hanmer’s with the money she gets?”

“That seems to me a great shame. But she’s an old brick,” said Alfred, rising from his chair, and pulling Mary’s head backward to kiss her.

Mary colored and laughed, but could not conceal that the tears were coming. Caleb, looking on over his spectacles, with the angles of his eyebrows falling, had an expression of mingled delight and sorrow as he returned to the opening of his letter; and even Mrs. Garth, her lips curling with a calm contentment, allowed that inappropriate language to pass without correction, although Ben immediately took it up, and sang, “She’s an old brick, old brick, old brick!” to a cantering measure, which he beat out with his fist on Mary’s arm.

But Mrs. Garth’s eyes were now drawn towards her husband, who was already deep in the letter he was reading. His face had an expression of grave surprise, which alarmed her a little, but he did not like to be questioned while he was reading, and she remained anxiously watching till she saw him suddenly shaken by a little joyous laugh as he turned back to the beginning of the letter, and looking at her above his spectacles, said, in a low tone, “What do you think, Susan?”

She went and stood behind him, putting her hand on his shoulder, while they read the letter together. It was from Sir James Chettam, offering to Mr. Garth the management of the family estates at Freshitt and elsewhere, and adding that Sir James had been requested by Mr. Brooke of Tipton to ascertain whether Mr. Garth would be disposed at the same time to resume

the agency of the Tipton property. The Baronet added in very obliging words that he himself was particularly desirous of seeing the Freshitt and Tipton estates under the same management, and he hoped to be able to show that the double agency might be held on terms agreeable to Mr. Garth, whom he would be glad to see at the Hall at twelve o'clock on the following day.

“He writes handsomely, doesn't he, Susan?” said Caleb, turning his eyes upward to his wife, who raised her hand from his shoulder to his ear, while she rested her chin on his head. “Brooke didn't like to ask me himself, I can see,” he continued, laughing silently.

“Here is an honor to your father, children,” said Mrs. Garth, looking round at the five pair of eyes, all fixed on the parents. “He is asked to take a post again by those who dismissed him long ago. That shows that he did his work well, so that they feel the want of him.”

“Like Cincinnatus—hooray!” said Ben, riding on his chair, with a pleasant confidence that discipline was relaxed.

“Will they come to fetch him, mother?” said Letty, thinking of the Mayor and Corporation in their robes.

Mrs. Garth patted Letty's head and smiled, but seeing that her husband was gathering up his letters and likely soon to be out of reach in that sanctuary “business,” she pressed his shoulder and said emphatically—

“Now, mind you ask fair pay, Caleb.”

“Oh yes,” said Caleb, in a deep voice of assent, as if it would be unreasonable to suppose anything else of him. “It'll come to between four and five hundred, the two together.” Then with a little start of remembrance he said, “Mary, write and give up that school. Stay and help your mother. I'm as pleased as Punch, now I've thought of that.”

No manner could have been less like that of Punch triumphant than Caleb's, but his talents did not lie in finding phrases, though he was very particular about his letter-writing, and regarded his wife as a treasury of correct language.

There was almost an uproar among the children now, and Mary held up the cambric embroidery towards her mother entreatingly, that it might be put out of reach while the boys dragged her into a dance. Mrs. Garth, in placid joy, began to put the cups and plates together, while Caleb pushing

his chair from the table, as if he were going to move to the desk, still sat holding his letters in his hand and looking on the ground meditatively, stretching out the fingers of his left hand, according to a mute language of his own. At last he said—

“It’s a thousand pities Christy didn’t take to business, Susan. I shall want help by-and-by. And Alfred must go off to the engineering—I’ve made up my mind to that.” He fell into meditation and finger-rhetoric again for a little while, and then continued: “I shall make Brooke have new agreements with the tenants, and I shall draw up a rotation of crops. And I’ll lay a wager we can get fine bricks out of the clay at Bott’s corner. I must look into that: it would cheapen the repairs. It’s a fine bit of work, Susan! A man without a family would be glad to do it for nothing.”

“Mind you don’t, though,” said his wife, lifting up her finger.

“No, no; but it’s a fine thing to come to a man when he’s seen into the nature of business: to have the chance of getting a bit of the country into good fettle, as they say, and putting men into the right way with their farming, and getting a bit of good contriving and solid building done—that those who are living and those who come after will be the better for. I’d sooner have it than a fortune. I hold it the most honorable work that is.” Here Caleb laid down his letters, thrust his fingers between the buttons of his waistcoat, and sat upright, but presently proceeded with some awe in his voice and moving his head slowly aside—“It’s a great gift of God, Susan.”

“That it is, Caleb,” said his wife, with answering fervor. “And it will be a blessing to your children to have had a father who did such work: a father whose good work remains though his name may be forgotten.” She could not say any more to him then about the pay.

In the evening, when Caleb, rather tired with his day’s work, was seated in silence with his pocket-book open on his knee, while Mrs. Garth and Mary were at their sewing, and Letty in a corner was whispering a dialogue with her doll, Mr. Farebrother came up the orchard walk, dividing the bright August lights and shadows with the tufted grass and the apple-tree boughs. We know that he was fond of his parishioners the Garths, and had thought Mary worth mentioning to Lydgate. He used to the full the clergyman’s privilege of disregarding the Middlemarch discrimination of ranks, and always told his mother that Mrs. Garth was more of a lady than

any matron in the town. Still, you see, he spent his evenings at the Vincys', where the matron, though less of a lady, presided over a well-lit drawing-room and whist. In those days human intercourse was not determined solely by respect. But the Vicar did heartily respect the Garths, and a visit from him was no surprise to that family. Nevertheless he accounted for it even while he was shaking hands, by saying, "I come as an envoy, Mrs. Garth: I have something to say to you and Garth on behalf of Fred Vincy. The fact is, poor fellow," he continued, as he seated himself and looked round with his bright glance at the three who were listening to him, "he has taken me into his confidence."

Mary's heart beat rather quickly: she wondered how far Fred's confidence had gone.

"We haven't seen the lad for months," said Caleb. "I couldn't think what was become of him."

"He has been away on a visit," said the Vicar, "because home was a little too hot for him, and Lydgate told his mother that the poor fellow must not begin to study yet. But yesterday he came and poured himself out to me. I am very glad he did, because I have seen him grow up from a youngster of fourteen, and I am so much at home in the house that the children are like nephews and nieces to me. But it is a difficult case to advise upon. However, he has asked me to come and tell you that he is going away, and that he is so miserable about his debt to you, and his inability to pay, that he can't bear to come himself even to bid you good by."

"Tell him it doesn't signify a farthing," said Caleb, waving his hand. "We've had the pinch and have got over it. And now I'm going to be as rich as a Jew."

"Which means," said Mrs. Garth, smiling at the Vicar, "that we are going to have enough to bring up the boys well and to keep Mary at home."

"What is the treasure-trove?" said Mr. Farebrother.

"I'm going to be agent for two estates, Freshitt and Tipton; and perhaps for a pretty little bit of land in Lowick besides: it's all the same family connection, and employment spreads like water if it's once set going. It makes me very happy, Mr. Farebrother"—here Caleb threw back his head a little, and spread his arms on the elbows of his chair—"that I've got an

opportunity again with the letting of the land, and carrying out a notion or two with improvements. It's a most uncommonly cramping thing, as I've often told Susan, to sit on horseback and look over the hedges at the wrong thing, and not be able to put your hand to it to make it right. What people do who go into politics I can't think: it drives me almost mad to see mismanagement over only a few hundred acres."

It was seldom that Caleb volunteered so long a speech, but his happiness had the effect of mountain air: his eyes were bright, and the words came without effort.

"I congratulate you heartily, Garth," said the Vicar. "This is the best sort of news I could have had to carry to Fred Vincy, for he dwelt a good deal on the injury he had done you in causing you to part with money—robbing you of it, he said—which you wanted for other purposes. I wish Fred were not such an idle dog; he has some very good points, and his father is a little hard upon him."

"Where is he going?" said Mrs. Garth, rather coldly.

"He means to try again for his degree, and he is going up to study before term. I have advised him to do that. I don't urge him to enter the Church—on the contrary. But if he will go and work so as to pass, that will be some guarantee that he has energy and a will; and he is quite at sea; he doesn't know what else to do. So far he will please his father, and I have promised in the mean time to try and reconcile Vincy to his son's adopting some other line of life. Fred says frankly he is not fit for a clergyman, and I would do anything I could to hinder a man from the fatal step of choosing the wrong profession. He quoted to me what you said, Miss Garth—do you remember it?" (Mr. Farebrother used to say "Mary" instead of "Miss Garth," but it was part of his delicacy to treat her with the more deference because, according to Mrs. Vincy's phrase, she worked for her bread.)

Mary felt uncomfortable, but, determined to take the matter lightly, answered at once, "I have said so many impertinent things to Fred—we are such old playfellows."

"You said, according to him, that he would be one of those ridiculous clergymen who help to make the whole clergy ridiculous. Really, that was so cutting that I felt a little cut myself."

Caleb laughed. "She gets her tongue from you, Susan," he said, with some enjoyment.

“Not its flippancy, father,” said Mary, quickly, fearing that her mother would be displeased. “It is rather too bad of Fred to repeat my flippant speeches to Mr. Farebrother.”

“It was certainly a hasty speech, my dear,” said Mrs. Garth, with whom speaking evil of dignities was a high misdemeanor. “We should not value our Vicar the less because there was a ridiculous curate in the next parish.”

“There’s something in what she says, though,” said Caleb, not disposed to have Mary’s sharpness undervalued. “A bad workman of any sort makes his fellows mistrusted. Things hang together,” he added, looking on the floor and moving his feet uneasily with a sense that words were scantier than thoughts.

“Clearly,” said the Vicar, amused. “By being contemptible we set men’s minds to the tune of contempt. I certainly agree with Miss Garth’s view of the matter, whether I am condemned by it or not. But as to Fred Vincy, it is only fair he should be excused a little: old Featherstone’s delusive behavior did help to spoil him. There was something quite diabolical in not leaving him a farthing after all. But Fred has the good taste not to dwell on that. And what he cares most about is having offended you, Mrs. Garth; he supposes you will never think well of him again.”

“I have been disappointed in Fred,” said Mrs. Garth, with decision. “But I shall be ready to think well of him again when he gives me good reason to do so.”

At this point Mary went out of the room, taking Letty with her.

“Oh, we must forgive young people when they’re sorry,” said Caleb, watching Mary close the door. “And as you say, Mr. Farebrother, there was the very devil in that old man. Now Mary’s gone out, I must tell you a thing—it’s only known to Susan and me, and you’ll not tell it again. The old scoundrel wanted Mary to burn one of the wills the very night he died, when she was sitting up with him by herself, and he offered her a sum of money that he had in the box by him if she would do it. But Mary, you understand, could do no such thing—would not be handling his iron chest, and so on. Now, you see, the will he wanted burnt was this last, so that if Mary had done what he wanted, Fred Vincy would have had ten thousand pounds. The old man did turn to him at the last. That touches poor Mary close; she couldn’t help it—she was in the right to do what she did, but she feels, as she says, much as if she had knocked down somebody’s property



and broken it against her will, when she was rightfully defending herself. I feel with her, somehow, and if I could make any amends to the poor lad, instead of bearing him a grudge for the harm he did us, I should be glad to do it. Now, what is your opinion, sir? Susan doesn't agree with me; she says—tell what you say, Susan.”

“Mary could not have acted otherwise, even if she had known what would be the effect on Fred,” said Mrs. Garth, pausing from her work, and looking at Mr. Farebrother.

“And she was quite ignorant of it. It seems to me, a loss which falls on another because we have done right is not to lie upon our conscience.”

The Vicar did not answer immediately, and Caleb said, “It's the feeling. The child feels in that way, and I feel with her. You don't mean your horse to tread on a dog when you're backing out of the way; but it goes through you, when it's done.”

“I am sure Mrs. Garth would agree with you there,” said Mr. Farebrother, who for some reason seemed more inclined to ruminate than to speak. “One could hardly say that the feeling you mention about Fred is wrong—or rather, mistaken—though no man ought to make a claim on such feeling.”

“Well, well,” said Caleb, “it's a secret. You will not tell Fred.”

“Certainly not. But I shall carry the other good news—that you can afford the loss he caused you.”

Mr. Farebrother left the house soon after, and seeing Mary in the orchard with Letty, went to say good-by to her. They made a pretty picture in the western light which brought out the brightness of the apples on the old scant-leaved boughs—Mary in her lavender gingham and black ribbons holding a basket, while Letty in her well-worn nankin picked up the fallen apples. If you want to know more particularly how Mary looked, ten to one you will see a face like hers in the crowded street to-morrow, if you are there on the watch: she will not be among those daughters of Zion who are haughty, and walk with stretched-out necks and wanton eyes, mincing as they go: let all those pass, and fix your eyes on some small plump brownish person of firm but quiet carriage, who looks about her, but does not suppose that anybody is looking at her. If she has a broad face and square brow, well-marked eyebrows and curly dark hair, a certain expression of amusement in her glance which her mouth keeps the secret

of, and for the rest features entirely insignificant—take that ordinary but not disagreeable person for a portrait of Mary Garth. If you made her smile, she would show you perfect little teeth; if you made her angry, she would not raise her voice, but would probably say one of the bitterest things you have ever tasted the flavor of; if you did her a kindness, she would never forget it. Mary admired the keen-faced handsome little Vicar in his well-brushed threadbare clothes more than any man she had had the opportunity of knowing. She had never heard him say a foolish thing, though she knew that he did unwise ones; and perhaps foolish sayings were more objectionable to her than any of Mr. Farebrother's unwise doings. At least, it was remarkable that the actual imperfections of the Vicar's clerical character never seemed to call forth the same scorn and dislike which she showed beforehand for the predicted imperfections of the clerical character sustained by Fred Vincy. These irregularities of judgment, I imagine, are found even in riper minds than Mary Garth's: our impartiality is kept for abstract merit and demerit, which none of us ever saw. Will any one guess towards which of those widely different men Mary had the peculiar woman's tenderness?—the one she was most inclined to be severe on, or the contrary?

“Have you any message for your old playfellow, Miss Garth?” said the Vicar, as he took a fragrant apple from the basket which she held towards him, and put it in his pocket. “Something to soften down that harsh judgment? I am going straight to see him.”

“No,” said Mary, shaking her head, and smiling. “If I were to say that he would not be ridiculous as a clergyman, I must say that he would be something worse than ridiculous. But I am very glad to hear that he is going away to work.”

“On the other hand, I am very glad to hear that *you* are not going away to work. My mother, I am sure, will be all the happier if you will come to see her at the vicarage: you know she is fond of having young people to talk to, and she has a great deal to tell about old times. You will really be doing a kindness.”

“I should like it very much, if I may,” said Mary. “Everything seems too happy for me all at once. I thought it would always be part of my life to long for home, and losing that grievance makes me feel rather empty: I suppose it served instead of sense to fill up my mind?”

“May I go with you, Mary?” whispered Letty—a most inconvenient child, who listened to everything. But she was made exultant by having her chin pinched and her cheek kissed by Mr. Farebrother—an incident which she narrated to her mother and father.

As the Vicar walked to Lowick, any one watching him closely might have seen him twice shrug his shoulders. I think that the rare Englishmen who have this gesture are never of the heavy type—for fear of any lumbering instance to the contrary, I will say, hardly ever; they have usually a fine temperament and much tolerance towards the smaller errors of men (themselves inclusive). The Vicar was holding an inward dialogue in which he told himself that there was probably something more between Fred and Mary Garth than the regard of old playfellows, and replied with a question whether that bit of womanhood were not a great deal too choice for that crude young gentleman. The rejoinder to this was the first shrug. Then he laughed at himself for being likely to have felt jealous, as if he had been a man able to marry, which, added he, it is as clear as any balance-sheet that I am not. Whereupon followed the second shrug.

What could two men, so different from each other, see in this “brown patch,” as Mary called herself? It was certainly not her plainness that attracted them (and let all plain young ladies be warned against the dangerous encouragement given them by Society to confide in their want of beauty). A human being in this aged nation of ours is a very wonderful whole, the slow creation of long interchanging influences: and charm is a result of two such wholes, the one loving and the one loved.

When Mr. and Mrs. Garth were sitting alone, Caleb said, “Susan, guess what I’m thinking of.”

“The rotation of crops,” said Mrs. Garth, smiling at him, above her knitting, “or else the back-doors of the Tipton cottages.”

“No,” said Caleb, gravely; “I am thinking that I could do a great turn for Fred Vincy. Christy’s gone, Alfred will be gone soon, and it will be five years before Jim is ready to take to business. I shall want help, and Fred might come in and learn the nature of things and act under me, and it might be the making of him into a useful man, if he gives up being a parson. What do you think?”

“I think, there is hardly anything honest that his family would object to more,” said Mrs. Garth, decidedly.

“What care I about their objecting?” said Caleb, with a sturdiness which he was apt to show when he had an opinion. “The lad is of age and must get his bread. He has sense enough and quickness enough; he likes being on the land, and it’s my belief that he could learn business well if he gave his mind to it.”

“But would he? His father and mother wanted him to be a fine gentleman, and I think he has the same sort of feeling himself. They all think us beneath them. And if the proposal came from you, I am sure Mrs. Vincy would say that we wanted Fred for Mary.”

“Life is a poor tale, if it is to be settled by nonsense of that sort,” said Caleb, with disgust.

“Yes, but there is a certain pride which is proper, Caleb.”

“I call it improper pride to let fools’ notions hinder you from doing a good action. There’s no sort of work,” said Caleb, with fervor, putting out his hand and moving it up and down to mark his emphasis, “that could ever be done well, if you minded what fools say. You must have it inside you that your plan is right, and that plan you must follow.”

“I will not oppose any plan you have set your mind on, Caleb,” said Mrs. Garth, who was a firm woman, but knew that there were some points on which her mild husband was yet firmer. “Still, it seems to be fixed that Fred is to go back to college: will it not be better to wait and see what he will choose to do after that? It is not easy to keep people against their will. And you are not yet quite sure enough of your own position, or what you will want.”

“Well, it may be better to wait a bit. But as to my getting plenty of work for two, I’m pretty sure of that. I’ve always had my hands full with scattered things, and there’s always something fresh turning up. Why, only yesterday—bless me, I don’t think I told you!—it was rather odd that two men should have been at me on different sides to do the same bit of valuing. And who do you think they were?” said Caleb, taking a pinch of snuff and holding it up between his fingers, as if it were a part of his exposition. He was fond of a pinch when it occurred to him, but he usually forgot that this indulgence was at his command.

His wife held down her knitting and looked attentive.

“Why, that Rigg, or Rigg Featherstone, was one. But Bulstrode was before him, so I’m going to do it for Bulstrode. Whether it’s mortgage or purchase they’re going for, I can’t tell yet.”

“Can that man be going to sell the land just left him—which he has taken the name for?” said Mrs. Garth.

“Deuce knows,” said Caleb, who never referred the knowledge of discreditable doings to any higher power than the deuce. “But Bulstrode has long been wanting to get a handsome bit of land under his fingers—that I know. And it’s a difficult matter to get, in this part of the country.”

Caleb scattered his snuff carefully instead of taking it, and then added, “The ins and outs of things are curious. Here is the land they’ve been all along expecting for Fred, which it seems the old man never meant to leave him a foot of, but left it to this side-slip of a son that he kept in the dark, and thought of his sticking there and vexing everybody as well as he could have vexed ’em himself if he could have kept alive. I say, it would be curious if it got into Bulstrode’s hands after all. The old man hated him, and never would bank with him.”

“What reason could the miserable creature have for hating a man whom he had nothing to do with?” said Mrs. Garth.

“Pooh! where’s the use of asking for such fellows’ reasons? The soul of man,” said Caleb, with the deep tone and grave shake of the head which always came when he used this phrase—“The soul of man, when it gets fairly rotten, will bear you all sorts of poisonous toad-stools, and no eye can see whence came the seed thereof.”

It was one of Caleb’s quaintnesses, that in his difficulty of finding speech for his thought, he caught, as it were, snatches of diction which he associated with various points of view or states of mind; and whenever he had a feeling of awe, he was haunted by a sense of Biblical phraseology, though he could hardly have given a strict quotation.

## CHAPTER XLI.

By swaggering could I never thrive,  
For the rain it raineth every day.  
—*Twelfth Night*.

The transactions referred to by Caleb Garth as having gone forward between Mr. Bulstrode and Mr. Joshua Rigg Featherstone concerning the land attached to Stone Court, had occasioned the interchange of a letter or two between these personages.

Who shall tell what may be the effect of writing? If it happens to have been cut in stone, though it lie face down-most for ages on a forsaken beach, or “rest quietly under the drums and trappings of many conquests,” it may end by letting us into the secret of usurpations and other scandals gossiped about long empires ago:—this world being apparently a huge whispering-gallery. Such conditions are often minutely represented in our petty lifetimes. As the stone which has been kicked by generations of clowns may come by curious little links of effect under the eyes of a scholar, through whose labors it may at last fix the date of invasions and unlock religions, so a bit of ink and paper which has long been an innocent wrapping or stop-gap may at last be laid open under the one pair of eyes which have knowledge enough to turn it into the opening of a catastrophe. To Uriel watching the progress of planetary history from the sun, the one result would be just as much of a coincidence as the other.

Having made this rather lofty comparison I am less uneasy in calling attention to the existence of low people by whose interference, however little we may like it, the course of the world is very much determined. It would be well, certainly, if we could help to reduce their number, and something might perhaps be done by not lightly giving occasion to their existence. Socially speaking, Joshua Rigg would have been generally pronounced a superfluity. But those who like Peter Featherstone never had a copy of themselves demanded, are the very last to wait for such a request either in prose or verse. The copy in this case bore more of outside resemblance to the mother, in whose sex frog-features, accompanied with

fresh-colored cheeks and a well-rounded figure, are compatible with much charm for a certain order of admirers. The result is sometimes a frog-faced male, desirable, surely, to no order of intelligent beings. Especially when he is suddenly brought into evidence to frustrate other people's expectations—the very lowest aspect in which a social superfluity can present himself.

But Mr. Rigg Featherstone's low characteristics were all of the sober, water-drinking kind. From the earliest to the latest hour of the day he was always as sleek, neat, and cool as the frog he resembled, and old Peter had secretly chuckled over an offshoot almost more calculating, and far more imperturbable, than himself. I will add that his finger-nails were scrupulously attended to, and that he meant to marry a well-educated young lady (as yet unspecified) whose person was good, and whose connections, in a solid middle-class way, were undeniable. Thus his nails and modesty were comparable to those of most gentlemen; though his ambition had been educated only by the opportunities of a clerk and accountant in the smaller commercial houses of a seaport. He thought the rural Featherstones very simple absurd people, and they in their turn regarded his "bringing up" in a seaport town as an exaggeration of the monstrosity that their brother Peter, and still more Peter's property, should have had such belongings.

The garden and gravel approach, as seen from the two windows of the wainscoted parlor at Stone Court, were never in better trim than now, when Mr. Rigg Featherstone stood, with his hands behind him, looking out on these grounds as their master. But it seemed doubtful whether he looked out for the sake of contemplation or of turning his back to a person who stood in the middle of the room, with his legs considerably apart and his hands in his trouser-pockets: a person in all respects a contrast to the sleek and cool Rigg. He was a man obviously on the way towards sixty, very florid and hairy, with much gray in his bushy whiskers and thick curly hair, a stoutish body which showed to disadvantage the somewhat worn joinings of his clothes, and the air of a swaggerer, who would aim at being noticeable even at a show of fireworks, regarding his own remarks on any other person's performance as likely to be more interesting than the performance itself.

His name was John Raffles, and he sometimes wrote jocosely W.A.G. after his signature, observing when he did so, that he was once taught by Leonard Lamb of Finsbury who wrote B.A. after his name, and that he, Raffles, originated the witticism of calling that celebrated principal Ba-Lamb. Such were the appearance and mental flavor of Mr. Raffles, both of which seemed to have a stale odor of travellers' rooms in the commercial hotels of that period.

“Come, now, Josh,” he was saying, in a full rumbling tone, “look at it in this light: here is your poor mother going into the vale of years, and you could afford something handsome now to make her comfortable.”

“Not while you live. Nothing would make her comfortable while you live,” returned Rigg, in his cool high voice. “What I give her, you’ll take.”

“You bear me a grudge, Josh, that I know. But come, now—as between man and man—without humbug—a little capital might enable me to make a first-rate thing of the shop. The tobacco trade is growing. I should cut my own nose off in not doing the best I could at it. I should stick to it like a flea to a fleece for my own sake. I should always be on the spot. And nothing would make your poor mother so happy. I’ve pretty well done with my wild oats—turned fifty-five. I want to settle down in my chimney-corner. And if I once buckled to the tobacco trade, I could bring an amount of brains and experience to bear on it that would not be found elsewhere in a hurry. I don’t want to be bothering you one time after another, but to get things once for all into the right channel. Consider that, Josh—as between man and man—and with your poor mother to be made easy for her life. I was always fond of the old woman, by Jove!”

“Have you done?” said Mr. Rigg, quietly, without looking away from the window.

“Yes, *I*’ve done,” said Raffles, taking hold of his hat which stood before him on the table, and giving it a sort of oratorical push.

“Then just listen to me. The more you say anything, the less I shall believe it. The more you want me to do a thing, the more reason I shall have for never doing it. Do you think I mean to forget your kicking me when I was a lad, and eating all the best victual away from me and my mother? Do you think I forget your always coming home to sell and pocket everything, and going off again leaving us in the lurch? I should be glad to see you whipped at the cart-tail. My mother was a fool to you:



she'd no right to give me a father-in-law, and she's been punished for it. She shall have her weekly allowance paid and no more: and that shall be stopped if you dare to come on to these premises again, or to come into this country after me again. The next time you show yourself inside the gates here, you shall be driven off with the dogs and the wagoner's whip."

As Rigg pronounced the last words he turned round and looked at Raffles with his prominent frozen eyes. The contrast was as striking as it could have been eighteen years before, when Rigg was a most unengaging kickable boy, and Raffles was the rather thick-set Adonis of bar-rooms and back-parlors. But the advantage now was on the side of Rigg, and auditors of this conversation might probably have expected that Raffles would retire with the air of a defeated dog. Not at all. He made a grimace which was habitual with him whenever he was "out" in a game; then subsided into a laugh, and drew a brandy-flask from his pocket.

"Come, Josh," he said, in a cajoling tone, "give us a spoonful of brandy, and a sovereign to pay the way back, and I'll go. Honor bright! I'll go like a bullet, *by Jove!*"

"Mind," said Rigg, drawing out a bunch of keys, "if I ever see you again, I shan't speak to you. I don't own you any more than if I saw a crow; and if you want to own me you'll get nothing by it but a character for being what you are—a spiteful, brassy, bullying rogue."

"That's a pity, now, Josh," said Raffles, affecting to scratch his head and wrinkle his brows upward as if he were nonplussed. "I'm very fond of you; *by Jove*, I am! There's nothing I like better than plaguing you—you're so like your mother, and I must do without it. But the brandy and the sovereign's a bargain."

He jerked forward the flask and Rigg went to a fine old oaken bureau with his keys. But Raffles had reminded himself by his movement with the flask that it had become dangerously loose from its leather covering, and catching sight of a folded paper which had fallen within the fender, he took it up and shoved it under the leather so as to make the glass firm.

By that time Rigg came forward with a brandy-bottle, filled the flask, and handed Raffles a sovereign, neither looking at him nor speaking to him. After locking up the bureau again, he walked to the window and gazed out as impassibly as he had done at the beginning of the interview, while Raffles took a small allowance from the flask, screwed it up, and

deposited it in his side-pocket, with provoking slowness, making a grimace at his stepson's back.

“Farewell, Josh—and if forever!” said Raffles, turning back his head as he opened the door.

Rigg saw him leave the grounds and enter the lane. The gray day had turned to a light drizzling rain, which freshened the hedgerows and the grassy borders of the by-roads, and hastened the laborers who were loading the last shocks of corn. Raffles, walking with the uneasy gait of a town loiterer obliged to do a bit of country journeying on foot, looked as incongruous amid this moist rural quiet and industry as if he had been a baboon escaped from a menagerie. But there were none to stare at him except the long-weaned calves, and none to show dislike of his appearance except the little water-rats which rustled away at his approach.

He was fortunate enough when he got on to the highroad to be overtaken by the stage-coach, which carried him to Brassing; and there he took the new-made railway, observing to his fellow-passengers that he considered it pretty well seasoned now it had done for Huskisson. Mr. Raffles on most occasions kept up the sense of having been educated at an academy, and being able, if he chose, to pass well everywhere; indeed, there was not one of his fellow-men whom he did not feel himself in a position to ridicule and torment, confident of the entertainment which he thus gave to all the rest of the company.

He played this part now with as much spirit as if his journey had been entirely successful, resorting at frequent intervals to his flask. The paper with which he had wedged it was a letter signed *Nicholas Bulstrode*, but Raffles was not likely to disturb it from its present useful position.

## CHAPTER XLII.

How much, methinks, I could despise this man  
Were I not bound in charity against it!  
—SHAKESPEARE: *Henry VIII.*

One of the professional calls made by Lydgate soon after his return from his wedding-journey was to Lowick Manor, in consequence of a letter which had requested him to fix a time for his visit.

Mr. Casaubon had never put any question concerning the nature of his illness to Lydgate, nor had he even to Dorothea betrayed any anxiety as to how far it might be likely to cut short his labors or his life. On this point, as on all others, he shrank from pity; and if the suspicion of being pitied for anything in his lot surmised or known in spite of himself was embittering, the idea of calling forth a show of compassion by frankly admitting an alarm or a sorrow was necessarily intolerable to him. Every proud mind knows something of this experience, and perhaps it is only to be overcome by a sense of fellowship deep enough to make all efforts at isolation seem mean and petty instead of exalting.

But Mr. Casaubon was now brooding over something through which the question of his health and life haunted his silence with a more harassing importunity even than through the autumnal unripeness of his authorship. It is true that this last might be called his central ambition; but there are some kinds of authorship in which by far the largest result is the uneasy susceptibility accumulated in the consciousness of the author—one knows of the river by a few streaks amid a long-gathered deposit of uncomfortable mud. That was the way with Mr. Casaubon's hard intellectual labors. Their most characteristic result was not the "Key to all Mythologies," but a morbid consciousness that others did not give him the place which he had not demonstrably merited—a perpetual suspicious conjecture that the views entertained of him were not to his advantage—a melancholy absence of passion in his efforts at achievement, and a passionate resistance to the confession that he had achieved nothing.

Thus his intellectual ambition which seemed to others to have absorbed and dried him, was really no security against wounds, least of all against those which came from Dorothea. And he had begun now to frame possibilities for the future which were somehow more embittering to him than anything his mind had dwelt on before.

Against certain facts he was helpless: against Will Ladislaw's existence, his defiant stay in the neighborhood of Lowick, and his flippant state of mind with regard to the possessors of authentic, well-stamped erudition: against Dorothea's nature, always taking on some new shape of ardent activity, and even in submission and silence covering fervid reasons which it was an irritation to think of: against certain notions and likings which had taken possession of her mind in relation to subjects that he could not possibly discuss with her. There was no denying that Dorothea was as virtuous and lovely a young lady as he could have obtained for a wife; but a young lady turned out to be something more troublesome than he had conceived. She nursed him, she read to him, she anticipated his wants, and was solicitous about his feelings; but there had entered into the husband's mind the certainty that she judged him, and that her wifely devotedness was like a penitential expiation of unbelieving thoughts—was accompanied with a power of comparison by which himself and his doings were seen too luminously as a part of things in general. His discontent passed vapor-like through all her gentle loving manifestations, and clung to that inappreciative world which she had only brought nearer to him.

Poor Mr. Casaubon! This suffering was the harder to bear because it seemed like a betrayal: the young creature who had worshipped him with perfect trust had quickly turned into the critical wife; and early instances of criticism and resentment had made an impression which no tenderness and submission afterwards could remove. To his suspicious interpretation Dorothea's silence now was a suppressed rebellion; a remark from her which he had not in any way anticipated was an assertion of conscious superiority; her gentle answers had an irritating cautiousness in them; and when she acquiesced it was a self-approved effort of forbearance. The tenacity with which he strove to hide this inward drama made it the more vivid for him; as we hear with the more keenness what we wish others not to hear.

Instead of wondering at this result of misery in Mr. Casaubon, I think it quite ordinary. Will not a tiny speck very close to our vision blot out the glory of the world, and leave only a margin by which we see the blot? I know no speck so troublesome as self. And who, if Mr. Casaubon had chosen to expound his discontents—his suspicions that he was not any longer adored without criticism—could have denied that they were founded on good reasons? On the contrary, there was a strong reason to be added, which he had not himself taken explicitly into account—namely, that he was not unmixedly adorable. He suspected this, however, as he suspected other things, without confessing it, and like the rest of us, felt how soothing it would have been to have a companion who would never find it out.

This sore susceptibility in relation to Dorothea was thoroughly prepared before Will Ladislaw had returned to Lowick, and what had occurred since then had brought Mr. Casaubon's power of suspicious construction into exasperated activity. To all the facts which he knew, he added imaginary facts both present and future which became more real to him than those because they called up a stronger dislike, a more predominating bitterness. Suspicion and jealousy of Will Ladislaw's intentions, suspicion and jealousy of Dorothea's impressions, were constantly at their weaving work. It would be quite unjust to him to suppose that he could have entered into any coarse misinterpretation of Dorothea: his own habits of mind and conduct, quite as much as the open elevation of her nature, saved him from any such mistake. What he was jealous of was her opinion, the sway that might be given to her ardent mind in its judgments, and the future possibilities to which these might lead her. As to Will, though until his last defiant letter he had nothing definite which he would choose formally to allege against him, he felt himself warranted in believing that he was capable of any design which could fascinate a rebellious temper and an undisciplined impulsiveness. He was quite sure that Dorothea was the cause of Will's return from Rome, and his determination to settle in the neighborhood; and he was penetrating enough to imagine that Dorothea had innocently encouraged this course. It was as clear as possible that she was ready to be attached to Will and to be pliant to his suggestions: they had never had a *tête-à-tête* without her bringing away from it some new troublesome impression, and the last interview that Mr. Casaubon was aware of (Dorothea, on returning from Freshitt Hall, had for

the first time been silent about having seen Will) had led to a scene which roused an angrier feeling against them both than he had ever known before. Dorothea's outpouring of her notions about money, in the darkness of the night, had done nothing but bring a mixture of more odious foreboding into her husband's mind.

And there was the shock lately given to his health always sadly present with him. He was certainly much revived; he had recovered all his usual power of work: the illness might have been mere fatigue, and there might still be twenty years of achievement before him, which would justify the thirty years of preparation. That prospect was made the sweeter by a flavor of vengeance against the hasty sneers of Carp & Company; for even when Mr. Casaubon was carrying his taper among the tombs of the past, those modern figures came athwart the dim light, and interrupted his diligent exploration. To convince Carp of his mistake, so that he would have to eat his own words with a good deal of indigestion, would be an agreeable accident of triumphant authorship, which the prospect of living to future ages on earth and to all eternity in heaven could not exclude from contemplation. Since, thus, the prevision of his own unending bliss could not nullify the bitter savors of irritated jealousy and vindictiveness, it is the less surprising that the probability of a transient earthly bliss for other persons, when he himself should have entered into glory, had not a potently sweetening effect. If the truth should be that some undermining disease was at work within him, there might be large opportunity for some people to be the happier when he was gone; and if one of those people should be Will Ladislaw, Mr. Casaubon objected so strongly that it seemed as if the annoyance would make part of his disembodied existence.

This is a very bare and therefore a very incomplete way of putting the case. The human soul moves in many channels, and Mr. Casaubon, we know, had a sense of rectitude and an honorable pride in satisfying the requirements of honor, which compelled him to find other reasons for his conduct than those of jealousy and vindictiveness. The way in which Mr. Casaubon put the case was this:—"In marrying Dorothea Brooke I had to care for her well-being in case of my death. But well-being is not to be secured by ample, independent possession of property; on the contrary, occasions might arise in which such possession might expose her to the more danger. She is ready prey to any man who knows how to play adroitly either on her affectionate ardor or her Quixotic enthusiasm; and a man

stands by with that very intention in his mind—a man with no other principle than transient caprice, and who has a personal animosity towards me—I am sure of it—an animosity which is fed by the consciousness of his ingratitude, and which he has constantly vented in ridicule of which I am as well assured as if I had heard it. Even if I live I shall not be without uneasiness as to what he may attempt through indirect influence. This man has gained Dorothea's ear: he has fascinated her attention; he has evidently tried to impress her mind with the notion that he has claims beyond anything I have done for him. If I die—and he is waiting here on the watch for that—he will persuade her to marry him. That would be calamity for her and success for him. *She* would not think it calamity: he would make her believe anything; she has a tendency to immoderate attachment which she inwardly reproaches me for not responding to, and already her mind is occupied with his fortunes. He thinks of an easy conquest and of entering into my nest. That I will hinder! Such a marriage would be fatal to Dorothea. Has he ever persisted in anything except from contradiction? In knowledge he has always tried to be showy at small cost. In religion he could be, as long as it suited him, the facile echo of Dorothea's vagaries. When was sciolism ever dissociated from laxity? I utterly distrust his morals, and it is my duty to hinder to the utmost the fulfilment of his designs.”

The arrangements made by Mr. Casaubon on his marriage left strong measures open to him, but in ruminating on them his mind inevitably dwelt so much on the probabilities of his own life that the longing to get the nearest possible calculation had at last overcome his proud reticence, and had determined him to ask Lydgate's opinion as to the nature of his illness.

He had mentioned to Dorothea that Lydgate was coming by appointment at half-past three, and in answer to her anxious question, whether he had felt ill, replied,—“No, I merely wish to have his opinion concerning some habitual symptoms. You need not see him, my dear. I shall give orders that he may be sent to me in the Yew-tree Walk, where I shall be taking my usual exercise.”

When Lydgate entered the Yew-tree Walk he saw Mr. Casaubon slowly receding with his hands behind him according to his habit, and his head bent forward. It was a lovely afternoon; the leaves from the lofty limes

were falling silently across the sombre evergreens, while the lights and shadows slept side by side: there was no sound but the cawing of the rooks, which to the accustomed ear is a lullaby, or that last solemn lullaby, a dirge. Lydgate, conscious of an energetic frame in its prime, felt some compassion when the figure which he was likely soon to overtake turned round, and in advancing towards him showed more markedly than ever the signs of premature age—the student's bent shoulders, the emaciated limbs, and the melancholy lines of the mouth. "Poor fellow," he thought, "some men with his years are like lions; one can tell nothing of their age except that they are full grown."

"Mr. Lydgate," said Mr. Casaubon, with his invariably polite air, "I am exceedingly obliged to you for your punctuality. We will, if you please, carry on our conversation in walking to and fro."

"I hope your wish to see me is not due to the return of unpleasant symptoms," said Lydgate, filling up a pause.

"Not immediately—no. In order to account for that wish I must mention—what it were otherwise needless to refer to—that my life, on all collateral accounts insignificant, derives a possible importance from the incompleteness of labors which have extended through all its best years. In short, I have long had on hand a work which I would fain leave behind me in such a state, at least, that it might be committed to the press by—others. Were I assured that this is the utmost I can reasonably expect, that assurance would be a useful circumscription of my attempts, and a guide in both the positive and negative determination of my course."

Here Mr. Casaubon paused, removed one hand from his back and thrust it between the buttons of his single-breasted coat. To a mind largely instructed in the human destiny hardly anything could be more interesting than the inward conflict implied in his formal measured address, delivered with the usual sing-song and motion of the head. Nay, are there many situations more sublimely tragic than the struggle of the soul with the demand to renounce a work which has been all the significance of its life—a significance which is to vanish as the waters which come and go where no man has need of them? But there was nothing to strike others as sublime about Mr. Casaubon, and Lydgate, who had some contempt at hand for futile scholarship, felt a little amusement mingling with his pity. He was at present too ill acquainted with disaster to enter into the pathos



of a lot where everything is below the level of tragedy except the passionate egoism of the sufferer.

“You refer to the possible hindrances from want of health?” he said, wishing to help forward Mr. Casaubon’s purpose, which seemed to be clogged by some hesitation.

“I do. You have not implied to me that the symptoms which—I am bound to testify—you watched with scrupulous care, were those of a fatal disease. But were it so, Mr. Lydgate, I should desire to know the truth without reservation, and I appeal to you for an exact statement of your conclusions: I request it as a friendly service. If you can tell me that my life is not threatened by anything else than ordinary casualties, I shall rejoice, on grounds which I have already indicated. If not, knowledge of the truth is even more important to me.”

“Then I can no longer hesitate as to my course,” said Lydgate; “but the first thing I must impress on you is that my conclusions are doubly uncertain—uncertain not only because of my fallibility, but because diseases of the heart are eminently difficult to found predictions on. In any case, one can hardly increase appreciably the tremendous uncertainty of life.”

Mr. Casaubon winced perceptibly, but bowed.

“I believe that you are suffering from what is called fatty degeneration of the heart, a disease which was first divined and explored by Laennec, the man who gave us the stethoscope, not so very many years ago. A good deal of experience—a more lengthened observation—is wanting on the subject. But after what you have said, it is my duty to tell you that death from this disease is often sudden. At the same time, no such result can be predicted. Your condition may be consistent with a tolerably comfortable life for another fifteen years, or even more. I could add no information to this beyond anatomical or medical details, which would leave expectation at precisely the same point.” Lydgate’s instinct was fine enough to tell him that plain speech, quite free from ostentatious caution, would be felt by Mr. Casaubon as a tribute of respect.

“I thank you, Mr. Lydgate,” said Mr. Casaubon, after a moment’s pause. “One thing more I have still to ask: did you communicate what you have now told me to Mrs. Casaubon?”

“Partly—I mean, as to the possible issues.” Lydgate was going to explain why he had told Dorothea, but Mr. Casaubon, with an unmistakable desire to end the conversation, waved his hand slightly, and said again, “I thank you,” proceeding to remark on the rare beauty of the day.

Lydgate, certain that his patient wished to be alone, soon left him; and the black figure with hands behind and head bent forward continued to pace the walk where the dark yew-trees gave him a mute companionship in melancholy, and the little shadows of bird or leaf that fledged across the isles of sunlight, stole along in silence as in the presence of a sorrow. Here was a man who now for the first time found himself looking into the eyes of death—who was passing through one of those rare moments of experience when we feel the truth of a commonplace, which is as different from what we call knowing it, as the vision of waters upon the earth is different from the delirious vision of the water which cannot be had to cool the burning tongue. When the commonplace “We must all die” transforms itself suddenly into the acute consciousness “I must die—and soon,” then death grapples us, and his fingers are cruel; afterwards, he may come to fold us in his arms as our mother did, and our last moment of dim earthly discerning may be like the first. To Mr. Casaubon now, it was as if he suddenly found himself on the dark river-brink and heard the plash of the oncoming oar, not discerning the forms, but expecting the summons. In such an hour the mind does not change its lifelong bias, but carries it onward in imagination to the other side of death, gazing backward—perhaps with the divine calm of beneficence, perhaps with the petty anxieties of self-assertion. What was Mr. Casaubon’s bias his acts will give us a clue to. He held himself to be, with some private scholarly reservations, a believing Christian, as to estimates of the present and hopes of the future. But what we strive to gratify, though we may call it a distant hope, is an immediate desire: the future estate for which men drudge up city alleys exists already in their imagination and love. And Mr. Casaubon’s immediate desire was not for divine communion and light divested of earthly conditions; his passionate longings, poor man, clung low and mist-like in very shady places.

Dorothea had been aware when Lydgate had ridden away, and she had stepped into the garden, with the impulse to go at once to her husband. But she hesitated, fearing to offend him by obtruding herself; for her ardor,

continually repulsed, served, with her intense memory, to heighten her dread, as thwarted energy subsides into a shudder; and she wandered slowly round the nearer clumps of trees until she saw him advancing. Then she went towards him, and might have represented a heaven-sent angel coming with a promise that the short hours remaining should yet be filled with that faithful love which clings the closer to a comprehended grief. His glance in reply to hers was so chill that she felt her timidity increased; yet she turned and passed her hand through his arm.

Mr. Casaubon kept his hands behind him and allowed her pliant arm to cling with difficulty against his rigid arm.

There was something horrible to Dorothea in the sensation which this unresponsive hardness inflicted on her. That is a strong word, but not too strong: it is in these acts called trivialities that the seeds of joy are forever wasted, until men and women look round with haggard faces at the devastation their own waste has made, and say, the earth bears no harvest of sweetness—calling their denial knowledge. You may ask why, in the name of manliness, Mr. Casaubon should have behaved in that way. Consider that his was a mind which shrank from pity: have you ever watched in such a mind the effect of a suspicion that what is pressing it as a grief may be really a source of contentment, either actual or future, to the being who already offends by pitying? Besides, he knew little of Dorothea's sensations, and had not reflected that on such an occasion as the present they were comparable in strength to his own sensibilities about Carp's criticisms.

Dorothea did not withdraw her arm, but she could not venture to speak. Mr. Casaubon did not say, "I wish to be alone," but he directed his steps in silence towards the house, and as they entered by the glass door on this eastern side, Dorothea withdrew her arm and lingered on the matting, that she might leave her husband quite free. He entered the library and shut himself in, alone with his sorrow.

She went up to her boudoir. The open bow-window let in the serene glory of the afternoon lying in the avenue, where the lime-trees cast long shadows. But Dorothea knew nothing of the scene. She threw herself on a chair, not heeding that she was in the dazzling sun-rays: if there were discomfort in that, how could she tell that it was not part of her inward misery?

She was in the reaction of a rebellious anger stronger than any she had felt since her marriage. Instead of tears there came words:—

“What have I done—what am I—that he should treat me so? He never knows what is in my mind—he never cares. What is the use of anything I do? He wishes he had never married me.”

She began to hear herself, and was checked into stillness. Like one who has lost his way and is weary, she sat and saw as in one glance all the paths of her young hope which she should never find again. And just as clearly in the miserable light she saw her own and her husband’s solitude—how they walked apart so that she was obliged to survey him. If he had drawn her towards him, she would never have surveyed him—never have said, “Is he worth living for?” but would have felt him simply a part of her own life. Now she said bitterly, “It is his fault, not mine.” In the jar of her whole being, Pity was overthrown. Was it her fault that she had believed in him—had believed in his worthiness?—And what, exactly, was he?— She was able enough to estimate him—she who waited on his glances with trembling, and shut her best soul in prison, paying it only hidden visits, that she might be petty enough to please him. In such a crisis as this, some women begin to hate.

The sun was low when Dorothea was thinking that she would not go down again, but would send a message to her husband saying that she was not well and preferred remaining up-stairs. She had never deliberately allowed her resentment to govern her in this way before, but she believed now that she could not see him again without telling him the truth about her feeling, and she must wait till she could do it without interruption. He might wonder and be hurt at her message. It was good that he should wonder and be hurt. Her anger said, as anger is apt to say, that God was with her—that all heaven, though it were crowded with spirits watching them, must be on her side. She had determined to ring her bell, when there came a rap at the door.

Mr. Casaubon had sent to say that he would have his dinner in the library. He wished to be quite alone this evening, being much occupied.

“I shall not dine, then, Tantripp.”

“Oh, madam, let me bring you a little something?”

“No; I am not well. Get everything ready in my dressing room, but pray do not disturb me again.”

Dorothea sat almost motionless in her meditative struggle, while the evening slowly deepened into night. But the struggle changed continually, as that of a man who begins with a movement towards striking and ends with conquering his desire to strike. The energy that would animate a crime is not more than is wanted to inspire a resolved submission, when the noble habit of the soul reasserts itself. That thought with which Dorothea had gone out to meet her husband—her conviction that he had been asking about the possible arrest of all his work, and that the answer must have wrung his heart, could not be long without rising beside the image of him, like a shadowy monitor looking at her anger with sad remonstrance. It cost her a litany of pictured sorrows and of silent cries that she might be the mercy for those sorrows—but the resolved submission did come; and when the house was still, and she knew that it was near the time when Mr. Casaubon habitually went to rest, she opened her door gently and stood outside in the darkness waiting for his coming up-stairs with a light in his hand. If he did not come soon she thought that she would go down and even risk incurring another pang. She would never again expect anything else. But she did hear the library door open, and slowly the light advanced up the staircase without noise from the footsteps on the carpet. When her husband stood opposite to her, she saw that his face was more haggard. He started slightly on seeing her, and she looked up at him beseechingly, without speaking.

“Dorothea!” he said, with a gentle surprise in his tone. “Were you waiting for me?”

“Yes, I did not like to disturb you.”

“Come, my dear, come. You are young, and need not to extend your life by watching.”

When the kind quiet melancholy of that speech fell on Dorothea’s ears, she felt something like the thankfulness that might well up in us if we had narrowly escaped hurting a lamed creature. She put her hand into her husband’s, and they went along the broad corridor together.

BOOK V.  
THE DEAD HAND.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

“This figure hath high price: ’t was wrought with love  
Ages ago in finest ivory;  
Nought modish in it, pure and noble lines  
Of generous womanhood that fits all time  
That too is costly ware; majolica  
Of deft design, to please a lordly eye:  
The smile, you see, is perfect—wonderful  
As mere Faience! a table ornament  
To suit the richest mounting.”

Dorothea seldom left home without her husband, but she did occasionally drive into Middlemarch alone, on little errands of shopping or charity such as occur to every lady of any wealth when she lives within three miles of a town. Two days after that scene in the Yew-tree Walk, she determined to use such an opportunity in order if possible to see Lydgate, and learn from him whether her husband had really felt any depressing change of symptoms which he was concealing from her, and whether he had insisted on knowing the utmost about himself. She felt almost guilty in asking for knowledge about him from another, but the dread of being without it—the dread of that ignorance which would make her unjust or hard—overcame every scruple. That there had been some crisis in her husband’s mind she was certain: he had the very next day begun a new method of arranging his notes, and had associated her quite newly in carrying out his plan. Poor Dorothea needed to lay up stores of patience.

It was about four o’clock when she drove to Lydgate’s house in Lowick Gate, wishing, in her immediate doubt of finding him at home, that she had written beforehand. And he was not at home.

“Is Mrs. Lydgate at home?” said Dorothea, who had never, that she knew of, seen Rosamond, but now remembered the fact of the marriage. Yes, Mrs. Lydgate was at home.

“I will go in and speak to her, if she will allow me. Will you ask her if she can see me—see Mrs. Casaubon, for a few minutes?”

When the servant had gone to deliver that message, Dorothea could hear sounds of music through an open window—a few notes from a man's voice and then a piano bursting into roulades. But the roulades broke off suddenly, and then the servant came back saying that Mrs. Lydgate would be happy to see Mrs. Casaubon.

When the drawing-room door opened and Dorothea entered, there was a sort of contrast not infrequent in country life when the habits of the different ranks were less blent than now. Let those who know, tell us exactly what stuff it was that Dorothea wore in those days of mild autumn—that thin white woollen stuff soft to the touch and soft to the eye. It always seemed to have been lately washed, and to smell of the sweet hedges—was always in the shape of a pelisse with sleeves hanging all out of the fashion. Yet if she had entered before a still audience as Imogene or Cato's daughter, the dress might have seemed right enough: the grace and dignity were in her limbs and neck; and about her simply parted hair and candid eyes the large round poke which was then in the fate of women, seemed no more odd as a head-dress than the gold trencher we call a halo. By the present audience of two persons, no dramatic heroine could have been expected with more interest than Mrs. Casaubon. To Rosamond she was one of those county divinities not mixing with Middlemarch mortality, whose slightest marks of manner or appearance were worthy of her study; moreover, Rosamond was not without satisfaction that Mrs. Casaubon should have an opportunity of studying *her*. What is the use of being exquisite if you are not seen by the best judges? and since Rosamond had received the highest compliments at Sir Godwin Lydgate's, she felt quite confident of the impression she must make on people of good birth. Dorothea put out her hand with her usual simple kindness, and looked admiringly at Lydgate's lovely bride—aware that there was a gentleman standing at a distance, but seeing him merely as a coated figure at a wide angle. The gentleman was too much occupied with the presence of the one woman to reflect on the contrast between the two—a contrast that would certainly have been striking to a calm observer. They were both tall, and their eyes were on a level; but imagine Rosamond's infantine blondness and wondrous crown of hair-plaits, with her pale-blue dress of a fit and fashion so perfect that no dressmaker could look at it without emotion, a large embroidered collar which it was to be hoped all beholders would know the price of, her small hands duly set off with rings, and that



controlled self-consciousness of manner which is the expensive substitute for simplicity.

“Thank you very much for allowing me to interrupt you,” said Dorothea, immediately. “I am anxious to see Mr. Lydgate, if possible, before I go home, and I hoped that you might possibly tell me where I could find him, or even allow me to wait for him, if you expect him soon.”

“He is at the New Hospital,” said Rosamond; “I am not sure how soon he will come home. But I can send for him.”

“Will you let me go and fetch him?” said Will Ladislaw, coming forward. He had already taken up his hat before Dorothea entered. She colored with surprise, but put out her hand with a smile of unmistakable pleasure, saying—

“I did not know it was you: I had no thought of seeing you here.”

“May I go to the Hospital and tell Mr. Lydgate that you wish to see him?” said Will.

“It would be quicker to send the carriage for him,” said Dorothea, “if you will be kind enough to give the message to the coachman.”

Will was moving to the door when Dorothea, whose mind had flashed in an instant over many connected memories, turned quickly and said, “I will go myself, thank you. I wish to lose no time before getting home again. I will drive to the Hospital and see Mr. Lydgate there. Pray excuse me, Mrs. Lydgate. I am very much obliged to you.”

Her mind was evidently arrested by some sudden thought, and she left the room hardly conscious of what was immediately around her—hardly conscious that Will opened the door for her and offered her his arm to lead her to the carriage. She took the arm but said nothing. Will was feeling rather vexed and miserable, and found nothing to say on his side. He handed her into the carriage in silence, they said good-by, and Dorothea drove away.

In the five minutes’ drive to the Hospital she had time for some reflections that were quite new to her. Her decision to go, and her preoccupation in leaving the room, had come from the sudden sense that there would be a sort of deception in her voluntarily allowing any further intercourse between herself and Will which she was unable to mention to her husband, and already her errand in seeking Lydgate was a matter of

concealment. That was all that had been explicitly in her mind; but she had been urged also by a vague discomfort. Now that she was alone in her drive, she heard the notes of the man's voice and the accompanying piano, which she had not noted much at the time, returning on her inward sense; and she found herself thinking with some wonder that Will Ladislaw was passing his time with Mrs. Lydgate in her husband's absence. And then she could not help remembering that he had passed some time with her under like circumstances, so why should there be any unfitness in the fact? But Will was Mr. Casaubon's relative, and one towards whom she was bound to show kindness. Still there had been signs which perhaps she ought to have understood as implying that Mr. Casaubon did not like his cousin's visits during his own absence. "Perhaps I have been mistaken in many things," said poor Dorothea to herself, while the tears came rolling and she had to dry them quickly. She felt confusedly unhappy, and the image of Will which had been so clear to her before was mysteriously spoiled. But the carriage stopped at the gate of the Hospital. She was soon walking round the grass plots with Lydgate, and her feelings recovered the strong bent which had made her seek for this interview.

Will Ladislaw, meanwhile, was mortified, and knew the reason of it clearly enough. His chances of meeting Dorothea were rare; and here for the first time there had come a chance which had set him at a disadvantage. It was not only, as it had been hitherto, that she was not supremely occupied with him, but that she had seen him under circumstances in which he might appear not to be supremely occupied with her. He felt thrust to a new distance from her, amongst the circles of Middlemarchers who made no part of her life. But that was not his fault: of course, since he had taken his lodgings in the town, he had been making as many acquaintances as he could, his position requiring that he should know everybody and everything. Lydgate was really better worth knowing than any one else in the neighborhood, and he happened to have a wife who was musical and altogether worth calling upon. Here was the whole history of the situation in which Diana had descended too unexpectedly on her worshipper. It was mortifying. Will was conscious that he should not have been at Middlemarch but for Dorothea; and yet his position there was threatening to divide him from her with those barriers of habitual sentiment which are more fatal to the persistence of mutual interest than all the distance between Rome and Britain. Prejudices about rank and

status were easy enough to defy in the form of a tyrannical letter from Mr. Casaubon; but prejudices, like odorous bodies, have a double existence both solid and subtle—solid as the pyramids, subtle as the twentieth echo of an echo, or as the memory of hyacinths which once scented the darkness. And Will was of a temperament to feel keenly the presence of subtleties: a man of clumsier perceptions would not have felt, as he did, that for the first time some sense of unfitness in perfect freedom with him had sprung up in Dorothea's mind, and that their silence, as he conducted her to the carriage, had had a chill in it. Perhaps Casaubon, in his hatred and jealousy, had been insisting to Dorothea that Will had slid below her socially. Confound Casaubon!

Will re-entered the drawing-room, took up his hat, and looking irritated as he advanced towards Mrs. Lydgate, who had seated herself at her work-table, said—

“It is always fatal to have music or poetry interrupted. May I come another day and just finish about the rendering of ‘Lungi dal caro bene’?”

“I shall be happy to be taught,” said Rosamond. “But I am sure you admit that the interruption was a very beautiful one. I quite envy your acquaintance with Mrs. Casaubon. Is she very clever? She looks as if she were.”

“Really, I never thought about it,” said Will, sulkily.

“That is just the answer Tertius gave me, when I first asked him if she were handsome. What is it that you gentlemen are thinking of when you are with Mrs. Casaubon?”

“Herself,” said Will, not indisposed to provoke the charming Mrs. Lydgate. “When one sees a perfect woman, one never thinks of her attributes—one is conscious of her presence.”

“I shall be jealous when Tertius goes to Lowick,” said Rosamond, dimpling, and speaking with airy lightness. “He will come back and think nothing of me.”

“That does not seem to have been the effect on Lydgate hitherto. Mrs. Casaubon is too unlike other women for them to be compared with her.”

“You are a devout worshipper, I perceive. You often see her, I suppose.”

“No,” said Will, almost pettishly. “Worship is usually a matter of theory rather than of practice. But I am practising it to excess just at this moment

—I must really tear myself away.”

“Pray come again some evening: Mr. Lydgate will like to hear the music, and I cannot enjoy it so well without him.”

When her husband was at home again, Rosamond said, standing in front of him and holding his coat-collar with both her hands, “Mr. Ladislaw was here singing with me when Mrs. Casaubon came in. He seemed vexed. Do you think he disliked her seeing him at our house? Surely your position is more than equal to his—whatever may be his relation to the Casaubons.”

“No, no; it must be something else if he were really vexed. Ladislaw is a sort of gypsy; he thinks nothing of leather and prunella.”

“Music apart, he is not always very agreeable. Do you like him?”

“Yes: I think he is a good fellow: rather miscellaneous and bric-a-brac, but likable.”

“Do you know, I think he adores Mrs. Casaubon.”

“Poor devil!” said Lydgate, smiling and pinching his wife’s ears.

Rosamond felt herself beginning to know a great deal of the world, especially in discovering what when she was in her unmarried girlhood had been inconceivable to her except as a dim tragedy in by-gone costumes—that women, even after marriage, might make conquests and enslave men. At that time young ladies in the country, even when educated at Mrs. Lemon’s, read little French literature later than Racine, and public prints had not cast their present magnificent illumination over the scandals of life. Still, vanity, with a woman’s whole mind and day to work in, can construct abundantly on slight hints, especially on such a hint as the possibility of indefinite conquests. How delightful to make captives from the throne of marriage with a husband as crown-prince by your side—himself in fact a subject—while the captives look up forever hopeless, losing their rest probably, and if their appetite too, so much the better! But Rosamond’s romance turned at present chiefly on her crown-prince, and it was enough to enjoy his assured subjection. When he said, “Poor devil!” she asked, with playful curiosity—

“Why so?”

“Why, what can a man do when he takes to adoring one of you mermaids? He only neglects his work and runs up bills.”

“I am sure you do not neglect your work. You are always at the Hospital, or seeing poor patients, or thinking about some doctor’s quarrel; and then at home you always want to pore over your microscope and phials. Confess you like those things better than me.”

“Haven’t you ambition enough to wish that your husband should be something better than a Middlemarch doctor?” said Lydgate, letting his hands fall on to his wife’s shoulders, and looking at her with affectionate gravity. “I shall make you learn my favorite bit from an old poet—

‘Why should our pride make such a stir to be  
And be forgot? What good is like to this,  
To do worthy the writing, and to write  
Worthy the reading and the worlds delight?’

What I want, Rosy, is to do worthy the writing,—and to write out myself what I have done. A man must work, to do that, my pet.”

“Of course, I wish you to make discoveries: no one could more wish you to attain a high position in some better place than Middlemarch. You cannot say that I have ever tried to hinder you from working. But we cannot live like hermits. You are not discontented with me, Tertius?”

“No, dear, no. I am too entirely contented.”

“But what did Mrs. Casaubon want to say to you?”

“Merely to ask about her husband’s health. But I think she is going to be splendid to our New Hospital: I think she will give us two hundred a-year.”

## CHAPTER XLIV.

I would not creep along the coast but steer  
Out in mid-sea, by guidance of the stars.

When Dorothea, walking round the laurel-planted plots of the New Hospital with Lydgate, had learned from him that there were no signs of change in Mr. Casaubon's bodily condition beyond the mental sign of anxiety to know the truth about his illness, she was silent for a few moments, wondering whether she had said or done anything to rouse this new anxiety. Lydgate, not willing to let slip an opportunity of furthering a favorite purpose, ventured to say—

“I don't know whether your or Mr. Casaubon's attention has been drawn to the needs of our New Hospital. Circumstances have made it seem rather egotistic in me to urge the subject; but that is not my fault: it is because there is a fight being made against it by the other medical men. I think you are generally interested in such things, for I remember that when I first had the pleasure of seeing you at Tipton Grange before your marriage, you were asking me some questions about the way in which the health of the poor was affected by their miserable housing.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Dorothea, brightening. “I shall be quite grateful to you if you will tell me how I can help to make things a little better. Everything of that sort has slipped away from me since I have been married. I mean,” she said, after a moment's hesitation, “that the people in our village are tolerably comfortable, and my mind has been too much taken up for me to inquire further. But here—in such a place as Middlemarch—there must be a great deal to be done.”

“There is everything to be done,” said Lydgate, with abrupt energy. “And this Hospital is a capital piece of work, due entirely to Mr. Bulstrode's exertions, and in a great degree to his money. But one man can't do everything in a scheme of this sort. Of course he looked forward to help. And now there's a mean, petty feud set up against the thing in the town, by certain persons who want to make it a failure.”

“What can be their reasons?” said Dorothea, with naive surprise.

“Chiefly Mr. Bulstrode’s unpopularity, to begin with. Half the town would almost take trouble for the sake of thwarting him. In this stupid world most people never consider that a thing is good to be done unless it is done by their own set. I had no connection with Bulstrode before I came here. I look at him quite impartially, and I see that he has some notions—that he has set things on foot—which I can turn to good public purpose. If a fair number of the better educated men went to work with the belief that their observations might contribute to the reform of medical doctrine and practice, we should soon see a change for the better. That’s my point of view. I hold that by refusing to work with Mr. Bulstrode I should be turning my back on an opportunity of making my profession more generally serviceable.”

“I quite agree with you,” said Dorothea, at once fascinated by the situation sketched in Lydgate’s words. “But what is there against Mr. Bulstrode? I know that my uncle is friendly with him.”

“People don’t like his religious tone,” said Lydgate, breaking off there.

“That is all the stronger reason for despising such an opposition,” said Dorothea, looking at the affairs of Middlemarch by the light of the great persecutions.

“To put the matter quite fairly, they have other objections to him:—he is masterful and rather unsociable, and he is concerned with trade, which has complaints of its own that I know nothing about. But what has that to do with the question whether it would not be a fine thing to establish here a more valuable hospital than any they have in the county? The immediate motive to the opposition, however, is the fact that Bulstrode has put the medical direction into my hands. Of course I am glad of that. It gives me an opportunity of doing some good work,—and I am aware that I have to justify his choice of me. But the consequence is, that the whole profession in Middlemarch have set themselves tooth and nail against the Hospital, and not only refuse to cooperate themselves, but try to blacken the whole affair and hinder subscriptions.”

“How very petty!” exclaimed Dorothea, indignantly.

“I suppose one must expect to fight one’s way: there is hardly anything to be done without it. And the ignorance of people about here is stupendous. I don’t lay claim to anything else than having used some

opportunities which have not come within everybody's reach; but there is no stifling the offence of being young, and a new-comer, and happening to know something more than the old inhabitants. Still, if I believe that I can set going a better method of treatment—if I believe that I can pursue certain observations and inquiries which may be a lasting benefit to medical practice, I should be a base truckler if I allowed any consideration of personal comfort to hinder me. And the course is all the clearer from there being no salary in question to put my persistence in an equivocal light.”

“I am glad you have told me this, Mr. Lydgate,” said Dorothea, cordially. “I feel sure I can help a little. I have some money, and don't know what to do with it—that is often an uncomfortable thought to me. I am sure I can spare two hundred a-year for a grand purpose like this. How happy you must be, to know things that you feel sure will do great good! I wish I could awake with that knowledge every morning. There seems to be so much trouble taken that one can hardly see the good of!”

There was a melancholy cadence in Dorothea's voice as she spoke these last words. But she presently added, more cheerfully, “Pray come to Lowick and tell us more of this. I will mention the subject to Mr. Casaubon. I must hasten home now.”

She did mention it that evening, and said that she should like to subscribe two hundred a-year—she had seven hundred a-year as the equivalent of her own fortune, settled on her at her marriage. Mr. Casaubon made no objection beyond a passing remark that the sum might be disproportionate in relation to other good objects, but when Dorothea in her ignorance resisted that suggestion, he acquiesced. He did not care himself about spending money, and was not reluctant to give it. If he ever felt keenly any question of money it was through the medium of another passion than the love of material property.

Dorothea told him that she had seen Lydgate, and recited the gist of her conversation with him about the Hospital. Mr. Casaubon did not question her further, but he felt sure that she had wished to know what had passed between Lydgate and himself. “She knows that I know,” said the ever-restless voice within; but that increase of tacit knowledge only thrust further off any confidence between them. He distrusted her affection; and what loneliness is more lonely than distrust?



## CHAPTER XLV.

It is the humor of many heads to extol the days of their forefathers, and declaim against the wickedness of times present. Which notwithstanding they cannot handsomely do, without the borrowed help and satire of times past; condemning the vices of their own times, by the expressions of vices in times which they commend, which cannot but argue the community of vice in both. Horace, therefore, Juvenal, and Persius, were no prophets, although their lines did seem to indigitate and point at our times.—SIR THOMAS BROWNE: *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*.

That opposition to the New Fever Hospital which Lydgate had sketched to Dorothea was, like other oppositions, to be viewed in many different lights. He regarded it as a mixture of jealousy and dunderheaded prejudice. Mr. Bulstrode saw in it not only medical jealousy but a determination to thwart himself, prompted mainly by a hatred of that vital religion of which he had striven to be an effectual lay representative—a hatred which certainly found pretexts apart from religion such as were only too easy to find in the entanglements of human action. These might be called the ministerial views. But oppositions have the illimitable range of objections at command, which need never stop short at the boundary of knowledge, but can draw forever on the vasts of ignorance. What the opposition in Middlemarch said about the New Hospital and its administration had certainly a great deal of echo in it, for heaven has taken care that everybody shall not be an originator; but there were differences which represented every social shade between the polished moderation of Dr. Minchin and the trenchant assertion of Mrs. Dollop, the landlady of the Tankard in Slaughter Lane.

Mrs. Dollop became more and more convinced by her own asseveration, that Dr. Lydgate meant to let the people die in the Hospital, if not to poison them, for the sake of cutting them up without saying by your leave or with your leave; for it was a known “fac” that he had wanted to cut up Mrs. Goby, as respectable a woman as any in Parley Street, who had money in trust before her marriage—a poor tale for a doctor, who if he was good for anything should know what was the matter with you before you died, and

not want to pry into your inside after you were gone. If that was not reason, Mrs. Dollop wished to know what was; but there was a prevalent feeling in her audience that her opinion was a bulwark, and that if it were overthrown there would be no limits to the cutting-up of bodies, as had been well seen in Burke and Hare with their pitch-plaisters—such a hanging business as that was not wanted in Middlemarch!

And let it not be supposed that opinion at the Tankard in Slaughter Lane was unimportant to the medical profession: that old authentic public-house—the original Tankard, known by the name of Dollop’s—was the resort of a great Benefit Club, which had some months before put to the vote whether its long-standing medical man, “Doctor Gambit,” should not be cashiered in favor of “this Doctor Lydgate,” who was capable of performing the most astonishing cures, and rescuing people altogether given up by other practitioners. But the balance had been turned against Lydgate by two members, who for some private reasons held that this power of resuscitating persons as good as dead was an equivocal recommendation, and might interfere with providential favors. In the course of the year, however, there had been a change in the public sentiment, of which the unanimity at Dollop’s was an index.

A good deal more than a year ago, before anything was known of Lydgate’s skill, the judgments on it had naturally been divided, depending on a sense of likelihood, situated perhaps in the pit of the stomach or in the pineal gland, and differing in its verdicts, but not the less valuable as a guide in the total deficit of evidence. Patients who had chronic diseases or whose lives had long been worn threadbare, like old Featherstone’s, had been at once inclined to try him; also, many who did not like paying their doctor’s bills, thought agreeably of opening an account with a new doctor and sending for him without stint if the children’s temper wanted a dose, occasions when the old practitioners were often crusty; and all persons thus inclined to employ Lydgate held it likely that he was clever. Some considered that he might do more than others “where there was liver;”—at least there would be no harm in getting a few bottles of “stuff” from him, since if these proved useless it would still be possible to return to the Purifying Pills, which kept you alive if they did not remove the yellowness. But these were people of minor importance. Good Middlemarch families were of course not going to change their doctor without reason shown; and everybody who had employed Mr. Peacock did

not feel obliged to accept a new man merely in the character of his successor, objecting that he was “not likely to be equal to Peacock.”

But Lydgate had not been long in the town before there were particulars enough reported of him to breed much more specific expectations and to intensify differences into partisanship; some of the particulars being of that impressive order of which the significance is entirely hidden, like a statistical amount without a standard of comparison, but with a note of exclamation at the end. The cubic feet of oxygen yearly swallowed by a full-grown man—what a shudder they might have created in some Middlemarch circles! “Oxygen! nobody knows what that may be—is it any wonder the cholera has got to Dantzic? And yet there are people who say quarantine is no good!”

One of the facts quickly rumored was that Lydgate did not dispense drugs. This was offensive both to the physicians whose exclusive distinction seemed infringed on, and to the surgeon-apothecaries with whom he ranged himself; and only a little while before, they might have counted on having the law on their side against a man who without calling himself a London-made M.D. dared to ask for pay except as a charge on drugs. But Lydgate had not been experienced enough to foresee that his new course would be even more offensive to the laity; and to Mr. Mawmsey, an important grocer in the Top Market, who, though not one of his patients, questioned him in an affable manner on the subject, he was injudicious enough to give a hasty popular explanation of his reasons, pointing out to Mr. Mawmsey that it must lower the character of practitioners, and be a constant injury to the public, if their only mode of getting paid for their work was by their making out long bills for draughts, boluses, and mixtures.

“It is in that way that hard-working medical men may come to be almost as mischievous as quacks,” said Lydgate, rather thoughtlessly. “To get their own bread they must overdose the king’s lieges; and that’s a bad sort of treason, Mr. Mawmsey—undermines the constitution in a fatal way.”

Mr. Mawmsey was not only an overseer (it was about a question of outdoor pay that he was having an interview with Lydgate), he was also asthmatic and had an increasing family: thus, from a medical point of view, as well as from his own, he was an important man; indeed, an

exceptional grocer, whose hair was arranged in a flame-like pyramid, and whose retail deference was of the cordial, encouraging kind—jocosely complimentary, and with a certain considerate abstinence from letting out the full force of his mind. It was Mr. Mawmsey's friendly jocoseness in questioning him which had set the tone of Lydgate's reply. But let the wise be warned against too great readiness at explanation: it multiplies the sources of mistake, lengthening the sum for reckoners sure to go wrong.

Lydgate smiled as he ended his speech, putting his foot into the stirrup, and Mr. Mawmsey laughed more than he would have done if he had known who the king's lieges were, giving his "Good morning, sir, good-morning, sir," with the air of one who saw everything clearly enough. But in truth his views were perturbed. For years he had been paying bills with strictly made items, so that for every half-crown and eighteen-pence he was certain something measurable had been delivered. He had done this with satisfaction, including it among his responsibilities as a husband and father, and regarding a longer bill than usual as a dignity worth mentioning. Moreover, in addition to the massive benefit of the drugs to "self and family," he had enjoyed the pleasure of forming an acute judgment as to their immediate effects, so as to give an intelligent statement for the guidance of Mr. Gambit—a practitioner just a little lower in status than Wrench or Toller, and especially esteemed as an accoucheur, of whose ability Mr. Mawmsey had the poorest opinion on all other points, but in doctoring, he was wont to say in an undertone, he placed Gambit above any of them.

Here were deeper reasons than the superficial talk of a new man, which appeared still flimsier in the drawing-room over the shop, when they were recited to Mrs. Mawmsey, a woman accustomed to be made much of as a fertile mother,—generally under attendance more or less frequent from Mr. Gambit, and occasionally having attacks which required Dr. Minchin.

"Does this Mr. Lydgate mean to say there is no use in taking medicine?" said Mrs. Mawmsey, who was slightly given to drawling. "I should like him to tell me how I could bear up at Fair time, if I didn't take strengthening medicine for a month beforehand. Think of what I have to provide for calling customers, my dear!"—here Mrs. Mawmsey turned to an intimate female friend who sat by—"a large veal pie—a stuffed fillet—a round of beef—ham, tongue, et cetera, et cetera! But what keeps me up

best is the pink mixture, not the brown. I wonder, Mr. Mawmsey, with *your* experience, you could have patience to listen. I should have told him at once that I knew a little better than that.”

“No, no, no,” said Mr. Mawmsey; “I was not going to tell him my opinion. Hear everything and judge for yourself is my motto. But he didn’t know who he was talking to. I was not to be turned on *his* finger. People often pretend to tell me things, when they might as well say, ‘Mawmsey, you’re a fool.’ But I smile at it: I humor everybody’s weak place. If physic had done harm to self and family, I should have found it out by this time.”

The next day Mr. Gambit was told that Lydgate went about saying physic was of no use.

“Indeed!” said he, lifting his eyebrows with cautious surprise. (He was a stout husky man with a large ring on his fourth finger.) “How will he cure his patients, then?”

“That is what I say,” returned Mrs. Mawmsey, who habitually gave weight to her speech by loading her pronouns. “Does *he* suppose that people will pay him only to come and sit with them and go away again?”

Mrs. Mawmsey had had a great deal of sitting from Mr. Gambit, including very full accounts of his own habits of body and other affairs; but of course he knew there was no innuendo in her remark, since his spare time and personal narrative had never been charged for. So he replied, humorously—

“Well, Lydgate is a good-looking young fellow, you know.”

“Not one that *I* would employ,” said Mrs. Mawmsey. “*Others* may do as they please.”

Hence Mr. Gambit could go away from the chief grocer’s without fear of rivalry, but not without a sense that Lydgate was one of those hypocrites who try to discredit others by advertising their own honesty, and that it might be worth some people’s while to show him up. Mr. Gambit, however, had a satisfactory practice, much pervaded by the smells of retail trading which suggested the reduction of cash payments to a balance. And he did not think it worth his while to show Lydgate up until he knew how. He had not indeed great resources of education, and had had to work his own way against a good deal of professional contempt; but he made none the worse accoucheur for calling the breathing apparatus “longs.”

Other medical men felt themselves more capable. Mr. Toller shared the highest practice in the town and belonged to an old Middlemarch family: there were Tollers in the law and everything else above the line of retail trade. Unlike our irascible friend Wrench, he had the easiest way in the world of taking things which might be supposed to annoy him, being a well-bred, quietly facetious man, who kept a good house, was very fond of a little sporting when he could get it, very friendly with Mr. Hawley, and hostile to Mr. Bulstrode. It may seem odd that with such pleasant habits he should have been given to the heroic treatment, bleeding and blistering and starving his patients, with a dispassionate disregard to his personal example; but the incongruity favored the opinion of his ability among his patients, who commonly observed that Mr. Toller had lazy manners, but his treatment was as active as you could desire: no man, said they, carried more seriousness into his profession: he was a little slow in coming, but when he came, he *did* something. He was a great favorite in his own circle, and whatever he implied to any one's disadvantage told doubly from his careless ironical tone.

He naturally got tired of smiling and saying, "Ah!" when he was told that Mr. Peacock's successor did not mean to dispense medicines; and Mr. Hackbutt one day mentioning it over the wine at a dinner-party, Mr. Toller said, laughingly, "Dibbitts will get rid of his stale drugs, then. I'm fond of little Dibbitts—I'm glad he's in luck."

"I see your meaning, Toller," said Mr. Hackbutt, "and I am entirely of your opinion. I shall take an opportunity of expressing myself to that effect. A medical man should be responsible for the quality of the drugs consumed by his patients. That is the rationale of the system of charging which has hitherto obtained; and nothing is more offensive than this ostentation of reform, where there is no real amelioration."

"Ostentation, Hackbutt?" said Mr. Toller, ironically. "I don't see that. A man can't very well be ostentatious of what nobody believes in. There's no reform in the matter: the question is, whether the profit on the drugs is paid to the medical man by the druggist or by the patient, and whether there shall be extra pay under the name of attendance."

"Ah, to be sure; one of your damned new versions of old humbug," said Mr. Hawley, passing the decanter to Mr. Wrench.

Mr. Wrench, generally abstemious, often drank wine rather freely at a party, getting the more irritable in consequence.

“As to humbug, Hawley,” he said, “that’s a word easy to fling about. But what I contend against is the way medical men are fouling their own nest, and setting up a cry about the country as if a general practitioner who dispenses drugs couldn’t be a gentleman. I throw back the imputation with scorn. I say, the most ungentlemanly trick a man can be guilty of is to come among the members of his profession with innovations which are a libel on their time-honored procedure. That is my opinion, and I am ready to maintain it against any one who contradicts me.” Mr. Wrench’s voice had become exceedingly sharp.

“I can’t oblige you there, Wrench,” said Mr. Hawley, thrusting his hands into his trouser-pockets.

“My dear fellow,” said Mr. Toller, striking in pacifically, and looking at Mr. Wrench, “the physicians have their toes trodden on more than we have. If you come to dignity it is a question for Minchin and Sprague.”

“Does medical jurisprudence provide nothing against these infringements?” said Mr. Hackbutt, with a disinterested desire to offer his lights. “How does the law stand, eh, Hawley?”

“Nothing to be done there,” said Mr. Hawley. “I looked into it for Sprague. You’d only break your nose against a damned judge’s decision.”

“Pooh! no need of law,” said Mr. Toller. “So far as practice is concerned the attempt is an absurdity. No patient will like it—certainly not Peacock’s, who have been used to depletion. Pass the wine.”

Mr. Toller’s prediction was partly verified. If Mr. and Mrs. Mawmsey, who had no idea of employing Lydgate, were made uneasy by his supposed declaration against drugs, it was inevitable that those who called him in should watch a little anxiously to see whether he did “use all the means he might use” in the case. Even good Mr. Powderell, who in his constant charity of interpretation was inclined to esteem Lydgate the more for what seemed a conscientious pursuit of a better plan, had his mind disturbed with doubts during his wife’s attack of erysipelas, and could not abstain from mentioning to Lydgate that Mr. Peacock on a similar occasion had administered a series of boluses which were not otherwise definable than by their remarkable effect in bringing Mrs. Powderell round before Michaelmas from an illness which had begun in a remarkably hot August.

At last, indeed, in the conflict between his desire not to hurt Lydgate and his anxiety that no “means” should be lacking, he induced his wife privately to take Widgeon’s Purifying Pills, an esteemed Middlemarch medicine, which arrested every disease at the fountain by setting to work at once upon the blood. This co-operative measure was not to be mentioned to Lydgate, and Mr. Powderell himself had no certain reliance on it, only hoping that it might be attended with a blessing.

But in this doubtful stage of Lydgate’s introduction he was helped by what we mortals rashly call good fortune. I suppose no doctor ever came newly to a place without making cures that surprised somebody—cures which may be called fortune’s testimonials, and deserve as much credit as the written or printed kind. Various patients got well while Lydgate was attending them, some even of dangerous illnesses; and it was remarked that the new doctor with his new ways had at least the merit of bringing people back from the brink of death. The trash talked on such occasions was the more vexatious to Lydgate, because it gave precisely the sort of prestige which an incompetent and unscrupulous man would desire, and was sure to be imputed to him by the simmering dislike of the other medical men as an encouragement on his own part of ignorant puffing. But even his proud outspokenness was checked by the discernment that it was as useless to fight against the interpretations of ignorance as to whip the fog; and “good fortune” insisted on using those interpretations.

Mrs. Larcher having just become charitably concerned about alarming symptoms in her charwoman, when Dr. Minchin called, asked him to see her then and there, and to give her a certificate for the Infirmary; whereupon after examination he wrote a statement of the case as one of tumor, and recommended the bearer Nancy Nash as an out-patient. Nancy, calling at home on her way to the Infirmary, allowed the stay maker and his wife, in whose attic she lodged, to read Dr. Minchin’s paper, and by this means became a subject of compassionate conversation in the neighboring shops of Churchyard Lane as being afflicted with a tumor at first declared to be as large and hard as a duck’s egg, but later in the day to be about the size of “your fist.” Most hearers agreed that it would have to be cut out, but one had known of oil and another of “squitchineal” as adequate to soften and reduce any lump in the body when taken enough of into the inside—the oil by gradually “soopling,” the squitchineal by eating away.



Meanwhile when Nancy presented herself at the Infirmary, it happened to be one of Lydgate's days there. After questioning and examining her, Lydgate said to the house-surgeon in an undertone, "It's not tumor: it's cramp." He ordered her a blister and some steel mixture, and told her to go home and rest, giving her at the same time a note to Mrs. Larcher, who, she said, was her best employer, to testify that she was in need of good food.

But by-and-by Nancy, in her attic, became portentously worse, the supposed tumor having indeed given way to the blister, but only wandered to another region with angrier pain. The staymaker's wife went to fetch Lydgate, and he continued for a fortnight to attend Nancy in her own home, until under his treatment she got quite well and went to work again. But the case continued to be described as one of tumor in Churchyard Lane and other streets—nay, by Mrs. Larcher also; for when Lydgate's remarkable cure was mentioned to Dr. Minchin, he naturally did not like to say, "The case was not one of tumor, and I was mistaken in describing it as such," but answered, "Indeed! ah! I saw it was a surgical case, not of a fatal kind." He had been inwardly annoyed, however, when he had asked at the Infirmary about the woman he had recommended two days before, to hear from the house-surgeon, a youngster who was not sorry to vex Minchin with impunity, exactly what had occurred: he privately pronounced that it was indecent in a general practitioner to contradict a physician's diagnosis in that open manner, and afterwards agreed with Wrench that Lydgate was disagreeably inattentive to etiquette. Lydgate did not make the affair a ground for valuing himself or (very particularly) despising Minchin, such rectification of misjudgments often happening among men of equal qualifications. But report took up this amazing case of tumor, not clearly distinguished from cancer, and considered the more awful for being of the wandering sort; till much prejudice against Lydgate's method as to drugs was overcome by the proof of his marvellous skill in the speedy restoration of Nancy Nash after she had been rolling and rolling in agonies from the presence of a tumor both hard and obstinate, but nevertheless compelled to yield.

How could Lydgate help himself? It is offensive to tell a lady when she is expressing her amazement at your skill, that she is altogether mistaken and rather foolish in her amazement. And to have entered into the nature of diseases would only have added to his breaches of medical propriety.

Thus he had to wince under a promise of success given by that ignorant praise which misses every valid quality.

In the case of a more conspicuous patient, Mr. Borthrop Trumbull, Lydgate was conscious of having shown himself something better than an every-day doctor, though here too it was an equivocal advantage that he won. The eloquent auctioneer was seized with pneumonia, and having been a patient of Mr. Peacock's, sent for Lydgate, whom he had expressed his intention to patronize. Mr Trumbull was a robust man, a good subject for trying the expectant theory upon—watching the course of an interesting disease when left as much as possible to itself, so that the stages might be noted for future guidance; and from the air with which he described his sensations Lydgate surmised that he would like to be taken into his medical man's confidence, and be represented as a partner in his own cure. The auctioneer heard, without much surprise, that his was a constitution which (always with due watching) might be left to itself, so as to offer a beautiful example of a disease with all its phases seen in clear delineation, and that he probably had the rare strength of mind voluntarily to become the test of a rational procedure, and thus make the disorder of his pulmonary functions a general benefit to society.

Mr. Trumbull acquiesced at once, and entered strongly into the view that an illness of his was no ordinary occasion for medical science.

“Never fear, sir; you are not speaking to one who is altogether ignorant of the *vis medicatrix*,” said he, with his usual superiority of expression, made rather pathetic by difficulty of breathing. And he went without shrinking through his abstinence from drugs, much sustained by application of the thermometer which implied the importance of his temperature, by the sense that he furnished objects for the microscope, and by learning many new words which seemed suited to the dignity of his secretions. For Lydgate was acute enough to indulge him with a little technical talk.

It may be imagined that Mr. Trumbull rose from his couch with a disposition to speak of an illness in which he had manifested the strength of his mind as well as constitution; and he was not backward in awarding credit to the medical man who had discerned the quality of patient he had to deal with. The auctioneer was not an ungenerous man, and liked to give others their due, feeling that he could afford it. He had caught the words

“expectant method,” and rang chimes on this and other learned phrases to accompany the assurance that Lydgate “knew a thing or two more than the rest of the doctors—was far better versed in the secrets of his profession than the majority of his compeers.”

This had happened before the affair of Fred Vincy’s illness had given to Mr. Wrench’s enmity towards Lydgate more definite personal ground. The new-comer already threatened to be a nuisance in the shape of rivalry, and was certainly a nuisance in the shape of practical criticism or reflections on his hard-driven elders, who had had something else to do than to busy themselves with untried notions. His practice had spread in one or two quarters, and from the first the report of his high family had led to his being pretty generally invited, so that the other medical men had to meet him at dinner in the best houses; and having to meet a man whom you dislike is not observed always to end in a mutual attachment. There was hardly ever so much unanimity among them as in the opinion that Lydgate was an arrogant young fellow, and yet ready for the sake of ultimately predominating to show a crawling subservience to Bulstrode. That Mr. Farebrother, whose name was a chief flag of the anti-Bulstrode party, always defended Lydgate and made a friend of him, was referred to Farebrother’s unaccountable way of fighting on both sides.

Here was plenty of preparation for the outburst of professional disgust at the announcement of the laws Mr. Bulstrode was laying down for the direction of the New Hospital, which were the more exasperating because there was no present possibility of interfering with his will and pleasure, everybody except Lord Medlicote having refused help towards the building, on the ground that they preferred giving to the Old Infirmary. Mr. Bulstrode met all the expenses, and had ceased to be sorry that he was purchasing the right to carry out his notions of improvement without hindrance from prejudiced coadjutors; but he had had to spend large sums, and the building had lingered. Caleb Garth had undertaken it, had failed during its progress, and before the interior fittings were begun had retired from the management of the business; and when referring to the Hospital he often said that however Bulstrode might ring if you tried him, he liked good solid carpentry and masonry, and had a notion both of drains and chimneys. In fact, the Hospital had become an object of intense interest to Bulstrode, and he would willingly have continued to spare a large yearly sum that he might rule it dictatorially without any Board; but he had

another favorite object which also required money for its accomplishment: he wished to buy some land in the neighborhood of Middlemarch, and therefore he wished to get considerable contributions towards maintaining the Hospital. Meanwhile he framed his plan of management. The Hospital was to be reserved for fever in all its forms; Lydgate was to be chief medical superintendent, that he might have free authority to pursue all comparative investigations which his studies, particularly in Paris, had shown him the importance of, the other medical visitors having a consultative influence, but no power to contravene Lydgate's ultimate decisions; and the general management was to be lodged exclusively in the hands of five directors associated with Mr. Bulstrode, who were to have votes in the ratio of their contributions, the Board itself filling up any vacancy in its numbers, and no mob of small contributors being admitted to a share of government.

There was an immediate refusal on the part of every medical man in the town to become a visitor at the Fever Hospital.

"Very well," said Lydgate to Mr. Bulstrode, "we have a capital house-surgeon and dispenser, a clear-headed, neat-handed fellow; we'll get Webbe from Crabsley, as good a country practitioner as any of them, to come over twice a-week, and in case of any exceptional operation, Protheroe will come from Brassing. I must work the harder, that's all, and I have given up my post at the Infirmary. The plan will flourish in spite of them, and then they'll be glad to come in. Things can't last as they are: there must be all sorts of reform soon, and then young fellows may be glad to come and study here." Lydgate was in high spirits.

"I shall not flinch, you may depend upon it, Mr. Lydgate," said Mr. Bulstrode. "While I see you carrying out high intentions with vigor, you shall have my unfailing support. And I have humble confidence that the blessing which has hitherto attended my efforts against the spirit of evil in this town will not be withdrawn. Suitable directors to assist me I have no doubt of securing. Mr. Brooke of Tipton has already given me his concurrence, and a pledge to contribute yearly: he has not specified the sum—probably not a great one. But he will be a useful member of the board."

A useful member was perhaps to be defined as one who would originate nothing, and always vote with Mr. Bulstrode.

The medical aversion to Lydgate was hardly disguised now. Neither Dr. Sprague nor Dr. Minchin said that he disliked Lydgate's knowledge, or his disposition to improve treatment: what they disliked was his arrogance, which nobody felt to be altogether deniable. They implied that he was insolent, pretentious, and given to that reckless innovation for the sake of noise and show which was the essence of the charlatan.

The word charlatan once thrown on the air could not be let drop. In those days the world was agitated about the wondrous doings of Mr. St. John Long, "noblemen and gentlemen" attesting his extraction of a fluid like mercury from the temples of a patient.

Mr. Toller remarked one day, smilingly, to Mrs. Taft, that "Bulstrode had found a man to suit him in Lydgate; a charlatan in religion is sure to like other sorts of charlatans."

"Yes, indeed, I can imagine," said Mrs. Taft, keeping the number of thirty stitches carefully in her mind all the while; "there are so many of that sort. I remember Mr. Cheshire, with his irons, trying to make people straight when the Almighty had made them crooked."

"No, no," said Mr. Toller, "Cheshire was all right—all fair and above board. But there's St. John Long—that's the kind of fellow we call a charlatan, advertising cures in ways nobody knows anything about: a fellow who wants to make a noise by pretending to go deeper than other people. The other day he was pretending to tap a man's brain and get quicksilver out of it."

"Good gracious! what dreadful trifling with people's constitutions!" said Mrs. Taft.

After this, it came to be held in various quarters that Lydgate played even with respectable constitutions for his own purposes, and how much more likely that in his flighty experimenting he should make sixes and sevens of hospital patients. Especially it was to be expected, as the landlady of the Tankard had said, that he would recklessly cut up their dead bodies. For Lydgate having attended Mrs. Goby, who died apparently of a heart-disease not very clearly expressed in the symptoms, too daringly asked leave of her relatives to open the body, and thus gave an offence quickly spreading beyond Parley Street, where that lady had long resided on an income such as made this association of her body with the victims of Burke and Hare a flagrant insult to her memory.

Affairs were in this stage when Lydgate opened the subject of the Hospital to Dorothea. We see that he was bearing enmity and silly misconception with much spirit, aware that they were partly created by his good share of success.

“They will not drive me away,” he said, talking confidentially in Mr. Farebrother’s study. “I have got a good opportunity here, for the ends I care most about; and I am pretty sure to get income enough for our wants. By-and-by I shall go on as quietly as possible: I have no seductions now away from home and work. And I am more and more convinced that it will be possible to demonstrate the homogeneous origin of all the tissues. Raspail and others are on the same track, and I have been losing time.”

“I have no power of prophecy there,” said Mr. Farebrother, who had been puffing at his pipe thoughtfully while Lydgate talked; “but as to the hostility in the town, you’ll weather it if you are prudent.”

“How am I to be prudent?” said Lydgate, “I just do what comes before me to do. I can’t help people’s ignorance and spite, any more than Vesalius could. It isn’t possible to square one’s conduct to silly conclusions which nobody can foresee.”

“Quite true; I didn’t mean that. I meant only two things. One is, keep yourself as separable from Bulstrode as you can: of course, you can go on doing good work of your own by his help; but don’t get tied. Perhaps it seems like personal feeling in me to say so—and there’s a good deal of that, I own—but personal feeling is not always in the wrong if you boil it down to the impressions which make it simply an opinion.”

“Bulstrode is nothing to me,” said Lydgate, carelessly, “except on public grounds. As to getting very closely united to him, I am not fond enough of him for that. But what was the other thing you meant?” said Lydgate, who was nursing his leg as comfortably as possible, and feeling in no great need of advice.

“Why, this. Take care—*experto crede*—take care not to get hampered about money matters. I know, by a word you let fall one day, that you don’t like my playing at cards so much for money. You are right enough there. But try and keep clear of wanting small sums that you haven’t got. I am perhaps talking rather superfluously; but a man likes to assume superiority over himself, by holding up his bad example and sermonizing on it.”

Lydgate took Mr. Farebrother's hints very cordially, though he would hardly have borne them from another man. He could not help remembering that he had lately made some debts, but these had seemed inevitable, and he had no intention now to do more than keep house in a simple way. The furniture for which he owed would not want renewing; nor even the stock of wine for a long while.

Many thoughts cheered him at that time—and justly. A man conscious of enthusiasm for worthy aims is sustained under petty hostilities by the memory of great workers who had to fight their way not without wounds, and who hover in his mind as patron saints, invisibly helping. At home, that same evening when he had been chatting with Mr. Farebrother, he had his long legs stretched on the sofa, his head thrown back, and his hands clasped behind it according to his favorite ruminating attitude, while Rosamond sat at the piano, and played one tune after another, of which her husband only knew (like the emotional elephant he was!) that they fell in with his mood as if they had been melodious sea-breezes.

There was something very fine in Lydgate's look just then, and any one might have been encouraged to bet on his achievement. In his dark eyes and on his mouth and brow there was that placidity which comes from the fulness of contemplative thought—the mind not searching, but beholding, and the glance seeming to be filled with what is behind it.

Presently Rosamond left the piano and seated herself on a chair close to the sofa and opposite her husband's face.

“Is that enough music for you, my lord?” she said, folding her hands before her and putting on a little air of meekness.

“Yes, dear, if you are tired,” said Lydgate, gently, turning his eyes and resting them on her, but not otherwise moving. Rosamond's presence at that moment was perhaps no more than a spoonful brought to the lake, and her woman's instinct in this matter was not dull.

“What is absorbing you?” she said, leaning forward and bringing her face nearer to his.

He moved his hands and placed them gently behind her shoulders.

“I am thinking of a great fellow, who was about as old as I am three hundred years ago, and had already begun a new era in anatomy.”

“I can’t guess,” said Rosamond, shaking her head. “We used to play at guessing historical characters at Mrs. Lemon’s, but not anatomists.”

“I’ll tell you. His name was Vesalius. And the only way he could get to know anatomy as he did, was by going to snatch bodies at night, from graveyards and places of execution.”

“Oh!” said Rosamond, with a look of disgust on her pretty face, “I am very glad you are not Vesalius. I should have thought he might find some less horrible way than that.”

“No, he couldn’t,” said Lydgate, going on too earnestly to take much notice of her answer. “He could only get a complete skeleton by snatching the whitened bones of a criminal from the gallows, and burying them, and fetching them away by bits secretly, in the dead of night.”

“I hope he is not one of your great heroes,” said Rosamond, half playfully, half anxiously, “else I shall have you getting up in the night to go to St. Peter’s churchyard. You know how angry you told me the people were about Mrs. Goby. You have enemies enough already.”

“So had Vesalius, Rosy. No wonder the medical fogies in Middlemarch are jealous, when some of the greatest doctors living were fierce upon Vesalius because they had believed in Galen, and he showed that Galen was wrong. They called him a liar and a poisonous monster. But the facts of the human frame were on his side; and so he got the better of them.”

“And what happened to him afterwards?” said Rosamond, with some interest.

“Oh, he had a good deal of fighting to the last. And they did exasperate him enough at one time to make him burn a good deal of his work. Then he got shipwrecked just as he was coming from Jerusalem to take a great chair at Padua. He died rather miserably.”

There was a moment’s pause before Rosamond said, “Do you know, Tertius, I often wish you had not been a medical man.”

“Nay, Rosy, don’t say that,” said Lydgate, drawing her closer to him. “That is like saying you wish you had married another man.”

“Not at all; you are clever enough for anything: you might easily have been something else. And your cousins at Quallingham all think that you have sunk below them in your choice of a profession.”



“The cousins at Quallingham may go to the devil!” said Lydgate, with scorn. “It was like their impudence if they said anything of the sort to you.”

“Still,” said Rosamond, “I do *not* think it is a nice profession, dear.” We know that she had much quiet perseverance in her opinion.

“It is the grandest profession in the world, Rosamond,” said Lydgate, gravely. “And to say that you love me without loving the medical man in me, is the same sort of thing as to say that you like eating a peach but don’t like its flavor. Don’t say that again, dear, it pains me.”

“Very well, Doctor Grave-face,” said Rosy, dimpling, “I will declare in future that I dote on skeletons, and body-snatchers, and bits of things in phials, and quarrels with everybody, that end in your dying miserably.”

“No, no, not so bad as that,” said Lydgate, giving up remonstrance and petting her resignedly.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

Pues no podemos haber aquello que queremos, queramos aquello que podremos.

Since we cannot get what we like, let us like what we can get.—*Spanish Proverb.*

While Lydgate, safely married and with the Hospital under his command, felt himself struggling for Medical Reform against Middlemarch, Middlemarch was becoming more and more conscious of the national struggle for another kind of Reform.

By the time that Lord John Russell's measure was being debated in the House of Commons, there was a new political animation in Middlemarch, and a new definition of parties which might show a decided change of balance if a new election came. And there were some who already predicted this event, declaring that a Reform Bill would never be carried by the actual Parliament. This was what Will Ladislaw dwelt on to Mr. Brooke as a reason for congratulation that he had not yet tried his strength at the hustings.

"Things will grow and ripen as if it were a comet year," said Will. "The public temper will soon get to a cometary heat, now the question of Reform has set in. There is likely to be another election before long, and by that time Middlemarch will have got more ideas into its head. What we have to work at now is the 'Pioneer' and political meetings."

"Quite right, Ladislaw; we shall make a new thing of opinion here," said Mr. Brooke. "Only I want to keep myself independent about Reform, you know; I don't want to go too far. I want to take up Wilberforce's and Romilly's line, you know, and work at Negro Emancipation, Criminal Law—that kind of thing. But of course I should support Grey."

"If you go in for the principle of Reform, you must be prepared to take what the situation offers," said Will. "If everybody pulled for his own bit against everybody else, the whole question would go to tatters."

“Yes, yes, I agree with you—I quite take that point of view. I should put it in that light. I should support Grey, you know. But I don’t want to change the balance of the constitution, and I don’t think Grey would.”

“But that is what the country wants,” said Will. “Else there would be no meaning in political unions or any other movement that knows what it’s about. It wants to have a House of Commons which is not weighted with nominees of the landed class, but with representatives of the other interests. And as to contending for a reform short of that, it is like asking for a bit of an avalanche which has already begun to thunder.”

“That is fine, Ladislaw: that is the way to put it. Write that down, now. We must begin to get documents about the feeling of the country, as well as the machine-breaking and general distress.”

“As to documents,” said Will, “a two-inch card will hold plenty. A few rows of figures are enough to deduce misery from, and a few more will show the rate at which the political determination of the people is growing.”

“Good: draw that out a little more at length, Ladislaw. That is an idea, now: write it out in the ‘Pioneer.’ Put the figures and deduce the misery, you know; and put the other figures and deduce—and so on. You have a way of putting things. Burke, now:—when I think of Burke, I can’t help wishing somebody had a pocket-borough to give you, Ladislaw. You’d never get elected, you know. And we shall always want talent in the House: reform as we will, we shall always want talent. That avalanche and the thunder, now, was really a little like Burke. I want that sort of thing—not ideas, you know, but a way of putting them.”

“Pocket-boroughs would be a fine thing,” said Ladislaw, “if they were always in the right pocket, and there were always a Burke at hand.”

Will was not displeased with that complimentary comparison, even from Mr. Brooke; for it is a little too trying to human flesh to be conscious of expressing one’s self better than others and never to have it noticed, and in the general dearth of admiration for the right thing, even a chance bray of applause falling exactly in time is rather fortifying. Will felt that his literary refinements were usually beyond the limits of Middlemarch perception; nevertheless, he was beginning thoroughly to like the work of which when he began he had said to himself rather languidly, “Why not?”—and he studied the political situation with as ardent an interest as

he had ever given to poetic metres or mediaevalism. It is undeniable that but for the desire to be where Dorothea was, and perhaps the want of knowing what else to do, Will would not at this time have been meditating on the needs of the English people or criticising English statesmanship: he would probably have been rambling in Italy sketching plans for several dramas, trying prose and finding it too jejune, trying verse and finding it too artificial, beginning to copy "bits" from old pictures, leaving off because they were "no good," and observing that, after all, self-culture was the principal point; while in politics he would have been sympathizing warmly with liberty and progress in general. Our sense of duty must often wait for some work which shall take the place of dilettanteism and make us feel that the quality of our action is not a matter of indifference.

Ladislaw had now accepted his bit of work, though it was not that indeterminate loftiest thing which he had once dreamed of as alone worthy of continuous effort. His nature warmed easily in the presence of subjects which were visibly mixed with life and action, and the easily stirred rebellion in him helped the glow of public spirit. In spite of Mr. Casaubon and the banishment from Lowick, he was rather happy; getting a great deal of fresh knowledge in a vivid way and for practical purposes, and making the "Pioneer" celebrated as far as Brassing (never mind the smallness of the area; the writing was not worse than much that reaches the four corners of the earth).

Mr. Brooke was occasionally irritating; but Will's impatience was relieved by the division of his time between visits to the Grange and retreats to his Middlemarch lodgings, which gave variety to his life.

"Shift the pegs a little," he said to himself, "and Mr. Brooke might be in the Cabinet, while I was Under-Secretary. That is the common order of things: the little waves make the large ones and are of the same pattern. I am better here than in the sort of life Mr. Casaubon would have trained me for, where the doing would be all laid down by a precedent too rigid for me to react upon. I don't care for prestige or high pay."

As Lydgate had said of him, he was a sort of gypsy, rather enjoying the sense of belonging to no class; he had a feeling of romance in his position, and a pleasant consciousness of creating a little surprise wherever he went. That sort of enjoyment had been disturbed when he had felt some new distance between himself and Dorothea in their accidental meeting at

Lydgate's, and his irritation had gone out towards Mr. Casaubon, who had declared beforehand that Will would lose caste. "I never had any caste," he would have said, if that prophecy had been uttered to him, and the quick blood would have come and gone like breath in his transparent skin. But it is one thing to like defiance, and another thing to like its consequences.

Meanwhile, the town opinion about the new editor of the "Pioneer" was tending to confirm Mr. Casaubon's view. Will's relationship in that distinguished quarter did not, like Lydgate's high connections, serve as an advantageous introduction: if it was rumored that young Ladislaw was Mr. Casaubon's nephew or cousin, it was also rumored that "Mr. Casaubon would have nothing to do with him."

"Brooke has taken him up," said Mr. Hawley, "because that is what no man in his senses could have expected. Casaubon has devilish good reasons, you may be sure, for turning the cold shoulder on a young fellow whose bringing-up he paid for. Just like Brooke—one of those fellows who would praise a cat to sell a horse."

And some oddities of Will's, more or less poetical, appeared to support Mr. Keck, the editor of the "Trumpet," in asserting that Ladislaw, if the truth were known, was not only a Polish emissary but crack-brained, which accounted for the preternatural quickness and glibness of his speech when he got on to a platform—as he did whenever he had an opportunity, speaking with a facility which cast reflections on solid Englishmen generally. It was disgusting to Keck to see a strip of a fellow, with light curls round his head, get up and speechify by the hour against institutions "which had existed when he was in his cradle." And in a leading article of the "Trumpet," Keck characterized Ladislaw's speech at a Reform meeting as "the violence of an energumen—a miserable effort to shroud in the brilliancy of fireworks the daring of irresponsible statements and the poverty of a knowledge which was of the cheapest and most recent description."

"That was a rattling article yesterday, Keck," said Dr. Sprague, with sarcastic intentions. "But what is an energumen?"

"Oh, a term that came up in the French Revolution," said Keck.

This dangerous aspect of Ladislaw was strangely contrasted with other habits which became matter of remark. He had a fondness, half artistic, half affectionate, for little children—the smaller they were on tolerably

active legs, and the funnier their clothing, the better Will liked to surprise and please them. We know that in Rome he was given to ramble about among the poor people, and the taste did not quit him in Middlemarch.

He had somehow picked up a troop of droll children, little hatless boys with their galligaskins much worn and scant shirting to hang out, little girls who tossed their hair out of their eyes to look at him, and guardian brothers at the mature age of seven. This troop he had led out on gypsy excursions to Halsell Wood at nutting-time, and since the cold weather had set in he had taken them on a clear day to gather sticks for a bonfire in the hollow of a hillside, where he drew out a small feast of gingerbread for them, and improvised a Punch-and-Judy drama with some private home-made puppets. Here was one oddity. Another was, that in houses where he got friendly, he was given to stretch himself at full length on the rug while he talked, and was apt to be discovered in this attitude by occasional callers for whom such an irregularity was likely to confirm the notions of his dangerously mixed blood and general laxity.

But Will's articles and speeches naturally recommended him in families which the new strictness of party division had marked off on the side of Reform. He was invited to Mr. Bulstrode's; but here he could not lie down on the rug, and Mrs. Bulstrode felt that his mode of talking about Catholic countries, as if there were any truce with Antichrist, illustrated the usual tendency to unsoundness in intellectual men.

At Mr. Farebrother's, however, whom the irony of events had brought on the same side with Bulstrode in the national movement, Will became a favorite with the ladies; especially with little Miss Noble, whom it was one of his oddities to escort when he met her in the street with her little basket, giving her his arm in the eyes of the town, and insisting on going with her to pay some call where she distributed her small filchings from her own share of sweet things.

But the house where he visited oftenest and lay most on the rug was Lydgate's. The two men were not at all alike, but they agreed none the worse. Lydgate was abrupt but not irritable, taking little notice of megrims in healthy people; and Ladislav did not usually throw away his susceptibilities on those who took no notice of them. With Rosamond, on the other hand, he pouted and was wayward—nay, often uncomplimentary, much to her inward surprise; nevertheless he was gradually becoming

necessary to her entertainment by his companionship in her music, his varied talk, and his freedom from the grave preoccupation which, with all her husband's tenderness and indulgence, often made his manners unsatisfactory to her, and confirmed her dislike of the medical profession.

Lydgate, inclined to be sarcastic on the superstitious faith of the people in the efficacy of "the bill," while nobody cared about the low state of pathology, sometimes assailed Will with troublesome questions. One evening in March, Rosamond in her cherry-colored dress with swansdown trimming about the throat sat at the tea-table; Lydgate, lately come in tired from his outdoor work, was seated sideways on an easy-chair by the fire with one leg over the elbow, his brow looking a little troubled as his eyes rambled over the columns of the "Pioneer," while Rosamond, having noticed that he was perturbed, avoided looking at him, and inwardly thanked heaven that she herself had not a moody disposition. Will Ladislaw was stretched on the rug contemplating the curtain-pole abstractedly, and humming very low the notes of "When first I saw thy face;" while the house spaniel, also stretched out with small choice of room, looked from between his paws at the usurper of the rug with silent but strong objection.

Rosamond bringing Lydgate his cup of tea, he threw down the paper, and said to Will, who had started up and gone to the table—

"It's no use your puffing Brooke as a reforming landlord, Ladislaw: they only pick the more holes in his coat in the 'Trumpet.'"

"No matter; those who read the 'Pioneer' don't read the 'Trumpet,'" said Will, swallowing his tea and walking about. "Do you suppose the public reads with a view to its own conversion? We should have a witches' brewing with a vengeance then—'Mingle, mingle, mingle, mingle, You that mingle may'—and nobody would know which side he was going to take."

"Farebrother says, he doesn't believe Brooke would get elected if the opportunity came: the very men who profess to be for him would bring another member out of the bag at the right moment."

"There's no harm in trying. It's good to have resident members."

"Why?" said Lydgate, who was much given to use that inconvenient word in a curt tone.

“They represent the local stupidity better,” said Will, laughing, and shaking his curls; “and they are kept on their best behavior in the neighborhood. Brooke is not a bad fellow, but he has done some good things on his estate that he never would have done but for this Parliamentary bite.”

“He’s not fitted to be a public man,” said Lydgate, with contemptuous decision. “He would disappoint everybody who counted on him: I can see that at the Hospital. Only, there Bulstrode holds the reins and drives him.”

“That depends on how you fix your standard of public men,” said Will. “He’s good enough for the occasion: when the people have made up their mind as they are making it up now, they don’t want a man—they only want a vote.”

“That is the way with you political writers, Ladislaw—crying up a measure as if it were a universal cure, and crying up men who are a part of the very disease that wants curing.”

“Why not? Men may help to cure themselves off the face of the land without knowing it,” said Will, who could find reasons impromptu, when he had not thought of a question beforehand.

“That is no excuse for encouraging the superstitious exaggeration of hopes about this particular measure, helping the cry to swallow it whole and to send up voting popinjays who are good for nothing but to carry it. You go against rottenness, and there is nothing more thoroughly rotten than making people believe that society can be cured by a political hocus-pocus.”

“That’s very fine, my dear fellow. But your cure must begin somewhere, and put it that a thousand things which debase a population can never be reformed without this particular reform to begin with. Look what Stanley said the other day—that the House had been tinkering long enough at small questions of bribery, inquiring whether this or that voter has had a guinea when everybody knows that the seats have been sold wholesale. Wait for wisdom and conscience in public agents—fiddlestick! The only conscience we can trust to is the massive sense of wrong in a class, and the best wisdom that will work is the wisdom of balancing claims. That’s my text—which side is injured? I support the man who supports their claims; not the virtuous upholder of the wrong.”



“That general talk about a particular case is mere question begging, Ladislaw. When I say, I go in for the dose that cures, it doesn’t follow that I go in for opium in a given case of gout.”

“I am not begging the question we are upon—whether we are to try for nothing till we find immaculate men to work with. Should you go on that plan? If there were one man who would carry you a medical reform and another who would oppose it, should you inquire which had the better motives or even the better brains?”

“Oh, of course,” said Lydgate, seeing himself checkmated by a move which he had often used himself, “if one did not work with such men as are at hand, things must come to a dead-lock. Suppose the worst opinion in the town about Bulstrode were a true one, that would not make it less true that he has the sense and the resolution to do what I think ought to be done in the matters I know and care most about; but that is the only ground on which I go with him,” Lydgate added rather proudly, bearing in mind Mr. Farebrother’s remarks. “He is nothing to me otherwise; I would not cry him up on any personal ground—I would keep clear of that.”

“Do you mean that I cry up Brooke on any personal ground?” said Will Ladislaw, nettled, and turning sharp round. For the first time he felt offended with Lydgate; not the less so, perhaps, because he would have declined any close inquiry into the growth of his relation to Mr. Brooke.

“Not at all,” said Lydgate, “I was simply explaining my own action. I meant that a man may work for a special end with others whose motives and general course are equivocal, if he is quite sure of his personal independence, and that he is not working for his private interest—either place or money.”

“Then, why don’t you extend your liberality to others?” said Will, still nettled. “My personal independence is as important to me as yours is to you. You have no more reason to imagine that I have personal expectations from Brooke, than I have to imagine that you have personal expectations from Bulstrode. Motives are points of honor, I suppose—nobody can prove them. But as to money and place in the world,” Will ended, tossing back his head, “I think it is pretty clear that I am not determined by considerations of that sort.”

“You quite mistake me, Ladislaw,” said Lydgate, surprised. He had been preoccupied with his own vindication, and had been blind to what

Ladislaw might infer on his own account. "I beg your pardon for unintentionally annoying you. In fact, I should rather attribute to you a romantic disregard of your own worldly interests. On the political question, I referred simply to intellectual bias."

"How very unpleasant you both are this evening!" said Rosamond. "I cannot conceive why money should have been referred to. Politics and Medicine are sufficiently disagreeable to quarrel upon. You can both of you go on quarrelling with all the world and with each other on those two topics."

Rosamond looked mildly neutral as she said this, rising to ring the bell, and then crossing to her work-table.

"Poor Rosy!" said Lydgate, putting out his hand to her as she was passing him. "Disputation is not amusing to cherubs. Have some music. Ask Ladislaw to sing with you."

When Will was gone Rosamond said to her husband, "What put you out of temper this evening, Tertius?"

"Me? It was Ladislaw who was out of temper. He is like a bit of tinder."

"But I mean, before that. Something had vexed you before you came in, you looked cross. And that made you begin to dispute with Mr. Ladislaw. You hurt me very much when you look so, Tertius."

"Do I? Then I am a brute," said Lydgate, caressing her penitently.

"What vexed you?"

"Oh, outdoor things—business." It was really a letter insisting on the payment of a bill for furniture. But Rosamond was expecting to have a baby, and Lydgate wished to save her from any perturbation.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

Was never true love loved in vain,  
For truest love is highest gain.  
No art can make it: it must spring  
Where elements are fostering.  
So in heaven's spot and hour  
Springs the little native flower,  
Downward root and upward eye,  
Shapen by the earth and sky.

It happened to be on a Saturday evening that Will Ladislaw had that little discussion with Lydgate. Its effect when he went to his own rooms was to make him sit up half the night, thinking over again, under a new irritation, all that he had before thought of his having settled in Middlemarch and harnessed himself with Mr. Brooke. Hesitations before he had taken the step had since turned into susceptibility to every hint that he would have been wiser not to take it; and hence came his heat towards Lydgate—a heat which still kept him restless. Was he not making a fool of himself?—and at a time when he was more than ever conscious of being something better than a fool? And for what end?

Well, for no definite end. True, he had dreamy visions of possibilities: there is no human being who having both passions and thoughts does not think in consequence of his passions—does not find images rising in his mind which soothe the passion with hope or sting it with dread. But this, which happens to us all, happens to some with a wide difference; and Will was not one of those whose wit “keeps the roadway:” he had his bypaths where there were little joys of his own choosing, such as gentlemen cantering on the highroad might have thought rather idiotic. The way in which he made a sort of happiness for himself out of his feeling for Dorothea was an example of this. It may seem strange, but it is the fact, that the ordinary vulgar vision of which Mr. Casaubon suspected him—namely, that Dorothea might become a widow, and that the interest he had established in her mind might turn into acceptance of him as a husband—had no tempting, arresting power over him; he did not live in the scenery

of such an event, and follow it out, as we all do with that imagined “otherwise” which is our practical heaven. It was not only that he was unwilling to entertain thoughts which could be accused of baseness, and was already uneasy in the sense that he had to justify himself from the charge of ingratitude—the latent consciousness of many other barriers between himself and Dorothea besides the existence of her husband, had helped to turn away his imagination from speculating on what might befall Mr. Casaubon. And there were yet other reasons. Will, we know, could not bear the thought of any flaw appearing in his crystal: he was at once exasperated and delighted by the calm freedom with which Dorothea looked at him and spoke to him, and there was something so exquisite in thinking of her just as she was, that he could not long for a change which must somehow change her. Do we not shun the street version of a fine melody?—or shrink from the news that the rarity—some bit of chiselling or engraving perhaps—which we have dwelt on even with exultation in the trouble it has cost us to snatch glimpses of it, is really not an uncommon thing, and may be obtained as an every-day possession? Our good depends on the quality and breadth of our emotion; and to Will, a creature who cared little for what are called the solid things of life and greatly for its subtler influences, to have within him such a feeling as he had towards Dorothea, was like the inheritance of a fortune. What others might have called the futility of his passion, made an additional delight for his imagination: he was conscious of a generous movement, and of verifying in his own experience that higher love-poetry which had charmed his fancy. Dorothea, he said to himself, was forever enthroned in his soul: no other woman could sit higher than her footstool; and if he could have written out in immortal syllables the effect she wrought within him, he might have boasted after the example of old Drayton, that,—

“Queens hereafter might be glad to live  
Upon the alms of her superfluous praise.”

But this result was questionable. And what else could he do for Dorothea? What was his devotion worth to her? It was impossible to tell. He would not go out of her reach. He saw no creature among her friends to whom he could believe that she spoke with the same simple confidence as to him. She had once said that she would like him to stay; and stay he would, whatever fire-breathing dragons might hiss around her.

This had always been the conclusion of Will's hesitations. But he was not without contradictoriness and rebellion even towards his own resolve. He had often got irritated, as he was on this particular night, by some outside demonstration that his public exertions with Mr. Brooke as a chief could not seem as heroic as he would like them to be, and this was always associated with the other ground of irritation—that notwithstanding his sacrifice of dignity for Dorothea's sake, he could hardly ever see her. Whereupon, not being able to contradict these unpleasant facts, he contradicted his own strongest bias and said, "I am a fool."

Nevertheless, since the inward debate necessarily turned on Dorothea, he ended, as he had done before, only by getting a livelier sense of what her presence would be to him; and suddenly reflecting that the morrow would be Sunday, he determined to go to Lowick Church and see her. He slept upon that idea, but when he was dressing in the rational morning light, Objection said—

"That will be a virtual defiance of Mr. Casaubon's prohibition to visit Lowick, and Dorothea will be displeased."

"Nonsense!" argued Inclination, "it would be too monstrous for him to hinder me from going out to a pretty country church on a spring morning. And Dorothea will be glad."

"It will be clear to Mr. Casaubon that you have come either to annoy him or to see Dorothea."

"It is not true that I go to annoy him, and why should I not go to see Dorothea? Is he to have everything to himself and be always comfortable? Let him smart a little, as other people are obliged to do. I have always liked the quaintness of the church and congregation; besides, I know the Tuckers: I shall go into their pew."

Having silenced Objection by force of unreason, Will walked to Lowick as if he had been on the way to Paradise, crossing Halsell Common and skirting the wood, where the sunlight fell broadly under the budding boughs, bringing out the beauties of moss and lichen, and fresh green growths piercing the brown. Everything seemed to know that it was Sunday, and to approve of his going to Lowick Church. Will easily felt happy when nothing crossed his humor, and by this time the thought of vexing Mr. Casaubon had become rather amusing to him, making his face break into its merry smile, pleasant to see as the breaking of sunshine on

the water—though the occasion was not exemplary. But most of us are apt to settle within ourselves that the man who blocks our way is odious, and not to mind causing him a little of the disgust which his personality excites in ourselves. Will went along with a small book under his arm and a hand in each side-pocket, never reading, but chanting a little, as he made scenes of what would happen in church and coming out. He was experimenting in tunes to suit some words of his own, sometimes trying a ready-made melody, sometimes improvising. The words were not exactly a hymn, but they certainly fitted his Sunday experience:—

“O me, O me, what frugal cheer  
My love doth feed upon!  
A touch, a ray, that is not here,  
A shadow that is gone:

“A dream of breath that might be near,  
An inly-echoed tone,  
The thought that one may think me dear,  
The place where one was known,

“The tremor of a banished fear,  
An ill that was not done—  
O me, O me, what frugal cheer  
My love doth feed upon!”

Sometimes, when he took off his hat, shaking his head backward, and showing his delicate throat as he sang, he looked like an incarnation of the spring whose spirit filled the air—a bright creature, abundant in uncertain promises.

The bells were still ringing when he got to Lowick, and he went into the curate’s pew before any one else arrived there. But he was still left alone in it when the congregation had assembled. The curate’s pew was opposite the rector’s at the entrance of the small chancel, and Will had time to fear that Dorothea might not come while he looked round at the group of rural faces which made the congregation from year to year within the white-washed walls and dark old pews, hardly with more change than we see in the boughs of a tree which breaks here and there with age, but yet has young shoots. Mr. Rigg’s frog-face was something alien and unaccountable, but notwithstanding this shock to the order of things, there were still the Waules and the rural stock of the Powderells in their pews side by side; brother Samuel’s cheek had the same purple round as ever,

and the three generations of decent cottagers came as of old with a sense of duty to their betters generally—the smaller children regarding Mr. Casaubon, who wore the black gown and mounted to the highest box, as probably the chief of all betters, and the one most awful if offended. Even in 1831 Lowick was at peace, not more agitated by Reform than by the solemn tenor of the Sunday sermon. The congregation had been used to seeing Will at church in former days, and no one took much note of him except the choir, who expected him to make a figure in the singing.

Dorothea did at last appear on this quaint background, walking up the short aisle in her white beaver bonnet and gray cloak—the same she had worn in the Vatican. Her face being, from her entrance, towards the chancel, even her shortsighted eyes soon discerned Will, but there was no outward show of her feeling except a slight paleness and a grave bow as she passed him. To his own surprise Will felt suddenly uncomfortable, and dared not look at her after they had bowed to each other. Two minutes later, when Mr. Casaubon came out of the vestry, and, entering the pew, seated himself in face of Dorothea, Will felt his paralysis more complete. He could look nowhere except at the choir in the little gallery over the vestry-door: Dorothea was perhaps pained, and he had made a wretched blunder. It was no longer amusing to vex Mr. Casaubon, who had the advantage probably of watching him and seeing that he dared not turn his head. Why had he not imagined this beforehand?—but he could not expect that he should sit in that square pew alone, unrelieved by any Tuckers, who had apparently departed from Lowick altogether, for a new clergyman was in the desk. Still he called himself stupid now for not foreseeing that it would be impossible for him to look towards Dorothea—nay, that she might feel his coming an impertinence. There was no delivering himself from his cage, however; and Will found his places and looked at his book as if he had been a school-mistress, feeling that the morning service had never been so immeasurably long before, that he was utterly ridiculous, out of temper, and miserable. This was what a man got by worshipping the sight of a woman! The clerk observed with surprise that Mr. Ladislav did not join in the tune of Hanover, and reflected that he might have a cold.

Mr. Casaubon did not preach that morning, and there was no change in Will's situation until the blessing had been pronounced and every one rose. It was the fashion at Lowick for "the betters" to go out first. With a sudden determination to break the spell that was upon him, Will looked straight at

Mr. Casaubon. But that gentleman's eyes were on the button of the pew-door, which he opened, allowing Dorothea to pass, and following her immediately without raising his eyelids. Will's glance had caught Dorothea's as she turned out of the pew, and again she bowed, but this time with a look of agitation, as if she were repressing tears. Will walked out after them, but they went on towards the little gate leading out of the churchyard into the shrubbery, never looking round.

It was impossible for him to follow them, and he could only walk back sadly at mid-day along the same road which he had trodden hopefully in the morning. The lights were all changed for him both without and within.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

Surely the golden hours are turning gray  
And dance no more, and vainly strive to run:  
I see their white locks streaming in the wind—  
Each face is haggard as it looks at me,  
Slow turning in the constant clasping round  
Storm-driven.

Dorothea's distress when she was leaving the church came chiefly from the perception that Mr. Casaubon was determined not to speak to his cousin, and that Will's presence at church had served to mark more strongly the alienation between them. Will's coming seemed to her quite excusable, nay, she thought it an amiable movement in him towards a reconciliation which she herself had been constantly wishing for. He had probably imagined, as she had, that if Mr. Casaubon and he could meet easily, they would shake hands and friendly intercourse might return. But now Dorothea felt quite robbed of that hope. Will was banished further than ever, for Mr. Casaubon must have been newly embittered by this thrusting upon him of a presence which he refused to recognize.

He had not been very well that morning, suffering from some difficulty in breathing, and had not preached in consequence; she was not surprised, therefore, that he was nearly silent at luncheon, still less that he made no allusion to Will Ladislaw. For her own part she felt that she could never again introduce that subject. They usually spent apart the hours between luncheon and dinner on a Sunday; Mr. Casaubon in the library dozing chiefly, and Dorothea in her boudoir, where she was wont to occupy herself with some of her favorite books. There was a little heap of them on the table in the bow-window—of various sorts, from Herodotus, which she was learning to read with Mr. Casaubon, to her old companion Pascal, and Keble's "Christian Year." But to-day she opened one after another, and could read none of them. Everything seemed dreary: the portents before the birth of Cyrus—Jewish antiquities—oh dear!—devout epigrams—the sacred chime of favorite hymns—all alike were as flat as tunes beaten on wood: even the spring flowers and the grass had a dull shiver in them

under the afternoon clouds that hid the sun fitfully; even the sustaining thoughts which had become habits seemed to have in them the weariness of long future days in which she would still live with them for her sole companions. It was another or rather a fuller sort of companionship that poor Dorothea was hungering for, and the hunger had grown from the perpetual effort demanded by her married life. She was always trying to be what her husband wished, and never able to repose on his delight in what she was. The thing that she liked, that she spontaneously cared to have, seemed to be always excluded from her life; for if it was only granted and not shared by her husband it might as well have been denied. About Will Ladislaw there had been a difference between them from the first, and it had ended, since Mr. Casaubon had so severely repulsed Dorothea's strong feeling about his claims on the family property, by her being convinced that she was in the right and her husband in the wrong, but that she was helpless. This afternoon the helplessness was more wretchedly benumbing than ever: she longed for objects who could be dear to her, and to whom she could be dear. She longed for work which would be directly beneficent like the sunshine and the rain, and now it appeared that she was to live more and more in a virtual tomb, where there was the apparatus of a ghastly labor producing what would never see the light. Today she had stood at the door of the tomb and seen Will Ladislaw receding into the distant world of warm activity and fellowship—turning his face towards her as he went.

Books were of no use. Thinking was of no use. It was Sunday, and she could not have the carriage to go to Celia, who had lately had a baby. There was no refuge now from spiritual emptiness and discontent, and Dorothea had to bear her bad mood, as she would have borne a headache.

After dinner, at the hour when she usually began to read aloud, Mr. Casaubon proposed that they should go into the library, where, he said, he had ordered a fire and lights. He seemed to have revived, and to be thinking intently.

In the library Dorothea observed that he had newly arranged a row of his note-books on a table, and now he took up and put into her hand a well-known volume, which was a table of contents to all the others.

“You will oblige me, my dear,” he said, seating himself, “if instead of other reading this evening, you will go through this aloud, pencil in hand,

and at each point where I say ‘mark,’ will make a cross with your pencil. This is the first step in a sifting process which I have long had in view, and as we go on I shall be able to indicate to you certain principles of selection whereby you will, I trust, have an intelligent participation in my purpose.”

This proposal was only one more sign added to many since his memorable interview with Lydgate, that Mr. Casaubon’s original reluctance to let Dorothea work with him had given place to the contrary disposition, namely, to demand much interest and labor from her.

After she had read and marked for two hours, he said, “We will take the volume up-stairs—and the pencil, if you please—and in case of reading in the night, we can pursue this task. It is not wearisome to you, I trust, Dorothea?”

“I prefer always reading what you like best to hear,” said Dorothea, who told the simple truth; for what she dreaded was to exert herself in reading or anything else which left him as joyless as ever.

It was a proof of the force with which certain characteristics in Dorothea impressed those around her, that her husband, with all his jealousy and suspicion, had gathered implicit trust in the integrity of her promises, and her power of devoting herself to her idea of the right and best. Of late he had begun to feel that these qualities were a peculiar possession for himself, and he wanted to engross them.

The reading in the night did come. Dorothea in her young weariness had slept soon and fast: she was awakened by a sense of light, which seemed to her at first like a sudden vision of sunset after she had climbed a steep hill: she opened her eyes and saw her husband wrapped in his warm gown seating himself in the arm-chair near the fire-place where the embers were still glowing. He had lit two candles, expecting that Dorothea would awake, but not liking to rouse her by more direct means.

“Are you ill, Edward?” she said, rising immediately.

“I felt some uneasiness in a reclining posture. I will sit here for a time.” She threw wood on the fire, wrapped herself up, and said, “You would like me to read to you?”

“You would oblige me greatly by doing so, Dorothea,” said Mr. Casaubon, with a shade more meekness than usual in his polite manner. “I am wakeful: my mind is remarkably lucid.”

“I fear that the excitement may be too great for you,” said Dorothea, remembering Lydgate’s cautions.

“No, I am not conscious of undue excitement. Thought is easy.” Dorothea dared not insist, and she read for an hour or more on the same plan as she had done in the evening, but getting over the pages with more quickness. Mr. Casaubon’s mind was more alert, and he seemed to anticipate what was coming after a very slight verbal indication, saying, “That will do—mark that”—or “Pass on to the next head—I omit the second excursus on Crete.” Dorothea was amazed to think of the bird-like speed with which his mind was surveying the ground where it had been creeping for years. At last he said—

“Close the book now, my dear. We will resume our work to-morrow. I have deferred it too long, and would gladly see it completed. But you observe that the principle on which my selection is made, is to give adequate, and not disproportionate illustration to each of the theses enumerated in my introduction, as at present sketched. You have perceived that distinctly, Dorothea?”

“Yes,” said Dorothea, rather tremulously. She felt sick at heart.

“And now I think that I can take some repose,” said Mr. Casaubon. He laid down again and begged her to put out the lights. When she had lain down too, and there was a darkness only broken by a dull glow on the hearth, he said—

“Before I sleep, I have a request to make, Dorothea.”

“What is it?” said Dorothea, with dread in her mind.

“It is that you will let me know, deliberately, whether, in case of my death, you will carry out my wishes: whether you will avoid doing what I should deprecate, and apply yourself to do what I should desire.”

Dorothea was not taken by surprise: many incidents had been leading her to the conjecture of some intention on her husband’s part which might make a new yoke for her. She did not answer immediately.

“You refuse?” said Mr. Casaubon, with more edge in his tone.

“No, I do not yet refuse,” said Dorothea, in a clear voice, the need of freedom asserting itself within her; “but it is too solemn—I think it is not right—to make a promise when I am ignorant what it will bind me to. Whatever affection prompted I would do without promising.”

“But you would use your own judgment: I ask you to obey mine; you refuse.”

“No, dear, no!” said Dorothea, beseechingly, crushed by opposing fears. “But may I wait and reflect a little while? I desire with my whole soul to do what will comfort you; but I cannot give any pledge suddenly—still less a pledge to do I know not what.”

“You cannot then confide in the nature of my wishes?”

“Grant me till to-morrow,” said Dorothea, beseechingly.

“Till to-morrow then,” said Mr. Casaubon.

Soon she could hear that he was sleeping, but there was no more sleep for her. While she constrained herself to lie still lest she should disturb him, her mind was carrying on a conflict in which imagination ranged its forces first on one side and then on the other. She had no presentiment that the power which her husband wished to establish over her future action had relation to anything else than his work. But it was clear enough to her that he would expect her to devote herself to sifting those mixed heaps of material, which were to be the doubtful illustration of principles still more doubtful. The poor child had become altogether unbelieving as to the trustworthiness of that Key which had made the ambition and the labor of her husband’s life. It was not wonderful that, in spite of her small instruction, her judgment in this matter was truer than his: for she looked with unbiassed comparison and healthy sense at probabilities on which he had risked all his egoism. And now she pictured to herself the days, and months, and years which she must spend in sorting what might be called shattered mummies, and fragments of a tradition which was itself a mosaic wrought from crushed ruins—sorting them as food for a theory which was already withered in the birth like an elfin child. Doubtless a vigorous error vigorously pursued has kept the embryos of truth a-breathing: the quest of gold being at the same time a questioning of substances, the body of chemistry is prepared for its soul, and Lavoisier is born. But Mr. Casaubon’s theory of the elements which made the seed of all tradition was not likely to bruise itself unawares against discoveries: it floated among flexible conjectures no more solid than those etymologies which seemed strong because of likeness in sound until it was shown that likeness in sound made them impossible: it was a method of interpretation which was not tested by the necessity of forming anything which had

sharper collisions than an elaborate notion of Gog and Magog: it was as free from interruption as a plan for threading the stars together. And Dorothea had so often had to check her weariness and impatience over this questionable riddle-guessing, as it revealed itself to her instead of the fellowship in high knowledge which was to make life worthier! She could understand well enough now why her husband had come to cling to her, as possibly the only hope left that his labors would ever take a shape in which they could be given to the world. At first it had seemed that he wished to keep even her aloof from any close knowledge of what he was doing; but gradually the terrible stringency of human need—the prospect of a too speedy death—

And here Dorothea's pity turned from her own future to her husband's past—nay, to his present hard struggle with a lot which had grown out of that past: the lonely labor, the ambition breathing hardly under the pressure of self-distrust; the goal receding, and the heavier limbs; and now at last the sword visibly trembling above him! And had she not wished to marry him that she might help him in his life's labor?—But she had thought the work was to be something greater, which she could serve in devoutly for its own sake. Was it right, even to soothe his grief—would it be possible, even if she promised—to work as in a treadmill fruitlessly?

And yet, could she deny him? Could she say, "I refuse to content this pining hunger?" It would be refusing to do for him dead, what she was almost sure to do for him living. If he lived as Lydgate had said he might, for fifteen years or more, her life would certainly be spent in helping him and obeying him.

Still, there was a deep difference between that devotion to the living and that indefinite promise of devotion to the dead. While he lived, he could claim nothing that she would not still be free to remonstrate against, and even to refuse. But—the thought passed through her mind more than once, though she could not believe in it—might he not mean to demand something more from her than she had been able to imagine, since he wanted her pledge to carry out his wishes without telling her exactly what they were? No; his heart was bound up in his work only: that was the end for which his failing life was to be eked out by hers.

And now, if she were to say, "No! if you die, I will put no finger to your work"—it seemed as if she would be crushing that bruised heart.

For four hours Dorothea lay in this conflict, till she felt ill and bewildered, unable to resolve, praying mutely. Helpless as a child which has sobbed and sought too long, she fell into a late morning sleep, and when she waked Mr. Casaubon was already up. Tantripp told her that he had read prayers, breakfasted, and was in the library.

“I never saw you look so pale, madam,” said Tantripp, a solid-figured woman who had been with the sisters at Lausanne.

“Was I ever high-colored, Tantripp?” said Dorothea, smiling faintly.

“Well, not to say high-colored, but with a bloom like a Chiny rose. But always smelling those leather books, what can be expected? Do rest a little this morning, madam. Let me say you are ill and not able to go into that close library.”

“Oh no, no! let me make haste,” said Dorothea. “Mr. Casaubon wants me particularly.”

When she went down she felt sure that she should promise to fulfil his wishes; but that would be later in the day—not yet.

As Dorothea entered the library, Mr. Casaubon turned round from the table where he had been placing some books, and said—

“I was waiting for your appearance, my dear. I had hoped to set to work at once this morning, but I find myself under some indisposition, probably from too much excitement yesterday. I am going now to take a turn in the shrubbery, since the air is milder.”

“I am glad to hear that,” said Dorothea. “Your mind, I feared, was too active last night.”

“I would fain have it set at rest on the point I last spoke of, Dorothea. You can now, I hope, give me an answer.”

“May I come out to you in the garden presently?” said Dorothea, winning a little breathing space in that way.

“I shall be in the Yew-tree Walk for the next half-hour,” said Mr. Casaubon, and then he left her.

Dorothea, feeling very weary, rang and asked Tantripp to bring her some wraps. She had been sitting still for a few minutes, but not in any renewal of the former conflict: she simply felt that she was going to say “Yes” to her own doom: she was too weak, too full of dread at the thought of

inflicting a keen-edged blow on her husband, to do anything but submit completely. She sat still and let Tantripp put on her bonnet and shawl, a passivity which was unusual with her, for she liked to wait on herself.

“God bless you, madam!” said Tantripp, with an irrepressible movement of love towards the beautiful, gentle creature for whom she felt unable to do anything more, now that she had finished tying the bonnet.

This was too much for Dorothea’s highly-strung feeling, and she burst into tears, sobbing against Tantripp’s arm. But soon she checked herself, dried her eyes, and went out at the glass door into the shrubbery.

“I wish every book in that library was built into a caticom for your master,” said Tantripp to Pratt, the butler, finding him in the breakfast-room. She had been at Rome, and visited the antiquities, as we know; and she always declined to call Mr. Casaubon anything but “your master,” when speaking to the other servants.

Pratt laughed. He liked his master very well, but he liked Tantripp better.

When Dorothea was out on the gravel walks, she lingered among the nearer clumps of trees, hesitating, as she had done once before, though from a different cause. Then she had feared lest her effort at fellowship should be unwelcome; now she dreaded going to the spot where she foresaw that she must bind herself to a fellowship from which she shrank. Neither law nor the world’s opinion compelled her to this—only her husband’s nature and her own compassion, only the ideal and not the real yoke of marriage. She saw clearly enough the whole situation, yet she was fettered: she could not smite the stricken soul that entreated hers. If that were weakness, Dorothea was weak. But the half-hour was passing, and she must not delay longer. When she entered the Yew-tree Walk she could not see her husband; but the walk had bends, and she went, expecting to catch sight of his figure wrapped in a blue cloak, which, with a warm velvet cap, was his outer garment on chill days for the garden. It occurred to her that he might be resting in the summer-house, towards which the path diverged a little. Turning the angle, she could see him seated on the bench, close to a stone table. His arms were resting on the table, and his brow was bowed down on them, the blue cloak being dragged forward and screening his face on each side.



“He exhausted himself last night,” Dorothea said to herself, thinking at first that he was asleep, and that the summer-house was too damp a place to rest in. But then she remembered that of late she had seen him take that attitude when she was reading to him, as if he found it easier than any other; and that he would sometimes speak, as well as listen, with his face down in that way. She went into the summerhouse and said, “I am come, Edward; I am ready.”

He took no notice, and she thought that he must be fast asleep. She laid her hand on his shoulder, and repeated, “I am ready!” Still he was motionless; and with a sudden confused fear, she leaned down to him, took off his velvet cap, and leaned her cheek close to his head, crying in a distressed tone—

“Wake, dear, wake! Listen to me. I am come to answer.” But Dorothea never gave her answer.

Later in the day, Lydgate was seated by her bedside, and she was talking deliriously, thinking aloud, and recalling what had gone through her mind the night before. She knew him, and called him by his name, but appeared to think it right that she should explain everything to him; and again, and again, begged him to explain everything to her husband.

“Tell him I shall go to him soon: I am ready to promise. Only, thinking about it was so dreadful—it has made me ill. Not very ill. I shall soon be better. Go and tell him.”

But the silence in her husband’s ear was never more to be broken.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

“A task too strong for wizard spells  
This squire had brought about;  
'T is easy dropping stones in wells,  
But who shall get them out?”

“I wish to God we could hinder Dorothea from knowing this,” said Sir James Chettam, with a little frown on his brow, and an expression of intense disgust about his mouth.

He was standing on the hearth-rug in the library at Lowick Grange, and speaking to Mr. Brooke. It was the day after Mr. Casaubon had been buried, and Dorothea was not yet able to leave her room.

“That would be difficult, you know, Chettam, as she is an executrix, and she likes to go into these things—property, land, that kind of thing. She has her notions, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, sticking his eye-glasses on nervously, and exploring the edges of a folded paper which he held in his hand; “and she would like to act—depend upon it, as an executrix Dorothea would want to act. And she was twenty-one last December, you know. I can hinder nothing.”

Sir James looked at the carpet for a minute in silence, and then lifting his eyes suddenly fixed them on Mr. Brooke, saying, “I will tell you what we can do. Until Dorothea is well, all business must be kept from her, and as soon as she is able to be moved she must come to us. Being with Celia and the baby will be the best thing in the world for her, and will pass away the time. And meanwhile you must get rid of Ladislaw: you must send him out of the country.” Here Sir James’s look of disgust returned in all its intensity.

Mr. Brooke put his hands behind him, walked to the window and straightened his back with a little shake before he replied.

“That is easily said, Chettam, easily said, you know.”

“My dear sir,” persisted Sir James, restraining his indignation within respectful forms, “it was you who brought him here, and you who keep

him here—I mean by the occupation you give him.”

“Yes, but I can’t dismiss him in an instant without assigning reasons, my dear Chettam. Ladislaw has been invaluable, most satisfactory. I consider that I have done this part of the country a service by bringing him—by bringing him, you know.” Mr. Brooke ended with a nod, turning round to give it.

“It’s a pity this part of the country didn’t do without him, that’s all I have to say about it. At any rate, as Dorothea’s brother-in-law, I feel warranted in objecting strongly to his being kept here by any action on the part of her friends. You admit, I hope, that I have a right to speak about what concerns the dignity of my wife’s sister?”

Sir James was getting warm.

“Of course, my dear Chettam, of course. But you and I have different ideas—different—”

“Not about this action of Casaubon’s, I should hope,” interrupted Sir James. “I say that he has most unfairly compromised Dorothea. I say that there never was a meaner, more ungentlemanly action than this—a codicil of this sort to a will which he made at the time of his marriage with the knowledge and reliance of her family—a positive insult to Dorothea!”

“Well, you know, Casaubon was a little twisted about Ladislaw. Ladislaw has told me the reason—dislike of the bent he took, you know—Ladislaw didn’t think much of Casaubon’s notions, Thoth and Dagon—that sort of thing: and I fancy that Casaubon didn’t like the independent position Ladislaw had taken up. I saw the letters between them, you know. Poor Casaubon was a little buried in books—he didn’t know the world.”

“It’s all very well for Ladislaw to put that color on it,” said Sir James. “But I believe Casaubon was only jealous of him on Dorothea’s account, and the world will suppose that she gave him some reason; and that is what makes it so abominable—coupling her name with this young fellow’s.”

“My dear Chettam, it won’t lead to anything, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, seating himself and sticking on his eye-glass again. “It’s all of a piece with Casaubon’s oddity. This paper, now, ‘Synoptical Tabulation’ and so on, ‘for the use of Mrs. Casaubon,’ it was locked up in the desk with the

will. I suppose he meant Dorothea to publish his researches, eh? and she'll do it, you know; she has gone into his studies uncommonly."

"My dear sir," said Sir James, impatiently, "that is neither here nor there. The question is, whether you don't see with me the propriety of sending young Ladislaw away?"

"Well, no, not the urgency of the thing. By-and-by, perhaps, it may come round. As to gossip, you know, sending him away won't hinder gossip. People say what they like to say, not what they have chapter and verse for," said Mr Brooke, becoming acute about the truths that lay on the side of his own wishes. "I might get rid of Ladislaw up to a certain point—take away the 'Pioneer' from him, and that sort of thing; but I couldn't send him out of the country if he didn't choose to go—didn't choose, you know."

Mr. Brooke, persisting as quietly as if he were only discussing the nature of last year's weather, and nodding at the end with his usual amenity, was an exasperating form of obstinacy.

"Good God!" said Sir James, with as much passion as he ever showed, "let us get him a post; let us spend money on him. If he could go in the suite of some Colonial Governor! Grampus might take him—and I could write to Fulke about it."

"But Ladislaw won't be shipped off like a head of cattle, my dear fellow; Ladislaw has his ideas. It's my opinion that if he were to part from me to-morrow, you'd only hear the more of him in the country. With his talent for speaking and drawing up documents, there are few men who could come up to him as an agitator—an agitator, you know."

"Agitator!" said Sir James, with bitter emphasis, feeling that the syllables of this word properly repeated were a sufficient exposure of its hatefulness.

"But be reasonable, Chettam. Dorothea, now. As you say, she had better go to Celia as soon as possible. She can stay under your roof, and in the mean time things may come round quietly. Don't let us be firing off our guns in a hurry, you know. Standish will keep our counsel, and the news will be old before it's known. Twenty things may happen to carry off Ladislaw—without my doing anything, you know."

"Then I am to conclude that you decline to do anything?"

“Decline, Chettam?—no—I didn’t say decline. But I really don’t see what I could do. Ladislav is a gentleman.”

“I am glad to hear it!” said Sir James, his irritation making him forget himself a little. “I am sure Casaubon was not.”

“Well, it would have been worse if he had made the codicil to hinder her from marrying again at all, you know.”

“I don’t know that,” said Sir James. “It would have been less indelicate.”

“One of poor Casaubon’s freaks! That attack upset his brain a little. It all goes for nothing. She doesn’t *want* to marry Ladislav.”

“But this codicil is framed so as to make everybody believe that she did. I don’t believe anything of the sort about Dorothea,” said Sir James—then frowningly, “but I suspect Ladislav. I tell you frankly, I suspect Ladislav.”

“I couldn’t take any immediate action on that ground, Chettam. In fact, if it were possible to pack him off—send him to Norfolk Island—that sort of thing—it would look all the worse for Dorothea to those who knew about it. It would seem as if we distrusted her—distrusted her, you know.”

That Mr. Brooke had hit on an undeniable argument, did not tend to soothe Sir James. He put out his hand to reach his hat, implying that he did not mean to contend further, and said, still with some heat—

“Well, I can only say that I think Dorothea was sacrificed once, because her friends were too careless. I shall do what I can, as her brother, to protect her now.”

“You can’t do better than get her to Freshitt as soon as possible, Chettam. I approve that plan altogether,” said Mr. Brooke, well pleased that he had won the argument. It would have been highly inconvenient to him to part with Ladislav at that time, when a dissolution might happen any day, and electors were to be convinced of the course by which the interests of the country would be best served. Mr. Brooke sincerely believed that this end could be secured by his own return to Parliament: he offered the forces of his mind honestly to the nation.

## CHAPTER L.

“This Loller here wol precilen us somewhat.”  
“Nay by my father’s soule! that schal he nat,”  
Sayde the Schipman, ‘here schal he not preche,  
We schal no gospel glosen here ne teche.  
We leven all in the gret God,’ quod he.  
He wolden sowen some diffcultee.”—*Canterbury Tales*.

Dorothea had been safe at Freshitt Hall nearly a week before she had asked any dangerous questions. Every morning now she sat with Celia in the prettiest of up-stairs sitting-rooms, opening into a small conservatory—Celia all in white and lavender like a bunch of mixed violets, watching the remarkable acts of the baby, which were so dubious to her inexperienced mind that all conversation was interrupted by appeals for their interpretation made to the oracular nurse. Dorothea sat by in her widow’s dress, with an expression which rather provoked Celia, as being much too sad; for not only was baby quite well, but really when a husband had been so dull and troublesome while he lived, and besides that had—well, well! Sir James, of course, had told Celia everything, with a strong representation how important it was that Dorothea should not know it sooner than was inevitable.

But Mr. Brooke had been right in predicting that Dorothea would not long remain passive where action had been assigned to her; she knew the purport of her husband’s will made at the time of their marriage, and her mind, as soon as she was clearly conscious of her position, was silently occupied with what she ought to do as the owner of Lowick Manor with the patronage of the living attached to it.

One morning when her uncle paid his usual visit, though with an unusual alacrity in his manner which he accounted for by saying that it was now pretty certain Parliament would be dissolved forthwith, Dorothea said—

“Uncle, it is right now that I should consider who is to have the living at Lowick. After Mr. Tucker had been provided for, I never heard my

husband say that he had any clergyman in his mind as a successor to himself. I think I ought to have the keys now and go to Lowick to examine all my husband's papers. There may be something that would throw light on his wishes."

"No hurry, my dear," said Mr. Brooke, quietly. "By-and-by, you know, you can go, if you like. But I cast my eyes over things in the desks and drawers—there was nothing—nothing but deep subjects, you know—besides the will. Everything can be done by-and-by. As to the living, I have had an application for interest already—I should say rather good. Mr. Tyke has been strongly recommended to me—I had something to do with getting him an appointment before. An apostolic man, I believe—the sort of thing that would suit you, my dear."

"I should like to have fuller knowledge about him, uncle, and judge for myself, if Mr. Casaubon has not left any expression of his wishes. He has perhaps made some addition to his will—there may be some instructions for me," said Dorothea, who had all the while had this conjecture in her mind with relation to her husband's work.

"Nothing about the rectory, my dear—nothing," said Mr. Brooke, rising to go away, and putting out his hand to his nieces: "nor about his researches, you know. Nothing in the will."

Dorothea's lip quivered.

"Come, you must not think of these things yet, my dear. By-and-by, you know."

"I am quite well now, uncle; I wish to exert myself."

"Well, well, we shall see. But I must run away now—I have no end of work now—it's a crisis—a political crisis, you know. And here is Celia and her little man—you are an aunt, you know, now, and I am a sort of grandfather," said Mr. Brooke, with placid hurry, anxious to get away and tell Chettam that it would not be his (Mr. Brooke's) fault if Dorothea insisted on looking into everything.

Dorothea sank back in her chair when her uncle had left the room, and cast her eyes down meditatively on her crossed hands.

"Look, Dodo! look at him! Did you ever see anything like that?" said Celia, in her comfortable staccato.

"What, Kitty?" said Dorothea, lifting her eyes rather absently.

“What? why, his upper lip; see how he is drawing it down, as if he meant to make a face. Isn’t it wonderful! He may have his little thoughts. I wish nurse were here. Do look at him.”

A large tear which had been for some time gathering, rolled down Dorothea’s cheek as she looked up and tried to smile.

“Don’t be sad, Dodo; kiss baby. What are you brooding over so? I am sure you did everything, and a great deal too much. You should be happy now.”

“I wonder if Sir James would drive me to Lowick. I want to look over everything—to see if there were any words written for me.”

“You are not to go till Mr. Lydgate says you may go. And he has not said so yet (here you are, nurse; take baby and walk up and down the gallery). Besides, you have got a wrong notion in your head as usual, Dodo—I can see that: it vexes me.”

“Where am I wrong, Kitty?” said Dorothea, quite meekly. She was almost ready now to think Celia wiser than herself, and was really wondering with some fear what her wrong notion was. Celia felt her advantage, and was determined to use it. None of them knew Dodo as well as she did, or knew how to manage her. Since Celia’s baby was born, she had had a new sense of her mental solidity and calm wisdom. It seemed clear that where there was a baby, things were right enough, and that error, in general, was a mere lack of that central poisoning force.

“I can see what you are thinking of as well as can be, Dodo,” said Celia. “You are wanting to find out if there is anything uncomfortable for you to do now, only because Mr. Casaubon wished it. As if you had not been uncomfortable enough before. And he doesn’t deserve it, and you will find that out. He has behaved very badly. James is as angry with him as can be. And I had better tell you, to prepare you.”

“Celia,” said Dorothea, entreatingly, “you distress me. Tell me at once what you mean.” It glanced through her mind that Mr. Casaubon had left the property away from her—which would not be so very distressing.

“Why, he has made a codicil to his will, to say the property was all to go away from you if you married—I mean—”

“That is of no consequence,” said Dorothea, breaking in impetuously.



“But if you married Mr. Ladislaw, not anybody else,” Celia went on with persevering quietude. “Of course that is of no consequence in one way—you never *would* marry Mr. Ladislaw; but that only makes it worse of Mr. Casaubon.”

The blood rushed to Dorothea’s face and neck painfully. But Celia was administering what she thought a sobering dose of fact. It was taking up notions that had done Dodo’s health so much harm. So she went on in her neutral tone, as if she had been remarking on baby’s robes.

“James says so. He says it is abominable, and not like a gentleman. And there never was a better judge than James. It is as if Mr. Casaubon wanted to make people believe that you would wish to marry Mr. Ladislaw—which is ridiculous. Only James says it was to hinder Mr. Ladislaw from wanting to marry you for your money—just as if he ever would think of making you an offer. Mrs. Cadwallader said you might as well marry an Italian with white mice! But I must just go and look at baby,” Celia added, without the least change of tone, throwing a light shawl over her, and tripping away.

Dorothea by this time had turned cold again, and now threw herself back helplessly in her chair. She might have compared her experience at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking on a new form, that she was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. Everything was changing its aspect: her husband’s conduct, her own duteous feeling towards him, every struggle between them—and yet more, her whole relation to Will Ladislaw. Her world was in a state of convulsive change; the only thing she could say distinctly to herself was, that she must wait and think anew. One change terrified her as if it had been a sin; it was a violent shock of repulsion from her departed husband, who had had hidden thoughts, perhaps perverting everything she said and did. Then again she was conscious of another change which also made her tremulous; it was a sudden strange yearning of heart towards Will Ladislaw. It had never before entered her mind that he could, under any circumstances, be her lover: conceive the effect of the sudden revelation that another had thought of him in that light—that perhaps he himself had been conscious of such a possibility,—and this with the hurrying, crowding vision of unfitting conditions, and questions not soon to be solved.

It seemed a long while—she did not know how long—before she heard Celia saying, “That will do, nurse; he will be quiet on my lap now. You can go to lunch, and let Garratt stay in the next room. What I think, Dodo,” Celia went on, observing nothing more than that Dorothea was leaning back in her chair, and likely to be passive, “is that Mr. Casaubon was spiteful. I never did like him, and James never did. I think the corners of his mouth were dreadfully spiteful. And now he has behaved in this way, I am sure religion does not require you to make yourself uncomfortable about him. If he has been taken away, that is a mercy, and you ought to be grateful. We should not grieve, should we, baby?” said Celia confidentially to that unconscious centre and poise of the world, who had the most remarkable fists all complete even to the nails, and hair enough, really, when you took his cap off, to make—you didn’t know what:—in short, he was Bouddha in a Western form.

At this crisis Lydgate was announced, and one of the first things he said was, “I fear you are not so well as you were, Mrs. Casaubon; have you been agitated? allow me to feel your pulse.” Dorothea’s hand was of a marble coldness.

“She wants to go to Lowick, to look over papers,” said Celia. “She ought not, ought she?”

Lydgate did not speak for a few moments. Then he said, looking at Dorothea. “I hardly know. In my opinion Mrs. Casaubon should do what would give her the most repose of mind. That repose will not always come from being forbidden to act.”

“Thank you,” said Dorothea, exerting herself, “I am sure that is wise. There are so many things which I ought to attend to. Why should I sit here idle?” Then, with an effort to recall subjects not connected with her agitation, she added, abruptly, “You know every one in Middlemarch, I think, Mr. Lydgate. I shall ask you to tell me a great deal. I have serious things to do now. I have a living to give away. You know Mr. Tyke and all the—” But Dorothea’s effort was too much for her; she broke off and burst into sobs.

Lydgate made her drink a dose of sal volatile.

“Let Mrs. Casaubon do as she likes,” he said to Sir James, whom he asked to see before quitting the house. “She wants perfect freedom, I think, more than any other prescription.”

His attendance on Dorothea while her brain was excited, had enabled him to form some true conclusions concerning the trials of her life. He felt sure that she had been suffering from the strain and conflict of self-repression; and that she was likely now to feel herself only in another sort of pinfold than that from which she had been released.

Lydgate's advice was all the easier for Sir James to follow when he found that Celia had already told Dorothea the unpleasant fact about the will. There was no help for it now—no reason for any further delay in the execution of necessary business. And the next day Sir James complied at once with her request that he would drive her to Lowick.

“I have no wish to stay there at present,” said Dorothea; “I could hardly bear it. I am much happier at Freshitt with Celia. I shall be able to think better about what should be done at Lowick by looking at it from a distance. And I should like to be at the Grange a little while with my uncle, and go about in all the old walks and among the people in the village.”

“Not yet, I think. Your uncle is having political company, and you are better out of the way of such doings,” said Sir James, who at that moment thought of the Grange chiefly as a haunt of young Ladislaw's. But no word passed between him and Dorothea about the objectionable part of the will; indeed, both of them felt that the mention of it between them would be impossible. Sir James was shy, even with men, about disagreeable subjects; and the one thing that Dorothea would have chosen to say, if she had spoken on the matter at all, was forbidden to her at present because it seemed to be a further exposure of her husband's injustice. Yet she did wish that Sir James could know what had passed between her and her husband about Will Ladislaw's moral claim on the property: it would then, she thought, be apparent to him as it was to her, that her husband's strange indelicate proviso had been chiefly urged by his bitter resistance to that idea of claim, and not merely by personal feelings more difficult to talk about. Also, it must be admitted, Dorothea wished that this could be known for Will's sake, since her friends seemed to think of him as simply an object of Mr. Casaubon's charity. Why should he be compared with an Italian carrying white mice? That word quoted from Mrs. Cadwallader seemed like a mocking travesty wrought in the dark by an impish finger.

At Lowick Dorothea searched desk and drawer—searched all her husband's places of deposit for private writing, but found no paper addressed especially to her, except that "Synoptical Tabulation," which was probably only the beginning of many intended directions for her guidance. In carrying out this bequest of labor to Dorothea, as in all else, Mr. Casaubon had been slow and hesitating, oppressed in the plan of transmitting his work, as he had been in executing it, by the sense of moving heavily in a dim and clogging medium: distrust of Dorothea's competence to arrange what he had prepared was subdued only by distrust of any other redactor. But he had come at last to create a trust for himself out of Dorothea's nature: she could do what she resolved to do: and he willingly imagined her toiling under the fetters of a promise to erect a tomb with his name upon it. (Not that Mr. Casaubon called the future volumes a tomb; he called them the Key to all Mythologies.) But the months gained on him and left his plans belated: he had only had time to ask for that promise by which he sought to keep his cold grasp on Dorothea's life.

The grasp had slipped away. Bound by a pledge given from the depths of her pity, she would have been capable of undertaking a toil which her judgment whispered was vain for all uses except that consecration of faithfulness which is a supreme use. But now her judgment, instead of being controlled by dutiful devotion, was made active by the embittering discovery that in her past union there had lurked the hidden alienation of secrecy and suspicion. The living, suffering man was no longer before her to awaken her pity: there remained only the retrospect of painful subjection to a husband whose thoughts had been lower than she had believed, whose exorbitant claims for himself had even blinded his scrupulous care for his own character, and made him defeat his own pride by shocking men of ordinary honor. As for the property which was the sign of that broken tie, she would have been glad to be free from it and have nothing more than her original fortune which had been settled on her, if there had not been duties attached to ownership, which she ought not to flinch from. About this property many troublous questions insisted on rising: had she not been right in thinking that the half of it ought to go to Will Ladislaw?—but was it not impossible now for her to do that act of justice? Mr. Casaubon had taken a cruelly effective means of hindering

her: even with indignation against him in her heart, any act that seemed a triumphant eluding of his purpose revolted her.

After collecting papers of business which she wished to examine, she locked up again the desks and drawers—all empty of personal words for her—empty of any sign that in her husband's lonely brooding his heart had gone out to her in excuse or explanation; and she went back to Freshitt with the sense that around his last hard demand and his last injurious assertion of his power, the silence was unbroken.

Dorothea tried now to turn her thoughts towards immediate duties, and one of these was of a kind which others were determined to remind her of. Lydgate's ear had caught eagerly her mention of the living, and as soon as he could, he reopened the subject, seeing here a possibility of making amends for the casting-vote he had once given with an ill-satisfied conscience. "Instead of telling you anything about Mr. Tyke," he said, "I should like to speak of another man—Mr. Farebrother, the Vicar of St. Botolph's. His living is a poor one, and gives him a stinted provision for himself and his family. His mother, aunt, and sister all live with him, and depend upon him. I believe he has never married because of them. I never heard such good preaching as his—such plain, easy eloquence. He would have done to preach at St. Paul's Cross after old Latimer. His talk is just as good about all subjects: original, simple, clear. I think him a remarkable fellow: he ought to have done more than he has done."

"Why has he not done more?" said Dorothea, interested now in all who had slipped below their own intention.

"That's a hard question," said Lydgate. "I find myself that it's uncommonly difficult to make the right thing work: there are so many strings pulling at once. Farebrother often hints that he has got into the wrong profession; he wants a wider range than that of a poor clergyman, and I suppose he has no interest to help him on. He is very fond of Natural History and various scientific matters, and he is hampered in reconciling these tastes with his position. He has no money to spare—hardly enough to use; and that has led him into card-playing—Middlemarch is a great place for whist. He does play for money, and he wins a good deal. Of course that takes him into company a little beneath him, and makes him slack about some things; and yet, with all that, looking at him as a whole, I think he is

one of the most blameless men I ever knew. He has neither venom nor doubleness in him, and those often go with a more correct outside.”

“I wonder whether he suffers in his conscience because of that habit,” said Dorothea; “I wonder whether he wishes he could leave it off.”

“I have no doubt he would leave it off, if he were transplanted into plenty: he would be glad of the time for other things.”

“My uncle says that Mr. Tyke is spoken of as an apostolic man,” said Dorothea, meditatively. She was wishing it were possible to restore the times of primitive zeal, and yet thinking of Mr. Farebrother with a strong desire to rescue him from his chance-gotten money.

“I don’t pretend to say that Farebrother is apostolic,” said Lydgate. “His position is not quite like that of the Apostles: he is only a parson among parishioners whose lives he has to try and make better. Practically I find that what is called being apostolic now, is an impatience of everything in which the parson doesn’t cut the principal figure. I see something of that in Mr. Tyke at the Hospital: a good deal of his doctrine is a sort of pinching hard to make people uncomfortably aware of him. Besides, an apostolic man at Lowick!—he ought to think, as St. Francis did, that it is needful to preach to the birds.”

“True,” said Dorothea. “It is hard to imagine what sort of notions our farmers and laborers get from their teaching. I have been looking into a volume of sermons by Mr. Tyke: such sermons would be of no use at Lowick—I mean, about imputed righteousness and the prophecies in the Apocalypse. I have always been thinking of the different ways in which Christianity is taught, and whenever I find one way that makes it a wider blessing than any other, I cling to that as the truest—I mean that which takes in the most good of all kinds, and brings in the most people as sharers in it. It is surely better to pardon too much, than to condemn too much. But I should like to see Mr. Farebrother and hear him preach.”

“Do,” said Lydgate; “I trust to the effect of that. He is very much beloved, but he has his enemies too: there are always people who can’t forgive an able man for differing from them. And that money-winning business is really a blot. You don’t, of course, see many Middlemarch people: but Mr. Ladislaw, who is constantly seeing Mr. Brooke, is a great friend of Mr. Farebrother’s old ladies, and would be glad to sing the Vicar’s praises. One of the old ladies—Miss Noble, the aunt—is a

wonderfully quaint picture of self-forgetful goodness, and Ladislav gallants her about sometimes. I met them one day in a back street: you know Ladislav's look—a sort of Daphnis in coat and waistcoat; and this little old maid reaching up to his arm—they looked like a couple dropped out of a romantic comedy. But the best evidence about Farebrother is to see him and hear him.”

Happily Dorothea was in her private sitting-room when this conversation occurred, and there was no one present to make Lydgate's innocent introduction of Ladislav painful to her. As was usual with him in matters of personal gossip, Lydgate had quite forgotten Rosamond's remark that she thought Will adored Mrs. Casaubon. At that moment he was only caring for what would recommend the Farebrother family; and he had purposely given emphasis to the worst that could be said about the Vicar, in order to forestall objections. In the weeks since Mr. Casaubon's death he had hardly seen Ladislav, and he had heard no rumor to warn him that Mr. Brooke's confidential secretary was a dangerous subject with Mrs. Casaubon. When he was gone, his picture of Ladislav lingered in her mind and disputed the ground with that question of the Lowick living. What was Will Ladislav thinking about her? Would he hear of that fact which made her cheeks burn as they never used to do? And how would he feel when he heard it?—But she could see as well as possible how he smiled down at the little old maid. An Italian with white mice!—on the contrary, he was a creature who entered into every one's feelings, and could take the pressure of their thought instead of urging his own with iron resistance.

## CHAPTER LI.

Party is Nature too, and you shall see  
By force of Logic how they both agree:  
The Many in the One, the One in Many;  
All is not Some, nor Some the same as Any:  
Genus holds species, both are great or small;  
One genus highest, one not high at all;  
Each species has its differentia too,  
This is not That, and He was never You,  
Though this and that are AYES, and you and he  
Are like as one to one, or three to three.

No gossip about Mr. Casaubon's will had yet reached Ladislaw: the air seemed to be filled with the dissolution of Parliament and the coming election, as the old wakes and fairs were filled with the rival clatter of itinerant shows; and more private noises were taken little notice of. The famous "dry election" was at hand, in which the depths of public feeling might be measured by the low flood-mark of drink. Will Ladislaw was one of the busiest at this time; and though Dorothea's widowhood was continually in his thought, he was so far from wishing to be spoken to on the subject, that when Lydgate sought him out to tell him what had passed about the Lowick living, he answered rather waspishly—

"Why should you bring me into the matter? I never see Mrs. Casaubon, and am not likely to see her, since she is at Freshitt. I never go there. It is Tory ground, where I and the 'Pioneer' are no more welcome than a poacher and his gun."

The fact was that Will had been made the more susceptible by observing that Mr. Brooke, instead of wishing him, as before, to come to the Grange oftener than was quite agreeable to himself, seemed now to contrive that he should go there as little as possible. This was a shuffling concession of Mr. Brooke's to Sir James Chettam's indignant remonstrance; and Will, awake to the slightest hint in this direction, concluded that he was to be kept away from the Grange on Dorothea's account. Her friends, then, regarded him with some suspicion? Their fears were quite superfluous:



they were very much mistaken if they imagined that he would put himself forward as a needy adventurer trying to win the favor of a rich woman.

Until now Will had never fully seen the chasm between himself and Dorothea—until now that he was come to the brink of it, and saw her on the other side. He began, not without some inward rage, to think of going away from the neighborhood: it would be impossible for him to show any further interest in Dorothea without subjecting himself to disagreeable imputations—perhaps even in her mind, which others might try to poison.

“We are forever divided,” said Will. “I might as well be at Rome; she would be no farther from me.” But what we call our despair is often only the painful eagerness of unfed hope. There were plenty of reasons why he should not go—public reasons why he should not quit his post at this crisis, leaving Mr. Brooke in the lurch when he needed “coaching” for the election, and when there was so much canvassing, direct and indirect, to be carried on. Will could not like to leave his own chessmen in the heat of a game; and any candidate on the right side, even if his brain and marrow had been as soft as was consistent with a gentlemanly bearing, might help to turn a majority. To coach Mr. Brooke and keep him steadily to the idea that he must pledge himself to vote for the actual Reform Bill, instead of insisting on his independence and power of pulling up in time, was not an easy task. Mr. Farebrother’s prophecy of a fourth candidate “in the bag” had not yet been fulfilled, neither the Parliamentary Candidate Society nor any other power on the watch to secure a reforming majority seeing a worthy nodus for interference while there was a second reforming candidate like Mr. Brooke, who might be returned at his own expense; and the fight lay entirely between Pinkerton the old Tory member, Bagster the new Whig member returned at the last election, and Brooke the future independent member, who was to fetter himself for this occasion only. Mr. Hawley and his party would bend all their forces to the return of Pinkerton, and Mr. Brooke’s success must depend either on plumpers which would leave Bagster in the rear, or on the new minting of Tory votes into reforming votes. The latter means, of course, would be preferable.

This prospect of converting votes was a dangerous distraction to Mr. Brooke: his impression that waverers were likely to be allured by wavering statements, and also the liability of his mind to stick afresh at

opposing arguments as they turned up in his memory, gave Will Ladislaw much trouble.

“You know there are tactics in these things,” said Mr. Brooke; “meeting people half-way—tempering your ideas—saying, ‘Well now, there’s something in that,’ and so on. I agree with you that this is a peculiar occasion—the country with a will of its own—political unions—that sort of thing—but we sometimes cut with rather too sharp a knife, Ladislaw. These ten-pound householders, now: why ten? Draw the line somewhere—yes: but why just at ten? That’s a difficult question, now, if you go into it.”

“Of course it is,” said Will, impatiently. “But if you are to wait till we get a logical Bill, you must put yourself forward as a revolutionist, and then Middlemarch would not elect you, I fancy. As for trimming, this is not a time for trimming.”

Mr. Brooke always ended by agreeing with Ladislaw, who still appeared to him a sort of Burke with a leaven of Shelley; but after an interval the wisdom of his own methods reasserted itself, and he was again drawn into using them with much hopefulness. At this stage of affairs he was in excellent spirits, which even supported him under large advances of money; for his powers of convincing and persuading had not yet been tested by anything more difficult than a chairman’s speech introducing other orators, or a dialogue with a Middlemarch voter, from which he came away with a sense that he was a tactician by nature, and that it was a pity he had not gone earlier into this kind of thing. He was a little conscious of defeat, however, with Mr. Mawmsey, a chief representative in Middlemarch of that great social power, the retail trader, and naturally one of the most doubtful voters in the borough—willing for his own part to supply an equal quality of teas and sugars to reformer and anti-reformer, as well as to agree impartially with both, and feeling like the burgesses of old that this necessity of electing members was a great burthen to a town; for even if there were no danger in holding out hopes to all parties beforehand, there would be the painful necessity at last of disappointing respectable people whose names were on his books. He was accustomed to receive large orders from Mr. Brooke of Tipton; but then, there were many of Pinkerton’s committee whose opinions had a great weight of grocery on their side. Mr. Mawmsey thinking that Mr. Brooke, as not too “clever in

his intellects,” was the more likely to forgive a grocer who gave a hostile vote under pressure, had become confidential in his back parlor.

“As to Reform, sir, put it in a family light,” he said, rattling the small silver in his pocket, and smiling affably. “Will it support Mrs. Mawmsey, and enable her to bring up six children when I am no more? I put the question *fictiously*, knowing what must be the answer. Very well, sir. I ask you what, as a husband and a father, I am to do when gentlemen come to me and say, ‘Do as you like, Mawmsey; but if you vote against us, I shall get my groceries elsewhere: when I sugar my liquor I like to feel that I am benefiting the country by maintaining tradesmen of the right color.’ Those very words have been spoken to me, sir, in the very chair where you are now sitting. I don’t mean by your honorable self, Mr. Brooke.”

“No, no, no—that’s narrow, you know. Until my butler complains to me of your goods, Mr. Mawmsey,” said Mr. Brooke, soothingly, “until I hear that you send bad sugars, spices—that sort of thing—I shall never order him to go elsewhere.”

“Sir, I am your humble servant, and greatly obliged,” said Mr. Mawmsey, feeling that politics were clearing up a little. “There would be some pleasure in voting for a gentleman who speaks in that honorable manner.”

“Well, you know, Mr. Mawmsey, you would find it the right thing to put yourself on our side. This Reform will touch everybody by-and-by—a thoroughly popular measure—a sort of A, B, C, you know, that must come first before the rest can follow. I quite agree with you that you’ve got to look at the thing in a family light: but public spirit, now. We’re all one family, you know—it’s all one cupboard. Such a thing as a vote, now: why, it may help to make men’s fortunes at the Cape—there’s no knowing what may be the effect of a vote,” Mr. Brooke ended, with a sense of being a little out at sea, though finding it still enjoyable. But Mr. Mawmsey answered in a tone of decisive check.

“I beg your pardon, sir, but I can’t afford that. When I give a vote I must know what I am doing; I must look to what will be the effects on my till and ledger, speaking respectfully. Prices, I’ll admit, are what nobody can know the merits of; and the sudden falls after you’ve bought in currants, which are a goods that will not keep—I’ve never; myself seen into the ins and outs there; which is a rebuke to human pride. But as to one family,

there's debtor and creditor, I hope; they're not going to reform that away; else I should vote for things staying as they are. Few men have less need to cry for change than I have, personally speaking—that is, for self and family. I am not one of those who have nothing to lose: I mean as to respectability both in parish and private business, and noways in respect of your honorable self and custom, which you was good enough to say you would not withdraw from me, vote or no vote, while the article sent in was satisfactory.”

After this conversation Mr. Mawmsey went up and boasted to his wife that he had been rather too many for Brooke of Tipton, and that he didn't mind so much now about going to the poll.

Mr. Brooke on this occasion abstained from boasting of his tactics to Ladislaw, who for his part was glad enough to persuade himself that he had no concern with any canvassing except the purely argumentative sort, and that he worked no meaner engine than knowledge. Mr. Brooke, necessarily, had his agents, who understood the nature of the Middlemarch voter and the means of enlisting his ignorance on the side of the Bill—which were remarkably similar to the means of enlisting it on the side against the Bill. Will stopped his ears. Occasionally Parliament, like the rest of our lives, even to our eating and apparel, could hardly go on if our imaginations were too active about processes. There were plenty of dirty-handed men in the world to do dirty business; and Will protested to himself that his share in bringing Mr. Brooke through would be quite innocent.

But whether he should succeed in that mode of contributing to the majority on the right side was very doubtful to him. He had written out various speeches and memoranda for speeches, but he had begun to perceive that Mr. Brooke's mind, if it had the burthen of remembering any train of thought, would let it drop, run away in search of it, and not easily come back again. To collect documents is one mode of serving your country, and to remember the contents of a document is another. No! the only way in which Mr. Brooke could be coerced into thinking of the right arguments at the right time was to be well plied with them till they took up all the room in his brain. But here there was the difficulty of finding room, so many things having been taken in beforehand. Mr. Brooke himself observed that his ideas stood rather in his way when he was speaking.

However, Ladislav's coaching was forthwith to be put to the test, for before the day of nomination Mr. Brooke was to explain himself to the worthy electors of Middlemarch from the balcony of the White Hart, which looked out advantageously at an angle of the market-place, commanding a large area in front and two converging streets. It was a fine May morning, and everything seemed hopeful: there was some prospect of an understanding between Bagster's committee and Brooke's, to which Mr. Bulstrode, Mr. Standish as a Liberal lawyer, and such manufacturers as Mr. Plymdale and Mr. Vincy, gave a solidity which almost counterbalanced Mr. Hawley and his associates who sat for Pinkerton at the Green Dragon. Mr. Brooke, conscious of having weakened the blasts of the "Trumpet" against him, by his reforms as a landlord in the last half year, and hearing himself cheered a little as he drove into the town, felt his heart tolerably light under his buff-colored waistcoat. But with regard to critical occasions, it often happens that all moments seem comfortably remote until the last.

"This looks well, eh?" said Mr. Brooke as the crowd gathered. "I shall have a good audience, at any rate. I like this, now—this kind of public made up of one's own neighbors, you know."

The weavers and tanners of Middlemarch, unlike Mr. Mawmsey, had never thought of Mr. Brooke as a neighbor, and were not more attached to him than if he had been sent in a box from London. But they listened without much disturbance to the speakers who introduced the candidate, one of them—a political personage from Brassing, who came to tell Middlemarch its duty—spoke so fully, that it was alarming to think what the candidate could find to say after him. Meanwhile the crowd became denser, and as the political personage neared the end of his speech, Mr. Brooke felt a remarkable change in his sensations while he still handled his eye-glass, trifled with documents before him, and exchanged remarks with his committee, as a man to whom the moment of summons was indifferent.

"I'll take another glass of sherry, Ladislav," he said, with an easy air, to Will, who was close behind him, and presently handed him the supposed fortifier. It was ill-chosen; for Mr. Brooke was an abstemious man, and to drink a second glass of sherry quickly at no great interval from the first was a surprise to his system which tended to scatter his energies instead of collecting them. Pray pity him: so many English gentlemen make

themselves miserable by speechifying on entirely private grounds! whereas Mr. Brooke wished to serve his country by standing for Parliament—which, indeed, may also be done on private grounds, but being once undertaken does absolutely demand some speechifying.

It was not about the beginning of his speech that Mr. Brooke was at all anxious; this, he felt sure, would be all right; he should have it quite pat, cut out as neatly as a set of couplets from Pope. Embarking would be easy, but the vision of open sea that might come after was alarming. “And questions, now,” hinted the demon just waking up in his stomach, “somebody may put questions about the schedules.—Ladislaw,” he continued, aloud, “just hand me the memorandum of the schedules.”

When Mr. Brooke presented himself on the balcony, the cheers were quite loud enough to counterbalance the yells, groans, brayings, and other expressions of adverse theory, which were so moderate that Mr. Standish (decidedly an old bird) observed in the ear next to him, “This looks dangerous, by God! Hawley has got some deeper plan than this.” Still, the cheers were exhilarating, and no candidate could look more amiable than Mr. Brooke, with the memorandum in his breast-pocket, his left hand on the rail of the balcony, and his right trifling with his eye-glass. The striking points in his appearance were his buff waistcoat, short-clipped blond hair, and neutral physiognomy. He began with some confidence.

“Gentlemen—Electors of Middlemarch!”

This was so much the right thing that a little pause after it seemed natural.

“I’m uncommonly glad to be here—I was never so proud and happy in my life—never so happy, you know.”

This was a bold figure of speech, but not exactly the right thing; for, unhappily, the pat opening had slipped away—even couplets from Pope may be but “fallings from us, vanishings,” when fear clutches us, and a glass of sherry is hurrying like smoke among our ideas. Ladislaw, who stood at the window behind the speaker, thought, “it’s all up now. The only chance is that, since the best thing won’t always do, floundering may answer for once.” Mr. Brooke, meanwhile, having lost other clews, fell back on himself and his qualifications—always an appropriate graceful subject for a candidate.

“I am a close neighbor of yours, my good friends—you’ve known me on the bench a good while—I’ve always gone a good deal into public questions—machinery, now, and machine-breaking—you’re many of you concerned with machinery, and I’ve been going into that lately. It won’t do, you know, breaking machines: everything must go on—trade, manufactures, commerce, interchange of staples—that kind of thing—since Adam Smith, that must go on. We must look all over the globe:—‘Observation with extensive view,’ must look everywhere, ‘from China to Peru,’ as somebody says—Johnson, I think, ‘The Rambler,’ you know. That is what I have done up to a certain point—not as far as Peru; but I’ve not always stayed at home—I saw it wouldn’t do. I’ve been in the Levant, where some of your Middlemarch goods go—and then, again, in the Baltic. The Baltic, now.”

Plying among his recollections in this way, Mr. Brooke might have got along, easily to himself, and would have come back from the remotest seas without trouble; but a diabolical procedure had been set up by the enemy. At one and the same moment there had risen above the shoulders of the crowd, nearly opposite Mr. Brooke, and within ten yards of him, the effigy of himself: buff-colored waistcoat, eye-glass, and neutral physiognomy, painted on rag; and there had arisen, apparently in the air, like the note of the cuckoo, a parrot-like, Punch-voiced echo of his words. Everybody looked up at the open windows in the houses at the opposite angles of the converging streets; but they were either blank, or filled by laughing listeners. The most innocent echo has an impish mockery in it when it follows a gravely persistent speaker, and this echo was not at all innocent; if it did not follow with the precision of a natural echo, it had a wicked choice of the words it overtook. By the time it said, “The Baltic, now,” the laugh which had been running through the audience became a general shout, and but for the sobering effects of party and that great public cause which the entanglement of things had identified with “Brooke of Tipton,” the laugh might have caught his committee. Mr. Bulstrode asked, reprehensively, what the new police was doing; but a voice could not well be collared, and an attack on the effigy of the candidate would have been too equivocal, since Hawley probably meant it to be pelted.

Mr. Brooke himself was not in a position to be quickly conscious of anything except a general slipping away of ideas within himself: he had even a little singing in the ears, and he was the only person who had not

yet taken distinct account of the echo or discerned the image of himself. Few things hold the perceptions more thoroughly captive than anxiety about what we have got to say. Mr. Brooke heard the laughter; but he had expected some Tory efforts at disturbance, and he was at this moment additionally excited by the tickling, stinging sense that his lost exordium was coming back to fetch him from the Baltic.

“That reminds me,” he went on, thrusting a hand into his side-pocket, with an easy air, “if I wanted a precedent, you know—but we never want a precedent for the right thing—but there is Chatham, now; I can’t say I should have supported Chatham, or Pitt, the younger Pitt—he was not a man of ideas, and we want ideas, you know.”

“Blast your ideas! we want the Bill,” said a loud rough voice from the crowd below.

Immediately the invisible Punch, who had hitherto followed Mr. Brooke, repeated, “Blast your ideas! we want the Bill.” The laugh was louder than ever, and for the first time Mr. Brooke being himself silent, heard distinctly the mocking echo. But it seemed to ridicule his interrupter, and in that light was encouraging; so he replied with amenity —

“There is something in what you say, my good friend, and what do we meet for but to speak our minds—freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, liberty—that kind of thing? The Bill, now—you shall have the Bill”—here Mr. Brooke paused a moment to fix on his eye-glass and take the paper from his breast-pocket, with a sense of being practical and coming to particulars. The invisible Punch followed:—

“You shall have the Bill, Mr. Brooke, per electioneering contest, and a seat outside Parliament as delivered, five thousand pounds, seven shillings, and fourpence.”

Mr. Brooke, amid the roars of laughter, turned red, let his eye-glass fall, and looking about him confusedly, saw the image of himself, which had come nearer. The next moment he saw it dolorously bespattered with eggs. His spirit rose a little, and his voice too.

“Buffoonery, tricks, ridicule the test of truth—all that is very well”—here an unpleasant egg broke on Mr. Brooke’s shoulder, as the echo said, “All that is very well;” then came a hail of eggs, chiefly aimed at the image, but occasionally hitting the original, as if by chance. There was a



stream of new men pushing among the crowd; whistles, yells, bellowings, and fifes made all the greater hubbub because there was shouting and struggling to put them down. No voice would have had wing enough to rise above the uproar, and Mr. Brooke, disagreeably annoyed, stood his ground no longer. The frustration would have been less exasperating if it had been less gamesome and boyish: a serious assault of which the newspaper reporter "can aver that it endangered the learned gentleman's ribs," or can respectfully bear witness to "the soles of that gentleman's boots having been visible above the railing," has perhaps more consolations attached to it.

Mr. Brooke re-entered the committee-room, saying, as carelessly as he could, "This is a little too bad, you know. I should have got the ear of the people by-and-by—but they didn't give me time. I should have gone into the Bill by-and-by, you know," he added, glancing at Ladislav. "However, things will come all right at the nomination."

But it was not resolved unanimously that things would come right; on the contrary, the committee looked rather grim, and the political personage from Brassing was writing busily, as if he were brewing new devices.

"It was Bowyer who did it," said Mr. Standish, evasively. "I know it as well as if he had been advertised. He's uncommonly good at ventriloquism, and he did it uncommonly well, by God! Hawley has been having him to dinner lately: there's a fund of talent in Bowyer."

"Well, you know, you never mentioned him to me, Standish, else I would have invited him to dine," said poor Mr. Brooke, who had gone through a great deal of inviting for the good of his country.

"There's not a more paltry fellow in Middlemarch than Bowyer," said Ladislav, indignantly, "but it seems as if the paltry fellows were always to turn the scale."

Will was thoroughly out of temper with himself as well as with his "principal," and he went to shut himself in his rooms with a half-formed resolve to throw up the "Pioneer" and Mr. Brooke together. Why should he stay? If the impassable gulf between himself and Dorothea were ever to be filled up, it must rather be by his going away and getting into a thoroughly different position than by staying here and slipping into deserved contempt as an understrapper of Brooke's. Then came the young dream of wonders that he might do—in five years, for example: political writing,

political speaking, would get a higher value now public life was going to be wider and more national, and they might give him such distinction that he would not seem to be asking Dorothea to step down to him. Five years:—if he could only be sure that she cared for him more than for others; if he could only make her aware that he stood aloof until he could tell his love without lowering himself—then he could go away easily, and begin a career which at five-and-twenty seemed probable enough in the inward order of things, where talent brings fame, and fame everything else which is delightful. He could speak and he could write; he could master any subject if he chose, and he meant always to take the side of reason and justice, on which he would carry all his ardor. Why should he not one day be lifted above the shoulders of the crowd, and feel that he had won that eminence well? Without doubt he would leave Middlemarch, go to town, and make himself fit for celebrity by “eating his dinners.”

But not immediately: not until some kind of sign had passed between him and Dorothea. He could not be satisfied until she knew why, even if he were the man she would choose to marry, he would not marry her. Hence he must keep his post and bear with Mr. Brooke a little longer.

But he soon had reason to suspect that Mr. Brooke had anticipated him in the wish to break up their connection. Deputations without and voices within had concurred in inducing that philanthropist to take a stronger measure than usual for the good of mankind; namely, to withdraw in favor of another candidate, to whom he left the advantages of his canvassing machinery. He himself called this a strong measure, but observed that his health was less capable of sustaining excitement than he had imagined.

“I have felt uneasy about the chest—it won’t do to carry that too far,” he said to Ladislaw in explaining the affair. “I must pull up. Poor Casaubon was a warning, you know. I’ve made some heavy advances, but I’ve dug a channel. It’s rather coarse work—this electioneering, eh, Ladislaw? dare say you are tired of it. However, we have dug a channel with the ‘Pioneer’—put things in a track, and so on. A more ordinary man than you might carry it on now—more ordinary, you know.”

“Do you wish me to give it up?” said Will, the quick color coming in his face, as he rose from the writing-table, and took a turn of three steps with his hands in his pockets. “I am ready to do so whenever you wish it.”

“As to wishing, my dear Ladislaw, I have the highest opinion of your powers, you know. But about the ‘Pioneer,’ I have been consulting a little with some of the men on our side, and they are inclined to take it into their hands—indemnify me to a certain extent—carry it on, in fact. And under the circumstances, you might like to give up—might find a better field. These people might not take that high view of you which I have always taken, as an alter ego, a right hand—though I always looked forward to your doing something else. I think of having a run into France. But I’ll write you any letters, you know—to Althorpe and people of that kind. I’ve met Althorpe.”

“I am exceedingly obliged to you,” said Ladislaw, proudly. “Since you are going to part with the ‘Pioneer,’ I need not trouble you about the steps I shall take. I may choose to continue here for the present.”

After Mr. Brooke had left him Will said to himself, “The rest of the family have been urging him to get rid of me, and he doesn’t care now about my going. I shall stay as long as I like. I shall go of my own movements and not because they are afraid of me.”

## CHAPTER LII.

“His heart  
The lowliest duties on itself did lay.”  
—WORDSWORTH.

On that June evening when Mr. Farebrother knew that he was to have the Lowick living, there was joy in the old fashioned parlor, and even the portraits of the great lawyers seemed to look on with satisfaction. His mother left her tea and toast untouched, but sat with her usual pretty primness, only showing her emotion by that flush in the cheeks and brightness in the eyes which give an old woman a touching momentary identity with her far-off youthful self, and saying decisively—

“The greatest comfort, Camden, is that you have deserved it.”

“When a man gets a good berth, mother, half the deserving must come after,” said the son, brimful of pleasure, and not trying to conceal it. The gladness in his face was of that active kind which seems to have energy enough not only to flash outwardly, but to light up busy vision within: one seemed to see thoughts, as well as delight, in his glances.

“Now, aunt,” he went on, rubbing his hands and looking at Miss Noble, who was making tender little beaver-like noises, “There shall be sugar-candy always on the table for you to steal and give to the children, and you shall have a great many new stockings to make presents of, and you shall darn your own more than ever!”

Miss Noble nodded at her nephew with a subdued half-frightened laugh, conscious of having already dropped an additional lump of sugar into her basket on the strength of the new preferment.

“As for you, Winny”—the Vicar went on—“I shall make no difficulty about your marrying any Lowick bachelor—Mr. Solomon Featherstone, for example, as soon as I find you are in love with him.”

Miss Winifred, who had been looking at her brother all the while and crying heartily, which was her way of rejoicing, smiled through her tears and said, “You must set me the example, Cam: *you* must marry now.”

“With all my heart. But who is in love with me? I am a seedy old fellow,” said the Vicar, rising, pushing his chair away and looking down at himself. “What do you say, mother?”

“You are a handsome man, Camden: though not so fine a figure of a man as your father,” said the old lady.

“I wish you would marry Miss Garth, brother,” said Miss Winifred. “She would make us so lively at Lowick.”

“Very fine! You talk as if young women were tied up to be chosen, like poultry at market; as if I had only to ask and everybody would have me,” said the Vicar, not caring to specify.

“We don’t want everybody,” said Miss Winifred. “But *you* would like Miss Garth, mother, shouldn’t you?”

“My son’s choice shall be mine,” said Mrs. Farebrother, with majestic discretion, “and a wife would be most welcome, Camden. You will want your whist at home when we go to Lowick, and Henrietta Noble never was a whist-player.” (Mrs. Farebrother always called her tiny old sister by that magnificent name.)

“I shall do without whist now, mother.”

“Why so, Camden? In my time whist was thought an undeniable amusement for a good churchman,” said Mrs. Farebrother, innocent of the meaning that whist had for her son, and speaking rather sharply, as at some dangerous countenancing of new doctrine.

“I shall be too busy for whist; I shall have two parishes,” said the Vicar, preferring not to discuss the virtues of that game.

He had already said to Dorothea, “I don’t feel bound to give up St. Botolph’s. It is protest enough against the pluralism they want to reform if I give somebody else most of the money. The stronger thing is not to give up power, but to use it well.”

“I have thought of that,” said Dorothea. “So far as self is concerned, I think it would be easier to give up power and money than to keep them. It seems very unfitting that I should have this patronage, yet I felt that I ought not to let it be used by some one else instead of me.”

“It is I who am bound to act so that you will not regret your power,” said Mr. Farebrother.

His was one of the natures in which conscience gets the more active when the yoke of life ceases to gall them. He made no display of humility on the subject, but in his heart he felt rather ashamed that his conduct had shown laches which others who did not get benefices were free from.

“I used often to wish I had been something else than a clergyman,” he said to Lydgate, “but perhaps it will be better to try and make as good a clergyman out of myself as I can. That is the well-beneficed point of view, you perceive, from which difficulties are much simplified,” he ended, smiling.

The Vicar did feel then as if his share of duties would be easy. But Duty has a trick of behaving unexpectedly—something like a heavy friend whom we have amiably asked to visit us, and who breaks his leg within our gates.

Hardly a week later, Duty presented itself in his study under the disguise of Fred Vincy, now returned from Omnibus College with his bachelor’s degree.

“I am ashamed to trouble you, Mr. Farebrother,” said Fred, whose fair open face was propitiating, “but you are the only friend I can consult. I told you everything once before, and you were so good that I can’t help coming to you again.”

“Sit down, Fred, I’m ready to hear and do anything I can,” said the Vicar, who was busy packing some small objects for removal, and went on with his work.

“I wanted to tell you—” Fred hesitated an instant and then went on plungingly, “I might go into the Church now; and really, look where I may, I can’t see anything else to do. I don’t like it, but I know it’s uncommonly hard on my father to say so, after he has spent a good deal of money in educating me for it.” Fred paused again an instant, and then repeated, “and I can’t see anything else to do.”

“I did talk to your father about it, Fred, but I made little way with him. He said it was too late. But you have got over one bridge now: what are your other difficulties?”

“Merely that I don’t like it. I don’t like divinity, and preaching, and feeling obliged to look serious. I like riding across country, and doing as other men do. I don’t mean that I want to be a bad fellow in any way; but

I've no taste for the sort of thing people expect of a clergyman. And yet what else am I to do? My father can't spare me any capital, else I might go into farming. And he has no room for me in his trade. And of course I can't begin to study for law or physic now, when my father wants me to earn something. It's all very well to say I'm wrong to go into the Church; but those who say so might as well tell me to go into the backwoods."

Fred's voice had taken a tone of grumbling remonstrance, and Mr. Farebrother might have been inclined to smile if his mind had not been too busy in imagining more than Fred told him.

"Have you any difficulties about doctrines—about the Articles?" he said, trying hard to think of the question simply for Fred's sake.

"No; I suppose the Articles are right. I am not prepared with any arguments to disprove them, and much better, cleverer fellows than I am go in for them entirely. I think it would be rather ridiculous in me to urge scruples of that sort, as if I were a judge," said Fred, quite simply.

"I suppose, then, it has occurred to you that you might be a fair parish priest without being much of a divine?"

"Of course, if I am obliged to be a clergyman, I shall try and do my duty, though I mayn't like it. Do you think any body ought to blame me?"

"For going into the Church under the circumstances? That depends on your conscience, Fred—how far you have counted the cost, and seen what your position will require of you. I can only tell you about myself, that I have always been too lax, and have been uneasy in consequence."

"But there is another hindrance," said Fred, coloring. "I did not tell you before, though perhaps I may have said things that made you guess it. There is somebody I am very fond of: I have loved her ever since we were children."

"Miss Garth, I suppose?" said the Vicar, examining some labels very closely.

"Yes. I shouldn't mind anything if she would have me. And I know I could be a good fellow then."

"And you think she returns the feeling?"

"She never will say so; and a good while ago she made me promise not to speak to her about it again. And she has set her mind especially against my being a clergyman; I know that. But I can't give her up. I do think she

cares about me. I saw Mrs. Garth last night, and she said that Mary was staying at Lowick Rectory with Miss Farebrother.”

“Yes, she is very kindly helping my sister. Do you wish to go there?”

“No, I want to ask a great favor of you. I am ashamed to bother you in this way; but Mary might listen to what you said, if you mentioned the subject to her—I mean about my going into the Church.”

“That is rather a delicate task, my dear Fred. I shall have to presuppose your attachment to her; and to enter on the subject as you wish me to do, will be asking her to tell me whether she returns it.”

“That is what I want her to tell you,” said Fred, bluntly. “I don’t know what to do, unless I can get at her feeling.”

“You mean that you would be guided by that as to your going into the Church?”

“If Mary said she would never have me I might as well go wrong in one way as another.”

“That is nonsense, Fred. Men outlive their love, but they don’t outlive the consequences of their recklessness.”

“Not my sort of love: I have never been without loving Mary. If I had to give her up, it would be like beginning to live on wooden legs.”

“Will she not be hurt at my intrusion?”

“No, I feel sure she will not. She respects you more than any one, and she would not put you off with fun as she does me. Of course I could not have told any one else, or asked any one else to speak to her, but you. There is no one else who could be such a friend to both of us.” Fred paused a moment, and then said, rather complainingly, “And she ought to acknowledge that I have worked in order to pass. She ought to believe that I would exert myself for her sake.”

There was a moment’s silence before Mr. Farebrother laid down his work, and putting out his hand to Fred said—

“Very well, my boy. I will do what you wish.”

That very day Mr. Farebrother went to Lowick parsonage on the nag which he had just set up. “Decidedly I am an old stalk,” he thought, “the young growths are pushing me aside.”



He found Mary in the garden gathering roses and sprinkling the petals on a sheet. The sun was low, and tall trees sent their shadows across the grassy walks where Mary was moving without bonnet or parasol. She did not observe Mr. Farebrother's approach along the grass, and had just stooped down to lecture a small black-and-tan terrier, which would persist in walking on the sheet and smelling at the rose-leaves as Mary sprinkled them. She took his fore-paws in one hand, and lifted up the forefinger of the other, while the dog wrinkled his brows and looked embarrassed. "Fly, Fly, I am ashamed of you," Mary was saying in a grave contralto. "This is not becoming in a sensible dog; anybody would think you were a silly young gentleman."

"You are unmerciful to young gentlemen, Miss Garth," said the Vicar, within two yards of her.

Mary started up and blushed. "It always answers to reason with Fly," she said, laughingly.

"But not with young gentlemen?"

"Oh, with some, I suppose; since some of them turn into excellent men."

"I am glad of that admission, because I want at this very moment to interest you in a young gentleman."

"Not a silly one, I hope," said Mary, beginning to pluck the roses again, and feeling her heart beat uncomfortably.

"No; though perhaps wisdom is not his strong point, but rather affection and sincerity. However, wisdom lies more in those two qualities than people are apt to imagine. I hope you know by those marks what young gentleman I mean."

"Yes, I think I do," said Mary, bravely, her face getting more serious, and her hands cold; "it must be Fred Vincy."

"He has asked me to consult you about his going into the Church. I hope you will not think that I consented to take a liberty in promising to do so."

"On the contrary, Mr. Farebrother," said Mary, giving up the roses, and folding her arms, but unable to look up, "whenever you have anything to say to me I feel honored."

"But before I enter on that question, let me just touch a point on which your father took me into confidence; by the way, it was that very evening

on which I once before fulfilled a mission from Fred, just after he had gone to college. Mr. Garth told me what happened on the night of Featherstone's death—how you refused to burn the will; and he said that you had some heart-prickings on that subject, because you had been the innocent means of hindering Fred from getting his ten thousand pounds. I have kept that in mind, and I have heard something that may relieve you on that score—may show you that no sin-offering is demanded from you there.”

Mr. Farebrother paused a moment and looked at Mary. He meant to give Fred his full advantage, but it would be well, he thought, to clear her mind of any superstitions, such as women sometimes follow when they do a man the wrong of marrying him as an act of atonement. Mary's cheeks had begun to burn a little, and she was mute.

“I mean, that your action made no real difference to Fred's lot. I find that the first will would not have been legally good after the burning of the last; it would not have stood if it had been disputed, and you may be sure it would have been disputed. So, on that score, you may feel your mind free.”

“Thank you, Mr. Farebrother,” said Mary, earnestly. “I am grateful to you for remembering my feelings.”

“Well, now I may go on. Fred, you know, has taken his degree. He has worked his way so far, and now the question is, what is he to do? That question is so difficult that he is inclined to follow his father's wishes and enter the Church, though you know better than I do that he was quite set against that formerly. I have questioned him on the subject, and I confess I see no insuperable objection to his being a clergyman, as things go. He says that he could turn his mind to doing his best in that vocation, on one condition. If that condition were fulfilled I would do my utmost in helping Fred on. After a time—not, of course, at first—he might be with me as my curate, and he would have so much to do that his stipend would be nearly what I used to get as vicar. But I repeat that there is a condition without which all this good cannot come to pass. He has opened his heart to me, Miss Garth, and asked me to plead for him. The condition lies entirely in your feeling.”

Mary looked so much moved, that he said after a moment, “Let us walk a little;” and when they were walking he added, “To speak quite plainly,

Fred will not take any course which would lessen the chance that you would consent to be his wife; but with that prospect, he will try his best at anything you approve.”

“I cannot possibly say that I will ever be his wife, Mr. Farebrother: but I certainly never will be his wife if he becomes a clergyman. What you say is most generous and kind; I don’t mean for a moment to correct your judgment. It is only that I have my girlish, mocking way of looking at things,” said Mary, with a returning sparkle of playfulness in her answer which only made its modesty more charming.

“He wishes me to report exactly what you think,” said Mr. Farebrother.

“I could not love a man who is ridiculous,” said Mary, not choosing to go deeper. “Fred has sense and knowledge enough to make him respectable, if he likes, in some good worldly business, but I can never imagine him preaching and exhorting, and pronouncing blessings, and praying by the sick, without feeling as if I were looking at a caricature. His being a clergyman would be only for gentility’s sake, and I think there is nothing more contemptible than such imbecile gentility. I used to think that of Mr. Crowse, with his empty face and neat umbrella, and mincing little speeches. What right have such men to represent Christianity—as if it were an institution for getting up idiots genteelly—as if—” Mary checked herself. She had been carried along as if she had been speaking to Fred instead of Mr. Farebrother.

“Young women are severe: they don’t feel the stress of action as men do, though perhaps I ought to make you an exception there. But you don’t put Fred Vincy on so low a level as that?”

“No, indeed, he has plenty of sense, but I think he would not show it as a clergyman. He would be a piece of professional affectation.”

“Then the answer is quite decided. As a clergyman he could have no hope?”

Mary shook her head.

“But if he braved all the difficulties of getting his bread in some other way—will you give him the support of hope? May he count on winning you?”

“I think Fred ought not to need telling again what I have already said to him,” Mary answered, with a slight resentment in her manner. “I mean that

he ought not to put such questions until he has done something worthy, instead of saying that he could do it.”

Mr. Farebrother was silent for a minute or more, and then, as they turned and paused under the shadow of a maple at the end of a grassy walk, said, “I understand that you resist any attempt to fetter you, but either your feeling for Fred Vincy excludes your entertaining another attachment, or it does not: either he may count on your remaining single until he shall have earned your hand, or he may in any case be disappointed. Pardon me, Mary—you know I used to catechise you under that name—but when the state of a woman’s affections touches the happiness of another life—of more lives than one—I think it would be the nobler course for her to be perfectly direct and open.”

Mary in her turn was silent, wondering not at Mr. Farebrother’s manner but at his tone, which had a grave restrained emotion in it. When the strange idea flashed across her that his words had reference to himself, she was incredulous, and ashamed of entertaining it. She had never thought that any man could love her except Fred, who had espoused her with the umbrella ring, when she wore socks and little strapped shoes; still less that she could be of any importance to Mr. Farebrother, the cleverest man in her narrow circle. She had only time to feel that all this was hazy and perhaps illusory; but one thing was clear and determined—her answer.

“Since you think it my duty, Mr. Farebrother, I will tell you that I have too strong a feeling for Fred to give him up for any one else. I should never be quite happy if I thought he was unhappy for the loss of me. It has taken such deep root in me—my gratitude to him for always loving me best, and minding so much if I hurt myself, from the time when we were very little. I cannot imagine any new feeling coming to make that weaker. I should like better than anything to see him worthy of every one’s respect. But please tell him I will not promise to marry him till then: I should shame and grieve my father and mother. He is free to choose some one else.”

“Then I have fulfilled my commission thoroughly,” said Mr. Farebrother, putting out his hand to Mary, “and I shall ride back to Middlemarch forthwith. With this prospect before him, we shall get Fred into the right niche somehow, and I hope I shall live to join your hands. God bless you!”

“Oh, please stay, and let me give you some tea,” said Mary. Her eyes filled with tears, for something indefinable, something like the resolute suppression of a pain in Mr. Farebrother’s manner, made her feel suddenly miserable, as she had once felt when she saw her father’s hands trembling in a moment of trouble.

“No, my dear, no. I must get back.”

In three minutes the Vicar was on horseback again, having gone magnanimously through a duty much harder than the renunciation of whist, or even than the writing of penitential meditations.

## CHAPTER LIII.

It is but a shallow haste which concludeth insincerity from what outsiders call inconsistency—putting a dead mechanism of “ifs” and “therefores” for the living myriad of hidden suckers whereby the belief and the conduct are wrought into mutual sustainment.

Mr. Bulstrode, when he was hoping to acquire a new interest in Lowick, had naturally had an especial wish that the new clergyman should be one whom he thoroughly approved; and he believed it to be a chastisement and admonition directed to his own shortcomings and those of the nation at large, that just about the time when he came in possession of the deeds which made him the proprietor of Stone Court, Mr. Farebrother “read himself” into the quaint little church and preached his first sermon to the congregation of farmers, laborers, and village artisans. It was not that Mr. Bulstrode intended to frequent Lowick Church or to reside at Stone Court for a good while to come: he had bought the excellent farm and fine homestead simply as a retreat which he might gradually enlarge as to the land and beautify as to the dwelling, until it should be conducive to the divine glory that he should enter on it as a residence, partially withdrawing from his present exertions in the administration of business, and throwing more conspicuously on the side of Gospel truth the weight of local landed proprietorship, which Providence might increase by unforeseen occasions of purchase. A strong leading in this direction seemed to have been given in the surprising facility of getting Stone Court, when every one had expected that Mr. Rigg Featherstone would have clung to it as the Garden of Eden. That was what poor old Peter himself had expected; having often, in imagination, looked up through the sods above him, and, unobstructed by perspective, seen his frog-faced legatee enjoying the fine old place to the perpetual surprise and disappointment of other survivors.

But how little we know what would make paradise for our neighbors! We judge from our own desires, and our neighbors themselves are not always open enough even to throw out a hint of theirs. The cool and

judicious Joshua Rigg had not allowed his parent to perceive that Stone Court was anything less than the chief good in his estimation, and he had certainly wished to call it his own. But as Warren Hastings looked at gold and thought of buying Daylesford, so Joshua Rigg looked at Stone Court and thought of buying gold. He had a very distinct and intense vision of his chief good, the vigorous greed which he had inherited having taken a special form by dint of circumstance: and his chief good was to be a moneychanger. From his earliest employment as an errand-boy in a seaport, he had looked through the windows of the moneychangers as other boys look through the windows of the pastry-cooks; the fascination had wrought itself gradually into a deep special passion; he meant, when he had property, to do many things, one of them being to marry a genteel young person; but these were all accidents and joys that imagination could dispense with. The one joy after which his soul thirsted was to have a money-changer's shop on a much-frequented quay, to have locks all round him of which he held the keys, and to look sublimely cool as he handled the breeding coins of all nations, while helpless Cupidity looked at him enviously from the other side of an iron lattice. The strength of that passion had been a power enabling him to master all the knowledge necessary to gratify it. And when others were thinking that he had settled at Stone Court for life, Joshua himself was thinking that the moment now was not far off when he should settle on the North Quay with the best appointments in safes and locks.

Enough. We are concerned with looking at Joshua Rigg's sale of his land from Mr. Bulstrode's point of view, and he interpreted it as a cheering dispensation conveying perhaps a sanction to a purpose which he had for some time entertained without external encouragement; he interpreted it thus, but not too confidently, offering up his thanksgiving in guarded phraseology. His doubts did not arise from the possible relations of the event to Joshua Rigg's destiny, which belonged to the unmapped regions not taken under the providential government, except perhaps in an imperfect colonial way; but they arose from reflecting that this dispensation too might be a chastisement for himself, as Mr. Farebrother's induction to the living clearly was.

This was not what Mr. Bulstrode said to any man for the sake of deceiving him: it was what he said to himself—it was as genuinely his mode of explaining events as any theory of yours may be, if you happen to

disagree with him. For the egoism which enters into our theories does not affect their sincerity; rather, the more our egoism is satisfied, the more robust is our belief.

However, whether for sanction or for chastisement, Mr. Bulstrode, hardly fifteen months after the death of Peter Featherstone, had become the proprietor of Stone Court, and what Peter would say "if he were worthy to know," had become an inexhaustible and consolatory subject of conversation to his disappointed relatives. The tables were now turned on that dear brother departed, and to contemplate the frustration of his cunning by the superior cunning of things in general was a cud of delight to Solomon. Mrs. Waule had a melancholy triumph in the proof that it did not answer to make false Featherstones and cut off the genuine; and Sister Martha receiving the news in the Chalky Flats said, "Dear, dear! then the Almighty could have been none so pleased with the almshouses after all."

Affectionate Mrs. Bulstrode was particularly glad of the advantage which her husband's health was likely to get from the purchase of Stone Court. Few days passed without his riding thither and looking over some part of the farm with the bailiff, and the evenings were delicious in that quiet spot, when the new hay-ricks lately set up were sending forth odors to mingle with the breath of the rich old garden. One evening, while the sun was still above the horizon and burning in golden lamps among the great walnut boughs, Mr. Bulstrode was pausing on horseback outside the front gate waiting for Caleb Garth, who had met him by appointment to give an opinion on a question of stable drainage, and was now advising the bailiff in the rick-yard.

Mr. Bulstrode was conscious of being in a good spiritual frame and more than usually serene, under the influence of his innocent recreation. He was doctrinally convinced that there was a total absence of merit in himself; but that doctrinal conviction may be held without pain when the sense of demerit does not take a distinct shape in memory and revive the tingling of shame or the pang of remorse. Nay, it may be held with intense satisfaction when the depth of our sinning is but a measure for the depth of forgiveness, and a clenching proof that we are peculiar instruments of the divine intention. The memory has as many moods as the temper, and shifts its scenery like a diorama. At this moment Mr. Bulstrode felt as if the sunshine were all one with that of far-off evenings when he was a very



young man and used to go out preaching beyond Highbury. And he would willingly have had that service of exhortation in prospect now. The texts were there still, and so was his own facility in expounding them. His brief reverie was interrupted by the return of Caleb Garth, who also was on horseback, and was just shaking his bridle before starting, when he exclaimed—

“Bless my heart! what’s this fellow in black coming along the lane? He’s like one of those men one sees about after the races.”

Mr. Bulstrode turned his horse and looked along the lane, but made no reply. The comer was our slight acquaintance Mr. Raffles, whose appearance presented no other change than such as was due to a suit of black and a crape hat-band. He was within three yards of the horseman now, and they could see the flash of recognition in his face as he whirled his stick upward, looking all the while at Mr. Bulstrode, and at last exclaiming:—

“By Jove, Nick, it’s you! I couldn’t be mistaken, though the five-and-twenty years have played old Boguy with us both! How are you, eh? you didn’t expect to see *me* here. Come, shake us by the hand.” To say that Mr. Raffles’ manner was rather excited would be only one mode of saying that it was evening. Caleb Garth could see that there was a moment of struggle and hesitation in Mr. Bulstrode, but it ended in his putting out his hand coldly to Raffles and saying—

“I did not indeed expect to see you in this remote country place.”

“Well, it belongs to a stepson of mine,” said Raffles, adjusting himself in a swaggering attitude. “I came to see him here before. I’m not so surprised at seeing you, old fellow, because I picked up a letter—what you may call a providential thing. It’s uncommonly fortunate I met you, though; for I don’t care about seeing my stepson: he’s not affectionate, and his poor mother’s gone now. To tell the truth, I came out of love to you, Nick: I came to get your address, for—look here!” Raffles drew a crumpled paper from his pocket.

Almost any other man than Caleb Garth might have been tempted to linger on the spot for the sake of hearing all he could about a man whose acquaintance with Bulstrode seemed to imply passages in the banker’s life so unlike anything that was known of him in Middlemarch that they must have the nature of a secret to pique curiosity. But Caleb was peculiar:

certain human tendencies which are commonly strong were almost absent from his mind; and one of these was curiosity about personal affairs. Especially if there was anything discreditable to be found out concerning another man, Caleb preferred not to know it; and if he had to tell anybody under him that his evil doings were discovered, he was more embarrassed than the culprit. He now spurred his horse, and saying, "I wish you good evening, Mr. Bulstrode; I must be getting home," set off at a trot.

"You didn't put your full address to this letter," Raffles continued. "That was not like the first-rate man of business you used to be. 'The Shrubs,'—they may be anywhere: you live near at hand, eh?—have cut the London concern altogether—perhaps turned country squire—have a rural mansion to invite me to. Lord, how many years it is ago! The old lady must have been dead a pretty long while—gone to glory without the pain of knowing how poor her daughter was, eh? But, by Jove! you're very pale and pasty, Nick. Come, if you're going home, I'll walk by your side."

Mr. Bulstrode's usual paleness had in fact taken an almost deathly hue. Five minutes before, the expanse of his life had been submerged in its evening sunshine which shone backward to its remembered morning: sin seemed to be a question of doctrine and inward penitence, humiliation an exercise of the closet, the bearing of his deeds a matter of private vision adjusted solely by spiritual relations and conceptions of the divine purposes. And now, as if by some hideous magic, this loud red figure had risen before him in unmanageable solidity—an incorporate past which had not entered into his imagination of chastisements. But Mr. Bulstrode's thought was busy, and he was not a man to act or speak rashly.

"I was going home," he said, "but I can defer my ride a little. And you can, if you please, rest here."

"Thank you," said Raffles, making a grimace. "I don't care now about seeing my stepson. I'd rather go home with you."

"Your stepson, if Mr. Rigg Featherstone was he, is here no longer. I am master here now."

Raffles opened wide eyes, and gave a long whistle of surprise, before he said, "Well then, I've no objection. I've had enough walking from the coach-road. I never was much of a walker, or rider either. What I like is a smart vehicle and a spirited cob. I was always a little heavy in the saddle. What a pleasant surprise it must be to you to see me, old fellow!" he

continued, as they turned towards the house. “You don’t say so; but you never took your luck heartily—you were always thinking of improving the occasion—you’d such a gift for improving your luck.”

Mr. Raffles seemed greatly to enjoy his own wit, and swung his leg in a swaggering manner which was rather too much for his companion’s judicious patience.

“If I remember rightly,” Mr. Bulstrode observed, with chill anger, “our acquaintance many years ago had not the sort of intimacy which you are now assuming, Mr. Raffles. Any services you desire of me will be the more readily rendered if you will avoid a tone of familiarity which did not lie in our former intercourse, and can hardly be warranted by more than twenty years of separation.”

“You don’t like being called Nick? Why, I always called you Nick in my heart, and though lost to sight, to memory dear. By Jove! my feelings have ripened for you like fine old cognac. I hope you’ve got some in the house now. Josh filled my flask well the last time.”

Mr. Bulstrode had not yet fully learned that even the desire for cognac was not stronger in Raffles than the desire to torment, and that a hint of annoyance always served him as a fresh cue. But it was at least clear that further objection was useless, and Mr. Bulstrode, in giving orders to the housekeeper for the accommodation of the guest, had a resolute air of quietude.

There was the comfort of thinking that this housekeeper had been in the service of Rigg also, and might accept the idea that Mr. Bulstrode entertained Raffles merely as a friend of her former master.

When there was food and drink spread before his visitor in the wainscoted parlor, and no witness in the room, Mr. Bulstrode said—

“Your habits and mine are so different, Mr. Raffles, that we can hardly enjoy each other’s society. The wisest plan for both of us will therefore be to part as soon as possible. Since you say that you wished to meet me, you probably considered that you had some business to transact with me. But under the circumstances I will invite you to remain here for the night, and I will myself ride over here early to-morrow morning—before breakfast, in fact—when I can receive any communication you have to make to me.”

“With all my heart,” said Raffles; “this is a comfortable place—a little dull for a continuance; but I can put up with it for a night, with this good liquor and the prospect of seeing you again in the morning. You’re a much better host than my stepson was; but Josh owed me a bit of a grudge for marrying his mother; and between you and me there was never anything but kindness.”

Mr. Bulstrode, hoping that the peculiar mixture of joviality and sneering in Raffles’ manner was a good deal the effect of drink, had determined to wait till he was quite sober before he spent more words upon him. But he rode home with a terribly lucid vision of the difficulty there would be in arranging any result that could be permanently counted on with this man. It was inevitable that he should wish to get rid of John Raffles, though his reappearance could not be regarded as lying outside the divine plan. The spirit of evil might have sent him to threaten Mr. Bulstrode’s subversion as an instrument of good; but the threat must have been permitted, and was a chastisement of a new kind. It was an hour of anguish for him very different from the hours in which his struggle had been securely private, and which had ended with a sense that his secret misdeeds were pardoned and his services accepted. Those misdeeds even when committed—had they not been half sanctified by the singleness of his desire to devote himself and all he possessed to the furtherance of the divine scheme? And was he after all to become a mere stone of stumbling and a rock of offence? For who would understand the work within him? Who would not, when there was the pretext of casting disgrace upon him, confound his whole life and the truths he had espoused, in one heap of obloquy?

In his closest meditations the life-long habit of Mr. Bulstrode’s mind clad his most egoistic terrors in doctrinal references to superhuman ends. But even while we are talking and meditating about the earth’s orbit and the solar system, what we feel and adjust our movements to is the stable earth and the changing day. And now within all the automatic succession of theoretic phrases—distinct and inmost as the shiver and the ache of oncoming fever when we are discussing abstract pain, was the forecast of disgrace in the presence of his neighbors and of his own wife. For the pain, as well as the public estimate of disgrace, depends on the amount of previous profession. To men who only aim at escaping felony, nothing short of the prisoner’s dock is disgrace. But Mr. Bulstrode had aimed at being an eminent Christian.

It was not more than half-past seven in the morning when he again reached Stone Court. The fine old place never looked more like a delightful home than at that moment; the great white lilies were in flower, the nasturtiums, their pretty leaves all silvered with dew, were running away over the low stone wall; the very noises all around had a heart of peace within them. But everything was spoiled for the owner as he walked on the gravel in front and awaited the descent of Mr. Raffles, with whom he was condemned to breakfast.

It was not long before they were seated together in the wainscoted parlor over their tea and toast, which was as much as Raffles cared to take at that early hour. The difference between his morning and evening self was not so great as his companion had imagined that it might be; the delight in tormenting was perhaps even the stronger because his spirits were rather less highly pitched. Certainly his manners seemed more disagreeable by the morning light.

“As I have little time to spare, Mr. Raffles,” said the banker, who could hardly do more than sip his tea and break his toast without eating it, “I shall be obliged if you will mention at once the ground on which you wished to meet with me. I presume that you have a home elsewhere and will be glad to return to it.”

“Why, if a man has got any heart, doesn’t he want to see an old friend, Nick?—I must call you Nick—we always did call you young Nick when we knew you meant to marry the old widow. Some said you had a handsome family likeness to old Nick, but that was your mother’s fault, calling you Nicholas. Aren’t you glad to see me again? I expected an invite to stay with you at some pretty place. My own establishment is broken up now my wife’s dead. I’ve no particular attachment to any spot; I would as soon settle hereabout as anywhere.”

“May I ask why you returned from America? I considered that the strong wish you expressed to go there, when an adequate sum was furnished, was tantamount to an engagement that you would remain there for life.”

“Never knew that a wish to go to a place was the same thing as a wish to stay. But I did stay a matter of ten years; it didn’t suit me to stay any longer. And I’m not going again, Nick.” Here Mr. Raffles winked slowly as he looked at Mr. Bulstrode.

“Do you wish to be settled in any business? What is your calling now?”

“Thank you, my calling is to enjoy myself as much as I can. I don’t care about working any more. If I did anything it would be a little travelling in the tobacco line—or something of that sort, which takes a man into agreeable company. But not without an independence to fall back upon. That’s what I want: I’m not so strong as I was, Nick, though I’ve got more color than you. I want an independence.”

“That could be supplied to you, if you would engage to keep at a distance,” said Mr. Bulstrode, perhaps with a little too much eagerness in his undertone.

“That must be as it suits my convenience,” said Raffles coolly. “I see no reason why I shouldn’t make a few acquaintances hereabout. I’m not ashamed of myself as company for anybody. I dropped my portmanteau at the turnpike when I got down—change of linen—genuine—honor bright—more than fronts and wristbands; and with this suit of mourning, straps and everything, I should do you credit among the nobs here.” Mr. Raffles had pushed away his chair and looked down at himself, particularly at his straps. His chief intention was to annoy Bulstrode, but he really thought that his appearance now would produce a good effect, and that he was not only handsome and witty, but clad in a mourning style which implied solid connections.

“If you intend to rely on me in any way, Mr. Raffles,” said Bulstrode, after a moment’s pause, “you will expect to meet my wishes.”

“Ah, to be sure,” said Raffles, with a mocking cordiality. “Didn’t I always do it? Lord, you made a pretty thing out of me, and I got but little. I’ve often thought since, I might have done better by telling the old woman that I’d found her daughter and her grandchild: it would have suited my feelings better; I’ve got a soft place in my heart. But you’ve buried the old lady by this time, I suppose—it’s all one to her now. And you’ve got your fortune out of that profitable business which had such a blessing on it. You’ve taken to being a nob, buying land, being a country bashaw. Still in the Dissenting line, eh? Still godly? Or taken to the Church as more genteel?”

This time Mr. Raffles’ slow wink and slight protrusion of his tongue was worse than a nightmare, because it held the certitude that it was not a nightmare, but a waking misery. Mr. Bulstrode felt a shuddering nausea,

and did not speak, but was considering diligently whether he should not leave Raffles to do as he would, and simply defy him as a slanderer. The man would soon show himself disreputable enough to make people disbelieve him. “But not when he tells any ugly-looking truth about *you*,” said discerning consciousness. And again: it seemed no wrong to keep Raffles at a distance, but Mr. Bulstrode shrank from the direct falsehood of denying true statements. It was one thing to look back on forgiven sins, nay, to explain questionable conformity to lax customs, and another to enter deliberately on the necessity of falsehood.

But since Bulstrode did not speak, Raffles ran on, by way of using time to the utmost.

“I’ve not had such fine luck as you, by Jove! Things went confoundedly with me in New York; those Yankees are cool hands, and a man of gentlemanly feelings has no chance with them. I married when I came back—a nice woman in the tobacco trade—very fond of me—but the trade was restricted, as we say. She had been settled there a good many years by a friend; but there was a son too much in the case. Josh and I never hit it off. However, I made the most of the position, and I’ve always taken my glass in good company. It’s been all on the square with me; I’m as open as the day. You won’t take it ill of me that I didn’t look you up before. I’ve got a complaint that makes me a little dilatory. I thought you were trading and praying away in London still, and didn’t find you there. But you see I was sent to you, Nick—perhaps for a blessing to both of us.”

Mr. Raffles ended with a jocosely snuffle: no man felt his intellect more superior to religious cant. And if the cunning which calculates on the meanest feelings in men could be called intellect, he had his share, for under the blurting rallying tone with which he spoke to Bulstrode, there was an evident selection of statements, as if they had been so many moves at chess. Meanwhile Bulstrode had determined on his move, and he said, with gathered resolution—

“You will do well to reflect, Mr. Raffles, that it is possible for a man to overreach himself in the effort to secure undue advantage. Although I am not in any way bound to you, I am willing to supply you with a regular annuity—in quarterly payments—so long as you fulfil a promise to remain at a distance from this neighborhood. It is in your power to choose. If you

insist on remaining here, even for a short time, you will get nothing from me. I shall decline to know you.”

“Ha, ha!” said Raffles, with an affected explosion, “that reminds me of a droll dog of a thief who declined to know the constable.”

“Your allusions are lost on me sir,” said Bulstrode, with white heat; “the law has no hold on me either through your agency or any other.”

“You can’t understand a joke, my good fellow. I only meant that I should never decline to know you. But let us be serious. Your quarterly payment won’t quite suit me. I like my freedom.”

Here Raffles rose and stalked once or twice up and down the room, swinging his leg, and assuming an air of masterly meditation. At last he stopped opposite Bulstrode, and said, “I’ll tell you what! Give us a couple of hundreds—come, that’s modest—and I’ll go away—honor bright!—pick up my portmanteau and go away. But I shall not give up my liberty for a dirty annuity. I shall come and go where I like. Perhaps it may suit me to stay away, and correspond with a friend; perhaps not. Have you the money with you?”

“No, I have one hundred,” said Bulstrode, feeling the immediate riddance too great a relief to be rejected on the ground of future uncertainties. “I will forward you the other if you will mention an address.”

“No, I’ll wait here till you bring it,” said Raffles. “I’ll take a stroll and have a snack, and you’ll be back by that time.”

Mr. Bulstrode’s sickly body, shattered by the agitations he had gone through since the last evening, made him feel abjectly in the power of this loud invulnerable man. At that moment he snatched at a temporary repose to be won on any terms. He was rising to do what Raffles suggested, when the latter said, lifting up his finger as if with a sudden recollection—

“I did have another look after Sarah again, though I didn’t tell you; I’d a tender conscience about that pretty young woman. I didn’t find her, but I found out her husband’s name, and I made a note of it. But hang it, I lost my pocketbook. However, if I heard it, I should know it again. I’ve got my faculties as if I was in my prime, but names wear out, by Jove! Sometimes I’m no better than a confounded tax-paper before the names are filled in.



However, if I hear of her and her family, you shall know, Nick. You'd like to do something for her, now she's your step-daughter."

"Doubtless," said Mr. Bulstrode, with the usual steady look of his light-gray eyes; "though that might reduce my power of assisting you."

As he walked out of the room, Raffles winked slowly at his back, and then turned towards the window to watch the banker riding away—virtually at his command. His lips first curled with a smile and then opened with a short triumphant laugh.

"But what the deuce was the name?" he presently said, half aloud, scratching his head, and wrinkling his brows horizontally. He had not really cared or thought about this point of forgetfulness until it occurred to him in his invention of annoyances for Bulstrode.

"It began with L; it was almost all l's I fancy," he went on, with a sense that he was getting hold of the slippery name. But the hold was too slight, and he soon got tired of this mental chase; for few men were more impatient of private occupation or more in need of making themselves continually heard than Mr. Raffles. He preferred using his time in pleasant conversation with the bailiff and the housekeeper, from whom he gathered as much as he wanted to know about Mr. Bulstrode's position in Middlemarch.

After all, however, there was a dull space of time which needed relieving with bread and cheese and ale, and when he was seated alone with these resources in the wainscoted parlor, he suddenly slapped his knee, and exclaimed, "Ladislaw!" That action of memory which he had tried to set going, and had abandoned in despair, had suddenly completed itself without conscious effort—a common experience, agreeable as a completed sneeze, even if the name remembered is of no value. Raffles immediately took out his pocket-book, and wrote down the name, not because he expected to use it, but merely for the sake of not being at a loss if he ever did happen to want it. He was not going to tell Bulstrode: there was no actual good in telling, and to a mind like that of Mr. Raffles there is always probable good in a secret.

He was satisfied with his present success, and by three o'clock that day he had taken up his portmanteau at the turnpike and mounted the coach, relieving Mr. Bulstrode's eyes of an ugly black spot on the landscape at

Stone Court, but not relieving him of the dread that the black spot might reappear and become inseparable even from the vision of his hearth.

BOOK VI.  
THE WIDOW AND THE WIFE.

## CHAPTER LIV.

“Negli occhi porta la mia donna Amore;  
Per che si fa gentil ciò ch’ella mira:  
Ov’ella passa, ogni uom ver lei si gira,  
E cui saluta fa tremar lo core.

Sicchè, bassando il viso, tutto smore,  
E d’ogni suo difetto allor sospira:  
Fuggon dinanzi a lei Superbia ed Ira:  
Aiutatemi, donne, a farle onore.

Ogni dolcezza, ogni pensiero umile  
Nasce nel core a chi parlar la sente;  
Ond’è beato chi prima la vide.  
Quel ch’ella par quand’ un poco sorride,  
Non si può dicer, nè tener a mente,  
Si è nuovo miracolo gentile.”

—DANTE: *La Vita Nuova*.

By that delightful morning when the hay-ricks at Stone Court were scenting the air quite impartially, as if Mr. Raffles had been a guest worthy of finest incense, Dorothea had again taken up her abode at Lowick Manor. After three months Freshitt had become rather oppressive: to sit like a model for Saint Catherine looking rapturously at Celia’s baby would not do for many hours in the day, and to remain in that momentous babe’s presence with persistent disregard was a course that could not have been tolerated in a childless sister. Dorothea would have been capable of carrying baby joyfully for a mile if there had been need, and of loving it the more tenderly for that labor; but to an aunt who does not recognize her infant nephew as Bouddha, and has nothing to do for him but to admire, his behavior is apt to appear monotonous, and the interest of watching him exhaustible. This possibility was quite hidden from Celia, who felt that Dorothea’s childless widowhood fell in quite prettily with the birth of little Arthur (baby was named after Mr. Brooke).

“Dodo is just the creature not to mind about having anything of her own—children or anything!” said Celia to her husband. “And if she had had a

baby, it never could have been such a dear as Arthur. Could it, James?

“Not if it had been like Casaubon,” said Sir James, conscious of some indirectness in his answer, and of holding a strictly private opinion as to the perfections of his first-born.

“No! just imagine! Really it was a mercy,” said Celia; “and I think it is very nice for Dodo to be a widow. She can be just as fond of our baby as if it were her own, and she can have as many notions of her own as she likes.”

“It is a pity she was not a queen,” said the devout Sir James.

“But what should we have been then? We must have been something else,” said Celia, objecting to so laborious a flight of imagination. “I like her better as she is.”

Hence, when she found that Dorothea was making arrangements for her final departure to Lowick, Celia raised her eyebrows with disappointment, and in her quiet unemphatic way shot a needle-arrow of sarcasm.

“What will you do at Lowick, Dodo? You say yourself there is nothing to be done there: everybody is so clean and well off, it makes you quite melancholy. And here you have been so happy going all about Tipton with Mr. Garth into the worst backyards. And now uncle is abroad, you and Mr. Garth can have it all your own way; and I am sure James does everything you tell him.”

“I shall often come here, and I shall see how baby grows all the better,” said Dorothea.

“But you will never see him washed,” said Celia; “and that is quite the best part of the day.” She was almost pouting: it did seem to her very hard in Dodo to go away from the baby when she might stay.

“Dear Kitty, I will come and stay all night on purpose,” said Dorothea; “but I want to be alone now, and in my own home. I wish to know the Farebrothers better, and to talk to Mr. Farebrother about what there is to be done in Middlemarch.”

Dorothea’s native strength of will was no longer all converted into resolute submission. She had a great yearning to be at Lowick, and was simply determined to go, not feeling bound to tell all her reasons. But every one around her disapproved. Sir James was much pained, and offered that they should all migrate to Cheltenham for a few months with

the sacred ark, otherwise called a cradle: at that period a man could hardly know what to propose if Cheltenham were rejected.

The Dowager Lady Chettam, just returned from a visit to her daughter in town, wished, at least, that Mrs. Vigo should be written to, and invited to accept the office of companion to Mrs. Casaubon: it was not credible that Dorothea as a young widow would think of living alone in the house at Lowick. Mrs. Vigo had been reader and secretary to royal personages, and in point of knowledge and sentiments even Dorothea could have nothing to object to her.

Mrs. Cadwallader said, privately, “You will certainly go mad in that house alone, my dear. You will see visions. We have all got to exert ourselves a little to keep sane, and call things by the same names as other people call them by. To be sure, for younger sons and women who have no money, it is a sort of provision to go mad: they are taken care of then. But you must not run into that. I dare say you are a little bored here with our good dowager; but think what a bore you might become yourself to your fellow-creatures if you were always playing tragedy queen and taking things sublimely. Sitting alone in that library at Lowick you may fancy yourself ruling the weather; you must get a few people round you who wouldn’t believe you if you told them. That is a good lowering medicine.”

“I never called everything by the same name that all the people about me did,” said Dorothea, stoutly.

“But I suppose you have found out your mistake, my dear,” said Mrs. Cadwallader, “and that is a proof of sanity.”

Dorothea was aware of the sting, but it did not hurt her. “No,” she said, “I still think that the greater part of the world is mistaken about many things. Surely one may be sane and yet think so, since the greater part of the world has often had to come round from its opinion.”

Mrs. Cadwallader said no more on that point to Dorothea, but to her husband she remarked, “It will be well for her to marry again as soon as it is proper, if one could get her among the right people. Of course the Chettams would not wish it. But I see clearly a husband is the best thing to keep her in order. If we were not so poor I would invite Lord Triton. He will be marquis some day, and there is no denying that she would make a good marchioness: she looks handsomer than ever in her mourning.”

“My dear Elinor, do let the poor woman alone. Such contrivances are of no use,” said the easy Rector.

“No use? How are matches made, except by bringing men and women together? And it is a shame that her uncle should have run away and shut up the Grange just now. There ought to be plenty of eligible matches invited to Freshitt and the Grange. Lord Triton is precisely the man: full of plans for making the people happy in a soft-headed sort of way. That would just suit Mrs. Casaubon.”

“Let Mrs. Casaubon choose for herself, Elinor.”

“That is the nonsense you wise men talk! How can she choose if she has no variety to choose from? A woman’s choice usually means taking the only man she can get. Mark my words, Humphrey. If her friends don’t exert themselves, there will be a worse business than the Casaubon business yet.”

“For heaven’s sake don’t touch on that topic, Elinor! It is a very sore point with Sir James. He would be deeply offended if you entered on it to him unnecessarily.”

“I have never entered on it,” said Mrs Cadwallader, opening her hands. “Celia told me all about the will at the beginning, without any asking of mine.”

“Yes, yes; but they want the thing hushed up, and I understand that the young fellow is going out of the neighborhood.”

Mrs. Cadwallader said nothing, but gave her husband three significant nods, with a very sarcastic expression in her dark eyes.

Dorothea quietly persisted in spite of remonstrance and persuasion. So by the end of June the shutters were all opened at Lowick Manor, and the morning gazed calmly into the library, shining on the rows of note-books as it shines on the weary waste planted with huge stones, the mute memorial of a forgotten faith; and the evening laden with roses entered silently into the blue-green boudoir where Dorothea chose oftenest to sit. At first she walked into every room, questioning the eighteen months of her married life, and carrying on her thoughts as if they were a speech to be heard by her husband. Then, she lingered in the library and could not be at rest till she had carefully ranged all the note-books as she imagined that he would wish to see them, in orderly sequence. The pity which had been

the restraining compelling motive in her life with him still clung about his image, even while she remonstrated with him in indignant thought and told him that he was unjust. One little act of hers may perhaps be smiled at as superstitious. The Synoptical Tabulation for the use of Mrs. Casaubon, she carefully enclosed and sealed, writing within the envelope, "I could not use it. Do you not see now that I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in—Dorothea?" Then she deposited the paper in her own desk.

That silent colloquy was perhaps only the more earnest because underneath and through it all there was always the deep longing which had really determined her to come to Lowick. The longing was to see Will Ladislaw. She did not know any good that could come of their meeting: she was helpless; her hands had been tied from making up to him for any unfairness in his lot. But her soul thirsted to see him. How could it be otherwise? If a princess in the days of enchantment had seen a four-footed creature from among those which live in herds come to her once and again with a human gaze which rested upon her with choice and beseeching, what would she think of in her journeying, what would she look for when the herds passed her? Surely for the gaze which had found her, and which she would know again. Life would be no better than candle-light tinsel and daylight rubbish if our spirits were not touched by what has been, to issues of longing and constancy. It was true that Dorothea wanted to know the Farebrothers better, and especially to talk to the new rector, but also true that remembering what Lydgate had told her about Will Ladislaw and little Miss Noble, she counted on Will's coming to Lowick to see the Farebrother family. The very first Sunday, *before* she entered the church, she saw him as she had seen him the last time she was there, alone in the clergyman's pew; but *when* she entered his figure was gone.

In the week-days when she went to see the ladies at the Rectory, she listened in vain for some word that they might let fall about Will; but it seemed to her that Mrs. Farebrother talked of every one else in the neighborhood and out of it.

"Probably some of Mr. Farebrother's Middlemarch hearers may follow him to Lowick sometimes. Do you not think so?" said Dorothea, rather despising herself for having a secret motive in asking the question.



“If they are wise they will, Mrs. Casaubon,” said the old lady. “I see that you set a right value on my son’s preaching. His grandfather on my side was an excellent clergyman, but his father was in the law:—most exemplary and honest nevertheless, which is a reason for our never being rich. They say Fortune is a woman and capricious. But sometimes she is a good woman and gives to those who merit, which has been the case with you, Mrs. Casaubon, who have given a living to my son.”

Mrs. Farebrother recurred to her knitting with a dignified satisfaction in her neat little effort at oratory, but this was not what Dorothea wanted to hear. Poor thing! she did not even know whether Will Ladislaw was still at Middlemarch, and there was no one whom she dared to ask, unless it were Lydgate. But just now she could not see Lydgate without sending for him or going to seek him. Perhaps Will Ladislaw, having heard of that strange ban against him left by Mr. Casaubon, had felt it better that he and she should not meet again, and perhaps she was wrong to wish for a meeting that others might find many good reasons against. Still “I do wish it” came at the end of those wise reflections as naturally as a sob after holding the breath. And the meeting did happen, but in a formal way quite unexpected by her.

One morning, about eleven, Dorothea was seated in her boudoir with a map of the land attached to the manor and other papers before her, which were to help her in making an exact statement for herself of her income and affairs. She had not yet applied herself to her work, but was seated with her hands folded on her lap, looking out along the avenue of limes to the distant fields. Every leaf was at rest in the sunshine, the familiar scene was changeless, and seemed to represent the prospect of her life, full of motiveless ease—motiveless, if her own energy could not seek out reasons for ardent action. The widow’s cap of those times made an oval frame for the face, and had a crown standing up; the dress was an experiment in the utmost laying on of crape; but this heavy solemnity of clothing made her face look all the younger, with its recovered bloom, and the sweet, inquiring candor of her eyes.

Her reverie was broken by Tantripp, who came to say that Mr. Ladislaw was below, and begged permission to see Madam if it were not too early.

“I will see him,” said Dorothea, rising immediately. “Let him be shown into the drawing-room.”

The drawing-room was the most neutral room in the house to her—the one least associated with the trials of her married life: the damask matched the wood-work, which was all white and gold; there were two tall mirrors and tables with nothing on them—in brief, it was a room where you had no reason for sitting in one place rather than in another. It was below the boudoir, and had also a bow-window looking out on the avenue. But when Pratt showed Will Ladislaw into it the window was open; and a winged visitor, buzzing in and out now and then without minding the furniture, made the room look less formal and uninhabited.

“Glad to see you here again, sir,” said Pratt, lingering to adjust a blind.

“I am only come to say good-by, Pratt,” said Will, who wished even the butler to know that he was too proud to hang about Mrs. Casaubon now she was a rich widow.

“Very sorry to hear it, sir,” said Pratt, retiring. Of course, as a servant who was to be told nothing, he knew the fact of which Ladislaw was still ignorant, and had drawn his inferences; indeed, had not differed from his betrothed Tantripp when she said, “Your master was as jealous as a fiend—and no reason. Madam would look higher than Mr. Ladislaw, else I don’t know her. Mrs. Cadwallader’s maid says there’s a lord coming who is to marry her when the mourning’s over.”

There were not many moments for Will to walk about with his hat in his hand before Dorothea entered. The meeting was very different from that first meeting in Rome when Will had been embarrassed and Dorothea calm. This time he felt miserable but determined, while she was in a state of agitation which could not be hidden. Just outside the door she had felt that this longed-for meeting was after all too difficult, and when she saw Will advancing towards her, the deep blush which was rare in her came with painful suddenness. Neither of them knew how it was, but neither of them spoke. She gave her hand for a moment, and then they went to sit down near the window, she on one settee and he on another opposite. Will was peculiarly uneasy: it seemed to him not like Dorothea that the mere fact of her being a widow should cause such a change in her manner of receiving him; and he knew of no other condition which could have affected their previous relation to each other—except that, as his imagination at once told him, her friends might have been poisoning her mind with their suspicions of him.

“I hope I have not presumed too much in calling,” said Will; “I could not bear to leave the neighborhood and begin a new life without seeing you to say good-by.”

“Presumed? Surely not. I should have thought it unkind if you had not wished to see me,” said Dorothea, her habit of speaking with perfect genuineness asserting itself through all her uncertainty and agitation. “Are you going away immediately?”

“Very soon, I think. I intend to go to town and eat my dinners as a barrister, since, they say, that is the preparation for all public business. There will be a great deal of political work to be done by-and-by, and I mean to try and do some of it. Other men have managed to win an honorable position for themselves without family or money.”

“And that will make it all the more honorable,” said Dorothea, ardently. “Besides, you have so many talents. I have heard from my uncle how well you speak in public, so that every one is sorry when you leave off, and how clearly you can explain things. And you care that justice should be done to every one. I am so glad. When we were in Rome, I thought you only cared for poetry and art, and the things that adorn life for us who are well off. But now I know you think about the rest of the world.”

While she was speaking Dorothea had lost her personal embarrassment, and had become like her former self. She looked at Will with a direct glance, full of delighted confidence.

“You approve of my going away for years, then, and never coming here again till I have made myself of some mark in the world?” said Will, trying hard to reconcile the utmost pride with the utmost effort to get an expression of strong feeling from Dorothea.

She was not aware how long it was before she answered. She had turned her head and was looking out of the window on the rose-bushes, which seemed to have in them the summers of all the years when Will would be away. This was not judicious behavior. But Dorothea never thought of studying her manners: she thought only of bowing to a sad necessity which divided her from Will. Those first words of his about his intentions had seemed to make everything clear to her: he knew, she supposed, all about Mr. Casaubon’s final conduct in relation to him, and it had come to him with the same sort of shock as to herself. He had never felt more than friendship for her—had never had anything in his mind to justify what she

felt to be her husband's outrage on the feelings of both: and that friendship he still felt. Something which may be called an inward silent sob had gone on in Dorothea before she said with a pure voice, just trembling in the last words as if only from its liquid flexibility—

“Yes, it must be right for you to do as you say. I shall be very happy when I hear that you have made your value felt. But you must have patience. It will perhaps be a long while.”

Will never quite knew how it was that he saved himself from falling down at her feet, when the “long while” came forth with its gentle tremor. He used to say that the horrible hue and surface of her crape dress was most likely the sufficient controlling force. He sat still, however, and only said—

“I shall never hear from you. And you will forget all about me.”

“No,” said Dorothea, “I shall never forget you. I have never forgotten any one whom I once knew. My life has never been crowded, and seems not likely to be so. And I have a great deal of space for memory at Lowick, haven't I?” She smiled.

“Good God!” Will burst out passionately, rising, with his hat still in his hand, and walking away to a marble table, where he suddenly turned and leaned his back against it. The blood had mounted to his face and neck, and he looked almost angry. It had seemed to him as if they were like two creatures slowly turning to marble in each other's presence, while their hearts were conscious and their eyes were yearning. But there was no help for it. It should never be true of him that in this meeting to which he had come with bitter resolution he had ended by a confession which might be interpreted into asking for her fortune. Moreover, it was actually true that he was fearful of the effect which such confessions might have on Dorothea herself.

She looked at him from that distance in some trouble, imagining that there might have been an offence in her words. But all the while there was a current of thought in her about his probable want of money, and the impossibility of her helping him. If her uncle had been at home, something might have been done through him! It was this preoccupation with the hardship of Will's wanting money, while she had what ought to have been his share, which led her to say, seeing that he remained silent and looked away from her—

“I wonder whether you would like to have that miniature which hangs up-stairs—I mean that beautiful miniature of your grandmother. I think it is not right for me to keep it, if you would wish to have it. It is wonderfully like you.”

“You are very good,” said Will, irritably. “No; I don’t mind about it. It is not very consoling to have one’s own likeness. It would be more consoling if others wanted to have it.”

“I thought you would like to cherish her memory—I thought—” Dorothea broke off an instant, her imagination suddenly warning her away from Aunt Julia’s history—“you would surely like to have the miniature as a family memorial.”

“Why should I have that, when I have nothing else! A man with only a portmanteau for his stowage must keep his memorials in his head.”

Will spoke at random: he was merely venting his petulance; it was a little too exasperating to have his grandmother’s portrait offered him at that moment. But to Dorothea’s feeling his words had a peculiar sting. She rose and said with a touch of indignation as well as hauteur—

“You are much the happier of us two, Mr. Ladislaw, to have nothing.”

Will was startled. Whatever the words might be, the tone seemed like a dismissal; and quitting his leaning posture, he walked a little way towards her. Their eyes met, but with a strange questioning gravity. Something was keeping their minds aloof, and each was left to conjecture what was in the other. Will had really never thought of himself as having a claim of inheritance on the property which was held by Dorothea, and would have required a narrative to make him understand her present feeling.

“I never felt it a misfortune to have nothing till now,” he said. “But poverty may be as bad as leprosy, if it divides us from what we most care for.”

The words cut Dorothea to the heart, and made her relent. She answered in a tone of sad fellowship.

“Sorrow comes in so many ways. Two years ago I had no notion of that—I mean of the unexpected way in which trouble comes, and ties our hands, and makes us silent when we long to speak. I used to despise women a little for not shaping their lives more, and doing better things. I

was very fond of doing as I liked, but I have almost given it up," she ended, smiling playfully.

"I have not given up doing as I like, but I can very seldom do it," said Will. He was standing two yards from her with his mind full of contradictory desires and resolves—desiring some unmistakable proof that she loved him, and yet dreading the position into which such a proof might bring him. "The thing one most longs for may be surrounded with conditions that would be intolerable."

At this moment Pratt entered and said, "Sir James Chettam is in the library, madam."

"Ask Sir James to come in here," said Dorothea, immediately. It was as if the same electric shock had passed through her and Will. Each of them felt proudly resistant, and neither looked at the other, while they awaited Sir James's entrance.

After shaking hands with Dorothea, he bowed as slightly as possible to Ladislaw, who repaid the slightness exactly, and then going towards Dorothea, said—

"I must say good-by, Mrs. Casaubon; and probably for a long while."

Dorothea put out her hand and said her good-by cordially. The sense that Sir James was depreciating Will, and behaving rudely to him, roused her resolution and dignity: there was no touch of confusion in her manner. And when Will had left the room, she looked with such calm self-possession at Sir James, saying, "How is Celia?" that he was obliged to behave as if nothing had annoyed him. And what would be the use of behaving otherwise? Indeed, Sir James shrank with so much dislike from the association even in thought of Dorothea with Ladislaw as her possible lover, that he would himself have wished to avoid an outward show of displeasure which would have recognized the disagreeable possibility. If any one had asked him why he shrank in that way, I am not sure that he would at first have said anything fuller or more precise than "*That Ladislaw!*"—though on reflection he might have urged that Mr. Casaubon's codicil, barring Dorothea's marriage with Will, except under a penalty, was enough to cast unfitness over any relation at all between them. His aversion was all the stronger because he felt himself unable to interfere.

But Sir James was a power in a way unguessed by himself. Entering at that moment, he was an incorporation of the strongest reasons through which Will's pride became a repellent force, keeping him asunder from Dorothea.

## CHAPTER LV.

Hath she her faults? I would you had them too.  
They are the fruity must of soundest wine;  
Or say, they are regenerating fire  
Such as hath turned the dense black element  
Into a crystal pathway for the sun.

If youth is the season of hope, it is often so only in the sense that our elders are hopeful about us; for no age is so apt as youth to think its emotions, partings, and resolves are the last of their kind. Each crisis seems final, simply because it is new. We are told that the oldest inhabitants in Peru do not cease to be agitated by the earthquakes, but they probably see beyond each shock, and reflect that there are plenty more to come.

To Dorothea, still in that time of youth when the eyes with their long full lashes look out after their rain of tears unsoiled and unwearied as a freshly opened passion-flower, that morning's parting with Will Ladislaw seemed to be the close of their personal relations. He was going away into the distance of unknown years, and if ever he came back he would be another man. The actual state of his mind—his proud resolve to give the lie beforehand to any suspicion that he would play the needy adventurer seeking a rich woman—lay quite out of her imagination, and she had interpreted all his behavior easily enough by her supposition that Mr. Casaubon's codicil seemed to him, as it did to her, a gross and cruel interdict on any active friendship between them. Their young delight in speaking to each other, and saying what no one else would care to hear, was forever ended, and become a treasure of the past. For this very reason she dwelt on it without inward check. That unique happiness too was dead, and in its shadowed silent chamber she might vent the passionate grief which she herself wondered at. For the first time she took down the miniature from the wall and kept it before her, liking to blend the woman who had been too hardly judged with the grandson whom her own heart and judgment defended. Can any one who has rejoiced in woman's



tenderness think it a reproach to her that she took the little oval picture in her palm and made a bed for it there, and leaned her cheek upon it, as if that would soothe the creatures who had suffered unjust condemnation? She did not know then that it was Love who had come to her briefly, as in a dream before awaking, with the hues of morning on his wings—that it was Love to whom she was sobbing her farewell as his image was banished by the blameless rigor of irresistible day. She only felt that there was something irrevocably amiss and lost in her lot, and her thoughts about the future were the more readily shapen into resolve. Ardent souls, ready to construct their coming lives, are apt to commit themselves to the fulfilment of their own visions.

One day that she went to Freshitt to fulfil her promise of staying all night and seeing baby washed, Mrs. Cadwallader came to dine, the Rector being gone on a fishing excursion. It was a warm evening, and even in the delightful drawing-room, where the fine old turf sloped from the open window towards a liliated pool and well-planted mounds, the heat was enough to make Celia in her white muslin and light curls reflect with pity on what Dodo must feel in her black dress and close cap. But this was not until some episodes with baby were over, and had left her mind at leisure. She had seated herself and taken up a fan for some time before she said, in her quiet guttural—

“Dear Dodo, do throw off that cap. I am sure your dress must make you feel ill.”

“I am so used to the cap—it has become a sort of shell,” said Dorothea, smiling. “I feel rather bare and exposed when it is off.”

“I must see you without it; it makes us all warm,” said Celia, throwing down her fan, and going to Dorothea. It was a pretty picture to see this little lady in white muslin unfastening the widow’s cap from her more majestic sister, and tossing it on to a chair. Just as the coils and braids of dark-brown hair had been set free, Sir James entered the room. He looked at the released head, and said, “Ah!” in a tone of satisfaction.

“It was I who did it, James,” said Celia. “Dodo need not make such a slavery of her mourning; she need not wear that cap any more among her friends.”

“My dear Celia,” said Lady Chettam, “a widow must wear her mourning at least a year.”

“Not if she marries again before the end of it,” said Mrs. Cadwallader, who had some pleasure in startling her good friend the Dowager. Sir James was annoyed, and leaned forward to play with Celia’s Maltese dog.

“That is very rare, I hope,” said Lady Chettam, in a tone intended to guard against such events. “No friend of ours ever committed herself in that way except Mrs. Beevor, and it was very painful to Lord Grinsell when she did so. Her first husband was objectionable, which made it the greater wonder. And severely she was punished for it. They said Captain Beevor dragged her about by the hair, and held up loaded pistols at her.”

“Oh, if she took the wrong man!” said Mrs. Cadwallader, who was in a decidedly wicked mood. “Marriage is always bad then, first or second. Priority is a poor recommendation in a husband if he has got no other. I would rather have a good second husband than an indifferent first.”

“My dear, your clever tongue runs away with you,” said Lady Chettam. “I am sure you would be the last woman to marry again prematurely, if our dear Rector were taken away.”

“Oh, I make no vows; it might be a necessary economy. It is lawful to marry again, I suppose; else we might as well be Hindoos instead of Christians. Of course if a woman accepts the wrong man, she must take the consequences, and one who does it twice over deserves her fate. But if she can marry blood, beauty, and bravery—the sooner the better.”

“I think the subject of our conversation is very ill-chosen,” said Sir James, with a look of disgust. “Suppose we change it.”

“Not on my account, Sir James,” said Dorothea, determined not to lose the opportunity of freeing herself from certain oblique references to excellent matches. “If you are speaking on my behalf, I can assure you that no question can be more indifferent and impersonal to me than second marriage. It is no more to me than if you talked of women going fox-hunting: whether it is admirable in them or not, I shall not follow them. Pray let Mrs. Cadwallader amuse herself on that subject as much as on any other.”

“My dear Mrs. Casaubon,” said Lady Chettam, in her stateliest way, “you do not, I hope, think there was any allusion to you in my mentioning Mrs. Beevor. It was only an instance that occurred to me. She was step-daughter to Lord Grinsell: he married Mrs. Teveroy for his second wife. There could be no possible allusion to you.”

“Oh no,” said Celia. “Nobody chose the subject; it all came out of Dodo’s cap. Mrs. Cadwallader only said what was quite true. A woman could not be married in a widow’s cap, James.”

“Hush, my dear!” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “I will not offend again. I will not even refer to Dido or Zenobia. Only what are we to talk about? I, for my part, object to the discussion of Human Nature, because that is the nature of rectors’ wives.”

Later in the evening, after Mrs. Cadwallader was gone, Celia said privately to Dorothea, “Really, Dodo, taking your cap off made you like yourself again in more ways than one. You spoke up just as you used to do, when anything was said to displease you. But I could hardly make out whether it was James that you thought wrong, or Mrs. Cadwallader.”

“Neither,” said Dorothea. “James spoke out of delicacy to me, but he was mistaken in supposing that I minded what Mrs. Cadwallader said. I should only mind if there were a law obliging me to take any piece of blood and beauty that she or anybody else recommended.”

“But you know, Dodo, if you ever did marry, it would be all the better to have blood and beauty,” said Celia, reflecting that Mr. Casaubon had not been richly endowed with those gifts, and that it would be well to caution Dorothea in time.

“Don’t be anxious, Kitty; I have quite other thoughts about my life. I shall never marry again,” said Dorothea, touching her sister’s chin, and looking at her with indulgent affection. Celia was nursing her baby, and Dorothea had come to say good-night to her.

“Really—quite?” said Celia. “Not anybody at all—if he were very wonderful indeed?”

Dorothea shook her head slowly. “Not anybody at all. I have delightful plans. I should like to take a great deal of land, and drain it, and make a little colony, where everybody should work, and all the work should be done well. I should know every one of the people and be their friend. I am going to have great consultations with Mr. Garth: he can tell me almost everything I want to know.”

“Then you *will* be happy, if you have a plan, Dodo?” said Celia. “Perhaps little Arthur will like plans when he grows up, and then he can help you.”

Sir James was informed that same night that Dorothea was really quite set against marrying anybody at all, and was going to take to “all sorts of plans,” just like what she used to have. Sir James made no remark. To his secret feeling there was something repulsive in a woman’s second marriage, and no match would prevent him from feeling it a sort of desecration for Dorothea. He was aware that the world would regard such a sentiment as preposterous, especially in relation to a woman of one-and-twenty; the practice of “the world” being to treat of a young widow’s second marriage as certain and probably near, and to smile with meaning if the widow acts accordingly. But if Dorothea did choose to espouse her solitude, he felt that the resolution would well become her.

## CHAPTER LVI.

“How happy is he born and taught  
That serveth not another’s will;  
Whose armor is his honest thought,  
And simple truth his only skill!

.....  
This man is freed from servile bands  
Of hope to rise or fear to fall;  
Lord of himself though not of lands;  
And having nothing yet hath all.”

—SIR HENRY WOTTON.

Dorothea’s confidence in Caleb Garth’s knowledge, which had begun on her hearing that he approved of her cottages, had grown fast during her stay at Freshitt, Sir James having induced her to take rides over the two estates in company with himself and Caleb, who quite returned her admiration, and told his wife that Mrs. Casaubon had a head for business most uncommon in a woman. It must be remembered that by “business” Caleb never meant money transactions, but the skilful application of labor.

“Most uncommon!” repeated Caleb. “She said a thing I often used to think myself when I was a lad:—‘Mr. Garth, I should like to feel, if I lived to be old, that I had improved a great piece of land and built a great many good cottages, because the work is of a healthy kind while it is being done, and after it is done, men are the better for it.’ Those were the very words: she sees into things in that way.”

“But womanly, I hope,” said Mrs. Garth, half suspecting that Mrs. Casaubon might not hold the true principle of subordination.

“Oh, you can’t think!” said Caleb, shaking his head. “You would like to hear her speak, Susan. She speaks in such plain words, and a voice like music. Bless me! it reminds me of bits in the ‘Messiah’—‘and straightway there appeared a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying;’ it has a tone with it that satisfies your ear.”

Caleb was very fond of music, and when he could afford it went to hear an oratorio that came within his reach, returning from it with a profound

reverence for this mighty structure of tones, which made him sit meditatively, looking on the floor and throwing much unutterable language into his outstretched hands.

With this good understanding between them, it was natural that Dorothea asked Mr. Garth to undertake any business connected with the three farms and the numerous tenements attached to Lowick Manor; indeed, his expectation of getting work for two was being fast fulfilled. As he said, "Business breeds." And one form of business which was beginning to breed just then was the construction of railways. A projected line was to run through Lowick parish where the cattle had hitherto grazed in a peace unbroken by astonishment; and thus it happened that the infant struggles of the railway system entered into the affairs of Caleb Garth, and determined the course of this history with regard to two persons who were dear to him. The submarine railway may have its difficulties; but the bed of the sea is not divided among various landed proprietors with claims for damages not only measurable but sentimental. In the hundred to which Middlemarch belonged railways were as exciting a topic as the Reform Bill or the imminent horrors of Cholera, and those who held the most decided views on the subject were women and landholders. Women both old and young regarded travelling by steam as presumptuous and dangerous, and argued against it by saying that nothing should induce them to get into a railway carriage; while proprietors, differing from each other in their arguments as much as Mr. Solomon Featherstone differed from Lord Medlicote, were yet unanimous in the opinion that in selling land, whether to the Enemy of mankind or to a company obliged to purchase, these pernicious agencies must be made to pay a very high price to landowners for permission to injure mankind.

But the slower wits, such as Mr. Solomon and Mrs. Waule, who both occupied land of their own, took a long time to arrive at this conclusion, their minds halting at the vivid conception of what it would be to cut the Big Pasture in two, and turn it into three-cornered bits, which would be "nohow;" while accommodation-bridges and high payments were remote and incredible.

"The cows will all cast their calves, brother," said Mrs. Waule, in a tone of deep melancholy, "if the railway comes across the Near Close; and I shouldn't wonder at the mare too, if she was in foal. It's a poor tale if a

widow's property is to be spaded away, and the law say nothing to it. What's to hinder 'em from cutting right and left if they begin? It's well known, *I can't fight.*"

"The best way would be to say nothing, and set somebody on to send 'em away with a flea in their ear, when they came spying and measuring," said Solomon. "Folks did that about Brassing, by what I can understand. It's all a pretence, if the truth was known, about their being forced to take one way. Let 'em go cutting in another parish. And I don't believe in any pay to make amends for bringing a lot of ruffians to trample your crops. Where's a company's pocket?"

"Brother Peter, God forgive him, got money out of a company," said Mrs. Waule. "But that was for the manganese. That wasn't for railways to blow you to pieces right and left."

"Well, there's this to be said, Jane," Mr. Solomon concluded, lowering his voice in a cautious manner—"the more spokes we put in their wheel, the more they'll pay us to let 'em go on, if they must come whether or not."

This reasoning of Mr. Solomon's was perhaps less thorough than he imagined, his cunning bearing about the same relation to the course of railways as the cunning of a diplomatist bears to the general chill or catarrh of the solar system. But he set about acting on his views in a thoroughly diplomatic manner, by stimulating suspicion. His side of Lowick was the most remote from the village, and the houses of the laboring people were either lone cottages or were collected in a hamlet called Frick, where a water-mill and some stone-pits made a little centre of slow, heavy-shouldered industry.

In the absence of any precise idea as to what railways were, public opinion in Frick was against them; for the human mind in that grassy corner had not the proverbial tendency to admire the unknown, holding rather that it was likely to be against the poor man, and that suspicion was the only wise attitude with regard to it. Even the rumor of Reform had not yet excited any millennial expectations in Frick, there being no definite promise in it, as of gratuitous grains to fatten Hiram Ford's pig, or of a publican at the "Weights and Scales" who would brew beer for nothing, or of an offer on the part of the three neighboring farmers to raise wages during winter. And without distinct good of this kind in its promises,

Reform seemed on a footing with the bragging of peddlers, which was a hint for distrust to every knowing person. The men of Frick were not ill-fed, and were less given to fanaticism than to a strong muscular suspicion; less inclined to believe that they were peculiarly cared for by heaven, than to regard heaven itself as rather disposed to take them in—a disposition observable in the weather.

Thus the mind of Frick was exactly of the sort for Mr. Solomon Featherstone to work upon, he having more plenteous ideas of the same order, with a suspicion of heaven and earth which was better fed and more entirely at leisure. Solomon was overseer of the roads at that time, and on his slow-paced cob often took his rounds by Frick to look at the workmen getting the stones there, pausing with a mysterious deliberation, which might have misled you into supposing that he had some other reason for staying than the mere want of impulse to move. After looking for a long while at any work that was going on, he would raise his eyes a little and look at the horizon; finally he would shake his bridle, touch his horse with the whip, and get it to move slowly onward. The hour-hand of a clock was quick by comparison with Mr. Solomon, who had an agreeable sense that he could afford to be slow. He was in the habit of pausing for a cautious, vaguely designing chat with every hedger or ditcher on his way, and was especially willing to listen even to news which he had heard before, feeling himself at an advantage over all narrators in partially disbelieving them. One day, however, he got into a dialogue with Hiram Ford, a wagoner, in which he himself contributed information. He wished to know whether Hiram had seen fellows with staves and instruments spying about: they called themselves railroad people, but there was no telling what they were or what they meant to do. The least they pretended was that they were going to cut Lowick Parish into sixes and sevens.

“Why, there’ll be no stirrin’ from one pla-ace to another,” said Hiram, thinking of his wagon and horses.

“Not a bit,” said Mr. Solomon. “And cutting up fine land such as this parish! Let ’em go into Tipton, say I. But there’s no knowing what there is at the bottom of it. Traffic is what they put for’ard; but it’s to do harm to the land and the poor man in the long-run.”

“Why, they’re Lunnon chaps, I reckon,” said Hiram, who had a dim notion of London as a centre of hostility to the country.



“Ay, to be sure. And in some parts against Brassing, by what I’ve heard say, the folks fell on ’em when they were spying, and broke their peep-holes as they carry, and drove ’em away, so as they knew better than come again.”

“It war good foon, I’d be bound,” said Hiram, whose fun was much restricted by circumstances.

“Well, I wouldn’t meddle with ’em myself,” said Solomon. “But some say this country’s seen its best days, and the sign is, as it’s being overrun with these fellows trampling right and left, and wanting to cut it up into railways; and all for the big traffic to swallow up the little, so as there shan’t be a team left on the land, nor a whip to crack.”

“I’ll crack *my* whip about their ear’n, afore they bring it to that, though,” said Hiram, while Mr. Solomon, shaking his bridle, moved onward.

Nettle-seed needs no digging. The ruin of this countryside by railroads was discussed, not only at the “Weights and Scales,” but in the hay-field, where the muster of working hands gave opportunities for talk such as were rarely had through the rural year.

One morning, not long after that interview between Mr. Farebrother and Mary Garth, in which she confessed to him her feeling for Fred Vincy, it happened that her father had some business which took him to Yoddrell’s farm in the direction of Frick: it was to measure and value an outlying piece of land belonging to Lowick Manor, which Caleb expected to dispose of advantageously for Dorothea (it must be confessed that his bias was towards getting the best possible terms from railroad companies). He put up his gig at Yoddrell’s, and in walking with his assistant and measuring-chain to the scene of his work, he encountered the party of the company’s agents, who were adjusting their spirit-level. After a little chat he left them, observing that by-and-by they would reach him again where he was going to measure. It was one of those gray mornings after light rains, which become delicious about twelve o’clock, when the clouds part a little, and the scent of the earth is sweet along the lanes and by the hedgerows.

The scent would have been sweeter to Fred Vincy, who was coming along the lanes on horseback, if his mind had not been worried by unsuccessful efforts to imagine what he was to do, with his father on one

side expecting him straightway to enter the Church, with Mary on the other threatening to forsake him if he did enter it, and with the working-day world showing no eager need whatever of a young gentleman without capital and generally unskilled. It was the harder to Fred's disposition because his father, satisfied that he was no longer rebellious, was in good humor with him, and had sent him on this pleasant ride to see after some greyhounds. Even when he had fixed on what he should do, there would be the task of telling his father. But it must be admitted that the fixing, which had to come first, was the more difficult task:—what secular avocation on earth was there for a young man (whose friends could not get him an "appointment") which was at once gentlemanly, lucrative, and to be followed without special knowledge? Riding along the lanes by Frick in this mood, and slackening his pace while he reflected whether he should venture to go round by Lowick Parsonage to call on Mary, he could see over the hedges from one field to another. Suddenly a noise roused his attention, and on the far side of a field on his left hand he could see six or seven men in smock-frocks with hay-forks in their hands making an offensive approach towards the four railway agents who were facing them, while Caleb Garth and his assistant were hastening across the field to join the threatened group. Fred, delayed a few moments by having to find the gate, could not gallop up to the spot before the party in smock-frocks, whose work of turning the hay had not been too pressing after swallowing their mid-day beer, were driving the men in coats before them with their hay-forks; while Caleb Garth's assistant, a lad of seventeen, who had snatched up the spirit-level at Caleb's order, had been knocked down and seemed to be lying helpless. The coated men had the advantage as runners, and Fred covered their retreat by getting in front of the smock-frocks and charging them suddenly enough to throw their chase into confusion. "What do you confounded fools mean?" shouted Fred, pursuing the divided group in a zigzag, and cutting right and left with his whip. "I'll swear to every one of you before the magistrate. You've knocked the lad down and killed him, for what I know. You'll every one of you be hanged at the next assizes, if you don't mind," said Fred, who afterwards laughed heartily as he remembered his own phrases.

The laborers had been driven through the gate-way into their hay-field, and Fred had checked his horse, when Hiram Ford, observing himself at a

safe challenging distance, turned back and shouted a defiance which he did not know to be Homeric.

“Yo’re a coward, yo are. Yo git off your horse, young measter, and I’ll have a round wi’ ye, I wull. Yo daredn’t come on wi’out your hoss an’ whip. I’d soon knock the breath out on ye, I would.”

“Wait a minute, and I’ll come back presently, and have a round with you all in turn, if you like,” said Fred, who felt confidence in his power of boxing with his dearly beloved brethren. But just now he wanted to hasten back to Caleb and the prostrate youth.

The lad’s ankle was strained, and he was in much pain from it, but he was no further hurt, and Fred placed him on the horse that he might ride to Yoddrell’s and be taken care of there.

“Let them put the horse in the stable, and tell the surveyors they can come back for their traps,” said Fred. “The ground is clear now.”

“No, no,” said Caleb, “here’s a breakage. They’ll have to give up for to-day, and it will be as well. Here, take the things before you on the horse, Tom. They’ll see you coming, and they’ll turn back.”

“I’m glad I happened to be here at the right moment, Mr. Garth,” said Fred, as Tom rode away. “No knowing what might have happened if the cavalry had not come up in time.”

“Ay, ay, it was lucky,” said Caleb, speaking rather absently, and looking towards the spot where he had been at work at the moment of interruption. “But—deuce take it—this is what comes of men being fools—I’m hindered of my day’s work. I can’t get along without somebody to help me with the measuring-chain. However!” He was beginning to move towards the spot with a look of vexation, as if he had forgotten Fred’s presence, but suddenly he turned round and said quickly, “What have you got to do to-day, young fellow?”

“Nothing, Mr. Garth. I’ll help you with pleasure—can I?” said Fred, with a sense that he should be courting Mary when he was helping her father.

“Well, you mustn’t mind stooping and getting hot.”

“I don’t mind anything. Only I want to go first and have a round with that hulky fellow who turned to challenge me. It would be a good lesson for him. I shall not be five minutes.”

“Nonsense!” said Caleb, with his most peremptory intonation. “I shall go and speak to the men myself. It’s all ignorance. Somebody has been telling them lies. The poor fools don’t know any better.”

“I shall go with you, then,” said Fred.

“No, no; stay where you are. I don’t want your young blood. I can take care of myself.”

Caleb was a powerful man and knew little of any fear except the fear of hurting others and the fear of having to speechify. But he felt it his duty at this moment to try and give a little harangue. There was a striking mixture in him—which came from his having always been a hard-working man himself—of rigorous notions about workmen and practical indulgence towards them. To do a good day’s work and to do it well, he held to be part of their welfare, as it was the chief part of his own happiness; but he had a strong sense of fellowship with them. When he advanced towards the laborers they had not gone to work again, but were standing in that form of rural grouping which consists in each turning a shoulder towards the other, at a distance of two or three yards. They looked rather sulkily at Caleb, who walked quickly with one hand in his pocket and the other thrust between the buttons of his waistcoat, and had his every-day mild air when he paused among them.

“Why, my lads, how’s this?” he began, taking as usual to brief phrases, which seemed pregnant to himself, because he had many thoughts lying under them, like the abundant roots of a plant that just manages to peep above the water. “How came you to make such a mistake as this? Somebody has been telling you lies. You thought those men up there wanted to do mischief.”

“Aw!” was the answer, dropped at intervals by each according to his degree of unreadiness.

“Nonsense! No such thing! They’re looking out to see which way the railroad is to take. Now, my lads, you can’t hinder the railroad: it will be made whether you like it or not. And if you go fighting against it, you’ll get yourselves into trouble. The law gives those men leave to come here on the land. The owner has nothing to say against it, and if you meddle with them you’ll have to do with the constable and Justice Blakesley, and with the handcuffs and Middlemarch jail. And you might be in for it now, if anybody informed against you.”

Caleb paused here, and perhaps the greatest orator could not have chosen either his pause or his images better for the occasion.

“But come, you didn’t mean any harm. Somebody told you the railroad was a bad thing. That was a lie. It may do a bit of harm here and there, to this and to that; and so does the sun in heaven. But the railway’s a good thing.”

“Aw! good for the big folks to make money out on,” said old Timothy Cooper, who had stayed behind turning his hay while the others had been gone on their spree;—“I’n seen lots o’ things turn up sin’ I war a young un—the war an’ the peace, and the canells, an’ the oald King George, an’ the Regen’, an’ the new King George, an’ the new un as has got a new ne-ame—an’ it’s been all aloike to the poor mon. What’s the canells been t’ him? They’n brought him neyther me-at nor be-acon, nor wage to lay by, if he didn’t save it wi’ clemmin’ his own inside. Times ha’ got wusser for him sin’ I war a young un. An’ so it’ll be wi’ the railroads. They’ll on’y leave the poor mon funder behind. But them are fools as meddle, and so I told the chaps here. This is the big folks’s world, this is. But yo’re for the big folks, Muster Garth, yo are.”

Timothy was a wiry old laborer, of a type lingering in those times—who had his savings in a stocking-foot, lived in a lone cottage, and was not to be wrought on by any oratory, having as little of the feudal spirit, and believing as little, as if he had not been totally unacquainted with the Age of Reason and the Rights of Man. Caleb was in a difficulty known to any person attempting in dark times and unassisted by miracle to reason with rustics who are in possession of an undeniable truth which they know through a hard process of feeling, and can let it fall like a giant’s club on your neatly carved argument for a social benefit which they do not feel. Caleb had no cant at command, even if he could have chosen to use it; and he had been accustomed to meet all such difficulties in no other way than by doing his “business” faithfully. He answered—

“If you don’t think well of me, Tim, never mind; that’s neither here nor there now. Things may be bad for the poor man—bad they are; but I want the lads here not to do what will make things worse for themselves. The cattle may have a heavy load, but it won’t help ’em to throw it over into the roadside pit, when it’s partly their own fodder.”

“We war on’y for a bit o’ foon,” said Hiram, who was beginning to see consequences. “That war all we war arter.”

“Well, promise me not to meddle again, and I’ll see that nobody informs against you.”

“I’n ne’er meddled, an’ I’n no call to promise,” said Timothy.

“No, but the rest. Come, I’m as hard at work as any of you to-day, and I can’t spare much time. Say you’ll be quiet without the constable.”

“Aw, we wooant meddle—they may do as they loike for oos”—were the forms in which Caleb got his pledges; and then he hastened back to Fred, who had followed him, and watched him in the gateway.

They went to work, and Fred helped vigorously. His spirits had risen, and he heartily enjoyed a good slip in the moist earth under the hedgerow, which soiled his perfect summer trousers. Was it his successful onset which had elated him, or the satisfaction of helping Mary’s father? Something more. The accidents of the morning had helped his frustrated imagination to shape an employment for himself which had several attractions. I am not sure that certain fibres in Mr. Garth’s mind had not resumed their old vibration towards the very end which now revealed itself to Fred. For the effective accident is but the touch of fire where there is oil and tow; and it always appeared to Fred that the railway brought the needed touch. But they went on in silence except when their business demanded speech. At last, when they had finished and were walking away, Mr. Garth said—

“A young fellow needn’t be a B. A. to do this sort of work, eh, Fred?”

“I wish I had taken to it before I had thought of being a B. A.,” said Fred. He paused a moment, and then added, more hesitatingly, “Do you think I am too old to learn your business, Mr. Garth?”

“My business is of many sorts, my boy,” said Mr. Garth, smiling. “A good deal of what I know can only come from experience: you can’t learn it off as you learn things out of a book. But you are young enough to lay a foundation yet.” Caleb pronounced the last sentence emphatically, but paused in some uncertainty. He had been under the impression lately that Fred had made up his mind to enter the Church.

“You do think I could do some good at it, if I were to try?” said Fred, more eagerly.

“That depends,” said Caleb, turning his head on one side and lowering his voice, with the air of a man who felt himself to be saying something deeply religious. “You must be sure of two things: you must love your work, and not be always looking over the edge of it, wanting your play to begin. And the other is, you must not be ashamed of your work, and think it would be more honorable to you to be doing something else. You must have a pride in your own work and in learning to do it well, and not be always saying, There’s this and there’s that—if I had this or that to do, I might make something of it. No matter what a man is—I wouldn’t give twopence for him”—here Caleb’s mouth looked bitter, and he snapped his fingers—“whether he was the prime minister or the rick-thatcher, if he didn’t do well what he undertook to do.”

“I can never feel that I should do that in being a clergyman,” said Fred, meaning to take a step in argument.

“Then let it alone, my boy,” said Caleb, abruptly, “else you’ll never be easy. Or, if you *are* easy, you’ll be a poor stick.”

“That is very nearly what Mary thinks about it,” said Fred, coloring. “I think you must know what I feel for Mary, Mr. Garth: I hope it does not displease you that I have always loved her better than any one else, and that I shall never love any one as I love her.”

The expression of Caleb’s face was visibly softening while Fred spoke. But he swung his head with a solemn slowness, and said—

“That makes things more serious, Fred, if you want to take Mary’s happiness into your keeping.”

“I know that, Mr. Garth,” said Fred, eagerly, “and I would do anything for *her*. She says she will never have me if I go into the Church; and I shall be the most miserable devil in the world if I lose all hope of Mary. Really, if I could get some other profession, business—anything that I am at all fit for, I would work hard, I would deserve your good opinion. I should like to have to do with outdoor things. I know a good deal about land and cattle already. I used to believe, you know—though you will think me rather foolish for it—that I should have land of my own. I am sure knowledge of that sort would come easily to me, especially if I could be under you in any way.”

“Softly, my boy,” said Caleb, having the image of “Susan” before his eyes. “What have you said to your father about all this?”

“Nothing, yet; but I must tell him. I am only waiting to know what I can do instead of entering the Church. I am very sorry to disappoint him, but a man ought to be allowed to judge for himself when he is four-and-twenty. How could I know when I was fifteen, what it would be right for me to do now? My education was a mistake.”

“But hearken to this, Fred,” said Caleb. “Are you sure Mary is fond of you, or would ever have you?”

“I asked Mr. Farebrother to talk to her, because she had forbidden me—I didn’t know what else to do,” said Fred, apologetically. “And he says that I have every reason to hope, if I can put myself in an honorable position—I mean, out of the Church. I dare say you think it unwarrantable in me, Mr. Garth, to be troubling you and obtruding my own wishes about Mary, before I have done anything at all for myself. Of course I have not the least claim—indeed, I have already a debt to you which will never be discharged, even when I have been able to pay it in the shape of money.”

“Yes, my boy, you have a claim,” said Caleb, with much feeling in his voice. “The young ones have always a claim on the old to help them forward. I was young myself once and had to do without much help; but help would have been welcome to me, if it had been only for the fellow-feeling’s sake. But I must consider. Come to me to-morrow at the office, at nine o’clock. At the office, mind.”

Mr. Garth would take no important step without consulting Susan, but it must be confessed that before he reached home he had taken his resolution. With regard to a large number of matters about which other men are decided or obstinate, he was the most easily manageable man in the world. He never knew what meat he would choose, and if Susan had said that they ought to live in a four-roomed cottage, in order to save, he would have said, “Let us go,” without inquiring into details. But where Caleb’s feeling and judgment strongly pronounced, he was a ruler; and in spite of his mildness and timidity in reproof, every one about him knew that on the exceptional occasions when he chose, he was absolute. He never, indeed, chose to be absolute except on some one else’s behalf. On ninety-nine points Mrs. Garth decided, but on the hundredth she was often aware that she would have to perform the singularly difficult task of carrying out her own principle, and to make herself subordinate.



“It is come round as I thought, Susan,” said Caleb, when they were seated alone in the evening. He had already narrated the adventure which had brought about Fred’s sharing in his work, but had kept back the further result. “The children *are* fond of each other—I mean, Fred and Mary.”

Mrs. Garth laid her work on her knee, and fixed her penetrating eyes anxiously on her husband.

“After we’d done our work, Fred poured it all out to me. He can’t bear to be a clergyman, and Mary says she won’t have him if he is one; and the lad would like to be under me and give his mind to business. And I’ve determined to take him and make a man of him.”

“Caleb!” said Mrs. Garth, in a deep contralto, expressive of resigned astonishment.

“It’s a fine thing to do,” said Mr. Garth, settling himself firmly against the back of his chair, and grasping the elbows. “I shall have trouble with him, but I think I shall carry it through. The lad loves Mary, and a true love for a good woman is a great thing, Susan. It shapes many a rough fellow.”

“Has Mary spoken to you on the subject?” said Mrs. Garth, secretly a little hurt that she had to be informed on it herself.

“Not a word. I asked her about Fred once; I gave her a bit of a warning. But she assured me she would never marry an idle self-indulgent man—nothing since. But it seems Fred set on Mr. Farebrother to talk to her, because she had forbidden him to speak himself, and Mr. Farebrother has found out that she is fond of Fred, but says he must not be a clergyman. Fred’s heart is fixed on Mary, that I can see: it gives me a good opinion of the lad—and we always liked him, Susan.”

“It is a pity for Mary, I think,” said Mrs. Garth.

“Why—a pity?”

“Because, Caleb, she might have had a man who is worth twenty Fred Vincy’s.”

“Ah?” said Caleb, with surprise.

“I firmly believe that Mr. Farebrother is attached to her, and meant to make her an offer; but of course, now that Fred has used him as an envoy, there is an end to that better prospect.” There was a severe precision in

Mrs. Garth's utterance. She was vexed and disappointed, but she was bent on abstaining from useless words.

Caleb was silent a few moments under a conflict of feelings. He looked at the floor and moved his head and hands in accompaniment to some inward argumentation. At last he said—

“That would have made me very proud and happy, Susan, and I should have been glad for your sake. I've always felt that your belongings have never been on a level with you. But you took me, though I was a plain man.”

“I took the best and cleverest man I had ever known,” said Mrs. Garth, convinced that *she* would never have loved any one who came short of that mark.

“Well, perhaps others thought you might have done better. But it would have been worse for me. And that is what touches me close about Fred. The lad is good at bottom, and clever enough to do, if he's put in the right way; and he loves and honors my daughter beyond anything, and she has given him a sort of promise according to what he turns out. I say, that young man's soul is in my hand; and I'll do the best I can for him, so help me God! It's my duty, Susan.”

Mrs. Garth was not given to tears, but there was a large one rolling down her face before her husband had finished. It came from the pressure of various feelings, in which there was much affection and some vexation. She wiped it away quickly, saying—

“Few men besides you would think it a duty to add to their anxieties in that way, Caleb.”

“That signifies nothing—what other men would think. I've got a clear feeling inside me, and that I shall follow; and I hope your heart will go with me, Susan, in making everything as light as can be to Mary, poor child.”

Caleb, leaning back in his chair, looked with anxious appeal towards his wife. She rose and kissed him, saying, “God bless you, Caleb! Our children have a good father.”

But she went out and had a hearty cry to make up for the suppression of her words. She felt sure that her husband's conduct would be misunderstood, and about Fred she was rational and unhopeful. Which

would turn out to have the more foresight in it—her rationality or Caleb’s ardent generosity?

When Fred went to the office the next morning, there was a test to be gone through which he was not prepared for.

“Now Fred,” said Caleb, “you will have some desk-work. I have always done a good deal of writing myself, but I can’t do without help, and as I want you to understand the accounts and get the values into your head, I mean to do without another clerk. So you must buckle to. How are you at writing and arithmetic?”

Fred felt an awkward movement of the heart; he had not thought of desk-work; but he was in a resolute mood, and not going to shrink. “I’m not afraid of arithmetic, Mr. Garth: it always came easily to me. I think you know my writing.”

“Let us see,” said Caleb, taking up a pen, examining it carefully and handing it, well dipped, to Fred with a sheet of ruled paper. “Copy me a line or two of that valuation, with the figures at the end.”

At that time the opinion existed that it was beneath a gentleman to write legibly, or with a hand in the least suitable to a clerk. Fred wrote the lines demanded in a hand as gentlemanly as that of any viscount or bishop of the day: the vowels were all alike and the consonants only distinguishable as turning up or down, the strokes had a blotted solidity and the letters disdained to keep the line—in short, it was a manuscript of that venerable kind easy to interpret when you know beforehand what the writer means.

As Caleb looked on, his visage showed a growing depression, but when Fred handed him the paper he gave something like a snarl, and rapped the paper passionately with the back of his hand. Bad work like this dispelled all Caleb’s mildness.

“The deuce!” he exclaimed, snarlingly. “To think that this is a country where a man’s education may cost hundreds and hundreds, and it turns you out this!” Then in a more pathetic tone, pushing up his spectacles and looking at the unfortunate scribe, “The Lord have mercy on us, Fred, I can’t put up with this!”

“What can I do, Mr. Garth?” said Fred, whose spirits had sunk very low, not only at the estimate of his handwriting, but at the vision of himself as liable to be ranked with office clerks.

“Do? Why, you must learn to form your letters and keep the line. What’s the use of writing at all if nobody can understand it?” asked Caleb, energetically, quite preoccupied with the bad quality of the work. “Is there so little business in the world that you must be sending puzzles over the country? But that’s the way people are brought up. I should lose no end of time with the letters some people send me, if Susan did not make them out for me. It’s disgusting.” Here Caleb tossed the paper from him.

Any stranger peeping into the office at that moment might have wondered what was the drama between the indignant man of business, and the fine-looking young fellow whose blond complexion was getting rather patchy as he bit his lip with mortification. Fred was struggling with many thoughts. Mr. Garth had been so kind and encouraging at the beginning of their interview, that gratitude and hopefulness had been at a high pitch, and the downfall was proportionate. He had not thought of desk-work—in fact, like the majority of young gentlemen, he wanted an occupation which should be free from disagreeables. I cannot tell what might have been the consequences if he had not distinctly promised himself that he would go to Lowick to see Mary and tell her that he was engaged to work under her father. He did not like to disappoint himself there.

“I am very sorry,” were all the words that he could muster. But Mr. Garth was already relenting.

“We must make the best of it, Fred,” he began, with a return to his usual quiet tone. “Every man can learn to write. I taught myself. Go at it with a will, and sit up at night if the day-time isn’t enough. We’ll be patient, my boy. Callum shall go on with the books for a bit, while you are learning. But now I must be off,” said Caleb, rising. “You must let your father know our agreement. You’ll save me Callum’s salary, you know, when you can write; and I can afford to give you eighty pounds for the first year, and more after.”

When Fred made the necessary disclosure to his parents, the relative effect on the two was a surprise which entered very deeply into his memory. He went straight from Mr. Garth’s office to the warehouse, rightly feeling that the most respectful way in which he could behave to his father was to make the painful communication as gravely and formally as possible. Moreover, the decision would be more certainly understood to

be final, if the interview took place in his father's gravest hours, which were always those spent in his private room at the warehouse.

Fred entered on the subject directly, and declared briefly what he had done and was resolved to do, expressing at the end his regret that he should be the cause of disappointment to his father, and taking the blame on his own deficiencies. The regret was genuine, and inspired Fred with strong, simple words.

Mr. Vincy listened in profound surprise without uttering even an exclamation, a silence which in his impatient temperament was a sign of unusual emotion. He had not been in good spirits about trade that morning, and the slight bitterness in his lips grew intense as he listened. When Fred had ended, there was a pause of nearly a minute, during which Mr. Vincy replaced a book in his desk and turned the key emphatically. Then he looked at his son steadily, and said—

“So you've made up your mind at last, sir?”

“Yes, father.”

“Very well; stick to it. I've no more to say. You've thrown away your education, and gone down a step in life, when I had given you the means of rising, that's all.”

“I am very sorry that we differ, father. I think I can be quite as much of a gentleman at the work I have undertaken, as if I had been a curate. But I am grateful to you for wishing to do the best for me.”

“Very well; I have no more to say. I wash my hands of you. I only hope, when you have a son of your own he will make a better return for the pains you spend on him.”

This was very cutting to Fred. His father was using that unfair advantage possessed by us all when we are in a pathetic situation and see our own past as if it were simply part of the pathos. In reality, Mr. Vincy's wishes about his son had had a great deal of pride, inconsiderateness, and egoistic folly in them. But still the disappointed father held a strong lever; and Fred felt as if he were being banished with a malediction.

“I hope you will not object to my remaining at home, sir?” he said, after rising to go; “I shall have a sufficient salary to pay for my board, as of course I should wish to do.”

“Board be hanged!” said Mr. Vincy, recovering himself in his disgust at the notion that Fred’s keep would be missed at his table. “Of course your mother will want you to stay. But I shall keep no horse for you, you understand; and you will pay your own tailor. You will do with a suit or two less, I fancy, when you have to pay for ’em.”

Fred lingered; there was still something to be said. At last it came.

“I hope you will shake hands with me, father, and forgive me the vexation I have caused you.”

Mr. Vincy from his chair threw a quick glance upward at his son, who had advanced near to him, and then gave his hand, saying hurriedly, “Yes, yes, let us say no more.”

Fred went through much more narrative and explanation with his mother, but she was inconsolable, having before her eyes what perhaps her husband had never thought of, the certainty that Fred would marry Mary Garth, that her life would henceforth be spoiled by a perpetual infusion of Garths and their ways, and that her darling boy, with his beautiful face and stylish air “beyond anybody else’s son in Middlemarch,” would be sure to get like that family in plainness of appearance and carelessness about his clothes. To her it seemed that there was a Garth conspiracy to get possession of the desirable Fred, but she dared not enlarge on this opinion, because a slight hint of it had made him “fly out” at her as he had never done before. Her temper was too sweet for her to show any anger, but she felt that her happiness had received a bruise, and for several days merely to look at Fred made her cry a little as if he were the subject of some baleful prophecy. Perhaps she was the slower to recover her usual cheerfulness because Fred had warned her that she must not reopen the sore question with his father, who had accepted his decision and forgiven him. If her husband had been vehement against Fred, she would have been urged into defence of her darling. It was the end of the fourth day when Mr. Vincy said to her—

“Come, Lucy, my dear, don’t be so down-hearted. You always have spoiled the boy, and you must go on spoiling him.”

“Nothing ever did cut me so before, Vincy,” said the wife, her fair throat and chin beginning to tremble again, “only his illness.”

“Pooh, pooh, never mind! We must expect to have trouble with our children. Don’t make it worse by letting me see you out of spirits.”

“Well, I won’t,” said Mrs. Vincy, roused by this appeal and adjusting herself with a little shake as of a bird which lays down its ruffled plumage.

“It won’t do to begin making a fuss about one,” said Mr. Vincy, wishing to combine a little grumbling with domestic cheerfulness. “There’s Rosamond as well as Fred.”

“Yes, poor thing. I’m sure I felt for her being disappointed of her baby; but she got over it nicely.”

“Baby, pooh! I can see Lydgate is making a mess of his practice, and getting into debt too, by what I hear. I shall have Rosamond coming to me with a pretty tale one of these days. But they’ll get no money from me, I know. Let *his* family help him. I never did like that marriage. But it’s no use talking. Ring the bell for lemons, and don’t look dull any more, Lucy. I’ll drive you and Louisa to Riverston to-morrow.”

## CHAPTER LVII.

They numbered scarce eight summers when a name  
Rose on their souls and stirred such motions there  
As thrill the buds and shape their hidden frame  
At penetration of the quickening air:  
His name who told of loyal Evan Dhu,  
Of quaint Bradwardine, and Vich Ian Vor,  
Making the little world their childhood knew  
Large with a land of mountain lake and scaur,  
And larger yet with wonder, love, belief  
Toward Walter Scott who living far away  
Sent them this wealth of joy and noble grief.  
The book and they must part, but day by day,  
In lines that thwart like portly spiders ran  
They wrote the tale, from Tully Veolan.

The evening that Fred Vincy walked to Lowick parsonage (he had begun to see that this was a world in which even a spirited young man must sometimes walk for want of a horse to carry him) he set out at five o'clock and called on Mrs. Garth by the way, wishing to assure himself that she accepted their new relations willingly.

He found the family group, dogs and cats included, under the great apple-tree in the orchard. It was a festival with Mrs. Garth, for her eldest son, Christy, her peculiar joy and pride, had come home for a short holiday—Christy, who held it the most desirable thing in the world to be a tutor, to study all literatures and be a regenerate Porson, and who was an incorporate criticism on poor Fred, a sort of object-lesson given to him by the educational mother. Christy himself, a square-browed, broad-shouldered masculine edition of his mother not much higher than Fred's shoulder—which made it the harder that he should be held superior—was always as simple as possible, and thought no more of Fred's disinclination to scholarship than of a giraffe's, wishing that he himself were more of the same height. He was lying on the ground now by his mother's chair, with his straw hat laid flat over his eyes, while Jim on the other side was reading aloud from that beloved writer who has made a chief part in the



happiness of many young lives. The volume was "Ivanhoe," and Jim was in the great archery scene at the tournament, but suffered much interruption from Ben, who had fetched his own old bow and arrows, and was making himself dreadfully disagreeable, Letty thought, by begging all present to observe his random shots, which no one wished to do except Brownie, the active-minded but probably shallow mongrel, while the grizzled Newfoundland lying in the sun looked on with the dull-eyed neutrality of extreme old age. Letty herself, showing as to her mouth and pinafore some slight signs that she had been assisting at the gathering of the cherries which stood in a coral-heap on the tea-table, was now seated on the grass, listening open-eyed to the reading.

But the centre of interest was changed for all by the arrival of Fred Vincy. When, seating himself on a garden-stool, he said that he was on his way to Lowick Parsonage, Ben, who had thrown down his bow, and snatched up a reluctant half-grown kitten instead, strode across Fred's outstretched leg, and said "Take me!"

"Oh, and me too," said Letty.

"You can't keep up with Fred and me," said Ben.

"Yes, I can. Mother, please say that I am to go," urged Letty, whose life was much checkered by resistance to her depreciation as a girl.

"I shall stay with Christy," observed Jim; as much as to say that he had the advantage of those simpletons; whereupon Letty put her hand up to her head and looked with jealous indecision from the one to the other.

"Let us all go and see Mary," said Christy, opening his arms.

"No, my dear child, we must not go in a swarm to the parsonage. And that old Glasgow suit of yours would never do. Besides, your father will come home. We must let Fred go alone. He can tell Mary that you are here, and she will come back to-morrow."

Christy glanced at his own threadbare knees, and then at Fred's beautiful white trousers. Certainly Fred's tailoring suggested the advantages of an English university, and he had a graceful way even of looking warm and of pushing his hair back with his handkerchief.

"Children, run away," said Mrs. Garth; "it is too warm to hang about your friends. Take your brother and show him the rabbits."

The eldest understood, and led off the children immediately. Fred felt that Mrs. Garth wished to give him an opportunity of saying anything he had to say, but he could only begin by observing—

“How glad you must be to have Christy here!”

“Yes; he has come sooner than I expected. He got down from the coach at nine o’clock, just after his father went out. I am longing for Caleb to come and hear what wonderful progress Christy is making. He has paid his expenses for the last year by giving lessons, carrying on hard study at the same time. He hopes soon to get a private tutorship and go abroad.”

“He is a great fellow,” said Fred, to whom these cheerful truths had a medicinal taste, “and no trouble to anybody.” After a slight pause, he added, “But I fear you will think that I am going to be a great deal of trouble to Mr. Garth.”

“Caleb likes taking trouble: he is one of those men who always do more than any one would have thought of asking them to do,” answered Mrs. Garth. She was knitting, and could either look at Fred or not, as she chose—always an advantage when one is bent on loading speech with salutary meaning; and though Mrs. Garth intended to be duly reserved, she did wish to say something that Fred might be the better for.

“I know you think me very undeserving, Mrs. Garth, and with good reason,” said Fred, his spirit rising a little at the perception of something like a disposition to lecture him. “I happen to have behaved just the worst to the people I can’t help wishing for the most from. But while two men like Mr. Garth and Mr. Farebrother have not given me up, I don’t see why I should give myself up.” Fred thought it might be well to suggest these masculine examples to Mrs. Garth.

“Assuredly,” said she, with gathering emphasis. “A young man for whom two such elders had devoted themselves would indeed be culpable if he threw himself away and made their sacrifices vain.”

Fred wondered a little at this strong language, but only said, “I hope it will not be so with me, Mrs. Garth, since I have some encouragement to believe that I may win Mary. Mr. Garth has told you about that? You were not surprised, I dare say?” Fred ended, innocently referring only to his own love as probably evident enough.

“Not surprised that Mary has given you encouragement?” returned Mrs. Garth, who thought it would be well for Fred to be more alive to the fact that Mary’s friends could not possibly have wished this beforehand, whatever the Vincys might suppose. “Yes, I confess I was surprised.”

“She never did give me any—not the least in the world, when I talked to her myself,” said Fred, eager to vindicate Mary. “But when I asked Mr. Farebrother to speak for me, she allowed him to tell me there was a hope.”

The power of admonition which had begun to stir in Mrs. Garth had not yet discharged itself. It was a little too provoking even for *her* self-control that this blooming youngster should flourish on the disappointments of sadder and wiser people—making a meal of a nightingale and never knowing it—and that all the while his family should suppose that hers was in eager need of this sprig; and her vexation had fermented the more actively because of its total repression towards her husband. Exemplary wives will sometimes find scapegoats in this way. She now said with energetic decision, “You made a great mistake, Fred, in asking Mr. Farebrother to speak for you.”

“Did I?” said Fred, reddening instantaneously. He was alarmed, but at a loss to know what Mrs. Garth meant, and added, in an apologetic tone, “Mr. Farebrother has always been such a friend of ours; and Mary, I knew, would listen to him gravely; and he took it on himself quite readily.”

“Yes, young people are usually blind to everything but their own wishes, and seldom imagine how much those wishes cost others,” said Mrs. Garth. She did not mean to go beyond this salutary general doctrine, and threw her indignation into a needless unwinding of her worsted, knitting her brow at it with a grand air.

“I cannot conceive how it could be any pain to Mr. Farebrother,” said Fred, who nevertheless felt that surprising conceptions were beginning to form themselves.

“Precisely; you cannot conceive,” said Mrs. Garth, cutting her words as neatly as possible.

For a moment Fred looked at the horizon with a dismayed anxiety, and then turning with a quick movement said almost sharply—

“Do you mean to say, Mrs. Garth, that Mr. Farebrother is in love with Mary?”

“And if it were so, Fred, I think you are the last person who ought to be surprised,” returned Mrs. Garth, laying her knitting down beside her and folding her arms. It was an unwonted sign of emotion in her that she should put her work out of her hands. In fact her feelings were divided between the satisfaction of giving Fred his discipline and the sense of having gone a little too far. Fred took his hat and stick and rose quickly.

“Then you think I am standing in his way, and in Mary’s too?” he said, in a tone which seemed to demand an answer.

Mrs. Garth could not speak immediately. She had brought herself into the unpleasant position of being called on to say what she really felt, yet what she knew there were strong reasons for concealing. And to her the consciousness of having exceeded in words was peculiarly mortifying. Besides, Fred had given out unexpected electricity, and he now added, “Mr. Garth seemed pleased that Mary should be attached to me. He could not have known anything of this.”

Mrs. Garth felt a severe twinge at this mention of her husband, the fear that Caleb might think her in the wrong not being easily endurable. She answered, wanting to check unintended consequences—

“I spoke from inference only. I am not aware that Mary knows anything of the matter.”

But she hesitated to beg that he would keep entire silence on a subject which she had herself unnecessarily mentioned, not being used to stoop in that way; and while she was hesitating there was already a rush of unintended consequences under the apple-tree where the tea-things stood. Ben, bouncing across the grass with Brownie at his heels, and seeing the kitten dragging the knitting by a lengthening line of wool, shouted and clapped his hands; Brownie barked, the kitten, desperate, jumped on the tea-table and upset the milk, then jumped down again and swept half the cherries with it; and Ben, snatching up the half-knitted sock-top, fitted it over the kitten’s head as a new source of madness, while Letty arriving cried out to her mother against this cruelty—it was a history as full of sensation as “This is the house that Jack built.” Mrs. Garth was obliged to interfere, the other young ones came up and the *tête-à-tête* with Fred was ended. He got away as soon as he could, and Mrs. Garth could only imply some retractation of her severity by saying “God bless you” when she shook hands with him.

She was unpleasantly conscious that she had been on the verge of speaking as “one of the foolish women speaketh”—telling first and entreating silence after. But she had not entreated silence, and to prevent Caleb’s blame she determined to blame herself and confess all to him that very night. It was curious what an awful tribunal the mild Caleb’s was to her, whenever he set it up. But she meant to point out to him that the revelation might do Fred Vincy a great deal of good.

No doubt it was having a strong effect on him as he walked to Lowick. Fred’s light hopeful nature had perhaps never had so much of a bruise as from this suggestion that if he had been out of the way Mary might have made a thoroughly good match. Also he was piqued that he had been what he called such a stupid lout as to ask that intervention from Mr. Farebrother. But it was not in a lover’s nature—it was not in Fred’s, that the new anxiety raised about Mary’s feeling should not surmount every other. Notwithstanding his trust in Mr. Farebrother’s generosity, notwithstanding what Mary had said to him, Fred could not help feeling that he had a rival: it was a new consciousness, and he objected to it extremely, not being in the least ready to give up Mary for her good, being ready rather to fight for her with any man whatsoever. But the fighting with Mr. Farebrother must be of a metaphorical kind, which was much more difficult to Fred than the muscular. Certainly this experience was a discipline for Fred hardly less sharp than his disappointment about his uncle’s will. The iron had not entered into his soul, but he had begun to imagine what the sharp edge would be. It did not once occur to Fred that Mrs. Garth might be mistaken about Mr. Farebrother, but he suspected that she might be wrong about Mary. Mary had been staying at the parsonage lately, and her mother might know very little of what had been passing in her mind.

He did not feel easier when he found her looking cheerful with the three ladies in the drawing-room. They were in animated discussion on some subject which was dropped when he entered, and Mary was copying the labels from a heap of shallow cabinet drawers, in a minute handwriting which she was skilled in. Mr. Farebrother was somewhere in the village, and the three ladies knew nothing of Fred’s peculiar relation to Mary: it was impossible for either of them to propose that they should walk round the garden, and Fred predicted to himself that he should have to go away without saying a word to her in private. He told her first of Christy’s

arrival and then of his own engagement with her father; and he was comforted by seeing that this latter news touched her keenly. She said hurriedly, "I am so glad," and then bent over her writing to hinder any one from noticing her face. But here was a subject which Mrs. Farebrother could not let pass.

"You don't mean, my dear Miss Garth, that you are glad to hear of a young man giving up the Church for which he was educated: you only mean that things being so, you are glad that he should be under an excellent man like your father."

"No, really, Mrs. Farebrother, I am glad of both, I fear," said Mary, cleverly getting rid of one rebellious tear. "I have a dreadfully secular mind. I never liked any clergyman except the Vicar of Wakefield and Mr. Farebrother."

"Now why, my dear?" said Mrs. Farebrother, pausing on her large wooden knitting-needles and looking at Mary. "You have always a good reason for your opinions, but this astonishes me. Of course I put out of the question those who preach new doctrine. But why should you dislike clergymen?"

"Oh dear," said Mary, her face breaking into merriment as she seemed to consider a moment, "I don't like their neckcloths."

"Why, you don't like Camden's, then," said Miss Winifred, in some anxiety.

"Yes, I do," said Mary. "I don't like the other clergymen's neckcloths, because it is they who wear them."

"How very puzzling!" said Miss Noble, feeling that her own intellect was probably deficient.

"My dear, you are joking. You would have better reasons than these for slighting so respectable a class of men," said Mrs. Farebrother, majestically.

"Miss Garth has such severe notions of what people should be that it is difficult to satisfy her," said Fred.

"Well, I am glad at least that she makes an exception in favor of my son," said the old lady.

Mary was wondering at Fred's piqued tone, when Mr. Farebrother came in and had to hear the news about the engagement under Mr. Garth. At the

end he said with quiet satisfaction, "*That* is right;" and then bent to look at Mary's labels and praise her handwriting. Fred felt horribly jealous—was glad, of course, that Mr. Farebrother was so estimable, but wished that he had been ugly and fat as men at forty sometimes are. It was clear what the end would be, since Mary openly placed Farebrother above everybody, and these women were all evidently encouraging the affair. He was feeling sure that he should have no chance of speaking to Mary, when Mr. Farebrother said—

"Fred, help me to carry these drawers back into my study—you have never seen my fine new study. Pray come too, Miss Garth. I want you to see a stupendous spider I found this morning."

Mary at once saw the Vicar's intention. He had never since the memorable evening deviated from his old pastoral kindness towards her, and her momentary wonder and doubt had quite gone to sleep. Mary was accustomed to think rather rigorously of what was probable, and if a belief flattered her vanity she felt warned to dismiss it as ridiculous, having early had much exercise in such dismissals. It was as she had foreseen: when Fred had been asked to admire the fittings of the study, and she had been asked to admire the spider, Mr. Farebrother said—

"Wait here a minute or two. I am going to look out an engraving which Fred is tall enough to hang for me. I shall be back in a few minutes." And then he went out. Nevertheless, the first word Fred said to Mary was—

"It is of no use, whatever I do, Mary. You are sure to marry Farebrother at last." There was some rage in his tone.

"What do you mean, Fred?" Mary exclaimed indignantly, blushing deeply, and surprised out of all her readiness in reply.

"It is impossible that you should not see it all clearly enough—you who see everything."

"I only see that you are behaving very ill, Fred, in speaking so of Mr. Farebrother after he has pleaded your cause in every way. How can you have taken up such an idea?"

Fred was rather deep, in spite of his irritation. If Mary had really been unsuspecting, there was no good in telling her what Mrs. Garth had said.

"It follows as a matter of course," he replied. "When you are continually seeing a man who beats me in everything, and whom you set

up above everybody, I can have no fair chance.”

“You are very ungrateful, Fred,” said Mary. “I wish I had never told Mr. Farebrother that I cared for you in the least.”

“No, I am not ungrateful; I should be the happiest fellow in the world if it were not for this. I told your father everything, and he was very kind; he treated me as if I were his son. I could go at the work with a will, writing and everything, if it were not for this.”

“For this? for what?” said Mary, imagining now that something specific must have been said or done.

“This dreadful certainty that I shall be bowled out by Farebrother.” Mary was appeased by her inclination to laugh.

“Fred,” she said, peeping round to catch his eyes, which were sulkily turned away from her, “you are too delightfully ridiculous. If you were not such a charming simpleton, what a temptation this would be to play the wicked coquette, and let you suppose that somebody besides you has made love to me.”

“Do you really like me best, Mary?” said Fred, turning eyes full of affection on her, and trying to take her hand.

“I don’t like you at all at this moment,” said Mary, retreating, and putting her hands behind her. “I only said that no mortal ever made love to me besides you. And that is no argument that a very wise man ever will,” she ended, merrily.

“I wish you would tell me that you could not possibly ever think of him,” said Fred.

“Never dare to mention this any more to me, Fred,” said Mary, getting serious again. “I don’t know whether it is more stupid or ungenerous in you not to see that Mr. Farebrother has left us together on purpose that we might speak freely. I am disappointed that you should be so blind to his delicate feeling.”

There was no time to say any more before Mr. Farebrother came back with the engraving; and Fred had to return to the drawing-room still with a jealous dread in his heart, but yet with comforting arguments from Mary’s words and manner. The result of the conversation was on the whole more painful to Mary: inevitably her attention had taken a new attitude, and she saw the possibility of new interpretations. She was in a position in which



she seemed to herself to be slighting Mr. Farebrother, and this, in relation to a man who is much honored, is always dangerous to the firmness of a grateful woman. To have a reason for going home the next day was a relief, for Mary earnestly desired to be always clear that she loved Fred best. When a tender affection has been storing itself in us through many of our years, the idea that we could accept any exchange for it seems to be a cheapening of our lives. And we can set a watch over our affections and our constancy as we can over other treasures.

“Fred has lost all his other expectations; he must keep this,” Mary said to herself, with a smile curling her lips. It was impossible to help fleeting visions of another kind—new dignities and an acknowledged value of which she had often felt the absence. But these things with Fred outside them, Fred forsaken and looking sad for the want of her, could never tempt her deliberate thought.

## CHAPTER LVIII.

“For there can live no hatred in thine eye,  
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change:  
In many’s looks the false heart’s history  
Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange:  
But Heaven in thy creation did decree  
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell:  
Whate’er thy thoughts or thy heart’s workings be  
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.”  
—SHAKESPEARE: *Sonnets*.

At the time when Mr. Vincy uttered that presentiment about Rosamond, she herself had never had the idea that she should be driven to make the sort of appeal which he foresaw. She had not yet had any anxiety about ways and means, although her domestic life had been expensive as well as eventful. Her baby had been born prematurely, and all the embroidered robes and caps had to be laid by in darkness. This misfortune was attributed entirely to her having persisted in going out on horseback one day when her husband had desired her not to do so; but it must not be supposed that she had shown temper on the occasion, or rudely told him that she would do as she liked.

What led her particularly to desire horse-exercise was a visit from Captain Lydgate, the baronet’s third son, who, I am sorry to say, was detested by our Tertius of that name as a vapid fop “parting his hair from brow to nape in a despicable fashion” (not followed by Tertius himself), and showing an ignorant security that he knew the proper thing to say on every topic. Lydgate inwardly cursed his own folly that he had drawn down this visit by consenting to go to his uncle’s on the wedding-tour, and he made himself rather disagreeable to Rosamond by saying so in private. For to Rosamond this visit was a source of unprecedented but gracefully concealed exultation. She was so intensely conscious of having a cousin who was a baronet’s son staying in the house, that she imagined the knowledge of what was implied by his presence to be diffused through all other minds; and when she introduced Captain Lydgate to her guests, she

had a placid sense that his rank penetrated them as if it had been an odor. The satisfaction was enough for the time to melt away some disappointment in the conditions of marriage with a medical man even of good birth: it seemed now that her marriage was visibly as well as ideally floating her above the Middlemarch level, and the future looked bright with letters and visits to and from Quellingham, and vague advancement in consequence for Tertius. Especially as, probably at the Captain's suggestion, his married sister, Mrs. Mengan, had come with her maid, and stayed two nights on her way from town. Hence it was clearly worth while for Rosamond to take pains with her music and the careful selection of her lace.

As to Captain Lydgate himself, his low brow, his aquiline nose bent on one side, and his rather heavy utterance, might have been disadvantageous in any young gentleman who had not a military bearing and mustache to give him what is doted on by some flower-like blond heads as "style." He had, moreover, that sort of high-breeding which consists in being free from the petty solitudes of middle-class gentility, and he was a great critic of feminine charms. Rosamond delighted in his admiration now even more than she had done at Quellingham, and he found it easy to spend several hours of the day in flirting with her. The visit altogether was one of the pleasantest larks he had ever had, not the less so perhaps because he suspected that his queer cousin Tertius wished him away: though Lydgate, who would rather (hyperbolically speaking) have died than have failed in polite hospitality, suppressed his dislike, and only pretended generally not to hear what the gallant officer said, consigning the task of answering him to Rosamond. For he was not at all a jealous husband, and preferred leaving a feather-headed young gentleman alone with his wife to bearing him company.

"I wish you would talk more to the Captain at dinner, Tertius," said Rosamond, one evening when the important guest was gone to Loamford to see some brother officers stationed there. "You really look so absent sometimes—you seem to be seeing through his head into something behind it, instead of looking at him."

"My dear Rosy, you don't expect me to talk much to such a conceited ass as that, I hope," said Lydgate, brusquely. "If he got his head broken, I might look at it with interest, not before."

“I cannot conceive why you should speak of your cousin so contemptuously,” said Rosamond, her fingers moving at her work while she spoke with a mild gravity which had a touch of disdain in it.

“Ask Ladislav if he doesn’t think your Captain the greatest bore he ever met with. Ladislav has almost forsaken the house since he came.”

Rosamond thought she knew perfectly well why Mr. Ladislav disliked the Captain: he was jealous, and she liked his being jealous.

“It is impossible to say what will suit eccentric persons,” she answered, “but in my opinion Captain Lydgate is a thorough gentleman, and I think you ought not, out of respect to Sir Godwin, to treat him with neglect.”

“No, dear; but we have had dinners for him. And he comes in and goes out as he likes. He doesn’t want me.”

“Still, when he is in the room, you might show him more attention. He may not be a phoenix of cleverness in your sense; his profession is different; but it would be all the better for you to talk a little on his subjects. *I* think his conversation is quite agreeable. And he is anything but an unprincipled man.”

“The fact is, you would wish me to be a little more like him, Rosy,” said Lydgate, in a sort of resigned murmur, with a smile which was not exactly tender, and certainly not merry. Rosamond was silent and did not smile again; but the lovely curves of her face looked good-tempered enough without smiling.

Those words of Lydgate’s were like a sad milestone marking how far he had travelled from his old dreamland, in which Rosamond Vincy appeared to be that perfect piece of womanhood who would reverence her husband’s mind after the fashion of an accomplished mermaid, using her comb and looking-glass and singing her song for the relaxation of his adored wisdom alone. He had begun to distinguish between that imagined adoration and the attraction towards a man’s talent because it gives him prestige, and is like an order in his button-hole or an Honorable before his name.

It might have been supposed that Rosamond had travelled too, since she had found the pointless conversation of Mr. Ned Plymdale perfectly wearisome; but to most mortals there is a stupidity which is unendurable and a stupidity which is altogether acceptable—else, indeed, what would become of social bonds? Captain Lydgate’s stupidity was delicately

scented, carried itself with “style,” talked with a good accent, and was closely related to Sir Godwin. Rosamond found it quite agreeable and caught many of its phrases.

Therefore since Rosamond, as we know, was fond of horseback, there were plenty of reasons why she should be tempted to resume her riding when Captain Lydgate, who had ordered his man with two horses to follow him and put up at the “Green Dragon,” begged her to go out on the gray which he warranted to be gentle and trained to carry a lady—indeed, he had bought it for his sister, and was taking it to Quallingham. Rosamond went out the first time without telling her husband, and came back before his return; but the ride had been so thorough a success, and she declared herself so much the better in consequence, that he was informed of it with full reliance on his consent that she should go riding again.

On the contrary Lydgate was more than hurt—he was utterly confounded that she had risked herself on a strange horse without referring the matter to his wish. After the first almost thundering exclamations of astonishment, which sufficiently warned Rosamond of what was coming, he was silent for some moments.

“However, you have come back safely,” he said, at last, in a decisive tone. “You will not go again, Rosy; that is understood. If it were the quietest, most familiar horse in the world, there would always be the chance of accident. And you know very well that I wished you to give up riding the roan on that account.”

“But there is the chance of accident indoors, Tertius.”

“My darling, don’t talk nonsense,” said Lydgate, in an imploring tone; “surely I am the person to judge for you. I think it is enough that I say you are not to go again.”

Rosamond was arranging her hair before dinner, and the reflection of her head in the glass showed no change in its loveliness except a little turning aside of the long neck. Lydgate had been moving about with his hands in his pockets, and now paused near her, as if he awaited some assurance.

“I wish you would fasten up my plaits, dear,” said Rosamond, letting her arms fall with a little sigh, so as to make a husband ashamed of standing there like a brute. Lydgate had often fastened the plaits before, being among the deftest of men with his large finely formed fingers. He

swept up the soft festoons of plaits and fastened in the tall comb (to such uses do men come!); and what could he do then but kiss the exquisite nape which was shown in all its delicate curves? But when we do what we have done before, it is often with a difference. Lydgate was still angry, and had not forgotten his point.

“I shall tell the Captain that he ought to have known better than offer you his horse,” he said, as he moved away.

“I beg you will not do anything of the kind, Tertius,” said Rosamond, looking at him with something more marked than usual in her speech. “It will be treating me as if I were a child. Promise that you will leave the subject to me.”

There did seem to be some truth in her objection. Lydgate said, “Very well,” with a surly obedience, and thus the discussion ended with his promising Rosamond, and not with her promising him.

In fact, she had been determined not to promise. Rosamond had that victorious obstinacy which never wastes its energy in impetuous resistance. What she liked to do was to her the right thing, and all her cleverness was directed to getting the means of doing it. She meant to go out riding again on the gray, and she did go on the next opportunity of her husband’s absence, not intending that he should know until it was late enough not to signify to her. The temptation was certainly great: she was very fond of the exercise, and the gratification of riding on a fine horse, with Captain Lydgate, Sir Godwin’s son, on another fine horse by her side, and of being met in this position by any one but her husband, was something as good as her dreams before marriage: moreover she was riveting the connection with the family at Quallingham, which must be a wise thing to do.

But the gentle gray, unprepared for the crash of a tree that was being felled on the edge of Halsell wood, took fright, and caused a worse fright to Rosamond, leading finally to the loss of her baby. Lydgate could not show his anger towards her, but he was rather bearish to the Captain, whose visit naturally soon came to an end.

In all future conversations on the subject, Rosamond was mildly certain that the ride had made no difference, and that if she had stayed at home the same symptoms would have come on and would have ended in the same way, because she had felt something like them before.

Lydgate could only say, "Poor, poor darling!"—but he secretly wondered over the terrible tenacity of this mild creature. There was gathering within him an amazed sense of his powerlessness over Rosamond. His superior knowledge and mental force, instead of being, as he had imagined, a shrine to consult on all occasions, was simply set aside on every practical question. He had regarded Rosamond's cleverness as precisely of the receptive kind which became a woman. He was now beginning to find out what that cleverness was—what was the shape into which it had run as into a close network aloof and independent. No one quicker than Rosamond to see causes and effects which lay within the track of her own tastes and interests: she had seen clearly Lydgate's preeminence in Middlemarch society, and could go on imaginatively tracing still more agreeable social effects when his talent should have advanced him; but for her, his professional and scientific ambition had no other relation to these desirable effects than if they had been the fortunate discovery of an ill-smelling oil. And that oil apart, with which she had nothing to do, of course she believed in her own opinion more than she did in his. Lydgate was astounded to find in numberless trifling matters, as well as in this last serious case of the riding, that affection did not make her compliant. He had no doubt that the affection was there, and had no presentiment that he had done anything to repel it. For his own part he said to himself that he loved her as tenderly as ever, and could make up his mind to her negations; but—well! Lydgate was much worried, and conscious of new elements in his life as noxious to him as an inlet of mud to a creature that has been used to breathe and bathe and dart after its illuminated prey in the clearest of waters.

Rosamond was soon looking lovelier than ever at her worktable, enjoying drives in her father's phaeton and thinking it likely that she might be invited to Quellingham. She knew that she was a much more exquisite ornament to the drawing-room there than any daughter of the family, and in reflecting that the gentlemen were aware of that, did not perhaps sufficiently consider whether the ladies would be eager to see themselves surpassed.

Lydgate, relieved from anxiety about her, relapsed into what she inwardly called his moodiness—a name which to her covered his thoughtful preoccupation with other subjects than herself, as well as that uneasy look of the brow and distaste for all ordinary things as if they were

mixed with bitter herbs, which really made a sort of weather-glass to his vexation and foreboding. These latter states of mind had one cause amongst others, which he had generously but mistakenly avoided mentioning to Rosamond, lest it should affect her health and spirits. Between him and her indeed there was that total missing of each other's mental track, which is too evidently possible even between persons who are continually thinking of each other. To Lydgate it seemed that he had been spending month after month in sacrificing more than half of his best intent and best power to his tenderness for Rosamond; bearing her little claims and interruptions without impatience, and, above all, bearing without betrayal of bitterness to look through less and less of interfering illusion at the blank unreflecting surface her mind presented to his ardor for the more impersonal ends of his profession and his scientific study, an ardor which he had fancied that the ideal wife must somehow worship as sublime, though not in the least knowing why. But his endurance was mingled with a self-discontent which, if we know how to be candid, we shall confess to make more than half our bitterness under grievances, wife or husband included. It always remains true that if we had been greater, circumstance would have been less strong against us. Lydgate was aware that his concessions to Rosamond were often little more than the lapse of slackening resolution, the creeping paralysis apt to seize an enthusiasm which is out of adjustment to a constant portion of our lives. And on Lydgate's enthusiasm there was constantly pressing not a simple weight of sorrow, but the biting presence of a petty degrading care, such as casts the blight of irony over all higher effort.

This was the care which he had hitherto abstained from mentioning to Rosamond; and he believed, with some wonder, that it had never entered her mind, though certainly no difficulty could be less mysterious. It was an inference with a conspicuous handle to it, and had been easily drawn by indifferent observers, that Lydgate was in debt; and he could not succeed in keeping out of his mind for long together that he was every day getting deeper into that swamp, which tempts men towards it with such a pretty covering of flowers and verdure. It is wonderful how soon a man gets up to his chin there—in a condition in which, in spite of himself, he is forced to think chiefly of release, though he had a scheme of the universe in his soul.



Eighteen months ago Lydgate was poor, but had never known the eager want of small sums, and felt rather a burning contempt for any one who descended a step in order to gain them. He was now experiencing something worse than a simple deficit: he was assailed by the vulgar hateful trials of a man who has bought and used a great many things which might have been done without, and which he is unable to pay for, though the demand for payment has become pressing.

How this came about may be easily seen without much arithmetic or knowledge of prices. When a man in setting up a house and preparing for marriage finds that his furniture and other initial expenses come to between four and five hundred pounds more than he has capital to pay for; when at the end of a year it appears that his household expenses, horses and *et caeteras*, amount to nearly a thousand, while the proceeds of the practice reckoned from the old books to be worth eight hundred per annum have sunk like a summer pond and make hardly five hundred, chiefly in unpaid entries, the plain inference is that, whether he minds it or not, he is in debt. Those were less expensive times than our own, and provincial life was comparatively modest; but the ease with which a medical man who had lately bought a practice, who thought that he was obliged to keep two horses, whose table was supplied without stint, and who paid an insurance on his life and a high rent for house and garden, might find his expenses doubling his receipts, can be conceived by any one who does not think these details beneath his consideration. Rosamond, accustomed from her childhood to an extravagant household, thought that good housekeeping consisted simply in ordering the best of everything—nothing else “answered;” and Lydgate supposed that “if things were done at all, they must be done properly”—he did not see how they were to live otherwise. If each head of household expenditure had been mentioned to him beforehand, he would have probably observed that “it could hardly come to much,” and if any one had suggested a saving on a particular article—for example, the substitution of cheap fish for dear—it would have appeared to him simply a penny-wise, mean notion. Rosamond, even without such an occasion as Captain Lydgate’s visit, was fond of giving invitations, and Lydgate, though he often thought the guests tiresome, did not interfere. This sociability seemed a necessary part of professional prudence, and the entertainment must be suitable. It is true Lydgate was constantly visiting the homes of the poor and adjusting his prescriptions of

diet to their small means; but, dear me! has it not by this time ceased to be remarkable—is it not rather that we expect in men, that they should have numerous strands of experience lying side by side and never compare them with each other? Expenditure—like ugliness and errors—becomes a totally new thing when we attach our own personality to it, and measure it by that wide difference which is manifest (in our own sensations) between ourselves and others. Lydgate believed himself to be careless about his dress, and he despised a man who calculated the effects of his costume; it seemed to him only a matter of course that he had abundance of fresh garments—such things were naturally ordered in sheaves. It must be remembered that he had never hitherto felt the check of importunate debt, and he walked by habit, not by self-criticism. But the check had come.

Its novelty made it the more irritating. He was amazed, disgusted that conditions so foreign to all his purposes, so hatefully disconnected with the objects he cared to occupy himself with, should have lain in ambush and clutched him when he was unaware. And there was not only the actual debt; there was the certainty that in his present position he must go on deepening it. Two furnishing tradesmen at Brassing, whose bills had been incurred before his marriage, and whom uncalculated current expenses had ever since prevented him from paying, had repeatedly sent him unpleasant letters which had forced themselves on his attention. This could hardly have been more galling to any disposition than to Lydgate's, with his intense pride—his dislike of asking a favor or being under an obligation to any one. He had scorned even to form conjectures about Mr. Vincy's intentions on money matters, and nothing but extremity could have induced him to apply to his father-in-law, even if he had not been made aware in various indirect ways since his marriage that Mr. Vincy's own affairs were not flourishing, and that the expectation of help from him would be resented. Some men easily trust in the readiness of friends; it had never in the former part of his life occurred to Lydgate that he should need to do so: he had never thought what borrowing would be to him; but now that the idea had entered his mind, he felt that he would rather incur any other hardship. In the mean time he had no money or prospects of money; and his practice was not getting more lucrative.

No wonder that Lydgate had been unable to suppress all signs of inward trouble during the last few months, and now that Rosamond was regaining brilliant health, he meditated taking her entirely into confidence on his

difficulties. New conversance with tradesmen's bills had forced his reasoning into a new channel of comparison: he had begun to consider from a new point of view what was necessary and unnecessary in goods ordered, and to see that there must be some change of habits. How could such a change be made without Rosamond's concurrence? The immediate occasion of opening the disagreeable fact to her was forced upon him.

Having no money, and having privately sought advice as to what security could possibly be given by a man in his position, Lydgate had offered the one good security in his power to the less peremptory creditor, who was a silversmith and jeweller, and who consented to take on himself the upholsterer's credit also, accepting interest for a given term. The security necessary was a bill of sale on the furniture of his house, which might make a creditor easy for a reasonable time about a debt amounting to less than four hundred pounds; and the silversmith, Mr. Dover, was willing to reduce it by taking back a portion of the plate and any other article which was as good as new. "Any other article" was a phrase delicately implying jewellery, and more particularly some purple amethysts costing thirty pounds, which Lydgate had bought as a bridal present.

Opinions may be divided as to his wisdom in making this present: some may think that it was a graceful attention to be expected from a man like Lydgate, and that the fault of any troublesome consequences lay in the pinched narrowness of provincial life at that time, which offered no conveniences for professional people whose fortune was not proportioned to their tastes; also, in Lydgate's ridiculous fastidiousness about asking his friends for money.

However, it had seemed a question of no moment to him on that fine morning when he went to give a final order for plate: in the presence of other jewels enormously expensive, and as an addition to orders of which the amount had not been exactly calculated, thirty pounds for ornaments so exquisitely suited to Rosamond's neck and arms could hardly appear excessive when there was no ready cash for it to exceed. But at this crisis Lydgate's imagination could not help dwelling on the possibility of letting the amethysts take their place again among Mr. Dover's stock, though he shrank from the idea of proposing this to Rosamond. Having been roused to discern consequences which he had never been in the habit of tracing,

he was preparing to act on this discernment with some of the rigor (by no means all) that he would have applied in pursuing experiment. He was nerving himself to this rigor as he rode from Brassing, and meditated on the representations he must make to Rosamond.

It was evening when he got home. He was intensely miserable, this strong man of nine-and-twenty and of many gifts. He was not saying angrily within himself that he had made a profound mistake; but the mistake was at work in him like a recognized chronic disease, mingling its uneasy importunities with every prospect, and enfeebling every thought. As he went along the passage to the drawing-room, he heard the piano and singing. Of course, Ladislav was there. It was some weeks since Will had parted from Dorothea, yet he was still at the old post in Middlemarch. Lydgate had no objection in general to Ladislav's coming, but just now he was annoyed that he could not find his hearth free. When he opened the door the two singers went on towards the key-note, raising their eyes and looking at him indeed, but not regarding his entrance as an interruption. To a man galled with his harness as poor Lydgate was, it is not soothing to see two people warbling at him, as he comes in with the sense that the painful day has still pains in store. His face, already paler than usual, took on a scowl as he walked across the room and flung himself into a chair.

The singers feeling themselves excused by the fact that they had only three bars to sing, now turned round.

"How are you, Lydgate?" said Will, coming forward to shake hands.

Lydgate took his hand, but did not think it necessary to speak.

"Have you dined, Tertius? I expected you much earlier," said Rosamond, who had already seen that her husband was in a "horrible humor." She seated herself in her usual place as she spoke.

"I have dined. I should like some tea, please," said Lydgate, curtly, still scowling and looking markedly at his legs stretched out before him.

Will was too quick to need more. "I shall be off," he said, reaching his hat.

"Tea is coming," said Rosamond; "pray don't go."

"Yes, Lydgate is bored," said Will, who had more comprehension of Lydgate than Rosamond had, and was not offended by his manner, easily imagining outdoor causes of annoyance.

“There is the more need for you to stay,” said Rosamond, playfully, and in her lightest accent; “he will not speak to me all the evening.”

“Yes, Rosamond, I shall,” said Lydgate, in his strong baritone. “I have some serious business to speak to you about.”

No introduction of the business could have been less like that which Lydgate had intended; but her indifferent manner had been too provoking.

“There! you see,” said Will. “I’m going to the meeting about the Mechanics’ Institute. Good-by;” and he went quickly out of the room.

Rosamond did not look at her husband, but presently rose and took her place before the tea-tray. She was thinking that she had never seen him so disagreeable. Lydgate turned his dark eyes on her and watched her as she delicately handled the tea-service with her taper fingers, and looked at the objects immediately before her with no curve in her face disturbed, and yet with an ineffable protest in her air against all people with unpleasant manners. For the moment he lost the sense of his wound in a sudden speculation about this new form of feminine impassibility revealing itself in the sylph-like frame which he had once interpreted as the sign of a ready intelligent sensitiveness. His mind glancing back to Laure while he looked at Rosamond, he said inwardly, “Would *she* kill me because I wearied her?” and then, “It is the way with all women.” But this power of generalizing which gives men so much the superiority in mistake over the dumb animals, was immediately thwarted by Lydgate’s memory of wondering impressions from the behavior of another woman—from Dorothea’s looks and tones of emotion about her husband when Lydgate began to attend him—from her passionate cry to be taught what would best comfort that man for whose sake it seemed as if she must quell every impulse in her except the yearnings of faithfulness and compassion. These revived impressions succeeded each other quickly and dreamily in Lydgate’s mind while the tea was being brewed. He had shut his eyes in the last instant of reverie while he heard Dorothea saying, “Advise me—think what I can do—he has been all his life laboring and looking forward. He minds about nothing else—and I mind about nothing else.”

That voice of deep-souled womanhood had remained within him as the enkindling conceptions of dead and sceptred genius had remained within him (is there not a genius for feeling nobly which also reigns over human spirits and their conclusions?); the tones were a music from which he was

falling away—he had really fallen into a momentary doze, when Rosamond said in her silvery neutral way, “Here is your tea, Tertius,” setting it on the small table by his side, and then moved back to her place without looking at him. Lydgate was too hasty in attributing insensibility to her; after her own fashion, she was sensitive enough, and took lasting impressions. Her impression now was one of offence and repulsion. But then, Rosamond had no scowls and had never raised her voice: she was quite sure that no one could justly find fault with her.

Perhaps Lydgate and she had never felt so far off each other before; but there were strong reasons for not deferring his revelation, even if he had not already begun it by that abrupt announcement; indeed some of the angry desire to rouse her into more sensibility on his account which had prompted him to speak prematurely, still mingled with his pain in the prospect of her pain. But he waited till the tray was gone, the candles were lit, and the evening quiet might be counted on: the interval had left time for repelled tenderness to return into the old course. He spoke kindly.

“Dear Rosy, lay down your work and come to sit by me,” he said, gently, pushing away the table, and stretching out his arm to draw a chair near his own.

Rosamond obeyed. As she came towards him in her drapery of transparent faintly tinted muslin, her slim yet round figure never looked more graceful; as she sat down by him and laid one hand on the elbow of his chair, at last looking at him and meeting his eyes, her delicate neck and cheek and purely cut lips never had more of that untarnished beauty which touches as in spring-time and infancy and all sweet freshness. It touched Lydgate now, and mingled the early moments of his love for her with all the other memories which were stirred in this crisis of deep trouble. He laid his ample hand softly on hers, saying—

“Dear!” with the lingering utterance which affection gives to the word. Rosamond too was still under the power of that same past, and her husband was still in part the Lydgate whose approval had stirred delight. She put his hair lightly away from his forehead, then laid her other hand on his, and was conscious of forgiving him.

“I am obliged to tell you what will hurt you, Rosy. But there are things which husband and wife must think of together. I dare say it has occurred to you already that I am short of money.”

Lydgate paused; but Rosamond turned her neck and looked at a vase on the mantel-piece.

“I was not able to pay for all the things we had to get before we were married, and there have been expenses since which I have been obliged to meet. The consequence is, there is a large debt at Brassing—three hundred and eighty pounds—which has been pressing on me a good while, and in fact we are getting deeper every day, for people don’t pay me the faster because others want the money. I took pains to keep it from you while you were not well; but now we must think together about it, and you must help me.”

“What can *I* do, Tertius?” said Rosamond, turning her eyes on him again. That little speech of four words, like so many others in all languages, is capable by varied vocal inflections of expressing all states of mind from helpless dimness to exhaustive argumentative perception, from the completest self-devoting fellowship to the most neutral aloofness. Rosamond’s thin utterance threw into the words “What can—I—do!” as much neutrality as they could hold. They fell like a mortal chill on Lydgate’s roused tenderness. He did not storm in indignation—he felt too sad a sinking of the heart. And when he spoke again it was more in the tone of a man who forces himself to fulfil a task.

“It is necessary for you to know, because I have to give security for a time, and a man must come to make an inventory of the furniture.”

Rosamond colored deeply. “Have you not asked papa for money?” she said, as soon as she could speak.

“No.”

“Then I must ask him!” she said, releasing her hands from Lydgate’s, and rising to stand at two yards’ distance from him.

“No, Rosy,” said Lydgate, decisively. “It is too late to do that. The inventory will be begun to-morrow. Remember it is a mere security: it will make no difference: it is a temporary affair. I insist upon it that your father shall not know, unless I choose to tell him,” added Lydgate, with a more peremptory emphasis.

This certainly was unkind, but Rosamond had thrown him back on evil expectation as to what she would do in the way of quiet steady disobedience. The unkindness seemed unpardonable to her: she was not

given to weeping and disliked it, but now her chin and lips began to tremble and the tears welled up. Perhaps it was not possible for Lydgate, under the double stress of outward material difficulty and of his own proud resistance to humiliating consequences, to imagine fully what this sudden trial was to a young creature who had known nothing but indulgence, and whose dreams had all been of new indulgence, more exactly to her taste. But he did wish to spare her as much as he could, and her tears cut him to the heart. He could not speak again immediately; but Rosamond did not go on sobbing: she tried to conquer her agitation and wiped away her tears, continuing to look before her at the mantel-piece.

“Try not to grieve, darling,” said Lydgate, turning his eyes up towards her. That she had chosen to move away from him in this moment of her trouble made everything harder to say, but he must absolutely go on. “We must brace ourselves to do what is necessary. It is I who have been in fault: I ought to have seen that I could not afford to live in this way. But many things have told against me in my practice, and it really just now has ebbed to a low point. I may recover it, but in the mean time we must pull up—we must change our way of living. We shall weather it. When I have given this security I shall have time to look about me; and you are so clever that if you turn your mind to managing you will school me into carefulness. I have been a thoughtless rascal about squaring prices—but come, dear, sit down and forgive me.”

Lydgate was bowing his neck under the yoke like a creature who had talons, but who had Reason too, which often reduces us to meekness. When he had spoken the last words in an imploring tone, Rosamond returned to the chair by his side. His self-blame gave her some hope that he would attend to her opinion, and she said—

“Why can you not put off having the inventory made? You can send the men away to-morrow when they come.”

“I shall not send them away,” said Lydgate, the peremptoriness rising again. Was it of any use to explain?

“If we left Middlemarch? there would of course be a sale, and that would do as well.”

“But we are not going to leave Middlemarch.”

“I am sure, Tertius, it would be much better to do so. Why can we not go to London? Or near Durham, where your family is known?”



“We can go nowhere without money, Rosamond.”

“Your friends would not wish you to be without money. And surely these odious tradesmen might be made to understand that, and to wait, if you would make proper representations to them.”

“This is idle Rosamond,” said Lydgate, angrily. “You must learn to take my judgment on questions you don’t understand. I have made necessary arrangements, and they must be carried out. As to friends, I have no expectations whatever from them, and shall not ask them for anything.”

Rosamond sat perfectly still. The thought in her mind was that if she had known how Lydgate would behave, she would never have married him.

“We have no time to waste now on unnecessary words, dear,” said Lydgate, trying to be gentle again. “There are some details that I want to consider with you. Dover says he will take a good deal of the plate back again, and any of the jewellery we like. He really behaves very well.”

“Are we to go without spoons and forks then?” said Rosamond, whose very lips seemed to get thinner with the thinness of her utterance. She was determined to make no further resistance or suggestions.

“Oh no, dear!” said Lydgate. “But look here,” he continued, drawing a paper from his pocket and opening it; “here is Dover’s account. See, I have marked a number of articles, which if we returned them would reduce the amount by thirty pounds and more. I have not marked any of the jewellery.” Lydgate had really felt this point of the jewellery very bitter to himself; but he had overcome the feeling by severe argument. He could not propose to Rosamond that she should return any particular present of his, but he had told himself that he was bound to put Dover’s offer before her, and her inward prompting might make the affair easy.

“It is useless for me to look, Tertius,” said Rosamond, calmly; “you will return what you please.” She would not turn her eyes on the paper, and Lydgate, flushing up to the roots of his hair, drew it back and let it fall on his knee. Meanwhile Rosamond quietly went out of the room, leaving Lydgate helpless and wondering. Was she not coming back? It seemed that she had no more identified herself with him than if they had been creatures of different species and opposing interests. He tossed his head and thrust his hands deep into his pockets with a sort of vengeance. There was still science—there were still good objects to work for. He must give a tug still—all the stronger because other satisfactions were going.

But the door opened and Rosamond re-entered. She carried the leather box containing the amethysts, and a tiny ornamental basket which contained other boxes, and laying them on the chair where she had been sitting, she said, with perfect propriety in her air—

“This is all the jewellery you ever gave me. You can return what you like of it, and of the plate also. You will not, of course, expect me to stay at home to-morrow. I shall go to papa’s.”

To many women the look Lydgate cast at her would have been more terrible than one of anger: it had in it a despairing acceptance of the distance she was placing between them.

“And when shall you come back again?” he said, with a bitter edge on his accent.

“Oh, in the evening. Of course I shall not mention the subject to mamma.” Rosamond was convinced that no woman could behave more irreproachably than she was behaving; and she went to sit down at her work-table. Lydgate sat meditating a minute or two, and the result was that he said, with some of the old emotion in his tone—

“Now we have been united, Rosy, you should not leave me to myself in the first trouble that has come.”

“Certainly not,” said Rosamond; “I shall do everything it becomes me to do.”

“It is not right that the thing should be left to servants, or that I should have to speak to them about it. And I shall be obliged to go out—I don’t know how early. I understand your shrinking from the humiliation of these money affairs. But, my dear Rosamond, as a question of pride, which I feel just as much as you can, it is surely better to manage the thing ourselves, and let the servants see as little of it as possible; and since you are my wife, there is no hindering your share in my disgraces—if there were disgraces.”

Rosamond did not answer immediately, but at last she said, “Very well, I will stay at home.”

“I shall not touch these jewels, Rosy. Take them away again. But I will write out a list of plate that we may return, and that can be packed up and sent at once.”

“The servants will know *that*,” said Rosamond, with the slightest touch of sarcasm.

“Well, we must meet some disagreeables as necessities. Where is the ink, I wonder?” said Lydgate, rising, and throwing the account on the larger table where he meant to write.

Rosamond went to reach the inkstand, and after setting it on the table was going to turn away, when Lydgate, who was standing close by, put his arm round her and drew her towards him, saying—

“Come, darling, let us make the best of things. It will only be for a time, I hope, that we shall have to be stingy and particular. Kiss me.”

His native warm-heartedness took a great deal of quenching, and it is a part of manliness for a husband to feel keenly the fact that an inexperienced girl has got into trouble by marrying him. She received his kiss and returned it faintly, and in this way an appearance of accord was recovered for the time. But Lydgate could not help looking forward with dread to the inevitable future discussions about expenditure and the necessity for a complete change in their way of living.

## CHAPTER LIX.

“They said of old the Soul had human shape,  
But smaller, subtler than the fleshly self,  
So wandered forth for airing when it pleased.  
And see! beside her cherub-face there floats  
A pale-lipped form aerial whispering  
Its promptings in that little shell her ear.”

News is often dispersed as thoughtlessly and effectively as that pollen which the bees carry off (having no idea how powdery they are) when they are buzzing in search of their particular nectar. This fine comparison has reference to Fred Vincy, who on that evening at Lowick Parsonage heard a lively discussion among the ladies on the news which their old servant had got from Tantripp concerning Mr. Casaubon's strange mention of Mr. Ladislaw in a codicil to his will made not long before his death. Miss Winifred was astounded to find that her brother had known the fact before, and observed that Camden was the most wonderful man for knowing things and not telling them; whereupon Mary Garth said that the codicil had perhaps got mixed up with the habits of spiders, which Miss Winifred never would listen to. Mrs. Farebrother considered that the news had something to do with their having only once seen Mr. Ladislaw at Lowick, and Miss Noble made many small compassionate mewings.

Fred knew little and cared less about Ladislaw and the Casaubons, and his mind never recurred to that discussion till one day calling on Rosamond at his mother's request to deliver a message as he passed, he happened to see Ladislaw going away. Fred and Rosamond had little to say to each other now that marriage had removed her from collision with the unpleasantness of brothers, and especially now that he had taken what she held the stupid and even reprehensible step of giving up the Church to take to such a business as Mr. Garth's. Hence Fred talked by preference of what he considered indifferent news, and “a propos of that young Ladislaw” mentioned what he had heard at Lowick Parsonage.

Now Lydgate, like Mr. Farebrother, knew a great deal more than he told, and when he had once been set thinking about the relation between Will and Dorothea his conjectures had gone beyond the fact. He imagined that there was a passionate attachment on both sides, and this struck him as much too serious to gossip about. He remembered Will's irritability when he had mentioned Mrs. Casaubon, and was the more circumspect. On the whole his surmises, in addition to what he knew of the fact, increased his friendliness and tolerance towards Ladislaw, and made him understand the vacillation which kept him at Middlemarch after he had said that he should go away. It was significant of the separateness between Lydgate's mind and Rosamond's that he had no impulse to speak to her on the subject; indeed, he did not quite trust her reticence towards Will. And he was right there; though he had no vision of the way in which her mind would act in urging her to speak.

When she repeated Fred's news to Lydgate, he said, "Take care you don't drop the faintest hint to Ladislaw, Rosy. He is likely to fly out as if you insulted him. Of course it is a painful affair."

Rosamond turned her neck and patted her hair, looking the image of placid indifference. But the next time Will came when Lydgate was away, she spoke archly about his not going to London as he had threatened.

"I know all about it. I have a confidential little bird," said she, showing very pretty airs of her head over the bit of work held high between her active fingers. "There is a powerful magnet in this neighborhood."

"To be sure there is. Nobody knows that better than you," said Will, with light gallantry, but inwardly prepared to be angry.

"It is really the most charming romance: Mr. Casaubon jealous, and foreseeing that there was no one else whom Mrs. Casaubon would so much like to marry, and no one who would so much like to marry her as a certain gentleman; and then laying a plan to spoil all by making her forfeit her property if she did marry that gentleman—and then—and then—and then—oh, I have no doubt the end will be thoroughly romantic."

"Great God! what do you mean?" said Will, flushing over face and ears, his features seeming to change as if he had had a violent shake. "Don't joke; tell me what you mean."

"You don't really know?" said Rosamond, no longer playful, and desiring nothing better than to tell in order that she might evoke effects.

“No!” he returned, impatiently.

“Don’t know that Mr. Casaubon has left it in his will that if Mrs. Casaubon marries you she is to forfeit all her property?”

“How do you know that it is true?” said Will, eagerly.

“My brother Fred heard it from the Farebrothers.” Will started up from his chair and reached his hat.

“I dare say she likes you better than the property,” said Rosamond, looking at him from a distance.

“Pray don’t say any more about it,” said Will, in a hoarse undertone extremely unlike his usual light voice. “It is a foul insult to her and to me.” Then he sat down absently, looking before him, but seeing nothing.

“Now you are angry with *me*,” said Rosamond. “It is too bad to bear *me* malice. You ought to be obliged to me for telling you.”

“So I am,” said Will, abruptly, speaking with that kind of double soul which belongs to dreamers who answer questions.

“I expect to hear of the marriage,” said Rosamond, playfully.

“Never! You will never hear of the marriage!”

With those words uttered impetuously, Will rose, put out his hand to Rosamond, still with the air of a somnambulist, and went away.

When he was gone, Rosamond left her chair and walked to the other end of the room, leaning when she got there against a chiffonniere, and looking out of the window wearily. She was oppressed by ennui, and by that dissatisfaction which in women’s minds is continually turning into a trivial jealousy, referring to no real claims, springing from no deeper passion than the vague exactingness of egoism, and yet capable of impelling action as well as speech. “There really is nothing to care for much,” said poor Rosamond inwardly, thinking of the family at Quellingham, who did not write to her; and that perhaps Tertius when he came home would tease her about expenses. She had already secretly disobeyed him by asking her father to help them, and he had ended decisively by saying, “I am more likely to want help myself.”

## CHAPTER LX.

Good phrases are surely, and ever were, very commendable.  
—*Justice Shallow.*

A few days afterwards—it was already the end of August—there was an occasion which caused some excitement in Middlemarch: the public, if it chose, was to have the advantage of buying, under the distinguished auspices of Mr. Borthrop Trumbull, the furniture, books, and pictures which anybody might see by the handbills to be the best in every kind, belonging to Edwin Larcher, Esq. This was not one of the sales indicating the depression of trade; on the contrary, it was due to Mr. Larcher's great success in the carrying business, which warranted his purchase of a mansion near Riverston already furnished in high style by an illustrious Spa physician—furnished indeed with such large framefuls of expensive flesh-painting in the dining-room, that Mrs. Larcher was nervous until reassured by finding the subjects to be Scriptural. Hence the fine opportunity to purchasers which was well pointed out in the handbills of Mr. Borthrop Trumbull, whose acquaintance with the history of art enabled him to state that the hall furniture, to be sold without reserve, comprised a piece of carving by a contemporary of Gibbons.

At Middlemarch in those times a large sale was regarded as a kind of festival. There was a table spread with the best cold eatables, as at a superior funeral; and facilities were offered for that generous-drinking of cheerful glasses which might lead to generous and cheerful bidding for undesirable articles. Mr. Larcher's sale was the more attractive in the fine weather because the house stood just at the end of the town, with a garden and stables attached, in that pleasant issue from Middlemarch called the London Road, which was also the road to the New Hospital and to Mr. Bulstrode's retired residence, known as the Shrubs. In short, the auction was as good as a fair, and drew all classes with leisure at command: to some, who risked making bids in order simply to raise prices, it was almost equal to betting at the races. The second day, when the best furniture was to be sold, "everybody" was there; even Mr. Thesiger, the

rector of St. Peter's, had looked in for a short time, wishing to buy the carved table, and had rubbed elbows with Mr. Bambridge and Mr. Horrock. There was a wreath of Middlemarch ladies accommodated with seats round the large table in the dining-room, where Mr. Borthrop Trumbull was mounted with desk and hammer; but the rows chiefly of masculine faces behind were often varied by incomings and outgoings both from the door and the large bow-window opening on to the lawn.

“Everybody” that day did not include Mr. Bulstrode, whose health could not well endure crowds and draughts. But Mrs. Bulstrode had particularly wished to have a certain picture—a “Supper at Emmaus,” attributed in the catalogue to Guido; and at the last moment before the day of the sale Mr. Bulstrode had called at the office of the “Pioneer,” of which he was now one of the proprietors, to beg of Mr. Ladislaw as a great favor that he would obligingly use his remarkable knowledge of pictures on behalf of Mrs. Bulstrode, and judge of the value of this particular painting—“if,” added the scrupulously polite banker, “attendance at the sale would not interfere with the arrangements for your departure, which I know is imminent.”

This proviso might have sounded rather satirically in Will's ear if he had been in a mood to care about such satire. It referred to an understanding entered into many weeks before with the proprietors of the paper, that he should be at liberty any day he pleased to hand over the management to the subeditor whom he had been training; since he wished finally to quit Middlemarch. But indefinite visions of ambition are weak against the ease of doing what is habitual or beguilingly agreeable; and we all know the difficulty of carrying out a resolve when we secretly long that it may turn out to be unnecessary. In such states of mind the most incredulous person has a private leaning towards miracle: impossible to conceive how our wish could be fulfilled, still—very wonderful things have happened! Will did not confess this weakness to himself, but he lingered. What was the use of going to London at that time of the year? The Rugby men who would remember him were not there; and so far as political writing was concerned, he would rather for a few weeks go on with the “Pioneer.” At the present moment, however, when Mr. Bulstrode was speaking to him, he had both a strengthened resolve to go and an equally strong resolve not to go till he had once more seen Dorothea.



Hence he replied that he had reasons for deferring his departure a little, and would be happy to go to the sale.

Will was in a defiant mood, his consciousness being deeply stung with the thought that the people who looked at him probably knew a fact tantamount to an accusation against him as a fellow with low designs which were to be frustrated by a disposal of property. Like most people who assert their freedom with regard to conventional distinction, he was prepared to be sudden and quick at quarrel with any one who might hint that he had personal reasons for that assertion—that there was anything in his blood, his bearing, or his character to which he gave the mask of an opinion. When he was under an irritating impression of this kind he would go about for days with a defiant look, the color changing in his transparent skin as if he were on the *qui vive*, watching for something which he had to dart upon.

This expression was peculiarly noticeable in him at the sale, and those who had only seen him in his moods of gentle oddity or of bright enjoyment would have been struck with a contrast. He was not sorry to have this occasion for appearing in public before the Middlemarch tribes of Toller, Hackbutt, and the rest, who looked down on him as an adventurer, and were in a state of brutal ignorance about Dante—who sneered at his Polish blood, and were themselves of a breed very much in need of crossing. He stood in a conspicuous place not far from the auctioneer, with a fore-finger in each side-pocket and his head thrown backward, not caring to speak to anybody, though he had been cordially welcomed as a *connoisseur* by Mr. Trumbull, who was enjoying the utmost activity of his great faculties.

And surely among all men whose vocation requires them to exhibit their powers of speech, the happiest is a prosperous provincial auctioneer keenly alive to his own jokes and sensible of his encyclopedic knowledge. Some saturnine, sour-blooded persons might object to be constantly insisting on the merits of all articles from boot-jacks to “Berghems;” but Mr. Borthrop Trumbull had a kindly liquid in his veins; he was an admirer by nature, and would have liked to have the universe under his hammer, feeling that it would go at a higher figure for his recommendation.

Meanwhile Mrs. Larcher’s drawing-room furniture was enough for him. When Will Ladislaw had come in, a second fender, said to have been

forgotten in its right place, suddenly claimed the auctioneer's enthusiasm, which he distributed on the equitable principle of praising those things most which were most in need of praise. The fender was of polished steel, with much lancet-shaped open-work and a sharp edge.

"Now, ladies," said he, "I shall appeal to you. Here is a fender which at any other sale would hardly be offered with out reserve, being, as I may say, for quality of steel and quaintness of design, a kind of thing"—here Mr. Trumbull dropped his voice and became slightly nasal, trimming his outlines with his left finger—"that might not fall in with ordinary tastes. Allow me to tell you that by-and-by this style of workmanship will be the only one in vogue—half-a-crown, you said? thank you—going at half-a-crown, this characteristic fender; and I have particular information that the antique style is very much sought after in high quarters. Three shillings—three-and-sixpence—hold it well up, Joseph! Look, ladies, at the chastity of the design—I have no doubt myself that it was turned out in the last century! Four shillings, Mr. Mawmsey?—four shillings."

"It's not a thing I would put in *my* drawing-room," said Mrs. Mawmsey, audibly, for the warning of the rash husband. "I wonder *at* Mrs. Larcher. Every blessed child's head that fell against it would be cut in two. The edge is like a knife."

"Quite true," rejoined Mr. Trumbull, quickly, "and most uncommonly useful to have a fender at hand that will cut, if you have a leather shoe-tie or a bit of string that wants cutting and no knife at hand: many a man has been left hanging because there was no knife to cut him down. Gentlemen, here's a fender that if you had the misfortune to hang yourselves would cut you down in no time—with astonishing celerity—four-and-sixpence—five—five-and-sixpence—an appropriate thing for a spare bedroom where there was a four-poster and a guest a little out of his mind—six shillings—thank you, Mr. Clintup—going at six shillings—going—gone!" The auctioneer's glance, which had been searching round him with a preternatural susceptibility to all signs of bidding, here dropped on the paper before him, and his voice too dropped into a tone of indifferent despatch as he said, "Mr. Clintup. Be handy, Joseph."

"It was worth six shillings to have a fender you could always tell that joke on," said Mr. Clintup, laughing low and apologetically to his next

neighbor. He was a diffident though distinguished nurseryman, and feared that the audience might regard his bid as a foolish one.

Meanwhile Joseph had brought a trayful of small articles. “Now, ladies,” said Mr. Trumbull, taking up one of the articles, “this tray contains a very recherchy lot—a collection of trifles for the drawing-room table—and trifles make the sum *of* human things—nothing more important than trifles—(yes, Mr. Ladislaw, yes, by-and-by)—but pass the tray round, Joseph—these bijoux must be examined, ladies. This I have in my hand is an ingenious contrivance—a sort of practical rebus, I may call it: here, you see, it looks like an elegant heart-shaped box, portable—for the pocket; there, again, it becomes like a splendid double flower—an ornament for the table; and now”—Mr. Trumbull allowed the flower to fall alarmingly into strings of heart-shaped leaves—“a book of riddles! No less than five hundred printed in a beautiful red. Gentlemen, if I had less of a conscience, I should not wish you to bid high for this lot—I have a longing for it myself. What can promote innocent mirth, and I may say virtue, more than a good riddle?—it hinders profane language, and attaches a man to the society of refined females. This ingenious article itself, without the elegant domino-box, card-basket, &c., ought alone to give a high price to the lot. Carried in the pocket it might make an individual welcome in any society. Four shillings, sir?—four shillings for this remarkable collection of riddles with the *et caeteras*. Here is a sample: ‘How must you spell honey to make it catch lady-birds? Answer—money.’ You hear?—lady-birds—honey money. This is an amusement to sharpen the intellect; it has a sting—it has what we call satire, and wit without indecency. Four-and-sixpence—five shillings.”

The bidding ran on with warming rivalry. Mr. Bowyer was a bidder, and this was too exasperating. Bowyer couldn’t afford it, and only wanted to hinder every other man from making a figure. The current carried even Mr. Horrock with it, but this committal of himself to an opinion fell from him with so little sacrifice of his neutral expression, that the bid might not have been detected as his but for the friendly oaths of Mr. Bambridge, who wanted to know what Horrock would do with blasted stuff only fit for haberdashers given over to that state of perdition which the horse-dealer so cordially recognized in the majority of earthly existences. The lot was finally knocked down at a guinea to Mr. Spilkins, a young Slender of the

neighborhood, who was reckless with his pocket-money and felt his want of memory for riddles.

“Come, Trumbull, this is too bad—you’ve been putting some old maid’s rubbish into the sale,” murmured Mr. Toller, getting close to the auctioneer. “I want to see how the prints go, and I must be off soon.”

“*Immediately*, Mr. Toller. It was only an act of benevolence which your noble heart would approve. Joseph! quick with the prints—Lot 235. Now, gentlemen, you who are *connoisseurs*, you are going to have a treat. Here is an engraving of the Duke of Wellington surrounded by his staff on the Field of Waterloo; and notwithstanding recent events which have, as it were, enveloped our great Hero in a cloud, I will be bold to say—for a man in my line must not be blown about by political winds—that a finer subject—of the modern order, belonging to our own time and epoch—the understanding of man could hardly conceive: angels might, perhaps, but not men, sirs, not men.”

“Who painted it?” said Mr. Powderell, much impressed.

“It is a proof before the letter, Mr. Powderell—the painter is not known,” answered Trumbull, with a certain gaspingness in his last words, after which he pursed up his lips and stared round him.

“I’ll bid a pound!” said Mr. Powderell, in a tone of resolved emotion, as of a man ready to put himself in the breach. Whether from awe or pity, nobody raised the price on him.

Next came two Dutch prints which Mr. Toller had been eager for, and after he had secured them he went away. Other prints, and afterwards some paintings, were sold to leading Middlemarchers who had come with a special desire for them, and there was a more active movement of the audience in and out; some, who had bought what they wanted, going away, others coming in either quite newly or from a temporary visit to the refreshments which were spread under the marquee on the lawn. It was this marquee that Mr. Bambridge was bent on buying, and he appeared to like looking inside it frequently, as a foretaste of its possession. On the last occasion of his return from it he was observed to bring with him a new companion, a stranger to Mr. Trumbull and every one else, whose appearance, however, led to the supposition that he might be a relative of the horse-dealer’s—also “given to indulgence.” His large whiskers, imposing swagger, and swing of the leg, made him a striking figure; but

his suit of black, rather shabby at the edges, caused the prejudicial inference that he was not able to afford himself as much indulgence as he liked.

“Who is it you’ve picked up, Bam?” said Mr. Horrock, aside.

“Ask him yourself,” returned Mr. Bambridge. “He said he’d just turned in from the road.”

Mr. Horrock eyed the stranger, who was leaning back against his stick with one hand, using his toothpick with the other, and looking about him with a certain restlessness apparently under the silence imposed on him by circumstances.

At length the “Supper at Emmaus” was brought forward, to Will’s immense relief, for he was getting so tired of the proceedings that he had drawn back a little and leaned his shoulder against the wall just behind the auctioneer. He now came forward again, and his eye caught the conspicuous stranger, who, rather to his surprise, was staring at him markedly. But Will was immediately appealed to by Mr. Trumbull.

“Yes, Mr. Ladislaw, yes; this interests you as a *connoisseur*, I think. It is some pleasure,” the auctioneer went on with a rising fervor, “to have a picture like this to show to a company of ladies and gentlemen—a picture worth any sum to an individual whose means were on a level with his judgment. It is a painting of the Italian school—by the celebrated *Guydo*, the greatest painter in the world, the chief of the Old Masters, as they are called—I take it, because they were up to a thing or two beyond most of us—in possession of secrets now lost to the bulk of mankind. Let me tell you, gentlemen, I have seen a great many pictures by the Old Masters, and they are not all up to this mark—some of them are darker than you might like and not family subjects. But here is a *Guydo*—the frame alone is worth pounds—which any lady might be proud to hang up—a suitable thing for what we call a refectory in a charitable institution, if any gentleman of the Corporation wished to show his *munificence*. Turn it a little, sir? yes. Joseph, turn it a little towards Mr. Ladislaw—Mr. Ladislaw, having been abroad, understands the merit of these things, you observe.”

All eyes were for a moment turned towards Will, who said, coolly, “Five pounds.” The auctioneer burst out in deep remonstrance.

“Ah! Mr. Ladislaw! the frame alone is worth that. Ladies and gentlemen, for the credit of the town! Suppose it should be discovered

hereafter that a gem of art has been amongst us in this town, and nobody in Middlemarch awake to it. Five guineas—five seven-six—five ten. Still, ladies, still! It is a gem, and ‘Full many a gem,’ as the poet says, has been allowed to go at a nominal price because the public knew no better, because it was offered in circles where there was—I was going to say a low feeling, but no!—Six pounds—six guineas—a *Guydo* of the first order going at six guineas—it is an insult to religion, ladies; it touches us all as Christians, gentlemen, that a subject like this should go at such a low figure—six pounds ten—seven—”

The bidding was brisk, and Will continued to share in it, remembering that Mrs. Bulstrode had a strong wish for the picture, and thinking that he might stretch the price to twelve pounds. But it was knocked down to him at ten guineas, whereupon he pushed his way towards the bow-window and went out. He chose to go under the marquee to get a glass of water, being hot and thirsty: it was empty of other visitors, and he asked the woman in attendance to fetch him some fresh water; but before she was well gone he was annoyed to see entering the florid stranger who had stared at him. It struck Will at this moment that the man might be one of those political parasitic insects of the bloated kind who had once or twice claimed acquaintance with him as having heard him speak on the Reform question, and who might think of getting a shilling by news. In this light his person, already rather heating to behold on a summer’s day, appeared the more disagreeable; and Will, half-seated on the elbow of a garden-chair, turned his eyes carefully away from the comer. But this signified little to our acquaintance Mr. Raffles, who never hesitated to thrust himself on unwilling observation, if it suited his purpose to do so. He moved a step or two till he was in front of Will, and said with full-mouthed haste, “Excuse me, Mr. Ladislaw—was your mother’s name Sarah Dunkirk?”

Will, starting to his feet, moved backward a step, frowning, and saying with some fierceness, “Yes, sir, it was. And what is that to you?”

It was in Will’s nature that the first spark it threw out was a direct answer of the question and a challenge of the consequences. To have said, “What is that to you?” in the first instance, would have seemed like shuffling—as if he minded who knew anything about his origin!

Raffles on his side had not the same eagerness for a collision which was implied in Ladislaw’s threatening air. The slim young fellow with his girl’s

complexion looked like a tiger-cat ready to spring on him. Under such circumstances Mr. Raffles's pleasure in annoying his company was kept in abeyance.

"No offence, my good sir, no offence! I only remember your mother—knew her when she was a girl. But it is your father that you feature, sir. I had the pleasure of seeing your father too. Parents alive, Mr. Ladislaw?"

"No!" thundered Will, in the same attitude as before.

"Should be glad to do you a service, Mr. Ladislaw—by Jove, I should! Hope to meet again."

Hereupon Raffles, who had lifted his hat with the last words, turned himself round with a swing of his leg and walked away. Will looked after him a moment, and could see that he did not re-enter the auction-room, but appeared to be walking towards the road. For an instant he thought that he had been foolish not to let the man go on talking;—but no! on the whole he preferred doing without knowledge from that source.

Later in the evening, however, Raffles overtook him in the street, and appearing either to have forgotten the roughness of his former reception or to intend avenging it by a forgiving familiarity, greeted him jovially and walked by his side, remarking at first on the pleasantness of the town and neighborhood. Will suspected that the man had been drinking and was considering how to shake him off when Raffles said—

"I've been abroad myself, Mr. Ladislaw—I've seen the world—used to parley-vous a little. It was at Boulogne I saw your father—a most uncommon likeness you are of him, by Jove! mouth—nose—eyes—hair turned off your brow just like his—a little in the foreign style. John Bull doesn't do much of that. But your father was very ill when I saw him. Lord, lord! hands you might see through. You were a small youngster then. Did he get well?"

"No," said Will, curtly.

"Ah! Well! I've often wondered what became of your mother. She ran away from her friends when she was a young lass—a proud-spirited lass, and pretty, by Jove! I knew the reason why she ran away," said Raffles, winking slowly as he looked sideways at Will.

"You know nothing dishonorable of her, sir," said Will, turning on him rather savagely. But Mr. Raffles just now was not sensitive to shades of

manner.

“Not a bit!” said he, tossing his head decisively. “She was a little too honorable to like her friends—that was it!” Here Raffles again winked slowly. “Lord bless you, I knew all about ’em—a little in what you may call the respectable thieving line—the high style of receiving-house—none of your holes and corners—first-rate. Slap-up shop, high profits and no mistake. But Lord! Sarah would have known nothing about it—a dashing young lady she was—fine boarding-school—fit for a lord’s wife—only Archie Duncan threw it at her out of spite, because she would have nothing to do with him. And so she ran away from the whole concern. I travelled for ’em, sir, in a gentlemanly way—at a high salary. They didn’t mind her running away at first—godly folks, sir, very godly—and she was for the stage. The son was alive then, and the daughter was at a discount. Hallo! here we are at the Blue Bull. What do you say, Mr. Ladislaw?—shall we turn in and have a glass?”

“No, I must say good evening,” said Will, dashing up a passage which led into Lowick Gate, and almost running to get out of Raffles’s reach.

He walked a long while on the Lowick road away from the town, glad of the starlit darkness when it came. He felt as if he had had dirt cast on him amidst shouts of scorn. There was this to confirm the fellow’s statement—that his mother never would tell him the reason why she had run away from her family.

Well! what was he, Will Ladislaw, the worse, supposing the truth about that family to be the ugliest? His mother had braved hardship in order to separate herself from it. But if Dorothea’s friends had known this story—if the Chettams had known it—they would have had a fine color to give their suspicions a welcome ground for thinking him unfit to come near her. However, let them suspect what they pleased, they would find themselves in the wrong. They would find out that the blood in his veins was as free from the taint of meanness as theirs.



## CHAPTER LXI.

“Inconsistencies,” answered Imlac, “cannot both be right, but imputed to man they may both be true.”—*Rasselas*.

The same night, when Mr. Bulstrode returned from a journey to Brassing on business, his good wife met him in the entrance-hall and drew him into his private sitting-room.

“Nicholas,” she said, fixing her honest eyes upon him anxiously, “there has been such a disagreeable man here asking for you—it has made me quite uncomfortable.”

“What kind of man, my dear,” said Mr. Bulstrode, dreadfully certain of the answer.

“A red-faced man with large whiskers, and most impudent in his manner. He declared he was an old friend of yours, and said you would be sorry not to see him. He wanted to wait for you here, but I told him he could see you at the Bank to-morrow morning. Most impudent he was!—stared at me, and said his friend Nick had luck in wives. I don’t believe he would have gone away, if Blucher had not happened to break his chain and come running round on the gravel—for I was in the garden; so I said, ‘You’d better go away—the dog is very fierce, and I can’t hold him.’ Do you really know anything of such a man?”

“I believe I know who he is, my dear,” said Mr. Bulstrode, in his usual subdued voice, “an unfortunate dissolute wretch, whom I helped too much in days gone by. However, I presume you will not be troubled by him again. He will probably come to the Bank—to beg, doubtless.”

No more was said on the subject until the next day, when Mr. Bulstrode had returned from the town and was dressing for dinner. His wife, not sure that he was come home, looked into his dressing-room and saw him with his coat and cravat off, leaning one arm on a chest of drawers and staring absently at the ground. He started nervously and looked up as she entered.

“You look very ill, Nicholas. Is there anything the matter?”

“I have a good deal of pain in my head,” said Mr. Bulstrode, who was so frequently ailing that his wife was always ready to believe in this cause of depression.

“Sit down and let me sponge it with vinegar.”

Physically Mr. Bulstrode did not want the vinegar, but morally the affectionate attention soothed him. Though always polite, it was his habit to receive such services with marital coolness, as his wife’s duty. But today, while she was bending over him, he said, “You are very good, Harriet,” in a tone which had something new in it to her ear; she did not know exactly what the novelty was, but her woman’s solicitude shaped itself into a darting thought that he might be going to have an illness.

“Has anything worried you?” she said. “Did that man come to you at the Bank?”

“Yes; it was as I had supposed. He is a man who at one time might have done better. But he has sunk into a drunken debauched creature.”

“Is he quite gone away?” said Mrs. Bulstrode, anxiously; but for certain reasons she refrained from adding, “It was very disagreeable to hear him calling himself a friend of yours.” At that moment she would not have liked to say anything which implied her habitual consciousness that her husband’s earlier connections were not quite on a level with her own. Not that she knew much about them. That her husband had at first been employed in a bank, that he had afterwards entered into what he called city business and gained a fortune before he was three-and-thirty, that he had married a widow who was much older than himself—a Dissenter, and in other ways probably of that disadvantageous quality usually perceptible in a first wife if inquired into with the dispassionate judgment of a second—was almost as much as she had cared to learn beyond the glimpses which Mr. Bulstrode’s narrative occasionally gave of his early bent towards religion, his inclination to be a preacher, and his association with missionary and philanthropic efforts. She believed in him as an excellent man whose piety carried a peculiar eminence in belonging to a layman, whose influence had turned her own mind toward seriousness, and whose share of perishable good had been the means of raising her own position. But she also liked to think that it was well in every sense for Mr. Bulstrode to have won the hand of Harriet Vincy; whose family was undeniable in a Middlemarch light—a better light surely than any thrown in London

thoroughfares or dissenting chapel-yards. The unreformed provincial mind distrusted London; and while true religion was everywhere saving, honest Mrs. Bulstrode was convinced that to be saved in the Church was more respectable. She so much wished to ignore towards others that her husband had ever been a London Dissenter, that she liked to keep it out of sight even in talking to him. He was quite aware of this; indeed in some respects he was rather afraid of this ingenuous wife, whose imitative piety and native worldliness were equally sincere, who had nothing to be ashamed of, and whom he had married out of a thorough inclination still subsisting. But his fears were such as belong to a man who cares to maintain his recognized supremacy: the loss of high consideration from his wife, as from every one else who did not clearly hate him out of enmity to the truth, would be as the beginning of death to him. When she said—

“Is he quite gone away?”

“Oh, I trust so,” he answered, with an effort to throw as much sober unconcern into his tone as possible!

But in truth Mr. Bulstrode was very far from a state of quiet trust. In the interview at the Bank, Raffles had made it evident that his eagerness to torment was almost as strong in him as any other greed. He had frankly said that he had turned out of the way to come to Middlemarch, just to look about him and see whether the neighborhood would suit him to live in. He had certainly had a few debts to pay more than he expected, but the two hundred pounds were not gone yet: a cool five-and-twenty would suffice him to go away with for the present. What he had wanted chiefly was to see his friend Nick and family, and know all about the prosperity of a man to whom he was so much attached. By-and-by he might come back for a longer stay. This time Raffles declined to be “seen off the premises,” as he expressed it—declined to quit Middlemarch under Bulstrode’s eyes. He meant to go by coach the next day—if he chose.

Bulstrode felt himself helpless. Neither threats nor coaxing could avail: he could not count on any persistent fear nor on any promise. On the contrary, he felt a cold certainty at his heart that Raffles—unless providence sent death to hinder him—would come back to Middlemarch before long. And that certainty was a terror.

It was not that he was in danger of legal punishment or of beggary: he was in danger only of seeing disclosed to the judgment of his neighbors

and the mournful perception of his wife certain facts of his past life which would render him an object of scorn and an opprobrium of the religion with which he had diligently associated himself. The terror of being judged sharpens the memory: it sends an inevitable glare over that long-unvisited past which has been habitually recalled only in general phrases. Even without memory, the life is bound into one by a zone of dependence in growth and decay; but intense memory forces a man to own his blameworthy past. With memory set smarting like a reopened wound, a man's past is not simply a dead history, an outworn preparation of the present: it is not a repented error shaken loose from the life: it is a still quivering part of himself, bringing shudders and bitter flavors and the tinglings of a merited shame.

Into this second life Bulstrode's past had now risen, only the pleasures of it seeming to have lost their quality. Night and day, without interruption save of brief sleep which only wove retrospect and fear into a fantastic present, he felt the scenes of his earlier life coming between him and everything else, as obstinately as when we look through the window from a lighted room, the objects we turn our backs on are still before us, instead of the grass and the trees. The successive events inward and outward were there in one view: though each might be dwelt on in turn, the rest still kept their hold in the consciousness.

Once more he saw himself the young banker's clerk, with an agreeable person, as clever in figures as he was fluent in speech and fond of theological definition: an eminent though young member of a Calvinistic dissenting church at Highbury, having had striking experience in conviction of sin and sense of pardon. Again he heard himself called for as Brother Bulstrode in prayer meetings, speaking on religious platforms, preaching in private houses. Again he felt himself thinking of the ministry as possibly his vocation, and inclined towards missionary labor. That was the happiest time of his life: that was the spot he would have chosen now to awake in and find the rest a dream. The people among whom Brother Bulstrode was distinguished were very few, but they were very near to him, and stirred his satisfaction the more; his power stretched through a narrow space, but he felt its effect the more intensely. He believed without effort in the peculiar work of grace within him, and in the signs that God intended him for special instrumentality.

Then came the moment of transition; it was with the sense of promotion he had when he, an orphan educated at a commercial charity-school, was invited to a fine villa belonging to Mr. Dunkirk, the richest man in the congregation. Soon he became an intimate there, honored for his piety by the wife, marked out for his ability by the husband, whose wealth was due to a flourishing city and west-end trade. That was the setting-in of a new current for his ambition, directing his prospects of “instrumentality” towards the uniting of distinguished religious gifts with successful business.

By-and-by came a decided external leading: a confidential subordinate partner died, and nobody seemed to the principal so well fitted to fill the severely felt vacancy as his young friend Bulstrode, if he would become confidential accountant. The offer was accepted. The business was a pawnbroker’s, of the most magnificent sort both in extent and profits; and on a short acquaintance with it Bulstrode became aware that one source of magnificent profit was the easy reception of any goods offered, without strict inquiry as to where they came from. But there was a branch house at the west end, and no pettiness or dinginess to give suggestions of shame.

He remembered his first moments of shrinking. They were private, and were filled with arguments; some of these taking the form of prayer. The business was established and had old roots; is it not one thing to set up a new gin-palace and another to accept an investment in an old one? The profits made out of lost souls—where can the line be drawn at which they begin in human transactions? Was it not even God’s way of saving His chosen? “Thou knowest,”—the young Bulstrode had said then, as the older Bulstrode was saying now—“Thou knowest how loose my soul sits from these things—how I view them all as implements for tilling Thy garden rescued here and there from the wilderness.”

Metaphors and precedents were not wanting; peculiar spiritual experiences were not wanting which at last made the retention of his position seem a service demanded of him: the vista of a fortune had already opened itself, and Bulstrode’s shrinking remained private. Mr. Dunkirk had never expected that there would be any shrinking at all: he had never conceived that trade had anything to do with the scheme of salvation. And it was true that Bulstrode found himself carrying on two

distinct lives; his religious activity could not be incompatible with his business as soon as he had argued himself into not feeling it incompatible.

Mentally surrounded with that past again, Bulstrode had the same pleas—indeed, the years had been perpetually spinning them into intricate thickness, like masses of spider-web, padding the moral sensibility; nay, as age made egoism more eager but less enjoying, his soul had become more saturated with the belief that he did everything for God's sake, being indifferent to it for his own. And yet—if he could be back in that far-off spot with his youthful poverty—why, then he would choose to be a missionary.

But the train of causes in which he had locked himself went on. There was trouble in the fine villa at Highbury. Years before, the only daughter had run away, defied her parents, and gone on the stage; and now the only boy died, and after a short time Mr. Dunkirk died also. The wife, a simple pious woman, left with all the wealth in and out of the magnificent trade, of which she never knew the precise nature, had come to believe in Bulstrode, and innocently adore him as women often adore their priest or “man-made” minister. It was natural that after a time marriage should have been thought of between them. But Mrs. Dunkirk had qualms and yearnings about her daughter, who had long been regarded as lost both to God and her parents. It was known that the daughter had married, but she was utterly gone out of sight. The mother, having lost her boy, imagined a grandson, and wished in a double sense to reclaim her daughter. If she were found, there would be a channel for property—perhaps a wide one—in the provision for several grandchildren. Efforts to find her must be made before Mrs. Dunkirk would marry again. Bulstrode concurred; but after advertisement as well as other modes of inquiry had been tried, the mother believed that her daughter was not to be found, and consented to marry without reservation of property.

The daughter had been found; but only one man besides Bulstrode knew it, and he was paid for keeping silence and carrying himself away.

That was the bare fact which Bulstrode was now forced to see in the rigid outline with which acts present themselves to onlookers. But for himself at that distant time, and even now in burning memory, the fact was broken into little sequences, each justified as it came by reasonings which seemed to prove it righteous. Bulstrode's course up to that time had, he

thought, been sanctioned by remarkable providences, appearing to point the way for him to be the agent in making the best use of a large property and withdrawing it from perversion. Death and other striking dispositions, such as feminine trustfulness, had come; and Bulstrode would have adopted Cromwell's words—"Do you call these bare events? The Lord pity you!" The events were comparatively small, but the essential condition was there—namely, that they were in favor of his own ends. It was easy for him to settle what was due from him to others by inquiring what were God's intentions with regard to himself. Could it be for God's service that this fortune should in any considerable proportion go to a young woman and her husband who were given up to the lightest pursuits, and might scatter it abroad in triviality—people who seemed to lie outside the path of remarkable providences? Bulstrode had never said to himself beforehand, "The daughter shall not be found"—nevertheless when the moment came he kept her existence hidden; and when other moments followed, he soothed the mother with consolation in the probability that the unhappy young woman might be no more.

There were hours in which Bulstrode felt that his action was unrighteous; but how could he go back? He had mental exercises, called himself nought, laid hold on redemption, and went on in his course of instrumentality. And after five years Death again came to widen his path, by taking away his wife. He did gradually withdraw his capital, but he did not make the sacrifices requisite to put an end to the business, which was carried on for thirteen years afterwards before it finally collapsed. Meanwhile Nicholas Bulstrode had used his hundred thousand discreetly, and was become provincially, solidly important—a banker, a Churchman, a public benefactor; also a sleeping partner in trading concerns, in which his ability was directed to economy in the raw material, as in the case of the dyes which rotted Mr. Vincy's silk. And now, when this respectability had lasted undisturbed for nearly thirty years—when all that preceded it had long lain benumbed in the consciousness—that past had risen and immersed his thought as if with the terrible irruption of a new sense overburthening the feeble being.

Meanwhile, in his conversation with Raffles, he had learned something momentous, something which entered actively into the struggle of his longings and terrors. There, he thought, lay an opening towards spiritual, perhaps towards material rescue.

The spiritual kind of rescue was a genuine need with him. There may be coarse hypocrites, who consciously affect beliefs and emotions for the sake of gulling the world, but Bulstrode was not one of them. He was simply a man whose desires had been stronger than his theoretic beliefs, and who had gradually explained the gratification of his desires into satisfactory agreement with those beliefs. If this be hypocrisy, it is a process which shows itself occasionally in us all, to whatever confession we belong, and whether we believe in the future perfection of our race or in the nearest date fixed for the end of the world; whether we regard the earth as a putrefying nidus for a saved remnant, including ourselves, or have a passionate belief in the solidarity of mankind.

The service he could do to the cause of religion had been through life the ground he alleged to himself for his choice of action: it had been the motive which he had poured out in his prayers. Who would use money and position better than he meant to use them? Who could surpass him in self-abhorrence and exaltation of God's cause? And to Mr. Bulstrode God's cause was something distinct from his own rectitude of conduct: it enforced a discrimination of God's enemies, who were to be used merely as instruments, and whom it would be as well if possible to keep out of money and consequent influence. Also, profitable investments in trades where the power of the prince of this world showed its most active devices, became sanctified by a right application of the profits in the hands of God's servant.

This implicit reasoning is essentially no more peculiar to evangelical belief than the use of wide phrases for narrow motives is peculiar to Englishmen. There is no general doctrine which is not capable of eating out our morality if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men.

But a man who believes in something else than his own greed, has necessarily a conscience or standard to which he more or less adapts himself. Bulstrode's standard had been his serviceableness to God's cause: "I am sinful and nought—a vessel to be consecrated by use—but use me!"—had been the mould into which he had constrained his immense need of being something important and predominating. And now had come a moment in which that mould seemed in danger of being broken and utterly cast away.



What if the acts he had reconciled himself to because they made him a stronger instrument of the divine glory, were to become the pretext of the scoffer, and a darkening of that glory? If this were to be the ruling of Providence, he was cast out from the temple as one who had brought unclean offerings.

He had long poured out utterances of repentance. But today a repentance had come which was of a bitterer flavor, and a threatening Providence urged him to a kind of propitiation which was not simply a doctrinal transaction. The divine tribunal had changed its aspect for him; self-prostration was no longer enough, and he must bring restitution in his hand. It was really before his God that Bulstrode was about to attempt such restitution as seemed possible: a great dread had seized his susceptible frame, and the scorching approach of shame wrought in him a new spiritual need. Night and day, while the resurgent threatening past was making a conscience within him, he was thinking by what means he could recover peace and trust—by what sacrifice he could stay the rod. His belief in these moments of dread was, that if he spontaneously did something right, God would save him from the consequences of wrongdoing. For religion can only change when the emotions which fill it are changed; and the religion of personal fear remains nearly at the level of the savage.

He had seen Raffles actually going away on the Brassing coach, and this was a temporary relief; it removed the pressure of an immediate dread, but did not put an end to the spiritual conflict and the need to win protection. At last he came to a difficult resolve, and wrote a letter to Will Ladislav, begging him to be at the Shrubs that evening for a private interview at nine o'clock. Will had felt no particular surprise at the request, and connected it with some new notions about the "Pioneer;" but when he was shown into Mr. Bulstrode's private room, he was struck with the painfully worn look on the banker's face, and was going to say, "Are you ill?" when, checking himself in that abruptness, he only inquired after Mrs. Bulstrode, and her satisfaction with the picture bought for her.

"Thank you, she is quite satisfied; she has gone out with her daughters this evening. I begged you to come, Mr. Ladislav, because I have a communication of a very private—indeed, I will say, of a sacredly confidential nature, which I desire to make to you. Nothing, I dare say, has

been farther from your thoughts than that there had been important ties in the past which could connect your history with mine.”

Will felt something like an electric shock. He was already in a state of keen sensitiveness and hardly allayed agitation on the subject of ties in the past, and his presentiments were not agreeable. It seemed like the fluctuations of a dream—as if the action begun by that loud bloated stranger were being carried on by this pale-eyed sickly looking piece of respectability, whose subdued tone and glib formality of speech were at this moment almost as repulsive to him as their remembered contrast. He answered, with a marked change of color—

“No, indeed, nothing.”

“You see before you, Mr. Ladislaw, a man who is deeply stricken. But for the urgency of conscience and the knowledge that I am before the bar of One who seeth not as man seeth, I should be under no compulsion to make the disclosure which has been my object in asking you to come here to-night. So far as human laws go, you have no claim on me whatever.”

Will was even more uncomfortable than wondering. Mr. Bulstrode had paused, leaning his head on his hand, and looking at the floor. But he now fixed his examining glance on Will and said—

“I am told that your mother’s name was Sarah Dunkirk, and that she ran away from her friends to go on the stage. Also, that your father was at one time much emaciated by illness. May I ask if you can confirm these statements?”

“Yes, they are all true,” said Will, struck with the order in which an inquiry had come, that might have been expected to be preliminary to the banker’s previous hints. But Mr. Bulstrode had to-night followed the order of his emotions; he entertained no doubt that the opportunity for restitution had come, and he had an overpowering impulse towards the penitential expression by which he was deprecating chastisement.

“Do you know any particulars of your mother’s family?” he continued.

“No; she never liked to speak of them. She was a very generous, honorable woman,” said Will, almost angrily.

“I do not wish to allege anything against her. Did she never mention her mother to you at all?”

“I have heard her say that she thought her mother did not know the reason of her running away. She said ‘poor mother’ in a pitying tone.”

“That mother became my wife,” said Bulstrode, and then paused a moment before he added, “you have a claim on me, Mr. Ladislaw: as I said before, not a legal claim, but one which my conscience recognizes. I was enriched by that marriage—a result which would probably not have taken place—certainly not to the same extent—if your grandmother could have discovered her daughter. That daughter, I gather, is no longer living!”

“No,” said Will, feeling suspicion and repugnance rising so strongly within him, that without quite knowing what he did, he took his hat from the floor and stood up. The impulse within him was to reject the disclosed connection.

“Pray be seated, Mr. Ladislaw,” said Bulstrode, anxiously. “Doubtless you are startled by the suddenness of this discovery. But I entreat your patience with one who is already bowed down by inward trial.”

Will reseated himself, feeling some pity which was half contempt for this voluntary self-abasement of an elderly man.

“It is my wish, Mr. Ladislaw, to make amends for the deprivation which befell your mother. I know that you are without fortune, and I wish to supply you adequately from a store which would have probably already been yours had your grandmother been certain of your mother’s existence and been able to find her.”

Mr. Bulstrode paused. He felt that he was performing a striking piece of scrupulosity in the judgment of his auditor, and a penitential act in the eyes of God. He had no clew to the state of Will Ladislaw’s mind, smarting as it was from the clear hints of Raffles, and with its natural quickness in construction stimulated by the expectation of discoveries which he would have been glad to conjure back into darkness. Will made no answer for several moments, till Mr. Bulstrode, who at the end of his speech had cast his eyes on the floor, now raised them with an examining glance, which Will met fully, saying—

“I suppose you did know of my mother’s existence, and knew where she might have been found.”

Bulstrode shrank—there was a visible quivering in his face and hands. He was totally unprepared to have his advances met in this way, or to find

himself urged into more revelation than he had beforehand set down as needful. But at that moment he dared not tell a lie, and he felt suddenly uncertain of his ground which he had trodden with some confidence before.

“I will not deny that you conjecture rightly,” he answered, with a faltering in his tone. “And I wish to make atonement to you as the one still remaining who has suffered a loss through me. You enter, I trust, into my purpose, Mr. Ladislaw, which has a reference to higher than merely human claims, and as I have already said, is entirely independent of any legal compulsion. I am ready to narrow my own resources and the prospects of my family by binding myself to allow you five hundred pounds yearly during my life, and to leave you a proportional capital at my death—nay, to do still more, if more should be definitely necessary to any laudable project on your part.” Mr. Bulstrode had gone on to particulars in the expectation that these would work strongly on Ladislaw, and merge other feelings in grateful acceptance.

But Will was looking as stubborn as possible, with his lip pouting and his fingers in his side-pockets. He was not in the least touched, and said firmly,—

“Before I make any reply to your proposition, Mr. Bulstrode, I must beg you to answer a question or two. Were you connected with the business by which that fortune you speak of was originally made?”

Mr. Bulstrode’s thought was, “Raffles has told him.” How could he refuse to answer when he had volunteered what drew forth the question? He answered, “Yes.”

“And was that business—or was it not—a thoroughly dishonorable one—nay, one that, if its nature had been made public, might have ranked those concerned in it with thieves and convicts?”

Will’s tone had a cutting bitterness: he was moved to put his question as nakedly as he could.

Bulstrode reddened with irrepressible anger. He had been prepared for a scene of self-abasement, but his intense pride and his habit of supremacy overpowered penitence, and even dread, when this young man, whom he had meant to benefit, turned on him with the air of a judge.

“The business was established before I became connected with it, sir; nor is it for you to institute an inquiry of that kind,” he answered, not raising his voice, but speaking with quick defiantness.

“Yes, it is,” said Will, starting up again with his hat in his hand. “It is eminently mine to ask such questions, when I have to decide whether I will have transactions with you and accept your money. My unblemished honor is important to me. It is important to me to have no stain on my birth and connections. And now I find there is a stain which I can’t help. My mother felt it, and tried to keep as clear of it as she could, and so will I. You shall keep your ill-gotten money. If I had any fortune of my own, I would willingly pay it to any one who could disprove what you have told me. What I have to thank you for is that you kept the money till now, when I can refuse it. It ought to lie with a man’s self that he is a gentleman. Good-night, sir.”

Bulstrode was going to speak, but Will, with determined quickness, was out of the room in an instant, and in another the hall-door had closed behind him. He was too strongly possessed with passionate rebellion against this inherited blot which had been thrust on his knowledge to reflect at present whether he had not been too hard on Bulstrode—too arrogantly merciless towards a man of sixty, who was making efforts at retrieval when time had rendered them vain.

No third person listening could have thoroughly understood the impetuosity of Will’s repulse or the bitterness of his words. No one but himself then knew how everything connected with the sentiment of his own dignity had an immediate bearing for him on his relation to Dorothea and to Mr. Casaubon’s treatment of him. And in the rush of impulses by which he flung back that offer of Bulstrode’s there was mingled the sense that it would have been impossible for him ever to tell Dorothea that he had accepted it.

As for Bulstrode—when Will was gone he suffered a violent reaction, and wept like a woman. It was the first time he had encountered an open expression of scorn from any man higher than Raffles; and with that scorn hurrying like venom through his system, there was no sensibility left to consolations. But the relief of weeping had to be checked. His wife and daughters soon came home from hearing the address of an Oriental

missionary, and were full of regret that papa had not heard, in the first instance, the interesting things which they tried to repeat to him.

Perhaps, through all other hidden thoughts, the one that breathed most comfort was, that Will Ladislaw at least was not likely to publish what had taken place that evening.

## CHAPTER LXII.

He was a squyer of lowe degre,  
That loved the king's daughter of Hungrie.  
—*Old Romance.*

Will Ladislaw's mind was now wholly bent on seeing Dorothea again, and forthwith quitting Middlemarch. The morning after his agitating scene with Bulstrode he wrote a brief letter to her, saying that various causes had detained him in the neighborhood longer than he had expected, and asking her permission to call again at Lowick at some hour which she would mention on the earliest possible day, he being anxious to depart, but unwilling to do so until she had granted him an interview. He left the letter at the office, ordering the messenger to carry it to Lowick Manor, and wait for an answer.

Ladislaw felt the awkwardness of asking for more last words. His former farewell had been made in the hearing of Sir James Chettam, and had been announced as final even to the butler. It is certainly trying to a man's dignity to reappear when he is not expected to do so: a first farewell has pathos in it, but to come back for a second lends an opening to comedy, and it was possible even that there might be bitter sneers afloat about Will's motives for lingering. Still it was on the whole more satisfactory to his feeling to take the directest means of seeing Dorothea, than to use any device which might give an air of chance to a meeting of which he wished her to understand that it was what he earnestly sought. When he had parted from her before, he had been in ignorance of facts which gave a new aspect to the relation between them, and made a more absolute severance than he had then believed in. He knew nothing of Dorothea's private fortune, and being little used to reflect on such matters, took it for granted that according to Mr. Casaubon's arrangement marriage to him, Will Ladislaw, would mean that she consented to be penniless. That was not what he could wish for even in his secret heart, or even if she had been ready to meet such hard contrast for his sake. And then, too, there was the fresh smart of that disclosure about his mother's family,

which if known would be an added reason why Dorothea's friends should look down upon him as utterly below her. The secret hope that after some years he might come back with the sense that he had at least a personal value equal to her wealth, seemed now the dreamy continuation of a dream. This change would surely justify him in asking Dorothea to receive him once more.

But Dorothea on that morning was not at home to receive Will's note. In consequence of a letter from her uncle announcing his intention to be at home in a week, she had driven first to Freshitt to carry the news, meaning to go on to the Grange to deliver some orders with which her uncle had intrusted her—thinking, as he said, “a little mental occupation of this sort good for a widow.”

If Will Ladislaw could have overheard some of the talk at Freshitt that morning, he would have felt all his suppositions confirmed as to the readiness of certain people to sneer at his lingering in the neighborhood. Sir James, indeed, though much relieved concerning Dorothea, had been on the watch to learn Ladislaw's movements, and had an instructed informant in Mr. Standish, who was necessarily in his confidence on this matter. That Ladislaw had stayed in Middlemarch nearly two months after he had declared that he was going immediately, was a fact to embitter Sir James's suspicions, or at least to justify his aversion to a “young fellow” whom he represented to himself as slight, volatile, and likely enough to show such recklessness as naturally went along with a position unriveted by family ties or a strict profession. But he had just heard something from Standish which, while it justified these surmises about Will, offered a means of nullifying all danger with regard to Dorothea.

Unwonted circumstances may make us all rather unlike ourselves: there are conditions under which the most majestic person is obliged to sneeze, and our emotions are liable to be acted on in the same incongruous manner. Good Sir James was this morning so far unlike himself that he was irritably anxious to say something to Dorothea on a subject which he usually avoided as if it had been a matter of shame to them both. He could not use Celia as a medium, because he did not choose that she should know the kind of gossip he had in his mind; and before Dorothea happened to arrive he had been trying to imagine how, with his shyness and unready tongue, he could ever manage to introduce his communication. Her



unexpected presence brought him to utter hopelessness in his own power of saying anything unpleasant; but desperation suggested a resource; he sent the groom on an unsaddled horse across the park with a pencilled note to Mrs. Cadwallader, who already knew the gossip, and would think it no compromise of herself to repeat it as often as required.

Dorothea was detained on the good pretext that Mr. Garth, whom she wanted to see, was expected at the hall within the hour, and she was still talking to Caleb on the gravel when Sir James, on the watch for the rector's wife, saw her coming and met her with the needful hints.

"Enough! I understand,"—said Mrs. Cadwallader. "You shall be innocent. I am such a blackamoor that I cannot smirch myself."

"I don't mean that it's of any consequence," said Sir James, disliking that Mrs. Cadwallader should understand too much. "Only it is desirable that Dorothea should know there are reasons why she should not receive him again; and I really can't say so to her. It will come lightly from you."

It came very lightly indeed. When Dorothea quitted Caleb and turned to meet them, it appeared that Mrs. Cadwallader had stepped across the park by the merest chance in the world, just to chat with Celia in a matronly way about the baby. And so Mr. Brooke was coming back? Delightful!—coming back, it was to be hoped, quite cured of Parliamentary fever and pioneering. Apropos of the "Pioneer"—somebody had prophesied that it would soon be like a dying dolphin, and turn all colors for want of knowing how to help itself, because Mr. Brooke's protege, the brilliant young Ladislav, was gone or going. Had Sir James heard that?

The three were walking along the gravel slowly, and Sir James, turning aside to whip a shrub, said he had heard something of that sort.

"All false!" said Mrs. Cadwallader. "He is not gone, or going, apparently; the 'Pioneer' keeps its color, and Mr. Orlando Ladislav is making a sad dark-blue scandal by warbling continually with your Mr. Lydgate's wife, who they tell me is as pretty as pretty can be. It seems nobody ever goes into the house without finding this young gentleman lying on the rug or warbling at the piano. But the people in manufacturing towns are always disreputable."

"You began by saying that one report was false, Mrs. Cadwallader, and I believe this is false too," said Dorothea, with indignant energy; "at least, I

feel sure it is a misrepresentation. I will not hear any evil spoken of Mr. Ladislaw; he has already suffered too much injustice.”

Dorothea when thoroughly moved cared little what any one thought of her feelings; and even if she had been able to reflect, she would have held it petty to keep silence at injurious words about Will from fear of being herself misunderstood. Her face was flushed and her lip trembled.

Sir James, glancing at her, repented of his stratagem; but Mrs. Cadwallader, equal to all occasions, spread the palms of her hands outward and said—“Heaven grant it, my dear!—I mean that all bad tales about anybody may be false. But it is a pity that young Lydgate should have married one of these Middlemarch girls. Considering he’s a son of somebody, he might have got a woman with good blood in her veins, and not too young, who would have put up with his profession. There’s Clara Harfager, for instance, whose friends don’t know what to do with her; and she has a portion. Then we might have had her among us. However!—it’s no use being wise for other people. Where is Celia? Pray let us go in.”

“I am going on immediately to Tipton,” said Dorothea, rather haughtily. “Good-by.”

Sir James could say nothing as he accompanied her to the carriage. He was altogether discontented with the result of a contrivance which had cost him some secret humiliation beforehand.

Dorothea drove along between the berried hedgerows and the shorn corn-fields, not seeing or hearing anything around. The tears came and rolled down her cheeks, but she did not know it. The world, it seemed, was turning ugly and hateful, and there was no place for her trustfulness. “It is not true—it is not true!” was the voice within her that she listened to; but all the while a remembrance to which there had always clung a vague uneasiness would thrust itself on her attention—the remembrance of that day when she had found Will Ladislaw with Mrs. Lydgate, and had heard his voice accompanied by the piano.

“He said he would never do anything that I disapproved—I wish I could have told him that I disapproved of that,” said poor Dorothea, inwardly, feeling a strange alternation between anger with Will and the passionate defence of him. “They all try to blacken him before me; but I will care for no pain, if he is not to blame. I always believed he was good.”—These were her last thoughts before she felt that the carriage was passing under

the archway of the lodge-gate at the Grange, when she hurriedly pressed her handkerchief to her face and began to think of her errands. The coachman begged leave to take out the horses for half an hour as there was something wrong with a shoe; and Dorothea, having the sense that she was going to rest, took off her gloves and bonnet, while she was leaning against a statue in the entrance-hall, and talking to the housekeeper. At last she said—

“I must stay here a little, Mrs. Kell. I will go into the library and write you some memoranda from my uncle’s letter, if you will open the shutters for me.”

“The shutters are open, madam,” said Mrs. Kell, following Dorothea, who had walked along as she spoke. “Mr. Ladislaw is there, looking for something.”

(Will had come to fetch a portfolio of his own sketches which he had missed in the act of packing his movables, and did not choose to leave behind.)

Dorothea’s heart seemed to turn over as if it had had a blow, but she was not perceptibly checked: in truth, the sense that Will was there was for the moment all-satisfying to her, like the sight of something precious that one has lost. When she reached the door she said to Mrs. Kell—

“Go in first, and tell him that I am here.”

Will had found his portfolio, and had laid it on the table at the far end of the room, to turn over the sketches and please himself by looking at the memorable piece of art which had a relation to nature too mysterious for Dorothea. He was smiling at it still, and shaking the sketches into order with the thought that he might find a letter from her awaiting him at Middlemarch, when Mrs. Kell close to his elbow said—

“Mrs. Casaubon is coming in, sir.”

Will turned round quickly, and the next moment Dorothea was entering. As Mrs. Kell closed the door behind her they met: each was looking at the other, and consciousness was overflowed by something that suppressed utterance. It was not confusion that kept them silent, for they both felt that parting was near, and there is no shamefacedness in a sad parting.

She moved automatically towards her uncle’s chair against the writing-table, and Will, after drawing it out a little for her, went a few paces off

and stood opposite to her.

“Pray sit down,” said Dorothea, crossing her hands on her lap; “I am very glad you were here.” Will thought that her face looked just as it did when she first shook hands with him in Rome; for her widow’s cap, fixed in her bonnet, had gone off with it, and he could see that she had lately been shedding tears. But the mixture of anger in her agitation had vanished at the sight of him; she had been used, when they were face to face, always to feel confidence and the happy freedom which comes with mutual understanding, and how could other people’s words hinder that effect on a sudden? Let the music which can take possession of our frame and fill the air with joy for us, sound once more—what does it signify that we heard it found fault with in its absence?

“I have sent a letter to Lowick Manor to-day, asking leave to see you,” said Will, seating himself opposite to her. “I am going away immediately, and I could not go without speaking to you again.”

“I thought we had parted when you came to Lowick many weeks ago—you thought you were going then,” said Dorothea, her voice trembling a little.

“Yes; but I was in ignorance then of things which I know now—things which have altered my feelings about the future. When I saw you before, I was dreaming that I might come back some day. I don’t think I ever shall—now.” Will paused here.

“You wished me to know the reasons?” said Dorothea, timidly.

“Yes,” said Will, impetuously, shaking his head backward, and looking away from her with irritation in his face. “Of course I must wish it. I have been grossly insulted in your eyes and in the eyes of others. There has been a mean implication against my character. I wish you to know that under no circumstances would I have lowered myself by—under no circumstances would I have given men the chance of saying that I sought money under the pretext of seeking—something else. There was no need of other safeguard against me—the safeguard of wealth was enough.”

Will rose from his chair with the last word and went—he hardly knew where; but it was to the projecting window nearest him, which had been open as now about the same season a year ago, when he and Dorothea had stood within it and talked together. Her whole heart was going out at this moment in sympathy with Will’s indignation: she only wanted to convince

him that she had never done him injustice, and he seemed to have turned away from her as if she too had been part of the unfriendly world.

“It would be very unkind of you to suppose that I ever attributed any meanness to you,” she began. Then in her ardent way, wanting to plead with him, she moved from her chair and went in front of him to her old place in the window, saying, “Do you suppose that I ever disbelieved in you?”

When Will saw her there, he gave a start and moved backward out of the window, without meeting her glance. Dorothea was hurt by this movement following up the previous anger of his tone. She was ready to say that it was as hard on her as on him, and that she was helpless; but those strange particulars of their relation which neither of them could explicitly mention kept her always in dread of saying too much. At this moment she had no belief that Will would in any case have wanted to marry her, and she feared using words which might imply such a belief. She only said earnestly, recurring to his last word—

“I am sure no safeguard was ever needed against you.”

Will did not answer. In the stormy fluctuation of his feelings these words of hers seemed to him cruelly neutral, and he looked pale and miserable after his angry outburst. He went to the table and fastened up his portfolio, while Dorothea looked at him from the distance. They were wasting these last moments together in wretched silence. What could he say, since what had got obstinately uppermost in his mind was the passionate love for her which he forbade himself to utter? What could she say, since she might offer him no help—since she was forced to keep the money that ought to have been his?—since to-day he seemed not to respond as he used to do to her thorough trust and liking?

But Will at last turned away from his portfolio and approached the window again.

“I must go,” he said, with that peculiar look of the eyes which sometimes accompanies bitter feeling, as if they had been tired and burned with gazing too close at a light.

“What shall you do in life?” said Dorothea, timidly. “Have your intentions remained just the same as when we said good-by before?”

“Yes,” said Will, in a tone that seemed to waive the subject as uninteresting. “I shall work away at the first thing that offers. I suppose one gets a habit of doing without happiness or hope.”

“Oh, what sad words!” said Dorothea, with a dangerous tendency to sob. Then trying to smile, she added, “We used to agree that we were alike in speaking too strongly.”

“I have not spoken too strongly now,” said Will, leaning back against the angle of the wall. “There are certain things which a man can only go through once in his life; and he must know some time or other that the best is over with him. This experience has happened to me while I am very young—that is all. What I care more for than I can ever care for anything else is absolutely forbidden to me—I don’t mean merely by being out of my reach, but forbidden me, even if it were within my reach, by my own pride and honor—by everything I respect myself for. Of course I shall go on living as a man might do who had seen heaven in a trance.”

Will paused, imagining that it would be impossible for Dorothea to misunderstand this; indeed he felt that he was contradicting himself and offending against his self-approval in speaking to her so plainly; but still—it could not be fairly called wooing a woman to tell her that he would never woo her. It must be admitted to be a ghostly kind of wooing.

But Dorothea’s mind was rapidly going over the past with quite another vision than his. The thought that she herself might be what Will most cared for did throb through her an instant, but then came doubt: the memory of the little they had lived through together turned pale and shrank before the memory which suggested how much fuller might have been the intercourse between Will and some one else with whom he had had constant companionship. Everything he had said might refer to that other relation, and whatever had passed between him and herself was thoroughly explained by what she had always regarded as their simple friendship and the cruel obstruction thrust upon it by her husband’s injurious act. Dorothea stood silent, with her eyes cast down dreamily, while images crowded upon her which left the sickening certainty that Will was referring to Mrs. Lydgate. But why sickening? He wanted her to know that here too his conduct should be above suspicion.

Will was not surprised at her silence. His mind also was tumultuously busy while he watched her, and he was feeling rather wildly that

something must happen to hinder their parting—some miracle, clearly nothing in their own deliberate speech. Yet, after all, had she any love for him?—he could not pretend to himself that he would rather believe her to be without that pain. He could not deny that a secret longing for the assurance that she loved him was at the root of all his words.

Neither of them knew how long they stood in that way. Dorothea was raising her eyes, and was about to speak, when the door opened and her footman came to say—

“The horses are ready, madam, whenever you like to start.”

“Presently,” said Dorothea. Then turning to Will, she said, “I have some memoranda to write for the housekeeper.”

“I must go,” said Will, when the door had closed again—advancing towards her. “The day after to-morrow I shall leave Middlemarch.”

“You have acted in every way rightly,” said Dorothea, in a low tone, feeling a pressure at her heart which made it difficult to speak.

She put out her hand, and Will took it for an instant without speaking, for her words had seemed to him cruelly cold and unlike herself. Their eyes met, but there was discontent in his, and in hers there was only sadness. He turned away and took his portfolio under his arm.

“I have never done you injustice. Please remember me,” said Dorothea, repressing a rising sob.

“Why should you say that?” said Will, with irritation. “As if I were not in danger of forgetting everything else.”

He had really a movement of anger against her at that moment, and it impelled him to go away without pause. It was all one flash to Dorothea—his last words—his distant bow to her as he reached the door—the sense that he was no longer there. She sank into the chair, and for a few moments sat like a statue, while images and emotions were hurrying upon her. Joy came first, in spite of the threatening train behind it—joy in the impression that it was really herself whom Will loved and was renouncing, that there was really no other love less permissible, more blameworthy, which honor was hurrying him away from. They were parted all the same, but—Dorothea drew a deep breath and felt her strength return—she could think of him unrestrainedly. At that moment the parting was easy to bear: the first sense of loving and being loved excluded sorrow. It was as if some

hard icy pressure had melted, and her consciousness had room to expand: her past was come back to her with larger interpretation. The joy was not the less—perhaps it was the more complete just then—because of the irrevocable parting; for there was no reproach, no contemptuous wonder to imagine in any eye or from any lips. He had acted so as to defy reproach, and make wonder respectful.

Any one watching her might have seen that there was a fortifying thought within her. Just as when inventive power is working with glad ease some small claim on the attention is fully met as if it were only a cranny opened to the sunlight, it was easy now for Dorothea to write her memoranda. She spoke her last words to the housekeeper in cheerful tones, and when she seated herself in the carriage her eyes were bright and her cheeks blooming under the dismal bonnet. She threw back the heavy “weepers,” and looked before her, wondering which road Will had taken. It was in her nature to be proud that he was blameless, and through all her feelings there ran this vein—“I was right to defend him.”

The coachman was used to drive his grays at a good pace, Mr. Casaubon being unenjoying and impatient in everything away from his desk, and wanting to get to the end of all journeys; and Dorothea was now bowled along quickly. Driving was pleasant, for rain in the night had laid the dust, and the blue sky looked far off, away from the region of the great clouds that sailed in masses. The earth looked like a happy place under the vast heavens, and Dorothea was wishing that she might overtake Will and see him once more.

After a turn of the road, there he was with the portfolio under his arm; but the next moment she was passing him while he raised his hat, and she felt a pang at being seated there in a sort of exaltation, leaving him behind. She could not look back at him. It was as if a crowd of indifferent objects had thrust them asunder, and forced them along different paths, taking them farther and farther away from each other, and making it useless to look back. She could no more make any sign that would seem to say, “Need we part?” than she could stop the carriage to wait for him. Nay, what a world of reasons crowded upon her against any movement of her thought towards a future that might reverse the decision of this day!

“I only wish I had known before—I wish he knew—then we could be quite happy in thinking of each other, though we are forever parted. And if



I could but have given him the money, and made things easier for him!”—were the longings that came back the most persistently. And yet, so heavily did the world weigh on her in spite of her independent energy, that with this idea of Will as in need of such help and at a disadvantage with the world, there came always the vision of that unfittingness of any closer relation between them which lay in the opinion of every one connected with her. She felt to the full all the imperativeness of the motives which urged Will’s conduct. How could he dream of her defying the barrier that her husband had placed between them?—how could she ever say to herself that she would defy it?

Will’s certainty as the carriage grew smaller in the distance, had much more bitterness in it. Very slight matters were enough to gall him in his sensitive mood, and the sight of Dorothea driving past him while he felt himself plodding along as a poor devil seeking a position in a world which in his present temper offered him little that he coveted, made his conduct seem a mere matter of necessity, and took away the sustainment of resolve. After all, he had no assurance that she loved him: could any man pretend that he was simply glad in such a case to have the suffering all on his own side?

That evening Will spent with the Lydgates; the next evening he was gone.

BOOK VII.  
TWO TEMPTATIONS.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

These little things are great to little man.—GOLDSMITH.

“Have you seen much of your scientific phoenix, Lydgate, lately?” said Mr. Toller at one of his Christmas dinner-parties, speaking to Mr. Farebrother on his right hand.

“Not much, I am sorry to say,” answered the Vicar, accustomed to parry Mr. Toller’s banter about his belief in the new medical light. “I am out of the way and he is too busy.”

“Is he? I am glad to hear it,” said Dr. Minchin, with mingled suavity and surprise.

“He gives a great deal of time to the New Hospital,” said Mr. Farebrother, who had his reasons for continuing the subject: “I hear of that from my neighbor, Mrs. Casaubon, who goes there often. She says Lydgate is indefatigable, and is making a fine thing of Bulstrode’s institution. He is preparing a new ward in case of the cholera coming to us.”

“And preparing theories of treatment to try on the patients, I suppose,” said Mr. Toller.

“Come, Toller, be candid,” said Mr. Farebrother. “You are too clever not to see the good of a bold fresh mind in medicine, as well as in everything else; and as to cholera, I fancy, none of you are very sure what you ought to do. If a man goes a little too far along a new road, it is usually himself that he harms more than any one else.”

“I am sure you and Wrench ought to be obliged to him,” said Dr. Minchin, looking towards Toller, “for he has sent you the cream of Peacock’s patients.”

“Lydgate has been living at a great rate for a young beginner,” said Mr. Harry Toller, the brewer. “I suppose his relations in the North back him up.”

“I hope so,” said Mr. Chichely, “else he ought not to have married that nice girl we were all so fond of. Hang it, one has a grudge against a man who carries off the prettiest girl in the town.”

“Ay, by God! and the best too,” said Mr. Standish.

“My friend Vincy didn’t half like the marriage, I know that,” said Mr. Chichely. “*He* wouldn’t do much. How the relations on the other side may have come down I can’t say.” There was an emphatic kind of reticence in Mr. Chichely’s manner of speaking.

“Oh, I shouldn’t think Lydgate ever looked to practice for a living,” said Mr. Toller, with a slight touch of sarcasm, and there the subject was dropped.

This was not the first time that Mr. Farebrother had heard hints of Lydgate’s expenses being obviously too great to be met by his practice, but he thought it not unlikely that there were resources or expectations which excused the large outlay at the time of Lydgate’s marriage, and which might hinder any bad consequences from the disappointment in his practice. One evening, when he took the pains to go to Middlemarch on purpose to have a chat with Lydgate as of old, he noticed in him an air of excited effort quite unlike his usual easy way of keeping silence or breaking it with abrupt energy whenever he had anything to say. Lydgate talked persistently when they were in his work-room, putting arguments for and against the probability of certain biological views; but he had none of those definite things to say or to show which give the waymarks of a patient uninterrupted pursuit, such as he used himself to insist on, saying that “there must be a systole and diastole in all inquiry,” and that “a man’s mind must be continually expanding and shrinking between the whole human horizon and the horizon of an object-glass.” That evening he seemed to be talking widely for the sake of resisting any personal bearing; and before long they went into the drawing room, where Lydgate, having asked Rosamond to give them music, sank back in his chair in silence, but with a strange light in his eyes. “He may have been taking an opiate,” was a thought that crossed Mr. Farebrother’s mind—“tic-douloureux perhaps—or medical worries.”

It did not occur to him that Lydgate’s marriage was not delightful: he believed, as the rest did, that Rosamond was an amiable, docile creature, though he had always thought her rather uninteresting—a little too much

the pattern-card of the finishing-school; and his mother could not forgive Rosamond because she never seemed to see that Henrietta Noble was in the room. "However, Lydgate fell in love with her," said the Vicar to himself, "and she must be to his taste."

Mr. Farebrother was aware that Lydgate was a proud man, but having very little corresponding fibre in himself, and perhaps too little care about personal dignity, except the dignity of not being mean or foolish, he could hardly allow enough for the way in which Lydgate shrank, as from a burn, from the utterance of any word about his private affairs. And soon after that conversation at Mr. Toller's, the Vicar learned something which made him watch the more eagerly for an opportunity of indirectly letting Lydgate know that if he wanted to open himself about any difficulty there was a friendly ear ready.

The opportunity came at Mr. Vincy's, where, on New Year's Day, there was a party, to which Mr. Farebrother was irresistibly invited, on the plea that he must not forsake his old friends on the first new year of his being a greater man, and Rector as well as Vicar. And this party was thoroughly friendly: all the ladies of the Farebrother family were present; the Vincy children all dined at the table, and Fred had persuaded his mother that if she did not invite Mary Garth, the Farebrothers would regard it as a slight to themselves, Mary being their particular friend. Mary came, and Fred was in high spirits, though his enjoyment was of a checkered kind—triumph that his mother should see Mary's importance with the chief personages in the party being much streaked with jealousy when Mr. Farebrother sat down by her. Fred used to be much more easy about his own accomplishments in the days when he had not begun to dread being "bowled out by Farebrother," and this terror was still before him. Mrs. Vincy, in her fullest matronly bloom, looked at Mary's little figure, rough wavy hair, and visage quite without lilies and roses, and wondered; trying unsuccessfully to fancy herself caring about Mary's appearance in wedding clothes, or feeling complacency in grandchildren who would "feature" the Garths. However, the party was a merry one, and Mary was particularly bright; being glad, for Fred's sake, that his friends were getting kinder to her, and being also quite willing that they should see how much she was valued by others whom they must admit to be judges.

Mr. Farebrother noticed that Lydgate seemed bored, and that Mr. Vincy spoke as little as possible to his son-in-law. Rosamond was perfectly graceful and calm, and only a subtle observation such as the Vicar had not been roused to bestow on her would have perceived the total absence of that interest in her husband's presence which a loving wife is sure to betray, even if etiquette keeps her aloof from him. When Lydgate was taking part in the conversation, she never looked towards him any more than if she had been a sculptured Psyche modelled to look another way: and when, after being called out for an hour or two, he re-entered the room, she seemed unconscious of the fact, which eighteen months before would have had the effect of a numeral before ciphers. In reality, however, she was intensely aware of Lydgate's voice and movements; and her pretty good-tempered air of unconsciousness was a studied negation by which she satisfied her inward opposition to him without compromise of propriety. When the ladies were in the drawing-room after Lydgate had been called away from the dessert, Mrs. Farebrother, when Rosamond happened to be near her, said—"You have to give up a great deal of your husband's society, Mrs. Lydgate."

"Yes, the life of a medical man is very arduous: especially when he is so devoted to his profession as Mr. Lydgate is," said Rosamond, who was standing, and moved easily away at the end of this correct little speech.

"It is dreadfully dull for her when there is no company," said Mrs. Vincy, who was seated at the old lady's side. "I am sure I thought so when Rosamond was ill, and I was staying with her. You know, Mrs. Farebrother, ours is a cheerful house. I am of a cheerful disposition myself, and Mr. Vincy always likes something to be going on. That is what Rosamond has been used to. Very different from a husband out at odd hours, and never knowing when he will come home, and of a close, proud disposition, *I think*"—indiscreet Mrs. Vincy did lower her tone slightly with this parenthesis. "But Rosamond always had an angel of a temper; her brothers used very often not to please her, but she was never the girl to show temper; from a baby she was always as good as good, and with a complexion beyond anything. But my children are all good-tempered, thank God."

This was easily credible to any one looking at Mrs. Vincy as she threw back her broad cap-strings, and smiled towards her three little girls, aged

from seven to eleven. But in that smiling glance she was obliged to include Mary Garth, whom the three girls had got into a corner to make her tell them stories. Mary was just finishing the delicious tale of Rumpelstiltskin, which she had well by heart, because Letty was never tired of communicating it to her ignorant elders from a favorite red volume. Louisa, Mrs. Vincy's darling, now ran to her with wide-eyed serious excitement, crying, "Oh mamma, mamma, the little man stamped so hard on the floor he couldn't get his leg out again!"

"Bless you, my cherub!" said mamma; "you shall tell me all about it tomorrow. Go and listen!" and then, as her eyes followed Louisa back towards the attractive corner, she thought that if Fred wished her to invite Mary again she would make no objection, the children being so pleased with her.

But presently the corner became still more animated, for Mr. Farebrother came in, and seating himself behind Louisa, took her on his lap; whereupon the girls all insisted that he must hear Rumpelstiltskin, and Mary must tell it over again. He insisted too, and Mary, without fuss, began again in her neat fashion, with precisely the same words as before. Fred, who had also seated himself near, would have felt unmixed triumph in Mary's effectiveness if Mr. Farebrother had not been looking at her with evident admiration, while he dramatized an intense interest in the tale to please the children.

"You will never care any more about my one-eyed giant, Loo," said Fred at the end.

"Yes, I shall. Tell about him now," said Louisa.

"Oh, I dare say; I am quite cut out. Ask Mr. Farebrother."

"Yes," added Mary; "ask Mr. Farebrother to tell you about the ants whose beautiful house was knocked down by a giant named Tom, and he thought they didn't mind because he couldn't hear them cry, or see them use their pocket-handkerchiefs."

"Please," said Louisa, looking up at the Vicar.

"No, no, I am a grave old parson. If I try to draw a story out of my bag a sermon comes instead. Shall I preach you a sermon?" said he, putting on his short-sighted glasses, and pursing up his lips.

"Yes," said Louisa, falteringly.

“Let me see, then. Against cakes: how cakes are bad things, especially if they are sweet and have plums in them.”

Louisa took the affair rather seriously, and got down from the Vicar’s knee to go to Fred.

“Ah, I see it will not do to preach on New Year’s Day,” said Mr. Farebrother, rising and walking away. He had discovered of late that Fred had become jealous of him, and also that he himself was not losing his preference for Mary above all other women.

“A delightful young person is Miss Garth,” said Mrs. Farebrother, who had been watching her son’s movements.

“Yes,” said Mrs. Vincy, obliged to reply, as the old lady turned to her expectantly. “It is a pity she is not better-looking.”

“I cannot say that,” said Mrs. Farebrother, decisively. “I like her countenance. We must not always ask for beauty, when a good God has seen fit to make an excellent young woman without it. I put good manners first, and Miss Garth will know how to conduct herself in any station.”

The old lady was a little sharp in her tone, having a prospective reference to Mary’s becoming her daughter-in-law; for there was this inconvenience in Mary’s position with regard to Fred, that it was not suitable to be made public, and hence the three ladies at Lowick Parsonage were still hoping that Camden would choose Miss Garth.

New visitors entered, and the drawing-room was given up to music and games, while whist-tables were prepared in the quiet room on the other side of the hall. Mr. Farebrother played a rubber to satisfy his mother, who regarded her occasional whist as a protest against scandal and novelty of opinion, in which light even a revoke had its dignity. But at the end he got Mr. Chichely to take his place, and left the room. As he crossed the hall, Lydgate had just come in and was taking off his great-coat.

“You are the man I was going to look for,” said the Vicar; and instead of entering the drawing-room, they walked along the hall and stood against the fireplace, where the frosty air helped to make a glowing bank. “You see, I can leave the whist-table easily enough,” he went on, smiling at Lydgate, “now I don’t play for money. I owe that to you, Mrs. Casaubon says.”

“How?” said Lydgate, coldly.



“Ah, you didn’t mean me to know it; I call that ungenerous reticence. You should let a man have the pleasure of feeling that you have done him a good turn. I don’t enter into some people’s dislike of being under an obligation: upon my word, I prefer being under an obligation to everybody for behaving well to me.”

“I can’t tell what you mean,” said Lydgate, “unless it is that I once spoke of you to Mrs. Casaubon. But I did not think that she would break her promise not to mention that I had done so,” said Lydgate, leaning his back against the corner of the mantel-piece, and showing no radiance in his face.

“It was Brooke who let it out, only the other day. He paid me the compliment of saying that he was very glad I had the living though you had come across his tactics, and had praised me up as a Ken and a Tillotson, and that sort of thing, till Mrs. Casaubon would hear of no one else.”

“Oh, Brooke is such a leaky-minded fool,” said Lydgate, contemptuously.

“Well, I was glad of the leakiness then. I don’t see why you shouldn’t like me to know that you wished to do me a service, my dear fellow. And you certainly have done me one. It’s rather a strong check to one’s self-complacency to find how much of one’s right doing depends on not being in want of money. A man will not be tempted to say the Lord’s Prayer backward to please the devil, if he doesn’t want the devil’s services. I have no need to hang on the smiles of chance now.”

“I don’t see that there’s any money-getting without chance,” said Lydgate; “if a man gets it in a profession, it’s pretty sure to come by chance.”

Mr. Farebrother thought he could account for this speech, in striking contrast with Lydgate’s former way of talking, as the perversity which will often spring from the moodiness of a man ill at ease in his affairs. He answered in a tone of good-humored admission—

“Ah, there’s enormous patience wanted with the way of the world. But it is the easier for a man to wait patiently when he has friends who love him, and ask for nothing better than to help him through, so far as it lies in their power.”

“Oh yes,” said Lydgate, in a careless tone, changing his attitude and looking at his watch. “People make much more of their difficulties than they need to do.”

He knew as distinctly as possible that this was an offer of help to himself from Mr. Farebrother, and he could not bear it. So strangely determined are we mortals, that, after having been long gratified with the sense that he had privately done the Vicar a service, the suggestion that the Vicar discerned his need of a service in return made him shrink into unconquerable reticence. Besides, behind all making of such offers what else must come?—that he should “mention his case,” imply that he wanted specific things. At that moment, suicide seemed easier.

Mr. Farebrother was too keen a man not to know the meaning of that reply, and there was a certain massiveness in Lydgate’s manner and tone, corresponding with his physique, which if he repelled your advances in the first instance seemed to put persuasive devices out of question.

“What time are you?” said the Vicar, devouring his wounded feeling.

“After eleven,” said Lydgate. And they went into the drawing-room.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

*1st Gent.* Where lies the power, there let the blame lie too.

*2d Gent.* Nay, power is relative; you cannot fright  
The coming pest with border fortresses,  
Or catch your carp with subtle argument.  
All force is twain in one: cause is not cause  
Unless effect be there; and action's self  
Must needs contain a passive. So command  
Exists but with obedience.

Even if Lydgate had been inclined to be quite open about his affairs, he knew that it would have hardly been in Mr. Farebrother's power to give him the help he immediately wanted. With the year's bills coming in from his tradesmen, with Dover's threatening hold on his furniture, and with nothing to depend on but slow dribbling payments from patients who must not be offended—for the handsome fees he had had from Freshitt Hall and Lowick Manor had been easily absorbed—nothing less than a thousand pounds would have freed him from actual embarrassment, and left a residue which, according to the favorite phrase of hopefulness in such circumstances, would have given him “time to look about him.”

Naturally, the merry Christmas bringing the happy New Year, when fellow-citizens expect to be paid for the trouble and goods they have smilingly bestowed on their neighbors, had so tightened the pressure of sordid cares on Lydgate's mind that it was hardly possible for him to think unbrokenly of any other subject, even the most habitual and soliciting. He was not an ill-tempered man; his intellectual activity, the ardent kindness of his heart, as well as his strong frame, would always, under tolerably easy conditions, have kept him above the petty uncontrolled susceptibilities which make bad temper. But he was now a prey to that worst irritation which arises not simply from annoyances, but from the second consciousness underlying those annoyances, of wasted energy and a degrading preoccupation, which was the reverse of all his former purposes. “*This* is what I am thinking of; and *that* is what I might have

been thinking of,” was the bitter incessant murmur within him, making every difficulty a double goad to impatience.

Some gentlemen have made an amazing figure in literature by general discontent with the universe as a trap of dulness into which their great souls have fallen by mistake; but the sense of a stupendous self and an insignificant world may have its consolations. Lydgate’s discontent was much harder to bear: it was the sense that there was a grand existence in thought and effective action lying around him, while his self was being narrowed into the miserable isolation of egoistic fears, and vulgar anxieties for events that might allay such fears. His troubles will perhaps appear miserably sordid, and beneath the attention of lofty persons who can know nothing of debt except on a magnificent scale. Doubtless they were sordid; and for the majority, who are not lofty, there is no escape from sordidness but by being free from money-craving, with all its base hopes and temptations, its watching for death, its hinted requests, its horse-dealer’s desire to make bad work pass for good, its seeking for function which ought to be another’s, its compulsion often to long for Luck in the shape of a wide calamity.

It was because Lydgate writhed under the idea of getting his neck beneath this vile yoke that he had fallen into a bitter moody state which was continually widening Rosamond’s alienation from him. After the first disclosure about the bill of sale, he had made many efforts to draw her into sympathy with him about possible measures for narrowing their expenses, and with the threatening approach of Christmas his propositions grew more and more definite. “We two can do with only one servant, and live on very little,” he said, “and I shall manage with one horse.” For Lydgate, as we have seen, had begun to reason, with a more distinct vision, about the expenses of living, and any share of pride he had given to appearances of that sort was meagre compared with the pride which made him revolt from exposure as a debtor, or from asking men to help him with their money.

“Of course you can dismiss the other two servants, if you like,” said Rosamond; “but I should have thought it would be very injurious to your position for us to live in a poor way. You must expect your practice to be lowered.”

“My dear Rosamond, it is not a question of choice. We have begun too expensively. Peacock, you know, lived in a much smaller house than this.

It is my fault: I ought to have known better, and I deserve a thrashing—if there were anybody who had a right to give it me—for bringing you into the necessity of living in a poorer way than you have been used to. But we married because we loved each other, I suppose. And that may help us to pull along till things get better. Come, dear, put down that work and come to me.”

He was really in chill gloom about her at that moment, but he dreaded a future without affection, and was determined to resist the oncoming of division between them. Rosamond obeyed him, and he took her on his knee, but in her secret soul she was utterly aloof from him. The poor thing saw only that the world was not ordered to her liking, and Lydgate was part of that world. But he held her waist with one hand and laid the other gently on both of hers; for this rather abrupt man had much tenderness in his manners towards women, seeming to have always present in his imagination the weakness of their frames and the delicate poise of their health both in body and mind. And he began again to speak persuasively.

“I find, now I look into things a little, Rosy, that it is wonderful what an amount of money slips away in our housekeeping. I suppose the servants are careless, and we have had a great many people coming. But there must be many in our rank who manage with much less: they must do with commoner things, I suppose, and look after the scraps. It seems, money goes but a little way in these matters, for Wrench has everything as plain as possible, and he has a very large practice.”

“Oh, if you think of living as the Wrenches do!” said Rosamond, with a little turn of her neck. “But I have heard you express your disgust at that way of living.”

“Yes, they have bad taste in everything—they make economy look ugly. We needn’t do that. I only meant that they avoid expenses, although Wrench has a capital practice.”

“Why should not you have a good practice, Tertius? Mr. Peacock had. You should be more careful not to offend people, and you should send out medicines as the others do. I am sure you began well, and you got several good houses. It cannot answer to be eccentric; you should think what will be generally liked,” said Rosamond, in a decided little tone of admonition.

Lydgate’s anger rose: he was prepared to be indulgent towards feminine weakness, but not towards feminine dictation. The shallowness of a

waternixie's soul may have a charm until she becomes didactic. But he controlled himself, and only said, with a touch of despotic firmness—

“What I am to do in my practice, Rosy, it is for me to judge. That is not the question between us. It is enough for you to know that our income is likely to be a very narrow one—hardly four hundred, perhaps less, for a long time to come, and we must try to re-arrange our lives in accordance with that fact.”

Rosamond was silent for a moment or two, looking before her, and then said, “My uncle Bulstrode ought to allow you a salary for the time you give to the Hospital: it is not right that you should work for nothing.”

“It was understood from the beginning that my services would be gratuitous. That, again, need not enter into our discussion. I have pointed out what is the only probability,” said Lydgate, impatiently. Then checking himself, he went on more quietly—

“I think I see one resource which would free us from a good deal of the present difficulty. I hear that young Ned Plymdale is going to be married to Miss Sophy Toller. They are rich, and it is not often that a good house is vacant in Middlemarch. I feel sure that they would be glad to take this house from us with most of our furniture, and they would be willing to pay handsomely for the lease. I can employ Trumbull to speak to Plymdale about it.”

Rosamond left her husband's knee and walked slowly to the other end of the room; when she turned round and walked towards him it was evident that the tears had come, and that she was biting her under-lip and clasping her hands to keep herself from crying. Lydgate was wretched—shaken with anger and yet feeling that it would be unmanly to vent the anger just now.

“I am very sorry, Rosamond; I know this is painful.”

“I thought, at least, when I had borne to send the plate back and have that man taking an inventory of the furniture—I should have thought *that* would suffice.”

“I explained it to you at the time, dear. That was only a security and behind that security there is a debt. And that debt must be paid within the next few months, else we shall have our furniture sold. If young Plymdale will take our house and most of our furniture, we shall be able to pay that

debt, and some others too, and we shall be quit of a place too expensive for us. We might take a smaller house: Trumbull, I know, has a very decent one to let at thirty pounds a-year, and this is ninety.” Lydgate uttered this speech in the curt hammering way with which we usually try to nail down a vague mind to imperative facts. Tears rolled silently down Rosamond’s cheeks; she just pressed her handkerchief against them, and stood looking at the large vase on the mantel-piece. It was a moment of more intense bitterness than she had ever felt before. At last she said, without hurry and with careful emphasis—

“I never could have believed that you would like to act in that way.”

“Like it?” burst out Lydgate, rising from his chair, thrusting his hands in his pockets and stalking away from the hearth; “it’s not a question of liking. Of course, I don’t like it; it’s the only thing I can do.” He wheeled round there, and turned towards her.

“I should have thought there were many other means than that,” said Rosamond. “Let us have a sale and leave Middlemarch altogether.”

“To do what? What is the use of my leaving my work in Middlemarch to go where I have none? We should be just as penniless elsewhere as we are here,” said Lydgate still more angrily.

“If we are to be in that position it will be entirely your own doing, Tertius,” said Rosamond, turning round to speak with the fullest conviction. “You will not behave as you ought to do to your own family. You offended Captain Lydgate. Sir Godwin was very kind to me when we were at Quallingham, and I am sure if you showed proper regard to him and told him your affairs, he would do anything for you. But rather than that, you like giving up our house and furniture to Mr. Ned Plymdale.”

There was something like fierceness in Lydgate’s eyes, as he answered with new violence, “Well, then, if you will have it so, I do like it. I admit that I like it better than making a fool of myself by going to beg where it’s of no use. Understand then, that it is what I *like to do*.”

There was a tone in the last sentence which was equivalent to the clutch of his strong hand on Rosamond’s delicate arm. But for all that, his will was not a whit stronger than hers. She immediately walked out of the room in silence, but with an intense determination to hinder what Lydgate liked to do.

He went out of the house, but as his blood cooled he felt that the chief result of the discussion was a deposit of dread within him at the idea of opening with his wife in future subjects which might again urge him to violent speech. It was as if a fracture in delicate crystal had begun, and he was afraid of any movement that might make it fatal. His marriage would be a mere piece of bitter irony if they could not go on loving each other. He had long ago made up his mind to what he thought was her negative character—her want of sensibility, which showed itself in disregard both of his specific wishes and of his general aims. The first great disappointment had been borne: the tender devotedness and docile adoration of the ideal wife must be renounced, and life must be taken up on a lower stage of expectation, as it is by men who have lost their limbs. But the real wife had not only her claims, she had still a hold on his heart, and it was his intense desire that the hold should remain strong. In marriage, the certainty, “She will never love me much,” is easier to bear than the fear, “I shall love her no more.” Hence, after that outburst, his inward effort was entirely to excuse her, and to blame the hard circumstances which were partly his fault. He tried that evening, by petting her, to heal the wound he had made in the morning, and it was not in Rosamond’s nature to be repellent or sulky; indeed, she welcomed the signs that her husband loved her and was under control. But this was something quite distinct from loving *him*. Lydgate would not have chosen soon to recur to the plan of parting with the house; he was resolved to carry it out, and say as little more about it as possible. But Rosamond herself touched on it at breakfast by saying, mildly—

“Have you spoken to Trumbull yet?”

“No,” said Lydgate, “but I shall call on him as I go by this morning. No time must be lost.” He took Rosamond’s question as a sign that she withdrew her inward opposition, and kissed her head caressingly when he got up to go away.

As soon as it was late enough to make a call, Rosamond went to Mrs. Plymdale, Mr. Ned’s mother, and entered with pretty congratulations into the subject of the coming marriage. Mrs. Plymdale’s maternal view was, that Rosamond might possibly now have retrospective glimpses of her own folly; and feeling the advantages to be at present all on the side of her son, was too kind a woman not to behave graciously.



“Yes, Ned is most happy, I must say. And Sophy Toller is all I could desire in a daughter-in-law. Of course her father is able to do something handsome for her—that is only what would be expected with a brewery like his. And the connection is everything we should desire. But that is not what I look at. She is such a very nice girl—no airs, no pretensions, though on a level with the first. I don’t mean with the titled aristocracy. I see very little good in people aiming out of their own sphere. I mean that Sophy is equal to the best in the town, and she is contented with that.”

“I have always thought her very agreeable,” said Rosamond.

“I look upon it as a reward for Ned, who never held his head too high, that he should have got into the very best connection,” continued Mrs. Plymdale, her native sharpness softened by a fervid sense that she was taking a correct view. “And such particular people as the Tollers are, they might have objected because some of our friends are not theirs. It is well known that your aunt Bulstrode and I have been intimate from our youth, and Mr. Plymdale has been always on Mr. Bulstrode’s side. And I myself prefer serious opinions. But the Tollers have welcomed Ned all the same.”

“I am sure he is a very deserving, well-principled young man,” said Rosamond, with a neat air of patronage in return for Mrs. Plymdale’s wholesome corrections.

“Oh, he has not the style of a captain in the army, or that sort of carriage as if everybody was beneath him, or that showy kind of talking, and singing, and intellectual talent. But I am thankful he has not. It is a poor preparation both for here and Hereafter.”

“Oh dear, yes; appearances have very little to do with happiness,” said Rosamond. “I think there is every prospect of their being a happy couple. What house will they take?”

“Oh, as for that, they must put up with what they can get. They have been looking at the house in St. Peter’s Place, next to Mr. Hackbutt’s; it belongs to him, and he is putting it nicely in repair. I suppose they are not likely to hear of a better. Indeed, I think Ned will decide the matter to-day.”

“I should think it is a nice house; I like St. Peter’s Place.”

“Well, it is near the Church, and a genteel situation. But the windows are narrow, and it is all ups and downs. You don’t happen to know of any

other that would be at liberty?" said Mrs. Plymdale, fixing her round black eyes on Rosamond with the animation of a sudden thought in them.

"Oh no; I hear so little of those things."

Rosamond had not foreseen that question and answer in setting out to pay her visit; she had simply meant to gather any information which would help her to avert the parting with her own house under circumstances thoroughly disagreeable to her. As to the untruth in her reply, she no more reflected on it than she did on the untruth there was in her saying that appearances had very little to do with happiness. Her object, she was convinced, was thoroughly justifiable: it was Lydgate whose intention was inexcusable; and there was a plan in her mind which, when she had carried it out fully, would prove how very false a step it would have been for him to have descended from his position.

She returned home by Mr. Borthrop Trumbull's office, meaning to call there. It was the first time in her life that Rosamond had thought of doing anything in the form of business, but she felt equal to the occasion. That she should be obliged to do what she intensely disliked, was an idea which turned her quiet tenacity into active invention. Here was a case in which it could not be enough simply to disobey and be serenely, placidly obstinate: she must act according to her judgment, and she said to herself that her judgment was right—"indeed, if it had not been, she would not have wished to act on it."

Mr. Trumbull was in the back-room of his office, and received Rosamond with his finest manners, not only because he had much sensibility to her charms, but because the good-natured fibre in him was stirred by his certainty that Lydgate was in difficulties, and that this uncommonly pretty woman—this young lady with the highest personal attractions—was likely to feel the pinch of trouble—to find herself involved in circumstances beyond her control. He begged her to do him the honor to take a seat, and stood before her trimming and comporting himself with an eager solicitude, which was chiefly benevolent. Rosamond's first question was, whether her husband had called on Mr. Trumbull that morning, to speak about disposing of their house.

"Yes, ma'am, yes, he did; he did so," said the good auctioneer, trying to throw something soothing into his iteration. "I was about to fulfil his order, if possible, this afternoon. He wished me not to procrastinate."

“I called to tell you not to go any further, Mr. Trumbull; and I beg of you not to mention what has been said on the subject. Will you oblige me?”

“Certainly I will, Mrs. Lydgate, certainly. Confidence is sacred with me on business or any other topic. I am then to consider the commission withdrawn?” said Mr. Trumbull, adjusting the long ends of his blue cravat with both hands, and looking at Rosamond deferentially.

“Yes, if you please. I find that Mr. Ned Plymdale has taken a house—the one in St. Peter’s Place next to Mr. Hackbutt’s. Mr. Lydgate would be annoyed that his orders should be fulfilled uselessly. And besides that, there are other circumstances which render the proposal unnecessary.”

“Very good, Mrs. Lydgate, very good. I am at your commands, whenever you require any service of me,” said Mr. Trumbull, who felt pleasure in conjecturing that some new resources had been opened. “Rely on me, I beg. The affair shall go no further.”

That evening Lydgate was a little comforted by observing that Rosamond was more lively than she had usually been of late, and even seemed interested in doing what would please him without being asked. He thought, “If she will be happy and I can rub through, what does it all signify? It is only a narrow swamp that we have to pass in a long journey. If I can get my mind clear again, I shall do.”

He was so much cheered that he began to search for an account of experiments which he had long ago meant to look up, and had neglected out of that creeping self-despair which comes in the train of petty anxieties. He felt again some of the old delightful absorption in a far-reaching inquiry, while Rosamond played the quiet music which was as helpful to his meditation as the splash of an oar on the evening lake. It was rather late; he had pushed away all the books, and was looking at the fire with his hands clasped behind his head in forgetfulness of everything except the construction of a new controlling experiment, when Rosamond, who had left the piano and was leaning back in her chair watching him, said—

“Mr. Ned Plymdale has taken a house already.”

Lydgate, startled and jarred, looked up in silence for a moment, like a man who has been disturbed in his sleep. Then flushing with an unpleasant consciousness, he asked—

“How do you know?”

“I called at Mrs. Plymdale’s this morning, and she told me that he had taken the house in St. Peter’s Place, next to Mr. Hackbutt’s.”

Lydgate was silent. He drew his hands from behind his head and pressed them against the hair which was hanging, as it was apt to do, in a mass on his forehead, while he rested his elbows on his knees. He was feeling bitter disappointment, as if he had opened a door out of a suffocating place and had found it walled up; but he also felt sure that Rosamond was pleased with the cause of his disappointment. He preferred not looking at her and not speaking, until he had got over the first spasm of vexation. After all, he said in his bitterness, what can a woman care about so much as house and furniture? a husband without them is an absurdity. When he looked up and pushed his hair aside, his dark eyes had a miserable blank non-expectance of sympathy in them, but he only said, coolly—

“Perhaps some one else may turn up. I told Trumbull to be on the lookout if he failed with Plymdale.”

Rosamond made no remark. She trusted to the chance that nothing more would pass between her husband and the auctioneer until some issue should have justified her interference; at any rate, she had hindered the event which she immediately dreaded. After a pause, she said—

“How much money is it that those disagreeable people want?”

“What disagreeable people?”

“Those who took the list—and the others. I mean, how much money would satisfy them so that you need not be troubled any more?”

Lydgate surveyed her for a moment, as if he were looking for symptoms, and then said, “Oh, if I could have got six hundred from Plymdale for furniture and as premium, I might have managed. I could have paid off Dover, and given enough on account to the others to make them wait patiently, if we contracted our expenses.”

“But I mean how much should you want if we stayed in this house?”

“More than I am likely to get anywhere,” said Lydgate, with rather a grating sarcasm in his tone. It angered him to perceive that Rosamond’s mind was wandering over impracticable wishes instead of facing possible efforts.

“Why should you not mention the sum?” said Rosamond, with a mild indication that she did not like his manners.

“Well,” said Lydgate in a guessing tone, “it would take at least a thousand to set me at ease. But,” he added, incisively, “I have to consider what I shall do without it, not with it.”

Rosamond said no more.

But the next day she carried out her plan of writing to Sir Godwin Lydgate. Since the Captain’s visit, she had received a letter from him, and also one from Mrs. Mengan, his married sister, condoling with her on the loss of her baby, and expressing vaguely the hope that they should see her again at Quallingham. Lydgate had told her that this politeness meant nothing; but she was secretly convinced that any backwardness in Lydgate’s family towards him was due to his cold and contemptuous behavior, and she had answered the letters in her most charming manner, feeling some confidence that a specific invitation would follow. But there had been total silence. The Captain evidently was not a great penman, and Rosamond reflected that the sisters might have been abroad. However, the season was come for thinking of friends at home, and at any rate Sir Godwin, who had chucked her under the chin, and pronounced her to be like the celebrated beauty, Mrs. Croly, who had made a conquest of him in 1790, would be touched by any appeal from her, and would find it pleasant for her sake to behave as he ought to do towards his nephew. Rosamond was naively convinced of what an old gentleman ought to do to prevent her from suffering annoyance. And she wrote what she considered the most judicious letter possible—one which would strike Sir Godwin as a proof of her excellent sense—pointing out how desirable it was that Tertius should quit such a place as Middlemarch for one more fitted to his talents, how the unpleasant character of the inhabitants had hindered his professional success, and how in consequence he was in money difficulties, from which it would require a thousand pounds thoroughly to extricate him. She did not say that Tertius was unaware of her intention to write; for she had the idea that his supposed sanction of her letter would be in accordance with what she did say of his great regard for his uncle Godwin as the relative who had always been his best friend. Such was the force of Poor Rosamond’s tactics now she applied them to affairs.

This had happened before the party on New Year's Day, and no answer had yet come from Sir Godwin. But on the morning of that day Lydgate had to learn that Rosamond had revoked his order to Borthrop Trumbull. Feeling it necessary that she should be gradually accustomed to the idea of their quitting the house in Lowick Gate, he overcame his reluctance to speak to her again on the subject, and when they were breakfasting said—

“I shall try to see Trumbull this morning, and tell him to advertise the house in the ‘Pioneer’ and the ‘Trumpet.’ If the thing were advertised, some one might be inclined to take it who would not otherwise have thought of a change. In these country places many people go on in their old houses when their families are too large for them, for want of knowing where they can find another. And Trumbull seems to have got no bite at all.”

Rosamond knew that the inevitable moment was come. “I ordered Trumbull not to inquire further,” she said, with a careful calmness which was evidently defensive.

Lydgate stared at her in mute amazement. Only half an hour before he had been fastening up her plaits for her, and talking the “little language” of affection, which Rosamond, though not returning it, accepted as if she had been a serene and lovely image, now and then miraculously dimpling towards her votary. With such fibres still astir in him, the shock he received could not at once be distinctly anger; it was confused pain. He laid down the knife and fork with which he was carving, and throwing himself back in his chair, said at last, with a cool irony in his tone—

“May I ask when and why you did so?”

“When I knew that the Plymdales had taken a house, I called to tell him not to mention ours to them; and at the same time I told him not to let the affair go on any further. I knew that it would be very injurious to you if it were known that you wished to part with your house and furniture, and I had a very strong objection to it. I think that was reason enough.”

“It was of no consequence then that I had told you imperative reasons of another kind; of no consequence that I had come to a different conclusion, and given an order accordingly?” said Lydgate, biting, the thunder and lightning gathering about his brow and eyes.

The effect of any one's anger on Rosamond had always been to make her shrink in cold dislike, and to become all the more calmly correct, in

the conviction that she was not the person to misbehave whatever others might do. She replied—

“I think I had a perfect right to speak on a subject which concerns me at least as much as you.”

“Clearly—you had a right to speak, but only to me. You had no right to contradict my orders secretly, and treat me as if I were a fool,” said Lydgate, in the same tone as before. Then with some added scorn, “Is it possible to make you understand what the consequences will be? Is it of any use for me to tell you again why we must try to part with the house?”

“It is not necessary for you to tell me again,” said Rosamond, in a voice that fell and trickled like cold water-drops. “I remembered what you said. You spoke just as violently as you do now. But that does not alter my opinion that you ought to try every other means rather than take a step which is so painful to me. And as to advertising the house, I think it would be perfectly degrading to you.”

“And suppose I disregard your opinion as you disregard mine?”

“You can do so, of course. But I think you ought to have told me before we were married that you would place me in the worst position, rather than give up your own will.”

Lydgate did not speak, but tossed his head on one side, and twitched the corners of his mouth in despair. Rosamond, seeing that he was not looking at her, rose and set his cup of coffee before him; but he took no notice of it, and went on with an inward drama and argument, occasionally moving in his seat, resting one arm on the table, and rubbing his hand against his hair. There was a conflux of emotions and thoughts in him that would not let him either give thorough way to his anger or persevere with simple rigidity of resolve. Rosamond took advantage of his silence.

“When we were married everyone felt that your position was very high. I could not have imagined then that you would want to sell our furniture, and take a house in Bride Street, where the rooms are like cages. If we are to live in that way let us at least leave Middlemarch.”

“These would be very strong considerations,” said Lydgate, half ironically—still there was a withered paleness about his lips as he looked at his coffee, and did not drink—“these would be very strong considerations if I did not happen to be in debt.”

“Many persons must have been in debt in the same way, but if they are respectable, people trust them. I am sure I have heard papa say that the Torbits were in debt, and they went on very well. It cannot be good to act rashly,” said Rosamond, with serene wisdom.

Lydgate sat paralyzed by opposing impulses: since no reasoning he could apply to Rosamond seemed likely to conquer her assent, he wanted to smash and grind some object on which he could at least produce an impression, or else to tell her brutally that he was master, and she must obey. But he not only dreaded the effect of such extremities on their mutual life—he had a growing dread of Rosamond’s quiet elusive obstinacy, which would not allow any assertion of power to be final; and again, she had touched him in a spot of keenest feeling by implying that she had been deluded with a false vision of happiness in marrying him. As to saying that he was master, it was not the fact. The very resolution to which he had wrought himself by dint of logic and honorable pride was beginning to relax under her torpedo contact. He swallowed half his cup of coffee, and then rose to go.

“I may at least request that you will not go to Trumbull at present—until it has been seen that there are no other means,” said Rosamond. Although she was not subject to much fear, she felt it safer not to betray that she had written to Sir Godwin. “Promise me that you will not go to him for a few weeks, or without telling me.”

Lydgate gave a short laugh. “I think it is I who should exact a promise that you will do nothing without telling me,” he said, turning his eyes sharply upon her, and then moving to the door.

“You remember that we are going to dine at papa’s,” said Rosamond, wishing that he should turn and make a more thorough concession to her. But he only said “Oh yes,” impatiently, and went away. She held it to be very odious in him that he did not think the painful propositions he had had to make to her were enough, without showing so unpleasant a temper. And when she put the moderate request that he would defer going to Trumbull again, it was cruel in him not to assure her of what he meant to do. She was convinced of her having acted in every way for the best; and each grating or angry speech of Lydgate’s served only as an addition to the register of offences in her mind. Poor Rosamond for months had begun to associate her husband with feelings of disappointment, and the terribly



inflexible relation of marriage had lost its charm of encouraging delightful dreams. It had freed her from the disagreeables of her father's house, but it had not given her everything that she had wished and hoped. The Lydgate with whom she had been in love had been a group of airy conditions for her, most of which had disappeared, while their place had been taken by every-day details which must be lived through slowly from hour to hour, not floated through with a rapid selection of favorable aspects. The habits of Lydgate's profession, his home preoccupation with scientific subjects, which seemed to her almost like a morbid vampire's taste, his peculiar views of things which had never entered into the dialogue of courtship—all these continually alienating influences, even without the fact of his having placed himself at a disadvantage in the town, and without that first shock of revelation about Dover's debt, would have made his presence dull to her. There was another presence which ever since the early days of her marriage, until four months ago, had been an agreeable excitement, but that was gone: Rosamond would not confess to herself how much the consequent blank had to do with her utter ennui; and it seemed to her (perhaps she was right) that an invitation to Quellingham, and an opening for Lydgate to settle elsewhere than in Middlemarch—in London, or somewhere likely to be free from unpleasantness—would satisfy her quite well, and make her indifferent to the absence of Will Ladislaw, towards whom she felt some resentment for his exaltation of Mrs. Casaubon.

That was the state of things with Lydgate and Rosamond on the New Year's Day when they dined at her father's, she looking mildly neutral towards him in remembrance of his ill-tempered behavior at breakfast, and he carrying a much deeper effect from the inward conflict in which that morning scene was only one of many epochs. His flushed effort while talking to Mr. Farebrother—his effort after the cynical pretence that all ways of getting money are essentially the same, and that chance has an empire which reduces choice to a fool's illusion—was but the symptom of a wavering resolve, a benumbed response to the old stimuli of enthusiasm.

What was he to do? He saw even more keenly than Rosamond did the dreariness of taking her into the small house in Bride Street, where she would have scanty furniture around her and discontent within: a life of privation and life with Rosamond were two images which had become more and more irreconcilable ever since the threat of privation had disclosed itself. But even if his resolves had forced the two images into

combination, the useful preliminaries to that hard change were not visibly within reach. And though he had not given the promise which his wife had asked for, he did not go again to Trumbull. He even began to think of taking a rapid journey to the North and seeing Sir Godwin. He had once believed that nothing would urge him into making an application for money to his uncle, but he had not then known the full pressure of alternatives yet more disagreeable. He could not depend on the effect of a letter; it was only in an interview, however disagreeable this might be to himself, that he could give a thorough explanation and could test the effectiveness of kinship. No sooner had Lydgate begun to represent this step to himself as the easiest than there was a reaction of anger that he—he who had long ago determined to live aloof from such abject calculations, such self-interested anxiety about the inclinations and the pockets of men with whom he had been proud to have no aims in common—should have fallen not simply to their level, but to the level of soliciting them.

## CHAPTER LXV.

One of us two must bowen douteless,  
And, sith a man is more reasonable  
Than woman is, ye [men] moste be suffrable.  
—CHAUCER: *Canterbury Tales*.

The bias of human nature to be slow in correspondence triumphs even over the present quickening in the general pace of things: what wonder then that in 1832 old Sir Godwin Lydgate was slow to write a letter which was of consequence to others rather than to himself? Nearly three weeks of the new year were gone, and Rosamond, awaiting an answer to her winning appeal, was every day disappointed. Lydgate, in total ignorance of her expectations, was seeing the bills come in, and feeling that Dover's use of his advantage over other creditors was imminent. He had never mentioned to Rosamond his brooding purpose of going to Quallingham: he did not want to admit what would appear to her a concession to her wishes after indignant refusal, until the last moment; but he was really expecting to set off soon. A slice of the railway would enable him to manage the whole journey and back in four days.

But one morning after Lydgate had gone out, a letter came addressed to him, which Rosamond saw clearly to be from Sir Godwin. She was full of hope. Perhaps there might be a particular note to her enclosed; but Lydgate was naturally addressed on the question of money or other aid, and the fact that he was written to, nay, the very delay in writing at all, seemed to certify that the answer was thoroughly compliant. She was too much excited by these thoughts to do anything but light stitching in a warm corner of the dining-room, with the outside of this momentous letter lying on the table before her. About twelve she heard her husband's step in the passage, and tripping to open the door, she said in her lightest tones, "Tertius, come in here—here is a letter for you."

"Ah?" he said, not taking off his hat, but just turning her round within his arm to walk towards the spot where the letter lay. "My uncle Godwin!"

he exclaimed, while Rosamond reseated herself, and watched him as he opened the letter. She had expected him to be surprised.

While Lydgate's eyes glanced rapidly over the brief letter, she saw his face, usually of a pale brown, taking on a dry whiteness; with nostrils and lips quivering he tossed down the letter before her, and said violently—

“It will be impossible to endure life with you, if you will always be acting secretly—acting in opposition to me and hiding your actions.”

He checked his speech and turned his back on her—then wheeled round and walked about, sat down, and got up again restlessly, grasping hard the objects deep down in his pockets. He was afraid of saying something irremediably cruel.

Rosamond too had changed color as she read. The letter ran in this way:

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“DEAR TERTIUS,—Don't set your wife to write to me when you have anything to ask. It is a roundabout wheedling sort of thing which I should not have credited you with. I never choose to write to a woman on matters of business. As to my supplying you with a thousand pounds, or only half that sum, I can do nothing of the sort. My own family drains me to the last penny. With two younger sons and three daughters, I am not likely to have cash to spare. You seem to have got through your own money pretty quickly, and to have made a mess where you are; the sooner you go somewhere else the better. But I have nothing to do with men of your profession, and can't help you there. I did the best I could for you as guardian, and let you have your own way in taking to medicine. You might have gone into the army or the Church. Your money would have held out for that, and there would have been a surer ladder before you. Your uncle Charles has had a grudge against you for not going into his profession, but not I. I have always wished you well, but you must consider yourself on your own legs entirely now.

Your affectionate uncle,  
GODWIN LYDGATE.”

When Rosamond had finished reading the letter she sat quite still, with her hands folded before her, restraining any show of her keen disappointment, and intrenching herself in quiet passivity under her husband’s wrath. Lydgate paused in his movements, looked at her again, and said, with biting severity—

“Will this be enough to convince you of the harm you may do by secret meddling? Have you sense enough to recognize now your incompetence to judge and act for me—to interfere with your ignorance in affairs which it belongs to me to decide on?”

The words were hard; but this was not the first time that Lydgate had been frustrated by her. She did not look at him, and made no reply.

“I had nearly resolved on going to Quallingham. It would have cost me pain enough to do it, yet it might have been of some use. But it has been of no use for me to think of anything. You have always been counteracting me secretly. You delude me with a false assent, and then I am at the mercy of your devices. If you mean to resist every wish I express, say so and defy me. I shall at least know what I am doing then.”

It is a terrible moment in young lives when the closeness of love’s bond has turned to this power of galling. In spite of Rosamond’s self-control a tear fell silently and rolled over her lips. She still said nothing; but under that quietude was hidden an intense effect: she was in such entire disgust with her husband that she wished she had never seen him. Sir Godwin’s rudeness towards her and utter want of feeling ranged him with Dover and all other creditors—disagreeable people who only thought of themselves, and did not mind how annoying they were to her. Even her father was unkind, and might have done more for them. In fact there was but one person in Rosamond’s world whom she did not regard as blameworthy, and that was the graceful creature with blond plaits and with little hands crossed before her, who had never expressed herself unbecomingly, and had always acted for the best—the best naturally being what she best liked.

Lydgate pausing and looking at her began to feel that half-maddening sense of helplessness which comes over passionate people when their

passion is met by an innocent-looking silence whose meek victimized air seems to put them in the wrong, and at last infects even the justest indignation with a doubt of its justice. He needed to recover the full sense that he was in the right by moderating his words.

“Can you not see, Rosamond,” he began again, trying to be simply grave and not bitter, “that nothing can be so fatal as a want of openness and confidence between us? It has happened again and again that I have expressed a decided wish, and you have seemed to assent, yet after that you have secretly disobeyed my wish. In that way I can never know what I have to trust to. There would be some hope for us if you would admit this. Am I such an unreasonable, furious brute? Why should you not be open with me?” Still silence.

“Will you only say that you have been mistaken, and that I may depend on your not acting secretly in future?” said Lydgate, urgently, but with something of request in his tone which Rosamond was quick to perceive. She spoke with coolness.

“I cannot possibly make admissions or promises in answer to such words as you have used towards me. I have not been accustomed to language of that kind. You have spoken of my ‘secret meddling,’ and my ‘interfering ignorance,’ and my ‘false assent.’ I have never expressed myself in that way to you, and I think that you ought to apologize. You spoke of its being impossible to live with me. Certainly you have not made my life pleasant to me of late. I think it was to be expected that I should try to avert some of the hardships which our marriage has brought on me.” Another tear fell as Rosamond ceased speaking, and she pressed it away as quietly as the first.

Lydgate flung himself into a chair, feeling checkmated. What place was there in her mind for a remonstrance to lodge in? He laid down his hat, flung an arm over the back of his chair, and looked down for some moments without speaking. Rosamond had the double purchase over him of insensibility to the point of justice in his reproach, and of sensibility to the undeniable hardships now present in her married life. Although her duplicity in the affair of the house had exceeded what he knew, and had really hindered the Plymdales from knowing of it, she had no consciousness that her action could rightly be called false. We are not obliged to identify our own acts according to a strict classification, any

more than the materials of our grocery and clothes. Rosamond felt that she was aggrieved, and that this was what Lydgate had to recognize.

As for him, the need of accommodating himself to her nature, which was inflexible in proportion to its negations, held him as with pincers. He had begun to have an alarmed foresight of her irrevocable loss of love for him, and the consequent dreariness of their life. The ready fulness of his emotions made this dread alternate quickly with the first violent movements of his anger. It would assuredly have been a vain boast in him to say that he was her master.

“You have not made my life pleasant to me of late”—“the hardships which our marriage has brought on me”—these words were stinging his imagination as a pain makes an exaggerated dream. If he were not only to sink from his highest resolve, but to sink into the hideous fettering of domestic hate?

“Rosamond,” he said, turning his eyes on her with a melancholy look, “you should allow for a man’s words when he is disappointed and provoked. You and I cannot have opposite interests. I cannot part my happiness from yours. If I am angry with you, it is that you seem not to see how any concealment divides us. How could I wish to make anything hard to you either by my words or conduct? When I hurt you, I hurt part of my own life. I should never be angry with you if you would be quite open with me.”

“I have only wished to prevent you from hurrying us into wretchedness without any necessity,” said Rosamond, the tears coming again from a softened feeling now that her husband had softened. “It is so very hard to be disgraced here among all the people we know, and to live in such a miserable way. I wish I had died with the baby.”

She spoke and wept with that gentleness which makes such words and tears omnipotent over a loving-hearted man. Lydgate drew his chair near to hers and pressed her delicate head against his cheek with his powerful tender hand. He only caressed her; he did not say anything; for what was there to say? He could not promise to shield her from the dreaded wretchedness, for he could see no sure means of doing so. When he left her to go out again, he told himself that it was ten times harder for her than for him: he had a life away from home, and constant appeals to his activity on behalf of others. He wished to excuse everything in her if he

could—but it was inevitable that in that excusing mood he should think of her as if she were an animal of another and feebler species. Nevertheless she had mastered him.



## CHAPTER LXVI.

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,  
Another thing to fall.  
—*Measure for Measure.*

Lydgate certainly had good reason to reflect on the service his practice did him in counteracting his personal cares. He had no longer free energy enough for spontaneous research and speculative thinking, but by the bedside of patients, the direct external calls on his judgment and sympathies brought the added impulse needed to draw him out of himself. It was not simply that beneficent harness of routine which enables silly men to live respectably and unhappy men to live calmly—it was a perpetual claim on the immediate fresh application of thought, and on the consideration of another's need and trial. Many of us looking back through life would say that the kindest man we have ever known has been a medical man, or perhaps that surgeon whose fine tact, directed by deeply informed perception, has come to us in our need with a more sublime beneficence than that of miracle-workers. Some of that twice-blessed mercy was always with Lydgate in his work at the Hospital or in private houses, serving better than any opiate to quiet and sustain him under his anxieties and his sense of mental degeneracy.

Mr. Farebrother's suspicion as to the opiate was true, however. Under the first galling pressure of foreseen difficulties, and the first perception that his marriage, if it were not to be a yoked loneliness, must be a state of effort to go on loving without too much care about being loved, he had once or twice tried a dose of opium. But he had no hereditary constitutional craving after such transient escapes from the hauntings of misery. He was strong, could drink a great deal of wine, but did not care about it; and when the men round him were drinking spirits, he took sugar and water, having a contemptuous pity even for the earliest stages of excitement from drink. It was the same with gambling. He had looked on at a great deal of gambling in Paris, watching it as if it had been a disease. He was no more tempted by such winning than he was by drink. He had

said to himself that the only winning he cared for must be attained by a conscious process of high, difficult combination tending towards a beneficent result. The power he longed for could not be represented by agitated fingers clutching a heap of coin, or by the half-barbarous, half-idiotic triumph in the eyes of a man who sweeps within his arms the ventures of twenty chapfallen companions.

But just as he had tried opium, so his thought now began to turn upon gambling—not with appetite for its excitement, but with a sort of wistful inward gaze after that easy way of getting money, which implied no asking and brought no responsibility. If he had been in London or Paris at that time, it is probable that such thoughts, seconded by opportunity, would have taken him into a gambling-house, no longer to watch the gamblers, but to watch with them in kindred eagerness. Repugnance would have been surmounted by the immense need to win, if chance would be kind enough to let him. An incident which happened not very long after that airy notion of getting aid from his uncle had been excluded, was a strong sign of the effect that might have followed any extant opportunity of gambling.

The billiard-room at the Green Dragon was the constant resort of a certain set, most of whom, like our acquaintance Mr. Bambridge, were regarded as men of pleasure. It was here that poor Fred Vincy had made part of his memorable debt, having lost money in betting, and been obliged to borrow of that gay companion. It was generally known in Middlemarch that a good deal of money was lost and won in this way; and the consequent repute of the Green Dragon as a place of dissipation naturally heightened in some quarters the temptation to go there. Probably its regular visitants, like the initiates of freemasonry, wished that there were something a little more tremendous to keep to themselves concerning it; but they were not a closed community, and many decent seniors as well as juniors occasionally turned into the billiard-room to see what was going on. Lydgate, who had the muscular aptitude for billiards, and was fond of the game, had once or twice in the early days after his arrival in Middlemarch taken his turn with the cue at the Green Dragon; but afterwards he had no leisure for the game, and no inclination for the socialities there. One evening, however, he had occasion to seek Mr. Bambridge at that resort. The horsedealer had engaged to get him a customer for his remaining good horse, for which Lydgate had determined to substitute a cheap hack, hoping by this reduction of style to get perhaps

twenty pounds; and he cared now for every small sum, as a help towards feeding the patience of his tradesmen. To run up to the billiard-room, as he was passing, would save time.

Mr. Bambridge was not yet come, but would be sure to arrive by-and-by, said his friend Mr. Horrock; and Lydgate stayed, playing a game for the sake of passing the time. That evening he had the peculiar light in the eyes and the unusual vivacity which had been once noticed in him by Mr. Farebrother. The exceptional fact of his presence was much noticed in the room, where there was a good deal of Middlemarch company; and several lookers-on, as well as some of the players, were betting with animation. Lydgate was playing well, and felt confident; the bets were dropping round him, and with a swift glancing thought of the probable gain which might double the sum he was saving from his horse, he began to bet on his own play, and won again and again. Mr. Bambridge had come in, but Lydgate did not notice him. He was not only excited with his play, but visions were gleaming on him of going the next day to Brassing, where there was gambling on a grander scale to be had, and where, by one powerful snatch at the devil's bait, he might carry it off without the hook, and buy his rescue from his daily solicitings.

He was still winning when two new visitors entered. One of them was a young Hawley, just come from his law studies in town, and the other was Fred Vincy, who had spent several evenings of late at this old haunt of his. Young Hawley, an accomplished billiard-player, brought a cool fresh hand to the cue. But Fred Vincy, startled at seeing Lydgate, and astonished to see him betting with an excited air, stood aside, and kept out of the circle round the table.

Fred had been rewarding resolution by a little laxity of late. He had been working heartily for six months at all outdoor occupations under Mr. Garth, and by dint of severe practice had nearly mastered the defects of his handwriting, this practice being, perhaps, a little the less severe that it was often carried on in the evening at Mr. Garth's under the eyes of Mary. But the last fortnight Mary had been staying at Lowick Parsonage with the ladies there, during Mr. Farebrother's residence in Middlemarch, where he was carrying out some parochial plans; and Fred, not seeing anything more agreeable to do, had turned into the Green Dragon, partly to play at billiards, partly to taste the old flavor of discourse about horses, sport, and

things in general, considered from a point of view which was not strenuously correct. He had not been out hunting once this season, had had no horse of his own to ride, and had gone from place to place chiefly with Mr. Garth in his gig, or on the sober cob which Mr. Garth could lend him. It was a little too bad, Fred began to think, that he should be kept in the traces with more severity than if he had been a clergyman. "I will tell you what, Mistress Mary—it will be rather harder work to learn surveying and drawing plans than it would have been to write sermons," he had said, wishing her to appreciate what he went through for her sake; "and as to Hercules and Theseus, they were nothing to me. They had sport, and never learned to write a bookkeeping hand." And now, Mary being out of the way for a little while, Fred, like any other strong dog who cannot slip his collar, had pulled up the staple of his chain and made a small escape, not of course meaning to go fast or far. There could be no reason why he should not play at billiards, but he was determined not to bet. As to money just now, Fred had in his mind the heroic project of saving almost all of the eighty pounds that Mr. Garth offered him, and returning it, which he could easily do by giving up all futile money-spending, since he had a superfluous stock of clothes, and no expense in his board. In that way he could, in one year, go a good way towards repaying the ninety pounds of which he had deprived Mrs. Garth, unhappily at a time when she needed that sum more than she did now. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that on this evening, which was the fifth of his recent visits to the billiard-room, Fred had, not in his pocket, but in his mind, the ten pounds which he meant to reserve for himself from his half-year's salary (having before him the pleasure of carrying thirty to Mrs. Garth when Mary was likely to be come home again)—he had those ten pounds in his mind as a fund from which he might risk something, if there were a chance of a good bet. Why? Well, when sovereigns were flying about, why shouldn't he catch a few? He would never go far along that road again; but a man likes to assure himself, and men of pleasure generally, what he could do in the way of mischief if he chose, and that if he abstains from making himself ill, or beggaring himself, or talking with the utmost looseness which the narrow limits of human capacity will allow, it is not because he is a spooney. Fred did not enter into formal reasons, which are a very artificial, inexact way of representing the tingling returns of old habit, and the caprices of young blood: but there was lurking in him a prophetic sense that evening, that

when he began to play he should also begin to bet—that he should enjoy some punch-drinking, and in general prepare himself for feeling “rather seedy” in the morning. It is in such indefinable movements that action often begins.

But the last thing likely to have entered Fred’s expectation was that he should see his brother-in-law Lydgate—of whom he had never quite dropped the old opinion that he was a prig, and tremendously conscious of his superiority—looking excited and betting, just as he himself might have done. Fred felt a shock greater than he could quite account for by the vague knowledge that Lydgate was in debt, and that his father had refused to help him; and his own inclination to enter into the play was suddenly checked. It was a strange reversal of attitudes: Fred’s blond face and blue eyes, usually bright and careless, ready to give attention to anything that held out a promise of amusement, looking involuntarily grave and almost embarrassed as if by the sight of something unfitting; while Lydgate, who had habitually an air of self-possessed strength, and a certain meditateness that seemed to lie behind his most observant attention, was acting, watching, speaking with that excited narrow consciousness which reminds one of an animal with fierce eyes and retractile claws.

Lydgate, by betting on his own strokes, had won sixteen pounds; but young Hawley’s arrival had changed the poise of things. He made first-rate strokes himself, and began to bet against Lydgate’s strokes, the strain of whose nerves was thus changed from simple confidence in his own movements to defying another person’s doubt in them. The defiance was more exciting than the confidence, but it was less sure. He continued to bet on his own play, but began often to fail. Still he went on, for his mind was as utterly narrowed into that precipitous crevice of play as if he had been the most ignorant loungeur there. Fred observed that Lydgate was losing fast, and found himself in the new situation of puzzling his brains to think of some device by which, without being offensive, he could withdraw Lydgate’s attention, and perhaps suggest to him a reason for quitting the room. He saw that others were observing Lydgate’s strange unlikeness to himself, and it occurred to him that merely to touch his elbow and call him aside for a moment might rouse him from his absorption. He could think of nothing cleverer than the daring improbability of saying that he wanted to see Rosy, and wished to know if she were at home this evening; and he was going desperately to carry out this weak device, when a waiter came

up to him with a message, saying that Mr. Farebrother was below, and begged to speak with him.

Fred was surprised, not quite comfortably, but sending word that he would be down immediately, he went with a new impulse up to Lydgate, said, "Can I speak to you a moment?" and drew him aside.

"Farebrother has just sent up a message to say that he wants to speak to me. He is below. I thought you might like to know he was there, if you had anything to say to him."

Fred had simply snatched up this pretext for speaking, because he could not say, "You are losing confoundedly, and are making everybody stare at you; you had better come away." But inspiration could hardly have served him better. Lydgate had not before seen that Fred was present, and his sudden appearance with an announcement of Mr. Farebrother had the effect of a sharp concussion.

"No, no," said Lydgate; "I have nothing particular to say to him. But—the game is up—I must be going—I came in just to see Bambridge."

"Bambridge is over there, but he is making a row—I don't think he's ready for business. Come down with me to Farebrother. I expect he is going to blow me up, and you will shield me," said Fred, with some adroitness.

Lydgate felt shame, but could not bear to act as if he felt it, by refusing to see Mr. Farebrother; and he went down. They merely shook hands, however, and spoke of the frost; and when all three had turned into the street, the Vicar seemed quite willing to say good-by to Lydgate. His present purpose was clearly to talk with Fred alone, and he said, kindly, "I disturbed you, young gentleman, because I have some pressing business with you. Walk with me to St. Botolph's, will you?"

It was a fine night, the sky thick with stars, and Mr. Farebrother proposed that they should make a circuit to the old church by the London road. The next thing he said was—

"I thought Lydgate never went to the Green Dragon?"

"So did I," said Fred. "But he said that he went to see Bambridge."

"He was not playing, then?"

Fred had not meant to tell this, but he was obliged now to say, "Yes, he was. But I suppose it was an accidental thing. I have never seen him there

before.”

“You have been going often yourself, then, lately?”

“Oh, about five or six times.”

“I think you had some good reason for giving up the habit of going there?”

“Yes. You know all about it,” said Fred, not liking to be catechised in this way. “I made a clean breast to you.”

“I suppose that gives me a warrant to speak about the matter now. It is understood between us, is it not?—that we are on a footing of open friendship: I have listened to you, and you will be willing to listen to me. I may take my turn in talking a little about myself?”

“I am under the deepest obligation to you, Mr. Farebrother,” said Fred, in a state of uncomfortable surmise.

“I will not affect to deny that you are under some obligation to me. But I am going to confess to you, Fred, that I have been tempted to reverse all that by keeping silence with you just now. When somebody said to me, ‘Young Vincy has taken to being at the billiard-table every night again—he won’t bear the curb long;’ I was tempted to do the opposite of what I am doing—to hold my tongue and wait while you went down the ladder again, betting first and then—”

“I have not made any bets,” said Fred, hastily.

“Glad to hear it. But I say, my prompting was to look on and see you take the wrong turning, wear out Garth’s patience, and lose the best opportunity of your life—the opportunity which you made some rather difficult effort to secure. You can guess the feeling which raised that temptation in me—I am sure you know it. I am sure you know that the satisfaction of your affections stands in the way of mine.”

There was a pause. Mr. Farebrother seemed to wait for a recognition of the fact; and the emotion perceptible in the tones of his fine voice gave solemnity to his words. But no feeling could quell Fred’s alarm.

“I could not be expected to give her up,” he said, after a moment’s hesitation: it was not a case for any pretence of generosity.

“Clearly not, when her affection met yours. But relations of this sort, even when they are of long standing, are always liable to change. I can

easily conceive that you might act in a way to loosen the tie she feels towards you—it must be remembered that she is only conditionally bound to you—and that in that case, another man, who may flatter himself that he has a hold on her regard, might succeed in winning that firm place in her love as well as respect which you had let slip. I can easily conceive such a result,” repeated Mr. Farebrother, emphatically. “There is a companionship of ready sympathy, which might get the advantage even over the longest associations.” It seemed to Fred that if Mr. Farebrother had had a beak and talons instead of his very capable tongue, his mode of attack could hardly be more cruel. He had a horrible conviction that behind all this hypothetic statement there was a knowledge of some actual change in Mary’s feeling.

“Of course I know it might easily be all up with me,” he said, in a troubled voice. “If she is beginning to compare—” He broke off, not liking to betray all he felt, and then said, by the help of a little bitterness, “But I thought you were friendly to me.”

“So I am; that is why we are here. But I have had a strong disposition to be otherwise. I have said to myself, ‘If there is a likelihood of that youngster doing himself harm, why should you interfere? Aren’t you worth as much as he is, and don’t your sixteen years over and above his, in which you have gone rather hungry, give you more right to satisfaction than he has? If there’s a chance of his going to the dogs, let him—perhaps you could nohow hinder it—and do you take the benefit.’”

There was a pause, in which Fred was seized by a most uncomfortable chill. What was coming next? He dreaded to hear that something had been said to Mary—he felt as if he were listening to a threat rather than a warning. When the Vicar began again there was a change in his tone like the encouraging transition to a major key.

“But I had once meant better than that, and I am come back to my old intention. I thought that I could hardly *secure myself* in it better, Fred, than by telling you just what had gone on in me. And now, do you understand me? I want you to make the happiness of her life and your own, and if there is any chance that a word of warning from me may turn aside any risk to the contrary—well, I have uttered it.”

There was a drop in the Vicar’s voice when he spoke the last words. He paused—they were standing on a patch of green where the road diverged towards St. Botolph’s, and he put out his hand, as if to imply that the



conversation was closed. Fred was moved quite newly. Some one highly susceptible to the contemplation of a fine act has said, that it produces a sort of regenerating shudder through the frame, and makes one feel ready to begin a new life. A good degree of that effect was just then present in Fred Vincy.

“I will try to be worthy,” he said, breaking off before he could say “of you as well as of her.” And meanwhile Mr. Farebrother had gathered the impulse to say something more.

“You must not imagine that I believe there is at present any decline in her preference of you, Fred. Set your heart at rest, that if you keep right, other things will keep right.”

“I shall never forget what you have done,” Fred answered. “I can’t say anything that seems worth saying—only I will try that your goodness shall not be thrown away.”

“That’s enough. Good-by, and God bless you.”

In that way they parted. But both of them walked about a long while before they went out of the starlight. Much of Fred’s rumination might be summed up in the words, “It certainly would have been a fine thing for her to marry Farebrother—but if she loves me best and I am a good husband?”

Perhaps Mr. Farebrother’s might be concentrated into a single shrug and one little speech. “To think of the part one little woman can play in the life of a man, so that to renounce her may be a very good imitation of heroism, and to win her may be a discipline!”

## CHAPTER LXVII.

Now is there civil war within the soul:  
Resolve is thrust from off the sacred throne  
By clamorous Needs, and Pride the grand-vizier  
Makes humble compact, plays the supple part  
Of envoy and deft-tongued apologist  
For hungry rebels.

Happily Lydgate had ended by losing in the billiard-room, and brought away no encouragement to make a raid on luck. On the contrary, he felt unmixed disgust with himself the next day when he had to pay four or five pounds over and above his gains, and he carried about with him a most unpleasant vision of the figure he had made, not only rubbing elbows with the men at the Green Dragon but behaving just as they did. A philosopher fallen to betting is hardly distinguishable from a Philistine under the same circumstances: the difference will chiefly be found in his subsequent reflections, and Lydgate chewed a very disagreeable cud in that way. His reason told him how the affair might have been magnified into ruin by a slight change of scenery—if it had been a gambling-house that he had turned into, where chance could be clutched with both hands instead of being picked up with thumb and fore-finger. Nevertheless, though reason strangled the desire to gamble, there remained the feeling that, with an assurance of luck to the needful amount, he would have liked to gamble, rather than take the alternative which was beginning to urge itself as inevitable.

That alternative was to apply to Mr. Bulstrode. Lydgate had so many times boasted both to himself and others that he was totally independent of Bulstrode, to whose plans he had lent himself solely because they enabled him to carry out his own ideas of professional work and public benefit—he had so constantly in their personal intercourse had his pride sustained by the sense that he was making a good social use of this predominating banker, whose opinions he thought contemptible and whose motives often seemed to him an absurd mixture of contradictory impressions—that he

had been creating for himself strong ideal obstacles to the proffering of any considerable request to him on his own account.

Still, early in March his affairs were at that pass in which men begin to say that their oaths were delivered in ignorance, and to perceive that the act which they had called impossible to them is becoming manifestly possible. With Dover's ugly security soon to be put in force, with the proceeds of his practice immediately absorbed in paying back debts, and with the chance, if the worst were known, of daily supplies being refused on credit, above all with the vision of Rosamond's hopeless discontent continually haunting him, Lydgate had begun to see that he should inevitably bend himself to ask help from somebody or other. At first he had considered whether he should write to Mr. Vincy; but on questioning Rosamond he found that, as he had suspected, she had already applied twice to her father, the last time being since the disappointment from Sir Godwin; and papa had said that Lydgate must look out for himself. "Papa said he had come, with one bad year after another, to trade more and more on borrowed capital, and had had to give up many indulgences; he could not spare a single hundred from the charges of his family. He said, let Lydgate ask Bulstrode: they have always been hand and glove."

Indeed, Lydgate himself had come to the conclusion that if he must end by asking for a free loan, his relations with Bulstrode, more at least than with any other man, might take the shape of a claim which was not purely personal. Bulstrode had indirectly helped to cause the failure of his practice, and had also been highly gratified by getting a medical partner in his plans:—but who among us ever reduced himself to the sort of dependence in which Lydgate now stood, without trying to believe that he had claims which diminished the humiliation of asking? It was true that of late there had seemed to be a new languor of interest in Bulstrode about the Hospital; but his health had got worse, and showed signs of a deep-seated nervous affection. In other respects he did not appear to be changed: he had always been highly polite, but Lydgate had observed in him from the first a marked coldness about his marriage and other private circumstances, a coldness which he had hitherto preferred to any warmth of familiarity between them. He deferred the intention from day to day, his habit of acting on his conclusions being made infirm by his repugnance to every possible conclusion and its consequent act. He saw Mr. Bulstrode often, but he did not try to use any occasion for his private purpose. At one

moment he thought, "I will write a letter: I prefer that to any circuitous talk;" at another he thought, "No; if I were talking to him, I could make a retreat before any signs of disinclination."

Still the days passed and no letter was written, no special interview sought. In his shrinking from the humiliation of a dependent attitude towards Bulstrode, he began to familiarize his imagination with another step even more unlike his remembered self. He began spontaneously to consider whether it would be possible to carry out that puerile notion of Rosamond's which had often made him angry, namely, that they should quit Middlemarch without seeing anything beyond that preface. The question came—"Would any man buy the practice of me even now, for as little as it is worth? Then the sale might happen as a necessary preparation for going away."

But against his taking this step, which he still felt to be a contemptible relinquishment of present work, a guilty turning aside from what was a real and might be a widening channel for worthy activity, to start again without any justified destination, there was this obstacle, that the purchaser, if procurable at all, might not be quickly forthcoming. And afterwards? Rosamond in a poor lodging, though in the largest city or most distant town, would not find the life that could save her from gloom, and save him from the reproach of having plunged her into it. For when a man is at the foot of the hill in his fortunes, he may stay a long while there in spite of professional accomplishment. In the British climate there is no incompatibility between scientific insight and furnished lodgings: the incompatibility is chiefly between scientific ambition and a wife who objects to that kind of residence.

But in the midst of his hesitation, opportunity came to decide him. A note from Mr. Bulstrode requested Lydgate to call on him at the Bank. A hypochondriacal tendency had shown itself in the banker's constitution of late; and a lack of sleep, which was really only a slight exaggeration of an habitual dyspeptic symptom, had been dwelt on by him as a sign of threatening insanity. He wanted to consult Lydgate without delay on that particular morning, although he had nothing to tell beyond what he had told before. He listened eagerly to what Lydgate had to say in dissipation of his fears, though this too was only repetition; and this moment in which Bulstrode was receiving a medical opinion with a sense of comfort,

seemed to make the communication of a personal need to him easier than it had been in Lydgate's contemplation beforehand. He had been insisting that it would be well for Mr. Bulstrode to relax his attention to business.

"One sees how any mental strain, however slight, may affect a delicate frame," said Lydgate at that stage of the consultation when the remarks tend to pass from the personal to the general, "by the deep stamp which anxiety will make for a time even on the young and vigorous. I am naturally very strong; yet I have been thoroughly shaken lately by an accumulation of trouble."

"I presume that a constitution in the susceptible state in which mine at present is, would be especially liable to fall a victim to cholera, if it visited our district. And since its appearance near London, we may well besiege the Mercy-seat for our protection," said Mr. Bulstrode, not intending to evade Lydgate's allusion, but really preoccupied with alarms about himself.

"You have at all events taken your share in using good practical precautions for the town, and that is the best mode of asking for protection," said Lydgate, with a strong distaste for the broken metaphor and bad logic of the banker's religion, somewhat increased by the apparent deafness of his sympathy. But his mind had taken up its long-prepared movement towards getting help, and was not yet arrested. He added, "The town has done well in the way of cleansing, and finding appliances; and I think that if the cholera should come, even our enemies will admit that the arrangements in the Hospital are a public good."

"Truly," said Mr. Bulstrode, with some coldness. "With regard to what you say, Mr. Lydgate, about the relaxation of my mental labor, I have for some time been entertaining a purpose to that effect—a purpose of a very decided character. I contemplate at least a temporary withdrawal from the management of much business, whether benevolent or commercial. Also I think of changing my residence for a time: probably I shall close or let 'The Shrubs,' and take some place near the coast—under advice of course as to salubrity. That would be a measure which you would recommend?"

"Oh yes," said Lydgate, falling backward in his chair, with ill-repressed impatience under the banker's pale earnest eyes and intense preoccupation with himself.

“I have for some time felt that I should open this subject with you in relation to our Hospital,” continued Bulstrode. “Under the circumstances I have indicated, of course I must cease to have any personal share in the management, and it is contrary to my views of responsibility to continue a large application of means to an institution which I cannot watch over and to some extent regulate. I shall therefore, in case of my ultimate decision to leave Middlemarch, consider that I withdraw other support to the New Hospital than that which will subsist in the fact that I chiefly supplied the expenses of building it, and have contributed further large sums to its successful working.”

Lydgate’s thought, when Bulstrode paused according to his wont, was, “He has perhaps been losing a good deal of money.” This was the most plausible explanation of a speech which had caused rather a startling change in his expectations. He said in reply—

“The loss to the Hospital can hardly be made up, I fear.”

“Hardly,” returned Bulstrode, in the same deliberate, silvery tone; “except by some changes of plan. The only person who may be certainly counted on as willing to increase her contributions is Mrs. Casaubon. I have had an interview with her on the subject, and I have pointed out to her, as I am about to do to you, that it will be desirable to win a more general support to the New Hospital by a change of system.” Another pause, but Lydgate did not speak.

“The change I mean is an amalgamation with the Infirmary, so that the New Hospital shall be regarded as a special addition to the elder institution, having the same directing board. It will be necessary, also, that the medical management of the two shall be combined. In this way any difficulty as to the adequate maintenance of our new establishment will be removed; the benevolent interests of the town will cease to be divided.”

Mr. Bulstrode had lowered his eyes from Lydgate’s face to the buttons of his coat as he again paused.

“No doubt that is a good device as to ways and means,” said Lydgate, with an edge of irony in his tone. “But I can’t be expected to rejoice in it at once, since one of the first results will be that the other medical men will upset or interrupt my methods, if it were only because they are mine.”

“I myself, as you know, Mr. Lydgate, highly valued the opportunity of new and independent procedure which you have diligently employed: the

original plan, I confess, was one which I had much at heart, under submission to the Divine Will. But since providential indications demand a renunciation from me, I renounce.”

Bulstrode showed a rather exasperating ability in this conversation. The broken metaphor and bad logic of motive which had stirred his hearer’s contempt were quite consistent with a mode of putting the facts which made it difficult for Lydgate to vent his own indignation and disappointment. After some rapid reflection, he only asked—

“What did Mrs. Casaubon say?”

“That was the further statement which I wished to make to you,” said Bulstrode, who had thoroughly prepared his ministerial explanation. “She is, you are aware, a woman of most munificent disposition, and happily in possession—not I presume of great wealth, but of funds which she can well spare. She has informed me that though she has destined the chief part of those funds to another purpose, she is willing to consider whether she cannot fully take my place in relation to the Hospital. But she wishes for ample time to mature her thoughts on the subject, and I have told her that there is no need for haste—that, in fact, my own plans are not yet absolute.”

Lydgate was ready to say, “If Mrs. Casaubon would take your place, there would be gain, instead of loss.” But there was still a weight on his mind which arrested this cheerful candor. He replied, “I suppose, then, that I may enter into the subject with Mrs. Casaubon.”

“Precisely; that is what she expressly desires. Her decision, she says, will much depend on what you can tell her. But not at present: she is, I believe, just setting out on a journey. I have her letter here,” said Mr. Bulstrode, drawing it out, and reading from it. “‘I am immediately otherwise engaged,’ she says. ‘I am going into Yorkshire with Sir James and Lady Chettam; and the conclusions I come to about some land which I am to see there may affect my power of contributing to the Hospital.’ Thus, Mr. Lydgate, there is no haste necessary in this matter; but I wished to apprise you beforehand of what may possibly occur.”

Mr. Bulstrode returned the letter to his side-pocket, and changed his attitude as if his business were closed. Lydgate, whose renewed hope about the Hospital only made him more conscious of the facts which poisoned

his hope, felt that his effort after help, if made at all, must be made now and vigorously.

“I am much obliged to you for giving me full notice,” he said, with a firm intention in his tone, yet with an interruptedness in his delivery which showed that he spoke unwillingly. “The highest object to me is my profession, and I had identified the Hospital with the best use I can at present make of my profession. But the best use is not always the same with monetary success. Everything which has made the Hospital unpopular has helped with other causes—I think they are all connected with my professional zeal—to make me unpopular as a practitioner. I get chiefly patients who can’t pay me. I should like them best, if I had nobody to pay on my own side.” Lydgate waited a little, but Bulstrode only bowed, looking at him fixedly, and he went on with the same interrupted enunciation—as if he were biting an objectionable leek.

“I have slipped into money difficulties which I can see no way out of, unless some one who trusts me and my future will advance me a sum without other security. I had very little fortune left when I came here. I have no prospects of money from my own family. My expenses, in consequence of my marriage, have been very much greater than I had expected. The result at this moment is that it would take a thousand pounds to clear me. I mean, to free me from the risk of having all my goods sold in security of my largest debt—as well as to pay my other debts—and leave anything to keep us a little beforehand with our small income. I find that it is out of the question that my wife’s father should make such an advance. That is why I mention my position to—to the only other man who may be held to have some personal connection with my prosperity or ruin.”

Lydgate hated to hear himself. But he had spoken now, and had spoken with unmistakable directness. Mr. Bulstrode replied without haste, but also without hesitation.

“I am grieved, though, I confess, not surprised by this information, Mr. Lydgate. For my own part, I regretted your alliance with my brother-in-law’s family, which has always been of prodigal habits, and which has already been much indebted to me for sustainment in its present position. My advice to you, Mr. Lydgate, would be, that instead of involving



yourself in further obligations, and continuing a doubtful struggle, you should simply become a bankrupt.”

“That would not improve my prospect,” said Lydgate, rising and speaking bitterly, “even if it were a more agreeable thing in itself.”

“It is always a trial,” said Mr. Bulstrode; “but trial, my dear sir, is our portion here, and is a needed corrective. I recommend you to weigh the advice I have given.”

“Thank you,” said Lydgate, not quite knowing what he said. “I have occupied you too long. Good-day.”

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

What suit of grace hath Virtue to put on  
If Vice shall wear as good, and do as well?  
If Wrong, if Craft, if Indiscretion  
Act as fair parts with ends as laudable?  
Which all this mighty volume of events  
The world, the universal map of deeds,  
Strongly controls, and proves from all descents,  
That the directest course still best succeeds.  
For should not grave and learn'd Experience  
That looks with the eyes of all the world beside,  
And with all ages holds intelligence,  
Go safer than Deceit without a guide!  
—DANIEL: *Musophilus*.

That change of plan and shifting of interest which Bulstrode stated or betrayed in his conversation with Lydgate, had been determined in him by some severe experience which he had gone through since the epoch of Mr. Larcher's sale, when Raffles had recognized Will Ladislaw, and when the banker had in vain attempted an act of restitution which might move Divine Providence to arrest painful consequences.

His certainty that Raffles, unless he were dead, would return to Middlemarch before long, had been justified. On Christmas Eve he had reappeared at The Shrubs. Bulstrode was at home to receive him, and hinder his communication with the rest of the family, but he could not altogether hinder the circumstances of the visit from compromising himself and alarming his wife. Raffles proved more unmanageable than he had shown himself to be in his former appearances, his chronic state of mental restlessness, the growing effect of habitual intemperance, quickly shaking off every impression from what was said to him. He insisted on staying in the house, and Bulstrode, weighing two sets of evils, felt that this was at least not a worse alternative than his going into the town. He kept him in his own room for the evening and saw him to bed, Raffles all the while amusing himself with the annoyance he was causing this decent and highly prosperous fellow-sinner, an amusement which he facetiously

expressed as sympathy with his friend's pleasure in entertaining a man who had been serviceable to him, and who had not had all his earnings. There was a cunning calculation under this noisy joking—a cool resolve to extract something the handsomer from Bulstrode as payment for release from this new application of torture. But his cunning had a little overcast its mark.

Bulstrode was indeed more tortured than the coarse fibre of Raffles could enable him to imagine. He had told his wife that he was simply taking care of this wretched creature, the victim of vice, who might otherwise injure himself; he implied, without the direct form of falsehood, that there was a family tie which bound him to this care, and that there were signs of mental alienation in Raffles which urged caution. He would himself drive the unfortunate being away the next morning. In these hints he felt that he was supplying Mrs. Bulstrode with precautionary information for his daughters and servants, and accounting for his allowing no one but himself to enter the room even with food and drink. But he sat in an agony of fear lest Raffles should be overheard in his loud and plain references to past facts—lest Mrs. Bulstrode should be even tempted to listen at the door. How could he hinder her, how betray his terror by opening the door to detect her? She was a woman of honest direct habits, and little likely to take so low a course in order to arrive at painful knowledge; but fear was stronger than the calculation of probabilities.

In this way Raffles had pushed the torture too far, and produced an effect which had not been in his plan. By showing himself hopelessly unmanageable he had made Bulstrode feel that a strong defiance was the only resource left. After taking Raffles to bed that night the banker ordered his closed carriage to be ready at half-past seven the next morning. At six o'clock he had already been long dressed, and had spent some of his wretchedness in prayer, pleading his motives for averting the worst evil if in anything he had used falsity and spoken what was not true before God. For Bulstrode shrank from a direct lie with an intensity disproportionate to the number of his more indirect misdeeds. But many of these misdeeds were like the subtle muscular movements which are not taken account of in the consciousness, though they bring about the end that we fix our mind on and desire. And it is only what we are vividly conscious of that we can vividly imagine to be seen by Omniscience.

Bulstrode carried his candle to the bedside of Raffles, who was apparently in a painful dream. He stood silent, hoping that the presence of the light would serve to waken the sleeper gradually and gently, for he feared some noise as the consequence of a too sudden awakening. He had watched for a couple of minutes or more the shudderings and pantings which seemed likely to end in waking, when Raffles, with a long half-stifled moan, started up and stared round him in terror, trembling and gasping. But he made no further noise, and Bulstrode, setting down the candle, awaited his recovery.

It was a quarter of an hour later before Bulstrode, with a cold peremptoriness of manner which he had not before shown, said, "I came to call you thus early, Mr. Raffles, because I have ordered the carriage to be ready at half-past seven, and intend myself to conduct you as far as Ilsely, where you can either take the railway or await a coach." Raffles was about to speak, but Bulstrode anticipated him imperiously with the words, "Be silent, sir, and hear what I have to say. I shall supply you with money now, and I will furnish you with a reasonable sum from time to time, on your application to me by letter; but if you choose to present yourself here again, if you return to Middlemarch, if you use your tongue in a manner injurious to me, you will have to live on such fruits as your malice can bring you, without help from me. Nobody will pay you well for blasting my name: I know the worst you can do against me, and I shall brave it if you dare to thrust yourself upon me again. Get up, sir, and do as I order you, without noise, or I will send for a policeman to take you off my premises, and you may carry your stories into every pothouse in the town, but you shall have no sixpence from me to pay your expenses there."

Bulstrode had rarely in his life spoken with such nervous energy: he had been deliberating on this speech and its probable effects through a large part of the night; and though he did not trust to its ultimately saving him from any return of Raffles, he had concluded that it was the best throw he could make. It succeeded in enforcing submission from the jaded man this morning: his empoisoned system at this moment quailed before Bulstrode's cold, resolute bearing, and he was taken off quietly in the carriage before the family breakfast time. The servants imagined him to be a poor relation, and were not surprised that a strict man like their master, who held his head high in the world, should be ashamed of such a cousin and want to get rid of him. The banker's drive of ten miles with his hated

companion was a dreary beginning of the Christmas day; but at the end of the drive, Raffles had recovered his spirits, and parted in a contentment for which there was the good reason that the banker had given him a hundred pounds. Various motives urged Bulstrode to this open-handedness, but he did not himself inquire closely into all of them. As he had stood watching Raffles in his uneasy sleep, it had certainly entered his mind that the man had been much shattered since the first gift of two hundred pounds.

He had taken care to repeat the incisive statement of his resolve not to be played on any more; and had tried to penetrate Raffles with the fact that he had shown the risks of bribing him to be quite equal to the risks of defying him. But when, freed from his repulsive presence, Bulstrode returned to his quiet home, he brought with him no confidence that he had secured more than a respite. It was as if he had had a loathsome dream, and could not shake off its images with their hateful kindred of sensations—as if on all the pleasant surroundings of his life a dangerous reptile had left his slimy traces.

Who can know how much of his most inward life is made up of the thoughts he believes other men to have about him, until that fabric of opinion is threatened with ruin?

Bulstrode was only the more conscious that there was a deposit of uneasy presentiment in his wife's mind, because she carefully avoided any allusion to it. He had been used every day to taste the flavor of supremacy and the tribute of complete deference: and the certainty that he was watched or measured with a hidden suspicion of his having some discreditable secret, made his voice totter when he was speaking to edification. Foreseeing, to men of Bulstrode's anxious temperament, is often worse than seeing; and his imagination continually heightened the anguish of an imminent disgrace. Yes, imminent; for if his defiance of Raffles did not keep the man away—and though he prayed for this result he hardly hoped for it—the disgrace was certain. In vain he said to himself that, if permitted, it would be a divine visitation, a chastisement, a preparation; he recoiled from the imagined burning; and he judged that it must be more for the Divine glory that he should escape dishonor. That recoil had at last urged him to make preparations for quitting Middlemarch. If evil truth must be reported of him, he would then be at a less scorching distance from the contempt of his old neighbors; and in a

new scene, where his life would not have gathered the same wide sensibility, the tormentor, if he pursued him, would be less formidable. To leave the place finally would, he knew, be extremely painful to his wife, and on other grounds he would have preferred to stay where he had struck root. Hence he made his preparations at first in a conditional way, wishing to leave on all sides an opening for his return after brief absence, if any favorable intervention of Providence should dissipate his fears. He was preparing to transfer his management of the Bank, and to give up any active control of other commercial affairs in the neighborhood, on the ground of his failing health, but without excluding his future resumption of such work. The measure would cause him some added expense and some diminution of income beyond what he had already undergone from the general depression of trade; and the Hospital presented itself as a principal object of outlay on which he could fairly economize.

This was the experience which had determined his conversation with Lydgate. But at this time his arrangements had most of them gone no farther than a stage at which he could recall them if they proved to be unnecessary. He continually deferred the final steps; in the midst of his fears, like many a man who is in danger of shipwreck or of being dashed from his carriage by runaway horses, he had a clinging impression that something would happen to hinder the worst, and that to spoil his life by a late transplantation might be over-hasty—especially since it was difficult to account satisfactorily to his wife for the project of their indefinite exile from the only place where she would like to live.

Among the affairs Bulstrode had to care for, was the management of the farm at Stone Court in case of his absence; and on this as well as on all other matters connected with any houses and land he possessed in or about Middlemarch, he had consulted Caleb Garth. Like every one else who had business of that sort, he wanted to get the agent who was more anxious for his employer's interests than his own. With regard to Stone Court, since Bulstrode wished to retain his hold on the stock, and to have an arrangement by which he himself could, if he chose, resume his favorite recreation of superintendence, Caleb had advised him not to trust to a mere bailiff, but to let the land, stock, and implements yearly, and take a proportionate share of the proceeds.

“May I trust to you to find me a tenant on these terms, Mr. Garth?” said Bulstrode. “And will you mention to me the yearly sum which would repay you for managing these affairs which we have discussed together?”

“I’ll think about it,” said Caleb, in his blunt way. “I’ll see how I can make it out.”

If it had not been that he had to consider Fred Vincy’s future, Mr. Garth would not probably have been glad of any addition to his work, of which his wife was always fearing an excess for him as he grew older. But on quitting Bulstrode after that conversation, a very alluring idea occurred to him about this said letting of Stone Court. What if Bulstrode would agree to his placing Fred Vincy there on the understanding that he, Caleb Garth, should be responsible for the management? It would be an excellent schooling for Fred; he might make a modest income there, and still have time left to get knowledge by helping in other business. He mentioned his notion to Mrs. Garth with such evident delight that she could not bear to chill his pleasure by expressing her constant fear of his undertaking too much.

“The lad would be as happy as two,” he said, throwing himself back in his chair, and looking radiant, “if I could tell him it was all settled. Think; Susan! His mind had been running on that place for years before old Featherstone died. And it would be as pretty a turn of things as could be that he should hold the place in a good industrious way after all—by his taking to business. For it’s likely enough Bulstrode might let him go on, and gradually buy the stock. He hasn’t made up his mind, I can see, whether or not he shall settle somewhere else as a lasting thing. I never was better pleased with a notion in my life. And then the children might be married by-and-by, Susan.”

“You will not give any hint of the plan to Fred, until you are sure that Bulstrode would agree to the plan?” said Mrs. Garth, in a tone of gentle caution. “And as to marriage, Caleb, we old people need not help to hasten it.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Caleb, swinging his head aside. “Marriage is a taming thing. Fred would want less of my bit and bridle. However, I shall say nothing till I know the ground I’m treading on. I shall speak to Bulstrode again.”

He took his earliest opportunity of doing so. Bulstrode had anything but a warm interest in his nephew Fred Vincy, but he had a strong wish to secure Mr. Garth's services on many scattered points of business at which he was sure to be a considerable loser, if they were under less conscientious management. On that ground he made no objection to Mr. Garth's proposal; and there was also another reason why he was not sorry to give a consent which was to benefit one of the Vincy family. It was that Mrs. Bulstrode, having heard of Lydgate's debts, had been anxious to know whether her husband could not do something for poor Rosamond, and had been much troubled on learning from him that Lydgate's affairs were not easily remediable, and that the wisest plan was to let them "take their course." Mrs. Bulstrode had then said for the first time, "I think you are always a little hard towards my family, Nicholas. And I am sure I have no reason to deny any of my relatives. Too worldly they may be, but no one ever had to say that they were not respectable."

"My dear Harriet," said Mr. Bulstrode, wincing under his wife's eyes, which were filling with tears, "I have supplied your brother with a great deal of capital. I cannot be expected to take care of his married children."

That seemed to be true, and Mrs. Bulstrode's remonstrance subsided into pity for poor Rosamond, whose extravagant education she had always foreseen the fruits of.

But remembering that dialogue, Mr. Bulstrode felt that when he had to talk to his wife fully about his plan of quitting Middlemarch, he should be glad to tell her that he had made an arrangement which might be for the good of her nephew Fred. At present he had merely mentioned to her that he thought of shutting up The Shrubs for a few months, and taking a house on the Southern Coast.

Hence Mr. Garth got the assurance he desired, namely, that in case of Bulstrode's departure from Middlemarch for an indefinite time, Fred Vincy should be allowed to have the tenancy of Stone Court on the terms proposed.

Caleb was so elated with his hope of this "neat turn" being given to things, that if his self-control had not been braced by a little affectionate wifely scolding, he would have betrayed everything to Mary, wanting "to give the child comfort." However, he restrained himself, and kept in strict privacy from Fred certain visits which he was making to Stone Court, in



order to look more thoroughly into the state of the land and stock, and take a preliminary estimate. He was certainly more eager in these visits than the probable speed of events required him to be; but he was stimulated by a fatherly delight in occupying his mind with this bit of probable happiness which he held in store like a hidden birthday gift for Fred and Mary.

“But suppose the whole scheme should turn out to be a castle in the air?” said Mrs. Garth.

“Well, well,” replied Caleb; “the castle will tumble about nobody’s head.”

## CHAPTER LXIX.

“If thou hast heard a word, let it die with thee.”

—*Ecclesiasticus.*

Mr. Bulstrode was still seated in his manager's room at the Bank, about three o'clock of the same day on which he had received Lydgate there, when the clerk entered to say that his horse was waiting, and also that Mr. Garth was outside and begged to speak with him.

“By all means,” said Bulstrode; and Caleb entered. “Pray sit down, Mr. Garth,” continued the banker, in his suavest tone.

“I am glad that you arrived just in time to find me here. I know you count your minutes.”

“Oh,” said Caleb, gently, with a slow swing of his head on one side, as he seated himself and laid his hat on the floor.

He looked at the ground, leaning forward and letting his long fingers droop between his legs, while each finger moved in succession, as if it were sharing some thought which filled his large quiet brow.

Mr. Bulstrode, like every one else who knew Caleb, was used to his slowness in beginning to speak on any topic which he felt to be important, and rather expected that he was about to recur to the buying of some houses in Blindman's Court, for the sake of pulling them down, as a sacrifice of property which would be well repaid by the influx of air and light on that spot. It was by propositions of this kind that Caleb was sometimes troublesome to his employers; but he had usually found Bulstrode ready to meet him in projects of improvement, and they had got on well together. When he spoke again, however, it was to say, in rather a subdued voice—

“I have just come away from Stone Court, Mr. Bulstrode.”

“You found nothing wrong there, I hope,” said the banker; “I was there myself yesterday. Abel has done well with the lambs this year.”

“Why, yes,” said Caleb, looking up gravely, “there is something wrong—a stranger, who is very ill, I think. He wants a doctor, and I came to tell you of that. His name is Raffles.”

He saw the shock of his words passing through Bulstrode’s frame. On this subject the banker had thought that his fears were too constantly on the watch to be taken by surprise; but he had been mistaken.

“Poor wretch!” he said in a compassionate tone, though his lips trembled a little. “Do you know how he came there?”

“I took him myself,” said Caleb, quietly—“took him up in my gig. He had got down from the coach, and was walking a little beyond the turning from the toll-house, and I overtook him. He remembered seeing me with you once before, at Stone Court, and he asked me to take him on. I saw he was ill: it seemed to me the right thing to do, to carry him under shelter. And now I think you should lose no time in getting advice for him.” Caleb took up his hat from the floor as he ended, and rose slowly from his seat.

“Certainly,” said Bulstrode, whose mind was very active at this moment. “Perhaps you will yourself oblige me, Mr. Garth, by calling at Mr. Lydgate’s as you pass—or stay! he may at this hour probably be at the Hospital. I will first send my man on the horse there with a note this instant, and then I will myself ride to Stone Court.”

Bulstrode quickly wrote a note, and went out himself to give the commission to his man. When he returned, Caleb was standing as before with one hand on the back of the chair, holding his hat with the other. In Bulstrode’s mind the dominant thought was, “Perhaps Raffles only spoke to Garth of his illness. Garth may wonder, as he must have done before, at this disreputable fellow’s claiming intimacy with me; but he will know nothing. And he is friendly to me—I can be of use to him.”

He longed for some confirmation of this hopeful conjecture, but to have asked any question as to what Raffles had said or done would have been to betray fear.

“I am exceedingly obliged to you, Mr. Garth,” he said, in his usual tone of politeness. “My servant will be back in a few minutes, and I shall then go myself to see what can be done for this unfortunate man. Perhaps you had some other business with me? If so, pray be seated.”

“Thank you,” said Caleb, making a slight gesture with his right hand to waive the invitation. “I wish to say, Mr. Bulstrode, that I must request you to put your business into some other hands than mine. I am obliged to you for your handsome way of meeting me—about the letting of Stone Court, and all other business. But I must give it up.” A sharp certainty entered like a stab into Bulstrode’s soul.

“This is sudden, Mr. Garth,” was all he could say at first.

“It is,” said Caleb; “but it is quite fixed. I must give it up.”

He spoke with a firmness which was very gentle, and yet he could see that Bulstrode seemed to cower under that gentleness, his face looking dried and his eyes swerving away from the glance which rested on him. Caleb felt a deep pity for him, but he could have used no pretexts to account for his resolve, even if they would have been of any use.

“You have been led to this, I apprehend, by some slanders concerning me uttered by that unhappy creature,” said Bulstrode, anxious now to know the utmost.

“That is true. I can’t deny that I act upon what I heard from him.”

“You are a conscientious man, Mr. Garth—a man, I trust, who feels himself accountable to God. You would not wish to injure me by being too ready to believe a slander,” said Bulstrode, casting about for pleas that might be adapted to his hearer’s mind. “That is a poor reason for giving up a connection which I think I may say will be mutually beneficial.”

“I would injure no man if I could help it,” said Caleb; “even if I thought God winked at it. I hope I should have a feeling for my fellow-creature. But, sir—I am obliged to believe that this Raffles has told me the truth. And I can’t be happy in working with you, or profiting by you. It hurts my mind. I must beg you to seek another agent.”

“Very well, Mr. Garth. But I must at least claim to know the worst that he has told you. I must know what is the foul speech that I am liable to be the victim of,” said Bulstrode, a certain amount of anger beginning to mingle with his humiliation before this quiet man who renounced his benefits.

“That’s needless,” said Caleb, waving his hand, bowing his head slightly, and not swerving from the tone which had in it the merciful intention to spare this pitiable man. “What he has said to me will never

pass from my lips, unless something now unknown forces it from me. If you led a harmful life for gain, and kept others out of their rights by deceit, to get the more for yourself, I dare say you repent—you would like to go back, and can't: that must be a bitter thing"—Caleb paused a moment and shook his head—"it is not for me to make your life harder to you."

"But you do—you do make it harder to me," said Bulstrode constrained into a genuine, pleading cry. "You make it harder to me by turning your back on me."

"That I'm forced to do," said Caleb, still more gently, lifting up his hand. "I am sorry. I don't judge you and say, he is wicked, and I am righteous. God forbid. I don't know everything. A man may do wrong, and his will may rise clear out of it, though he can't get his life clear. That's a bad punishment. If it is so with you,—well, I'm very sorry for you. But I have that feeling inside me, that I can't go on working with you. That's all, Mr. Bulstrode. Everything else is buried, so far as my will goes. And I wish you good-day."

"One moment, Mr. Garth!" said Bulstrode, hurriedly. "I may trust then to your solemn assurance that you will not repeat either to man or woman what—even if it have any degree of truth in it—is yet a malicious representation?" Caleb's wrath was stirred, and he said, indignantly—

"Why should I have said it if I didn't mean it? I am in no fear of you. Such tales as that will never tempt my tongue."

"Excuse me—I am agitated—I am the victim of this abandoned man."

"Stop a bit! you have got to consider whether you didn't help to make him worse, when you profited by his vices."

"You are wronging me by too readily believing him," said Bulstrode, oppressed, as by a nightmare, with the inability to deny flatly what Raffles might have said; and yet feeling it an escape that Caleb had not so stated it to him as to ask for that flat denial.

"No," said Caleb, lifting his hand deprecatingly; "I am ready to believe better, when better is proved. I rob you of no good chance. As to speaking, I hold it a crime to expose a man's sin unless I'm clear it must be done to save the innocent. That is my way of thinking, Mr. Bulstrode, and what I say, I've no need to swear. I wish you good-day."

Some hours later, when he was at home, Caleb said to his wife, incidentally, that he had had some little differences with Bulstrode, and that in consequence, he had given up all notion of taking Stone Court, and indeed had resigned doing further business for him.

“He was disposed to interfere too much, was he?” said Mrs. Garth, imagining that her husband had been touched on his sensitive point, and not been allowed to do what he thought right as to materials and modes of work.

“Oh,” said Caleb, bowing his head and waving his hand gravely. And Mrs. Garth knew that this was a sign of his not intending to speak further on the subject.

As for Bulstrode, he had almost immediately mounted his horse and set off for Stone Court, being anxious to arrive there before Lydgate.

His mind was crowded with images and conjectures, which were a language to his hopes and fears, just as we hear tones from the vibrations which shake our whole system. The deep humiliation with which he had winced under Caleb Garth’s knowledge of his past and rejection of his patronage, alternated with and almost gave way to the sense of safety in the fact that Garth, and no other, had been the man to whom Raffles had spoken. It seemed to him a sort of earnest that Providence intended his rescue from worse consequences; the way being thus left open for the hope of secrecy. That Raffles should be afflicted with illness, that he should have been led to Stone Court rather than elsewhere—Bulstrode’s heart fluttered at the vision of probabilities which these events conjured up. If it should turn out that he was freed from all danger of disgrace—if he could breathe in perfect liberty—his life should be more consecrated than it had ever been before. He mentally lifted up this vow as if it would urge the result he longed for—he tried to believe in the potency of that prayerful resolution—its potency to determine death. He knew that he ought to say, “Thy will be done;” and he said it often. But the intense desire remained that the will of God might be the death of that hated man.

Yet when he arrived at Stone Court he could not see the change in Raffles without a shock. But for his pallor and feebleness, Bulstrode would have called the change in him entirely mental. Instead of his loud tormenting mood, he showed an intense, vague terror, and seemed to deprecate Bulstrode’s anger, because the money was all gone—he had

been robbed—it had half of it been taken from him. He had only come here because he was ill and somebody was hunting him—somebody was after him, he had told nobody anything, he had kept his mouth shut. Bulstrode, not knowing the significance of these symptoms, interpreted this new nervous susceptibility into a means of alarming Raffles into true confessions, and taxed him with falsehood in saying that he had not told anything, since he had just told the man who took him up in his gig and brought him to Stone Court. Raffles denied this with solemn adjurations; the fact being that the links of consciousness were interrupted in him, and that his minute terror-stricken narrative to Caleb Garth had been delivered under a set of visionary impulses which had dropped back into darkness.

Bulstrode's heart sank again at this sign that he could get no grasp over the wretched man's mind, and that no word of Raffles could be trusted as to the fact which he most wanted to know, namely, whether or not he had really kept silence to every one in the neighborhood except Caleb Garth. The housekeeper had told him without the least constraint of manner that since Mr. Garth left, Raffles had asked her for beer, and after that had not spoken, seeming very ill. On that side it might be concluded that there had been no betrayal. Mrs. Abel thought, like the servants at The Shrubs, that the strange man belonged to the unpleasant "kin" who are among the troubles of the rich; she had at first referred the kinship to Mr. Rigg, and where there was property left, the buzzing presence of such large blue-bottles seemed natural enough. How he could be "kin" to Bulstrode as well was not so clear, but Mrs. Abel agreed with her husband that there was "no knowing," a proposition which had a great deal of mental food for her, so that she shook her head over it without further speculation.

In less than an hour Lydgate arrived. Bulstrode met him outside the wainscoted parlor, where Raffles was, and said—

"I have called you in, Mr. Lydgate, to an unfortunate man who was once in my employment, many years ago. Afterwards he went to America, and returned I fear to an idle dissolute life. Being destitute, he has a claim on me. He was slightly connected with Rigg, the former owner of this place, and in consequence found his way here. I believe he is seriously ill: apparently his mind is affected. I feel bound to do the utmost for him."

Lydgate, who had the remembrance of his last conversation with Bulstrode strongly upon him, was not disposed to say an unnecessary word

to him, and bowed slightly in answer to this account; but just before entering the room he turned automatically and said, "What is his name?"—to know names being as much a part of the medical man's accomplishment as of the practical politician's.

"Raffles, John Raffles," said Bulstrode, who hoped that whatever became of Raffles, Lydgate would never know any more of him.

When he had thoroughly examined and considered the patient, Lydgate ordered that he should go to bed, and be kept there in as complete quiet as possible, and then went with Bulstrode into another room.

"It is a serious case, I apprehend," said the banker, before Lydgate began to speak.

"No—and yes," said Lydgate, half dubiously. "It is difficult to decide as to the possible effect of long-standing complications; but the man had a robust constitution to begin with. I should not expect this attack to be fatal, though of course the system is in a ticklish state. He should be well watched and attended to."

"I will remain here myself," said Bulstrode. "Mrs. Abel and her husband are inexperienced. I can easily remain here for the night, if you will oblige me by taking a note for Mrs. Bulstrode."

"I should think that is hardly necessary," said Lydgate. "He seems tame and terrified enough. He might become more unmanageable. But there is a man here—is there not?"

"I have more than once stayed here a few nights for the sake of seclusion," said Bulstrode, indifferently; "I am quite disposed to do so now. Mrs. Abel and her husband can relieve or aid me, if necessary."

"Very well. Then I need give my directions only to you," said Lydgate, not feeling surprised at a little peculiarity in Bulstrode.

"You think, then, that the case is hopeful?" said Bulstrode, when Lydgate had ended giving his orders.

"Unless there turn out to be further complications, such as I have not at present detected—yes," said Lydgate. "He may pass on to a worse stage; but I should not wonder if he got better in a few days, by adhering to the treatment I have prescribed. There must be firmness. Remember, if he calls for liquors of any sort, not to give them to him. In my opinion, men



in his condition are oftener killed by treatment than by the disease. Still, new symptoms may arise. I shall come again to-morrow morning.”

After waiting for the note to be carried to Mrs. Bulstrode, Lydgate rode away, forming no conjectures, in the first instance, about the history of Raffles, but rehearsing the whole argument, which had lately been much stirred by the publication of Dr. Ware’s abundant experience in America, as to the right way of treating cases of alcoholic poisoning such as this. Lydgate, when abroad, had already been interested in this question: he was strongly convinced against the prevalent practice of allowing alcohol and persistently administering large doses of opium; and he had repeatedly acted on this conviction with a favorable result.

“The man is in a diseased state,” he thought, “but there’s a good deal of wear in him still. I suppose he is an object of charity to Bulstrode. It is curious what patches of hardness and tenderness lie side by side in men’s dispositions. Bulstrode seems the most unsympathetic fellow I ever saw about some people, and yet he has taken no end of trouble, and spent a great deal of money, on benevolent objects. I suppose he has some test by which he finds out whom Heaven cares for—he has made up his mind that it doesn’t care for me.”

This streak of bitterness came from a plenteous source, and kept widening in the current of his thought as he neared Lowick Gate. He had not been there since his first interview with Bulstrode in the morning, having been found at the Hospital by the banker’s messenger; and for the first time he was returning to his home without the vision of any expedient in the background which left him a hope of raising money enough to deliver him from the coming destitution of everything which made his married life tolerable—everything which saved him and Rosamond from that bare isolation in which they would be forced to recognize how little of a comfort they could be to each other. It was more bearable to do without tenderness for himself than to see that his own tenderness could make no amends for the lack of other things to her. The sufferings of his own pride from humiliations past and to come were keen enough, yet they were hardly distinguishable to himself from that more acute pain which dominated them—the pain of foreseeing that Rosamond would come to regard him chiefly as the cause of disappointment and unhappiness to her. He had never liked the makeshifts of poverty, and they had never before

entered into his prospects for himself; but he was beginning now to imagine how two creatures who loved each other, and had a stock of thoughts in common, might laugh over their shabby furniture, and their calculations how far they could afford butter and eggs. But the glimpse of that poetry seemed as far off from him as the carelessness of the golden age; in poor Rosamond's mind there was not room enough for luxuries to look small in. He got down from his horse in a very sad mood, and went into the house, not expecting to be cheered except by his dinner, and reflecting that before the evening closed it would be wise to tell Rosamond of his application to Bulstrode and its failure. It would be well not to lose time in preparing her for the worst.

But his dinner waited long for him before he was able to eat it. For on entering he found that Dover's agent had already put a man in the house, and when he asked where Mrs. Lydgate was, he was told that she was in her bedroom. He went up and found her stretched on the bed pale and silent, without an answer even in her face to any word or look of his. He sat down by the bed and leaning over her said with almost a cry of prayer —

“Forgive me for this misery, my poor Rosamond! Let us only love one another.”

She looked at him silently, still with the blank despair on her face; but then the tears began to fill her blue eyes, and her lip trembled. The strong man had had too much to bear that day. He let his head fall beside hers and sobbed.

He did not hinder her from going to her father early in the morning—it seemed now that he ought not to hinder her from doing as she pleased. In half an hour she came back, and said that papa and mamma wished her to go and stay with them while things were in this miserable state. Papa said he could do nothing about the debt—if he paid this, there would be half-a-dozen more. She had better come back home again till Lydgate had got a comfortable home for her. “Do you object, Tertius?”

“Do as you like,” said Lydgate. “But things are not coming to a crisis immediately. There is no hurry.”

“I should not go till to-morrow,” said Rosamond; “I shall want to pack my clothes.”

“Oh, I would wait a little longer than to-morrow—there is no knowing what may happen,” said Lydgate, with bitter irony. “I may get my neck broken, and that may make things easier to you.”

It was Lydgate’s misfortune and Rosamond’s too, that his tenderness towards her, which was both an emotional prompting and a well-considered resolve, was inevitably interrupted by these outbursts of indignation either ironical or remonstrant. She thought them totally unwarranted, and the repulsion which this exceptional severity excited in her was in danger of making the more persistent tenderness unacceptable.

“I see you do not wish me to go,” she said, with chill mildness; “why can you not say so, without that kind of violence? I shall stay until you request me to do otherwise.”

Lydgate said no more, but went out on his rounds. He felt bruised and shattered, and there was a dark line under his eyes which Rosamond had not seen before. She could not bear to look at him. Tertius had a way of taking things which made them a great deal worse for her.

## CHAPTER LXX.

“Our deeds still travel with us from afar,  
And what we have been makes us what we are.”

Bulstrode's first object after Lydgate had left Stone Court was to examine Raffles's pockets, which he imagined were sure to carry signs in the shape of hotel-bills of the places he had stopped in, if he had not told the truth in saying that he had come straight from Liverpool because he was ill and had no money. There were various bills crammed into his pocketbook, but none of a later date than Christmas at any other place, except one, which bore date that morning. This was crumpled up with a hand-bill about a horse-fair in one of his tail-pockets, and represented the cost of three days' stay at an inn at Bilkley, where the fair was held—a town at least forty miles from Middlemarch. The bill was heavy, and since Raffles had no luggage with him, it seemed probable that he had left his portmanteau behind in payment, in order to save money for his travelling fare; for his purse was empty, and he had only a couple of sixpences and some loose pence in his pockets.

Bulstrode gathered a sense of safety from these indications that Raffles had really kept at a distance from Middlemarch since his memorable visit at Christmas. At a distance and among people who were strangers to Bulstrode, what satisfaction could there be to Raffles's tormenting, self-magnifying vein in telling old scandalous stories about a Middlemarch banker? And what harm if he did talk? The chief point now was to keep watch over him as long as there was any danger of that intelligible raving, that unaccountable impulse to tell, which seemed to have acted towards Caleb Garth; and Bulstrode felt much anxiety lest some such impulse should come over him at the sight of Lydgate. He sat up alone with him through the night, only ordering the housekeeper to lie down in her clothes, so as to be ready when he called her, alleging his own indisposition to sleep, and his anxiety to carry out the doctor's orders. He did carry them out faithfully, although Raffles was incessantly asking for brandy, and declaring that he was sinking away—that the earth was sinking

away from under him. He was restless and sleepless, but still quailing and manageable. On the offer of the food ordered by Lydgate, which he refused, and the denial of other things which he demanded, he seemed to concentrate all his terror on Bulstrode, imploringly deprecating his anger, his revenge on him by starvation, and declaring with strong oaths that he had never told any mortal a word against him. Even this Bulstrode felt that he would not have liked Lydgate to hear; but a more alarming sign of fitful alternation in his delirium was, that in-the morning twilight Raffles suddenly seemed to imagine a doctor present, addressing him and declaring that Bulstrode wanted to starve him to death out of revenge for telling, when he never had told.

Bulstrode's native imperiousness and strength of determination served him well. This delicate-looking man, himself nervously perturbed, found the needed stimulus in his strenuous circumstances, and through that difficult night and morning, while he had the air of an animated corpse returned to movement without warmth, holding the mastery by its chill impassibility, his mind was intensely at work thinking of what he had to guard against and what would win him security. Whatever prayers he might lift up, whatever statements he might inwardly make of this man's wretched spiritual condition, and the duty he himself was under to submit to the punishment divinely appointed for him rather than to wish for evil to another—through all this effort to condense words into a solid mental state, there pierced and spread with irresistible vividness the images of the events he desired. And in the train of those images came their apology. He could not but see the death of Raffles, and see in it his own deliverance. What was the removal of this wretched creature? He was impenitent—but were not public criminals impenitent?—yet the law decided on their fate. Should Providence in this case award death, there was no sin in contemplating death as the desirable issue—if he kept his hands from hastening it—if he scrupulously did what was prescribed. Even here there might be a mistake: human prescriptions were fallible things: Lydgate had said that treatment had hastened death,—why not his own method of treatment? But of course intention was everything in the question of right and wrong.

And Bulstrode set himself to keep his intention separate from his desire. He inwardly declared that he intended to obey orders. Why should he have got into any argument about the validity of these orders? It was only the

common trick of desire—which avails itself of any irrelevant scepticism, finding larger room for itself in all uncertainty about effects, in every obscurity that looks like the absence of law. Still, he did obey the orders.

His anxieties continually glanced towards Lydgate, and his remembrance of what had taken place between them the morning before was accompanied with sensibilities which had not been roused at all during the actual scene. He had then cared but little about Lydgate's painful impressions with regard to the suggested change in the Hospital, or about the disposition towards himself which what he held to be his justifiable refusal of a rather exorbitant request might call forth. He recurred to the scene now with a perception that he had probably made Lydgate his enemy, and with an awakened desire to propitiate him, or rather to create in him a strong sense of personal obligation. He regretted that he had not at once made even an unreasonable money-sacrifice. For in case of unpleasant suspicions, or even knowledge gathered from the raving of Raffles, Bulstrode would have felt that he had a defence in Lydgate's mind by having conferred a momentous benefit on him. But the regret had perhaps come too late.

Strange, piteous conflict in the soul of this unhappy man, who had longed for years to be better than he was—who had taken his selfish passions into discipline and clad them in severe robes, so that he had walked with them as a devout choir, till now that a terror had risen among them, and they could chant no longer, but threw out their common cries for safety.

It was nearly the middle of the day before Lydgate arrived: he had meant to come earlier, but had been detained, he said; and his shattered looks were noticed by Bulstrode. But he immediately threw himself into the consideration of the patient, and inquired strictly into all that had occurred. Raffles was worse, would take hardly any food, was persistently wakeful and restlessly raving; but still not violent. Contrary to Bulstrode's alarmed expectation, he took little notice of Lydgate's presence, and continued to talk or murmur incoherently.

“What do you think of him?” said Bulstrode, in private.

“The symptoms are worse.”

“You are less hopeful?”

“No; I still think he may come round. Are you going to stay here yourself?” said Lydgate, looking at Bulstrode with an abrupt question, which made him uneasy, though in reality it was not due to any suspicious conjecture.

“Yes, I think so,” said Bulstrode, governing himself and speaking with deliberation. “Mrs. Bulstrode is advised of the reasons which detain me. Mrs. Abel and her husband are not experienced enough to be left quite alone, and this kind of responsibility is scarcely included in their service of me. You have some fresh instructions, I presume.”

The chief new instruction that Lydgate had to give was on the administration of extremely moderate doses of opium, in case of the sleeplessness continuing after several hours. He had taken the precaution of bringing opium in his pocket, and he gave minute directions to Bulstrode as to the doses, and the point at which they should cease. He insisted on the risk of not ceasing; and repeated his order that no alcohol should be given.

“From what I see of the case,” he ended, “narcotism is the only thing I should be much afraid of. He may wear through even without much food. There’s a good deal of strength in him.”

“You look ill yourself, Mr. Lydgate—a most unusual, I may say unprecedented thing in my knowledge of you,” said Bulstrode, showing a solicitude as unlike his indifference the day before, as his present recklessness about his own fatigue was unlike his habitual self-cherishing anxiety. “I fear you are harassed.”

“Yes, I am,” said Lydgate, brusquely, holding his hat, and ready to go.

“Something new, I fear,” said Bulstrode, inquiringly. “Pray be seated.”

“No, thank you,” said Lydgate, with some hauteur. “I mentioned to you yesterday what was the state of my affairs. There is nothing to add, except that the execution has since then been actually put into my house. One can tell a good deal of trouble in a short sentence. I will say good morning.”

“Stay, Mr. Lydgate, stay,” said Bulstrode; “I have been reconsidering this subject. I was yesterday taken by surprise, and saw it superficially. Mrs. Bulstrode is anxious for her niece, and I myself should grieve at a calamitous change in your position. Claims on me are numerous, but on reconsideration, I esteem it right that I should incur a small sacrifice

rather than leave you unaided. You said, I think, that a thousand pounds would suffice entirely to free you from your burthens, and enable you to recover a firm stand?"

"Yes," said Lydgate, a great leap of joy within him surmounting every other feeling; "that would pay all my debts, and leave me a little on hand. I could set about economizing in our way of living. And by-and-by my practice might look up."

"If you will wait a moment, Mr. Lydgate, I will draw a check to that amount. I am aware that help, to be effectual in these cases, should be thorough."

While Bulstrode wrote, Lydgate turned to the window thinking of his home—thinking of his life with its good start saved from frustration, its good purposes still unbroken.

"You can give me a note of hand for this, Mr. Lydgate," said the banker, advancing towards him with the check. "And by-and-by, I hope, you may be in circumstances gradually to repay me. Meanwhile, I have pleasure in thinking that you will be released from further difficulty."

"I am deeply obliged to you," said Lydgate. "You have restored to me the prospect of working with some happiness and some chance of good."

It appeared to him a very natural movement in Bulstrode that he should have reconsidered his refusal: it corresponded with the more munificent side of his character. But as he put his hack into a canter, that he might get the sooner home, and tell the good news to Rosamond, and get cash at the bank to pay over to Dover's agent, there crossed his mind, with an unpleasant impression, as from a dark-winged flight of evil augury across his vision, the thought of that contrast in himself which a few months had brought—that he should be overjoyed at being under a strong personal obligation—that he should be overjoyed at getting money for himself from Bulstrode.

The banker felt that he had done something to nullify one cause of uneasiness, and yet he was scarcely the easier. He did not measure the quantity of diseased motive which had made him wish for Lydgate's goodwill, but the quantity was none the less actively there, like an irritating agent in his blood. A man vows, and yet will not cast away the means of breaking his vow. Is it that he distinctly means to break it? Not at all; but the desires which tend to break it are at work in him dimly, and make their



way into his imagination, and relax his muscles in the very moments when he is telling himself over again the reasons for his vow. Raffles, recovering quickly, returning to the free use of his odious powers—how could Bulstrode wish for that? Raffles dead was the image that brought release, and indirectly he prayed for that way of release, beseeching that, if it were possible, the rest of his days here below might be freed from the threat of an ignominy which would break him utterly as an instrument of God's service. Lydgate's opinion was not on the side of promise that this prayer would be fulfilled; and as the day advanced, Bulstrode felt himself getting irritated at the persistent life in this man, whom he would fain have seen sinking into the silence of death: imperious will stirred murderous impulses towards this brute life, over which will, by itself, had no power. He said inwardly that he was getting too much worn; he would not sit up with the patient to-night, but leave him to Mrs. Abel, who, if necessary, could call her husband.

At six o'clock, Raffles, having had only fitful perturbed snatches of sleep, from which he waked with fresh restlessness and perpetual cries that he was sinking away, Bulstrode began to administer the opium according to Lydgate's directions. At the end of half an hour or more he called Mrs. Abel and told her that he found himself unfit for further watching. He must now consign the patient to her care; and he proceeded to repeat to her Lydgate's directions as to the quantity of each dose. Mrs. Abel had not before known anything of Lydgate's prescriptions; she had simply prepared and brought whatever Bulstrode ordered, and had done what he pointed out to her. She began now to ask what else she should do besides administering the opium.

"Nothing at present, except the offer of the soup or the soda-water: you can come to me for further directions. Unless there is any important change, I shall not come into the room again to-night. You will ask your husband for help if necessary. I must go to bed early."

"You've much need, sir, I'm sure," said Mrs. Abel, "and to take something more strengthening than what you've done."

Bulstrode went away now without anxiety as to what Raffles might say in his raving, which had taken on a muttering incoherence not likely to create any dangerous belief. At any rate he must risk this. He went down into the wainscoted parlor first, and began to consider whether he would

not have his horse saddled and go home by the moonlight, and give up caring for earthly consequences. Then, he wished that he had begged Lydgate to come again that evening. Perhaps he might deliver a different opinion, and think that Raffles was getting into a less hopeful state. Should he send for Lydgate? If Raffles were really getting worse, and slowly dying, Bulstrode felt that he could go to bed and sleep in gratitude to Providence. But was he worse? Lydgate might come and simply say that he was going on as he expected, and predict that he would by-and-by fall into a good sleep, and get well. What was the use of sending for him? Bulstrode shrank from that result. No ideas or opinions could hinder him from seeing the one probability to be, that Raffles recovered would be just the same man as before, with his strength as a tormentor renewed, obliging him to drag away his wife to spend her years apart from her friends and native place, carrying an alienating suspicion against him in her heart.

He had sat an hour and a half in this conflict by the firelight only, when a sudden thought made him rise and light the bed-candle, which he had brought down with him. The thought was, that he had not told Mrs. Abel when the doses of opium must cease.

He took hold of the candlestick, but stood motionless for a long while. She might already have given him more than Lydgate had prescribed. But it was excusable in him, that he should forget part of an order, in his present wearied condition. He walked up-stairs, candle in hand, not knowing whether he should straightway enter his own room and go to bed, or turn to the patient's room and rectify his omission. He paused in the passage, with his face turned towards Raffles's room, and he could hear him moaning and murmuring. He was not asleep, then. Who could know that Lydgate's prescription would not be better disobeyed than followed, since there was still no sleep?

He turned into his own room. Before he had quite undressed, Mrs. Abel rapped at the door; he opened it an inch, so that he could hear her speak low.

“If you please, sir, should I have no brandy nor nothing to give the poor creetur? He feels sinking away, and nothing else will he swaller—and but little strength in it, if he did—only the opium. And he says more and more he's sinking down through the earth.”

To her surprise, Mr. Bulstrode did not answer. A struggle was going on within him.

“I think he must die for want o’ support, if he goes on in that way. When I nursed my poor master, Mr. Robisson, I had to give him port-wine and brandy constant, and a big glass at a time,” added Mrs. Abel, with a touch of remonstrance in her tone.

But again Mr. Bulstrode did not answer immediately, and she continued, “It’s not a time to spare when people are at death’s door, nor would you wish it, sir, I’m sure. Else I should give him our own bottle o’ rum as we keep by us. But a sitter-up so as you’ve been, and doing everything as laid in your power—”

Here a key was thrust through the inch of doorway, and Mr. Bulstrode said huskily, “That is the key of the wine-cooler. You will find plenty of brandy there.”

Early in the morning—about six—Mr. Bulstrode rose and spent some time in prayer. Does any one suppose that private prayer is necessarily candid—necessarily goes to the roots of action? Private prayer is inaudible speech, and speech is representative: who can represent himself just as he is, even in his own reflections? Bulstrode had not yet unravelled in his thought the confused promptings of the last four-and-twenty hours.

He listened in the passage, and could hear hard stertorous breathing. Then he walked out in the garden, and looked at the early rime on the grass and fresh spring leaves. When he re-entered the house, he felt startled at the sight of Mrs. Abel.

“How is your patient—asleep, I think?” he said, with an attempt at cheerfulness in his tone.

“He’s gone very deep, sir,” said Mrs. Abel. “He went off gradual between three and four o’clock. Would you please to go and look at him? I thought it no harm to leave him. My man’s gone afield, and the little girl’s seeing to the kettles.”

Bulstrode went up. At a glance he knew that Raffles was not in the sleep which brings revival, but in the sleep which streams deeper and deeper into the gulf of death.

He looked round the room and saw a bottle with some brandy in it, and the almost empty opium phial. He put the phial out of sight, and carried

the brandy-bottle down-stairs with him, locking it again in the wine-cooler.

While breakfasting he considered whether he should ride to Middlemarch at once, or wait for Lydgate's arrival. He decided to wait, and told Mrs. Abel that she might go about her work—he could watch in the bed-chamber.

As he sat there and beheld the enemy of his peace going irrevocably into silence, he felt more at rest than he had done for many months. His conscience was soothed by the enfolding wing of secrecy, which seemed just then like an angel sent down for his relief. He drew out his pocket-book to review various memoranda there as to the arrangements he had projected and partly carried out in the prospect of quitting Middlemarch, and considered how far he would let them stand or recall them, now that his absence would be brief. Some economies which he felt desirable might still find a suitable occasion in his temporary withdrawal from management, and he hoped still that Mrs. Casaubon would take a large share in the expenses of the Hospital. In that way the moments passed, until a change in the stertorous breathing was marked enough to draw his attention wholly to the bed, and forced him to think of the departing life, which had once been subservient to his own—which he had once been glad to find base enough for him to act on as he would. It was his gladness then which impelled him now to be glad that the life was at an end.

And who could say that the death of Raffles had been hastened? Who knew what would have saved him?

Lydgate arrived at half-past ten, in time to witness the final pause of the breath. When he entered the room Bulstrode observed a sudden expression in his face, which was not so much surprise as a recognition that he had not judged correctly. He stood by the bed in silence for some time, with his eyes turned on the dying man, but with that subdued activity of expression which showed that he was carrying on an inward debate.

“When did this change begin?” said he, looking at Bulstrode.

“I did not watch by him last night,” said Bulstrode. “I was over-worn, and left him under Mrs. Abel's care. She said that he sank into sleep between three and four o'clock. When I came in before eight he was nearly in this condition.”

Lydgate did not ask another question, but watched in silence until he said, "It's all over."

This morning Lydgate was in a state of recovered hope and freedom. He had set out on his work with all his old animation, and felt himself strong enough to bear all the deficiencies of his married life. And he was conscious that Bulstrode had been a benefactor to him. But he was uneasy about this case. He had not expected it to terminate as it had done. Yet he hardly knew how to put a question on the subject to Bulstrode without appearing to insult him; and if he examined the housekeeper—why, the man was dead. There seemed to be no use in implying that somebody's ignorance or imprudence had killed him. And after all, he himself might be wrong.

He and Bulstrode rode back to Middlemarch together, talking of many things—chiefly cholera and the chances of the Reform Bill in the House of Lords, and the firm resolve of the political Unions. Nothing was said about Raffles, except that Bulstrode mentioned the necessity of having a grave for him in Lowick churchyard, and observed that, so far as he knew, the poor man had no connections, except Rigg, whom he had stated to be unfriendly towards him.

On returning home Lydgate had a visit from Mr. Farebrother. The Vicar had not been in the town the day before, but the news that there was an execution in Lydgate's house had got to Lowick by the evening, having been carried by Mr. Spicer, shoemaker and parish-clerk, who had it from his brother, the respectable bell-hanger in Lowick Gate. Since that evening when Lydgate had come down from the billiard room with Fred Vincy, Mr. Farebrother's thoughts about him had been rather gloomy. Playing at the Green Dragon once or oftener might have been a trifle in another man; but in Lydgate it was one of several signs that he was getting unlike his former self. He was beginning to do things for which he had formerly even an excessive scorn. Whatever certain dissatisfactions in marriage, which some silly tinklings of gossip had given him hints of, might have to do with this change, Mr. Farebrother felt sure that it was chiefly connected with the debts which were being more and more distinctly reported, and he began to fear that any notion of Lydgate's having resources or friends in the background must be quite illusory. The rebuff he had met with in his first attempt to win Lydgate's confidence, disinclined him to a second; but

this news of the execution being actually in the house, determined the Vicar to overcome his reluctance.

Lydgate had just dismissed a poor patient, in whom he was much interested, and he came forward to put out his hand—with an open cheerfulness which surprised Mr. Farebrother. Could this too be a proud rejection of sympathy and help? Never mind; the sympathy and help should be offered.

“How are you, Lydgate? I came to see you because I had heard something which made me anxious about you,” said the Vicar, in the tone of a good brother, only that there was no reproach in it. They were both seated by this time, and Lydgate answered immediately—

“I think I know what you mean. You had heard that there was an execution in the house?”

“Yes; is it true?”

“It was true,” said Lydgate, with an air of freedom, as if he did not mind talking about the affair now. “But the danger is over; the debt is paid. I am out of my difficulties now: I shall be freed from debts, and able, I hope, to start afresh on a better plan.”

“I am very thankful to hear it,” said the Vicar, falling back in his chair, and speaking with that low-toned quickness which often follows the removal of a load. “I like that better than all the news in the ‘Times.’ I confess I came to you with a heavy heart.”

“Thank you for coming,” said Lydgate, cordially. “I can enjoy the kindness all the more because I am happier. I have certainly been a good deal crushed. I’m afraid I shall find the bruises still painful by-and-by,” he added, smiling rather sadly; “but just now I can only feel that the torture-screw is off.”

Mr. Farebrother was silent for a moment, and then said earnestly, “My dear fellow, let me ask you one question. Forgive me if I take a liberty.”

“I don’t believe you will ask anything that ought to offend me.”

“Then—this is necessary to set my heart quite at rest—you have not—have you?—in order to pay your debts, incurred another debt which may harass you worse hereafter?”

“No,” said Lydgate, coloring slightly. “There is no reason why I should not tell you—since the fact is so—that the person to whom I am indebted

is Bulstrode. He has made me a very handsome advance—a thousand pounds—and he can afford to wait for repayment.”

“Well, that is generous,” said Mr. Farebrother, compelling himself to approve of the man whom he disliked. His delicate feeling shrank from dwelling even in his thought on the fact that he had always urged Lydgate to avoid any personal entanglement with Bulstrode. He added immediately, “And Bulstrode must naturally feel an interest in your welfare, after you have worked with him in a way which has probably reduced your income instead of adding to it. I am glad to think that he has acted accordingly.”

Lydgate felt uncomfortable under these kindly suppositions. They made more distinct within him the uneasy consciousness which had shown its first dim stirrings only a few hours before, that Bulstrode’s motives for his sudden beneficence following close upon the chilliest indifference might be merely selfish. He let the kindly suppositions pass. He could not tell the history of the loan, but it was more vividly present with him than ever, as well as the fact which the Vicar delicately ignored—that this relation of personal indebtedness to Bulstrode was what he had once been most resolved to avoid.

He began, instead of answering, to speak of his projected economies, and of his having come to look at his life from a different point of view.

“I shall set up a surgery,” he said. “I really think I made a mistaken effort in that respect. And if Rosamond will not mind, I shall take an apprentice. I don’t like these things, but if one carries them out faithfully they are not really lowering. I have had a severe galling to begin with: that will make the small rubs seem easy.”

Poor Lydgate! the “if Rosamond will not mind,” which had fallen from him involuntarily as part of his thought, was a significant mark of the yoke he bore. But Mr. Farebrother, whose hopes entered strongly into the same current with Lydgate’s, and who knew nothing about him that could now raise a melancholy presentiment, left him with affectionate congratulation.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

*Clown.* . . . 'Twas in the Bunch of Grapes, where, indeed,  
you have a delight to sit, have you not?

*Froth.* I have so: because it is an open room, and good for winter.

*Clo.* Why, very well then: I hope here be truths.

—*Measure for Measure.*

Five days after the death of Raffles, Mr. Bambridge was standing at his leisure under the large archway leading into the yard of the Green Dragon. He was not fond of solitary contemplation, but he had only just come out of the house, and any human figure standing at ease under the archway in the early afternoon was as certain to attract companionship as a pigeon which has found something worth pecking at. In this case there was no material object to feed upon, but the eye of reason saw a probability of mental sustenance in the shape of gossip. Mr. Hopkins, the meek-mannered draper opposite, was the first to act on this inward vision, being the more ambitious of a little masculine talk because his customers were chiefly women. Mr. Bambridge was rather curt to the draper, feeling that Hopkins was of course glad to talk to *him*, but that he was not going to waste much of his talk on Hopkins. Soon, however, there was a small cluster of more important listeners, who were either deposited from the passers-by, or had sauntered to the spot expressly to see if there were anything going on at the Green Dragon; and Mr. Bambridge was finding it worth his while to say many impressive things about the fine studs he had been seeing and the purchases he had made on a journey in the north from which he had just returned. Gentlemen present were assured that when they could show him anything to cut out a blood mare, a bay, rising four, which was to be seen at Doncaster if they chose to go and look at it, Mr. Bambridge would gratify them by being shot "from here to Hereford." Also, a pair of blacks which he was going to put into the break recalled vividly to his mind a pair which he had sold to Faulkner in '19, for a hundred guineas, and which Faulkner had sold for a hundred and sixty two months later—any gent who could disprove this statement being offered



the privilege of calling Mr. Bambridge by a very ugly name until the exercise made his throat dry.

When the discourse was at this point of animation, came up Mr. Frank Hawley. He was not a man to compromise his dignity by lounging at the Green Dragon, but happening to pass along the High Street and seeing Bambridge on the other side, he took some of his long strides across to ask the horsedealer whether he had found the first-rate gig-horse which he had engaged to look for. Mr. Hawley was requested to wait until he had seen a gray selected at Bilkley: if that did not meet his wishes to a hair, Bambridge did not know a horse when he saw it, which seemed to be the highest conceivable unlikelihood. Mr. Hawley, standing with his back to the street, was fixing a time for looking at the gray and seeing it tried, when a horseman passed slowly by.

“Bulstrode!” said two or three voices at once in a low tone, one of them, which was the draper’s, respectfully prefixing the “Mr.,” but nobody having more intention in this interjectural naming than if they had said “the Riverston coach” when that vehicle appeared in the distance. Mr. Hawley gave a careless glance round at Bulstrode’s back, but as Bambridge’s eyes followed it he made a sarcastic grimace.

“By jingo! that reminds me,” he began, lowering his voice a little, “I picked up something else at Bilkley besides your gig-horse, Mr. Hawley. I picked up a fine story about Bulstrode. Do you know how he came by his fortune? Any gentleman wanting a bit of curious information, I can give it him free of expense. If everybody got their deserts, Bulstrode might have had to say his prayers at Botany Bay.”

“What do you mean?” said Mr. Hawley, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and pushing a little forward under the archway. If Bulstrode should turn out to be a rascal, Frank Hawley had a prophetic soul.

“I had it from a party who was an old chum of Bulstrode’s. I’ll tell you where I first picked him up,” said Bambridge, with a sudden gesture of his fore-finger. “He was at Larcher’s sale, but I knew nothing of him then—he slipped through my fingers—was after Bulstrode, no doubt. He tells me he can tap Bulstrode to any amount, knows all his secrets. However, he blabbed to me at Bilkley: he takes a stiff glass. Damme if I think he meant to turn king’s evidence; but he’s that sort of bragging fellow, the bragging runs over hedge and ditch with him, till he’d brag of a spavin as if it ’ud

fetch money. A man should know when to pull up.” Mr. Bambridge made this remark with an air of disgust, satisfied that his own bragging showed a fine sense of the marketable.

“What’s the man’s name? Where can he be found?” said Mr. Hawley.

“As to where he is to be found, I left him to it at the Saracen’s Head; but his name is Raffles.”

“Raffles!” exclaimed Mr. Hopkins. “I furnished his funeral yesterday. He was buried at Lowick. Mr. Bulstrode followed him. A very decent funeral.” There was a strong sensation among the listeners. Mr. Bambridge gave an ejaculation in which “brimstone” was the mildest word, and Mr. Hawley, knitting his brows and bending his head forward, exclaimed, “What?—where did the man die?”

“At Stone Court,” said the draper. “The housekeeper said he was a relation of the master’s. He came there ill on Friday.”

“Why, it was on Wednesday I took a glass with him,” interposed Bambridge.

“Did any doctor attend him?” said Mr. Hawley

“Yes. Mr. Lydgate. Mr. Bulstrode sat up with him one night. He died the third morning.”

“Go on, Bambridge,” said Mr. Hawley, insistently. “What did this fellow say about Bulstrode?”

The group had already become larger, the town-clerk’s presence being a guarantee that something worth listening to was going on there; and Mr. Bambridge delivered his narrative in the hearing of seven. It was mainly what we know, including the fact about Will Ladislaw, with some local color and circumstance added: it was what Bulstrode had dreaded the betrayal of—and hoped to have buried forever with the corpse of Raffles—it was that haunting ghost of his earlier life which as he rode past the archway of the Green Dragon he was trusting that Providence had delivered him from. Yes, Providence. He had not confessed to himself yet that he had done anything in the way of contrivance to this end; he had accepted what seemed to have been offered. It was impossible to prove that he had done anything which hastened the departure of that man’s soul.

But this gossip about Bulstrode spread through Middlemarch like the smell of fire. Mr. Frank Hawley followed up his information by sending a

clerk whom he could trust to Stone Court on a pretext of inquiring about hay, but really to gather all that could be learned about Raffles and his illness from Mrs. Abel. In this way it came to his knowledge that Mr. Garth had carried the man to Stone Court in his gig; and Mr. Hawley in consequence took an opportunity of seeing Caleb, calling at his office to ask whether he had time to undertake an arbitration if it were required, and then asking him incidentally about Raffles. Caleb was betrayed into no word injurious to Bulstrode beyond the fact which he was forced to admit, that he had given up acting for him within the last week. Mr. Hawley drew his inferences, and feeling convinced that Raffles had told his story to Garth, and that Garth had given up Bulstrode's affairs in consequence, said so a few hours later to Mr. Toller. The statement was passed on until it had quite lost the stamp of an inference, and was taken as information coming straight from Garth, so that even a diligent historian might have concluded Caleb to be the chief publisher of Bulstrode's misdemeanors.

Mr. Hawley was not slow to perceive that there was no handle for the law either in the revelations made by Raffles or in the circumstances of his death. He had himself ridden to Lowick village that he might look at the register and talk over the whole matter with Mr. Farebrother, who was not more surprised than the lawyer that an ugly secret should have come to light about Bulstrode, though he had always had justice enough in him to hinder his antipathy from turning into conclusions. But while they were talking another combination was silently going forward in Mr. Farebrother's mind, which foreshadowed what was soon to be loudly spoken of in Middlemarch as a necessary "putting of two and two together." With the reasons which kept Bulstrode in dread of Raffles there flashed the thought that the dread might have something to do with his munificence towards his medical man; and though he resisted the suggestion that it had been consciously accepted in any way as a bribe, he had a foreboding that this complication of things might be of malignant effect on Lydgate's reputation. He perceived that Mr. Hawley knew nothing at present of the sudden relief from debt, and he himself was careful to glide away from all approaches towards the subject.

"Well," he said, with a deep breath, wanting to wind up the illimitable discussion of what might have been, though nothing could be legally proven, "it is a strange story. So our mercurial Ladislav has a queer genealogy! A high-spirited young lady and a musical Polish patriot made a

likely enough stock for him to spring from, but I should never have suspected a grafting of the Jew pawnbroker. However, there's no knowing what a mixture will turn out beforehand. Some sorts of dirt serve to clarify."

"It's just what I should have expected," said Mr. Hawley, mounting his horse. "Any cursed alien blood, Jew, Corsican, or Gypsy."

"I know he's one of your black sheep, Hawley. But he is really a disinterested, unworldly fellow," said Mr. Farebrother, smiling.

"Ay, ay, that is your Whiggish twist," said Mr. Hawley, who had been in the habit of saying apologetically that Farebrother was such a damned pleasant good-hearted fellow you would mistake him for a Tory.

Mr. Hawley rode home without thinking of Lydgate's attendance on Raffles in any other light than as a piece of evidence on the side of Bulstrode. But the news that Lydgate had all at once become able not only to get rid of the execution in his house but to pay all his debts in Middlemarch was spreading fast, gathering round it conjectures and comments which gave it new body and impetus, and soon filling the ears of other persons besides Mr. Hawley, who were not slow to see a significant relation between this sudden command of money and Bulstrode's desire to stifle the scandal of Raffles. That the money came from Bulstrode would infallibly have been guessed even if there had been no direct evidence of it; for it had beforehand entered into the gossip about Lydgate's affairs, that neither his father-in-law nor his own family would do anything for him, and direct evidence was furnished not only by a clerk at the Bank, but by innocent Mrs. Bulstrode herself, who mentioned the loan to Mrs. Plymdale, who mentioned it to her daughter-in-law of the house of Toller, who mentioned it generally. The business was felt to be so public and important that it required dinners to feed it, and many invitations were just then issued and accepted on the strength of this scandal concerning Bulstrode and Lydgate; wives, widows, and single ladies took their work and went out to tea oftener than usual; and all public conviviality, from the Green Dragon to Dollop's, gathered a zest which could not be won from the question whether the Lords would throw out the Reform Bill.

For hardly anybody doubted that some scandalous reason or other was at the bottom of Bulstrode's liberality to Lydgate. Mr. Hawley indeed, in the

first instance, invited a select party, including the two physicians, with Mr Toller and Mr. Wrench, expressly to hold a close discussion as to the probabilities of Raffles's illness, reciting to them all the particulars which had been gathered from Mrs. Abel in connection with Lydgate's certificate, that the death was due to delirium tremens; and the medical gentlemen, who all stood undisturbedly on the old paths in relation to this disease, declared that they could see nothing in these particulars which could be transformed into a positive ground of suspicion. But the moral grounds of suspicion remained: the strong motives Bulstrode clearly had for wishing to be rid of Raffles, and the fact that at this critical moment he had given Lydgate the help which he must for some time have known the need for; the disposition, moreover, to believe that Bulstrode would be unscrupulous, and the absence of any indisposition to believe that Lydgate might be as easily bribed as other haughty-minded men when they have found themselves in want of money. Even if the money had been given merely to make him hold his tongue about the scandal of Bulstrode's earlier life, the fact threw an odious light on Lydgate, who had long been sneered at as making himself subservient to the banker for the sake of working himself into predominance, and discrediting the elder members of his profession. Hence, in spite of the negative as to any direct sign of guilt in relation to the death at Stone Court, Mr. Hawley's select party broke up with the sense that the affair had "an ugly look."

But this vague conviction of indeterminable guilt, which was enough to keep up much head-shaking and biting innuendo even among substantial professional seniors, had for the general mind all the superior power of mystery over fact. Everybody liked better to conjecture how the thing was, than simply to know it; for conjecture soon became more confident than knowledge, and had a more liberal allowance for the incompatible. Even the more definite scandal concerning Bulstrode's earlier life was, for some minds, melted into the mass of mystery, as so much lively metal to be poured out in dialogue, and to take such fantastic shapes as heaven pleased.

This was the tone of thought chiefly sanctioned by Mrs. Dollop, the spirited landlady of the Tankard in Slaughter Lane, who had often to resist the shallow pragmatism of customers disposed to think that their reports from the outer world were of equal force with what had "come up" in her mind. How it had been brought to her she didn't know, but it was there

before her as if it had been “scored with the chalk on the chimney-board —” as Bulstrode should say, “his inside was *that black* as if the hairs of his head knowed the thoughts of his heart, he’d tear ’em up by the roots.”

“That’s odd,” said Mr. Limp, a meditative shoemaker, with weak eyes and a piping voice. “Why, I read in the ‘Trumpet’ that was what the Duke of Wellington said when he turned his coat and went over to the Romans.”

“Very like,” said Mrs. Dollop. “If one raskill said it, it’s more reason why another should. But *hypocrite* as he’s been, and holding things with that high hand, as there was no parson i’ the country good enough for him, he was forced to take Old Harry into his counsel, and Old Harry’s been too many for him.”

“Ay, ay, he’s a ’complice you can’t send out o’ the country,” said Mr. Crabbe, the glazier, who gathered much news and groped among it dimly. “But by what I can make out, there’s them says Bulstrode was for running away, for fear o’ being found out, before now.”

“He’ll be drove away, whether or no,” said Mr. Dill, the barber, who had just dropped in. “I shaved Fletcher, Hawley’s clerk, this morning—he’s got a bad finger—and he says they’re all of one mind to get rid of Bulstrode. Mr. Thesiger is turned against him, and wants him out o’ the parish. And there’s gentlemen in this town says they’d as soon dine with a fellow from the hulks. ‘And a deal sooner I would,’ says Fletcher; ‘for what’s more against one’s stomach than a man coming and making himself bad company with his religion, and giving out as the Ten Commandments are not enough for him, and all the while he’s worse than half the men at the tread-mill?’ Fletcher said so himself.”

“It’ll be a bad thing for the town though, if Bulstrode’s money goes out of it,” said Mr. Limp, quaveringly.

“Ah, there’s better folks spend their money worse,” said a firm-voiced dyer, whose crimson hands looked out of keeping with his good-natured face.

“But he won’t keep his money, by what I can make out,” said the glazier. “Don’t they say as there’s somebody can strip it off him? By what I can understan’, they could take every penny off him, if they went to lawing.”

“No such thing!” said the barber, who felt himself a little above his company at Dollop’s, but liked it none the worse. “Fletcher says it’s no

such thing. He says they might prove over and over again whose child this young Ladislaw was, and they'd do no more than if they proved I came out of the Fens—he couldn't touch a penny.”

“Look you there now!” said Mrs. Dollop, indignantly. “I thank the Lord he took my children to Himself, if that's all the law can do for the motherless. Then by that, it's o' no use who your father and mother is. But as to listening to what one lawyer says without asking another—I wonder at a man o' your cleverness, Mr. Dill. It's well known there's always two sides, if no more; else who'd go to law, I should like to know? It's a poor tale, with all the law as there is up and down, if it's no use proving whose child you are. Fletcher may say that if he likes, but I say, don't Fletcher *me!*”

Mr. Dill affected to laugh in a complimentary way at Mrs. Dollop, as a woman who was more than a match for the lawyers; being disposed to submit to much twitting from a landlady who had a long score against him.

“If they come to lawing, and it's all true as folks say, there's more to be looked to nor money,” said the glazier. “There's this poor creetur as is dead and gone; by what I can make out, he'd seen the day when he was a deal finer gentleman nor Bulstrode.”

“Finer gentleman! I'll warrant him,” said Mrs. Dollop; “and a far personabler man, by what I can hear. As I said when Mr. Baldwin, the tax-gatherer, comes in, a-standing where you sit, and says, ‘Bulstrode got all his money as he brought into this town by thieving and swindling,’—I said, ‘You don't make me no wiser, Mr. Baldwin: it's set my blood a-creeping to look at him ever sin' here he came into Slaughter Lane a-wanting to buy the house over my head: folks don't look the color o' the dough-tub and stare at you as if they wanted to see into your backbone for nothink.’ That was what I said, and Mr. Baldwin can bear me witness.”

“And in the rights of it too,” said Mr. Crabbe. “For by what I can make out, this Raffles, as they call him, was a lusty, fresh-colored man as you'd wish to see, and the best o' company—though dead he lies in Lowick churchyard sure enough; and by what I can understan', there's them knows more than they *should* know about how he got there.”

“I'll believe you!” said Mrs. Dollop, with a touch of scorn at Mr. Crabbe's apparent dimness. “When a man's been 'ticed to a lone house,

and there's them can pay for hospitals and nurses for half the country-side choose to be sitters-up night and day, and nobody to come near but a doctor as is known to stick at nothingk, and as poor as he can hang together, and after that so flush o' money as he can pay off Mr. Byles the butcher as his bill has been running on for the best o' joints since last Michaelmas was a twelvemonth—I don't want anybody to come and tell me as there's been more going on nor the Prayer-book's got a service for—I don't want to stand winking and blinking and thinking.”

Mrs. Dollop looked round with the air of a landlady accustomed to dominate her company. There was a chorus of adhesion from the more courageous; but Mr. Limp, after taking a draught, placed his flat hands together and pressed them hard between his knees, looking down at them with blear-eyed contemplation, as if the scorching power of Mrs. Dollop's speech had quite dried up and nullified his wits until they could be brought round again by further moisture.

“Why shouldn't they dig the man up and have the Crowner?” said the dyer. “It's been done many and many's the time. If there's been foul play they might find it out.”

“Not they, Mr. Jonas!” said Mrs Dollop, emphatically. “I know what doctors are. They're a deal too cunning to be found out. And this Doctor Lydgate that's been for cutting up everybody before the breath was well out o' their body—it's plain enough what use he wanted to make o' looking into respectable people's insides. He knows drugs, you may be sure, as you can neither smell nor see, neither before they're swallowed nor after. Why, I've seen drops myself ordered by Doctor Gambit, as is our club doctor and a good charikter, and has brought more live children into the world nor ever another i' Middlemarch—I say I've seen drops myself as made no difference whether they was in the glass or out, and yet have griped you the next day. So I'll leave your own sense to judge. Don't tell me! All I say is, it's a mercy they didn't take this Doctor Lydgate on to our club. There's many a mother's child might ha' rued it.”

The heads of this discussion at “Dollop's” had been the common theme among all classes in the town, had been carried to Lowick Parsonage on one side and to Tipton Grange on the other, had come fully to the ears of the Vincy family, and had been discussed with sad reference to “poor Harriet” by all Mrs. Bulstrode's friends, before Lydgate knew distinctly



why people were looking strangely at him, and before Bulstrode himself suspected the betrayal of his secrets. He had not been accustomed to very cordial relations with his neighbors, and hence he could not miss the signs of cordiality; moreover, he had been taking journeys on business of various kinds, having now made up his mind that he need not quit Middlemarch, and feeling able consequently to determine on matters which he had before left in suspense.

“We will make a journey to Cheltenham in the course of a month or two,” he had said to his wife. “There are great spiritual advantages to be had in that town along with the air and the waters, and six weeks there will be eminently refreshing to us.”

He really believed in the spiritual advantages, and meant that his life henceforth should be the more devoted because of those later sins which he represented to himself as hypothetic, praying hypothetically for their pardon:—“if I have herein transgressed.”

As to the Hospital, he avoided saying anything further to Lydgate, fearing to manifest a too sudden change of plans immediately on the death of Raffles. In his secret soul he believed that Lydgate suspected his orders to have been intentionally disobeyed, and suspecting this he must also suspect a motive. But nothing had been betrayed to him as to the history of Raffles, and Bulstrode was anxious not to do anything which would give emphasis to his undefined suspicions. As to any certainty that a particular method of treatment would either save or kill, Lydgate himself was constantly arguing against such dogmatism; he had no right to speak, and he had every motive for being silent. Hence Bulstrode felt himself providentially secured. The only incident he had strongly winced under had been an occasional encounter with Caleb Garth, who, however, had raised his hat with mild gravity.

Meanwhile, on the part of the principal townsmen a strong determination was growing against him.

A meeting was to be held in the Town-Hall on a sanitary question which had risen into pressing importance by the occurrence of a cholera case in the town. Since the Act of Parliament, which had been hurriedly passed, authorizing assessments for sanitary measures, there had been a Board for the superintendence of such measures appointed in Middlemarch, and much cleansing and preparation had been concurred in by Whigs and

Tories. The question now was, whether a piece of ground outside the town should be secured as a burial-ground by means of assessment or by private subscription. The meeting was to be open, and almost everybody of importance in the town was expected to be there.

Mr. Bulstrode was a member of the Board, and just before twelve o'clock he started from the Bank with the intention of urging the plan of private subscription. Under the hesitation of his projects, he had for some time kept himself in the background, and he felt that he should this morning resume his old position as a man of action and influence in the public affairs of the town where he expected to end his days. Among the various persons going in the same direction, he saw Lydgate; they joined, talked over the object of the meeting, and entered it together.

It seemed that everybody of mark had been earlier than they. But there were still spaces left near the head of the large central table, and they made their way thither. Mr. Farebrother sat opposite, not far from Mr. Hawley; all the medical men were there; Mr. Thesiger was in the chair, and Mr. Brooke of Tipton was on his right hand.

Lydgate noticed a peculiar interchange of glances when he and Bulstrode took their seats.

After the business had been fully opened by the chairman, who pointed out the advantages of purchasing by subscription a piece of ground large enough to be ultimately used as a general cemetery, Mr. Bulstrode, whose rather high-pitched but subdued and fluent voice the town was used to at meetings of this sort, rose and asked leave to deliver his opinion. Lydgate could see again the peculiar interchange of glances before Mr. Hawley started up, and said in his firm resonant voice, "Mr. Chairman, I request that before any one delivers his opinion on this point I may be permitted to speak on a question of public feeling, which not only by myself, but by many gentlemen present, is regarded as preliminary."

Mr. Hawley's mode of speech, even when public decorum repressed his "awful language," was formidable in its curtness and self-possession. Mr. Thesiger sanctioned the request, Mr. Bulstrode sat down, and Mr. Hawley continued.

"In what I have to say, Mr. Chairman, I am not speaking simply on my own behalf: I am speaking with the concurrence and at the express request of no fewer than eight of my fellow-townsmen, who are immediately

around us. It is our united sentiment that Mr. Bulstrode should be called upon—and I do now call upon him—to resign public positions which he holds not simply as a tax-payer, but as a gentleman among gentlemen. There are practices and there are acts which, owing to circumstances, the law cannot visit, though they may be worse than many things which are legally punishable. Honest men and gentlemen, if they don't want the company of people who perpetrate such acts, have got to defend themselves as they best can, and that is what I and the friends whom I may call my clients in this affair are determined to do. I don't say that Mr. Bulstrode has been guilty of shameful acts, but I call upon him either publicly to deny and confute the scandalous statements made against him by a man now dead, and who died in his house—the statement that he was for many years engaged in nefarious practices, and that he won his fortune by dishonest procedures—or else to withdraw from positions which could only have been allowed him as a gentleman among gentlemen.”

All eyes in the room were turned on Mr. Bulstrode, who, since the first mention of his name, had been going through a crisis of feeling almost too violent for his delicate frame to support. Lydgate, who himself was undergoing a shock as from the terrible practical interpretation of some faint augury, felt, nevertheless, that his own movement of resentful hatred was checked by that instinct of the Healer which thinks first of bringing rescue or relief to the sufferer, when he looked at the shrunken misery of Bulstrode's livid face.

The quick vision that his life was after all a failure, that he was a dishonored man, and must quail before the glance of those towards whom he had habitually assumed the attitude of a reprover—that God had disowned him before men and left him unscreened to the triumphant scorn of those who were glad to have their hatred justified—the sense of utter futility in that equivocation with his conscience in dealing with the life of his accomplice, an equivocation which now turned venomously upon him with the full-grown fang of a discovered lie:—all this rushed through him like the agony of terror which fails to kill, and leaves the ears still open to the returning wave of execration. The sudden sense of exposure after the re-established sense of safety came—not to the coarse organization of a criminal, but to the susceptible nerve of a man whose intensest being lay in such mastery and predominance as the conditions of his life had shaped for him.

But in that intense being lay the strength of reaction. Through all his bodily infirmity there ran a tenacious nerve of ambitious self-preserving will, which had continually leaped out like a flame, scattering all doctrinal fears, and which, even while he sat an object of compassion for the merciful, was beginning to stir and glow under his ashy paleness. Before the last words were out of Mr. Hawley's mouth, Bulstrode felt that he should answer, and that his answer would be a retort. He dared not get up and say, "I am not guilty, the whole story is false"—even if he had dared this, it would have seemed to him, under his present keen sense of betrayal, as vain as to pull, for covering to his nakedness, a frail rag which would rend at every little strain.

For a few moments there was total silence, while every man in the room was looking at Bulstrode. He sat perfectly still, leaning hard against the back of his chair; he could not venture to rise, and when he began to speak he pressed his hands upon the seat on each side of him. But his voice was perfectly audible, though hoarser than usual, and his words were distinctly pronounced, though he paused between sentence as if short of breath. He said, turning first toward Mr. Thesiger, and then looking at Mr. Hawley—

"I protest before you, sir, as a Christian minister, against the sanction of proceedings towards me which are dictated by virulent hatred. Those who are hostile to me are glad to believe any libel uttered by a loose tongue against me. And their consciences become strict against me. Say that the evil-speaking of which I am to be made the victim accuses me of malpractices—" here Bulstrode's voice rose and took on a more biting accent, till it seemed a low cry—"who shall be my accuser? Not men whose own lives are unchristian, nay, scandalous—not men who themselves use low instruments to carry out their ends—whose profession is a tissue of chicanery—who have been spending their income on their own sensual enjoyments, while I have been devoting mine to advance the best objects with regard to this life and the next."

After the word chicanery there was a growing noise, half of murmurs and half of hisses, while four persons started up at once—Mr. Hawley, Mr. Toller, Mr. Chichely, and Mr. Hackbutt; but Mr. Hawley's outburst was instantaneous, and left the others behind in silence.

"If you mean me, sir, I call you and every one else to the inspection of my professional life. As to Christian or unchristian, I repudiate your

canting palavering Christianity; and as to the way in which I spend my income, it is not my principle to maintain thieves and cheat offspring of their due inheritance in order to support religion and set myself up as a saintly Killjoy. I affect no niceness of conscience—I have not found any nice standards necessary yet to measure your actions by, sir. And I again call upon you to enter into satisfactory explanations concerning the scandals against you, or else to withdraw from posts in which we at any rate decline you as a colleague. I say, sir, we decline to co-operate with a man whose character is not cleared from infamous lights cast upon it, not only by reports but by recent actions.”

“Allow me, Mr. Hawley,” said the chairman; and Mr. Hawley, still fuming, bowed half impatiently, and sat down with his hands thrust deep in his pockets.

“Mr. Bulstrode, it is not desirable, I think, to prolong the present discussion,” said Mr. Thesiger, turning to the pallid trembling man; “I must so far concur with what has fallen from Mr. Hawley in expression of a general feeling, as to think it due to your Christian profession that you should clear yourself, if possible, from unhappy aspersions. I for my part should be willing to give you full opportunity and hearing. But I must say that your present attitude is painfully inconsistent with those principles which you have sought to identify yourself with, and for the honor of which I am bound to care. I recommend you at present, as your clergyman, and one who hopes for your reinstatement in respect, to quit the room, and avoid further hindrance to business.”

Bulstrode, after a moment’s hesitation, took his hat from the floor and slowly rose, but he grasped the corner of the chair so totteringly that Lydgate felt sure there was not strength enough in him to walk away without support. What could he do? He could not see a man sink close to him for want of help. He rose and gave his arm to Bulstrode, and in that way led him out of the room; yet this act, which might have been one of gentle duty and pure compassion, was at this moment unspeakably bitter to him. It seemed as if he were putting his sign-manual to that association of himself with Bulstrode, of which he now saw the full meaning as it must have presented itself to other minds. He now felt the conviction that this man who was leaning tremblingly on his arm, had given him the thousand pounds as a bribe, and that somehow the treatment of Raffles had

been tampered with from an evil motive. The inferences were closely linked enough; the town knew of the loan, believed it to be a bribe, and believed that he took it as a bribe.

Poor Lydgate, his mind struggling under the terrible clutch of this revelation, was all the while morally forced to take Mr. Bulstrode to the Bank, send a man off for his carriage, and wait to accompany him home.

Meanwhile the business of the meeting was despatched, and fringed off into eager discussion among various groups concerning this affair of Bulstrode—and Lydgate.

Mr. Brooke, who had before heard only imperfect hints of it, and was very uneasy that he had “gone a little too far” in countenancing Bulstrode, now got himself fully informed, and felt some benevolent sadness in talking to Mr. Farebrother about the ugly light in which Lydgate had come to be regarded. Mr. Farebrother was going to walk back to Lowick.

“Step into my carriage,” said Mr. Brooke. “I am going round to see Mrs. Casaubon. She was to come back from Yorkshire last night. She will like to see me, you know.”

So they drove along, Mr. Brooke chatting with good-natured hope that there had not really been anything black in Lydgate’s behavior—a young fellow whom he had seen to be quite above the common mark, when he brought a letter from his uncle Sir Godwin. Mr. Farebrother said little: he was deeply mournful: with a keen perception of human weakness, he could not be confident that under the pressure of humiliating needs Lydgate had not fallen below himself.

When the carriage drove up to the gate of the Manor, Dorothea was out on the gravel, and came to greet them.

“Well, my dear,” said Mr. Brooke, “we have just come from a meeting—a sanitary meeting, you know.”

“Was Mr. Lydgate there?” said Dorothea, who looked full of health and animation, and stood with her head bare under the gleaming April lights. “I want to see him and have a great consultation with him about the Hospital. I have engaged with Mr. Bulstrode to do so.”

“Oh, my dear,” said Mr. Brooke, “we have been hearing bad news—bad news, you know.”

They walked through the garden towards the churchyard gate, Mr. Farebrother wanting to go on to the parsonage; and Dorothea heard the whole sad story.

She listened with deep interest, and begged to hear twice over the facts and impressions concerning Lydgate. After a short silence, pausing at the churchyard gate, and addressing Mr. Farebrother, she said energetically—

“You don’t believe that Mr. Lydgate is guilty of anything base? I will not believe it. Let us find out the truth and clear him!”

BOOK VIII.  
SUNSET AND SUNRISE.



## CHAPTER LXXII.

Full souls are double mirrors, making still  
An endless vista of fair things before,  
Repeating things behind.

Dorothea's impetuous generosity, which would have leaped at once to the vindication of Lydgate from the suspicion of having accepted money as a bribe, underwent a melancholy check when she came to consider all the circumstances of the case by the light of Mr. Farebrother's experience.

"It is a delicate matter to touch," he said. "How can we begin to inquire into it? It must be either publicly by setting the magistrate and coroner to work, or privately by questioning Lydgate. As to the first proceeding there is no solid ground to go upon, else Hawley would have adopted it; and as to opening the subject with Lydgate, I confess I should shrink from it. He would probably take it as a deadly insult. I have more than once experienced the difficulty of speaking to him on personal matters. And—one should know the truth about his conduct beforehand, to feel very confident of a good result."

"I feel convinced that his conduct has not been guilty: I believe that people are almost always better than their neighbors think they are," said Dorothea. Some of her intensest experience in the last two years had set her mind strongly in opposition to any unfavorable construction of others; and for the first time she felt rather discontented with Mr. Farebrother. She disliked this cautious weighing of consequences, instead of an ardent faith in efforts of justice and mercy, which would conquer by their emotional force. Two days afterwards, he was dining at the Manor with her uncle and the Chettams, and when the dessert was standing uneaten, the servants were out of the room, and Mr. Brooke was nodding in a nap, she returned to the subject with renewed vivacity.

"Mr. Lydgate would understand that if his friends hear a calumny about him their first wish must be to justify him. What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult to each other? I cannot be indifferent to the

troubles of a man who advised me in *my* trouble, and attended me in my illness.”

Dorothea’s tone and manner were not more energetic than they had been when she was at the head of her uncle’s table nearly three years before, and her experience since had given her more right to express a decided opinion. But Sir James Chettam was no longer the diffident and acquiescent suitor: he was the anxious brother-in-law, with a devout admiration for his sister, but with a constant alarm lest she should fall under some new illusion almost as bad as marrying Casaubon. He smiled much less; when he said “Exactly” it was more often an introduction to a dissentient opinion than in those submissive bachelor days; and Dorothea found to her surprise that she had to resolve not to be afraid of him—all the more because he was really her best friend. He disagreed with her now.

“But, Dorothea,” he said, remonstrantly, “you can’t undertake to manage a man’s life for him in that way. Lydgate must know—at least he will soon come to know how he stands. If he can clear himself, he will. He must act for himself.”

“I think his friends must wait till they find an opportunity,” added Mr. Farebrother. “It is possible—I have often felt so much weakness in myself that I can conceive even a man of honorable disposition, such as I have always believed Lydgate to be, succumbing to such a temptation as that of accepting money which was offered more or less indirectly as a bribe to insure his silence about scandalous facts long gone by. I say, I can conceive this, if he were under the pressure of hard circumstances—if he had been harassed as I feel sure Lydgate has been. I would not believe anything worse of him except under stringent proof. But there is the terrible Nemesis following on some errors, that it is always possible for those who like it to interpret them into a crime: there is no proof in favor of the man outside his own consciousness and assertion.”

“Oh, how cruel!” said Dorothea, clasping her hands. “And would you not like to be the one person who believed in that man’s innocence, if the rest of the world belied him? Besides, there is a man’s character beforehand to speak for him.”

“But, my dear Mrs. Casaubon,” said Mr. Farebrother, smiling gently at her ardor, “character is not cut in marble—it is not something solid and

unalterable. It is something living and changing, and may become diseased as our bodies do.”

“Then it may be rescued and healed,” said Dorothea “I should not be afraid of asking Mr. Lydgate to tell me the truth, that I might help him. Why should I be afraid? Now that I am not to have the land, James, I might do as Mr. Bulstrode proposed, and take his place in providing for the Hospital; and I have to consult Mr. Lydgate, to know thoroughly what are the prospects of doing good by keeping up the present plans. There is the best opportunity in the world for me to ask for his confidence; and he would be able to tell me things which might make all the circumstances clear. Then we would all stand by him and bring him out of his trouble. People glorify all sorts of bravery except the bravery they might show on behalf of their nearest neighbors.” Dorothea’s eyes had a moist brightness in them, and the changed tones of her voice roused her uncle, who began to listen.

“It is true that a woman may venture on some efforts of sympathy which would hardly succeed if we men undertook them,” said Mr. Farebrother, almost converted by Dorothea’s ardor.

“Surely, a woman is bound to be cautious and listen to those who know the world better than she does.” said Sir James, with his little frown. “Whatever you do in the end, Dorothea, you should really keep back at present, and not volunteer any meddling with this Bulstrode business. We don’t know yet what may turn up. You must agree with me?” he ended, looking at Mr. Farebrother.

“I do think it would be better to wait,” said the latter.

“Yes, yes, my dear,” said Mr. Brooke, not quite knowing at what point the discussion had arrived, but coming up to it with a contribution which was generally appropriate. “It is easy to go too far, you know. You must not let your ideas run away with you. And as to being in a hurry to put money into schemes—it won’t do, you know. Garth has drawn me in uncommonly with repairs, draining, that sort of thing: I’m uncommonly out of pocket with one thing or another. I must pull up. As for you, Chettam, you are spending a fortune on those oak fences round your demesne.”

Dorothea, submitting uneasily to this discouragement, went with Celia into the library, which was her usual drawing-room.

“Now, Dodo, do listen to what James says,” said Celia, “else you will be getting into a scrape. You always did, and you always will, when you set about doing as you please. And I think it is a mercy now after all that you have got James to think for you. He lets you have your plans, only he hinders you from being taken in. And that is the good of having a brother instead of a husband. A husband would not let you have your plans.”

“As if I wanted a husband!” said Dorothea. “I only want not to have my feelings checked at every turn.” Mrs. Casaubon was still undisciplined enough to burst into angry tears.

“Now, really, Dodo,” said Celia, with rather a deeper guttural than usual, “you *are* contradictory: first one thing and then another. You used to submit to Mr. Casaubon quite shamefully: I think you would have given up ever coming to see me if he had asked you.”

“Of course I submitted to him, because it was my duty; it was my feeling for him,” said Dorothea, looking through the prism of her tears.

“Then why can’t you think it your duty to submit a little to what James wishes?” said Celia, with a sense of stringency in her argument. “Because he only wishes what is for your own good. And, of course, men know best about everything, except what women know better.” Dorothea laughed and forgot her tears.

“Well, I mean about babies and those things,” explained Celia. “I should not give up to James when I knew he was wrong, as you used to do to Mr. Casaubon.”

## CHAPTER LXXIII.

Pity the laden one; this wandering woe  
May visit you and me.

When Lydgate had allayed Mrs. Bulstrode's anxiety by telling her that her husband had been seized with faintness at the meeting, but that he trusted soon to see him better and would call again the next day, unless she sent for him earlier, he went directly home, got on his horse, and rode three miles out of the town for the sake of being out of reach.

He felt himself becoming violent and unreasonable as if raging under the pain of stings: he was ready to curse the day on which he had come to Middlemarch. Everything that had happened to him there seemed a mere preparation for this hateful fatality, which had come as a blight on his honorable ambition, and must make even people who had only vulgar standards regard his reputation as irrevocably damaged. In such moments a man can hardly escape being unloving. Lydgate thought of himself as the sufferer, and of others as the agents who had injured his lot. He had meant everything to turn out differently; and others had thrust themselves into his life and thwarted his purposes. His marriage seemed an unmitigated calamity; and he was afraid of going to Rosamond before he had vented himself in this solitary rage, lest the mere sight of her should exasperate him and make him behave unwarrantably. There are episodes in most men's lives in which their highest qualities can only cast a deterring shadow over the objects that fill their inward vision: Lydgate's tenderheartedness was present just then only as a dread lest he should offend against it, not as an emotion that swayed him to tenderness. For he was very miserable. Only those who know the supremacy of the intellectual life—the life which has a seed of ennobling thought and purpose within it—can understand the grief of one who falls from that serene activity into the absorbing soul-wasting struggle with worldly annoyances.

How was he to live on without vindicating himself among people who suspected him of baseness? How could he go silently away from Middlemarch as if he were retreating before a just condemnation? And yet how was he to set about vindicating himself?

For that scene at the meeting, which he had just witnessed, although it had told him no particulars, had been enough to make his own situation thoroughly clear to him. Bulstrode had been in dread of scandalous disclosures on the part of Raffles. Lydgate could now construct all the probabilities of the case. "He was afraid of some betrayal in my hearing: all he wanted was to bind me to him by a strong obligation: that was why he passed on a sudden from hardness to liberality. And he may have tampered with the patient—he may have disobeyed my orders. I fear he did. But whether he did or not, the world believes that he somehow or other poisoned the man and that I winked at the crime, if I didn't help in it. And yet—and yet he may not be guilty of the last offence; and it is just possible that the change towards me may have been a genuine relenting—the effect of second thoughts such as he alleged. What we call the 'just possible' is sometimes true and the thing we find it easier to believe is grossly false. In his last dealings with this man Bulstrode may have kept his hands pure, in spite of my suspicion to the contrary."

There was a benumbing cruelty in his position. Even if he renounced every other consideration than that of justifying himself—if he met shrugs, cold glances, and avoidance as an accusation, and made a public statement of all the facts as he knew them, who would be convinced? It would be playing the part of a fool to offer his own testimony on behalf of himself, and say, "I did not take the money as a bribe." The circumstances would always be stronger than his assertion. And besides, to come forward and tell everything about himself must include declarations about Bulstrode which would darken the suspicions of others against him. He must tell that he had not known of Raffles's existence when he first mentioned his pressing need of money to Bulstrode, and that he took the money innocently as a result of that communication, not knowing that a new motive for the loan might have arisen on his being called in to this man. And after all, the suspicion of Bulstrode's motives might be unjust.

But then came the question whether he should have acted in precisely the same way if he had not taken the money? Certainly, if Raffles had

continued alive and susceptible of further treatment when he arrived, and he had then imagined any disobedience to his orders on the part of Bulstrode, he would have made a strict inquiry, and if his conjecture had been verified he would have thrown up the case, in spite of his recent heavy obligation. But if he had not received any money—if Bulstrode had never revoked his cold recommendation of bankruptcy—would he, Lydgate, have abstained from all inquiry even on finding the man dead?—would the shrinking from an insult to Bulstrode—would the dubiousness of all medical treatment and the argument that his own treatment would pass for the wrong with most members of his profession—have had just the same force or significance with him?

That was the uneasy corner of Lydgate's consciousness while he was reviewing the facts and resisting all reproach. If he had been independent, this matter of a patient's treatment and the distinct rule that he must do or see done that which he believed best for the life committed to him, would have been the point on which he would have been the sturdiest. As it was, he had rested in the consideration that disobedience to his orders, however it might have arisen, could not be considered a crime, that in the dominant opinion obedience to his orders was just as likely to be fatal, and that the affair was simply one of etiquette. Whereas, again and again, in his time of freedom, he had denounced the perversion of pathological doubt into moral doubt and had said—"the purest experiment in treatment may still be conscientious: my business is to take care of life, and to do the best I can think of for it. Science is properly more scrupulous than dogma. Dogma gives a charter to mistake, but the very breath of science is a contest with mistake, and must keep the conscience alive." Alas! the scientific conscience had got into the debasing company of money obligation and selfish respects.

"Is there a medical man of them all in Middlemarch who would question himself as I do?" said poor Lydgate, with a renewed outburst of rebellion against the oppression of his lot. "And yet they will all feel warranted in making a wide space between me and them, as if I were a leper! My practice and my reputation are utterly damned—I can see that. Even if I could be cleared by valid evidence, it would make little difference to the blessed world here. I have been set down as tainted and should be cheapened to them all the same."

Already there had been abundant signs which had hitherto puzzled him, that just when he had been paying off his debts and getting cheerfully on his feet, the townsmen were avoiding him or looking strangely at him, and in two instances it came to his knowledge that patients of his had called in another practitioner. The reasons were too plain now. The general black-balling had begun.

No wonder that in Lydgate's energetic nature the sense of a hopeless misconception easily turned into a dogged resistance. The scowl which occasionally showed itself on his square brow was not a meaningless accident. Already when he was re-entering the town after that ride taken in the first hours of stinging pain, he was setting his mind on remaining in Middlemarch in spite of the worst that could be done against him. He would not retreat before calumny, as if he submitted to it. He would face it to the utmost, and no act of his should show that he was afraid. It belonged to the generosity as well as defiant force of his nature that he resolved not to shrink from showing to the full his sense of obligation to Bulstrode. It was true that the association with this man had been fatal to him—true that if he had had the thousand pounds still in his hands with all his debts unpaid he would have returned the money to Bulstrode, and taken beggary rather than the rescue which had been sullied with the suspicion of a bribe (for, remember, he was one of the proudest among the sons of men)—nevertheless, he would not turn away from this crushed fellow-mortal whose aid he had used, and make a pitiful effort to get acquittal for himself by howling against another. "I shall do as I think right, and explain to nobody. They will try to starve me out, but—" he was going on with an obstinate resolve, but he was getting near home, and the thought of Rosamond urged itself again into that chief place from which it had been thrust by the agonized struggles of wounded honor and pride.

How would Rosamond take it all? Here was another weight of chain to drag, and poor Lydgate was in a bad mood for bearing her dumb mastery. He had no impulse to tell her the trouble which must soon be common to them both. He preferred waiting for the incidental disclosure which events must soon bring about.



## CHAPTER LXXIV.

“Mercifully grant that we may grow aged together.”  
—BOOK OF TOBIT: *Marriage Prayer*.

In Middlemarch a wife could not long remain ignorant that the town held a bad opinion of her husband. No feminine intimate might carry her friendship so far as to make a plain statement to the wife of the unpleasant fact known or believed about her husband; but when a woman with her thoughts much at leisure got them suddenly employed on something grievously disadvantageous to her neighbors, various moral impulses were called into play which tended to stimulate utterance. Candor was one. To be candid, in Middlemarch phraseology, meant, to use an early opportunity of letting your friends know that you did not take a cheerful view of their capacity, their conduct, or their position; and a robust candor never waited to be asked for its opinion. Then, again, there was the love of truth—a wide phrase, but meaning in this relation, a lively objection to seeing a wife look happier than her husband’s character warranted, or manifest too much satisfaction in her lot—the poor thing should have some hint given her that if she knew the truth she would have less complacency in her bonnet, and in light dishes for a supper-party. Stronger than all, there was the regard for a friend’s moral improvement, sometimes called her soul, which was likely to be benefited by remarks tending to gloom, uttered with the accompaniment of pensive staring at the furniture and a manner implying that the speaker would not tell what was on her mind, from regard to the feelings of her hearer. On the whole, one might say that an ardent charity was at work setting the virtuous mind to make a neighbor unhappy for her good.

There were hardly any wives in Middlemarch whose matrimonial misfortunes would in different ways be likely to call forth more of this moral activity than Rosamond and her aunt Bulstrode. Mrs. Bulstrode was not an object of dislike, and had never consciously injured any human being. Men had always thought her a handsome comfortable woman, and had reckoned it among the signs of Bulstrode’s hypocrisy that he had

chosen a red-blooded Vincy, instead of a ghastly and melancholy person suited to his low esteem for earthly pleasure. When the scandal about her husband was disclosed they remarked of her—"Ah, poor woman! She's as honest as the day—*she* never suspected anything wrong in him, you may depend on it." Women, who were intimate with her, talked together much of "poor Harriet," imagined what her feelings must be when she came to know everything, and conjectured how much she had already come to know. There was no spiteful disposition towards her; rather, there was a busy benevolence anxious to ascertain what it would be well for her to feel and do under the circumstances, which of course kept the imagination occupied with her character and history from the times when she was Harriet Vincy till now. With the review of Mrs. Bulstrode and her position it was inevitable to associate Rosamond, whose prospects were under the same blight with her aunt's. Rosamond was more severely criticised and less pitied, though she too, as one of the good old Vincy family who had always been known in Middlemarch, was regarded as a victim to marriage with an interloper. The Vincys had their weaknesses, but then they lay on the surface: there was never anything bad to be "found out" concerning them. Mrs. Bulstrode was vindicated from any resemblance to her husband. Harriet's faults were her own.

"She has always been showy," said Mrs. Hackbutt, making tea for a small party, "though she has got into the way of putting her religion forward, to conform to her husband; she has tried to hold her head up above Middlemarch by making it known that she invites clergymen and heaven-knows-who from Riverston and those places."

"We can hardly blame her for that," said Mrs. Sprague; "because few of the best people in the town cared to associate with Bulstrode, and she must have somebody to sit down at her table."

"Mr. Thesiger has always countenanced him," said Mrs. Hackbutt. "I think he must be sorry now."

"But he was never fond of him in his heart—that every one knows," said Mrs. Tom Toller. "Mr. Thesiger never goes into extremes. He keeps to the truth in what is evangelical. It is only clergymen like Mr. Tyke, who want to use Dissenting hymn-books and that low kind of religion, who ever found Bulstrode to their taste."

“I understand, Mr. Tyke is in great distress about him,” said Mrs. Hackbutt. “And well he may be: they say the Bulstrodes have half kept the Tyke family.”

“And of course it is a discredit to his doctrines,” said Mrs. Sprague, who was elderly, and old-fashioned in her opinions.

“People will not make a boast of being methodistical in Middlemarch for a good while to come.”

“I think we must not set down people’s bad actions to their religion,” said falcon-faced Mrs. Plymdale, who had been listening hitherto.

“Oh, my dear, we are forgetting,” said Mrs. Sprague. “We ought not to be talking of this before you.”

“I am sure I have no reason to be partial,” said Mrs. Plymdale, coloring. “It’s true Mr. Plymdale has always been on good terms with Mr. Bulstrode, and Harriet Vincy was my friend long before she married him. But I have always kept my own opinions and told her where she was wrong, poor thing. Still, in point of religion, I must say, Mr. Bulstrode might have done what he has, and worse, and yet have been a man of no religion. I don’t say that there has not been a little too much of that—I like moderation myself. But truth is truth. The men tried at the assizes are not all over-religious, I suppose.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Hackbutt, wheeling adroitly, “all I can say is, that I think she ought to separate from him.”

“I can’t say that,” said Mrs. Sprague. “She took him for better or worse, you know.”

“But ‘worse’ can never mean finding out that your husband is fit for Newgate,” said Mrs. Hackbutt. “Fancy living with such a man! I should expect to be poisoned.”

“Yes, I think myself it is an encouragement to crime if such men are to be taken care of and waited on by good wives,” said Mrs. Tom Toller.

“And a good wife poor Harriet has been,” said Mrs. Plymdale. “She thinks her husband the first of men. It’s true he has never denied her anything.”

“Well, we shall see what she will do,” said Mrs. Hackbutt. “I suppose she knows nothing yet, poor creature. I do hope and trust I shall not see

her, for I should be frightened to death lest I should say anything about her husband. Do you think any hint has reached her?"

"I should hardly think so," said Mrs. Tom Toller. "We hear that *he* is ill, and has never stirred out of the house since the meeting on Thursday; but she was with her girls at church yesterday, and they had new Tuscan bonnets. Her own had a feather in it. I have never seen that her religion made any difference in her dress."

"She wears very neat patterns always," said Mrs. Plymdale, a little stung. "And that feather I know she got dyed a pale lavender on purpose to be consistent. I must say it of Harriet that she wishes to do right."

"As to her knowing what has happened, it can't be kept from her long," said Mrs. Hackbutt. "The Vincys know, for Mr. Vincy was at the meeting. It will be a great blow to him. There is his daughter as well as his sister."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Sprague. "Nobody supposes that Mr. Lydgate can go on holding up his head in Middlemarch, things look so black about the thousand pounds he took just at that man's death. It really makes one shudder."

"Pride must have a fall," said Mrs. Hackbutt.

"I am not so sorry for Rosamond Vincy that was as I am for her aunt," said Mrs. Plymdale. "She needed a lesson."

"I suppose the Bulstrodes will go and live abroad somewhere," said Mrs. Sprague. "That is what is generally done when there is anything disgraceful in a family."

"And a most deadly blow it will be to Harriet," said Mrs. Plymdale. "If ever a woman was crushed, she will be. I pity her from my heart. And with all her faults, few women are better. From a girl she had the neatest ways, and was always good-hearted, and as open as the day. You might look into her drawers when you would—always the same. And so she has brought up Kate and Ellen. You may think how hard it will be for her to go among foreigners."

"The doctor says that is what he should recommend the Lydgates to do," said Mrs. Sprague. "He says Lydgate ought to have kept among the French."

"That would suit *her* well enough, I dare say," said Mrs. Plymdale; "there is that kind of lightness about her. But she got that from her mother;

she never got it from her aunt Bulstrode, who always gave her good advice, and to my knowledge would rather have had her marry elsewhere.”

Mrs. Plymdale was in a situation which caused her some complication of feeling. There had been not only her intimacy with Mrs. Bulstrode, but also a profitable business relation of the great Plymdale dyeing house with Mr. Bulstrode, which on the one hand would have inclined her to desire that the mildest view of his character should be the true one, but on the other, made her the more afraid of seeming to palliate his culpability. Again, the late alliance of her family with the Tollers had brought her in connection with the best circle, which gratified her in every direction except in the inclination to those serious views which she believed to be the best in another sense. The sharp little woman's conscience was somewhat troubled in the adjustment of these opposing “bests,” and of her griefs and satisfactions under late events, which were likely to humble those who needed humbling, but also to fall heavily on her old friend whose faults she would have preferred seeing on a background of prosperity.

Poor Mrs. Bulstrode, meanwhile, had been no further shaken by the oncoming tread of calamity than in the busier stirring of that secret uneasiness which had always been present in her since the last visit of Raffles to The Shrubs. That the hateful man had come ill to Stone Court, and that her husband had chosen to remain there and watch over him, she allowed to be explained by the fact that Raffles had been employed and aided in earlier-days, and that this made a tie of benevolence towards him in his degraded helplessness; and she had been since then innocently cheered by her husband's more hopeful speech about his own health and ability to continue his attention to business. The calm was disturbed when Lydgate had brought him home ill from the meeting, and in spite of comforting assurances during the next few days, she cried in private from the conviction that her husband was not suffering from bodily illness merely, but from something that afflicted his mind. He would not allow her to read to him, and scarcely to sit with him, alleging nervous susceptibility to sounds and movements; yet she suspected that in shutting himself up in his private room he wanted to be busy with his papers. Something, she felt sure, had happened. Perhaps it was some great loss of money; and she was kept in the dark. Not daring to question her husband,

she said to Lydgate, on the fifth day after the meeting, when she had not left home except to go to church—

“Mr. Lydgate, pray be open with me: I like to know the truth. Has anything happened to Mr. Bulstrode?”

“Some little nervous shock,” said Lydgate, evasively. He felt that it was not for him to make the painful revelation.

“But what brought it on?” said Mrs. Bulstrode, looking directly at him with her large dark eyes.

“There is often something poisonous in the air of public rooms,” said Lydgate. “Strong men can stand it, but it tells on people in proportion to the delicacy of their systems. It is often impossible to account for the precise moment of an attack—or rather, to say why the strength gives way at a particular moment.”

Mrs. Bulstrode was not satisfied with this answer. There remained in her the belief that some calamity had befallen her husband, of which she was to be kept in ignorance; and it was in her nature strongly to object to such concealment. She begged leave for her daughters to sit with their father, and drove into the town to pay some visits, conjecturing that if anything were known to have gone wrong in Mr. Bulstrode’s affairs, she should see or hear some sign of it.

She called on Mrs. Thesiger, who was not at home, and then drove to Mrs. Hackbutt’s on the other side of the churchyard. Mrs. Hackbutt saw her coming from an up-stairs window, and remembering her former alarm lest she should meet Mrs. Bulstrode, felt almost bound in consistency to send word that she was not at home; but against that, there was a sudden strong desire within her for the excitement of an interview in which she was quite determined not to make the slightest allusion to what was in her mind.

Hence Mrs. Bulstrode was shown into the drawing-room, and Mrs. Hackbutt went to her, with more tightness of lip and rubbing of her hands than was usually observable in her, these being precautions adopted against freedom of speech. She was resolved not to ask how Mr. Bulstrode was.

“I have not been anywhere except to church for nearly a week,” said Mrs. Bulstrode, after a few introductory remarks. “But Mr. Bulstrode was

taken so ill at the meeting on Thursday that I have not liked to leave the house.”

Mrs. Hackbutt rubbed the back of one hand with the palm of the other held against her chest, and let her eyes ramble over the pattern on the rug.

“Was Mr. Hackbutt at the meeting?” persevered Mrs. Bulstrode.

“Yes, he was,” said Mrs. Hackbutt, with the same attitude. “The land is to be bought by subscription, I believe.”

“Let us hope that there will be no more cases of cholera to be buried in it,” said Mrs. Bulstrode. “It is an awful visitation. But I always think Middlemarch a very healthy spot. I suppose it is being used to it from a child; but I never saw the town I should like to live at better, and especially our end.”

“I am sure I should be glad that you always should live at Middlemarch, Mrs. Bulstrode,” said Mrs. Hackbutt, with a slight sigh. “Still, we must learn to resign ourselves, wherever our lot may be cast. Though I am sure there will always be people in this town who will wish you well.”

Mrs. Hackbutt longed to say, “if you take my advice you will part from your husband,” but it seemed clear to her that the poor woman knew nothing of the thunder ready to bolt on her head, and she herself could do no more than prepare her a little. Mrs. Bulstrode felt suddenly rather chill and trembling: there was evidently something unusual behind this speech of Mrs. Hackbutt’s; but though she had set out with the desire to be fully informed, she found herself unable now to pursue her brave purpose, and turning the conversation by an inquiry about the young Hackbuts, she soon took her leave saying that she was going to see Mrs. Plymdale. On her way thither she tried to imagine that there might have been some unusually warm sparring at the meeting between Mr. Bulstrode and some of his frequent opponents—perhaps Mr. Hackbutt might have been one of them. That would account for everything.

But when she was in conversation with Mrs. Plymdale that comforting explanation seemed no longer tenable. “Selina” received her with a pathetic affectionateness and a disposition to give edifying answers on the commonest topics, which could hardly have reference to an ordinary quarrel of which the most important consequence was a perturbation of Mr. Bulstrode’s health. Beforehand Mrs. Bulstrode had thought that she would sooner question Mrs. Plymdale than any one else; but she found to

her surprise that an old friend is not always the person whom it is easiest to make a confidant of: there was the barrier of remembered communication under other circumstances—there was the dislike of being pitied and informed by one who had been long wont to allow her the superiority. For certain words of mysterious appropriateness that Mrs. Plymdale let fall about her resolution never to turn her back on her friends, convinced Mrs. Bulstrode that what had happened must be some kind of misfortune, and instead of being able to say with her native directness, “What is it that you have in your mind?” she found herself anxious to get away before she had heard anything more explicit. She began to have an agitating certainty that the misfortune was something more than the mere loss of money, being keenly sensitive to the fact that Selina now, just as Mrs. Hackbutt had done before, avoided noticing what she said about her husband, as they would have avoided noticing a personal blemish.

She said good-by with nervous haste, and told the coachman to drive to Mr. Vincy’s warehouse. In that short drive her dread gathered so much force from the sense of darkness, that when she entered the private counting-house where her brother sat at his desk, her knees trembled and her usually florid face was deathly pale. Something of the same effect was produced in him by the sight of her: he rose from his seat to meet her, took her by the hand, and said, with his impulsive rashness—

“God help you, Harriet! you know all.”

That moment was perhaps worse than any which came after. It contained that concentrated experience which in great crises of emotion reveals the bias of a nature, and is prophetic of the ultimate act which will end an intermediate struggle. Without that memory of Raffles she might still have thought only of monetary ruin, but now along with her brother’s look and words there darted into her mind the idea of some guilt in her husband—then, under the working of terror came the image of her husband exposed to disgrace—and then, after an instant of scorching shame in which she felt only the eyes of the world, with one leap of her heart she was at his side in mournful but unreproaching fellowship with shame and isolation. All this went on within her in a mere flash of time—while she sank into the chair, and raised her eyes to her brother, who stood over her. “I know nothing, Walter. What is it?” she said, faintly.



He told her everything, very inartificially, in slow fragments, making her aware that the scandal went much beyond proof, especially as to the end of Raffles.

“People will talk,” he said. “Even if a man has been acquitted by a jury, they’ll talk, and nod and wink—and as far as the world goes, a man might often as well be guilty as not. It’s a breakdown blow, and it damages Lydgate as much as Bulstrode. I don’t pretend to say what is the truth. I only wish we had never heard the name of either Bulstrode or Lydgate. You’d better have been a Vincy all your life, and so had Rosamond.” Mrs. Bulstrode made no reply.

“But you must bear up as well as you can, Harriet. People don’t blame *you*. And I’ll stand by you whatever you make up your mind to do,” said the brother, with rough but well-meaning affectionateness.

“Give me your arm to the carriage, Walter,” said Mrs. Bulstrode. “I feel very weak.”

And when she got home she was obliged to say to her daughter, “I am not well, my dear; I must go and lie down. Attend to your papa. Leave me in quiet. I shall take no dinner.”

She locked herself in her room. She needed time to get used to her maimed consciousness, her poor lopped life, before she could walk steadily to the place allotted her. A new searching light had fallen on her husband’s character, and she could not judge him leniently: the twenty years in which she had believed in him and venerated him by virtue of his concealments came back with particulars that made them seem an odious deceit. He had married her with that bad past life hidden behind him, and she had no faith left to protest his innocence of the worst that was imputed to him. Her honest ostentatious nature made the sharing of a merited dishonor as bitter as it could be to any mortal.

But this imperfectly taught woman, whose phrases and habits were an odd patchwork, had a loyal spirit within her. The man whose prosperity she had shared through nearly half a life, and who had unvaryingly cherished her—now that punishment had befallen him it was not possible to her in any sense to forsake him. There is a forsaking which still sits at the same board and lies on the same couch with the forsaken soul, withering it the more by unloving proximity. She knew, when she locked her door, that she should unlock it ready to go down to her unhappy husband and espouse his

sorrow, and say of his guilt, I will mourn and not reproach. But she needed time to gather up her strength; she needed to sob out her farewell to all the gladness and pride of her life. When she had resolved to go down, she prepared herself by some little acts which might seem mere folly to a hard onlooker; they were her way of expressing to all spectators visible or invisible that she had begun a new life in which she embraced humiliation. She took off all her ornaments and put on a plain black gown, and instead of wearing her much-adorned cap and large bows of hair, she brushed her hair down and put on a plain bonnet-cap, which made her look suddenly like an early Methodist.

Bulstrode, who knew that his wife had been out and had come in saying that she was not well, had spent the time in an agitation equal to hers. He had looked forward to her learning the truth from others, and had acquiesced in that probability, as something easier to him than any confession. But now that he imagined the moment of her knowledge come, he awaited the result in anguish. His daughters had been obliged to consent to leave him, and though he had allowed some food to be brought to him, he had not touched it. He felt himself perishing slowly in unpitied misery. Perhaps he should never see his wife's face with affection in it again. And if he turned to God there seemed to be no answer but the pressure of retribution.

It was eight o'clock in the evening before the door opened and his wife entered. He dared not look up at her. He sat with his eyes bent down, and as she went towards him she thought he looked smaller—he seemed so withered and shrunken. A movement of new compassion and old tenderness went through her like a great wave, and putting one hand on his which rested on the arm of the chair, and the other on his shoulder, she said, solemnly but kindly—

“Look up, Nicholas.”

He raised his eyes with a little start and looked at her half amazed for a moment: her pale face, her changed, mourning dress, the trembling about her mouth, all said, “I know;” and her hands and eyes rested gently on him. He burst out crying and they cried together, she sitting at his side. They could not yet speak to each other of the shame which she was bearing with him, or of the acts which had brought it down on them. His confession was silent, and her promise of faithfulness was silent. Open-

minded as she was, she nevertheless shrank from the words which would have expressed their mutual consciousness, as she would have shrunk from flakes of fire. She could not say, "How much is only slander and false suspicion?" and he did not say, "I am innocent."

## CHAPTER LXXV.

“Le sentiment de la fausseté des plaisirs présents, et l’ignorance de la vanité des plaisirs absents causent l’inconstance.”—PASCAL.

Rosamond had a gleam of returning cheerfulness when the house was freed from the threatening figure, and when all the disagreeable creditors were paid. But she was not joyous: her married life had fulfilled none of her hopes, and had been quite spoiled for her imagination. In this brief interval of calm, Lydgate, remembering that he had often been stormy in his hours of perturbation, and mindful of the pain Rosamond had had to bear, was carefully gentle towards her; but he, too, had lost some of his old spirit, and he still felt it necessary to refer to an economical change in their way of living as a matter of course, trying to reconcile her to it gradually, and repressing his anger when she answered by wishing that he would go to live in London. When she did not make this answer, she listened languidly, and wondered what she had that was worth living for. The hard and contemptuous words which had fallen from her husband in his anger had deeply offended that vanity which he had at first called into active enjoyment; and what she regarded as his perverse way of looking at things, kept up a secret repulsion, which made her receive all his tenderness as a poor substitute for the happiness he had failed to give her. They were at a disadvantage with their neighbors, and there was no longer any outlook towards Quallingham—there was no outlook anywhere except in an occasional letter from Will Ladislaw. She had felt stung and disappointed by Will’s resolution to quit Middlemarch, for in spite of what she knew and guessed about his admiration for Dorothea, she secretly cherished the belief that he had, or would necessarily come to have, much more admiration for herself; Rosamond being one of those women who live much in the idea that each man they meet would have preferred them if the preference had not been hopeless. Mrs. Casaubon was all very well; but Will’s interest in her dated before he knew Mrs. Lydgate. Rosamond took his way of talking to herself, which was a mixture of playful fault-

finding and hyperbolic gallantry, as the disguise of a deeper feeling; and in his presence she felt that agreeable titillation of vanity and sense of romantic drama which Lydgate's presence had no longer the magic to create. She even fancied—what will not men and women fancy in these matters?—that Will exaggerated his admiration for Mrs. Casaubon in order to pique herself. In this way poor Rosamond's brain had been busy before Will's departure. He would have made, she thought, a much more suitable husband for her than she had found in Lydgate. No notion could have been falser than this, for Rosamond's discontent in her marriage was due to the conditions of marriage itself, to its demand for self-suppression and tolerance, and not to the nature of her husband; but the easy conception of an unreal Better had a sentimental charm which diverted her ennui. She constructed a little romance which was to vary the flatness of her life: Will Ladislaw was always to be a bachelor and live near her, always to be at her command, and have an understood though never fully expressed passion for her, which would be sending out lambent flames every now and then in interesting scenes. His departure had been a proportionate disappointment, and had sadly increased her weariness of Middlemarch; but at first she had the alternative dream of pleasures in store from her intercourse with the family at Quellingham. Since then the troubles of her married life had deepened, and the absence of other relief encouraged her regretful rumination over that thin romance which she had once fed on. Men and women make sad mistakes about their own symptoms, taking their vague uneasy longings, sometimes for genius, sometimes for religion, and oftener still for a mighty love. Will Ladislaw had written chatty letters, half to her and half to Lydgate, and she had replied: their separation, she felt, was not likely to be final, and the change she now most longed for was that Lydgate should go to live in London; everything would be agreeable in London; and she had set to work with quiet determination to win this result, when there came a sudden, delightful promise which inspirited her.

It came shortly before the memorable meeting at the town-hall, and was nothing less than a letter from Will Ladislaw to Lydgate, which turned indeed chiefly on his new interest in plans of colonization, but mentioned incidentally, that he might find it necessary to pay a visit to Middlemarch within the next few weeks—a very pleasant necessity, he said, almost as good as holidays to a schoolboy. He hoped there was his old place on the

rug, and a great deal of music in store for him. But he was quite uncertain as to the time. While Lydgate was reading the letter to Rosamond, her face looked like a reviving flower—it grew prettier and more blooming. There was nothing unendurable now: the debts were paid, Mr. Ladislaw was coming, and Lydgate would be persuaded to leave Middlemarch and settle in London, which was “so different from a provincial town.”

That was a bright bit of morning. But soon the sky became black over poor Rosamond. The presence of a new gloom in her husband, about which he was entirely reserved towards her—for he dreaded to expose his lacerated feeling to her neutrality and misconception—soon received a painfully strange explanation, alien to all her previous notions of what could affect her happiness. In the new gayety of her spirits, thinking that Lydgate had merely a worse fit of moodiness than usual, causing him to leave her remarks unanswered, and evidently to keep out of her way as much as possible, she chose, a few days after the meeting, and without speaking to him on the subject, to send out notes of invitation for a small evening party, feeling convinced that this was a judicious step, since people seemed to have been keeping aloof from them, and wanted restoring to the old habit of intercourse. When the invitations had been accepted, she would tell Lydgate, and give him a wise admonition as to how a medical man should behave to his neighbors; for Rosamond had the gravest little airs possible about other people’s duties. But all the invitations were declined, and the last answer came into Lydgate’s hands.

“This is Chichely’s scratch. What is he writing to you about?” said Lydgate, wonderingly, as he handed the note to her. She was obliged to let him see it, and, looking at her severely, he said—

“Why on earth have you been sending out invitations without telling me, Rosamond? I beg, I insist that you will not invite any one to this house. I suppose you have been inviting others, and they have refused too.” She said nothing.

“Do you hear me?” thundered Lydgate.

“Yes, certainly I hear you,” said Rosamond, turning her head aside with the movement of a graceful long-necked bird.

Lydgate tossed his head without any grace and walked out of the room, feeling himself dangerous. Rosamond’s thought was, that he was getting more and more unbearable—not that there was any new special reason for

this peremptoriness. His indisposition to tell her anything in which he was sure beforehand that she would not be interested was growing into an unreflecting habit, and she was in ignorance of everything connected with the thousand pounds except that the loan had come from her uncle Bulstrode. Lydgate's odious humors and their neighbors' apparent avoidance of them had an unaccountable date for her in their relief from money difficulties. If the invitations had been accepted she would have gone to invite her mamma and the rest, whom she had seen nothing of for several days; and she now put on her bonnet to go and inquire what had become of them all, suddenly feeling as if there were a conspiracy to leave her in isolation with a husband disposed to offend everybody. It was after the dinner hour, and she found her father and mother seated together alone in the drawing-room. They greeted her with sad looks, saying "Well, my dear!" and no more. She had never seen her father look so downcast; and seating herself near him she said—

"Is there anything the matter, papa?"

He did not answer, but Mrs. Vincy said, "Oh, my dear, have you heard nothing? It won't be long before it reaches you."

"Is it anything about Tertius?" said Rosamond, turning pale. The idea of trouble immediately connected itself with what had been unaccountable to her in him.

"Oh, my dear, yes. To think of your marrying into this trouble. Debt was bad enough, but this will be worse."

"Stay, stay, Lucy," said Mr. Vincy. "Have you heard nothing about your uncle Bulstrode, Rosamond?"

"No, papa," said the poor thing, feeling as if trouble were not anything she had before experienced, but some invisible power with an iron grasp that made her soul faint within her.

Her father told her everything, saying at the end, "It's better for you to know, my dear. I think Lydgate must leave the town. Things have gone against him. I dare say he couldn't help it. I don't accuse him of any harm," said Mr. Vincy. He had always before been disposed to find the utmost fault with Lydgate.

The shock to Rosamond was terrible. It seemed to her that no lot could be so cruelly hard as hers to have married a man who had become the

centre of infamous suspicions. In many cases it is inevitable that the shame is felt to be the worst part of crime; and it would have required a great deal of disentangling reflection, such as had never entered into Rosamond's life, for her in these moments to feel that her trouble was less than if her husband had been certainly known to have done something criminal. All the shame seemed to be there. And she had innocently married this man with the belief that he and his family were a glory to her! She showed her usual reticence to her parents, and only said, that if Lydgate had done as she wished he would have left Middlemarch long ago.

"She bears it beyond anything," said her mother when she was gone.

"Ah, thank God!" said Mr. Vincy, who was much broken down.

But Rosamond went home with a sense of justified repugnance towards her husband. What had he really done—how had he really acted? She did not know. Why had he not told her everything? He did not speak to her on the subject, and of course she could not speak to him. It came into her mind once that she would ask her father to let her go home again; but dwelling on that prospect made it seem utter dreariness to her: a married woman gone back to live with her parents—life seemed to have no meaning for her in such a position: she could not contemplate herself in it.

The next two days Lydgate observed a change in her, and believed that she had heard the bad news. Would she speak to him about it, or would she go on forever in the silence which seemed to imply that she believed him guilty? We must remember that he was in a morbid state of mind, in which almost all contact was pain. Certainly Rosamond in this case had equal reason to complain of reserve and want of confidence on his part; but in the bitterness of his soul he excused himself;—was he not justified in shrinking from the task of telling her, since now she knew the truth she had no impulse to speak to him? But a deeper-lying consciousness that he was in fault made him restless, and the silence between them became intolerable to him; it was as if they were both adrift on one piece of wreck and looked away from each other.

He thought, "I am a fool. Haven't I given up expecting anything? I have married care, not help." And that evening he said—

"Rosamond, have you heard anything that distresses you?"

"Yes," she answered, laying down her work, which she had been carrying on with a languid semi-consciousness, most unlike her usual self.



“What have you heard?”

“Everything, I suppose. Papa told me.”

“That people think me disgraced?”

“Yes,” said Rosamond, faintly, beginning to sew again automatically.

There was silence. Lydgate thought, “If she has any trust in me—any notion of what I am, she ought to speak now and say that she does not believe I have deserved disgrace.”

But Rosamond on her side went on moving her fingers languidly. Whatever was to be said on the subject she expected to come from Tertius. What did she know? And if he were innocent of any wrong, why did he not do something to clear himself?

This silence of hers brought a new rush of gall to that bitter mood in which Lydgate had been saying to himself that nobody believed in him—even Farebrother had not come forward. He had begun to question her with the intent that their conversation should disperse the chill fog which had gathered between them, but he felt his resolution checked by despairing resentment. Even this trouble, like the rest, she seemed to regard as if it were hers alone. He was always to her a being apart, doing what she objected to. He started from his chair with an angry impulse, and thrusting his hands in his pockets, walked up and down the room. There was an underlying consciousness all the while that he should have to master this anger, and tell her everything, and convince her of the facts. For he had almost learned the lesson that he must bend himself to her nature, and that because she came short in her sympathy, he must give the more. Soon he recurred to his intention of opening himself: the occasion must not be lost. If he could bring her to feel with some solemnity that here was a slander which must be met and not run away from, and that the whole trouble had come out of his desperate want of money, it would be a moment for urging powerfully on her that they should be one in the resolve to do with as little money as possible, so that they might weather the bad time and keep themselves independent. He would mention the definite measures which he desired to take, and win her to a willing spirit. He was bound to try this—and what else was there for him to do?

He did not know how long he had been walking uneasily backwards and forwards, but Rosamond felt that it was long, and wished that he would sit down. She too had begun to think this an opportunity for urging on Tertius

what he ought to do. Whatever might be the truth about all this misery, there was one dread which asserted itself.

Lydgate at last seated himself, not in his usual chair, but in one nearer to Rosamond, leaning aside in it towards her, and looking at her gravely before he reopened the sad subject. He had conquered himself so far, and was about to speak with a sense of solemnity, as on an occasion which was not to be repeated. He had even opened his lips, when Rosamond, letting her hands fall, looked at him and said—

“Surely, Tertius—”

“Well?”

“Surely now at last you have given up the idea of staying in Middlemarch. I cannot go on living here. Let us go to London. Papa, and every one else, says you had better go. Whatever misery I have to put up with, it will be easier away from here.”

Lydgate felt miserably jarred. Instead of that critical outpouring for which he had prepared himself with effort, here was the old round to be gone through again. He could not bear it. With a quick change of countenance he rose and went out of the room.

Perhaps if he had been strong enough to persist in his determination to be the more because she was less, that evening might have had a better issue. If his energy could have borne down that check, he might still have wrought on Rosamond’s vision and will. We cannot be sure that any natures, however inflexible or peculiar, will resist this effect from a more massive being than their own. They may be taken by storm and for the moment converted, becoming part of the soul which enwraps them in the ardor of its movement. But poor Lydgate had a throbbing pain within him, and his energy had fallen short of its task.

The beginning of mutual understanding and resolve seemed as far off as ever; nay, it seemed blocked out by the sense of unsuccessful effort. They lived on from day to day with their thoughts still apart, Lydgate going about what work he had in a mood of despair, and Rosamond feeling, with some justification, that he was behaving cruelly. It was of no use to say anything to Tertius; but when Will Ladislaw came, she was determined to tell him everything. In spite of her general reticence, she needed some one who would recognize her wrongs.

## CHAPTER LXXVI.

To mercy, pity, peace, and love  
All pray in their distress,  
And to these virtues of delight,  
Return their thankfulness.

.....  
For Mercy has a human heart,  
Pity a human face;  
And Love, the human form divine;  
And Peace, the human dress.  
—WILLIAM BLAKE: *Songs of Innocence*.

Some days later, Lydgate was riding to Lowick Manor, in consequence of a summons from Dorothea. The summons had not been unexpected, since it had followed a letter from Mr. Bulstrode, in which he stated that he had resumed his arrangements for quitting Middlemarch, and must remind Lydgate of his previous communications about the Hospital, to the purport of which he still adhered. It had been his duty, before taking further steps, to reopen the subject with Mrs. Casaubon, who now wished, as before, to discuss the question with Lydgate. “Your views may possibly have undergone some change,” wrote Mr. Bulstrode; “but, in that case also, it is desirable that you should lay them before her.”

Dorothea awaited his arrival with eager interest. Though, in deference to her masculine advisers, she had refrained from what Sir James had called “interfering in this Bulstrode business,” the hardship of Lydgate’s position was continually in her mind, and when Bulstrode applied to her again about the hospital, she felt that the opportunity was come to her which she had been hindered from hastening. In her luxurious home, wandering under the boughs of her own great trees, her thought was going out over the lot of others, and her emotions were imprisoned. The idea of some active good within her reach, “haunted her like a passion,” and another’s need having once come to her as a distinct image, preoccupied her desire with the yearning to give relief, and made her own ease tasteless. She was full of confident hope about this interview with Lydgate, never heeding

what was said of his personal reserve; never heeding that she was a very young woman. Nothing could have seemed more irrelevant to Dorothea than insistence on her youth and sex when she was moved to show her human fellowship.

As she sat waiting in the library, she could do nothing but live through again all the past scenes which had brought Lydgate into her memories. They all owed their significance to her marriage and its troubles—but no; there were two occasions in which the image of Lydgate had come painfully in connection with his wife and some one else. The pain had been allayed for Dorothea, but it had left in her an awakened conjecture as to what Lydgate's marriage might be to him, a susceptibility to the slightest hint about Mrs. Lydgate. These thoughts were like a drama to her, and made her eyes bright, and gave an attitude of suspense to her whole frame, though she was only looking out from the brown library on to the turf and the bright green buds which stood in relief against the dark evergreens.

When Lydgate came in, she was almost shocked at the change in his face, which was strikingly perceptible to her who had not seen him for two months. It was not the change of emaciation, but that effect which even young faces will very soon show from the persistent presence of resentment and despondency. Her cordial look, when she put out her hand to him, softened his expression, but only with melancholy.

“I have wished very much to see you for a long while, Mr. Lydgate,” said Dorothea when they were seated opposite each other; “but I put off asking you to come until Mr. Bulstrode applied to me again about the Hospital. I know that the advantage of keeping the management of it separate from that of the Infirmary depends on you, or, at least, on the good which you are encouraged to hope for from having it under your control. And I am sure you will not refuse to tell me exactly what you think.”

“You want to decide whether you should give a generous support to the Hospital,” said Lydgate. “I cannot conscientiously advise you to do it in dependence on any activity of mine. I may be obliged to leave the town.”

He spoke curtly, feeling the ache of despair as to his being able to carry out any purpose that Rosamond had set her mind against.

“Not because there is no one to believe in you?” said Dorothea, pouring out her words in clearness from a full heart. “I know the unhappy mistakes about you. I knew them from the first moment to be mistakes. You have never done anything vile. You would not do anything dishonorable.”

It was the first assurance of belief in him that had fallen on Lydgate’s ears. He drew a deep breath, and said, “Thank you.” He could say no more: it was something very new and strange in his life that these few words of trust from a woman should be so much to him.

“I beseech you to tell me how everything was,” said Dorothea, fearlessly. “I am sure that the truth would clear you.”

Lydgate started up from his chair and went towards the window, forgetting where he was. He had so often gone over in his mind the possibility of explaining everything without aggravating appearances that would tell, perhaps unfairly, against Bulstrode, and had so often decided against it—he had so often said to himself that his assertions would not change people’s impressions—that Dorothea’s words sounded like a temptation to do something which in his soberness he had pronounced to be unreasonable.

“Tell me, pray,” said Dorothea, with simple earnestness; “then we can consult together. It is wicked to let people think evil of any one falsely, when it can be hindered.”

Lydgate turned, remembering where he was, and saw Dorothea’s face looking up at him with a sweet trustful gravity. The presence of a noble nature, generous in its wishes, ardent in its charity, changes the lights for us: we begin to see things again in their larger, quieter masses, and to believe that we too can be seen and judged in the wholeness of our character. That influence was beginning to act on Lydgate, who had for many days been seeing all life as one who is dragged and struggling amid the throng. He sat down again, and felt that he was recovering his old self in the consciousness that he was with one who believed in it.

“I don’t want,” he said, “to bear hard on Bulstrode, who has lent me money of which I was in need—though I would rather have gone without it now. He is hunted down and miserable, and has only a poor thread of life in him. But I should like to tell you everything. It will be a comfort to me to speak where belief has gone beforehand, and where I shall not seem to

be offering assertions of my own honesty. You will feel what is fair to another, as you feel what is fair to me.”

“Do trust me,” said Dorothea; “I will not repeat anything without your leave. But at the very least, I could say that you have made all the circumstances clear to me, and that I know you are not in any way guilty. Mr. Farebrother would believe me, and my uncle, and Sir James Chettam. Nay, there are persons in Middlemarch to whom I could go; although they don’t know much of me, they would believe me. They would know that I could have no other motive than truth and justice. I would take any pains to clear you. I have very little to do. There is nothing better that I can do in the world.”

Dorothea’s voice, as she made this childlike picture of what she would do, might have been almost taken as a proof that she could do it effectively. The searching tenderness of her woman’s tones seemed made for a defence against ready accusers. Lydgate did not stay to think that she was Quixotic: he gave himself up, for the first time in his life, to the exquisite sense of leaning entirely on a generous sympathy, without any check of proud reserve. And he told her everything, from the time when, under the pressure of his difficulties, he unwillingly made his first application to Bulstrode; gradually, in the relief of speaking, getting into a more thorough utterance of what had gone on in his mind—entering fully into the fact that his treatment of the patient was opposed to the dominant practice, into his doubts at the last, his ideal of medical duty, and his uneasy consciousness that the acceptance of the money had made some difference in his private inclination and professional behavior, though not in his fulfilment of any publicly recognized obligation.

“It has come to my knowledge since,” he added, “that Hawley sent some one to examine the housekeeper at Stone Court, and she said that she gave the patient all the opium in the phial I left, as well as a good deal of brandy. But that would not have been opposed to ordinary prescriptions, even of first-rate men. The suspicions against me had no hold there: they are grounded on the knowledge that I took money, that Bulstrode had strong motives for wishing the man to die, and that he gave me the money as a bribe to concur in some malpractices or other against the patient—that in any case I accepted a bribe to hold my tongue. They are just the suspicions that cling the most obstinately, because they lie in people’s

inclination and can never be disproved. How my orders came to be disobeyed is a question to which I don't know the answer. It is still possible that Bulstrode was innocent of any criminal intention—even possible that he had nothing to do with the disobedience, and merely abstained from mentioning it. But all that has nothing to do with the public belief. It is one of those cases on which a man is condemned on the ground of his character—it is believed that he has committed a crime in some undefined way, because he had the motive for doing it; and Bulstrode's character has enveloped me, because I took his money. I am simply blighted—like a damaged ear of corn—the business is done and can't be undone.”

“Oh, it is hard!” said Dorothea. “I understand the difficulty there is in your vindicating yourself. And that all this should have come to you who had meant to lead a higher life than the common, and to find out better ways—I cannot bear to rest in this as unchangeable. I know you meant that. I remember what you said to me when you first spoke to me about the hospital. There is no sorrow I have thought more about than that—to love what is great, and try to reach it, and yet to fail.”

“Yes,” said Lydgate, feeling that here he had found room for the full meaning of his grief. “I had some ambition. I meant everything to be different with me. I thought I had more strength and mastery. But the most terrible obstacles are such as nobody can see except oneself.”

“Suppose,” said Dorothea, meditatively,—“suppose we kept on the Hospital according to the present plan, and you stayed here though only with the friendship and support of a few, the evil feeling towards you would gradually die out; there would come opportunities in which people would be forced to acknowledge that they had been unjust to you, because they would see that your purposes were pure. You may still win a great fame like the Louis and Laennec I have heard you speak of, and we shall all be proud of you,” she ended, with a smile.

“That might do if I had my old trust in myself,” said Lydgate, mournfully. “Nothing galls me more than the notion of turning round and running away before this slander, leaving it unchecked behind me. Still, I can't ask any one to put a great deal of money into a plan which depends on me.”

“It would be quite worth my while,” said Dorothea, simply. “Only think. I am very uncomfortable with my money, because they tell me I have too little for any great scheme of the sort I like best, and yet I have too much. I don’t know what to do. I have seven hundred a-year of my own fortune, and nineteen hundred a-year that Mr. Casaubon left me, and between three and four thousand of ready money in the bank. I wished to raise money and pay it off gradually out of my income which I don’t want, to buy land with and found a village which should be a school of industry; but Sir James and my uncle have convinced me that the risk would be too great. So you see that what I should most rejoice at would be to have something good to do with my money: I should like it to make other people’s lives better to them. It makes me very uneasy—coming all to me who don’t want it.”

A smile broke through the gloom of Lydgate’s face. The childlike grave-eyed earnestness with which Dorothea said all this was irresistible—blent into an adorable whole with her ready understanding of high experience. (Of lower experience such as plays a great part in the world, poor Mrs. Casaubon had a very blurred shortsighted knowledge, little helped by her imagination.) But she took the smile as encouragement of her plan.

“I think you see now that you spoke too scrupulously,” she said, in a tone of persuasion. “The hospital would be one good; and making your life quite whole and well again would be another.”

Lydgate’s smile had died away. “You have the goodness as well as the money to do all that; if it could be done,” he said. “But—”

He hesitated a little while, looking vaguely towards the window; and she sat in silent expectation. At last he turned towards her and said impetuously—

“Why should I not tell you?—you know what sort of bond marriage is. You will understand everything.”

Dorothea felt her heart beginning to beat faster. Had he that sorrow too? But she feared to say any word, and he went on immediately.

“It is impossible for me now to do anything—to take any step without considering my wife’s happiness. The thing that I might like to do if I were alone, is become impossible to me. I can’t see her miserable. She married me without knowing what she was going into, and it might have been better for her if she had not married me.”



“I know, I know—you could not give her pain, if you were not obliged to do it,” said Dorothea, with keen memory of her own life.

“And she has set her mind against staying. She wishes to go. The troubles she has had here have wearied her,” said Lydgate, breaking off again, lest he should say too much.

“But when she saw the good that might come of staying—” said Dorothea, remonstrantly, looking at Lydgate as if he had forgotten the reasons which had just been considered. He did not speak immediately.

“She would not see it,” he said at last, curtly, feeling at first that this statement must do without explanation. “And, indeed, I have lost all spirit about carrying on my life here.” He paused a moment and then, following the impulse to let Dorothea see deeper into the difficulty of his life, he said, “The fact is, this trouble has come upon her confusedly. We have not been able to speak to each other about it. I am not sure what is in her mind about it: she may fear that I have really done something base. It is my fault; I ought to be more open. But I have been suffering cruelly.”

“May I go and see her?” said Dorothea, eagerly. “Would she accept my sympathy? I would tell her that you have not been blamable before any one’s judgment but your own. I would tell her that you shall be cleared in every fair mind. I would cheer her heart. Will you ask her if I may go to see her? I did see her once.”

“I am sure you may,” said Lydgate, seizing the proposition with some hope. “She would feel honored—cheered, I think, by the proof that you at least have some respect for me. I will not speak to her about your coming—that she may not connect it with my wishes at all. I know very well that I ought not to have left anything to be told her by others, but—”

He broke off, and there was a moment’s silence. Dorothea refrained from saying what was in her mind—how well she knew that there might be invisible barriers to speech between husband and wife. This was a point on which even sympathy might make a wound. She returned to the more outward aspect of Lydgate’s position, saying cheerfully—

“And if Mrs. Lydgate knew that there were friends who would believe in you and support you, she might then be glad that you should stay in your place and recover your hopes—and do what you meant to do. Perhaps then you would see that it was right to agree with what I proposed about your

continuing at the Hospital. Surely you would, if you still have faith in it as a means of making your knowledge useful?"

Lydgate did not answer, and she saw that he was debating with himself.

"You need not decide immediately," she said, gently. "A few days hence it will be early enough for me to send my answer to Mr. Bulstrode."

Lydgate still waited, but at last turned to speak in his most decisive tones.

"No; I prefer that there should be no interval left for wavering. I am no longer sure enough of myself—I mean of what it would be possible for me to do under the changed circumstances of my life. It would be dishonorable to let others engage themselves to anything serious in dependence on me. I might be obliged to go away after all; I see little chance of anything else. The whole thing is too problematic; I cannot consent to be the cause of your goodness being wasted. No—let the new Hospital be joined with the old Infirmary, and everything go on as it might have done if I had never come. I have kept a valuable register since I have been there; I shall send it to a man who will make use of it," he ended bitterly. "I can think of nothing for a long while but getting an income."

"It hurts me very much to hear you speak so hopelessly," said Dorothea. "It would be a happiness to your friends, who believe in your future, in your power to do great things, if you would let them save you from that. Think how much money I have; it would be like taking a burthen from me if you took some of it every year till you got free from this fettering want of income. Why should not people do these things? It is so difficult to make shares at all even. This is one way."

"God bless you, Mrs. Casaubon!" said Lydgate, rising as if with the same impulse that made his words energetic, and resting his arm on the back of the great leather chair he had been sitting in. "It is good that you should have such feelings. But I am not the man who ought to allow himself to benefit by them. I have not given guarantees enough. I must not at least sink into the degradation of being pensioned for work that I never achieved. It is very clear to me that I must not count on anything else than getting away from Middlemarch as soon as I can manage it. I should not be able for a long while, at the very best, to get an income here, and—and it is easier to make necessary changes in a new place. I must do as other men do, and think what will please the world and bring in money; look for

a little opening in the London crowd, and push myself; set up in a watering-place, or go to some southern town where there are plenty of idle English, and get myself puffed,—that is the sort of shell I must creep into and try to keep my soul alive in.”

“Now that is not brave,” said Dorothea,—“to give up the fight.”

“No, it is not brave,” said Lydgate, “but if a man is afraid of creeping paralysis?” Then, in another tone, “Yet you have made a great difference in my courage by believing in me. Everything seems more bearable since I have talked to you; and if you can clear me in a few other minds, especially in Farebrother’s, I shall be deeply grateful. The point I wish you not to mention is the fact of disobedience to my orders. That would soon get distorted. After all, there is no evidence for me but people’s opinion of me beforehand. You can only repeat my own report of myself.”

“Mr. Farebrother will believe—others will believe,” said Dorothea. “I can say of you what will make it stupidity to suppose that you would be bribed to do a wickedness.”

“I don’t know,” said Lydgate, with something like a groan in his voice. “I have not taken a bribe yet. But there is a pale shade of bribery which is sometimes called prosperity. You will do me another great kindness, then, and come to see my wife?”

“Yes, I will. I remember how pretty she is,” said Dorothea, into whose mind every impression about Rosamond had cut deep. “I hope she will like me.”

As Lydgate rode away, he thought, “This young creature has a heart large enough for the Virgin Mary. She evidently thinks nothing of her own future, and would pledge away half her income at once, as if she wanted nothing for herself but a chair to sit in from which she can look down with those clear eyes at the poor mortals who pray to her. She seems to have what I never saw in any woman before—a fountain of friendship towards men—a man can make a friend of her. Casaubon must have raised some heroic hallucination in her. I wonder if she could have any other sort of passion for a man? Ladislaw?—there was certainly an unusual feeling between them. And Casaubon must have had a notion of it. Well—her love might help a man more than her money.”

Dorothea on her side had immediately formed a plan of relieving Lydgate from his obligation to Bulstrode, which she felt sure was a part,

though small, of the galling pressure he had to bear. She sat down at once under the inspiration of their interview, and wrote a brief note, in which she pleaded that she had more claim than Mr. Bulstrode had to the satisfaction of providing the money which had been serviceable to Lydgate—that it would be unkind in Lydgate not to grant her the position of being his helper in this small matter, the favor being entirely to her who had so little that was plainly marked out for her to do with her superfluous money. He might call her a creditor or by any other name if it did but imply that he granted her request. She enclosed a check for a thousand pounds, and determined to take the letter with her the next day when she went to see Rosamond.

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

“And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot,  
To mark the full-fraught man and best indued  
With some suspicion.”

—*Henry V.*

The next day Lydgate had to go to Brassing, and told Rosamond that he should be away until the evening. Of late she had never gone beyond her own house and garden, except to church, and once to see her papa, to whom she said, “If Tertius goes away, you will help us to move, will you not, papa? I suppose we shall have very little money. I am sure I hope some one will help us.” And Mr. Vincy had said, “Yes, child, I don’t mind a hundred or two. I can see the end of that.” With these exceptions she had sat at home in languid melancholy and suspense, fixing her mind on Will Ladislaw’s coming as the one point of hope and interest, and associating this with some new urgency on Lydgate to make immediate arrangements for leaving Middlemarch and going to London, till she felt assured that the coming would be a potent cause of the going, without at all seeing how. This way of establishing sequences is too common to be fairly regarded as a peculiar folly in Rosamond. And it is precisely this sort of sequence which causes the greatest shock when it is sundered: for to see how an effect may be produced is often to see possible missings and checks; but to see nothing except the desirable cause, and close upon it the desirable effect, rids us of doubt and makes our minds strongly intuitive. That was the process going on in poor Rosamond, while she arranged all objects around her with the same nicety as ever, only with more slowness—or sat down to the piano, meaning to play, and then desisting, yet lingering on the music stool with her white fingers suspended on the wooden front, and looking before her in dreamy ennui. Her melancholy had become so marked that Lydgate felt a strange timidity before it, as a perpetual silent reproach, and the strong man, mastered by his keen sensibilities towards this fair fragile creature whose life he seemed somehow to have bruised, shrank from her look, and sometimes started at her approach, fear of her

and fear for her rushing in only the more forcibly after it had been momentarily expelled by exasperation.

But this morning Rosamond descended from her room upstairs—where she sometimes sat the whole day when Lydgate was out—equipped for a walk in the town. She had a letter to post—a letter addressed to Mr. Ladislaw and written with charming discretion, but intended to hasten his arrival by a hint of trouble. The servant-maid, their sole house-servant now, noticed her coming down-stairs in her walking dress, and thought “there never did anybody look so pretty in a bonnet poor thing.”

Meanwhile Dorothea’s mind was filled with her project of going to Rosamond, and with the many thoughts, both of the past and the probable future, which gathered round the idea of that visit. Until yesterday when Lydgate had opened to her a glimpse of some trouble in his married life, the image of Mrs. Lydgate had always been associated for her with that of Will Ladislaw. Even in her most uneasy moments—even when she had been agitated by Mrs. Cadwallader’s painfully graphic report of gossip—her effort, nay, her strongest impulsive prompting, had been towards the vindication of Will from any sullyng surmises; and when, in her meeting with him afterwards, she had at first interpreted his words as a probable allusion to a feeling towards Mrs. Lydgate which he was determined to cut himself off from indulging, she had had a quick, sad, excusing vision of the charm there might be in his constant opportunities of companionship with that fair creature, who most likely shared his other tastes as she evidently did his delight in music. But there had followed his parting words—the few passionate words in which he had implied that she herself was the object of whom his love held him in dread, that it was his love for her only which he was resolved not to declare but to carry away into banishment. From the time of that parting, Dorothea, believing in Will’s love for her, believing with a proud delight in his delicate sense of honor and his determination that no one should impeach him justly, felt her heart quite at rest as to the regard he might have for Mrs. Lydgate. She was sure that the regard was blameless.

There are natures in which, if they love us, we are conscious of having a sort of baptism and consecration: they bind us over to rectitude and purity by their pure belief about us; and our sins become that worst kind of sacrilege which tears down the invisible altar of trust. “If you are not

good, none is good”—those little words may give a terrific meaning to responsibility, may hold a vitriolic intensity for remorse.

Dorothea's nature was of that kind: her own passionate faults lay along the easily counted open channels of her ardent character; and while she was full of pity for the visible mistakes of others, she had not yet any material within her experience for subtle constructions and suspicions of hidden wrong. But that simplicity of hers, holding up an ideal for others in her believing conception of them, was one of the great powers of her womanhood. And it had from the first acted strongly on Will Ladislaw. He felt, when he parted from her, that the brief words by which he had tried to convey to her his feeling about herself and the division which her fortune made between them, would only profit by their brevity when Dorothea had to interpret them: he felt that in her mind he had found his highest estimate.

And he was right there. In the months since their parting Dorothea had felt a delicious though sad repose in their relation to each other, as one which was inwardly whole and without blemish. She had an active force of antagonism within her, when the antagonism turned on the defence either of plans or persons that she believed in; and the wrongs which she felt that Will had received from her husband, and the external conditions which to others were grounds for slighting him, only gave the more tenacity to her affection and admiring judgment. And now with the disclosures about Bulstrode had come another fact affecting Will's social position, which roused afresh Dorothea's inward resistance to what was said about him in that part of her world which lay within park palings.

“Young Ladislaw the grandson of a thieving Jew pawnbroker” was a phrase which had entered emphatically into the dialogues about the Bulstrode business, at Lowick, Tipton, and Freshitt, and was a worse kind of placard on poor Will's back than the “Italian with white mice.” Upright Sir James Chettam was convinced that his own satisfaction was righteous when he thought with some complacency that here was an added league to that mountainous distance between Ladislaw and Dorothea, which enabled him to dismiss any anxiety in that direction as too absurd. And perhaps there had been some pleasure in pointing Mr. Brooke's attention to this ugly bit of Ladislaw's genealogy, as a fresh candle for him to see his own folly by. Dorothea had observed the animus with which Will's part in the

painful story had been recalled more than once; but she had uttered no word, being checked now, as she had not been formerly in speaking of Will, by the consciousness of a deeper relation between them which must always remain in consecrated secrecy. But her silence shrouded her resistant emotion into a more thorough glow; and this misfortune in Will's lot which, it seemed, others were wishing to fling at his back as an opprobrium, only gave something more of enthusiasm to her clinging thought.

She entertained no visions of their ever coming into nearer union, and yet she had taken no posture of renunciation. She had accepted her whole relation to Will very simply as part of her marriage sorrows, and would have thought it very sinful in her to keep up an inward wail because she was not completely happy, being rather disposed to dwell on the superfluities of her lot. She could bear that the chief pleasures of her tenderness should lie in memory, and the idea of marriage came to her solely as a repulsive proposition from some suitor of whom she at present knew nothing, but whose merits, as seen by her friends, would be a source of torment to her:—"somebody who will manage your property for you, my dear," was Mr. Brooke's attractive suggestion of suitable characteristics. "I should like to manage it myself, if I knew what to do with it," said Dorothea. No—she adhered to her declaration that she would never be married again, and in the long valley of her life which looked so flat and empty of waymarks, guidance would come as she walked along the road, and saw her fellow-passengers by the way.

This habitual state of feeling about Will Ladislaw had been strong in all her waking hours since she had proposed to pay a visit to Mrs. Lydgate, making a sort of background against which she saw Rosamond's figure presented to her without hindrances to her interest and compassion. There was evidently some mental separation, some barrier to complete confidence which had arisen between this wife and the husband who had yet made her happiness a law to him. That was a trouble which no third person must directly touch. But Dorothea thought with deep pity of the loneliness which must have come upon Rosamond from the suspicions cast on her husband; and there would surely be help in the manifestation of respect for Lydgate and sympathy with her.



“I shall talk to her about her husband,” thought Dorothea, as she was being driven towards the town. The clear spring morning, the scent of the moist earth, the fresh leaves just showing their creased-up wealth of greenery from out their half-opened sheaths, seemed part of the cheerfulness she was feeling from a long conversation with Mr. Farebrother, who had joyfully accepted the justifying explanation of Lydgate’s conduct. “I shall take Mrs. Lydgate good news, and perhaps she will like to talk to me and make a friend of me.”

Dorothea had another errand in Lowick Gate: it was about a new fine-toned bell for the school-house, and as she had to get out of her carriage very near to Lydgate’s, she walked thither across the street, having told the coachman to wait for some packages. The street door was open, and the servant was taking the opportunity of looking out at the carriage which was pausing within sight when it became apparent to her that the lady who “belonged to it” was coming towards her.

“Is Mrs. Lydgate at home?” said Dorothea.

“I’m not sure, my lady; I’ll see, if you’ll please to walk in,” said Martha, a little confused on the score of her kitchen apron, but collected enough to be sure that “mum” was not the right title for this queenly young widow with a carriage and pair. “Will you please to walk in, and I’ll go and see.”

“Say that I am Mrs. Casaubon,” said Dorothea, as Martha moved forward intending to show her into the drawing-room and then to go upstairs to see if Rosamond had returned from her walk.

They crossed the broader part of the entrance-hall, and turned up the passage which led to the garden. The drawing-room door was unlatched, and Martha, pushing it without looking into the room, waited for Mrs. Casaubon to enter and then turned away, the door having swung open and swung back again without noise.

Dorothea had less of outward vision than usual this morning, being filled with images of things as they had been and were going to be. She found herself on the other side of the door without seeing anything remarkable, but immediately she heard a voice speaking in low tones which startled her as with a sense of dreaming in daylight, and advancing unconsciously a step or two beyond the projecting slab of a bookcase, she saw, in the terrible illumination of a certainty which filled up all outlines,

something which made her pause, motionless, without self-possession enough to speak.

Seated with his back towards her on a sofa which stood against the wall on a line with the door by which she had entered, she saw Will Ladislav: close by him and turned towards him with a flushed tearfulness which gave a new brilliancy to her face. Rosamond, her bonnet hanging back, while Will leaning towards her clasped both her upraised hands in his and spoke with low-toned fervor.

Rosamond in her agitated absorption had not noticed the silently advancing figure; but when Dorothea, after the first immeasurable instant of this vision, moved confusedly backward and found herself impeded by some piece of furniture, Rosamond was suddenly aware of her presence, and with a spasmodic movement snatched away her hands and rose, looking at Dorothea who was necessarily arrested. Will Ladislav, starting up, looked round also, and meeting Dorothea's eyes with a new lightning in them, seemed changing to marble. But she immediately turned them away from him to Rosamond and said in a firm voice—

“Excuse me, Mrs. Lydgate, the servant did not know that you were here. I called to deliver an important letter for Mr. Lydgate, which I wished to put into your own hands.”

She laid down the letter on the small table which had checked her retreat, and then including Rosamond and Will in one distant glance and bow, she went quickly out of the room, meeting in the passage the surprised Martha, who said she was sorry the mistress was not at home, and then showed the strange lady out with an inward reflection that grand people were probably more impatient than others.

Dorothea walked across the street with her most elastic step and was quickly in her carriage again.

“Drive on to Freshitt Hall,” she said to the coachman, and any one looking at her might have thought that though she was paler than usual she was never animated by a more self-possessed energy. And that was really her experience. It was as if she had drunk a great draught of scorn that stimulated her beyond the susceptibility to other feelings. She had seen something so far below her belief, that her emotions rushed back from it and made an excited throng without an object. She needed something active to turn her excitement out upon. She felt power to walk and work

for a day, without meat or drink. And she would carry out the purpose with which she had started in the morning, of going to Freshitt and Tipton to tell Sir James and her uncle all that she wished them to know about Lydgate, whose married loneliness under his trial now presented itself to her with new significance, and made her more ardent in readiness to be his champion. She had never felt anything like this triumphant power of indignation in the struggle of her married life, in which there had always been a quickly subduing pang; and she took it as a sign of new strength.

“Dodo, how very bright your eyes are!” said Celia, when Sir James was gone out of the room. “And you don’t see anything you look at, Arthur or anything. You are going to do something uncomfortable, I know. Is it all about Mr. Lydgate, or has something else happened?” Celia had been used to watch her sister with expectation.

“Yes, dear, a great many things have happened,” said Dodo, in her full tones.

“I wonder what,” said Celia, folding her arms cozily and leaning forward upon them.

“Oh, all the troubles of all people on the face of the earth,” said Dorothea, lifting her arms to the back of her head.

“Dear me, Dodo, are you going to have a scheme for them?” said Celia, a little uneasy at this Hamlet-like raving.

But Sir James came in again, ready to accompany Dorothea to the Grange, and she finished her expedition well, not swerving in her resolution until she descended at her own door.

## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

“Would it were yesterday and I i’ the grave,  
With her sweet faith above for monument.”

Rosamond and Will stood motionless—they did not know how long—he looking towards the spot where Dorothea had stood, and she looking towards him with doubt. It seemed an endless time to Rosamond, in whose inmost soul there was hardly so much annoyance as gratification from what had just happened. Shallow natures dream of an easy sway over the emotions of others, trusting implicitly in their own petty magic to turn the deepest streams, and confident, by pretty gestures and remarks, of making the thing that is not as though it were. She knew that Will had received a severe blow, but she had been little used to imagining other people’s states of mind except as a material cut into shape by her own wishes; and she believed in her own power to soothe or subdue. Even Tertius, that most perverse of men, was always subdued in the long-run: events had been obstinate, but still Rosamond would have said now, as she did before her marriage, that she never gave up what she had set her mind on.

She put out her arm and laid the tips of her fingers on Will’s coat-sleeve.

“Don’t touch me!” he said, with an utterance like the cut of a lash, darting from her, and changing from pink to white and back again, as if his whole frame were tingling with the pain of the sting. He wheeled round to the other side of the room and stood opposite to her, with the tips of his fingers in his pockets and his head thrown back, looking fiercely not at Rosamond but at a point a few inches away from her.

She was keenly offended, but the signs she made of this were such as only Lydgate was used to interpret. She became suddenly quiet and seated herself, untying her hanging bonnet and laying it down with her shawl. Her little hands which she folded before her were very cold.

It would have been safer for Will in the first instance to have taken up his hat and gone away; but he had felt no impulse to do this; on the

contrary, he had a horrible inclination to stay and shatter Rosamond with his anger. It seemed as impossible to bear the fatality she had drawn down on him without venting his fury as it would be to a panther to bear the javelin-wound without springing and biting. And yet—how could he tell a woman that he was ready to curse her? He was fuming under a repressive law which he was forced to acknowledge: he was dangerously poised, and Rosamond's voice now brought the decisive vibration. In flute-like tones of sarcasm she said—

“You can easily go after Mrs. Casaubon and explain your preference.”

“Go after her!” he burst out, with a sharp edge in his voice. “Do you think she would turn to look at me, or value any word I ever uttered to her again at more than a dirty feather?—Explain! How can a man explain at the expense of a woman?”

“You can tell her what you please,” said Rosamond with more tremor.

“Do you suppose she would like me better for sacrificing you? She is not a woman to be flattered because I made myself despicable—to believe that I must be true to her because I was a dastard to you.”

He began to move about with the restlessness of a wild animal that sees prey but cannot reach it. Presently he burst out again—

“I had no hope before—not much—of anything better to come. But I had one certainty—that she believed in me. Whatever people had said or done about me, she believed in me.—That's gone! She'll never again think me anything but a paltry pretence—too nice to take heaven except upon flattering conditions, and yet selling myself for any devil's change by the sly. She'll think of me as an incarnate insult to her, from the first moment we—”

Will stopped as if he had found himself grasping something that must not be thrown and shattered. He found another vent for his rage by snatching up Rosamond's words again, as if they were reptiles to be throttled and flung off.

“Explain! Tell a man to explain how he dropped into hell! Explain my preference! I never had a *preference* for her, any more than I have a preference for breathing. No other woman exists by the side of her. I would rather touch her hand if it were dead, than I would touch any other woman's living.”

Rosamond, while these poisoned weapons were being hurled at her, was almost losing the sense of her identity, and seemed to be waking into some new terrible existence. She had no sense of chill resolute repulsion, of reticent self-justification such as she had known under Lydgate's most stormy displeasure: all her sensibility was turned into a bewildering novelty of pain; she felt a new terrified recoil under a lash never experienced before. What another nature felt in opposition to her own was being burnt and bitten into her consciousness. When Will had ceased to speak she had become an image of sickened misery: her lips were pale, and her eyes had a tearless dismay in them. If it had been Tertius who stood opposite to her, that look of misery would have been a pang to him, and he would have sunk by her side to comfort her, with that strong-armed comfort which she had often held very cheap.

Let it be forgiven to Will that he had no such movement of pity. He had felt no bond beforehand to this woman who had spoiled the ideal treasure of his life, and he held himself blameless. He knew that he was cruel, but he had no relenting in him yet.

After he had done speaking, he still moved about, half in absence of mind, and Rosamond sat perfectly still. At length Will, seeming to bethink himself, took up his hat, yet stood some moments irresolute. He had spoken to her in a way that made a phrase of common politeness difficult to utter; and yet, now that he had come to the point of going away from her without further speech, he shrank from it as a brutality; he felt checked and stultified in his anger. He walked towards the mantel-piece and leaned his arm on it, and waited in silence for—he hardly knew what. The vindictive fire was still burning in him, and he could utter no word of retractation; but it was nevertheless in his mind that having come back to this hearth where he had enjoyed a caressing friendship he had found calamity seated there—he had had suddenly revealed to him a trouble that lay outside the home as well as within it. And what seemed a foreboding was pressing upon him as with slow pincers:—that his life might come to be enslaved by this helpless woman who had thrown herself upon him in the dreary sadness of her heart. But he was in gloomy rebellion against the fact that his quick apprehensiveness foreshadowed to him, and when his eyes fell on Rosamond's blighted face it seemed to him that he was the more pitiable of the two; for pain must enter into its glorified life of memory before it can turn into compassion.

And so they remained for many minutes, opposite each other, far apart, in silence; Will's face still possessed by a mute rage, and Rosamond's by a mute misery. The poor thing had no force to fling out any passion in return; the terrible collapse of the illusion towards which all her hope had been strained was a stroke which had too thoroughly shaken her: her little world was in ruins, and she felt herself tottering in the midst as a lonely bewildered consciousness.

Will wished that she would speak and bring some mitigating shadow across his own cruel speech, which seemed to stand staring at them both in mockery of any attempt at revived fellowship. But she said nothing, and at last with a desperate effort over himself, he asked, "Shall I come in and see Lydgate this evening?"

"If you like," Rosamond answered, just audibly.

And then Will went out of the house, Martha never knowing that he had been in.

After he was gone, Rosamond tried to get up from her seat, but fell back fainting. When she came to herself again, she felt too ill to make the exertion of rising to ring the bell, and she remained helpless until the girl, surprised at her long absence, thought for the first time of looking for her in all the down-stairs rooms. Rosamond said that she had felt suddenly sick and faint, and wanted to be helped up-stairs. When there she threw herself on the bed with her clothes on, and lay in apparent torpor, as she had done once before on a memorable day of grief.

Lydgate came home earlier than he had expected, about half-past five, and found her there. The perception that she was ill threw every other thought into the background. When he felt her pulse, her eyes rested on him with more persistence than they had done for a long while, as if she felt some content that he was there. He perceived the difference in a moment, and seating himself by her put his arm gently under her, and bending over her said, "My poor Rosamond! has something agitated you?" Clinging to him she fell into hysterical sobbings and cries, and for the next hour he did nothing but soothe and tend her. He imagined that Dorothea had been to see her, and that all this effect on her nervous system, which evidently involved some new turning towards himself, was due to the excitement of the new impressions which that visit had raised.

## CHAPTER LXXIX.

“Now, I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended their talk, they drew nigh to a very miry slough, that was in the midst of the plain; and they, being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond.”—BUNYAN.

When Rosamond was quiet, and Lydgate had left her, hoping that she might soon sleep under the effect of an anodyne, he went into the drawing-room to fetch a book which he had left there, meaning to spend the evening in his work-room, and he saw on the table Dorothea’s letter addressed to him. He had not ventured to ask Rosamond if Mrs. Casaubon had called, but the reading of this letter assured him of the fact, for Dorothea mentioned that it was to be carried by herself.

When Will Ladislaw came in a little later Lydgate met him with a surprise which made it clear that he had not been told of the earlier visit, and Will could not say, “Did not Mrs. Lydgate tell you that I came this morning?”

“Poor Rosamond is ill,” Lydgate added immediately on his greeting.

“Not seriously, I hope,” said Will.

“No—only a slight nervous shock—the effect of some agitation. She has been overwrought lately. The truth is, Ladislaw, I am an unlucky devil. We have gone through several rounds of purgatory since you left, and I have lately got on to a worse ledge of it than ever. I suppose you are only just come down—you look rather battered—you have not been long enough in the town to hear anything?”

“I travelled all night and got to the White Hart at eight o’clock this morning. I have been shutting myself up and resting,” said Will, feeling himself a sneak, but seeing no alternative to this evasion.

And then he heard Lydgate’s account of the troubles which Rosamond had already depicted to him in her way. She had not mentioned the fact of Will’s name being connected with the public story—this detail not immediately affecting her—and he now heard it for the first time.



“I thought it better to tell you that your name is mixed up with the disclosures,” said Lydgate, who could understand better than most men how Ladislaw might be stung by the revelation. “You will be sure to hear it as soon as you turn out into the town. I suppose it is true that Raffles spoke to you.”

“Yes,” said Will, sardonically. “I shall be fortunate if gossip does not make me the most disreputable person in the whole affair. I should think the latest version must be, that I plotted with Raffles to murder Bulstrode, and ran away from Middlemarch for the purpose.”

He was thinking “Here is a new ring in the sound of my name to recommend it in her hearing; however—what does it signify now?”

But he said nothing of Bulstrode’s offer to him. Will was very open and careless about his personal affairs, but it was among the more exquisite touches in nature’s modelling of him that he had a delicate generosity which warned him into reticence here. He shrank from saying that he had rejected Bulstrode’s money, in the moment when he was learning that it was Lydgate’s misfortune to have accepted it.

Lydgate too was reticent in the midst of his confidence. He made no allusion to Rosamond’s feeling under their trouble, and of Dorothea he only said, “Mrs. Casaubon has been the one person to come forward and say that she had no belief in any of the suspicions against me.” Observing a change in Will’s face, he avoided any further mention of her, feeling himself too ignorant of their relation to each other not to fear that his words might have some hidden painful bearing on it. And it occurred to him that Dorothea was the real cause of the present visit to Middlemarch.

The two men were pitying each other, but it was only Will who guessed the extent of his companion’s trouble. When Lydgate spoke with desperate resignation of going to settle in London, and said with a faint smile, “We shall have you again, old fellow,” Will felt inexpressibly mournful, and said nothing. Rosamond had that morning entreated him to urge this step on Lydgate; and it seemed to him as if he were beholding in a magic panorama a future where he himself was sliding into that pleasureless yielding to the small solicitations of circumstance, which is a commoner history of perdition than any single momentous bargain.

We are on a perilous margin when we begin to look passively at our future selves, and see our own figures led with dull consent into insipid

misdoing and shabby achievement. Poor Lydgate was inwardly groaning on that margin, and Will was arriving at it. It seemed to him this evening as if the cruelty of his outburst to Rosamond had made an obligation for him, and he dreaded the obligation: he dreaded Lydgate's unsuspecting good-will: he dreaded his own distaste for his spoiled life, which would leave him in motiveless levity.

## CHAPTER LXXX.

Stern lawgiver! yet thou dost wear  
The Godhead's most benignant grace;  
Nor know we anything so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face;  
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,  
And fragrance in thy footing treads;  
Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;  
And the most ancient Heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.  
—WORDSWORTH: *Ode to Duty*.

When Dorothea had seen Mr. Farebrother in the morning, she had promised to go and dine at the parsonage on her return from Freshitt. There was a frequent interchange of visits between her and the Farebrother family, which enabled her to say that she was not at all lonely at the Manor, and to resist for the present the severe prescription of a lady companion. When she reached home and remembered her engagement, she was glad of it; and finding that she had still an hour before she could dress for dinner, she walked straight to the schoolhouse and entered into a conversation with the master and mistress about the new bell, giving eager attention to their small details and repetitions, and getting up a dramatic sense that her life was very busy. She paused on her way back to talk to old Master Bunney who was putting in some garden-seeds, and discoursed wisely with that rural sage about the crops that would make the most return on a perch of ground, and the result of sixty years' experience as to soils—namely, that if your soil was pretty mellow it would do, but if there came wet, wet, wet to make it all of a mummy, why then—

Finding that the social spirit had beguiled her into being rather late, she dressed hastily and went over to the parsonage rather earlier than was necessary. That house was never dull, Mr. Farebrother, like another White of Selborne, having continually something new to tell of his inarticulate guests and *proteges*, whom he was teaching the boys not to torment; and he had just set up a pair of beautiful goats to be pets of the village in general, and to walk at large as sacred animals. The evening went by

cheerfully till after tea, Dorothea talking more than usual and dilating with Mr. Farebrother on the possible histories of creatures that converse compendiously with their antennae, and for aught we know may hold reformed parliaments; when suddenly some inarticulate little sounds were heard which called everybody's attention.

"Henrietta Noble," said Mrs. Farebrother, seeing her small sister moving about the furniture-legs distressfully, "what is the matter?"

"I have lost my tortoise-shell lozenge-box. I fear the kitten has rolled it away," said the tiny old lady, involuntarily continuing her beaver-like notes.

"Is it a great treasure, aunt?" said Mr. Farebrother, putting up his glasses and looking at the carpet.

"Mr. Ladislaw gave it me," said Miss Noble. "A German box—very pretty, but if it falls it always spins away as far as it can."

"Oh, if it is Ladislaw's present," said Mr. Farebrother, in a deep tone of comprehension, getting up and hunting. The box was found at last under a chiffonier, and Miss Noble grasped it with delight, saying, "it was under a fender the last time."

"That is an affair of the heart with my aunt," said Mr. Farebrother, smiling at Dorothea, as he reseated himself.

"If Henrietta Noble forms an attachment to any one, Mrs. Casaubon," said his mother, emphatically,— "she is like a dog—she would take their shoes for a pillow and sleep the better."

"Mr. Ladislaw's shoes, I would," said Henrietta Noble.

Dorothea made an attempt at smiling in return. She was surprised and annoyed to find that her heart was palpitating violently, and that it was quite useless to try after a recovery of her former animation. Alarmed at herself—fearing some further betrayal of a change so marked in its occasion, she rose and said in a low voice with undisguised anxiety, "I must go; I have overtired myself."

Mr. Farebrother, quick in perception, rose and said, "It is true; you must have half-exhausted yourself in talking about Lydgate. That sort of work tells upon one after the excitement is over."

He gave her his arm back to the Manor, but Dorothea did not attempt to speak, even when he said good-night.

The limit of resistance was reached, and she had sunk back helpless within the clutch of inescapable anguish. Dismissing Tantripp with a few faint words, she locked her door, and turning away from it towards the vacant room she pressed her hands hard on the top of her head, and moaned out—

“Oh, I did love him!”

Then came the hour in which the waves of suffering shook her too thoroughly to leave any power of thought. She could only cry in loud whispers, between her sobs, after her lost belief which she had planted and kept alive from a very little seed since the days in Rome—after her lost joy of clinging with silent love and faith to one who, misprized by others, was worthy in her thought—after her lost woman’s pride of reigning in his memory—after her sweet dim perspective of hope, that along some pathway they should meet with unchanged recognition and take up the backward years as a yesterday.

In that hour she repeated what the merciful eyes of solitude have looked on for ages in the spiritual struggles of man—she besought hardness and coldness and aching weariness to bring her relief from the mysterious incorporeal might of her anguish: she lay on the bare floor and let the night grow cold around her; while her grand woman’s frame was shaken by sobs as if she had been a despairing child.

There were two images—two living forms that tore her heart in two, as if it had been the heart of a mother who seems to see her child divided by the sword, and presses one bleeding half to her breast while her gaze goes forth in agony towards the half which is carried away by the lying woman that has never known the mother’s pang.

Here, with the nearness of an answering smile, here within the vibrating bond of mutual speech, was the bright creature whom she had trusted—who had come to her like the spirit of morning visiting the dim vault where she sat as the bride of a worn-out life; and now, with a full consciousness which had never awakened before, she stretched out her arms towards him and cried with bitter cries that their nearness was a parting vision: she discovered her passion to herself in the unshrinking utterance of despair.

And there, aloof, yet persistently with her, moving wherever she moved, was the Will Ladislaw who was a changed belief exhausted of hope, a

detected illusion—no, a living man towards whom there could not yet struggle any wail of regretful pity, from the midst of scorn and indignation and jealous offended pride. The fire of Dorothea's anger was not easily spent, and it flamed out in fitful returns of spurning reproach. Why had he come obtruding his life into hers, hers that might have been whole enough without him? Why had he brought his cheap regard and his lip-born words to her who had nothing paltry to give in exchange? He knew that he was deluding her—wished, in the very moment of farewell, to make her believe that he gave her the whole price of her heart, and knew that he had spent it half before. Why had he not stayed among the crowd of whom she asked nothing—but only prayed that they might be less contemptible?

But she lost energy at last even for her loud-whispered cries and moans: she subsided into helpless sobs, and on the cold floor she sobbed herself to sleep.

In the chill hours of the morning twilight, when all was dim around her, she awoke—not with any amazed wondering where she was or what had happened, but with the clearest consciousness that she was looking into the eyes of sorrow. She rose, and wrapped warm things around her, and seated herself in a great chair where she had often watched before. She was vigorous enough to have borne that hard night without feeling ill in body, beyond some aching and fatigue; but she had waked to a new condition: she felt as if her soul had been liberated from its terrible conflict; she was no longer wrestling with her grief, but could sit down with it as a lasting companion and make it a sharer in her thoughts. For now the thoughts came thickly. It was not in Dorothea's nature, for longer than the duration of a paroxysm, to sit in the narrow cell of her calamity, in the besotted misery of a consciousness that only sees another's lot as an accident of its own.

She began now to live through that yesterday morning deliberately again, forcing herself to dwell on every detail and its possible meaning. Was she alone in that scene? Was it her event only? She forced herself to think of it as bound up with another woman's life—a woman towards whom she had set out with a longing to carry some clearness and comfort into her beclouded youth. In her first outleap of jealous indignation and disgust, when quitting the hateful room, she had flung away all the mercy with which she had undertaken that visit. She had enveloped both Will and

Rosamond in her burning scorn, and it seemed to her as if Rosamond were burned out of her sight forever. But that base prompting which makes a woman more cruel to a rival than to a faithless lover, could have no strength of recurrence in Dorothea when the dominant spirit of justice within her had once overcome the tumult and had once shown her the truer measure of things. All the active thought with which she had before been representing to herself the trials of Lydgate's lot, and this young marriage union which, like her own, seemed to have its hidden as well as evident troubles—all this vivid sympathetic experience returned to her now as a power: it asserted itself as acquired knowledge asserts itself and will not let us see as we saw in the day of our ignorance. She said to her own irremediable grief, that it should make her more helpful, instead of driving her back from effort.

And what sort of crisis might not this be in three lives whose contact with hers laid an obligation on her as if they had been suppliants bearing the sacred branch? The objects of her rescue were not to be sought out by her fancy: they were chosen for her. She yearned towards the perfect Right, that it might make a throne within her, and rule her errant will. "What should I do—how should I act now, this very day, if I could clutch my own pain, and compel it to silence, and think of those three?"

It had taken long for her to come to that question, and there was light piercing into the room. She opened her curtains, and looked out towards the bit of road that lay in view, with fields beyond outside the entrance-gates. On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving—perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labor and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining.

What she would resolve to do that day did not yet seem quite clear, but something that she could achieve stirred her as with an approaching murmur which would soon gather distinctness. She took off the clothes which seemed to have some of the weariness of a hard watching in them, and began to make her toilet. Presently she rang for Tantripp, who came in her dressing-gown.

“Why, madam, you’ve never been in bed this blessed night,” burst out Tantripp, looking first at the bed and then at Dorothea’s face, which in spite of bathing had the pale cheeks and pink eyelids of a *mater dolorosa*. “You’ll kill yourself, you *will*. Anybody might think now you had a right to give yourself a little comfort.”

“Don’t be alarmed, Tantripp,” said Dorothea, smiling. “I have slept; I am not ill. I shall be glad of a cup of coffee as soon as possible. And I want you to bring me my new dress; and most likely I shall want my new bonnet to-day.”

“They’ve lain there a month and more ready for you, madam, and most thankful I shall be to see you with a couple o’ pounds’ worth less of crape,” said Tantripp, stooping to light the fire. “There’s a reason in mourning, as I’ve always said; and three folds at the bottom of your skirt and a plain quilling in your bonnet—and if ever anybody looked like an angel, it’s you in a net quilling—is what’s consistent for a second year. At least, that’s *my* thinking,” ended Tantripp, looking anxiously at the fire; “and if anybody was to marry me flattering himself I should wear those hijeous weepers two years for him, he’d be deceived by his own vanity, that’s all.”

“The fire will do, my good Tan,” said Dorothea, speaking as she used to do in the old Lausanne days, only with a very low voice; “get me the coffee.”

She folded herself in the large chair, and leaned her head against it in fatigued quiescence, while Tantripp went away wondering at this strange contrariness in her young mistress—that just the morning when she had more of a widow’s face than ever, she should have asked for her lighter mourning which she had waived before. Tantripp would never have found the clew to this mystery. Dorothea wished to acknowledge that she had not the less an active life before her because she had buried a private joy; and the tradition that fresh garments belonged to all initiation, haunting her mind, made her grasp after even that slight outward help towards calm resolve. For the resolve was not easy.

Nevertheless at eleven o’clock she was walking towards Middlemarch, having made up her mind that she would make as quietly and unnoticeably as possible her second attempt to see and save Rosamond.



## CHAPTER LXXXI.

Du Erde warst auch diese Nacht beständig,  
Und athmest neu erquickt zu meinen Füßen,  
Beginnest schon mit Lust mich zu umgeben,  
Du regst und rührst ein kräftiges Beschliessen  
*Zum höchsten Dasein immerfort zu streben.*  
—*Faust*: 2r Theil.

When Dorothea was again at Lydgate's door speaking to Martha, he was in the room close by with the door ajar, preparing to go out. He heard her voice, and immediately came to her.

“Do you think that Mrs. Lydgate can receive me this morning?” she said, having reflected that it would be better to leave out all allusion to her previous visit.

“I have no doubt she will,” said Lydgate, suppressing his thought about Dorothea's looks, which were as much changed as Rosamond's, “if you will be kind enough to come in and let me tell her that you are here. She has not been very well since you were here yesterday, but she is better this morning, and I think it is very likely that she will be cheered by seeing you again.”

It was plain that Lydgate, as Dorothea had expected, knew nothing about the circumstances of her yesterday's visit; nay, he appeared to imagine that she had carried it out according to her intention. She had prepared a little note asking Rosamond to see her, which she would have given to the servant if he had not been in the way, but now she was in much anxiety as to the result of his announcement.

After leading her into the drawing-room, he paused to take a letter from his pocket and put it into her hands, saying, “I wrote this last night, and was going to carry it to Lowick in my ride. When one is grateful for something too good for common thanks, writing is less unsatisfactory than speech—one does not at least *hear* how inadequate the words are.”

Dorothea's face brightened. “It is I who have most to thank for, since you have let me take that place. You *have* consented?” she said, suddenly

doubting.

“Yes, the check is going to Bulstrode to-day.”

He said no more, but went up-stairs to Rosamond, who had but lately finished dressing herself, and sat languidly wondering what she should do next, her habitual industry in small things, even in the days of her sadness, prompting her to begin some kind of occupation, which she dragged through slowly or paused in from lack of interest. She looked ill, but had recovered her usual quietude of manner, and Lydgate had feared to disturb her by any questions. He had told her of Dorothea’s letter containing the check, and afterwards he had said, “Ladislaw is come, Rosy; he sat with me last night; I dare say he will be here again to-day. I thought he looked rather battered and depressed.” And Rosamond had made no reply.

Now, when he came up, he said to her very gently, “Rosy, dear, Mrs. Casaubon is come to see you again; you would like to see her, would you not?” That she colored and gave rather a startled movement did not surprise him after the agitation produced by the interview yesterday—a beneficent agitation, he thought, since it seemed to have made her turn to him again.

Rosamond dared not say no. She dared not with a tone of her voice touch the facts of yesterday. Why had Mrs. Casaubon come again? The answer was a blank which Rosamond could only fill up with dread, for Will Ladislaw’s lacerating words had made every thought of Dorothea a fresh smart to her. Nevertheless, in her new humiliating uncertainty she dared do nothing but comply. She did not say yes, but she rose and let Lydgate put a light shawl over her shoulders, while he said, “I am going out immediately.” Then something crossed her mind which prompted her to say, “Pray tell Martha not to bring any one else into the drawing-room.” And Lydgate assented, thinking that he fully understood this wish. He led her down to the drawing-room door, and then turned away, observing to himself that he was rather a blundering husband to be dependent for his wife’s trust in him on the influence of another woman.

Rosamond, wrapping her soft shawl around her as she walked towards Dorothea, was inwardly wrapping her soul in cold reserve. Had Mrs. Casaubon come to say anything to her about Will? If so, it was a liberty that Rosamond resented; and she prepared herself to meet every word with polite impassibility. Will had bruised her pride too sorely for her to feel

any compunction towards him and Dorothea: her own injury seemed much the greater. Dorothea was not only the “preferred” woman, but had also a formidable advantage in being Lydgate’s benefactor; and to poor Rosamond’s pained confused vision it seemed that this Mrs. Casaubon—this woman who predominated in all things concerning her—must have come now with the sense of having the advantage, and with animosity prompting her to use it. Indeed, not Rosamond only, but any one else, knowing the outer facts of the case, and not the simple inspiration on which Dorothea acted, might well have wondered why she came.

Looking like the lovely ghost of herself, her graceful slimness wrapped in her soft white shawl, the rounded infantine mouth and cheek inevitably suggesting mildness and innocence, Rosamond paused at three yards’ distance from her visitor and bowed. But Dorothea, who had taken off her gloves, from an impulse which she could never resist when she wanted a sense of freedom, came forward, and with her face full of a sad yet sweet openness, put out her hand. Rosamond could not avoid meeting her glance, could not avoid putting her small hand into Dorothea’s, which clasped it with gentle motherliness; and immediately a doubt of her own prepossessions began to stir within her. Rosamond’s eye was quick for faces; she saw that Mrs. Casaubon’s face looked pale and changed since yesterday, yet gentle, and like the firm softness of her hand. But Dorothea had counted a little too much on her own strength: the clearness and intensity of her mental action this morning were the continuance of a nervous exaltation which made her frame as dangerously responsive as a bit of finest Venetian crystal; and in looking at Rosamond, she suddenly found her heart swelling, and was unable to speak—all her effort was required to keep back tears. She succeeded in that, and the emotion only passed over her face like the spirit of a sob; but it added to Rosamond’s impression that Mrs. Casaubon’s state of mind must be something quite different from what she had imagined.

So they sat down without a word of preface on the two chairs that happened to be nearest, and happened also to be close together; though Rosamond’s notion when she first bowed was that she should stay a long way off from Mrs. Casaubon. But she ceased thinking how anything would turn out—merely wondering what would come. And Dorothea began to speak quite simply, gathering firmness as she went on.

“I had an errand yesterday which I did not finish; that is why I am here again so soon. You will not think me too troublesome when I tell you that I came to talk to you about the injustice that has been shown towards Mr. Lydgate. It will cheer you—will it not?—to know a great deal about him, that he may not like to speak about himself just because it is in his own vindication and to his own honor. You will like to know that your husband has warm friends, who have not left off believing in his high character? You will let me speak of this without thinking that I take a liberty?”

The cordial, pleading tones which seemed to flow with generous heedlessness above all the facts which had filled Rosamond’s mind as grounds of obstruction and hatred between her and this woman, came as soothingly as a warm stream over her shrinking fears. Of course Mrs. Casaubon had the facts in her mind, but she was not going to speak of anything connected with them. That relief was too great for Rosamond to feel much else at the moment. She answered prettily, in the new ease of her soul—

“I know you have been very good. I shall like to hear anything you will say to me about Tertius.”

“The day before yesterday,” said Dorothea, “when I had asked him to come to Lowick to give me his opinion on the affairs of the Hospital, he told me everything about his conduct and feelings in this sad event which has made ignorant people cast suspicions on him. The reason he told me was because I was very bold and asked him. I believed that he had never acted dishonorably, and I begged him to tell me the history. He confessed to me that he had never told it before, not even to you, because he had a great dislike to say, ‘I was not wrong,’ as if that were proof, when there are guilty people who will say so. The truth is, he knew nothing of this man Raffles, or that there were any bad secrets about him; and he thought that Mr. Bulstrode offered him the money because he repented, out of kindness, of having refused it before. All his anxiety about his patient was to treat him rightly, and he was a little uncomfortable that the case did not end as he had expected; but he thought then and still thinks that there may have been no wrong in it on any one’s part. And I have told Mr. Farebrother, and Mr. Brooke, and Sir James Chettam: they all believe in your husband. That will cheer you, will it not? That will give you courage?”

Dorothea's face had become animated, and as it beamed on Rosamond very close to her, she felt something like bashful timidity before a superior, in the presence of this self-forgetful ardor. She said, with blushing embarrassment, "Thank you: you are very kind."

"And he felt that he had been so wrong not to pour out everything about this to you. But you will forgive him. It was because he feels so much more about your happiness than anything else—he feels his life bound into one with yours, and it hurts him more than anything, that his misfortunes must hurt you. He could speak to me because I am an indifferent person. And then I asked him if I might come to see you; because I felt so much for his trouble and yours. That is why I came yesterday, and why I am come to-day. Trouble is so hard to bear, is it not?— How can we live and think that any one has trouble—piercing trouble—and we could help them, and never try?"

Dorothea, completely swayed by the feeling that she was uttering, forgot everything but that she was speaking from out the heart of her own trial to Rosamond's. The emotion had wrought itself more and more into her utterance, till the tones might have gone to one's very marrow, like a low cry from some suffering creature in the darkness. And she had unconsciously laid her hand again on the little hand that she had pressed before.

Rosamond, with an overmastering pang, as if a wound within her had been probed, burst into hysterical crying as she had done the day before when she clung to her husband. Poor Dorothea was feeling a great wave of her own sorrow returning over her—her thought being drawn to the possible share that Will Ladislaw might have in Rosamond's mental tumult. She was beginning to fear that she should not be able to suppress herself enough to the end of this meeting, and while her hand was still resting on Rosamond's lap, though the hand underneath it was withdrawn, she was struggling against her own rising sobs. She tried to master herself with the thought that this might be a turning-point in three lives—not in her own; no, there the irrevocable had happened, but—in those three lives which were touching hers with the solemn neighborhood of danger and distress. The fragile creature who was crying close to her—there might still be time to rescue her from the misery of false incompatible bonds; and this moment was unlike any other: she and Rosamond could never be

together again with the same thrilling consciousness of yesterday within them both. She felt the relation between them to be peculiar enough to give her a peculiar influence, though she had no conception that the way in which her own feelings were involved was fully known to Mrs. Lydgate.

It was a newer crisis in Rosamond's experience than even Dorothea could imagine: she was under the first great shock that had shattered her dream-world in which she had been easily confident of herself and critical of others; and this strange unexpected manifestation of feeling in a woman whom she had approached with a shrinking aversion and dread, as one who must necessarily have a jealous hatred towards her, made her soul totter all the more with a sense that she had been walking in an unknown world which had just broken in upon her.

When Rosamond's convulsed throat was subsiding into calm, and she withdrew the handkerchief with which she had been hiding her face, her eyes met Dorothea's as helplessly as if they had been blue flowers. What was the use of thinking about behavior after this crying? And Dorothea looked almost as childish, with the neglected trace of a silent tear. Pride was broken down between these two.

"We were talking about your husband," Dorothea said, with some timidity. "I thought his looks were sadly changed with suffering the other day. I had not seen him for many weeks before. He said he had been feeling very lonely in his trial; but I think he would have borne it all better if he had been able to be quite open with you."

"Tertius is so angry and impatient if I say anything," said Rosamond, imagining that he had been complaining of her to Dorothea. "He ought not to wonder that I object to speak to him on painful subjects."

"It was himself he blamed for not speaking," said Dorothea. "What he said of you was, that he could not be happy in doing anything which made you unhappy—that his marriage was of course a bond which must affect his choice about everything; and for that reason he refused my proposal that he should keep his position at the Hospital, because that would bind him to stay in Middlemarch, and he would not undertake to do anything which would be painful to you. He could say that to me, because he knows that I had much trial in my marriage, from my husband's illness, which hindered his plans and saddened him; and he knows that I have felt how hard it is to walk always in fear of hurting another who is tied to us."

Dorothea waited a little; she had discerned a faint pleasure stealing over Rosamond's face. But there was no answer, and she went on, with a gathering tremor, "Marriage is so unlike everything else. There is something even awful in the nearness it brings. Even if we loved some one else better than—than those we were married to, it would be no use"—poor Dorothea, in her palpitating anxiety, could only seize her language brokenly—"I mean, marriage drinks up all our power of giving or getting any blessedness in that sort of love. I know it may be very dear—but it murders our marriage—and then the marriage stays with us like a murder—and everything else is gone. And then our husband—if he loved and trusted us, and we have not helped him, but made a curse in his life—"

Her voice had sunk very low: there was a dread upon her of presuming too far, and of speaking as if she herself were perfection addressing error. She was too much preoccupied with her own anxiety, to be aware that Rosamond was trembling too; and filled with the need to express pitying fellowship rather than rebuke, she put her hands on Rosamond's, and said with more agitated rapidity,—“I know, I know that the feeling may be very dear—it has taken hold of us unawares—it is so hard, it may seem like death to part with it—and we are weak—I am weak—”

The waves of her own sorrow, from out of which she was struggling to save another, rushed over Dorothea with conquering force. She stopped in speechless agitation, not crying, but feeling as if she were being inwardly grappled. Her face had become of a deathlier paleness, her lips trembled, and she pressed her hands helplessly on the hands that lay under them.

Rosamond, taken hold of by an emotion stronger than her own—hurried along in a new movement which gave all things some new, awful, undefined aspect—could find no words, but involuntarily she put her lips to Dorothea's forehead which was very near her, and then for a minute the two women clasped each other as if they had been in a shipwreck.

“You are thinking what is not true,” said Rosamond, in an eager half-whisper, while she was still feeling Dorothea's arms round her—urged by a mysterious necessity to free herself from something that oppressed her as if it were blood guiltiness.

They moved apart, looking at each other.

“When you came in yesterday—it was not as you thought,” said Rosamond in the same tone.

There was a movement of surprised attention in Dorothea. She expected a vindication of Rosamond herself.

“He was telling me how he loved another woman, that I might know he could never love me,” said Rosamond, getting more and more hurried as she went on. “And now I think he hates me because—because you mistook him yesterday. He says it is through me that you will think ill of him—think that he is a false person. But it shall not be through me. He has never had any love for me—I know he has not—he has always thought slightly of me. He said yesterday that no other woman existed for him beside you. The blame of what happened is entirely mine. He said he could never explain to you—because of me. He said you could never think well of him again. But now I have told you, and he cannot reproach me any more.”

Rosamond had delivered her soul under impulses which she had not known before. She had begun her confession under the subduing influence of Dorothea’s emotion; and as she went on she had gathered the sense that she was repelling Will’s reproaches, which were still like a knife-wound within her.

The revulsion of feeling in Dorothea was too strong to be called joy. It was a tumult in which the terrible strain of the night and morning made a resistant pain:—she could only perceive that this would be joy when she had recovered her power of feeling it. Her immediate consciousness was one of immense sympathy without check; she cared for Rosamond without struggle now, and responded earnestly to her last words—

“No, he cannot reproach you any more.”

With her usual tendency to over-estimate the good in others, she felt a great outgoing of her heart towards Rosamond, for the generous effort which had redeemed her from suffering, not counting that the effort was a reflex of her own energy. After they had been silent a little, she said—

“You are not sorry that I came this morning?”

“No, you have been very good to me,” said Rosamond. “I did not think that you would be so good. I was very unhappy. I am not happy now. Everything is so sad.”

“But better days will come. Your husband will be rightly valued. And he depends on you for comfort. He loves you best. The worst loss would be to lose that—and you have not lost it,” said Dorothea.



She tried to thrust away the too overpowering thought of her own relief, lest she should fail to win some sign that Rosamond's affection was yearning back towards her husband.

"Tertius did not find fault with me, then?" said Rosamond, understanding now that Lydgate might have said anything to Mrs. Casaubon, and that she certainly was different from other women. Perhaps there was a faint taste of jealousy in the question. A smile began to play over Dorothea's face as she said—

"No, indeed! How could you imagine it?" But here the door opened, and Lydgate entered.

"I am come back in my quality of doctor," he said. "After I went away, I was haunted by two pale faces: Mrs. Casaubon looked as much in need of care as you, Rosy. And I thought that I had not done my duty in leaving you together; so when I had been to Coleman's I came home again. I noticed that you were walking, Mrs. Casaubon, and the sky has changed—I think we may have rain. May I send some one to order your carriage to come for you?"

"Oh, no! I am strong: I need the walk," said Dorothea, rising with animation in her face. "Mrs. Lydgate and I have chatted a great deal, and it is time for me to go. I have always been accused of being immoderate and saying too much."

She put out her hand to Rosamond, and they said an earnest, quiet good-bye without kiss or other show of effusion: there had been between them too much serious emotion for them to use the signs of it superficially.

As Lydgate took her to the door she said nothing of Rosamond, but told him of Mr. Farebrother and the other friends who had listened with belief to his story.

When he came back to Rosamond, she had already thrown herself on the sofa, in resigned fatigue.

"Well, Rosy," he said, standing over her, and touching her hair, "what do you think of Mrs. Casaubon now you have seen so much of her?"

"I think she must be better than any one," said Rosamond, "and she is very beautiful. If you go to talk to her so often, you will be more discontented with me than ever!"

Lydgate laughed at the “so often.” “But has she made you any less discontented with me?”

“I think she has,” said Rosamond, looking up in his face. “How heavy your eyes are, Tertius—and do push your hair back.” He lifted up his large white hand to obey her, and felt thankful for this little mark of interest in him. Poor Rosamond’s vagrant fancy had come back terribly scourged—meek enough to nestle under the old despised shelter. And the shelter was still there: Lydgate had accepted his narrowed lot with sad resignation. He had chosen this fragile creature, and had taken the burthen of her life upon his arms. He must walk as he could, carrying that burthen pitifully.

## CHAPTER LXXXII.

“My grief lies onward and my joy behind.”  
—SHAKESPEARE: *Sonnets*.

Exiles notoriously feed much on hopes, and are unlikely to stay in banishment unless they are obliged. When Will Ladislaw exiled himself from Middlemarch he had placed no stronger obstacle to his return than his own resolve, which was by no means an iron barrier, but simply a state of mind liable to melt into a minuet with other states of mind, and to find itself bowing, smiling, and giving place with polite facility. As the months went on, it had seemed more and more difficult to him to say why he should not run down to Middlemarch—merely for the sake of hearing something about Dorothea; and if on such a flying visit he should chance by some strange coincidence to meet with her, there was no reason for him to be ashamed of having taken an innocent journey which he had beforehand supposed that he should not take. Since he was hopelessly divided from her, he might surely venture into her neighborhood; and as to the suspicious friends who kept a dragon watch over her—their opinions seemed less and less important with time and change of air.

And there had come a reason quite irrespective of Dorothea, which seemed to make a journey to Middlemarch a sort of philanthropic duty. Will had given a disinterested attention to an intended settlement on a new plan in the Far West, and the need for funds in order to carry out a good design had set him on debating with himself whether it would not be a laudable use to make of his claim on Bulstrode, to urge the application of that money which had been offered to himself as a means of carrying out a scheme likely to be largely beneficial. The question seemed a very dubious one to Will, and his repugnance to again entering into any relation with the banker might have made him dismiss it quickly, if there had not arisen in his imagination the probability that his judgment might be more safely determined by a visit to Middlemarch.

That was the object which Will stated to himself as a reason for coming down. He had meant to confide in Lydgate, and discuss the money question with him, and he had meant to amuse himself for the few evenings of his stay by having a great deal of music and badinage with fair Rosamond, without neglecting his friends at Lowick Parsonage:—if the Parsonage was close to the Manor, that was no fault of his. He had neglected the Farebrothers before his departure, from a proud resistance to the possible accusation of indirectly seeking interviews with Dorothea; but hunger tames us, and Will had become very hungry for the vision of a certain form and the sound of a certain voice. Nothing had done instead—not the opera, or the converse of zealous politicians, or the flattering reception (in dim corners) of his new hand in leading articles.

Thus he had come down, foreseeing with confidence how almost everything would be in his familiar little world; fearing, indeed, that there would be no surprises in his visit. But he had found that humdrum world in a terribly dynamic condition, in which even badinage and lyrism had turned explosive; and the first day of this visit had become the most fatal epoch of his life. The next morning he felt so harassed with the nightmare of consequences—he dreaded so much the immediate issues before him—that seeing while he breakfasted the arrival of the Riverston coach, he went out hurriedly and took his place on it, that he might be relieved, at least for a day, from the necessity of doing or saying anything in Middlemarch. Will Ladislaw was in one of those tangled crises which are commoner in experience than one might imagine, from the shallow absoluteness of men's judgments. He had found Lydgate, for whom he had the sincerest respect, under circumstances which claimed his thorough and frankly declared sympathy; and the reason why, in spite of that claim, it would have been better for Will to have avoided all further intimacy, or even contact, with Lydgate, was precisely of the kind to make such a course appear impossible. To a creature of Will's susceptible temperament—without any neutral region of indifference in his nature, ready to turn everything that befell him into the collisions of a passionate drama—the revelation that Rosamond had made her happiness in any way dependent on him was a difficulty which his outburst of rage towards her had immeasurably increased for him. He hated his own cruelty, and yet he dreaded to show the fulness of his relenting: he must go to her again; the friendship could not be put to a sudden end; and her unhappiness was a

power which he dreaded. And all the while there was no more foretaste of enjoyment in the life before him than if his limbs had been lopped off and he was making his fresh start on crutches. In the night he had debated whether he should not get on the coach, not for Riverston, but for London, leaving a note to Lydgate which would give a makeshift reason for his retreat. But there were strong cords pulling him back from that abrupt departure: the blight on his happiness in thinking of Dorothea, the crushing of that chief hope which had remained in spite of the acknowledged necessity for renunciation, was too fresh a misery for him to resign himself to it and go straightway into a distance which was also despair.

Thus he did nothing more decided than taking the Riverston coach. He came back again by it while it was still daylight, having made up his mind that he must go to Lydgate's that evening. The Rubicon, we know, was a very insignificant stream to look at; its significance lay entirely in certain invisible conditions. Will felt as if he were forced to cross his small boundary ditch, and what he saw beyond it was not empire, but discontented subjection.

But it is given to us sometimes even in our every-day life to witness the saving influence of a noble nature, the divine efficacy of rescue that may lie in a self-subduing act of fellowship. If Dorothea, after her night's anguish, had not taken that walk to Rosamond—why, she perhaps would have been a woman who gained a higher character for discretion, but it would certainly not have been as well for those three who were on one hearth in Lydgate's house at half-past seven that evening.

Rosamond had been prepared for Will's visit, and she received him with a languid coldness which Lydgate accounted for by her nervous exhaustion, of which he could not suppose that it had any relation to Will. And when she sat in silence bending over a bit of work, he innocently apologized for her in an indirect way by begging her to lean backward and rest. Will was miserable in the necessity for playing the part of a friend who was making his first appearance and greeting to Rosamond, while his thoughts were busy about her feeling since that scene of yesterday, which seemed still inexorably to enclose them both, like the painful vision of a double madness. It happened that nothing called Lydgate out of the room; but when Rosamond poured out the tea, and Will came near to fetch it, she

placed a tiny bit of folded paper in his saucer. He saw it and secured it quickly, but as he went back to his inn he had no eagerness to unfold the paper. What Rosamond had written to him would probably deepen the painful impressions of the evening. Still, he opened and read it by his bed-candle. There were only these few words in her neatly flowing hand:—

“I have told Mrs. Casaubon. She is not under any mistake about you. I told her because she came to see me and was very kind. You will have nothing to reproach me with now. I shall not have made any difference to you.”

The effect of these words was not quite all gladness. As Will dwelt on them with excited imagination, he felt his cheeks and ears burning at the thought of what had occurred between Dorothea and Rosamond—at the uncertainty how far Dorothea might still feel her dignity wounded in having an explanation of his conduct offered to her. There might still remain in her mind a changed association with him which made an irremediable difference—a lasting flaw. With active fancy he wrought himself into a state of doubt little more easy than that of the man who has escaped from wreck by night and stands on unknown ground in the darkness. Until that wretched yesterday—except the moment of vexation long ago in the very same room and in the very same presence—all their vision, all their thought of each other, had been as in a world apart, where the sunshine fell on tall white lilies, where no evil lurked, and no other soul entered. But now—would Dorothea meet him in that world again?

## CHAPTER LXXXIII.

“And now good-morrow to our waking souls  
Which watch not one another out of fear;  
For love all love of other sights controls,  
And makes one little room, an everywhere.”

—DR. DONNE.

On the second morning after Dorothea's visit to Rosamond, she had had two nights of sound sleep, and had not only lost all traces of fatigue, but felt as if she had a great deal of superfluous strength—that is to say, more strength than she could manage to concentrate on any occupation. The day before, she had taken long walks outside the grounds, and had paid two visits to the Parsonage; but she never in her life told any one the reason why she spent her time in that fruitless manner, and this morning she was rather angry with herself for her childish restlessness. To-day was to be spent quite differently. What was there to be done in the village? Oh dear! nothing. Everybody was well and had flannel; nobody's pig had died; and it was Saturday morning, when there was a general scrubbing of doors and door-stones, and when it was useless to go into the school. But there were various subjects that Dorothea was trying to get clear upon, and she resolved to throw herself energetically into the gravest of all. She sat down in the library before her particular little heap of books on political economy and kindred matters, out of which she was trying to get light as to the best way of spending money so as not to injure one's neighbors, or—what comes to the same thing—so as to do them the most good. Here was a weighty subject which, if she could but lay hold of it, would certainly keep her mind steady. Unhappily her mind slipped off it for a whole hour; and at the end she found herself reading sentences twice over with an intense consciousness of many things, but not of any one thing contained in the text. This was hopeless. Should she order the carriage and drive to Tipton? No; for some reason or other she preferred staying at Lowick. But her vagrant mind must be reduced to order: there was an art in self-discipline; and she walked round and round the brown library considering by what sort of manoeuvre she could arrest her wandering

thoughts. Perhaps a mere task was the best means—something to which she must go doggedly. Was there not the geography of Asia Minor, in which her slackness had often been rebuked by Mr. Casaubon? She went to the cabinet of maps and unrolled one: this morning she might make herself finally sure that Paphlagonia was not on the Levantine coast, and fix her total darkness about the Chalybes firmly on the shores of the Euxine. A map was a fine thing to study when you were disposed to think of something else, being made up of names that would turn into a chime if you went back upon them. Dorothea set earnestly to work, bending close to her map, and uttering the names in an audible, subdued tone, which often got into a chime. She looked amusingly girlish after all her deep experience—nodding her head and marking the names off on her fingers, with a little pursing of her lip, and now and then breaking off to put her hands on each side of her face and say, “Oh dear! oh dear!”

There was no reason why this should end any more than a merry-go-round; but it was at last interrupted by the opening of the door and the announcement of Miss Noble.

The little old lady, whose bonnet hardly reached Dorothea’s shoulder, was warmly welcomed, but while her hand was being pressed she made many of her beaver-like noises, as if she had something difficult to say.

“Do sit down,” said Dorothea, rolling a chair forward. “Am I wanted for anything? I shall be so glad if I can do anything.”

“I will not stay,” said Miss Noble, putting her hand into her small basket, and holding some article inside it nervously; “I have left a friend in the churchyard.” She lapsed into her inarticulate sounds, and unconsciously drew forth the article which she was fingering. It was the tortoise-shell lozenge-box, and Dorothea felt the color mounting to her cheeks.

“Mr. Ladislaw,” continued the timid little woman. “He fears he has offended you, and has begged me to ask if you will see him for a few minutes.”

Dorothea did not answer on the instant: it was crossing her mind that she could not receive him in this library, where her husband’s prohibition seemed to dwell. She looked towards the window. Could she go out and meet him in the grounds? The sky was heavy, and the trees had begun to shiver as at a coming storm. Besides, she shrank from going out to him.



“Do see him, Mrs. Casaubon,” said Miss Noble, pathetically; “else I must go back and say No, and that will hurt him.”

“Yes, I will see him,” said Dorothea. “Pray tell him to come.”

What else was there to be done? There was nothing that she longed for at that moment except to see Will: the possibility of seeing him had thrust itself insistently between her and every other object; and yet she had a throbbing excitement like an alarm upon her—a sense that she was doing something daringly defiant for his sake.

When the little lady had trotted away on her mission, Dorothea stood in the middle of the library with her hands falling clasped before her, making no attempt to compose herself in an attitude of dignified unconsciousness. What she was least conscious of just then was her own body: she was thinking of what was likely to be in Will’s mind, and of the hard feelings that others had had about him. How could any duty bind her to hardness? Resistance to unjust dispraise had mingled with her feeling for him from the very first, and now in the rebound of her heart after her anguish the resistance was stronger than ever. “If I love him too much it is because he has been used so ill:”—there was a voice within her saying this to some imagined audience in the library, when the door was opened, and she saw Will before her.

She did not move, and he came towards her with more doubt and timidity in his face than she had ever seen before. He was in a state of uncertainty which made him afraid lest some look or word of his should condemn him to a new distance from her; and Dorothea was afraid of her *own* emotion. She looked as if there were a spell upon her, keeping her motionless and hindering her from unclasping her hands, while some intense, grave yearning was imprisoned within her eyes. Seeing that she did not put out her hand as usual, Will paused a yard from her and said with embarrassment, “I am so grateful to you for seeing me.”

“I wanted to see you,” said Dorothea, having no other words at command. It did not occur to her to sit down, and Will did not give a cheerful interpretation to this queenly way of receiving him; but he went on to say what he had made up his mind to say.

“I fear you think me foolish and perhaps wrong for coming back so soon. I have been punished for my impatience. You know—every one

knows now—a painful story about my parentage. I knew of it before I went away, and I always meant to tell you of it if—if we ever met again.”

There was a slight movement in Dorothea, and she unclasped her hands, but immediately folded them over each other.

“But the affair is matter of gossip now,” Will continued. “I wished you to know that something connected with it—something which happened before I went away, helped to bring me down here again. At least I thought it excused my coming. It was the idea of getting Bulstrode to apply some money to a public purpose—some money which he had thought of giving me. Perhaps it is rather to Bulstrode’s credit that he privately offered me compensation for an old injury: he offered to give me a good income to make amends; but I suppose you know the disagreeable story?”

Will looked doubtfully at Dorothea, but his manner was gathering some of the defiant courage with which he always thought of this fact in his destiny. He added, “You know that it must be altogether painful to me.”

“Yes—yes—I know,” said Dorothea, hastily.

“I did not choose to accept an income from such a source. I was sure that you would not think well of me if I did so,” said Will. Why should he mind saying anything of that sort to her now? She knew that he had avowed his love for her. “I felt that”—he broke off, nevertheless.

“You acted as I should have expected you to act,” said Dorothea, her face brightening and her head becoming a little more erect on its beautiful stem.

“I did not believe that you would let any circumstance of my birth create a prejudice in you against me, though it was sure to do so in others,” said Will, shaking his head backward in his old way, and looking with a grave appeal into her eyes.

“If it were a new hardship it would be a new reason for me to cling to you,” said Dorothea, fervidly. “Nothing could have changed me but—” her heart was swelling, and it was difficult to go on; she made a great effort over herself to say in a low tremulous voice, “but thinking that you were different—not so good as I had believed you to be.”

“You are sure to believe me better than I am in everything but one,” said Will, giving way to his own feeling in the evidence of hers. “I mean, in my truth to you. When I thought you doubted of that, I didn’t care about

anything that was left. I thought it was all over with me, and there was nothing to try for—only things to endure.”

“I don’t doubt you any longer,” said Dorothea, putting out her hand; a vague fear for him impelling her unutterable affection.

He took her hand and raised it to his lips with something like a sob. But he stood with his hat and gloves in the other hand, and might have done for the portrait of a Royalist. Still it was difficult to loose the hand, and Dorothea, withdrawing it in a confusion that distressed her, looked and moved away.

“See how dark the clouds have become, and how the trees are tossed,” she said, walking towards the window, yet speaking and moving with only a dim sense of what she was doing.

Will followed her at a little distance, and leaned against the tall back of a leather chair, on which he ventured now to lay his hat and gloves, and free himself from the intolerable duration of formality to which he had been for the first time condemned in Dorothea’s presence. It must be confessed that he felt very happy at that moment leaning on the chair. He was not much afraid of anything that she might feel now.

They stood silent, not looking at each other, but looking at the evergreens which were being tossed, and were showing the pale underside of their leaves against the blackening sky. Will never enjoyed the prospect of a storm so much: it delivered him from the necessity of going away. Leaves and little branches were hurled about, and the thunder was getting nearer. The light was more and more sombre, but there came a flash of lightning which made them start and look at each other, and then smile. Dorothea began to say what she had been thinking of.

“That was a wrong thing for you to say, that you would have had nothing to try for. If we had lost our own chief good, other people’s good would remain, and that is worth trying for. Some can be happy. I seemed to see that more clearly than ever, when I was the most wretched. I can hardly think how I could have borne the trouble, if that feeling had not come to me to make strength.”

“You have never felt the sort of misery I felt,” said Will; “the misery of knowing that you must despise me.”

“But I have felt worse—it was worse to think ill—” Dorothea had begun impetuously, but broke off.

Will colored. He had the sense that whatever she said was uttered in the vision of a fatality that kept them apart. He was silent a moment, and then said passionately—

“We may at least have the comfort of speaking to each other without disguise. Since I must go away—since we must always be divided—you may think of me as one on the brink of the grave.”

While he was speaking there came a vivid flash of lightning which lit each of them up for the other—and the light seemed to be the terror of a hopeless love. Dorothea darted instantaneously from the window; Will followed her, seizing her hand with a spasmodic movement; and so they stood, with their hands clasped, like two children, looking out on the storm, while the thunder gave a tremendous crack and roll above them, and the rain began to pour down. Then they turned their faces towards each other, with the memory of his last words in them, and they did not loose each other’s hands.

“There is no hope for me,” said Will. “Even if you loved me as well as I love you—even if I were everything to you—I shall most likely always be very poor: on a sober calculation, one can count on nothing but a creeping lot. It is impossible for us ever to belong to each other. It is perhaps base of me to have asked for a word from you. I meant to go away into silence, but I have not been able to do what I meant.”

“Don’t be sorry,” said Dorothea, in her clear tender tones. “I would rather share all the trouble of our parting.”

Her lips trembled, and so did his. It was never known which lips were the first to move towards the other lips; but they kissed tremblingly, and then they moved apart.

The rain was dashing against the window-panes as if an angry spirit were within it, and behind it was the great swoop of the wind; it was one of those moments in which both the busy and the idle pause with a certain awe.

Dorothea sat down on the seat nearest to her, a long low ottoman in the middle of the room, and with her hands folded over each other on her lap, looked at the drear outer world. Will stood still an instant looking at her,

then seated himself beside her, and laid his hand on hers, which turned itself upward to be clasped. They sat in that way without looking at each other, until the rain abated and began to fall in stillness. Each had been full of thoughts which neither of them could begin to utter.

But when the rain was quiet, Dorothea turned to look at Will. With passionate exclamation, as if some torture screw were threatening him, he started up and said, "It is impossible!"

He went and leaned on the back of the chair again, and seemed to be battling with his own anger, while she looked towards him sadly.

"It is as fatal as a murder or any other horror that divides people," he burst out again; "it is more intolerable—to have our life maimed by petty accidents."

"No—don't say that—your life need not be maimed," said Dorothea, gently.

"Yes, it must," said Will, angrily. "It is cruel of you to speak in that way—as if there were any comfort. You may see beyond the misery of it, but I don't. It is unkind—it is throwing back my love for you as if it were a trifle, to speak in that way in the face of the fact. We can never be married."

"Some time—we might," said Dorothea, in a trembling voice.

"When?" said Will, bitterly. "What is the use of counting on any success of mine? It is a mere toss up whether I shall ever do more than keep myself decently, unless I choose to sell myself as a mere pen and a mouthpiece. I can see that clearly enough. I could not offer myself to any woman, even if she had no luxuries to renounce."

There was silence. Dorothea's heart was full of something that she wanted to say, and yet the words were too difficult. She was wholly possessed by them: at that moment debate was mute within her. And it was very hard that she could not say what she wanted to say. Will was looking out of the window angrily. If he would have looked at her and not gone away from her side, she thought everything would have been easier. At last he turned, still resting against the chair, and stretching his hand automatically towards his hat, said with a sort of exasperation, "Good-by."

"Oh, I cannot bear it—my heart will break," said Dorothea, starting from her seat, the flood of her young passion bearing down all the

obstructions which had kept her silent—the great tears rising and falling in an instant: “I don’t mind about poverty—I hate my wealth.”

In an instant Will was close to her and had his arms round her, but she drew her head back and held his away gently that she might go on speaking, her large tear-filled eyes looking at his very simply, while she said in a sobbing childlike way, “We could live quite well on my own fortune—it is too much—seven hundred a-year—I want so little—no new clothes—and I will learn what everything costs.”

## CHAPTER LXXXIV.

“Though it be songe of old and yonge,  
That I sholde be to blame,  
Theyrs be the charge, that spoke so large  
In hurtyng of my name.”  
—*The Not-Browne Mayde.*

It was just after the Lords had thrown out the Reform Bill: that explains how Mr. Cadwallader came to be walking on the slope of the lawn near the great conservatory at Freshitt Hall, holding the “Times” in his hands behind him, while he talked with a trout-fisher’s dispassionateness about the prospects of the country to Sir James Chettam. Mrs. Cadwallader, the Dowager Lady Chettam, and Celia were sometimes seated on garden-chairs, sometimes walking to meet little Arthur, who was being drawn in his chariot, and, as became the infantine Bouddha, was sheltered by his sacred umbrella with handsome silken fringe.

The ladies also talked politics, though more fitfully. Mrs. Cadwallader was strong on the intended creation of peers: she had it for certain from her cousin that Truberry had gone over to the other side entirely at the instigation of his wife, who had scented peerages in the air from the very first introduction of the Reform question, and would sign her soul away to take precedence of her younger sister, who had married a baronet. Lady Chettam thought that such conduct was very reprehensible, and remembered that Mrs. Truberry’s mother was a Miss Walsingham of Melspring. Celia confessed it was nicer to be “Lady” than “Mrs.,” and that Dodo never minded about precedence if she could have her own way. Mrs. Cadwallader held that it was a poor satisfaction to take precedence when everybody about you knew that you had not a drop of good blood in your veins; and Celia again, stopping to look at Arthur, said, “It would be very nice, though, if he were a Viscount—and his lordship’s little tooth coming through! He might have been, if James had been an Earl.”

“My dear Celia,” said the Dowager, “James’s title is worth far more than any new earldom. I never wished his father to be anything else than

Sir James.”

“Oh, I only meant about Arthur’s little tooth,” said Celia, comfortably. “But see, here is my uncle coming.”

She tripped off to meet her uncle, while Sir James and Mr. Cadwallader came forward to make one group with the ladies. Celia had slipped her arm through her uncle’s, and he patted her hand with a rather melancholy “Well, my dear!” As they approached, it was evident that Mr. Brooke was looking dejected, but this was fully accounted for by the state of politics; and as he was shaking hands all round without more greeting than a “Well, you’re all here, you know,” the Rector said, laughingly—

“Don’t take the throwing out of the Bill so much to heart, Brooke; you’ve got all the riff-raff of the country on your side.”

“The Bill, eh? ah!” said Mr. Brooke, with a mild distractedness of manner. “Thrown out, you know, eh? The Lords are going too far, though. They’ll have to pull up. Sad news, you know. I mean, here at home—sad news. But you must not blame me, Chettam.”

“What is the matter?” said Sir James. “Not another gamekeeper shot, I hope? It’s what I should expect, when a fellow like Trapping Bass is let off so easily.”

“Gamekeeper? No. Let us go in; I can tell you all in the house, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, nodding at the Cadwalladers, to show that he included them in his confidence. “As to poachers like Trapping Bass, you know, Chettam,” he continued, as they were entering, “when you are a magistrate, you’ll not find it so easy to commit. Severity is all very well, but it’s a great deal easier when you’ve got somebody to do it for you. You have a soft place in your heart yourself, you know—you’re not a Draco, a Jeffreys, that sort of thing.”

Mr. Brooke was evidently in a state of nervous perturbation. When he had something painful to tell, it was usually his way to introduce it among a number of disjointed particulars, as if it were a medicine that would get a milder flavor by mixing. He continued his chat with Sir James about the poachers until they were all seated, and Mrs. Cadwallader, impatient of this drivelling, said—

“I’m dying to know the sad news. The gamekeeper is not shot: that is settled. What is it, then?”



“Well, it’s a very trying thing, you know,” said Mr. Brooke. “I’m glad you and the Rector are here; it’s a family matter—but you will help us all to bear it, Cadwallader. I’ve got to break it to you, my dear.” Here Mr. Brooke looked at Celia—“You’ve no notion what it is, you know. And, Chettam, it will annoy you uncommonly—but, you see, you have not been able to hinder it, any more than I have. There’s something singular in things: they come round, you know.”

“It must be about Dodo,” said Celia, who had been used to think of her sister as the dangerous part of the family machinery. She had seated herself on a low stool against her husband’s knee.

“For God’s sake let us hear what it is!” said Sir James.

“Well, you know, Chettam, I couldn’t help Casaubon’s will: it was a sort of will to make things worse.”

“Exactly,” said Sir James, hastily. “But *what* is worse?”

“Dorothea is going to be married again, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, nodding towards Celia, who immediately looked up at her husband with a frightened glance, and put her hand on his knee. Sir James was almost white with anger, but he did not speak.

“Merciful heaven!” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “Not to *young* Ladislaw?”

Mr. Brooke nodded, saying, “Yes; to Ladislaw,” and then fell into a prudential silence.

“You see, Humphrey!” said Mrs. Cadwallader, waving her arm towards her husband. “Another time you will admit that I have some foresight; or rather you will contradict me and be just as blind as ever. *You* supposed that the young gentleman was gone out of the country.”

“So he might be, and yet come back,” said the Rector, quietly.

“When did you learn this?” said Sir James, not liking to hear any one else speak, though finding it difficult to speak himself.

“Yesterday,” said Mr. Brooke, meekly. “I went to Lowick. Dorothea sent for me, you know. It had come about quite suddenly—neither of them had any idea two days ago—not any idea, you know. There’s something singular in things. But Dorothea is quite determined—it is no use opposing. I put it strongly to her. I did my duty, Chettam. But she can act as she likes, you know.”

“It would have been better if I had called him out and shot him a year ago,” said Sir James, not from bloody-mindedness, but because he needed something strong to say.

“Really, James, that would have been very disagreeable,” said Celia.

“Be reasonable, Chettam. Look at the affair more quietly,” said Mr. Cadwallader, sorry to see his good-natured friend so overmastered by anger.

“That is not so very easy for a man of any dignity—with any sense of right—when the affair happens to be in his own family,” said Sir James, still in his white indignation. “It is perfectly scandalous. If Ladislaw had had a spark of honor he would have gone out of the country at once, and never shown his face in it again. However, I am not surprised. The day after Casaubon’s funeral I said what ought to be done. But I was not listened to.”

“You wanted what was impossible, you know, Chettam,” said Mr. Brooke. “You wanted him shipped off. I told you Ladislaw was not to be done as we liked with: he had his ideas. He was a remarkable fellow—I always said he was a remarkable fellow.”

“Yes,” said Sir James, unable to repress a retort, “it is rather a pity you formed that high opinion of him. We are indebted to that for his being lodged in this neighborhood. We are indebted to that for seeing a woman like Dorothea degrading herself by marrying him.” Sir James made little stoppages between his clauses, the words not coming easily. “A man so marked out by her husband’s will, that delicacy ought to have forbidden her from seeing him again—who takes her out of her proper rank—into poverty—has the meanness to accept such a sacrifice—has always had an objectionable position—a bad origin—and, *I believe*, is a man of little principle and light character. That is my opinion.” Sir James ended emphatically, turning aside and crossing his leg.

“I pointed everything out to her,” said Mr. Brooke, apologetically—“I mean the poverty, and abandoning her position. I said, ‘My dear, you don’t know what it is to live on seven hundred a-year, and have no carriage, and that kind of thing, and go amongst people who don’t know who you are.’ I put it strongly to her. But I advise you to talk to Dorothea herself. The fact is, she has a dislike to Casaubon’s property. You will hear what she says, you know.”

“No—excuse me—I shall not,” said Sir James, with more coolness. “I cannot bear to see her again; it is too painful. It hurts me too much that a woman like Dorothea should have done what is wrong.”

“Be just, Chettam,” said the easy, large-lipped Rector, who objected to all this unnecessary discomfort. “Mrs. Casaubon may be acting imprudently: she is giving up a fortune for the sake of a man, and we men have so poor an opinion of each other that we can hardly call a woman wise who does that. But I think you should not condemn it as a wrong action, in the strict sense of the word.”

“Yes, I do,” answered Sir James. “I think that Dorothea commits a wrong action in marrying Ladislaw.”

“My dear fellow, we are rather apt to consider an act wrong because it is unpleasant to us,” said the Rector, quietly. Like many men who take life easily, he had the knack of saying a home truth occasionally to those who felt themselves virtuously out of temper. Sir James took out his handkerchief and began to bite the corner.

“It is very dreadful of Dodo, though,” said Celia, wishing to justify her husband. “She said she *never would* marry again—not anybody at all.”

“I heard her say the same thing myself,” said Lady Chettam, majestically, as if this were royal evidence.

“Oh, there is usually a silent exception in such cases,” said Mrs. Cadwallader. “The only wonder to me is, that any of you are surprised. You did nothing to hinder it. If you would have had Lord Triton down here to woo her with his philanthropy, he might have carried her off before the year was over. There was no safety in anything else. Mr. Casaubon had prepared all this as beautifully as possible. He made himself disagreeable—or it pleased God to make him so—and then he dared her to contradict him. It’s the way to make any trumpery tempting, to ticket it at a high price in that way.”

“I don’t know what you mean by wrong, Cadwallader,” said Sir James, still feeling a little stung, and turning round in his chair towards the Rector. “He’s not a man we can take into the family. At least, I must speak for myself,” he continued, carefully keeping his eyes off Mr. Brooke. “I suppose others will find his society too pleasant to care about the propriety of the thing.”

“Well, you know, Chettam,” said Mr. Brooke, good-humoredly, nursing his leg, “I can’t turn my back on Dorothea. I must be a father to her up to a certain point. I said, ‘My dear, I won’t refuse to give you away.’ I had spoken strongly before. But I can cut off the entail, you know. It will cost money and be troublesome; but I can do it, you know.”

Mr. Brooke nodded at Sir James, and felt that he was both showing his own force of resolution and propitiating what was just in the Baronet’s vexation. He had hit on a more ingenious mode of parrying than he was aware of. He had touched a motive of which Sir James was ashamed. The mass of his feeling about Dorothea’s marriage to Ladislaw was due partly to excusable prejudice, or even justifiable opinion, partly to a jealous repugnance hardly less in Ladislaw’s case than in Casaubon’s. He was convinced that the marriage was a fatal one for Dorothea. But amid that mass ran a vein of which he was too good and honorable a man to like the avowal even to himself: it was undeniable that the union of the two estates—Tipton and Freshitt—lying charmingly within a ring-fence, was a prospect that flattered him for his son and heir. Hence when Mr. Brooke noddingly appealed to that motive, Sir James felt a sudden embarrassment; there was a stoppage in his throat; he even blushed. He had found more words than usual in the first jet of his anger, but Mr. Brooke’s propitiation was more clogging to his tongue than Mr. Cadwallader’s caustic hint.

But Celia was glad to have room for speech after her uncle’s suggestion of the marriage ceremony, and she said, though with as little eagerness of manner as if the question had turned on an invitation to dinner, “Do you mean that Dodo is going to be married directly, uncle?”

“In three weeks, you know,” said Mr. Brooke, helplessly. “I can do nothing to hinder it, Cadwallader,” he added, turning for a little countenance toward the Rector, who said—

“*I* should not make any fuss about it. If she likes to be poor, that is her affair. Nobody would have said anything if she had married the young fellow because he was rich. Plenty of beneficed clergy are poorer than they will be. Here is Elinor,” continued the provoking husband; “she vexed her friends by me: I had hardly a thousand a-year—I was a lout—nobody could see anything in me—my shoes were not the right cut—all the men

wondered how a woman could like me. Upon my word, I must take Ladislaw's part until I hear more harm of him."

"Humphrey, that is all sophistry, and you know it," said his wife. "Everything is all one—that is the beginning and end with you. As if you had not been a Cadwallader! Does any one suppose that I would have taken such a monster as you by any other name?"

"And a clergyman too," observed Lady Chettam with approbation. "Elinor cannot be said to have descended below her rank. It is difficult to say what Mr. Ladislaw is, eh, James?"

Sir James gave a small grunt, which was less respectful than his usual mode of answering his mother. Celia looked up at him like a thoughtful kitten.

"It must be admitted that his blood is a frightful mixture!" said Mrs. Cadwallader. "The Casaubon cuttle-fish fluid to begin with, and then a rebellious Polish fiddler or dancing-master, was it?—and then an old clo —"

"Nonsense, Elinor," said the Rector, rising. "It is time for us to go."

"After all, he is a pretty sprig," said Mrs. Cadwallader, rising too, and wishing to make amends. "He is like the fine old Crichley portraits before the idiots came in."

"I'll go with you," said Mr. Brooke, starting up with alacrity. "You must all come and dine with me to-morrow, you know—eh, Celia, my dear?"

"You will, James—won't you?" said Celia, taking her husband's hand.

"Oh, of course, if you like," said Sir James, pulling down his waistcoat, but unable yet to adjust his face good-humoredly. "That is to say, if it is not to meet anybody else."

"No, no, no," said Mr. Brooke, understanding the condition. "Dorothea would not come, you know, unless you had been to see her."

When Sir James and Celia were alone, she said, "Do you mind about my having the carriage to go to Lowick, James?"

"What, now, directly?" he answered, with some surprise.

"Yes, it is very important," said Celia.

"Remember, Celia, I cannot see her," said Sir James.

"Not if she gave up marrying?"

“What is the use of saying that?—however, I’m going to the stables. I’ll tell Briggs to bring the carriage round.”

Celia thought it was of great use, if not to say that, at least to take a journey to Lowick in order to influence Dorothea’s mind. All through their girlhood she had felt that she could act on her sister by a word judiciously placed—by opening a little window for the daylight of her own understanding to enter among the strange colored lamps by which Dodo habitually saw. And Celia the matron naturally felt more able to advise her childless sister. How could any one understand Dodo so well as Celia did or love her so tenderly?

Dorothea, busy in her boudoir, felt a glow of pleasure at the sight of her sister so soon after the revelation of her intended marriage. She had prefigured to herself, even with exaggeration, the disgust of her friends, and she had even feared that Celia might be kept aloof from her.

“O Kitty, I am delighted to see you!” said Dorothea, putting her hands on Celia’s shoulders, and beaming on her. “I almost thought you would not come to me.”

“I have not brought Arthur, because I was in a hurry,” said Celia, and they sat down on two small chairs opposite each other, with their knees touching.

“You know, Dodo, it is very bad,” said Celia, in her placid guttural, looking as prettily free from humors as possible. “You have disappointed us all so. And I can’t think that it ever *will* be—you never can go and live in that way. And then there are all your plans! You never can have thought of that. James would have taken any trouble for you, and you might have gone on all your life doing what you liked.”

“On the contrary, dear,” said Dorothea, “I never could do anything that I liked. I have never carried out any plan yet.”

“Because you always wanted things that wouldn’t do. But other plans would have come. And how *can* you marry Mr. Ladislav, that we none of us ever thought you *could* marry? It shocks James so dreadfully. And then it is all so different from what you have always been. You would have Mr. Casaubon because he had such a great soul, and was so old and dismal and learned; and now, to think of marrying Mr. Ladislav, who has got no estate or anything. I suppose it is because you must be making yourself uncomfortable in some way or other.”

Dorothea laughed.

“Well, it is very serious, Dodo,” said Celia, becoming more impressive. “How will you live? and you will go away among queer people. And I shall never see you—and you won’t mind about little Arthur—and I thought you always would—”

Celia’s rare tears had got into her eyes, and the corners of her mouth were agitated.

“Dear Celia,” said Dorothea, with tender gravity, “if you don’t ever see me, it will not be my fault.”

“Yes, it will,” said Celia, with the same touching distortion of her small features. “How can I come to you or have you with me when James can’t bear it?—that is because he thinks it is not right—he thinks you are so wrong, Dodo. But you always were wrong: only I can’t help loving you. And nobody can think where you will live: where can you go?”

“I am going to London,” said Dorothea.

“How can you always live in a street? And you will be so poor. I could give you half my things, only how can I, when I never see you?”

“Bless you, Kitty,” said Dorothea, with gentle warmth. “Take comfort: perhaps James will forgive me some time.”

“But it would be much better if you would not be married,” said Celia, drying her eyes, and returning to her argument; “then there would be nothing uncomfortable. And you would not do what nobody thought you could do. James always said you ought to be a queen; but this is not at all being like a queen. You know what mistakes you have always been making, Dodo, and this is another. Nobody thinks Mr. Ladislaw a proper husband for you. And you *said* you would never be married again.”

“It is quite true that I might be a wiser person, Celia,” said Dorothea, “and that I might have done something better, if I had been better. But this is what I am going to do. I have promised to marry Mr. Ladislaw; and I am going to marry him.”

The tone in which Dorothea said this was a note that Celia had long learned to recognize. She was silent a few moments, and then said, as if she had dismissed all contest, “Is he very fond of you, Dodo?”

“I hope so. I am very fond of him.”

“That is nice,” said Celia, comfortably. “Only I would rather you had such a sort of husband as James is, with a place very near, that I could drive to.”

Dorothea smiled, and Celia looked rather meditative. Presently she said, “I cannot think how it all came about.” Celia thought it would be pleasant to hear the story.

“I dare say not,” said Dorothea, pinching her sister’s chin. “If you knew how it came about, it would not seem wonderful to you.”

“Can’t you tell me?” said Celia, settling her arms cozily.

“No, dear, you would have to feel with me, else you would never know.”



## CHAPTER LXXXV.

“Then went the jury out whose names were Mr. Blindman, Mr. No-good, Mr. Malice, Mr. Love-lust, Mr. Live-loose, Mr. Heady, Mr. High-mind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Liar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hate-light, Mr. Implacable, who every one gave in his private verdict against him among themselves, and afterwards unanimously concluded to bring him in guilty before the judge. And first among themselves, Mr. Blindman, the foreman, said, I see clearly that this man is a heretic. Then said Mr. No-good, Away with such a fellow from the earth! Ay, said Mr. Malice, for I hate the very look of him. Then said Mr. Love-lust, I could never endure him. Nor I, said Mr. Live-loose; for he would be always condemning my way. Hang him, hang him, said Mr. Heady. A sorry scrub, said Mr. High-mind. My heart riseth against him, said Mr. Enmity. He is a rogue, said Mr. Liar. Hanging is too good for him, said Mr. Cruelty. Let us despatch him out of the way said Mr. Hate-light. Then said Mr. Implacable, Might I have all the world given me, I could not be reconciled to him; therefore let us forthwith bring him in guilty of death.”—*Pilgrim's Progress.*

When immortal Bunyan makes his picture of the persecuting passions bringing in their verdict of guilty, who pities Faithful? That is a rare and blessed lot which some greatest men have not attained, to know ourselves guiltless before a condemning crowd—to be sure that what we are denounced for is solely the good in us. The pitiable lot is that of the man who could not call himself a martyr even though he were to persuade himself that the men who stoned him were but ugly passions incarnate—who knows that he is stoned, not for professing the Right, but for not being the man he professed to be.

This was the consciousness that Bulstrode was withering under while he made his preparations for departing from Middlemarch, and going to end his stricken life in that sad refuge, the indifference of new faces. The duteous merciful constancy of his wife had delivered him from one dread, but it could not hinder her presence from being still a tribunal before which he shrank from confession and desired advocacy. His equivocations with himself about the death of Raffles had sustained the conception of an Omniscience whom he prayed to, yet he had a terror upon him which would not let him expose them to judgment by a full confession to his wife: the acts which he had washed and diluted with inward argument and

motive, and for which it seemed comparatively easy to win invisible pardon—what name would she call them by? That she should ever silently call his acts Murder was what he could not bear. He felt shrouded by her doubt: he got strength to face her from the sense that she could not yet feel warranted in pronouncing that worst condemnation on him. Some time, perhaps—when he was dying—he would tell her all: in the deep shadow of that time, when she held his hand in the gathering darkness, she might listen without recoiling from his touch. Perhaps: but concealment had been the habit of his life, and the impulse to confession had no power against the dread of a deeper humiliation.

He was full of timid care for his wife, not only because he deprecated any harshness of judgment from her, but because he felt a deep distress at the sight of her suffering. She had sent her daughters away to board at a school on the coast, that this crisis might be hidden from them as far as possible. Set free by their absence from the intolerable necessity of accounting for her grief or of beholding their frightened wonder, she could live unconstrainedly with the sorrow that was every day streaking her hair with whiteness and making her eyelids languid.

“Tell me anything that you would like to have me do, Harriet,” Bulstrode had said to her; “I mean with regard to arrangements of property. It is my intention not to sell the land I possess in this neighborhood, but to leave it to you as a safe provision. If you have any wish on such subjects, do not conceal it from me.”

A few days afterwards, when she had returned from a visit to her brother’s, she began to speak to her husband on a subject which had for some time been in her mind.

“I *should* like to do something for my brother’s family, Nicholas; and I think we are bound to make some amends to Rosamond and her husband. Walter says Mr. Lydgate must leave the town, and his practice is almost good for nothing, and they have very little left to settle anywhere with. I would rather do without something for ourselves, to make some amends to my poor brother’s family.”

Mrs. Bulstrode did not wish to go nearer to the facts than in the phrase “make some amends;” knowing that her husband must understand her. He had a particular reason, which she was not aware of, for wincing under her suggestion. He hesitated before he said—

“It is not possible to carry out your wish in the way you propose, my dear. Mr. Lydgate has virtually rejected any further service from me. He has returned the thousand pounds which I lent him. Mrs. Casaubon advanced him the sum for that purpose. Here is his letter.”

The letter seemed to cut Mrs. Bulstrode severely. The mention of Mrs. Casaubon’s loan seemed a reflection of that public feeling which held it a matter of course that every one would avoid a connection with her husband. She was silent for some time; and the tears fell one after the other, her chin trembling as she wiped them away. Bulstrode, sitting opposite to her, ached at the sight of that grief-worn face, which two months before had been bright and blooming. It had aged to keep sad company with his own withered features. Urged into some effort at comforting her, he said—

“There is another means, Harriet, by which I might do a service to your brother’s family, if you like to act in it. And it would, I think, be beneficial to you: it would be an advantageous way of managing the land which I mean to be yours.”

She looked attentive.

“Garth once thought of undertaking the management of Stone Court in order to place your nephew Fred there. The stock was to remain as it is, and they were to pay a certain share of the profits instead of an ordinary rent. That would be a desirable beginning for the young man, in conjunction with his employment under Garth. Would it be a satisfaction to you?”

“Yes, it would,” said Mrs. Bulstrode, with some return of energy. “Poor Walter is so cast down; I would try anything in my power to do him some good before I go away. We have always been brother and sister.”

“You must make the proposal to Garth yourself, Harriet,” said Mr. Bulstrode, not liking what he had to say, but desiring the end he had in view, for other reasons besides the consolation of his wife. “You must state to him that the land is virtually yours, and that he need have no transactions with me. Communications can be made through Standish. I mention this, because Garth gave up being my agent. I can put into your hands a paper which he himself drew up, stating conditions; and you can propose his renewed acceptance of them. I think it is not unlikely that he will accept when you propose the thing for the sake of your nephew.”

## CHAPTER LXXXVI.

“Le cœur se sature d’amour comme d’un sel divin qui le conserve; de là l’incorruptible adhérence de ceux qui se sont aimés dès l’aube de la vie, et la fraîcheur des vieilles amours prolongées. Il existe un embaumement d’amour. C’est de Daphnis et Chloé que sont faits Philémon et Baucis. Cette vieillesse-là, ressemblance du soir avec l’aurore.”—  
VICTOR HUGO: *L’homme qui rit*.

Mrs. Garth, hearing Caleb enter the passage about tea-time, opened the parlor-door and said, “There you are, Caleb. Have you had your dinner?” (Mr. Garth’s meals were much subordinated to “business.”)

“Oh yes, a good dinner—cold mutton and I don’t know what. Where is Mary?”

“In the garden with Letty, I think.”

“Fred is not come yet?”

“No. Are you going out again without taking tea, Caleb?” said Mrs. Garth, seeing that her absent-minded husband was putting on again the hat which he had just taken off.

“No, no; I’m only going to Mary a minute.”

Mary was in a grassy corner of the garden, where there was a swing loftily hung between two pear-trees. She had a pink kerchief tied over her head, making a little poke to shade her eyes from the level sunbeams, while she was giving a glorious swing to Letty, who laughed and screamed wildly.

Seeing her father, Mary left the swing and went to meet him, pushing back the pink kerchief and smiling afar off at him with the involuntary smile of loving pleasure.

“I came to look for you, Mary,” said Mr. Garth. “Let us walk about a bit.”

Mary knew quite well that her father had something particular to say: his eyebrows made their pathetic angle, and there was a tender gravity in

his voice: these things had been signs to her when she was Letty's age. She put her arm within his, and they turned by the row of nut-trees.

"It will be a sad while before you can be married, Mary," said her father, not looking at her, but at the end of the stick which he held in his other hand.

"Not a sad while, father—I mean to be merry," said Mary, laughingly. "I have been single and merry for four-and-twenty years and more: I suppose it will not be quite as long again as that." Then, after a little pause, she said, more gravely, bending her face before her father's, "If you are contented with Fred?"

Caleb screwed up his mouth and turned his head aside wisely.

"Now, father, you did praise him last Wednesday. You said he had an uncommon notion of stock, and a good eye for things."

"Did I?" said Caleb, rather slyly.

"Yes, I put it all down, and the date, *anno Domini*, and everything," said Mary. "You like things to be neatly booked. And then his behavior to you, father, is really good; he has a deep respect for you; and it is impossible to have a better temper than Fred has."

"Ay, ay; you want to coax me into thinking him a fine match."

"No, indeed, father. I don't love him because he is a fine match."

"What for, then?"

"Oh, dear, because I have always loved him. I should never like scolding any one else so well; and that is a point to be thought of in a husband."

"Your mind is quite settled, then, Mary?" said Caleb, returning to his first tone. "There's no other wish come into it since things have been going on as they have been of late?" (Caleb meant a great deal in that vague phrase;) "because, better late than never. A woman must not force her heart—she'll do a man no good by that."

"My feelings have not changed, father," said Mary, calmly. "I shall be constant to Fred as long as he is constant to me. I don't think either of us could spare the other, or like any one else better, however much we might admire them. It would make too great a difference to us—like seeing all

the old places altered, and changing the name for everything. We must wait for each other a long while; but Fred knows that.”

Instead of speaking immediately, Caleb stood still and screwed his stick on the grassy walk. Then he said, with emotion in his voice, “Well, I’ve got a bit of news. What do you think of Fred going to live at Stone Court, and managing the land there?”

“How can that ever be, father?” said Mary, wonderingly.

“He would manage it for his aunt Bulstrode. The poor woman has been to me begging and praying. She wants to do the lad good, and it might be a fine thing for him. With saving, he might gradually buy the stock, and he has a turn for farming.”

“Oh, Fred would be so happy! It is too good to believe.”

“Ah, but mind you,” said Caleb, turning his head warningly, “I must take it on *my* shoulders, and be responsible, and see after everything; and that will grieve your mother a bit, though she mayn’t say so. Fred had need be careful.”

“Perhaps it is too much, father,” said Mary, checked in her joy. “There would be no happiness in bringing you any fresh trouble.”

“Nay, nay; work is my delight, child, when it doesn’t vex your mother. And then, if you and Fred get married,” here Caleb’s voice shook just perceptibly, “he’ll be steady and saving; and you’ve got your mother’s cleverness, and mine too, in a woman’s sort of way; and you’ll keep him in order. He’ll be coming by-and-by, so I wanted to tell you first, because I think you’d like to tell *him* by yourselves. After that, I could talk it well over with him, and we could go into business and the nature of things.”

“Oh, you dear good father!” cried Mary, putting her hands round her father’s neck, while he bent his head placidly, willing to be caressed. “I wonder if any other girl thinks her father the best man in the world!”

“Nonsense, child; you’ll think your husband better.”

“Impossible,” said Mary, relapsing into her usual tone; “husbands are an inferior class of men, who require keeping in order.”

When they were entering the house with Letty, who had run to join them, Mary saw Fred at the orchard-gate, and went to meet him.

“What fine clothes you wear, you extravagant youth!” said Mary, as Fred stood still and raised his hat to her with playful formality. “You are not learning economy.”

“Now that is too bad, Mary,” said Fred. “Just look at the edges of these coat-cuffs! It is only by dint of good brushing that I look respectable. I am saving up three suits—one for a wedding-suit.”

“How very droll you will look!—like a gentleman in an old fashion-book.”

“Oh no, they will keep two years.”

“Two years! be reasonable, Fred,” said Mary, turning to walk. “Don’t encourage flattering expectations.”

“Why not? One lives on them better than on unflattering ones. If we can’t be married in two years, the truth will be quite bad enough when it comes.”

“I have heard a story of a young gentleman who once encouraged flattering expectations, and they did him harm.”

“Mary, if you’ve got something discouraging to tell me, I shall bolt; I shall go into the house to Mr. Garth. I am out of spirits. My father is so cut up—home is not like itself. I can’t bear any more bad news.”

“Should you call it bad news to be told that you were to live at Stone Court, and manage the farm, and be remarkably prudent, and save money every year till all the stock and furniture were your own, and you were a distinguished agricultural character, as Mr. Borthrop Trumbull says—rather stout, I fear, and with the Greek and Latin sadly weather-worn?”

“You don’t mean anything except nonsense, Mary?” said Fred, coloring slightly nevertheless.

“That is what my father has just told me of as what may happen, and he never talks nonsense,” said Mary, looking up at Fred now, while he grasped her hand as they walked, till it rather hurt her; but she would not complain.

“Oh, I could be a tremendously good fellow then, Mary, and we could be married directly.”

“Not so fast, sir; how do you know that I would not rather defer our marriage for some years? That would leave you time to misbehave, and

then if I liked some one else better, I should have an excuse for jilting you.”

“Pray don’t joke, Mary,” said Fred, with strong feeling. “Tell me seriously that all this is true, and that you are happy because of it—because you love me best.”

“It is all true, Fred, and I am happy because of it—because I love you best,” said Mary, in a tone of obedient recitation.

They lingered on the door-step under the steep-roofed porch, and Fred almost in a whisper said—

“When we were first engaged, with the umbrella-ring, Mary, you used to —”

The spirit of joy began to laugh more decidedly in Mary’s eyes, but the fatal Ben came running to the door with Brownie yapping behind him, and, bouncing against them, said—

“Fred and Mary! are you ever coming in?—or may I eat your cake?”



## FINALE.

Every limit is a beginning as well as an ending. Who can quit young lives after being long in company with them, and not desire to know what befell them in their after-years? For the fragment of a life, however typical, is not the sample of an even web: promises may not be kept, and an ardent outset may be followed by declension; latent powers may find their long-awaited opportunity; a past error may urge a grand retrieval.

Marriage, which has been the bourne of so many narratives, is still a great beginning, as it was to Adam and Eve, who kept their honeymoon in Eden, but had their first little one among the thorns and thistles of the wilderness. It is still the beginning of the home epic—the gradual conquest or irremediable loss of that complete union which makes the advancing years a climax, and age the harvest of sweet memories in common.

Some set out, like Crusaders of old, with a glorious equipment of hope and enthusiasm and get broken by the way, wanting patience with each other and the world.

All who have cared for Fred Vincy and Mary Garth will like to know that these two made no such failure, but achieved a solid mutual happiness. Fred surprised his neighbors in various ways. He became rather distinguished in his side of the county as a theoretic and practical farmer, and produced a work on the “Cultivation of Green Crops and the Economy of Cattle-Feeding” which won him high congratulations at agricultural meetings. In Middlemarch admiration was more reserved: most persons there were inclined to believe that the merit of Fred’s authorship was due to his wife, since they had never expected Fred Vincy to write on turnips and mangel-wurzel.

But when Mary wrote a little book for her boys, called “Stories of Great Men, taken from Plutarch,” and had it printed and published by Gripp & Co., Middlemarch, every one in the town was willing to give the credit of

this work to Fred, observing that he had been to the University, “where the ancients were studied,” and might have been a clergyman if he had chosen.

In this way it was made clear that Middlemarch had never been deceived, and that there was no need to praise anybody for writing a book, since it was always done by somebody else.

Moreover, Fred remained unswervingly steady. Some years after his marriage he told Mary that his happiness was half owing to Farebrother, who gave him a strong pull-up at the right moment. I cannot say that he was never again misled by his hopefulness: the yield of crops or the profits of a cattle sale usually fell below his estimate; and he was always prone to believe that he could make money by the purchase of a horse which turned out badly—though this, Mary observed, was of course the fault of the horse, not of Fred’s judgment. He kept his love of horsemanship, but he rarely allowed himself a day’s hunting; and when he did so, it was remarkable that he submitted to be laughed at for cowardliness at the fences, seeming to see Mary and the boys sitting on the five-barred gate, or showing their curly heads between hedge and ditch.

There were three boys: Mary was not discontented that she brought forth men-children only; and when Fred wished to have a girl like her, she said, laughingly, “that would be too great a trial to your mother.” Mrs. Vincy in her declining years, and in the diminished lustre of her housekeeping, was much comforted by her perception that two at least of Fred’s boys were real Vincys, and did not “feature the Garths.” But Mary secretly rejoiced that the youngest of the three was very much what her father must have been when he wore a round jacket, and showed a marvellous nicety of aim in playing at marbles, or in throwing stones to bring down the mellow pears.

Ben and Letty Garth, who were uncle and aunt before they were well in their teens, disputed much as to whether nephews or nieces were more desirable; Ben contending that it was clear girls were good for less than boys, else they would not be always in petticoats, which showed how little they were meant for; whereupon Letty, who argued much from books, got angry in replying that God made coats of skins for both Adam and Eve alike—also it occurred to her that in the East the men too wore petticoats. But this latter argument, obscuring the majesty of the former, was one too many, for Ben answered contemptuously, “The more spooneys they!” and

immediately appealed to his mother whether boys were not better than girls. Mrs. Garth pronounced that both were alike naughty, but that boys were undoubtedly stronger, could run faster, and throw with more precision to a greater distance. With this oracular sentence Ben was well satisfied, not minding the naughtiness; but Letty took it ill, her feeling of superiority being stronger than her muscles.

Fred never became rich—his hopefulness had not led him to expect that; but he gradually saved enough to become owner of the stock and furniture at Stone Court, and the work which Mr. Garth put into his hands carried him in plenty through those “bad times” which are always present with farmers. Mary, in her matronly days, became as solid in figure as her mother; but, unlike her, gave the boys little formal teaching, so that Mrs. Garth was alarmed lest they should never be well grounded in grammar and geography. Nevertheless, they were found quite forward enough when they went to school; perhaps, because they had liked nothing so well as being with their mother. When Fred was riding home on winter evenings he had a pleasant vision beforehand of the bright hearth in the wainscoted parlor, and was sorry for other men who could not have Mary for their wife; especially for Mr. Farebrother. “He was ten times worthier of you than I was,” Fred could now say to her, magnanimously. “To be sure he was,” Mary answered; “and for that reason he could do better without me. But you—I shudder to think what you would have been—a curate in debt for horse-hire and cambric pocket-handkerchiefs!”

On inquiry it might possibly be found that Fred and Mary still inhabit Stone Court—that the creeping plants still cast the foam of their blossoms over the fine stone-wall into the field where the walnut-trees stand in stately row—and that on sunny days the two lovers who were first engaged with the umbrella-ring may be seen in white-haired placidity at the open window from which Mary Garth, in the days of old Peter Featherstone, had often been ordered to look out for Mr. Lydgate.

Lydgate’s hair never became white. He died when he was only fifty, leaving his wife and children provided for by a heavy insurance on his life. He had gained an excellent practice, alternating, according to the season, between London and a Continental bathing-place; having written a treatise on Gout, a disease which has a good deal of wealth on its side. His skill was relied on by many paying patients, but he always regarded himself as

a failure: he had not done what he once meant to do. His acquaintances thought him enviable to have so charming a wife, and nothing happened to shake their opinion. Rosamond never committed a second compromising indiscretion. She simply continued to be mild in her temper, inflexible in her judgment, disposed to admonish her husband, and able to frustrate him by stratagem. As the years went on he opposed her less and less, whence Rosamond concluded that he had learned the value of her opinion; on the other hand, she had a more thorough conviction of his talents now that he gained a good income, and instead of the threatened cage in Bride Street provided one all flowers and gilding, fit for the bird of paradise that she resembled. In brief, Lydgate was what is called a successful man. But he died prematurely of diphtheria, and Rosamond afterwards married an elderly and wealthy physician, who took kindly to her four children. She made a very pretty show with her daughters, driving out in her carriage, and often spoke of her happiness as “a reward”—she did not say for what, but probably she meant that it was a reward for her patience with Tertius, whose temper never became faultless, and to the last occasionally let slip a bitter speech which was more memorable than the signs he made of his repentance. He once called her his basil plant; and when she asked for an explanation, said that basil was a plant which had flourished wonderfully on a murdered man’s brains. Rosamond had a placid but strong answer to such speeches. Why then had he chosen her? It was a pity he had not had Mrs. Ladislaw, whom he was always praising and placing above her. And thus the conversation ended with the advantage on Rosamond’s side. But it would be unjust not to tell, that she never uttered a word in depreciation of Dorothea, keeping in religious remembrance the generosity which had come to her aid in the sharpest crisis of her life.

Dorothea herself had no dreams of being praised above other women, feeling that there was always something better which she might have done, if she had only been better and known better. Still, she never repented that she had given up position and fortune to marry Will Ladislaw, and he would have held it the greatest shame as well as sorrow to him if she had repented. They were bound to each other by a love stronger than any impulses which could have marred it. No life would have been possible to Dorothea which was not filled with emotion, and she had now a life filled also with a beneficent activity which she had not the doubtful pains of discovering and marking out for herself. Will became an ardent public

man, working well in those times when reforms were begun with a young hopefulness of immediate good which has been much checked in our days, and getting at last returned to Parliament by a constituency who paid his expenses. Dorothea could have liked nothing better, since wrongs existed, than that her husband should be in the thick of a struggle against them, and that she should give him wifely help. Many who knew her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother. But no one stated exactly what else that was in her power she ought rather to have done—not even Sir James Chettam, who went no further than the negative prescription that she ought not to have married Will Ladislaw.

But this opinion of his did not cause a lasting alienation; and the way in which the family was made whole again was characteristic of all concerned. Mr. Brooke could not resist the pleasure of corresponding with Will and Dorothea; and one morning when his pen had been remarkably fluent on the prospects of Municipal Reform, it ran off into an invitation to the Grange, which, once written, could not be done away with at less cost than the sacrifice (hardly to be conceived) of the whole valuable letter. During the months of this correspondence Mr. Brooke had continually, in his talk with Sir James Chettam, been presupposing or hinting that the intention of cutting off the entail was still maintained; and the day on which his pen gave the daring invitation, he went to Freshitt expressly to intimate that he had a stronger sense than ever of the reasons for taking that energetic step as a precaution against any mixture of low blood in the heir of the Brookes.

But that morning something exciting had happened at the Hall. A letter had come to Celia which made her cry silently as she read it; and when Sir James, unused to see her in tears, asked anxiously what was the matter, she burst out in a wail such as he had never heard from her before.

“Dorothea has a little boy. And you will not let me go and see her. And I am sure she wants to see me. And she will not know what to do with the baby—she will do wrong things with it. And they thought she would die. It is very dreadful! Suppose it had been me and little Arthur, and Dodo had been hindered from coming to see me! I wish you would be less unkind, James!”

“Good heavens, Celia!” said Sir James, much wrought upon, “what do you wish? I will do anything you like. I will take you to town to-morrow if you wish it.” And Celia did wish it.

It was after this that Mr. Brooke came, and meeting the Baronet in the grounds, began to chat with him in ignorance of the news, which Sir James for some reason did not care to tell him immediately. But when the entail was touched on in the usual way, he said, “My dear sir, it is not for me to dictate to you, but for my part I would let that alone. I would let things remain as they are.”

Mr. Brooke felt so much surprised that he did not at once find out how much he was relieved by the sense that he was not expected to do anything in particular.

Such being the bent of Celia’s heart, it was inevitable that Sir James should consent to a reconciliation with Dorothea and her husband. Where women love each other, men learn to smother their mutual dislike. Sir James never liked Ladislaw, and Will always preferred to have Sir James’s company mixed with another kind: they were on a footing of reciprocal tolerance which was made quite easy only when Dorothea and Celia were present.

It became an understood thing that Mr. and Mrs. Ladislaw should pay at least two visits during the year to the Grange, and there came gradually a small row of cousins at Freshitt who enjoyed playing with the two cousins visiting Tipton as much as if the blood of these cousins had been less dubiously mixed.

Mr. Brooke lived to a good old age, and his estate was inherited by Dorothea’s son, who might have represented Middlemarch, but declined, thinking that his opinions had less chance of being stifled if he remained out of doors.

Sir James never ceased to regard Dorothea’s second marriage as a mistake; and indeed this remained the tradition concerning it in Middlemarch, where she was spoken of to a younger generation as a fine girl who married a sickly clergyman, old enough to be her father, and in little more than a year after his death gave up her estate to marry his cousin—young enough to have been his son, with no property, and not well-born. Those who had not seen anything of Dorothea usually observed

that she could not have been “a nice woman,” else she would not have married either the one or the other.

Certainly those determining acts of her life were not ideally beautiful. They were the mixed result of young and noble impulse struggling amidst the conditions of an imperfect social state, in which great feelings will often take the aspect of error, and great faith the aspect of illusion. For there is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside it. A new Theresa will hardly have the opportunity of reforming a conventual life, any more than a new Antigone will spend her heroic piety in daring all for the sake of a brother’s burial: the medium in which their ardent deeds took shape is forever gone. But we insignificant people with our daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas, some of which may present a far sadder sacrifice than that of the Dorothea whose story we know.

Her finely touched spirit had still its fine issues, though they were not widely visible. Her full nature, like that river of which Cyrus broke the strength, spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

## THE END

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A PASSAGE TO INDIA

E. M. FORSTER



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# A PASSAGE TO INDIA

BY

E. M. FORSTER

Author of "Howards End," "A Room with a View," etc.

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BY THE SAME WRITER:

WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

THE LONGEST JOURNEY

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

HOWARDS END

THE CELESTIAL OMNIBUS

PHAROS AND PHARILLON

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TO

SYED ROSS MASOOD

AND TO THE SEVENTEEN YEARS OF OUR FRIENDSHIP

# CONTENTS

## PART I: MOSQUE

CHAPTER I  
CHAPTER II  
CHAPTER III  
CHAPTER IV  
CHAPTER V  
CHAPTER VI  
CHAPTER VII  
CHAPTER VIII  
CHAPTER IX  
CHAPTER X  
CHAPTER XI

## PART II: CAVES

CHAPTER XII  
CHAPTER XIII  
CHAPTER XIV  
CHAPTER XV  
CHAPTER XVI  
CHAPTER XVII  
CHAPTER XVIII  
CHAPTER XIX  
CHAPTER XX  
CHAPTER XXI  
CHAPTER XXII  
CHAPTER XXIII  
CHAPTER XXIV  
CHAPTER XXV

CHAPTER XXVI  
CHAPTER XXVII  
CHAPTER XXVIII  
CHAPTER XXIX  
CHAPTER XXX  
CHAPTER XXXI  
CHAPTER XXXII

PART III: TEMPLE

CHAPTER XXXIII  
CHAPTER XXXIV  
CHAPTER XXXV  
CHAPTER XXXVI  
CHAPTER XXXVII

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

## PART I: MOSQUE

## CHAPTER I

Except for the Marabar Caves—and they are twenty miles off—the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. Edged rather than washed by the river Ganges, it trails for a couple of miles along the bank, scarcely distinguishable from the rubbish it deposits so freely. There are no bathing-steps on the river front, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no river front, and bazaars shut out the wide and shifting panorama of the stream. The streets are mean, the temples ineffective, and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters all but the invited guest. Chandrapore was never large or beautiful, but two hundred years ago it lay on the road between Upper India, then imperial, and the sea, and the fine houses date from that period. The zest for decoration stopped in the eighteenth century, nor was it ever democratic. There is no painting and scarcely any carving in the bazaars. The very wood seems made of mud, the inhabitants of mud moving. So abased, so monotonous is everything that meets the eye, that when the Ganges comes down it might be expected to wash the excrescence back into the soil. Houses do fall, people are drowned and left rotting, but the general outline of the town persists, swelling here, shrinking there, like some low but indestructible form of life.

Inland, the prospect alters. There is an oval Maidan, and a long sallow hospital. Houses belonging to Eurasians stand on the high ground by the railway station. Beyond the railway—which runs parallel to the river—the land sinks, then rises again rather steeply. On the second rise is laid out the little civil station, and viewed hence Chandrapore appears to be a totally different place. It is a city of gardens. It is no city, but a forest sparsely scattered with huts. It is a tropical pleasance washed by a noble river. The toddy palms and neem trees and mangoes and pekul that were hidden behind the bazaars now become visible and in their turn hide the bazaars. They rise from the gardens where ancient tanks nourish them, they burst out of stifling purlieus and unconsidered temples. Seeking, light and air, and

endowed with more strength than man or his works, they soar above the lower deposit to greet one another with branches and beckoning leaves, and to build a city for the birds. Especially after the rains do they screen what passes below, but at all times, even when scorched or leafless, they glorify the city to the English people who inhabit the rise, so that new-comers cannot believe it to be as meagre as it is described, and have to be driven down to acquire disillusionment. As for the civil station itself, it provokes no emotion. It charms not, neither does it repel. It is sensibly planned, with a red-brick club on its brow, and farther back a grocer's and a cemetery, and the bungalows are disposed along roads that intersect at right angles. It has nothing hideous in it, and only the view is beautiful; it shares nothing with the city except the overarching sky.

The sky too has its changes, but they are less marked than those of the vegetation and the river. Clouds map it up at times, but it is normally a dome of blending tints, and the main tint blue. By day the blue will pale down into white where it touches the white of the land, after sunset it has a new circumference—orange, melting upwards into tenderest purple. But the core of blue persists, and so it is by night. Then the stars hang like lamps from the immense vault. The distance between the vault and them is as nothing to the distance behind them, and that farther distance, though beyond colour, last freed itself from blue.

The sky settles everything—not only climates and seasons but when the earth shall be beautiful. By herself she can do little—only feeble outbursts of flowers. But when the sky chooses, glory can rain into the Chandrapore bazaars or a benediction pass from horizon to horizon. The sky can do this because it is so strong and so enormous. Strength comes from the sun, infused in it daily, size from the prostrate earth. No mountains infringe on the curve. League after league the earth lies flat, heaves a little, is flat again. Only in the south, where a group of fists and fingers are thrust up through the soil, is the endless expanse interrupted. These fists and fingers are the Marabar Hills, containing the extraordinary caves.

## CHAPTER II

Abandoning his bicycle, which fell before a servant could catch it, the young man sprang up on to the verandah. He was all animation. "Hamidullah, Hamidullah! am I late?" he cried.

"Do not apologize," said his host. "You are always late."

"Kindly answer my question. Am I late? Has Mahmoud Ali eaten all the food? If so I go elsewhere. Mr. Mahmoud Ali, how are you?"

"Thank you, Dr. Aziz, I am dying."

"Dying before your dinner? Oh, poor Mahmoud Ali!"

"Hamidullah here is actually dead. He passed away just as you rode up on your bike."

"Yes, that is so," said the other. "Imagine us both as addressing you from another and a happier world."

"Does there happen to be such a thing as a hookah in that happier world of yours?"

"Aziz, don't chatter. We are having a very sad talk."

The hookah had been packed too tight, as was usual in his friend's house, and bubbled sulkily. He coaxed it. Yielding at last, the tobacco jetted up into his lungs and nostrils, driving out the smoke of burning cow dung that had filled them as he rode through the bazaar. It was delicious. He lay in a trance, sensuous but healthy, through which the talk of the two others did not seem particularly sad—they were discussing as to whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman. Mahmoud Ali argued that it was not, Hamidullah disagreed, but with so many reservations that there was no



friction between them. Delicious indeed to lie on the broad verandah with the moon rising in front and the servants preparing dinner behind, and no trouble happening.

“Well, look at my own experience this morning.”

“I only contend that it is possible in England,” replied Hamidullah, who had been to that country long ago, before the big rush, and had received a cordial welcome at Cambridge.

“It is impossible here. Aziz! The red-nosed boy has again insulted me in Court. I do not blame him. He was told that he ought to insult me. Until lately he was quite a nice boy, but the others have got hold of him.”

“Yes, they have no chance here, that is my point. They come out intending to be gentlemen, and are told it will not do. Look at Lesley, look at Blakiston, now it is your red-nosed boy, and Fielding will go next. Why, I remember when Turton came out first. It was in another part of the Province. You fellows will not believe me, but I have driven with Turton in his carriage—Turton! Oh yes, we were once quite intimate. He has shown me his stamp collection.”

“He would expect you to steal it now. Turton! But red-nosed boy will be far worse than Turton!”

“I do not think so. They all become exactly the same, not worse, not better. I give any Englishman two years, be he Turton or Burton. It is only the difference of a letter. And I give any Englishwoman six months. All are exactly alike. Do you not agree with me?”

“I do not,” replied Mahmoud Ali, entering into the bitter fun, and feeling both pain and amusement at each word that was uttered. “For my own part I find such profound differences among our rulers. Red-nose mumbles, Turton talks distinctly, Mrs. Turton takes bribes, Mrs. Red-nose does not and cannot, because so far there is no Mrs. Red-nose.”

“Bribes?”

“Did you not know that when they were lent to Central India over a Canal Scheme, some Rajah or other gave her a sewing machine in solid gold so that the water should run through his state.”

“And does it?”

“No, that is where Mrs. Turton is so skilful. When we poor blacks take bribes, we perform what we are bribed to perform, and the law discovers us in consequence. The English take and do nothing. I admire them.”

“We all admire them. Aziz, please pass me the hookah.”

“Oh, not yet—hookah is so jolly now.”

“You are a very selfish boy.” He raised his voice suddenly, and shouted for dinner. Servants shouted back that it was ready. They meant that they wished it was ready, and were so understood, for nobody moved. Then Hamidullah continued, but with changed manner and evident emotion.

“But take my case—the case of young Hugh Bannister. Here is the son of my dear, my dead friends, the Reverend and Mrs. Bannister, whose goodness to me in England I shall never forget or describe. They were father and mother to me, I talked to them as I do now. In the vacations their Rectory became my home. They entrusted all their children to me—I often carried little Hugh about—I took him up to the Funeral of Queen Victoria, and held him in my arms above the crowd.”

“Queen Victoria was different,” murmured Mahmoud Ali.

“I learn now that this boy is in business as a leather merchant at Cawnpore. Imagine how I long to see him and to pay his fare that this house may be his home. But it is useless. The other Anglo-Indians will have got hold of him long ago. He will probably think that I want something, and I cannot face that from the son of my old friends. Oh, what in this country has gone wrong with everything, Vakil Sahib? I ask you.”

Aziz joined in. “Why talk about the English? Brrrr . . . ! Why be either friends with the fellows or not friends? Let us shut them out and be jolly.

Queen Victoria and Mrs. Bannister were the only exceptions, and they're dead."

"No, no, I do not admit that, I have met others."

"So have I," said Mahmoud Ali, unexpectedly veering. "All ladies are far from alike." Their mood was changed, and they recalled little kindnesses and courtesies. "She said 'Thank you so much' in the most natural way." "She offered me a lozenge when the dust irritated my throat." Hamidullah could remember more important examples of angelic ministrations, but the other, who only knew Anglo-India, had to ransack his memory for scraps, and it was not surprising that he should return to "But of course all this is exceptional. The exception does not prove the rule. The average woman is like Mrs. Turton, and, Aziz, you know what she is." Aziz did not know, but said he did. He too generalized from his disappointments—it is difficult for members of a subject race to do otherwise. Granted the exceptions, he agreed that all Englishwomen are haughty and venal. The gleam passed from the conversation, whose wintry surface unrolled and expanded interminably.

A servant announced dinner. They ignored him. The elder men had reached their eternal politics, Aziz drifted into the garden. The trees smelt sweet—green-blossomed champak—and scraps of Persian poetry came into his head. Dinner, dinner, dinner . . . but when he returned to the house for it, Mahmoud Ali had drifted away in his turn, to speak to his sais. "Come and see my wife a little then," said Hamidullah, and they spent twenty minutes behind the purdah. Hamidullah Begum was a distant aunt of Aziz, and the only female relative he had in Chandrapore, and she had much to say to him on this occasion about a family circumcision that had been celebrated with imperfect pomp. It was difficult to get away, because until they had had their dinner she would not begin hers, and consequently prolonged her remarks in case they should suppose she was impatient. Having censured the circumcision, she bethought her of kindred topics, and asked Aziz when he was going to be married.

Respectful but irritated, he answered, "Once is enough."

“Yes, he has done his duty,” said Hamidullah. “Do not tease him so. He carries on his family, two boys and their sister.”

“Aunt, they live most comfortably with my wife’s mother, where she was living when she died. I can see them whenever I like. They are such very, very small children.”

“And he sends them the whole of his salary and lives like a low-grade clerk, and tells no one the reason. What more do you require him to do?”

But this was not Hamidullah Begum’s point, and having courteously changed the conversation for a few moments she returned and made it. She said, “What is to become of all our daughters if men refuse to marry? They will marry beneath them, or——” And she began the oft-told tale of a lady of Imperial descent who could find no husband in the narrow circle where her pride permitted her to mate, and had lived on unwed, her age now thirty, and would die unwed, for no one would have her now. While the tale was in progress, it convinced the two men, the tragedy seemed a slur on the whole community; better polygamy almost, than that a woman should die without the joys God has intended her to receive. Wedlock, motherhood, power in the house—for what else is she born, and how can the man who has denied them to her stand up to face her creator and his own at the last day? Aziz took his leave saying “Perhaps . . . but later . . .” —his invariable reply to such an appeal.

“You mustn’t put off what you think right,” said Hamidullah. “That is why India is in such a plight, because we put off things.” But seeing that his young relative looked worried, he added a few soothing words, and thus wiped out any impression that his wife might have made.

During their absence, Mahmoud Ali had gone off in his carriage leaving a message that he should be back in five minutes, but they were on no account to wait. They sat down to meat with a distant cousin of the house, Mohammed Latif, who lived on Hamidullah’s bounty and who occupied the position neither of a servant nor of an equal. He did not speak unless spoken to, and since no one spoke kept unoffended silence. Now and then he belched, in compliment to the richness of the food. A gentle, happy and dishonest old man; all his life he had never done a stroke of work. So long

as some one of his relatives had a house he was sure of a home, and it was unlikely that so large a family would all go bankrupt. His wife led a similar existence some hundreds of miles away—he did not visit her, owing to the expense of the railway ticket. Presently Aziz chaffed him, also the servants, and then began quoting poetry, Persian, Urdu, a little Arabic. His memory was good, and for so young a man he had read largely; the themes he preferred were the decay of Islam and the brevity of love. They listened delighted, for they took the public view of poetry, not the private which obtains in England. It never bored them to hear words, words; they breathed them with the cool night air, never stopping to analyse; the name of the poet, Hafiz, Hali, Iqbal, was sufficient guarantee. India—a hundred Indias—whispered outside beneath the indifferent moon, but for the time India seemed one and their own, and they regained their departed greatness by hearing its departure lamented, they felt young again because reminded that youth must fly. A servant in scarlet interrupted him; he was the chuprassi of the Civil Surgeon, and he handed Aziz a note.

“Old Callendar wants to see me at his bungalow,” he said, not rising. “He might have the politeness to say why.”

“Some case, I daresay.”

“I daresay not, I daresay nothing. He has found out our dinner hour, that’s all, and chooses to interrupt us every time, in order to show his power.”

“On the one hand he always does this, on the other it may be a serious case, and you cannot know,” said Hamidullah, considerately paving the way towards obedience. “Had you not better clean your teeth after pan?”

“If my teeth are to be cleaned, I don’t go at all. I am an Indian, it is an Indian habit to take pan. The Civil Surgeon must put up with it. Mohammed Latif, my bike, please.”

The poor relation got up. Slightly immersed in the realms of matter, he laid his hand on the bicycle’s saddle, while a servant did the actual wheeling. Between them they took it over a tintack. Aziz held his hands under the ewer, dried them, fitted on his green felt hat, and then with unexpected energy whizzed out of Hamidullah’s compound.

“Aziz, Aziz, imprudent boy. . . .” But he was far down the bazaar, riding furiously. He had neither light nor bell nor had he a brake, but what use are such adjuncts in a land where the cyclist’s only hope is to coast from face to face, and just before he collides with each it vanishes? And the city was fairly empty at this hour. When his tyre went flat, he leapt off and shouted for a tonga.

He did not at first find one, and he had also to dispose of his bicycle at a friend’s house. He dallied furthermore to clean his teeth. But at last he was rattling towards the civil lines, with a vivid sense of speed. As he entered their arid tidiness, depression suddenly seized him. The roads, named after victorious generals and intersecting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India. He felt caught in their meshes. When he turned into Major Callendar’s compound he could with difficulty restrain himself from getting down from the tonga and approaching the bungalow on foot, and this not because his soul was servile but because his feelings—the sensitive edges of him—feared a gross snub. There had been a “case” last year—an Indian gentleman had driven up to an official’s house and been turned back by the servants and been told to approach more suitably—only one case among thousands of visits to hundreds of officials, but its fame spread wide. The young man shrank from a repetition of it. He compromised, and stopped the driver just outside the flood of light that fell across the verandah.

The Civil Surgeon was out.

“But the sahib has left me some message?”

The servant returned an indifferent “No.” Aziz was in despair. It was a servant whom he had forgotten to tip, and he could do nothing now because there were people in the hall. He was convinced that there was a message, and that the man was withholding it out of revenge. While they argued, the people came out. Both were ladies. Aziz lifted his hat. The first, who was in evening dress, glanced at the Indian and turned instinctively away.

“Mrs. Lesley, it *is* a tonga,” she cried.

“Ours?” enquired the second, also seeing Aziz, and doing likewise.

“Take the gifts the gods provide, anyhow,” she screeched, and both jumped in. “O Tonga wallah, club, club. Why doesn’t the fool go?”

“Go, I will pay you to-morrow,” said Aziz to the driver, and as they went off he called courteously, “You are most welcome, ladies.” They did not reply, being full of their own affairs.

So it had come, the usual thing—just as Mahmoud Ali said. The inevitable snub—his bow ignored, his carriage taken. It might have been worse, for it comforted him somehow that Mesdames Callendar and Lesley should both be fat and weigh the tonga down behind. Beautiful women would have pained him. He turned to the servant, gave him a couple of rupees, and asked again whether there was a message. The man, now very civil, returned the same answer. Major Callendar had driven away half an hour before.

“Saying nothing?”

He had as a matter of fact said, “Damn Aziz”—words that the servant understood, but was too polite to repeat. One can tip too much as well as too little, indeed the coin that buys the exact truth has not yet been minted.

“Then I will write him a letter.”

He was offered the use of the house, but was too dignified to enter it. Paper and ink were brought on to the verandah. He began: “Dear Sir,—At your express command I have hastened as a subordinate should——” and then stopped. “Tell him I have called, that is sufficient,” he said, tearing the protest up. “Here is my card. Call me a tonga.”

“Huzoor, all are at the club.”

“Then telephone for one down to the railway station.” And since the man hastened to do this he said, “Enough, enough, I prefer to walk.” He commandeered a match and lit a cigarette. These attentions, though purchased, soothed him. They would last as long as he had rupees, which is something. But to shake the dust of Anglo-India off his feet! To escape

from the net and be back among manners and gestures that he knew! He began a walk, an unwonted exercise.

He was an athletic little man, daintily put together, but really very strong. Nevertheless walking fatigued him, as it fatigues everyone in India except the new-comer. There is something hostile in that soil. It either yields, and the foot sinks into a depression, or else it is unexpectedly rigid and sharp, pressing stones or crystals against the tread. A series of these little surprises exhausts; and he was wearing pumps, a poor preparation for any country. At the edge of the civil station he turned into a mosque to rest.

He had always liked this mosque. It was gracious, and the arrangement pleased him. The courtyard—entered through a ruined gate—contained an ablution tank of fresh clear water, which was always in motion, being indeed part of a conduit that supplied the city. The courtyard was paved with broken slabs. The covered part of the mosque was deeper than is usual; its effect was that of an English parish church whose side has been taken out. Where he sat, he looked into three arcades whose darkness was illuminated by a small hanging lamp and by the moon. The front—in full moonlight—had the appearance of marble, and the ninety-nine names of God on the frieze stood out black, as the frieze stood out white against the sky. The contest between this dualism and the contention of shadows within pleased Aziz, and he tried to symbolize the whole into some truth of religion or love. A mosque by winning his approval let loose his imagination. The temple of another creed, Hindu, Christian, or Greek, would have bored him and failed to awaken his sense of beauty. Here was Islam, his own country, more than a Faith, more than a battle-cry, more, much more . . . Islam, an attitude towards life both exquisite and durable, where his body and his thoughts found their home.

His seat was the low wall that bounded the courtyard on the left. The ground fell away beneath him towards the city, visible as a blur of trees, and in the stillness he heard many small sounds. On the right, over in the club, the English community contributed an amateur orchestra. Elsewhere some Hindus were drumming—he knew they were Hindus, because the rhythm was uncongenial to him,—and others were bewailing a corpse—he knew whose, having certified it in the afternoon. There were owls, the Punjab



mail . . . and flowers smelt deliciously in the station-master's garden. But the mosque—that alone signified, and he returned to it from the complex appeal of the night, and decked it with meanings the builder had never intended. Some day he too would build a mosque, smaller than this but in perfect taste, so that all who passed by should experience the happiness he felt now. And near it, under a low dome, should be his tomb, with a Persian inscription:

Alas, without me for thousands of years  
The Rose will blossom and the Spring will bloom,  
But those who have secretly understood my heart—  
They will approach and visit the grave where I lie.

He had seen the quatrain on the tomb of a Deccan king, and regarded it as profound philosophy—he always held pathos to be profound. The secret understanding of the heart! He repeated the phrase with tears in his eyes, and as he did so one of the pillars of the mosque seemed to quiver. It swayed in the gloom and detached itself. Belief in ghosts ran in his blood, but he sat firm. Another pillar moved, a third, and then an Englishwoman stepped out into the moonlight. Suddenly he was furiously angry and shouted: “Madam! Madam! Madam!”

“Oh! Oh!” the woman gasped.

“Madam, this is a mosque, you have no right here at all; you should have taken off your shoes; this is a holy place for Moslems.”

“I have taken them off.”

“You have?”

“I left them at the entrance.”

“Then I ask your pardon.”

Still startled, the woman moved out, keeping the ablution-tank between them. He called after her, “I am truly sorry for speaking.”

“Yes, I was right, was I not? If I remove my shoes, I am allowed?”

“Of course, but so few ladies take the trouble, especially if thinking no one is there to see.”

“That makes no difference. God is here.”

“Madam!”

“Please let me go.”

“Oh, can I do you some service now or at any time?”

“No, thank you, really none—good night.”

“May I know your name?”

She was now in the shadow of the gateway, so that he could not see her face, but she saw his, and she said with a change of voice, “Mrs. Moore.”

“Mrs.——” Advancing, he found that she was old.

A fabric bigger than the mosque fell to pieces, and he did not know whether he was glad or sorry. She was older than Hamidullah Begum, with a red face and white hair. Her voice had deceived him.

“Mrs. Moore, I am afraid I startled you. I shall tell my community—our friends—about you. That God is here—very good, very fine indeed. I think you are newly arrived in India.”

“Yes—how did you know?”

“By the way you address me. No, but can I call you a carriage?”

“I have only come from the club. They are doing a play that I have seen in London, and it was so hot.”

“What was the name of the play?”

*“Cousin Kate.”*

“I think you ought not to walk at night alone, Mrs. Moore. There are bad characters about and leopards may come across from the Marabar Hills. Snakes also.”

She exclaimed; she had forgotten the snakes.

“For example, a six-spot beetle,” he continued, “You pick it up, it bites, you die.”

“But you walk about yourself.”

“Oh, I am used to it.”

“Used to snakes?”

They both laughed. “I’m a doctor,” he said. “Snakes don’t dare bite me.” They sat down side by side in the entrance, and slipped on their evening shoes. “Please may I ask you a question now? Why do you come to India at this time of year, just as the cold weather is ending?”

“I intended to start earlier, but there was an unavoidable delay.”

“It will soon be so unhealthy for you! And why ever do you come to Chandrapore?”

“To visit my son. He is the City Magistrate here.”

“Oh no, excuse me, that is quite impossible. Our City Magistrate’s name is Mr. Heaslop. I know him intimately.”

“He’s my son all the same,” she said, smiling.

“But, Mrs. Moore, how can he be?”

“I was married twice.”

“Yes, now I see, and your first husband died.”

“He did, and so did my second husband.”

“Then we are in the same box,” he said cryptically. “Then is the City Magistrate the entire of your family now?”

“No, there are the younger ones—Ralph and Stella in England.”

“And the gentleman here, is he Ralph and Stella’s half-brother?”

“Quite right.”

“Mrs. Moore, this is all extremely strange, because like yourself I have also two sons and a daughter. Is not this the same box with a vengeance?”

“What are their names? Not also Ronny, Ralph, and Stella, surely?”

The suggestion delighted him. “No, indeed. How funny it sounds! Their names are quite different and will surprise you. Listen, please. I am about to tell you my children’s names. The first is called Ahmed, the second is called Karim, the third—she is the eldest—Jamila. Three children are enough. Do not you agree with me?”

“I do.”

They were both silent for a little, thinking of their respective families. She sighed and rose to go.

“Would you care to see over the Minto Hospital one morning?” he enquired. “I have nothing else to offer at Chandrapore.”

“Thank you, I have seen it already, or I should have liked to come with you very much.”

“I suppose the Civil Surgeon took you.”

“Yes, and Mrs. Callendar.”

His voice altered. “Ah! A very charming lady.”

“Possibly, when one knows her better.”

“What? What? You didn’t like her?”

“She was certainly intending to be kind, but I did not find her exactly charming.”

He burst out with: “She has just taken my tonga without my permission—do you call that being charming?—and Major Callendar interrupts me night after night from where I am dining with my friends and I go at once, breaking up a most pleasant entertainment, and he is not there and not even a message. Is this charming, pray? But what does it matter? I can do nothing and he knows it. I am just a subordinate, my time is of no value, the verandah is good enough for an Indian, yes, yes, let him stand, and Mrs. Callendar takes my carriage and cuts me dead . . .”

She listened.

He was excited partly by his wrongs, but much more by the knowledge that someone sympathized with them. It was this that led him to repeat, exaggerate, contradict. She had proved her sympathy by criticizing her fellow-countrywoman to him, but even earlier he had known. The flame that not even beauty can nourish was springing up, and though his words were querulous his heart began to glow secretly. Presently it burst into speech.

“You understand me, you know what others feel. Oh, if others resembled you!”

Rather surprised, she replied: “I don’t think I understand people very well. I only know whether I like or dislike them.”

“Then you are an Oriental.”

She accepted his escort back to the club, and said at the gate that she wished she was a member, so that she could have asked him in.

“Indians are not allowed into the Chandrapore Club even as guests,” he said simply. He did not expatiate on his wrongs now, being happy. As he strolled downhill beneath the lovely moon, and again saw the lovely mosque, he seemed to own the land as much as anyone owned it. What did it matter if a few flabby Hindus had preceded him there, and a few chilly English succeeded?

### CHAPTER III

The third act of *Cousin Kate* was well advanced by the time Mrs. Moore re-entered the club. Windows were barred, lest the servants should see their mem-sahibs acting, and the heat was consequently immense. One electric fan revolved like a wounded bird, another was out of order. Disinclined to return to the audience, she went into the billiard room, where she was greeted by "I want to see the *real* India," and her appropriate life came back with a rush. This was Adela Quested, the queer, cautious girl whom Ronny had commissioned her to bring from England, and Ronny was her son, also cautious, whom Miss Quested would probably though not certainly marry, and she herself was an elderly lady.

"I want to see it too, and I only wish we could. Apparently the Turtons will arrange something for next Tuesday."

"It'll end in an elephant ride, it always does. Look at this evening. *Cousin Kate!* Imagine, *Cousin Kate!* But where have you been off to? Did you succeed in catching the moon in the Ganges?"

The two ladies had happened, the night before, to see the moon's reflection in a distant channel of the stream. The water had drawn it out, so that it had seemed larger than the real moon, and brighter, which had pleased them.

"I went to the mosque, but I did not catch the moon."

"The angle would have altered—she rises later."

"Later and later," yawned Mrs. Moore, who was tired after her walk. "Let me think—we don't see the other side of the moon out here, no."

"Come, India's not as bad as all that," said a pleasant voice. "Other side of the earth, if you like, but we stick to the same old moon." Neither of

them knew the speaker nor did they ever see him again. He passed with his friendly word through red-brick pillars into the darkness.

“We aren’t even seeing the other side of the world; that’s our complaint,” said Adela. Mrs. Moore agreed; she too was disappointed at the dullness of their new life. They had made such a romantic voyage across the Mediterranean and through the sands of Egypt to the harbour of Bombay, to find only a gridiron of bungalows at the end of it. But she did not take the disappointment as seriously as Miss Quested, for the reason that she was forty years older, and had learnt that Life never gives us what we want at the moment that we consider appropriate. Adventures do occur, but not punctually. She said again that she hoped that something interesting would be arranged for next Tuesday.

“Have a drink,” said another pleasant voice. “Mrs. Moore—Miss Quested—have a drink, have two drinks.” They knew who it was this time—the Collector, Mr. Turton, with whom they had dined. Like themselves, he had found the atmosphere of *Cousin Kate* too hot. Ronny, he told them, was stage-managing in place of Major Callendar, whom some native subordinate or other had let down, and doing it very well; then he turned to Ronny’s other merits, and in quiet, decisive tones said much that was flattering. It wasn’t that the young man was particularly good at the games or the lingo, or that he had much notion of the Law, but—apparently a large but—Ronny was dignified.

Mrs. Moore was surprised to learn this, dignity not being a quality with which any mother credits her son. Miss Quested learnt it with anxiety, for she had not decided whether she liked dignified men. She tried indeed to discuss this point with Mr. Turton, but he silenced her with a good-humoured motion of his hand, and continued what he had come to say. “The long and the short of it is Heaslop’s a sahib; he’s the type we want, he’s one of us,” and another civilian who was leaning over the billiard table said, “Hear, hear!” The matter was thus placed beyond doubt, and the Collector passed on, for other duties called him.

Meanwhile the performance ended, and the amateur orchestra played the National Anthem. Conversation and billiards stopped, faces stiffened. It was the Anthem of the Army of Occupation. It reminded every member of the



club that he or she was British and in exile. It produced a little sentiment and a useful accession of will-power. The meagre tune, the curt series of demands on Jehovah, fused into a prayer unknown in England, and though they perceived neither Royalty nor Deity they did perceive something, they were strengthened to resist another day. Then they poured out, offering one another drinks.

“Adela, have a drink; mother, a drink.”

They refused—they were weary of drinks—and Miss Quested, who always said exactly what was in her mind, announced anew that she was desirous of seeing the real India.

Ronny was in high spirits. The request struck him as comic, and he called out to another passer-by: “Fielding! how’s one to see the real India?”

“Try seeing Indians,” the man answered, and vanished.

“Who was that?”

“Our schoolmaster—Government College.”

“As if one could avoid seeing them,” sighed Mrs. Lesley.

“I’ve avoided,” said Miss Quested. “Excepting my own servant, I’ve scarcely spoken to an Indian since landing.”

“Oh, lucky you.”

“But I want to see them.”

She became the centre of an amused group of ladies. One said, “Wanting to see Indians! How new that sounds!” Another, “Natives! why, fancy!” A third, more serious, said, “Let me explain. Natives don’t respect one any the more after meeting one, you see.”

“That occurs after so many meetings.”

But the lady, entirely stupid and friendly, continued: “What I mean is, I was a nurse before my marriage, and came across them a great deal, so I know. I really do know the truth about Indians. A most unsuitable position for any Englishwoman—I was a nurse in a Native State. One’s only hope was to hold sternly aloof.”

“Even from one’s patients?”

“Why, the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die,” said Mrs. Callendar.

“How if he went to heaven?” asked Mrs. Moore, with a gentle but crooked smile.

“He can go where he likes as long as he doesn’t come near me. They give me the creeps.”

“As a matter of fact I have thought what you were saying about heaven, and that is why I am against Missionaries,” said the lady who had been a nurse. “I am all for Chaplains, but all against Missionaries. Let me explain.”

But before she could do so, the Collector intervened.

“Do you really want to meet the Aryan Brother, Miss Quested? That can be easily fixed up. I didn’t realize he’d amuse you.” He thought a moment. “You can practically see any type you like. Take your choice. I know the Government people and the landowners, Heaslop here can get hold of the barrister crew, while if you want to specialize on education, we can come down on Fielding.”

“I’m tired of seeing picturesque figures pass before me as a frieze,” the girl explained. “It was wonderful when we landed, but that superficial glamour soon goes.”

Her impressions were of no interest to the Collector; he was only concerned to give her a good time. Would she like a Bridge Party? He explained to her what that was—not the game, but a party to bridge the gulf

between East and West; the expression was his own invention, and amused all who heard it.

“I only want those Indians whom you come across socially—as your friends.”

“Well, we don’t come across them socially,” he said, laughing. “They’re full of all the virtues, but we don’t, and it’s now eleven-thirty, and too late to go into the reasons.”

“Miss Quested, what a name!” remarked Mrs. Turton to her husband as they drove away. She had not taken to the new young lady, thinking her ungracious and cranky. She trusted that she hadn’t been brought out to marry nice little Heaslop, though it looked like it, Her husband agreed with her in his heart, but he never spoke against an Englishwoman if he could avoid doing so, and he only said that Miss Quested naturally made mistakes. He added: “India does wonders for the judgment, especially during the hot weather; it has even done wonders for Fielding.” Mrs. Turton closed her eyes at this name and remarked that Mr. Fielding wasn’t pukka, and had better marry Miss Quested, for she wasn’t pukka. Then they reached their bungalow, low and enormous, the oldest and most uncomfortable bungalow in the civil station, with a sunk soup plate of a lawn, and they had one drink more, this time of barley water, and went to bed. Their withdrawal from the club had broken up the evening, which, like all gatherings, had an official tinge. A community that bows the knee to a Viceroy and believes that the divinity that hedges a king can be transplanted, must feel some reverence for any viceregal substitute. At Chandrapore the Turtons were little gods; soon they would retire to some suburban villa, and die exiled from glory.

“It’s decent of the Burra Sahib,” chattered Ronny, much gratified at the civility that had been shown to his guests. “Do you know he’s never given a Bridge Party before? Coming on top of the dinner too! I wish I could have arranged something myself, but when you know the natives better you’ll realize it’s easier for the Burra Sahib than for me. They know him—they know he can’t be fooled—I’m still fresh comparatively. No one can even begin to think of knowing this country until he has been in it twenty years.—Hullo, the mater! Here’s your cloak.—Well: for an example of the

mistakes one makes. Soon after I came out I asked one of the Pleaders to have a smoke with me—only a cigarette, mind. I found afterwards that he had sent touts all over the bazaar to announce the fact—told all the litigants, 'Oh, you'd better come to my Vakil Mahmoud Ali—he's in with the City Magistrate.' Ever since then I've dropped on him in Court as hard as I could. It's taught me a lesson, and I hope him."

"Isn't the lesson that you should invite all the Pleaders to have a smoke with you?"

"Perhaps, but time's limited and the flesh weak. I prefer my smoke at the club amongst my own sort, I'm afraid."

"Why not ask the Pleaders to the club?" Miss Quested persisted.

"Not allowed." He was pleasant and patient, and evidently understood why she did not understand. He implied that he had once been as she, though not for long. Going to the verandah, he called firmly to the moon. His sais answered, and without lowering his head, he ordered his trap to be brought round.

Mrs. Moore, whom the club had stupefied, woke up outside. She watched the moon, whose radiance stained with primrose the purple of the surrounding sky. In England the moon had seemed dead and alien; here she was caught in the shawl of night together with earth and all the other stars. A sudden sense of unity, of kinship with the heavenly bodies, passed into the old woman and out, like water through a tank, leaving a strange freshness behind. She did not dislike *Cousin Kate* or the National Anthem, but their note had died into a new one, just as cocktails and cigars had died into invisible flowers. When the mosque, long and domeless, gleamed at the turn of the road, she exclaimed, "Oh, yes—that's where I got to—that's where I've been."

"Been there when?" asked her son.

"Between the acts."

"But, mother, you can't do that sort of thing."

“Can’t mother?” she replied.

“No, really not in this country. It’s not done. There’s the danger from snakes for one thing. They are apt to lie out in the evening.”

“Ah yes, so the young man there said.”

“This sounds very romantic,” said Miss Quested, who was exceedingly fond of Mrs. Moore, and was glad she should have had this little escapade. “You meet a young man in a mosque, and then never let me know!”

“I was going to tell you, Adela, but something changed the conversation and I forgot. My memory grows deplorable.”

“Was he nice?”

She paused, then said emphatically: “Very nice.”

“Who was he?” Ronny enquired.

“A doctor. I don’t know his name.”

“A doctor? I know of no young doctor in Chandrapore. How odd! What was he like?”

“Rather small, with a little moustache and quick eyes. He called out to me when I was in the dark part of the mosque—about my shoes. That was how we began talking. He was afraid I had them on, but I remembered luckily. He told me about his children, and then we walked back to the club. He knows you well.”

“I wish you had pointed him out to me. I can’t make out who he is.”

“He didn’t come into the club. He said he wasn’t allowed to.”

Thereupon the truth struck him, and he cried “Oh, good gracious! Not a Mohammedan? Why ever didn’t you tell me you’d been talking to a native? I was going all wrong.”

“A Mohammedan! How perfectly magnificent!” exclaimed Miss Quested. “Ronny, isn’t that like your mother? While we talk about seeing the real India, she goes and sees it, and then forgets she’s seen it.”

But Ronny was ruffled. From his mother’s description he had thought the doctor might be young Muggins from over the Ganges, and had brought out all the comradely emotions. What a mix-up! Why hadn’t she indicated by the tone of her voice that she was talking about an Indian? Scratchy and dictatorial, he began to question her. “He called to you in the mosque, did he? How? Impudently? What was he doing there himself at that time of night?—No, it’s not their prayer time.”—This in answer to a suggestion of Miss Quested’s, who showed the keenest interest. “So he called to you over your shoes. Then it was impudence. It’s an old trick. I wish you had had them on.”

“I think it was impudence, but I don’t know about a trick,” said Mrs. Moore. “His nerves were all on edge—I could tell from his voice. As soon as I answered he altered.”

“You oughtn’t to have answered.”

“Now look here,” said the logical girl, “wouldn’t you expect a Mohammedan to answer if you asked him to take off his hat in church?”

“It’s different, it’s different; you don’t understand.”

“I know I don’t, and I want to. What is the difference, please?”

He wished she wouldn’t interfere. His mother did not signify—she was just a globe-trotter, a temporary escort, who could retire to England with what impressions she chose. But Adela, who meditated spending her life in the country, was a more serious matter; it would be tiresome if she started crooked over the native question. Pulling up the mare, he said, “There’s your Ganges.”

Their attention was diverted. Below them a radiance had suddenly appeared. It belonged neither to water nor moonlight, but stood like a luminous sheaf upon the fields of darkness. He told them that it was where

the new sand-bank was forming, and that the dark ravelled bit at the top was the sand, and that the dead bodies floated down that way from Benares, or would if the crocodiles let them. "It's not much of a dead body that gets down to Chandrapore."

"Crocodiles down in it too, how terrible!" his mother murmured. The young people glanced at each other and smiled; it amused them when the old lady got these gentle creeps, and harmony was restored between them consequently. She continued: "What a terrible river! what a wonderful river!" and sighed. The radiance was already altering, whether through shifting of the moon or of the sand; soon the bright sheaf would be gone, and a circlet, itself to alter, be burnished upon the streaming void. The women discussed whether they would wait for the change or not, while the silence broke into patches of unquietness and the mare shivered. On her account they did not wait, but drove on to the City Magistrate's bungalow, where Miss Quested went to bed, and Mrs. Moore had a short interview with her son.

He wanted to enquire about the Mohammedan doctor in the mosque. It was his duty to report suspicious characters and conceivably it was some disreputable hakim who had prowled up from the bazaar. When she told him that it was someone connected with the Minto Hospital, he was relieved, and said that the fellow's name must be Aziz, and that he was quite all right, nothing against him at all.

"Aziz! what a charming name!"

"So you and he had a talk. Did you gather he was well disposed?"

Ignorant of the force of this question, she replied, "Yes, quite, after the first moment."

"I meant, generally. Did he seem to tolerate us—the brutal conqueror, the sundried bureaucrat, that sort of thing?"

"Oh, yes, I think so, except the Callendars—he doesn't care for the Callendars at all."

“Oh. So he told you that, did he? The Major will be interested. I wonder what was the aim of the remark.”

“Ronny, Ronny! you’re never going to pass it on to Major Callendar?”

“Yes, rather. I must, in fact!”

“But, my dear boy——”

“If the Major heard I was disliked by any native subordinate of mine, I should expect him to pass it on to me.”

“But, my dear boy—a private conversation!”

“Nothing’s private in India. Aziz knew that when he spoke out, so don’t you worry. He had some motive in what he said. My personal belief is that the remark wasn’t true.”

“How not true?”

“He abused the Major in order to impress you.”

“I don’t know what you mean, dear.”

“It’s the educated native’s latest dodge. They used to cringe, but the younger generation believe in a show of manly independence. They think it will pay better with the itinerant M.P. But whether the native swaggers or cringes, there’s always something behind every remark he makes, always something, and if nothing else he’s trying to increase his izzat—in plain Anglo-Saxon, to score. Of course there are exceptions.”

“You never used to judge people like this at home.”

“India isn’t home,” he retorted, rather rudely, but in order to silence her he had been using phrases and arguments that he had picked up from older officials, and he did not feel quite sure of himself. When he said “of course there are exceptions” he was quoting Mr. Turton, while “increasing the izzat” was Major Callendar’s own. The phrases worked and were in current



use at the club, but she was rather clever at detecting the first from the second hand, and might press him for definite examples.

She only said, "I can't deny that what you say sounds very sensible, but you really must not hand on to Major Callendar anything I have told you about Doctor Aziz."

He felt disloyal to his caste, but he promised, adding, "In return please don't talk about Aziz to Adela."

"Not talk about him? Why?"

"There you go again, mother—I really can't explain every thing. I don't want Adela to be worried, that's the fact; she'll begin wondering whether we treat the natives properly, and all that sort of nonsense."

"But she came out to be worried—that's exactly why she's here. She discussed it all on the boat. We had a long talk when we went on shore at Aden. She knows you in play, as she put it, but not in work, and she felt she must come and look round, before she decided—and before you decided. She is very, very fair-minded."

"I know," he said dejectedly.

The note of anxiety in his voice made her feel that he was still a little boy, who must have what he liked, so she promised to do as he wished, and they kissed good night. He had not forbidden her to think about Aziz, however, and she did this when she retired to her room. In the light of her son's comment she reconsidered the scene at the mosque, to see whose impression was correct. Yes, it could be worked into quite an unpleasant scene. The doctor had begun by bullying her, had said Mrs. Callendar was nice, and then—finding the ground safe—had changed; he had alternately whined over his grievances and patronized her, had run a dozen ways in a single sentence, had been unreliable, inquisitive, vain. Yes, it was all true, but how false as a summary of the man; the essential life of him had been slain.

Going to hang up her cloak, she found that the tip of the peg was occupied by a small wasp. She had known this wasp or his relatives by day; they were not as English wasps, but had long yellow legs which hung down behind when they flew. Perhaps he mistook the peg for a branch—no Indian animal has any sense of an interior. Bats, rats, birds, insects will as soon nest inside a house as out; it is to them a normal growth of the eternal jungle, which alternately produces houses trees, houses trees. There he clung, asleep, while jackals in the plain bayed their desires and mingled with the percussion of drums.

“Pretty dear,” said Mrs. Moore to the wasp. He did not wake, but her voice floated out, to swell the night’s uneasiness.

## CHAPTER IV

The Collector kept his word. Next day he issued invitation cards to numerous Indian gentlemen in the neighbourhood, stating that he would be at home in the garden of the club between the hours of five and seven on the following Tuesday, also that Mrs. Turton would be glad to receive any ladies of their families who were out of purdah. His action caused much excitement and was discussed in several worlds.

“It is owing to orders from the L.G.,” was Mahmoud Ali’s explanation. “Turton would never do this unless compelled. Those high officials are different—they sympathize, the Viceroy sympathizes, they would have us treated properly. But they come too seldom and live too far away. Meanwhile——”

“It is easy to sympathize at a distance,” said an old gentleman with a beard. “I value more the kind word that is spoken close to my ear. Mr. Turton has spoken it, from whatever cause. He speaks, we hear. I do not see why we need discuss it further.” Quotations followed from the Koran.

“We have not all your sweet nature, Nawab Bahadur, nor your learning.”

“The Lieutenant-Governor may be my very good friend, but I give him no trouble.—How do you do, Nawab Bahadur?—Quite well, thank you, Sir Gilbert; how are you?—And all is over. But I can be a thorn in Mr. Turton’s flesh, and if he asks me I accept the invitation. I shall come in from Dilkusha specially, though I have to postpone other business.”

“You will make yourself chip,” suddenly said a little black man.

There was a stir of disapproval. Who was this ill-bred upstart, that he should criticize the leading Mohammedan landowner of the district? Mahmoud Ali, though sharing his opinion, felt bound to oppose it. “Mr. Ram Chand!” he said, swaying forward stiffly with his hands on his hips.

“Mr. Mahmoud Ali!”

“Mr. Ram Chand, the Nawab Bahadur can decide what is cheap without our valuation, I think.”

“I do not expect I shall make myself cheap,” said the Nawab Bahadur to Mr. Ram Chand, speaking very pleasantly, for he was aware that the man had been impolite and he desired to shield him from the consequences. It had passed through his mind to reply, “I expect I shall make myself cheap,” but he rejected this as the less courteous alternative. “I do not see why we should make ourselves cheap. I do not see why we should. The invitation is worded very graciously.” Feeling that he could not further decrease the social gulf between himself and his auditors, he sent his elegant grandson, who was in attendance on him, to fetch his car. When it came, he repeated all that he had said before, though at greater length, ending up with “Till Tuesday, then, gentlemen all, when I hope we may meet in the flower gardens of the club.”

This opinion carried great weight. The Nawab Bahadur was a big proprietor and a philanthropist, a man of benevolence and decision. His character among all the communities in the province stood high. He was a straightforward enemy and a staunch friend, and his hospitality was proverbial. “Give, do not lend; after death who will thank you?” was his favourite remark. He held it a disgrace to die rich. When such a man was prepared to motor twenty-five miles to shake the Collector’s hand, the entertainment took another aspect. For he was not like some eminent men, who give out that they will come, and then fail at the last moment, leaving the small fry floundering. If he said he would come, he would come, he would never deceive his supporters. The gentlemen whom he had lectured now urged one another to attend the party, although convinced at heart that his advice was unsound.

He had spoken in the little room near the Courts where the pleaders waited for clients; clients, waiting for pleaders, sat in the dust outside. These had not received a card from Mr. Turton. And there were circles even beyond these—people who wore nothing but a loincloth, people who wore not even that, and spent their lives in knocking two sticks together before a

scarlet doll—humanity grading and drifting beyond the educated vision, until no earthly invitation can embrace it.

All invitations must proceed from heaven perhaps; perhaps it is futile for men to initiate their own unity, they do but widen the gulfs between them by the attempt. So at all events thought old Mr. Graysford and young Mr. Sorley, the devoted missionaries who lived out beyond the slaughterhouses, always travelled third on the railways, and never came up to the club. In our Father's house are many mansions, they taught, and there alone will the incompatible multitudes of mankind be welcomed and soothed. Not one shall be turned away by the servants on that verandah, be he black or white, not one shall be kept standing who approaches with a loving heart. And why should the divine hospitality cease here? Consider, with all reverence, the monkeys. May there not be a mansion for the monkeys also? Old Mr. Graysford said No, but young Mr. Sorley, who was advanced, said Yes; he saw no reason why monkeys should not have their collateral share of bliss, and he had sympathetic discussions about them with his Hindu friends. And the jackals? Jackals were indeed less to Mr. Sorley's mind, but he admitted that the mercy of God, being infinite, may well embrace all mammals. And the wasps? He became uneasy during the descent to wasps, and was apt to change the conversation. And oranges, cactuses, crystals and mud? and the bacteria inside Mr. Sorley? No, no, this is going too far. We must exclude someone from our gathering, or we shall be left with nothing.

## CHAPTER V

The Bridge Party was not a success—at least it was not what Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested were accustomed to consider a successful party. They arrived early, since it was given in their honour, but most of the Indian guests had arrived even earlier, and stood massed at the farther side of the tennis lawns, doing nothing.

“It is only just five,” said Mrs. Turton. “My husband will be up from his office in a moment and start the thing. I have no idea what we have to do. It’s the first time we’ve ever given a party like this at the club. Mr. Heaslop, when I’m dead and gone will you give parties like this? It’s enough to make the old type of Burra Sahib turn in his grave.”

Ronny laughed deferentially. “You wanted something not picturesque and we’ve provided it,” he remarked to Miss Quested. “What do you think of the Aryan Brother in a topi and spats?”

Neither she nor his mother answered. They were gazing rather sadly over the tennis lawn. No, it was not picturesque; the East, abandoning its secular magnificence, was descending into a valley whose farther side no man can see.

“The great point to remember is that no one who’s here matters; those who matter don’t come. Isn’t that so, Mrs. Turton?”

“Absolutely true,” said the great lady, leaning back. She was “saving herself up,” as she called it—not for anything that would happen that afternoon or even that week, but for some vague future occasion when a high official might come along and tax her social strength. Most of her public appearances were marked by this air of reserve.

Assured of her approbation, Ronny continued: “The educated Indians will be no good to us if there’s a row, it’s simply not worth while

conciliating them, that's why they don't matter. Most of the people you see are seditious at heart, and the rest 'ld run squealing. The cultivator—he's another story. The Pathan—he's a man if you like. But these people—don't imagine they're India." He pointed to the dusky line beyond the court, and here and there it flashed a pince-nez or shuffled a shoe, as if aware that he was despising it. European costume had lighted like a leprosy. Few had yielded entirely, but none were untouched. There was a silence when he had finished speaking, on both sides of the court; at least, more ladies joined the English group, but their words seemed to die as soon as uttered. Some kites hovered overhead, impartial, over the kites passed the mass of a vulture, and with an impartiality exceeding all, the sky, not deeply coloured but translucent, poured light from its whole circumference. It seemed unlikely that the series stopped here. Beyond the sky must not there be something that overarches all the skies, more impartial even than they? Beyond which again . . .

They spoke of *Cousin Kate*.

They had tried to reproduce their own attitude to life upon the stage, and to dress up as the middle-class English people they actually were. Next year they would do *Quality Street* or *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Save for this annual incursion, they left literature alone. The men had no time for it, the women did nothing that they could not share with the men. Their ignorance of the Arts was notable, and they lost no opportunity of proclaiming it to one another; it was the Public School attitude, flourishing more vigorously than it can yet hope to do in England. If Indians were shop, the Arts were bad form, and Ronny had repressed his mother when she enquired after his viola; a viola was almost a demerit, and certainly not the sort of instrument one mentioned in public. She noticed now how tolerant and conventional his judgments had become; when they had seen *Cousin Kate* in London together in the past, he had scorned it; now he pretended that it was a good play, in order to hurt nobody's feelings. An "unkind notice" had appeared in the local paper, "the sort of thing no white man could have written," as Mrs. Lesley said. The play was praised, to be sure, and so were the stage management and the performance as a whole, but the notice contained the following sentence: "Miss Derek, though she charmingly looked her part, lacked the necessary experience, and occasionally forgot her words." This

tiny breath of genuine criticism had given deep offence, not indeed to Miss Derek, who was as hard as nails, but to her friends. Miss Derek did not belong to Chandrapore. She was stopping for a fortnight with the McBrydes, the police people, and she had been so good as to fill up a gap in the cast at the last moment. A nice impression of local hospitality she would carry away with her.

“To work, Mary, to work,” cried the Collector, touching his wife on the shoulder with a switch.

Mrs. Turton got up awkwardly. “What do you want me to do? Oh, those purdah women! I never thought any would come. Oh dear!”

A little group of Indian ladies had been gathering in a third quarter of the grounds, near a rustic summer-house in which the more timid of them had already taken refuge. The rest stood with their backs to the company and their faces pressed into a bank of shrubs. At a little distance stood their male relatives, watching the venture. The sight was significant: an island bared by the turning tide, and bound to grow.

“I consider they ought to come over to me.”

“Come along, Mary, get it over.”

“I refuse to shake hands with any of the men, unless it has to be the Nawab Bahadur.”

“Whom have we so far?” He glanced along the line. “H’m! h’m! much as one expected. We know why he’s here, I think—over that contract, and he wants to get the right side of me for Mohurram, and he’s the astrologer who wants to dodge the municipal building regulations, and he’s that Parsi, and he’s—Hullo! there he goes—smash into our hollyhocks. Pulled the left rein when he meant the right. All as usual.”

“They ought never to have been allowed to drive in; it’s so bad for them,” said Mrs. Turton, who had at last begun her progress to the summer-house, accompanied by Mrs. Moore, Miss Quested, and a terrier. “Why they come



at all I don't know. They hate it as much as we do. Talk to Mrs. McBryde. Her husband made her give purdah parties until she struck."

"This isn't a purdah party," corrected Miss Quested.

"Oh, really," was the haughty rejoinder.

"Do kindly tell us who these ladies are," asked Mrs. Moore.

"You're superior to them, anyway. Don't forget that. You're superior to everyone in India except one or two of the Ranis, and they're on an equality."

Advancing, she shook hands with the group and said a few words of welcome in Urdu. She had learnt the lingo, but only to speak to her servants, so she knew none of the politer forms and of the verbs only the imperative mood. As soon as her speech was over, she enquired of her companions, "Is that what you wanted?"

"Please tell these ladies that I wish we could speak their language, but we have only just come to their country."

"Perhaps we speak yours a little," one of the ladies said.

"Why, fancy, she understands!" said Mrs. Turton.

"Eastbourne, Piccadilly, High Park Corner," said another of the ladies.

"Oh yes, they're English-speaking."

"But now we can talk: how delightful!" cried Adela, her face lighting up.

"She knows Paris also," called one of the onlookers.

"They pass Paris on the way, no doubt," said Mrs. Turton, as if she was describing the movements of migratory birds. Her manner had grown more distant since she had discovered that some of the group was Westernized, and might apply her own standards to her.

“The shorter lady, she is my wife, she is Mrs. Bhattacharya,” the onlooker explained. “The taller lady, she is my sister, she is Mrs. Das.”

The shorter and the taller ladies both adjusted their saris, and smiled. There was a curious uncertainty about their gestures, as if they sought for a new formula which neither East nor West could provide. When Mrs. Bhattacharya’s husband spoke, she turned away from him, but she did not mind seeing the other men. Indeed all the ladies were uncertain, cowering, recovering, giggling, making tiny gestures of atonement or despair at all that was said, and alternately fondling the terrier or shrinking from him. Miss Quested now had her desired opportunity; friendly Indians were before her, and she tried to make them talk, but she failed, she strove in vain against the echoing walls of their civility. Whatever she said produced a murmur of deprecation, varying into a murmur of concern when she dropped her pocket-handkerchief. She tried doing nothing, to see what that produced, and they too did nothing. Mrs. Moore was equally unsuccessful. Mrs. Turton waited for them with a detached expression; she had known what nonsense it all was from the first.

When they took their leave, Mrs. Moore had an impulse, and said to Mrs. Bhattacharya, whose face she liked, “I wonder whether you would allow us to call on you some day.”

“When?” she replied, inclining charmingly.

“Whenever is convenient.”

“All days are convenient.”

“Thursday . . .”

“Most certainly.”

“We shall enjoy it greatly, it would be a real pleasure. What about the time?”

“All hours.”

“Tell us which you would prefer. We’re quite strangers to your country; we don’t know when you have visitors,” said Miss Quested.

Mrs. Bhattacharya seemed not to know either. Her gesture implied that she had known, since Thursdays began, that English ladies would come to see her on one of them, and so always stayed in. Everything pleased her, nothing surprised. She added, “We leave for Calcutta to-day.”

“Oh, do you?” said Adela, not at first seeing the implication. Then she cried, “Oh, but if you do we shall find you gone.”

Mrs. Bhattacharya did not dispute it. But her husband called from the distance, “Yes, yes, you come to us Thursday.”

“But you’ll be in Calcutta.”

“No, no, we shall not.” He said something swiftly to his wife in Bengali. “We expect you Thursday.”

“Thursday . . .” the woman echoed.

“You can’t have done such a dreadful thing as to put off going for our sake?” exclaimed Mrs. Moore.

“No, of course not, we are not such people.” He was laughing.

“I believe that you have. Oh, please—it distresses me beyond words.”

Everyone was laughing now, but with no suggestion that they had blundered. A shapeless discussion occurred, during which Mrs. Turton retired, smiling to herself. The upshot was that they were to come Thursday, but early in the morning, so as to wreck the Bhattacharya plans as little as possible, and Mr. Bhattacharya would send his carriage to fetch them, with servants to point out the way. Did he know where they lived? Yes, of course he knew, he knew everything; and he laughed again. They left among a flutter of compliments and smiles, and three ladies, who had hitherto taken no part in the reception, suddenly shot out of the summer-house like exquisitely coloured swallows, and salaamed them.

Meanwhile the Collector had been going his rounds. He made pleasant remarks and a few jokes, which were applauded lustily, but he knew something to the discredit of nearly every one of his guests, and was consequently perfunctory. When they had not cheated, it was bhang, women, or worse, and even the desirables wanted to get something out of him. He believed that a "Bridge Party" did good rather than harm, or he would not have given one, but he was under no illusions, and at the proper moment he retired to the English side of the lawn. The impressions he left behind him were various. Many of the guests, especially the humbler and less anglicized, were genuinely grateful. To be addressed by so high an official was a permanent asset. They did not mind how long they stood, or how little happened, and when seven o'clock struck, they had to be turned out. Others were grateful with more intelligence. The Nawab Bahadur, indifferent for himself and for the distinction with which he was greeted, was moved by the mere kindness that must have prompted the invitation. He knew the difficulties. Hamidullah also thought that the Collector had played up well. But others, such as Mahmoud Ali, were cynical; they were firmly convinced that Turton had been made to give the party by his official superiors and was all the time consumed with impotent rage, and they infected some who were inclined to a healthier view. Yet even Mahmoud Ali was glad he had come. Shrines are fascinating, especially when rarely opened, and it amused him to note the ritual of the English club, and to caricature it afterwards to his friends.

After Mr. Turton, the official who did his duty best was Mr. Fielding, the Principal of the little Government College. He knew little of the district and less against the inhabitants, so he was in a less cynical state of mind. Athletic and cheerful, he romped about, making numerous mistakes which the parents of his pupils tried to cover up, for he was popular among them. When the moment for refreshments came, he did not move back to the English side, but burnt his mouth with gram. He talked to anyone and he ate anything. Amid much that was alien, he learnt that the two new ladies from England had been a great success, and that their politeness in wishing to be Mrs. Bhattacharya's guests had pleased not only her but all Indians who heard of it. It pleased Mr. Fielding also. He scarcely knew the two new ladies, still he decided to tell them what pleasure they had given by their friendliness.

He found the younger of them alone. She was looking through a nick in the cactus hedge at the distant Marabar Hills, which had crept near, as was their custom at sunset; if the sunset had lasted long enough, they would have reached the town, but it was swift, being tropical. He gave her his information, and she was so much pleased and thanked him so heartily that he asked her and the other lady to tea.

“I’d like to come very much indeed, and so would Mrs. Moore, I know.”

“I’m rather a hermit, you know.”

“Much the best thing to be in this place.”

“Owing to my work and so on, I don’t get up much to the club.”

“I know, I know, and we never get down from it. I envy you being with Indians.”

“Do you care to meet one or two?”

“Very, very much indeed; it’s what I long for. This party to-day makes me so angry and miserable. I think my countrymen out here must be mad. Fancy inviting guests and not treating them properly! You and Mr. Turton and perhaps Mr. McBryde are the only people who showed any common politeness. The rest make me perfectly ashamed, and it’s got worse and worse.”

It had. The Englishmen had intended to play up better, but had been prevented from doing so by their women folk, whom they had to attend, provide with tea, advise about dogs, etc. When tennis began, the barrier grew impenetrable. It had been hoped to have some sets between East and West, but this was forgotten, and the courts were monopolized by the usual club couples. Fielding resented it too, but did not say so to the girl, for he found something theoretical in her outburst. Did she care about Indian music? he enquired; there was an old professor down at the College, who sang.

“Oh, just what we wanted to hear. And do you know Doctor Aziz?”

“I know all about him. I don’t know him. Would you like him asked too?”

“Mrs. Moore says he is so nice.”

“Very well, Miss Quersted. Will Thursday suit you?”

“Indeed it will, and that morning we go to this Indian lady’s. All the nice things are coming Thursday.”

“I won’t ask the City Magistrate to bring you. I know he’ll be busy at that time.”

“Yes, Ronny is always hard-worked,” she replied, contemplating the hills. How lovely they suddenly were! But she couldn’t touch them. In front, like a shutter, fell a vision of her married life. She and Ronny would look into the club like this every evening, then drive home to dress; they would see the Lesleys and the Callendars and the Turtons and the Burtons, and invite them and be invited by them, while the true India slid by unnoticed. Colour would remain—the pageant of birds in the early morning, brown bodies, white turbans, idols whose flesh was scarlet or blue—and movement would remain as long as there were crowds in the bazaar and bathers in the tanks. Perched up on the seat of a dogcart, she would see them. But the force that lies behind colour and movement would escape her even more effectually than it did now. She would see India always as a frieze, never as a spirit, and she assumed that it was a spirit of which Mrs. Moore had had a glimpse.

And sure enough they did drive away from the club in a few minutes, and they did dress, and to dinner came Miss Derek and the McBrydes, and the menu was: Julienne soup full of bullety bottled peas, pseudo-cottage bread, fish full of branching bones, pretending to be plaice, more bottled peas with the cutlets, trifle, sardines on toast: the menu of Anglo-India. A dish might be added or subtracted as one rose or fell in the official scale, the peas might rattle less or more, the sardines and the vermouth be imported by a different firm, but the tradition remained; the food of exiles, cooked by servants who did not understand it. Adela thought of the young men and women who had come out before her, P. & O. full after P. & O. full, and had

been set down to the same food and the same ideas, and been snubbed in the same good-humoured way until they kept to the accredited themes and began to snub others. "I should never get like that," she thought, for she was young herself; all the same she knew that she had come up against something that was both insidious and tough, and against which she needed allies. She must gather around her at Chandrapore a few people who felt as she did, and she was glad to have met Mr. Fielding and the Indian lady with the unpronounceable name. Here at all events was a nucleus; she should know much better where she stood in the course of the next two days.

Miss Derek—she companioned a Maharani in a remote Native State. She was genial and gay and made them all laugh about her leave, which she had taken because she felt she deserved it, not because the Maharani said she might go. Now she wanted to take the Maharajah's motor-car as well; it had gone to a Chiefs' Conference at Delhi, and she had a great scheme for burgling it at the junction as it came back in the train. She was also very funny about the Bridge Party—indeed she regarded the entire peninsula as a comic opera. "If one couldn't see the laughable side of these people one 'ld be done for," said Miss Derek. Mrs. McBryde—it was she who had been the nurse—ceased not to exclaim, "Oh, Nancy, how topping! Oh, Nancy, how killing! I wish I could look at things like that." Mr. McBryde did not speak much; he seemed nice.

When the guests had gone, and Adela gone to bed, there was another interview between mother and son. He wanted her advice and support—while resenting interference. "Does Adela talk to you much?" he began. "I'm so driven with work, I don't see her as much as I hoped, but I hope she finds things comfortable."

"Adela and I talk mostly about India. Dear, since you mention it, you're quite right—you ought to be more alone with her than you are."

"Yes, perhaps, but then people'ld gossip."

"Well, they must gossip sometime! Let them gossip."

"People are so odd out here, and it's not like home—one's always facing the footlights, as the Burra Sahib said. Take a silly little example: when

Adela went out to the boundary of the club compound, and Fielding followed her. I saw Mrs. Callendar notice it. They notice everything, until they're perfectly sure you're their sort."

"I don't think Adela 'll ever be quite their sort—she's much too individual."

"I know, that's so remarkable about her," he said thoughtfully. Mrs. Moore thought him rather absurd. Accustomed to the privacy of London, she could not realize that India, seemingly so mysterious, contains none, and that consequently the conventions have greater force. "I suppose nothing's on her mind," he continued.

"Ask her, ask her yourself, my dear boy."

"Probably she's heard tales of the heat, but of course I should pack her off to the Hills every April—I'm not one to keep a wife grilling in the Plains."

"Oh, it wouldn't be the weather."

"There's nothing in India but the weather, my dear mother; it's the Alpha and Omega of the whole affair."

"Yes, as Mr. McBryde was saying, but it's much more the Anglo-Indians themselves who are likely to get on Adela's nerves. She doesn't think they behave pleasantly to Indians, you see."

"What did I tell you?" he exclaimed, losing his gentle manner. "I knew it last week. Oh, how like a woman to worry over a side-issue!"

She forgot about Adela in her surprise. "A side-issue, a side-issue?" she repeated. "How can it be that?"

"We're not out here for the purpose of behaving pleasantly!"

"What do you mean?"



“What I say. We’re out here to do justice and keep the peace. Them’s my sentiments. India isn’t a drawing-room.”

“Your sentiments are those of a god,” she said quietly, but it was his manner rather than his sentiments that annoyed her.

Trying to recover his temper, he said, “India likes gods.”

“And Englishmen like posing as gods.”

“There’s no point in all this. Here we are, and we’re going to stop, and the country’s got to put up with us, gods or no gods. Oh, look here,” he broke out, rather pathetically, “what do you and Adela want me to do? Go against my class, against all the people I respect and admire out here? Lose such power as I have for doing good in this country because my behaviour isn’t pleasant? You neither of you understand what work is, or you ’ld never talk such eyewash. I hate talking like this, but one must occasionally. It’s morbidly sensitive to go on as Adela and you do. I noticed you both at the club to-day—after the Burra Sahib had been at all that trouble to amuse you. I am out here to work, mind, to hold this wretched country by force. I’m not a missionary or a Labour Member or a vague sentimental sympathetic literary man. I’m just a servant of the Government; it’s the profession you wanted me to choose myself, and that’s that. We’re not pleasant in India, and we don’t intend to be pleasant. We’ve something more important to do.”

He spoke sincerely. Every day he worked hard in the court trying to decide which of two untrue accounts was the less untrue, trying to dispense justice fearlessly, to protect the weak against the less weak, the incoherent against the plausible, surrounded by lies and flattery. That morning he had convicted a railway clerk of overcharging pilgrims for their tickets, and a Pathan of attempted rape. He expected no gratitude, no recognition for this, and both clerk and Pathan might appeal, bribe their witnesses more effectually in the interval, and get their sentences reversed. It was his duty. But he did expect sympathy from his own people, and except from newcomers he obtained it. He did think he ought not to be worried about “Bridge Parties” when the day’s work was over and he wanted to play tennis with his equals or rest his legs upon a long chair.

He spoke sincerely, but she could have wished with less gusto. How Ronny revelled in the drawbacks of his situation! How he did rub it in that he was not in India to behave pleasantly, and derived positive satisfaction therefrom! He reminded her of his public-school days. The traces of young-man humanitarianism had sloughed off, and he talked like an intelligent and embittered boy. His words without his voice might have impressed her, but when she heard the self-satisfied lilt of them, when she saw the mouth moving so complacently and competently beneath the little red nose, she felt, quite illogically, that this was not the last word on India. One touch of regret—not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart—would have made him a different man, and the British Empire a different institution.

“I’m going to argue, and indeed dictate,” she said, clinking her rings. “The English are out here to be pleasant.”

“How do you make that out, mother?” he asked, speaking gently again, for he was ashamed of his irritability.

“Because India is part of the earth. And God has put us on the earth in order to be pleasant to each other. God . . . is . . . love.” She hesitated, seeing how much he disliked the argument, but something made her go on. “God has put us on earth to love our neighbours and to show it, and He is omnipresent, even in India, to see how we are succeeding.”

He looked gloomy, and a little anxious. He knew this religious strain in her, and that it was a symptom of bad health; there had been much of it when his stepfather died. He thought, “She is certainly ageing, and I ought not to be vexed with anything she says.”

“The desire to behave pleasantly satisfies God. . . The sincere if impotent desire wins His blessing. I think every one fails, but there are so many kinds of failure. Good will and more good will and more good will. Though I speak with the tongues of . . .”

He waited until she had done, and then said gently, “I quite see that. I suppose I ought to get off to my files now, and you’ll be going to bed.”

“I suppose so, I suppose so.” They did not part for a few minutes, but the conversation had become unreal since Christianity had entered it. Ronny approved of religion as long as it endorsed the National Anthem, but he objected when it attempted to influence his life. Then he would say in respectful yet decided tones, “I don’t think it does to talk about these things, every fellow has to work out his own religion,” and any fellow who heard him muttered, “Hear!”

Mrs. Moore felt that she had made a mistake in mentioning God, but she found him increasingly difficult to avoid as she grew older, and he had been constantly in her thoughts since she entered India, though oddly enough he satisfied her less. She must needs pronounce his name frequently, as the greatest she knew, yet she had never found it less efficacious. Outside the arch there seemed always an arch, beyond the remotest echo a silence. And she regretted afterwards that she had not kept to the real serious subject that had caused her to visit India—namely the relationship between Ronny and Adela. Would they, or would they not, succeed in becoming engaged to be married?

## CHAPTER VI

Aziz had not gone to the Bridge Party. Immediately after his meeting with Mrs. Moore he was diverted to other matters. Several surgical cases came in, and kept him busy. He ceased to be either outcaste or poet, and became the medical student, very gay, and full of details of operations which he poured into the shrinking ears of his friends. His profession fascinated him at times, but he required it to be exciting, and it was his hand, not his mind, that was scientific. The knife he loved and used skilfully, and he also liked pumping in the latest serums. But the boredom of regime and hygiene repelled him, and after inoculating a man for enteric, he would go away and drink unfiltered water himself. “What can you expect from the fellow?” said dour Major Callendar. “No grits, no guts.” But in his heart he knew that if Aziz and not he had operated last year on Mrs. Graysford’s appendix, the old lady would probably have lived. And this did not dispose him any better towards his subordinate.

There was a row the morning after the mosque—they were always having rows. The Major, who had been up half the night, wanted damn well to know why Aziz had not come promptly when summoned.

“Sir, excuse me, I did. I mounted my bike, and it bust in front of the Cow Hospital. So I had to find a tonga.”

“Bust in front of the Cow Hospital, did it? And how did you come to be there?”

“I beg your pardon?”

“Oh Lord, oh Lord! When I live here”—he kicked the gravel—“and you live there—not ten minutes from me—and the Cow Hospital is right ever so far away the other side of you—*there*—then how did you come to be passing the Cow Hospital on the way to me? Now do some work for a change.”

He strode away in a temper, without waiting for the excuse, which as far as it went was a sound one: the Cow Hospital was in a straight line between Hamidullah's house and his own, so Aziz had naturally passed it. He never realized that the educated Indians visited one another constantly, and were weaving, however painfully, a new social fabric. Caste "or something of the sort" would prevent them. He only knew that no one ever told him the truth, although he had been in the country for twenty years.

Aziz watched him go with amusement. When his spirits were up he felt that the English are a comic institution, and he enjoyed being misunderstood by them. But it was an amusement of the emotions and nerves, which an accident or the passage of time might destroy; it was apart from the fundamental gaiety that he reached when he was with those whom he trusted. A disobliging simile involving Mrs. Callendar occurred to his fancy. "I must tell that to Mahmoud Ali, it'll make him laugh," he thought. Then he got to work. He was competent and indispensable, and he knew it. The simile passed from his mind while he exercised his professional skill.

During these pleasant and busy days, he heard vaguely that the Collector was giving a party, and that the Nawab Bahadur said every one ought to go to it. His fellow-assistant, Doctor Panna Lal, was in ecstasies at the prospect, and was urgent that they should attend it together in his new tum-tum. The arrangement suited them both. Aziz was spared the indignity of a bicycle or the expense of hiring, while Dr. Panna Lal, who was timid and elderly, secured someone who could manage his horse. He could manage it himself, but only just, and he was afraid of the motors and of the unknown turn into the club grounds. "Disaster may come," he said politely, "but we shall at all events get there safe, even if we do not get back." And with more logic: "It will, I think, create a good impression should two doctors arrive at the same time."

But when the time came, Aziz was seized with a revulsion, and determined not to go. For one thing his spell of work, lately concluded, left him independent and healthy. For another, the day chanced to fall on the anniversary of his wife's death. She had died soon after he had fallen in love with her; he had not loved her at first. Touched by Western feeling, he disliked union with a woman whom he had never seen; moreover, when he

did see her, she disappointed him, and he begat his first child in mere animality. The change began after its birth. He was won by her love for him, by a loyalty that implied something more than submission, and by her efforts to educate herself against that lifting of the purdah that would come in the next generation if not in theirs. She was intelligent, yet had old-fashioned grace. Gradually he lost the feeling that his relatives had chosen wrongly for him. Sensuous enjoyment—well, even if he had had it, it would have dulled in a year, and he had gained something instead, which seemed to increase the longer they lived together. She became the mother of a son . . . and in giving him a second son she died. Then he realized what he had lost, and that no woman could ever take her place; a friend would come nearer to her than another woman. She had gone, there was no one like her, and what is that uniqueness but love? He amused himself, he forgot her at times: but at other times he felt that she had sent all the beauty and joy of the world into Paradise, and he meditated suicide. Would he meet her beyond the tomb? Is there such a meeting-place? Though orthodox, he did not know. God's unity was indubitable and indubitably announced, but on all other points he wavered like the average Christian; his belief in the life to come would pale to a hope, vanish, reappear, all in a single sentence or a dozen heart-beats, so that the corpuscles of his blood rather than he seemed to decide which opinion he should hold, and for how long. It was so with all his opinions. Nothing stayed, nothing passed that did not return; the circulation was ceaseless and kept him young, and he mourned his wife the more sincerely because he mourned her seldom.

It would have been simpler to tell Dr. Lal that he had changed his mind about the party, but until the last minute he did not know that he had changed it; indeed, he didn't change it, it changed itself. Unconquerable aversion welled. Mrs. Callendar, Mrs. Lesley—no, he couldn't stand them in his sorrow: they would guess it—for he dowered the British matron with strange insight—and would delight in torturing him, they would mock him to their husbands. When he should have been ready, he stood at the Post Office, writing a telegram to his children, and found on his return that Dr. Lal had called for him, and gone on. Well, let him go on, as befitted the coarseness of his nature. For his own part, he would commune with the dead.

And unlocking a drawer, he took out his wife's photograph. He gazed at it, and tears spouted from his eyes. He thought, "How unhappy I am!" But because he really was unhappy, another emotion soon mingled with his self-pity: he desired to remember his wife and could not. Why could he remember people whom he did not love? They were always so vivid to him, whereas the more he looked at this photograph, the less he saw. She had eluded him thus, ever since they had carried her to her tomb. He had known that she would pass from his hands and eyes, but had thought she could live in his mind, not realizing that the very fact that we have loved the dead increases their unreality, and that the more passionately we invoke them the further they recede. A piece of brown cardboard and three children—that was all that was left of his wife. It was unbearable, and he thought again, "How unhappy I am!" and became happier. He had breathed for an instant the mortal air that surrounds Orientals and all men, and he drew back from it with a gasp, for he was young. "Never, never shall I get over this," he told himself. "Most certainly my career is a failure, and my sons will be badly brought up." Since it was certain, he strove to avert it, and looked at some notes he had made on a case at the hospital. Perhaps some day a rich person might require this particular operation, and he gain a large sum. The notes interesting him on their own account, he locked the photograph up again. Its moment was over, and he did not think about his wife any more.

After tea his spirits improved, and he went round to see Hamidullah. Hamidullah had gone to the party, but his pony had not, so Aziz borrowed it, also his friend's riding breeches and polo mallet. He repaired to the Maidan. It was deserted except at its rim, where some bazaar youths were training. Training for what? They would have found it hard to say, but the word had got into the air. Round they ran, weedy and knock-kneed—the local physique was wretched—with an expression on their faces not so much of determination as of a determination to be determined. "Maharajah, salaam," he called for a joke. The youths stopped and laughed. He advised them not to exert themselves. They promised they would not, and ran on.

Riding into the middle, he began to knock the ball about. He could not play, but his pony could, and he set himself to learn, free from all human tension. He forgot the whole damned business of living as he scurried over the brown platter of the Maidan, with the evening wind on his forehead, and

the encircling trees soothing his eyes. The ball shot away towards a stray subaltern who was also practising; he hit it back to Aziz and called, "Send it along again."

"All right."

The new-comer had some notion of what to do, but his horse had none, and forces were equal. Concentrated on the ball, they somehow became fond of one another, and smiled when they drew rein to rest. Aziz liked soldiers—they either accepted you or swore at you, which was preferable to the civilian's hauteur—and the subaltern liked anyone who could ride.

"Often play?" he asked.

"Never."

"Let's have another chukker."

As he hit, his horse bucked and off he went, cried, "Oh God!" and jumped on again. "Don't you ever fall off?"

"Plenty."

"Not you."

They reined up again, the fire of good fellowship in their eyes. But it cooled with their bodies, for athletics can only raise a temporary glow. Nationality was returning, but before it could exert its poison they parted, saluting each other. "If only they were all like that," each thought.

Now it was sunset. A few of his co-religionists had come to the Maidan, and were praying with their faces towards Mecca. A Brahminy Bull walked towards them, and Aziz, though disinclined to pray himself, did not see why they should be bothered with the clumsy and idolatrous animal. He gave it a tap with his polo mallet. As he did so, a voice from the road hailed him: it was Dr. Panna Lal, returning in high distress from the Collector's party.

"Dr. Aziz, Dr. Aziz, where you been? I waited ten full minutes' time at your house, then I went."



“I am so awfully sorry—I was compelled to go to the Post Office.”

One of his own circle would have accepted this as meaning that he had changed his mind, an event too common to merit censure. But Dr. Lal, being of low extraction, was not sure whether an insult had not been intended, and he was further annoyed because Aziz had buffeted the Brahminy Bull. “Post Office? Do you not send your servants?” he said.

“I have so few—my scale is very small.”

“Your servant spoke to me. I saw your servant.”

“But, Dr. Lal, consider. How could I send my servant when you were coming: you come, we go, my house is left alone, my servant comes back perhaps, and all my portable property has been carried away by bad characters in the meantime. Would you have that? The cook is deaf—I can never count on my cook—and the boy is only a little boy. Never, never do I and Hassan leave the house at the same time together. It is my fixed rule.” He said all this and much more out of civility, to save Dr. Lal’s face. It was not offered as truth and should not have been criticized as such. But the other demolished it—an easy and ignoble task. “Even if this so, what prevents leaving a chit saying where you go?” and so on. Aziz detested ill breeding, and made his pony caper. “Farther away, or mine will start out of sympathy,” he wailed, revealing the true source of his irritation. “It has been so rough and wild this afternoon. It spoiled some most valuable blossoms in the club garden, and had to be dragged back by four men. English ladies and gentlemen looking on, and the Collector Sahib himself taking a note. But, Dr. Aziz, I’ll not take up your valuable time. This will not interest you, who have so many engagements and telegrams. I am just a poor old doctor who thought right to pay my respects when I was asked and where I was asked. Your absence, I may remark, drew commentaries.”

“They can damn well comment.”

“It is fine to be young. Damn well! Oh, very fine. Damn whom?”

“I go or not as I please.”

“Yet you promise me, and then fabricate this tale of a telegram. Go forward, Dapple.”

They went, and Aziz had a wild desire to make an enemy for life. He could do it so easily by galloping near them. He did it. Dapple bolted. He thundered back on to the Maidan. The glory of his play with the subaltern remained for a little, he galloped and swooped till he poured with sweat, and until he returned the pony to Hamidullah’s stable he felt the equal of any man. Once on his feet, he had creeping fears. Was he in bad odour with the powers that be? Had he offended the Collector by absenting himself? Dr. Panna Lal was a person of no importance, yet was it wise to have quarrelled even with him? The complexion of his mind turned from human to political. He thought no longer, “Can I get on with people?” but “Are they stronger than I?” breathing the prevalent miasma.

At his home a chit was awaiting him, bearing the Government stamp. It lay on his table like a high explosive, which at a touch might blow his flimsy bungalow to bits. He was going to be cashiered because he had not turned up at the party. When he opened the note, it proved to be quite different; an invitation from Mr. Fielding, the Principal of Government College, asking him to come to tea the day after to-morrow. His spirits revived with violence. They would have revived in any case, for he possessed a soul that could suffer but not stifle, and led a steady life beneath his mutability. But this invitation gave him particular joy, because Fielding had asked him to tea a month ago, and he had forgotten about it—never answered, never gone, just forgotten.

And here came a second invitation, without a rebuke or even an allusion to his slip. Here was true courtesy—the civil deed that shows the good heart—and snatching up his pen he wrote an affectionate reply, and hurried back for news to Hamidullah’s. For he had never met the Principal, and believed that the one serious gap in his life was going to be filled. He longed to know everything about the splendid fellow—his salary, preferences, antecedents, how best one might please him. But Hamidullah was still out, and Mahmoud Ali, who was in, would only make silly rude jokes about the party.

## CHAPTER VII

This Mr. Fielding had been caught by India late. He was over forty when he entered that oddest portal, the Victoria Terminus at Bombay, and—having bribed a European ticket inspector—took his luggage into the compartment of his first tropical train. The journey remained in his mind as significant. Of his two carriage companions one was a youth, fresh to the East like himself, the other a seasoned Anglo-Indian of his own age. A gulf divided him from either; he had seen too many cities and men to be the first or to become the second. New impressions crowded on him, but they were not the orthodox new impressions; the past conditioned them, and so it was with his mistakes. To regard an Indian as if he were an Italian is not, for instance, a common error, nor perhaps a fatal one, and Fielding often attempted analogies between this peninsula and that other, smaller and more exquisitely shaped, that stretches into the classic waters of the Mediterranean.

His career, though scholastic, was varied, and had included going to the bad and repenting thereafter. By now he was a hard-bitten, good-tempered, intelligent fellow on the verge of middle age, with a belief in education. He did not mind whom he taught; public schoolboys, mental defectives and policemen, had all come his way, and he had no objection to adding Indians. Through the influence of friends, he was nominated Principal of the little college at Chandrapore, liked it, and assumed he was a success. He did succeed with his pupils, but the gulf between himself and his countrymen, which he had noticed in the train, widened distressingly. He could not at first see what was wrong. He was not unpatriotic, he always got on with Englishmen in England, all his best friends were English, so why was it not the same out here? Outwardly of the large shaggy type, with sprawling limbs and blue eyes, he appeared to inspire confidence until he spoke. Then something in his manner puzzled people and failed to allay the distrust which his profession naturally inspired. There needs must be this evil of brains in India, but woe to him through whom they are increased!

The feeling grew that Mr. Fielding was a disruptive force, and rightly, for ideas are fatal to caste, and he used ideas by that most potent method—interchange. Neither a missionary nor a student, he was happiest in the give-and-take of a private conversation. The world, he believed, is a globe of men who are trying to reach one another and can best do so by the help of good will plus culture and intelligence—a creed ill suited to Chandrapore, but he had come out too late to lose it. He had no racial feeling—not because he was superior to his brother civilians, but because he had matured in a different atmosphere, where the herd-instinct does not flourish. The remark that did him most harm at the club was a silly aside to the effect that the so-called white races are really pinko-grey. He only said this to be cheery, he did not realize that “white” has no more to do with a colour than “God save the King” with a god, and that it is the height of impropriety to consider what it does connote. The pinko-grey male whom he addressed was subtly scandalized; his sense of insecurity was awoken, and he communicated it to the rest of the herd.

Still, the men tolerated him for the sake of his good heart and strong body; it was their wives who decided that he was not a sahib really. They disliked him. He took no notice of them, and this, which would have passed without comment in feminist England, did him harm in a community where the male is expected to be lively and helpful. Mr. Fielding never advised one about dogs or horses, or dined, or paid his midday calls, or decorated trees for one’s children at Christmas, and though he came to the club, it was only to get his tennis or billiards, and to go. This was true. He had discovered that it is possible to keep in with Indians and Englishmen, but that he who would also keep in with Englishwomen must drop the Indians. The two wouldn’t combine. Useless to blame either party, useless to blame them for blaming one another. It just was so, and one had to choose. Most Englishmen preferred their own kinswomen, who, coming out in increasing numbers, made life on the home pattern yearly more possible. He had found it convenient and pleasant to associate with Indians and he must pay the price. As a rule no Englishwoman entered the College except for official functions, and if he invited Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested to tea, it was because they were new-comers who would view everything with an equal if superficial eye, and would not turn on a special voice when speaking to his other guests.

The College itself had been slapped down by the Public Works Department, but its grounds included an ancient garden and a garden-house, and here he lived for much of the year. He was dressing after a bath when Dr. Aziz was announced. Lifting up his voice, he shouted from the bedroom, "Please make yourself at home." The remark was unpremeditated, like most of his actions; it was what he felt inclined to say.

To Aziz it had a very definite meaning. "May I really, Mr. Fielding? It's very good of you," he called back; "I like unconventional behaviour so extremely." His spirits flared up, he glanced round the living-room. Some luxury in it, but no order—nothing to intimidate poor Indians. It was also a very beautiful room, opening into the garden through three high arches of wood. "The fact is I have long wanted to meet you," he continued. "I have heard so much about your warm heart from the Nawab Bahadur. But where is one to meet in a wretched hole like Chandrapore?" He came close up to the door. "When I was greener here, I'll tell you what. I used to wish you to fall ill so that we could meet that way." They laughed, and encouraged by his success he began to improvise. "I said to myself, How does Mr. Fielding look this morning? Perhaps pale. And the Civil Surgeon is pale too, he will not be able to attend upon him when the shivering commences. I should have been sent for instead. Then we would have had jolly talks, for you are a celebrated student of Persian poetry."

"You know me by sight, then."

"Of course, of course. You know me?"

"I know you very well by name."

"I have been here such a short time, and always in the bazaar. No wonder you have never seen me, and I wonder you know my name. I say, Mr. Fielding?"

"Yes?"

"Guess what I look like before you come out. That will be a kind of game."

“You’re five feet nine inches high,” said Fielding, surmising this much through the ground glass of the bedroom door.

“Jolly good. What next? Have I not a venerable white beard?”

“Blast!”

“Anything wrong?”

“I’ve stamped on my last collar stud.”

“Take mine, take mine.”

“Have you a spare one?”

“Yes, yes, one minute.”

“Not if you’re wearing it yourself.”

“No, no, one in my pocket.” Stepping aside, so that his outline might vanish, he wrenched off his collar, and pulled out of his shirt the back stud, a gold stud, which was part of a set that his brother-in-law had brought him from Europe. “Here it is,” he cried.

“Come in with it if you don’t mind the unconventionality.”

“One minute again.” Replacing his collar, he prayed that it would not spring up at the back during tea. Fielding’s bearer, who was helping him to dress, opened the door for him.

“Many thanks.” They shook hands smiling. He began to look round, as he would have with any old friend. Fielding was not surprised at the rapidity of their intimacy. With so emotional a people it was apt to come at once or never, and he and Aziz, having heard only good of each other, could afford to dispense with preliminaries.

“But I always thought that Englishmen kept their rooms so tidy. It seems that this is not so. I need not be so ashamed.” He sat down gaily on the bed; then, forgetting himself entirely, drew up his legs and folded them under

him. “Everything ranged coldly on shelves was what *I* thought.—I say, Mr. Fielding, is the stud going to go in?”

“I hae ma doots.”

“What’s that last sentence, please? Will you teach me some new words and so improve my English?”

Fielding doubted whether “everything ranged coldly on shelves” could be improved. He was often struck with the liveliness with which the younger generation handled a foreign tongue. They altered the idiom, but they could say whatever they wanted to say quickly; there were none of the babuisms ascribed to them up at the club. But then the club moved slowly; it still declared that few Mohammedans and no Hindus would eat at an Englishman’s table, and that all Indian ladies were in impenetrable purdah. Individually it knew better; as a club it declined to change.

“Let me put in your stud. I see . . . the shirt back’s hole is rather small and to rip it wider a pity.”

“Why in hell does one wear collars at all?” grumbled Fielding as he bent his neck.

“We wear them to pass the Police.”

“What’s that?”

“If I’m biking in English dress—starch collar, hat with ditch—they take no notice. When I wear a fez, they cry, ‘Your lamp’s out!’ Lord Curzon did not consider this when he urged natives of India to retain their picturesque costumes.—Hooray! Stud’s gone in.—Sometimes I shut my eyes and dream I have splendid clothes again and am riding into battle behind Alamgir. Mr. Fielding, must not India have been beautiful then, with the Mogul Empire at its height and Alamgir reigning at Delhi upon the Peacock Throne?”

“Two ladies are coming to tea to meet you—I think you know them.”

“Meet me? I know no ladies.”

“Not Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested?”

“Oh yes—I remember.” The romance at the mosque had sunk out of his consciousness as soon as it was over. “An excessively aged lady; but will you please repeat the name of her companion?”

“Miss Quested.”

“Just as you wish.” He was disappointed that other guests were coming, for he preferred to be alone with his new friend.

“You can talk to Miss Quested about the Peacock Throne if you like—she’s artistic, they say.”

“Is she a Post Impressionist?”

“Post Impressionism, indeed! Come along to tea. This world is getting too much for me altogether.”

Aziz was offended. The remark suggested that he, an obscure Indian, had no right to have heard of Post Impressionism—a privilege reserved for the Ruling Race, that. He said stiffly, “I do not consider Mrs. Moore my friend, I only met her accidentally in my mosque,” and was adding “a single meeting is too short to make a friend,” but before he could finish the sentence the stiffness vanished from it, because he felt Fielding’s fundamental good will. His own went out to it, and grappled beneath the shifting tides of emotion which can alone bear the voyager to an anchorage but may also carry him across it on to the rocks. He was safe really—as safe as the shore-dweller who can only understand stability and supposes that every ship must be wrecked, and he had sensations the shore-dweller cannot know. Indeed, he was sensitive rather than responsive. In every remark he found a meaning, but not always the true meaning, and his life though vivid was largely a dream. Fielding, for instance, had not meant that Indians are obscure, but that Post Impressionism is; a gulf divided his remark from Mrs. Turton’s “Why, they speak English,” but to Aziz the two sounded alike. Fielding saw that something had gone wrong, and equally that it had come right, but he didn’t fidget, being an optimist where personal relations were concerned, and their talk rattled on as before.



“Besides the ladies I am expecting one of my assistants—Narayan Godbole.”

“Oho, the Deccani Brahman!”

“He wants the past back too, but not precisely Alamgir.”

“I should think not. Do you know what Deccani Brahmans say? That England conquered India from them—from them, mind, and not from the Moguls. Is not that like their cheek? They have even bribed it to appear in text-books, for they are so subtle and immensely rich. Professor Godbole must be quite unlike all other Deccani Brahmans from all I can hear say. A most sincere chap.”

“Why don’t you fellows run a club in Chandrapore, Aziz?”

“Perhaps—some day . . . just now I see Mrs. Moore and—what’s her name—coming.”

How fortunate that it was an “unconventional” party, where formalities are ruled out! On this basis Aziz found the English ladies easy to talk to, he treated them like men. Beauty would have troubled him, for it entails rules of its own, but Mrs. Moore was so old and Miss Quested so plain that he was spared this anxiety. Adela’s angular body and the freckles on her face were terrible defects in his eyes, and he wondered how God could have been so unkind to any female form. His attitude towards her remained entirely straightforward in consequence.

“I want to ask you something, Dr. Aziz,” she began. “I heard from Mrs. Moore how helpful you were to her in the mosque, and how interesting. She learnt more about India in those few minutes’ talk with you than in the three weeks since we landed.”

“Oh, please do not mention a little thing like that. Is there anything else I may tell you about my country?”

“I want you to explain a disappointment we had this morning; it must be some point of Indian etiquette.”

“There honestly is none,” he replied. “We are by nature a most informal people.”

“I am afraid we must have made some blunder and given offence,” said Mrs. Moore.

“That is even more impossible. But may I know the facts?”

“An Indian lady and gentleman were to send their carriage for us this morning at nine. It has never come. We waited and waited and waited; we can’t think what happened.”

“Some misunderstanding,” said Fielding, seeing at once that it was the type of incident that had better not be cleared up.

“Oh no, it wasn’t that,” Miss Quested persisted. “They even gave up going to Calcutta to entertain us. We must have made some stupid blunder, we both feel sure.”

“I wouldn’t worry about that.”

“Exactly what Mr. Heaslop tells me,” she retorted, reddening a little. “If one doesn’t worry, how’s one to understand?”

The host was inclined to change the subject, but Aziz took it up warmly, and on learning fragments of the delinquents’ name pronounced that they were Hindus.

“Slack Hindus—they have no idea of society; I know them very well because of a doctor at the hospital. Such a slack, unpunctual fellow! It is as well you did not go to their house, for it would give you a wrong idea of India. Nothing sanitary. I think for my own part they grew ashamed of their house and that is why they did not send.”

“That’s a notion,” said the other man.

“I do so hate mysteries,” Adela announced.

“We English do.”

“I dislike them not because I’m English, but from my own personal point of view,” she corrected.

“I like mysteries but I rather dislike muddles,” said Mrs. Moore.

“A mystery is a muddle.”

“Oh, do you think so, Mr. Fielding?”

“A mystery is only a high-sounding term for a muddle. No advantage in stirring it up, in either case. Aziz and I know well that India’s a muddle.”

“India’s—— Oh, what an alarming idea!”

“There’ll be no muddle when you come to see me,” said Aziz, rather out of his depth. “Mrs. Moore and everyone—I invite you all—oh, please.”

The old lady accepted: she still thought the young doctor excessively nice; moreover, a new feeling, half languor, half excitement, bade her turn down any fresh path. Miss Quested accepted out of adventure. She also liked Aziz, and believed that when she knew him better he would unlock his country for her. His invitation gratified her, and she asked him for his address.

Aziz thought of his bungalow with horror. It was a detestable shanty near a low bazaar. There was practically only one room in it, and that infested with small black flies. “Oh, but we will talk of something else now,” he exclaimed. “I wish I lived here. See this beautiful room! Let us admire it together for a little. See those curves at the bottom of the arches. What delicacy! It is the architecture of Question and Answer. Mrs. Moore, you are in India; I am not joking.” The room inspired him. It was an audience hall built in the eighteenth century for some high official, and though of wood had reminded Fielding of the Loggia de’ Lanzi at Florence. Little rooms, now Europeanized, clung to it on either side, but the central hall was unpapered and unglazed, and the air of the garden poured in freely. One sat in public—on exhibition, as it were—in full view of the gardeners who were screaming at the birds and of the man who rented the tank for the cultivation of water chestnut. Fielding let the mango trees too—there was

no knowing who might not come in—and his servants sat on his steps night and day to discourage thieves. Beautiful certainly, and the Englishman had not spoilt it, whereas Aziz in an occidental moment would have hung Maude Goodmans on the walls. Yet there was no doubt to whom the room really belonged. . . .

“I am doing justice here. A poor widow who has been robbed comes along and I give her fifty rupees, to another a hundred, and so on and so on. I should like that.”

Mrs. Moore smiled, thinking of the modern method as exemplified in her son. “Rupees don’t last for ever, I’m afraid,” she said.

“Mine would. God would give me more when he saw I gave. Always be giving, like the Nawab Bahadur. My father was the same, that is why he died poor.” And pointing about the room he peopled it with clerks and officials, all benevolent because they lived long ago. “So we would sit giving for ever—on a carpet instead of chairs, that is the chief change between now and then, but I think we would never punish anyone.”

The ladies agreed.

“Poor criminal, give him another chance. It only makes a man worse to go to prison and be corrupted.” His face grew very tender—the tenderness of one incapable of administration, and unable to grasp that if the poor criminal is let off he will again rob the poor widow. He was tender to everyone except a few family enemies whom he did not consider human: on these he desired revenge. He was even tender to the English; he knew at the bottom of his heart that they could not help being so cold and odd and circulating like an ice stream through his land. “We punish no one, no one,” he repeated, “and in the evening we will give a great banquet with a nautch and lovely girls shall shine on every side of the tank with fireworks in their hands, and all shall be feasting and happiness until the next day, when there shall be justice as before—fifty rupees, a hundred, a thousand—till peace comes. Ah, why didn’t we live in that time?—But are you admiring Mr. Fielding’s house? Do look how the pillars are painted blue, and the verandah’s pavilions—what do you call them?—that are above us inside are blue also. Look at the carving on the pavilions. Think of the hours it took.

Their little roofs are curved to imitate bamboo. So pretty—and the bamboos waving by the tank outside. Mrs. Moore! Mrs. Moore!”

“Well?” she said, laughing.

“You remember the water by our mosque? It comes down and fills this tank—a skilful arrangement of the Emperors. They stopped here going down into Bengal. They loved water. Wherever they went they created fountains, gardens, hammams. I was telling Mr. Fielding I would give anything to serve them.”

He was wrong about the water, which no Emperor, however skilful, can cause to gravitate uphill; a depression of some depth together with the whole of Chandrapore lay between the mosque and Fielding’s house. Ronny would have pulled him up, Turton would have wanted to pull him up, but restrained himself. Fielding did not even want to pull him up; he had dulled his craving for verbal truth and cared chiefly for truth of mood. As for Miss Quested, she accepted everything Aziz said as true verbally. In her ignorance, she regarded him as “India,” and never surmised that his outlook was limited and his method inaccurate, and that no one is India.

He was now much excited, chattering away hard, and even saying damn when he got mixed up in his sentences. He told them of his profession, and of the operations he had witnessed and performed, and he went into details that scared Mrs. Moore, though Miss Quested mistook them for proofs of his broad-mindedness; she had heard such talk at home in advanced academic circles, deliberately free. She supposed him to be emancipated as well as reliable, and placed him on a pinnacle which he could not retain. He was high enough for the moment, to be sure, but not on any pinnacle. Wings bore him up, and flagging would deposit him.

The arrival of Professor Godbole quieted him somewhat, but it remained his afternoon. The Brahman, polite and enigmatic, did not impede his eloquence, and even applauded it. He took his tea at a little distance from the outcasts, from a low table placed slightly behind him, to which he stretched back, and as it were encountered food by accident; all feigned indifference to Professor Godbole’s tea. He was elderly and wizen with a grey moustache and grey-blue eyes, and his complexion was as fair as a

European's. He wore a turban that looked like pale purple macaroni, coat, waistcoat, dhoti, socks with clocks. The clocks matched the turban, and his whole appearance suggested harmony—as if he had reconciled the products of East and West, mental as well as physical, and could never be discomposed. The ladies were interested in him, and hoped that he would supplement Dr. Aziz by saying something about religion. But he only ate—ate and ate, smiling, never letting his eyes catch sight of his hand.

Leaving the Mogul Emperors, Aziz turned to topics that could distress no one. He described the ripening of the mangoes, and how in his boyhood he used to run out in the Rains to a big mango grove belonging to an uncle and gorge there. “Then back with water streaming over you and perhaps rather a pain inside. But I did not mind. All my friends were paining with me. We have a proverb in Urdu: ‘What does unhappiness matter when we are all unhappy together?’ which comes in conveniently after mangoes. Miss Quested, do wait for mangoes. Why not settle altogether in India?”

“I’m afraid I can’t do that,” said Adela. She made the remark without thinking what it meant. To her, as to the three men, it seemed in key with the rest of the conversation, and not for several minutes—indeed, not for half an hour—did she realize that it was an important remark, and ought to have been made in the first place to Ronny.

“Visitors like you are too rare.”

“They are indeed,” said Professor Godbole. “Such affability is seldom seen. But what can we offer to detain them?”

“Mangoes, mangoes.”

They laughed. “Even mangoes can be got in England now,” put in Fielding. “They ship them in ice-cold rooms. You can make India in England apparently, just as you can make England in India.”

“Frightfully expensive in both cases,” said the girl.

“I suppose so.”

“And nasty.”

But the host wouldn't allow the conversation to take this heavy turn. He turned to the old lady, who looked flustered and put out—he could not imagine why—and asked about her own plans. She replied that she should like to see over the College. Everyone immediately rose, with the exception of Professor Godbole, who was finishing a banana.

“Don't you come too, Adela; you dislike institutions.”

“Yes, that is so,” said Miss Quested, and sat down again.

Aziz hesitated. His audience was splitting up. The more familiar half was going, but the more attentive remained. Reflecting that it was an “unconventional” afternoon, he stopped.

Talk went on as before. Could one offer the visitors unripe mangoes in a fool? “I speak now as a doctor: no.” Then the old man said, “But I will send you up a few healthy sweets. I will give myself that pleasure.”

“Miss Quested, Professor Godbole's sweets are delicious,” said Aziz sadly, for he wanted to send sweets too and had no wife to cook them. “They will give you a real Indian treat. Ah, in my poor position I can give you nothing.”

“I don't know why you say that, when you have so kindly asked us to your house.”

He thought again of his bungalow with horror. Good heavens, the stupid girl had taken him at his word! What was he to do? “Yes, all that is settled,” he cried.

“I invite you all to see me in the Marabar Caves.”

“I shall be delighted.”

“Oh, that is a most magnificent entertainment compared to my poor sweets. But has not Miss Quested visited our caves already?”

“No. I’ve not even heard of them.”

“Not heard of them?” both cried. “The Marabar Caves in the Marabar Hills?”

“We hear nothing interesting up at the club. Only tennis and ridiculous gossip.”

The old man was silent, perhaps feeling that it was unseemly of her to criticize her race, perhaps fearing that if he agreed she would report him for disloyalty. But the young man uttered a rapid “I know.”

“Then tell me everything you will, or I shall never understand India. Are they the hills I sometimes see in the evening? What are these caves?”

Aziz undertook to explain, but it presently appeared that he had never visited the caves himself—had always been “meaning” to go, but work or private business had prevented him, and they were so far. Professor Godbole chaffed him pleasantly. “My dear young sir, the pot and the kettle! Have you ever heard of that useful proverb?”

“Are they large caves?” she asked.

“No, not large.”

“Do describe them, Professor Godbole.”

“It will be a great honour.” He drew up his chair and an expression of tension came over his face. Taking the cigarette box, she offered to him and to Aziz, and lit up herself. After an impressive pause he said: “There is an entrance in the rock which you enter, and through the entrance is the cave.”

“Something like the caves at Elephanta?”

“Oh no, not at all; at Elephanta there are sculptures of Siva and Parvati. There are no sculptures at Marabar.”

“They are immensely holy, no doubt,” said Aziz, to help on the narrative.



“Oh no, oh no.”

“Still, they are ornamented in some way.”

“Oh no.”

“Well, why are they so famous? We all talk of the famous Marabar Caves. Perhaps that is our empty brag.”

“No, I should not quite say that.”

“Describe them to this lady, then.”

“It will be a great pleasure.” He forewent the pleasure, and Aziz realized that he was keeping back something about the caves. He realized because he often suffered from similar inhibitions himself. Sometimes, to the exasperation of Major Callendar, he would pass over the one relevant fact in a position, to dwell on the hundred irrelevant. The Major accused him of disingenuousness, and was roughly right, but only roughly. It was rather that a power he couldn't control capriciously silenced his mind. Godbole had been silenced now; no doubt not willingly, he was concealing something. Handled subtly, he might regain control and announce that the Marabar Caves were—full of stalactites, perhaps; Aziz led up to this, but they weren't.

The dialogue remained light and friendly, and Adela had no conception of its underdrift. She did not know that the comparatively simple mind of the Mohammedan was encountering Ancient Night. Aziz played a thrilling game. He was handling a human toy that refused to work—he knew that much. If it worked, neither he nor Professor Godbole would be the least advantaged, but the attempt enthralled him and was akin to abstract thought. On he chattered, defeated at every move by an opponent who would not even admit that a move had been made, and further than ever from discovering what, if anything, was extraordinary about the Marabar Caves.

Into this Ronny dropped.

With an annoyance he took no trouble to conceal, he called from the garden: “What’s happened to Fielding? Where’s my mother?”

“Good evening!” she replied coolly.

“I want you and mother at once. There’s to be polo.”

“I thought there was to be no polo.”

“Everything’s altered. Some soldier men have come in. Come along and I’ll tell you about it.”

“Your mother will return shortly, sir,” said Professor Godbole, who had risen with deference. “There is but little to see at our poor college.”

Ronny took no notice, but continued to address his remarks to Adela; he had hurried away from his work to take her to see the polo, because he thought it would give her pleasure. He did not mean to be rude to the two men, but the only link he could be conscious of with an Indian was the official, and neither happened to be his subordinate. As private individuals he forgot them.

Unfortunately Aziz was in no mood to be forgotten. He would not give up the secure and intimate note of the last hour. He had not risen with

Godbole, and now, offensively friendly, called from his seat, "Come along up and join us, Mr. Heaslop; sit down till your mother turns up."

Ronny replied by ordering one of Fielding's servants to fetch his master at once.

"He may not understand that. Allow me——" Aziz repeated the order idiomatically.

Ronny was tempted to retort; he knew the type; he knew all the types, and this was the spoilt Westernized. But he was a servant of the Government, it was his job to avoid "incidents," so he said nothing, and ignored the provocation that Aziz continued to offer. Aziz was provocative. Everything he said had an impertinent flavour or jarred. His wings were failing, but he refused to fall without a struggle. He did not mean to be impertinent to Mr. Heaslop, who had never done him harm, but here was an Anglo-Indian who must become a man before comfort could be regained. He did not mean to be greasily confidential to Miss Quested, only to enlist her support; nor to be loud and jolly towards Professor Godbole. A strange quartette—he fluttering to the ground, she puzzled by the sudden ugliness, Ronny fuming, the Brahman observing all three, but with downcast eyes and hands folded, as if nothing was noticeable. A scene from a play, thought Fielding, who now saw them from the distance across the garden grouped among the blue pillars of his beautiful hall.

"Don't trouble to come, mother," Ronny called; "we're just starting." Then he hurried to Fielding, drew him aside and said with pseudo-heartiness, "I say, old man, do excuse me, but I think perhaps you oughtn't to have left Miss Quested alone."

"I'm sorry, what's up?" replied Fielding, also trying to be genial.

"Well . . . I'm the sun-dried bureaucrat, no doubt; still, I don't like to see an English girl left smoking with two Indians."

"She stopped, as she smokes, by her own wish, old man."

"Yes, that's all right in England."

“I really can’t see the harm.”

“If you can’t see, you can’t see. . . . Can’t you see that fellow’s a bounder?”

Aziz flamboyant, was patronizing Mrs. Moore.

“He isn’t a bounder,” protested Fielding. “His nerves are on edge, that’s all.”

“What should have upset his precious nerves?”

“I don’t know. He was all right when I left.”

“Well, it’s nothing I’ve said,” said Ronny reassuringly. “I never even spoke to him.”

“Oh well, come along now, and take your ladies away; the catastrophe over.”

“Fielding . . . don’t think I’m taking it badly, or anything of that sort. . . . I suppose you won’t come on to the polo with us? We should all be delighted.”

“I’m afraid I can’t, thanks all the same. I’m awfully sorry you feel I’ve been remiss. I didn’t mean to be.”

So the leave-taking began. Every one was cross or wretched. It was as if irritation exuded from the very soil. Could one have been so petty on a Scotch moor or an Italian alp? Fielding wondered afterwards. There seemed no reserve of tranquillity to draw upon in India.

Either none, or else tranquillity swallowed up everything, as it appeared to do for Professor Godbole. Here was Aziz all shoddy and odious, Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested both silly, and he himself and Heaslop both decorous on the surface, but detestable really, and detesting each other.

“Good-bye, Mr. Fielding, and thank you so much. . . . What lovely College buildings!”

“Good-bye, Mrs. Moore.”

“Good-bye, Mr. Fielding. Such an interesting afternoon. . . .”

“Good-bye, Miss Quested.”

“Good-bye, Dr. Aziz.”

“Good-bye, Mrs. Moore.”

“Good-bye, Dr. Aziz.”

“Good-bye, Miss Quested.” He pumped her hand up and down to show that he felt at ease. “You’ll jolly jolly well not forget those caves, won’t you? I’ll fix the whole show up in a jiffy.”

“Thank you. . .

Inspired by the devil to a final effort, he added, “What a shame you leave India so soon! Oh, do reconsider your decision, do stay.”

“Good-bye, Professor Godbole,” she continued, suddenly agitated. “It’s a shame we never heard you sing.”

“I may sing now,” he replied, and did.

His thin voice rose, and gave out one sound after another. At times there seemed rhythm, at times there was the illusion of a Western melody. But the ear, baffled repeatedly, soon lost any clue, and wandered in a maze of noises, none harsh or unpleasant, none intelligible. It was the song of an unknown bird. Only the servants understood it. They began to whisper to one another. The man who was gathering water chestnut came naked out of the tank, his lips parted with delight, disclosing his scarlet tongue. The sounds continued and ceased after a few moments as casually as they had begun—apparently half through a bar, and upon the subdominant.

“Thanks so much: what was that?” asked Fielding.

“I will explain in detail. It was a religious song. I placed myself in the position of a milkmaid. I say to Shri Krishna, ‘Come! come to me only.’ The god refuses to come. I grow humble and say: ‘Do not come to me only. Multiply yourself into a hundred Krishnas, and let one go to each of my hundred companions, but one, O Lord of the Universe, come to me.’ He refuses to come. This is repeated several times. The song is composed in a raga appropriate to the present hour, which is the evening.”

“But He comes in some other song, I hope?” said Mrs. Moore gently.

“Oh no, he refuses to come,” repeated Godbole, perhaps not understanding her question. “I say to Him, Come, come, come, come, come, come. He neglects to come.”

Ronny’s steps had died away, and there was a moment of absolute silence. No ripple disturbed the water, no leaf stirred.

## CHAPTER VIII

Although Miss Quested had known Ronny well in England, she felt well advised to visit him before deciding to be his wife. India had developed sides of his character that she had never admired. His self-complacency, his censoriousness, his lack of subtlety, all grew vivid beneath a tropic sky; he seemed more indifferent than of old to what was passing in the minds of his fellows, more certain that he was right about them or that if he was wrong it didn't matter. When proved wrong, he was particularly exasperating; he always managed to suggest that she needn't have bothered to prove it. The point she made was never the relevant point, her arguments conclusive but barren, she was reminded that he had expert knowledge and she none, and that experience would not help her because she could not interpret it. A Public School, London University, a year at a crammer's, a particular sequence of posts in a particular province, a fall from a horse and a touch of fever were presented to her as the only training by which Indians and all who reside in their country can be understood; the only training she could comprehend, that is to say, for of course above Ronny there stretched the higher realms of knowledge, inhabited by Callendars and Turtons, who had been not one year in the country but twenty and whose instincts were superhuman. For himself he made no extravagant claims; she wished he would. It was the qualified bray of the callow official, the "I am not perfect, but——" that got on her nerves.

How gross he had been at Mr. Fielding's—spoiling the talk and walking off in the middle of the haunting song! As he drove them away in the tum-tum, her irritation became unbearable, and she did not realize that much of it was directed against herself. She longed for an opportunity to fly out at him, and since he felt cross too, and they were both in India, an opportunity soon occurred. They had scarcely left the College grounds before she heard him say to his mother, who was with him on the front seat, "What was that about caves?" and she promptly opened fire.

“Mrs. Moore, your delightful doctor has decided on a picnic, instead of a party in his house; we are to meet him out there—you, myself, Mr. Fielding, Professor Godbole—exactly the same party.”

“Out where?” asked Ronny.

“The Marabar Caves.”

“Well, I’m blessed,” he murmured after a pause. “Did he descend to any details?”

“He did not. If you had spoken to him, we could have arranged them.”

He shook his head laughing.

“Have I said anything funny?”

“I was only thinking how the worthy doctor’s collar climbed up his neck.”

“I thought you were discussing the caves.”

“So I am. Aziz was exquisitely dressed, from tie-pin to spats, but he had forgotten his back collar-stud, and there you have the Indian all over: inattention to detail; the fundamental slackness that reveals the race. Similarly, to ‘meet’ in the caves as if they were the clock at Charing Cross, when they’re miles from a station and each other.”

“Have you been to them?”

“No, but I know all about them, naturally.”

“Oh naturally!”

“Are you too pledged to this expedition, mother?”

“Mother is pledged to nothing,” said Mrs. Moore, rather unexpectedly. “Certainly not to this polo. Will you drive up to the bungalow first, and drop me there, please? I prefer to rest.”



“Drop me too,” said Adela. “I don’t want to watch polo either, I’m sure.”

“Simpler to drop the polo,” said Ronny. Tired and disappointed, he quite lost self-control, and added in a loud lecturing voice, “I won’t have you messing about with Indians any more! If you want to go to the Marabar Caves, you’ll go under British auspices.”

“I’ve never heard of these caves, I don’t know what or where they are,” said Mrs. Moore, “but I really can’t have”—she tapped the cushion beside her—“so much quarrelling and tiresomeness!”

The young people were ashamed. They dropped her at the bungalow and drove on together to the polo, feeling it was the least they could do. Their crackling bad humour left them, but the heaviness of their spirit remained; thunderstorms seldom clear the air. Miss Quested was thinking over her own behaviour, and didn’t like it at all. Instead of weighing Ronny and herself, and coming to a reasoned conclusion about marriage, she had incidentally, in the course of a talk about mangoes, remarked to mixed company that she didn’t mean to stop in India. Which meant that she wouldn’t marry Ronny: but what a way to announce it, what a way for a civilized girl to behave! She owed him an explanation, but unfortunately there was nothing to explain. The “thorough talk” so dear to her principles and temperament had been postponed until too late. There seemed no point in being disagreeable to him and formulating her complaints against his character at this hour of the day, which was the evening. . . . The polo took place on the Maidan near the entrance of Chandrapore city. The sun was already declining and each of the trees held a premonition of night. They walked away from the governing group to a distant seat, and there, feeling that it was his due and her own, she forced out of herself the undigested remark: “We must have a thorough talk, Ronny, I’m afraid.”

“My temper’s rotten, I must apologize,” was his reply. “I didn’t mean to order you and mother about, but of course the way those Bengalis let you down this morning annoyed me, and I don’t want that sort of thing to keep happening.”

“It’s nothing to do with them that I . . .”

“No, but Aziz would make some similar muddle over the caves. He meant nothing by the invitation, I could tell by his voice; it’s just their way of being pleasant.”

“It’s something very different, nothing to do with caves, that I wanted to talk over with you.” She gazed at the colourless grass. “I’ve finally decided we are not going to be married, my dear boy.”

The news hurt Ronny very much. He had heard Aziz announce that she would not return to the country, but had paid no attention to the remark, for he never dreamt that an Indian could be a channel of communication between two English people. He controlled himself and said gently, “You never said we should marry, my dear girl; you never bound either yourself or me—don’t let this upset you.”

She felt ashamed. How decent he was! He might force his opinions down her throat, but did not press her to an “engagement,” because he believed, like herself, in the sanctity of personal relationships: it was this that had drawn them together at their first meeting, which had occurred among the grand scenery of the English Lakes. Her ordeal was over, but she felt it should have been more painful and longer. Adela will not marry Ronny. It seemed slipping away like a dream. She said, “But let us discuss things; it’s all so frightfully important, we mustn’t make false steps. I want next to hear your point of view about me—it might help us both.”

His manner was unhappy and reserved. “I don’t much believe in this discussing—besides, I’m so dead with all this extra work Mohurram’s bringing, if you’ll excuse me.”

“I only want everything to be absolutely clear between us, and to answer any questions you care to put to me on my conduct.”

“But I haven’t got any questions. You’ve acted within your rights, you were quite right to come out and have a look at me doing my work, it was an excellent plan, and anyhow it’s no use talking further—we should only get up steam.” He felt angry and bruised; he was too proud to tempt her back, but he did not consider that she had behaved badly, because where his compatriots were concerned he had a generous mind.

“I suppose that there is nothing else; it’s unpardonable of me to have given you and your mother all this bother,” said Miss Quested heavily, and frowned up at the tree beneath which they were sitting. A little green bird was observing her, so brilliant and neat that it might have hopped straight out of a shop. On catching her eye it closed its own, gave a small skip and prepared to go to bed. Some Indian wild bird. “Yes, nothing else,” she repeated, feeling that a profound and passionate speech ought to have been delivered by one or both of them. “We’ve been awfully British over it, but I suppose that’s all right.”

“As we are British, I suppose it is.”

“Anyhow we’ve not quarrelled, Ronny.”

“Oh, that would have been too absurd. Why should we quarrel?”

“I think we shall keep friends.”

“I know we shall.”

“Quite so.”

As soon as they had exchanged this admission, a wave of relief passed through them both, and then transformed itself into a wave of tenderness, and passed back. They were softened by their own honesty, and began to feel lonely and unwise. Experiences, not character, divided them; they were not dissimilar, as humans go; indeed, when compared with the people who stood nearest to them in point of space they became practically identical. The Bhil who was holding an officer’s polo pony, the Eurasian who drove the Nawab Bahadur’s car, the Nawab Bahadur himself, the Nawab Bahadur’s debauched grandson—none would have examined a difficulty so frankly and coolly. The mere fact of examination caused it to diminish. Of course they were friends, and for ever. “Do you know what the name of that green bird up above us is?” she asked, putting her shoulder rather nearer to his.

“Bee-eater.”

“Oh no, Ronny, it has red bars on its wings.”

“Parrot,” he hazarded.

“Good gracious no.”

The bird in question dived into the dome of the tree. It was of no importance, yet they would have liked to identify it, it would somehow have solaced their hearts.

But nothing in India is identifiable, the mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or to merge in something else.

“McBryde has an illustrated bird book,” he said dejectedly. “I’m no good at all at birds, in fact I’m useless at any information outside my own job. It’s a great pity.”

“So am I. I’m useless at everything.”

“What do I hear?” shouted the Nawab Bahadur at the top of his voice, causing both of them to start. “What most improbable statement have I heard? An English lady useless? No, no, no, no, no.” He laughed genially, sure, within limits, of his welcome.

“Hallo, Nawab Bahadur! Been watching the polo again?” said Ronny tepidly.

“I have, sahib, I have.”

“How do you do?” said Adela, likewise pulling herself together. She held out her hand. The old gentleman judged from so wanton a gesture that she was new to his country, but he paid little heed. Women who exposed their face became by that one act so mysterious to him that he took them at the valuation of their men folk rather than at his own. Perhaps they were not immoral, and anyhow they were not his affair. On seeing the City Magistrate alone with a maiden at twilight, he had borne down on them with hospitable intent. He had a new little car, and wished to place it at their

disposal; the City Magistrate would decide whether the offer was acceptable.

Ronny was by this time rather ashamed of his curtness to Aziz and Godbole, and here was an opportunity of showing that he could treat Indians with consideration when they deserved it. So he said to Adela, with the same sad friendliness that he had employed when discussing the bird, "Would half an hour's spin entertain you at all?"

"Oughtn't we to get back to the bungalow."

"Why?" He gazed at her.

"I think perhaps I ought to see your mother and discuss future plans."

"That's as you like, but there's no hurry, is there?"

"Let me take you to the bungalow, and first the little spin," cried the old man, and hastened to the car.

"He may show you some aspect of the country I can't, and he's a real loyalist. I thought you might care for a bit of a change."

Determined to give him no more trouble, she agreed, but her desire to see India had suddenly decreased. There had been a factitious element in it.

How should they seat themselves in the car? The elegant grandson had to be left behind. The Nawab Bahadur got up in front, for he had no intention of neighbouring an English girl. "Despite my advanced years, I am learning to drive," he said. "Man can learn everything if he will but try." And foreseeing a further difficulty, he added, "I do not do the actual steering. I sit and ask my chauffeur questions, and thus learn the reason for everything that is done before I do it myself. By this method serious and I may say ludicrous accidents, such as befell one of my compatriots during that delightful reception at the English Club, are avoided. Our good Panna Lal! I hope, sahib, that great damage was not done to your flowers. Let us have our little spin down the Gangavati road. Half one league onwards!" He fell asleep.

Ronny instructed the chauffeur to take the Marabar road rather than the Gangavati, since the latter was under repair, and settled himself down beside the lady he had lost. The car made a burring noise and rushed along a chaussée that ran upon an embankment above melancholy fields. Trees of a poor quality bordered the road, indeed the whole scene was inferior, and suggested that the country-side was too vast to admit of excellence. In vain did each item in it call out, "Come, come."

There was not enough god to go round. The two young people conversed feebly and felt unimportant. When the darkness began, it seemed to well out of the meagre vegetation, entirely covering the fields each side of them before it brimmed over the road. Ronny's face grew dim—an event that always increased her esteem for his character. Her hand touched his, owing to a jolt, and one of the thrills so frequent in the animal kingdom passed between them, and announced that all their difficulties were only a lovers' quarrel. Each was too proud to increase the pressure, but neither withdrew it, and a spurious unity descended on them, as local and temporary as the gleam that inhabits a firefly. It would vanish in a moment, perhaps to reappear, but the darkness is alone durable. And the night that encircled them, absolute as it seemed, was itself only a spurious unity, being modified by the gleams of day that leaked up round the edges of the earth, and by the stars.

They gripped . . . bump, jump, a swerve, two wheels lifted in the air, breaks on, bump with tree at edge of embankment, standstill. An accident. A slight one. Nobody hurt. The Nawab Bahadur awoke. He cried out in Arabic, and violently tugged his beard.

"What's the damage?" enquired Ronny, after the moment's pause that he permitted himself before taking charge of a situation. The Eurasian, inclined to be flustered, rallied to the sound of his voice, and, every inch an Englishman, replied, "You give me five minutes' time, I'll take you any dam anywhere."

"Frightened, Adela?" He released her hand.

"Not a bit."

“I consider not to be frightened the height of folly,” cried the Nawab Bahadur quite rudely.

“Well, it’s all over now, tears are useless,” said Ronny, dismounting. “We had some luck butting that tree.”

“All over . . . oh yes, the danger is past, let us smoke cigarettes, let us do anything we please. Oh yes . . . enjoy ourselves—oh my merciful God . . .” His words died into Arabic again.

“Wasn’t the bridge. We skidded.”

“We didn’t skid,” said Adela, who had seen the cause of the accident, and thought everyone must have seen it too. “We ran into an animal.”

A loud cry broke from the old man: his terror was disproportionate and ridiculous.

“An animal?”

“A large animal rushed up out of the dark on the right and hit us.”

“By Jove, she’s right,” Ronny exclaimed. “The paint’s gone.”

“By Jove, sir, your lady is right,” echoed the Eurasian. Just by the hinges of the door was a dent, and the door opened with difficulty.

“Of course I’m right. I saw its hairy back quite plainly.”

“I say, Adela, what was it?”

“I don’t know the animals any better than the birds here—too big for a goat.”

“Exactly, too big for a goat . . .” said the old man.

Ronny said, “Let’s go into this; let’s look for its tracks.”

“Exactly; you wish to borrow this electric torch.”

The English people walked a few steps back into the darkness, united and happy. Thanks to their youth and upbringing, they were not upset by the accident. They traced back the writhing of the tyres to the source of their disturbance. It was just after the exit from a bridge; the animal had probably come up out of the nullah. Steady and smooth ran the marks of the car, ribbons neatly nicked with lozenges, then all went mad. Certainly some external force had impinged, but the road had been used by too many objects for any one track to be legible, and the torch created such high lights and black shadows that they could not interpret what it revealed. Moreover, Adela in her excitement knelt and swept her skirts about, until it was she if anyone who appeared to have attacked the car. The incident was a great relief to them both. They forgot their abortive personal relationship, and felt adventurous as they muddled about in the dust.

“I believe it was a buffalo,” she called to their host, who had not accompanied them.

“Exactly.”

“Unless it was a hyena.”

Ronny approved this last conjecture. Hyenas prowl in nullahs and headlights dazzle them.

“Excellent, a hyena,” said the Indian with an angry irony and a gesture at the night. “Mr. Harris!”

“Half a mo-ment. Give me ten minutes’ time.”

“Sahib says hyena.”

“Don’t worry Mr. Harris. He saved us from a nasty smash. Harris, well done!”

“A smash, sahib, that would not have taken place had he obeyed and taken us Gangavati side, instead of Marabar.”



“My fault that. I told him to come this way because the road’s better. Mr. Lesley has made it pukka right up to the hills.”

“Ah, now I begin to understand.” Seeming to pull himself together, he apologized slowly and elaborately for the accident. Ronny murmured, “Not at all,” but apologies were his due, and should have started sooner: because English people are so calm at a crisis, it is not to be assumed that they are unimportant. The Nawab Bahadur had not come out very well.

At that moment a large car approached from the opposite direction. Ronny advanced a few steps down the road, and with authority in his voice and gesture stopped it. It bore the inscription “Mudkul State” across its bonnet. All friskiness and friendliness, Miss Derek sat inside.

“Mr. Heaslop, Miss Quested, what are you holding up an innocent female for?”

“We’ve had a breakdown.”

“But how putrid!”

“We ran into a hyena!”

“How absolutely rotten!”

“Can you give us a lift?”

“Yes, indeed.”

“Take me too,” said the Nawab Bahadur.

“Heh, what about me?” cried Mr. Harris.

“Now what’s all this? I’m not an omnibus,” said Miss Derek with decision. “I’ve a harmonium and two dogs in here with me as it is. I’ll take three of you if one’ll sit in front and nurse a pug. No more.”

“I will sit in front,” said the Nawab Bahadur.

“Then hop in: I’ve no notion who you are.”

“Heh no, what about my dinner? I can’t be left alone all the night.” Trying to look and feel like a European, the chauffeur interposed aggressively. He still wore a topi, despite the darkness, and his face, to which the Ruling Race had contributed little beyond bad teeth, peered out of it pathetically, and seemed to say, “What’s it all about? Don’t worry me so, you blacks and whites. Here I am, stuck in dam India same as you, and you got to fit me in better than this.”

“Nussu will bring you out some suitable dinner upon a bicycle,” said the Nawab Bahadur, who had regained his usual dignity. “I shall despatch him with all possible speed. Meanwhile, repair my car.”

They sped off, and Mr. Harris, after a reproachful glance, squatted down upon his hams. When English and Indians were both present, he grew self-conscious, because he did not know to whom he belonged. For a little he was vexed by opposite currents in his blood, then they blended, and he belonged to no one but himself.

But Miss Derek was in tearing spirits. She had succeeded in stealing the Mudkul car. Her Maharajah would be awfully sick, but she didn’t mind, he could sack her if he liked. “I don’t believe in these people letting you down,” she said. “If I didn’t snatch like the devil, I should be nowhere. He doesn’t want the car, silly fool! Surely it’s to the credit of his State I should be seen about in it at Chandrapore during my leave. He ought to look at it that way. Anyhow he’s got to look at it that way. My Maharani’s different—my Maharani’s a dear. That’s her fox terrier, poor little devil. I fished them out both with the driver. Imagine taking dogs to a Chiefs’ Conference! As sensible as taking Chiefs, perhaps.” She shrieked with laughter. “The harmonium—the harmonium’s my little mistake, I own. They rather had me over the harmonium. I meant it to stop on the train. Oh lor’!”

Ronny laughed with restraint. He did not approve of English people taking service under the Native States, where they obtain a certain amount of influence, but at the expense of the general prestige. The humorous triumphs of a free lance are of no assistance to an administrator, and he told

the young lady that she would outdo Indians at their own game if she went on much longer.

“They always sack me before that happens, and then I get another job. The whole of India seethes with Maharanis and Ranis and Begums who clamour for such as me.”

“Really. I had no idea.”

“How could you have any idea, Mr. Heaslop? What should he know about Maharanis, Miss Quested? Nothing. At least I should hope not.”

“I understand those big people are not particularly interesting,” said Adela, quietly, disliking the young woman’s tone. Her hand touched Ronny’s again in the darkness, and to the animal thrill there was now added a coincidence of opinion.

“Ah, there you’re wrong. They’re priceless.”

“I would scarcely call her wrong,” broke out the Nawab Bahadur, from his isolation on the front seat, whither they had relegated him. “A Native State, a Hindu State, the wife of a ruler of a Hindu State, may beyond doubt be a most excellent lady, and let it not be for a moment supposed that I suggest anything against the character of Her Highness the Maharani of Mudkul. But I fear she will be uneducated, I fear she will be superstitious. Indeed, how could she be otherwise? What opportunity of education has such a lady had? Oh, superstition is terrible, terrible! oh, it is the great defect in our Indian character!”—and as if to point his criticism, the lights of the civil station appeared on a rise to the right. He grew more and more voluble. “Oh, it is the duty of each and every citizen to shake superstition off, and though I have little experience of Hindu States, and none of this particular one, namely Mudkul (the Ruler, I fancy, has a salute of but eleven guns)—yet I cannot imagine that they have been as successful as British India, where we see reason and orderliness spreading in every direction, like a most health-giving flood!”

Miss Derek said “Golly!”

Undeterred by the expletive, the old man swept on. His tongue had been loosed and his mind had several points to make. He wanted to endorse Miss Quested's remark that big people are not interesting, because he was bigger himself than many an independent chief; at the same time, he must neither remind nor inform her that he was big, lest she felt she had committed a discourtesy. This was the groundwork of his oration; worked in with it was his gratitude to Miss Derek for the lift, his willingness to hold a repulsive dog in his arms, and his general regret for the trouble he had caused the human race during the evening. Also he wanted to be dropped near the city to get hold of his cleaner, and to see what mischief his grandson was up to. As he wove all these anxieties into a single rope, he suspected that his audience felt no interest, and that the City Magistrate fondled either maiden behind the cover of the harmonium, but good breeding compelled him to continue; it was nothing to him if they were bored, because he did not know what boredom is, and it was nothing to him if they were licentious, because God has created all races to be different. The accident was over, and his life, equably useful, distinguished, happy, ran on as before and expressed itself in streams of well-chosen words.

When this old geyser left them, Ronny made no comment, but talked lightly about polo; Turton had taught him that it is sounder not to discuss a man at once, and he reserved what he had to say on the Nawab's character until later in the evening. His hand, which he had removed to say good-bye, touched Adela's again; she caressed it definitely, he responded, and their firm and mutual pressure surely meant something. They looked at each other when they reached the bungalow, for Mrs. Moore was inside it. It was for Miss Quested to speak, and she said nervously, "Ronny, I should like to take back what I said on the Maidan." He assented, and they became engaged to be married in consequence.

Neither had foreseen such a consequence. She had meant to revert to her former condition of important and cultivated uncertainty, but it had passed out of her reach at its appropriate hour. Unlike the green bird or the hairy animal, she was labelled now. She felt humiliated again, for she deprecated labels, and she felt too that there should have been another scene between her lover and herself at this point, something dramatic and lengthy. He was pleased instead of distressed, he was surprised, but he had really nothing to

say. What indeed is there to say? To be or not to be married, that was the question, and they had decided it in the affirmative.

“Come along and let’s tell the mater all this”—opening the perforated zinc door that protected the bungalow from the swarms of winged creatures. The noise woke the mater up. She had been dreaming of the absent children who were so seldom mentioned, Ralph and Stella, and did not at first grasp what was required of her. She too had become used to thoughtful procrastination, and felt alarmed when it came to an end.

When the announcement was over, he made a gracious and honest remark. “Look here, both of you, see India if you like and as you like—I know I made myself rather ridiculous at Fielding’s, but . . . it’s different now. I wasn’t quite sure of myself.”

“My duties here are evidently finished, I don’t want to see India now; now for my passage back,” was Mrs. Moore’s thought. She reminded herself of all that a happy marriage means, and of her own happy marriages, one of which had produced Ronny. Adela’s parents had also been happily married, and excellent it was to see the incident repeated by the younger generation. On and on! the number of such unions would certainly increase as education spread and ideals grew loftier, and characters firmer. But she was tired by her visit to Government College, her feet ached, Mr. Fielding had walked too fast and far, the young people had annoyed her in the tum-tum, and given her to suppose they were breaking with each other, and though it was all right now she could not speak as enthusiastically of wedlock or of anything as she should have done. Ronny was suited, now she must go home and help the others, if they wished. She was past marrying herself, even unhappily; her function was to help others, her reward to be informed that she was sympathetic. Elderly ladies must not expect more than this.

They dined alone. There was much pleasant and affectionate talk about the future. Later on they spoke of passing events, and Ronny reviewed and recounted the day from his own point of view. It was a different day from the women’s, because while they had enjoyed themselves or thought, he had worked. Mohurram was approaching, and as usual the Chandrapore Mohammedans were building paper towers of a size too large to pass under

the branches of a certain pepl tree. One knew what happened next; the tower stuck, a Mohammedan climbed up the pepl and cut the branch off, the Hindus protested, there was a religious riot, and Heaven knew what, with perhaps the troops sent for. There had been deputations and conciliation committees under the auspices of Turton, and all the normal work of Chandrapore had been hung up. Should the procession take another route, or should the towers be shorter? The Mohammedans offered the former, the Hindus insisted on the latter. The Collector had favoured the Hindus, until he suspected that they had artificially bent the tree nearer the ground. They said it sagged naturally. Measurements, plans, an official visit to the spot. But Ronny had not disliked his day, for it proved that the British were necessary to India; there would certainly have been bloodshed without them. His voice grew complacent again; he was here not to be pleasant but to keep the peace, and now that Adela had promised to be his wife, she was sure to understand.

“What does our old gentleman of the car think?” she asked, and her negligent tone was exactly what he desired.

“Our old gentleman is helpful and sound, as he always is over public affairs. You’ve seen in him our show Indian.”

“Have I really?”

“I’m afraid so. Incredible, aren’t they, even the best of them? They’re all—they all forget their back collar studs sooner or later. You’ve had to do with three sets of Indians to-day, the Bhattacharyas, Aziz, and this chap, and it really isn’t a coincidence that they’ve all let you down.”

“I like Aziz, Aziz is my real friend,” Mrs. Moore interposed.

“When the animal runs into us the Nawab loses his head, deserts his unfortunate chauffeur, intrudes upon Miss Derek . . . no great crimes, no great crimes, but no white man would have done it.”

“What animal?”

“Oh, we had a small accident on the Marabar road. Adela thinks it was a hyena.”

“An accident?” she cried.

“Nothing; no one hurt. Our excellent host awoke much rattled from his dreams, appeared to think it was our fault, and chanted exactly, exactly.”

Mrs. Moore shivered, “A ghost!” But the idea of a ghost scarcely passed her lips. The young people did not take it up, being occupied with their own outlooks, and deprived of support it perished, or was reabsorbed into the part of the mind that seldom speaks.

“Yes, nothing criminal,” Ronny summed up, “but there’s the native, and there’s one of the reasons why we don’t admit him to our clubs, and how a decent girl like Miss Derek can take service under natives puzzles me. . . . But I must get on with my work. Krishna!” Krishna was the peon who should have brought the files from his office. He had not turned up, and a terrific row ensued. Ronny stormed, shouted, howled, and only the experienced observer could tell that he was not angry, did not much want the files, and only made a row because it was the custom. Servants, quite understanding, ran slowly in circles, carrying hurricane lamps. Krishna the earth, Krishna the stars replied, until the Englishman was appeased by their echoes, fined the absent peon eight annas, and sat down to his arrears in the next room.

“Will you play Patience with your future mother-in-law, dear Adela, or does it seem too tame?”

“I should like to—I don’t feel a bit excited—I’m just glad it’s settled up at last, but I’m not conscious of vast changes. We are all three the same people still.”

“That’s much the best feeling to have.” She dealt out the first row of “demon.”

“I suppose so,” said the girl thoughtfully.

“I feared at Mr. Fielding’s that it might be settled the other way . . . black knave on a red queen. . . .” They chatted gently about the game.

Presently Adela said: “You heard me tell Aziz and Godbole I wasn’t stopping in their country. I didn’t mean it, so why did I say it? I feel I haven’t been—frank enough, attentive enough, or something. It’s as if I got everything out of proportion. You have been so very good to me, and I meant to be good when I sailed, but somehow I haven’t been. . . . Mrs. Moore, if one isn’t absolutely honest, what is the use of existing?”

She continued to lay out her cards. The words were obscure, but she understood the uneasiness that produced them. She had experienced it twice herself, during her own engagements—this vague contrition and doubt. All had come right enough afterwards and doubtless would this time—marriage makes most things right enough. “I wouldn’t worry,” she said. “It’s partly the odd surroundings; you and I keep on attending to trifles instead of what’s important; we are what the people here call ‘new.’”

“You mean that my bothers are mixed up with India?”

“India’s——” She stopped.

“What made you call it a ghost?”

“Call what a ghost?”

“The animal thing that hit us. Didn’t you say ‘Oh, a ghost,’ in passing.”

“I couldn’t have been thinking of what I was saying.”

“It was probably a hyena, as a matter of fact.”

“Ah, very likely.”

And they went on with their Patience. Down in Chandrapore the Nawab Bahadur waited for his car. He sat behind his town house (a small unfurnished building which he rarely entered) in the midst of the little court that always improvises itself round Indians of position. As if turbans were the natural product of darkness a fresh one would occasionally froth to the



front, incline itself towards him, and retire. He was preoccupied, his diction was appropriate to a religious subject. Nine years previously, when first he had had a car, he had driven it over a drunken man and killed him, and the man had been waiting for him ever since. The Nawab Bahadur was innocent before God and the Law, he had paid double the compensation necessary; but it was no use, the man continued to wait in an unspeakable form, close to the scene of his death. None of the English people knew of this, nor did the chauffeur; it was a racial secret communicable more by blood than speech. He spoke now in horror of the particular circumstances; he had led others into danger, he had risked the lives of two innocent and honoured guests. He repeated, "If I had been killed, what matter? it must happen sometime; but they who trusted me——"

The company shuddered and invoked the mercy of God. Only Aziz held aloof, because a personal experience restrained him: was it not by despising ghosts that he had come to know Mrs. Moore? "You know, Nureddin," he whispered to the grandson—an effeminate youth whom he seldom met, always liked, and invariably forgot—"you know, my dear fellow, we Moslems simply must get rid of these superstitions, or India will never advance. How long must I hear of the savage pig upon the Marabar Road?" Nureddin looked down. Aziz continued: "Your grandfather belongs to another generation, and I respect and love the old gentleman, as you know. I say nothing against him, only that it is wrong for us, because we are young. I want you to promise me—Nureddin, are you listening?—not to believe in Evil Spirits, and if I die (for my health grows very weak) to bring up my three children to disbelieve in them too." Nureddin smiled, and a suitable answer rose to his pretty lips, but before he could make it the car arrived, and his grandfather took him away.

The game of Patience up in the civil lines went on longer than this. Mrs. Moore continued to murmur "Red ten on a black knave," Miss Quested to assist her, and to intersperse among the intricacies of the play details about the hyena, the engagement, the Maharani of Mudkul, the Bhattacharyas, and the day generally, whose rough desiccated surface acquired as it receded a definite outline, as India itself might, could it be viewed from the moon. Presently the players went to bed, but not before other people had woken up elsewhere, people whose emotions they could not share, and

whose existence they ignored. Never tranquil, never perfectly dark, the night wore itself away, distinguished from other nights by two or three blasts of wind, which seemed to fall perpendicularly out of the sky and to bounce back into it, hard and compact, leaving no freshness behind them: the hot weather was approaching.

## CHAPTER IX

Aziz fell ill as he foretold—slightly ill. Three days later he lay abed in his bungalow, pretending to be very ill. It was a touch of fever, which he would have neglected if there was anything important at the hospital. Now and then he groaned and thought he should die, but did not think so for long, and a very little diverted him. It was Sunday, always an equivocal day in the East, and an excuse for slacking. He could hear church bells as he drowsed, both from the civil station and from the missionaries out beyond the slaughter house—different bells and rung with different intent, for one set was calling firmly to Anglo-India, and the other feebly to mankind. He did not object to the first set; the other he ignored, knowing their inefficiency. Old Mr. Graysford and young Mr. Sorley made converts during a famine, because they distributed food; but when times improved they were naturally left alone again, and though surprised and aggrieved each time this happened, they never learnt wisdom. “No Englishman understands us except Mr. Fielding,” he thought; “but how shall I see him again? If he entered this room the disgrace of it would kill me.” He called to Hassan to clear up, but Hassan, who was testing his wages by ringing them on the step of the verandah, found it possible not to hear him; heard and didn’t hear, just as Aziz had called and hadn’t called. “That’s India all over . . . how like us . . . there we are . . .” He dozed again, and his thoughts wandered over the varied surface of life.

Gradually they steadied upon a certain spot—the Bottomless Pit according to missionaries, but he had never regarded it as more than a dimple. Yes, he did want to spend an evening with some girls, singing and all that, the vague jollity that would culminate in voluptuousness. Yes, that was what he did want. How could it be managed? If Major Callendar had been an Indian, he would have remembered what young men are, and granted two or three days’ leave to Calcutta without asking questions. But the Major assumed either that his subordinates were made of ice, or that

they repaired to the Chandrapore bazaars—disgusting ideas both. It was only Mr. Fielding who——

“Hassan!”

The servant came running.

“Look at those flies, brother;” and he pointed to the horrible mass that hung from the ceiling. The nucleus was a wire which had been inserted as a homage to electricity. Electricity had paid no attention, and a colony of eye-flies had come instead and blackened the coils with their bodies.

“Huzoor, those are flies.”

“Good, good, they are, excellent, but why have I called you?”

“To drive them elsewhere,” said Hassan, after painful thought.

“Driven elsewhere, they always return.”

“Huzoor.”

“You must make some arrangement against flies; that is why you are my servant,” said Aziz gently.

Hassan would call the little boy to borrow the step-ladder from Mahmoud Ali’s house; he would order the cook to light the Primus stove and heat water; he would personally ascend the steps with a bucket in his arms, and dip the end of the coil into it.

“Good, very good. Now what have you to do?”

“Kill flies.”

“Good. Do it.”

Hassan withdrew, the plan almost lodged in his head, and began to look for the little boy. Not finding him, his steps grew slower, and he stole back to his post on the verandah, but did not go on testing his rupees, in case his

master heard them clink. On twittered the Sunday bells; the East had returned to the East via the suburbs of England, and had become ridiculous during the detour.

Aziz continued to think about beautiful women.

His mind here was hard and direct, though not brutal. He had learnt all he needed concerning his own constitution many years ago, thanks to the social order into which he had been born, and when he came to study medicine he was repelled by the pedantry and fuss with which Europe tabulates the facts of sex. Science seemed to discuss everything from the wrong end. It didn't interpret his experiences when he found them in a German manual, because by being there they ceased to be his experiences. What he had been told by his father or mother or had picked up from servants—it was information of that sort that he found useful, and handed on as occasion offered to others.

But he must not bring any disgrace on his children by some silly escapade. Imagine if it got about that he was not respectable! His professional position too must be considered, whatever Major Callendar thought. Aziz upheld the proprieties, though he did not invest them with any moral halo, and it was here that he chiefly differed from an Englishman. His conventions were social. There is no harm in deceiving society as long as she does not find you out, because it is only when she finds you out that you have harmed her; she is not like a friend or God, who are injured by the mere existence of unfaithfulness. Quite clear about this, he meditated what type of lie he should tell to get away to Calcutta, and had thought of a man there who could be trusted to send him a wire and a letter that he could show to Major Callendar, when the noise of wheels was heard in his compound. Someone had called to enquire. The thought of sympathy increased his fever, and with a sincere groan he wrapped himself in his quilt.

“Aziz, my dear fellow, we are greatly concerned,” said Hamidullah's voice. One, two, three, four bumps, as people sat down upon his bed.

“When a doctor falls ill it is a serious matter,” said the voice of Mr. Syed Mohammed, the assistant engineer.

“When an engineer falls ill, it is equally important,” said the voice of Mr. Haq, a police inspector.

“Oh yes, we are all jolly important, our salaries prove it.”

“Dr. Aziz took tea with our Principal last Thursday afternoon,” piped Rafi, the engineer’s nephew. “Professor Godbole, who also attended, has sickened too, which seems rather a curious thing, sir, does it not?”

Flames of suspicion leapt up in the breast of each man.

“Humbug!” exclaimed Hamidullah, in authoritative tones, quenching them.

“Humbug, most certainly,” echoed the others, ashamed of themselves. The wicked schoolboy, having failed to start a scandal, lost confidence and stood up with his back to the wall.

“Is Professor Godbole ill?” enquired Aziz, penetrated by the news. “I am sincerely sorry.” Intelligent and compassionate, his face peeped out of the bright crimson folds of the quilt. “How do you do, Mr. Syed Mohammed, Mr. Haq? How very kind of you to enquire after my health! How do you do, Hamidullah? But you bring me bad news. What is wrong with him, the excellent fellow?”

“Why don’t you answer, Rafi? You’re the great authority,” said his uncle.

“Yes, Rafi’s the great man,” said Hamidullah, rubbing it in. “Rafi is the Sherlock Holmes of Chandrapore. Speak up, Rafi.”

Less than the dust, the schoolboy murmured the word “Diarrhoea,” but took courage as soon as it had been uttered, for it improved his position. Flames of suspicion shot up again in the breasts of his elders, though in a different direction. Could what was called diarrhoea really be an early case of cholera?

“If this is so, this is a very serious thing: this is scarcely the end of March. Why have I not been informed?” cried Aziz.

“Dr. Panna Lal attends him, sir.”

“Oh yes, both Hindus; there we have it; they hang together like flies and keep everything dark. Rafi, come here. Sit down. Tell me all the details. Is there vomiting also?”

“Oh yes indeed, sir, and the serious pains.”

“That settles it. In twenty-four hours he will be dead.”

Everybody looked and felt shocked, but Professor Godbole had diminished his appeal by linking himself with a co-religionist. He moved them less than when he had appeared as a suffering individual. Before long they began to condemn him as a source of infection. “All illness proceeds from Hindus,” Mr. Haq said. Mr. Syed Mohammed had visited religious fairs, at Allahabad and at Ujjain, and described them with biting scorn. At Allahabad there was flowing water, which carried impurities away, but at Ujjain the little river Sipra was banked up, and thousands of bathers deposited their germs in the pool. He spoke with disgust of the hot sun, the cow-dung and marigold flowers, and the encampment of saddhus, some of whom strode stark naked through the streets. Asked what was the name of the chief idol at Ujjain, he replied that he did not know, he had disdained to enquire, he really could not waste his time over such trivialities. His outburst took some time, and in his excitement he fell into Punjabi (he came from that side) and was unintelligible.

Aziz liked to hear his religion praised. It soothed the surface of his mind, and allowed beautiful images to form beneath. When the engineer’s noisy tirade was finished, he said, “That is exactly my own view.” He held up his hand, palm outward, his eyes began to glow, his heart to fill with tenderness. Issuing still farther from his quilt, he recited a poem by Ghalib. It had no connection with anything that had gone before, but it came from his heart and spoke to theirs. They were overwhelmed by its pathos; pathos, they agreed, is the highest quality in art; a poem should touch the hearer with a sense of his own weakness, and should institute some comparison between mankind and flowers. The squalid bedroom grew quiet; the silly intrigues, the gossip, the shallow discontent were stilled, while words accepted as immortal filled the indifferent air. Not as a call to battle, but as

a calm assurance came the feeling that India was one; Moslem; always had been; an assurance that lasted until they looked out of the door. Whatever Ghalib had felt, he had anyhow lived in India, and this consolidated it for them: he had gone with his own tulips and roses, but tulips and roses do not go. And the sister kingdoms of the north—Arabia, Persia, Ferghana, Turkestan—stretched out their hands as he sang, sadly, because all beauty is sad, and greeted ridiculous Chandrapore, where every street and house was divided against itself, and told her that she was a continent and a unity.

Of the company, only Hamidullah had any comprehension of poetry. The minds of the others were inferior and rough. Yet they listened with pleasure, because literature had not been divorced from their civilization. The police inspector, for instance, did not feel that Aziz had degraded himself by reciting, nor break into the cheery guffaw with which an Englishman averts the infection of beauty. He just sat with his mind empty, and when his thoughts, which were mainly ignoble, flowed back into it they had a pleasant freshness. The poem had done no “good” to anyone, but it was a passing reminder, a breath from the divine lips of beauty, a nightingale between two worlds of dust. Less explicit than the call to Krishna, it voiced our loneliness nevertheless, our isolation, our need for the Friend who never comes yet is not entirely disproved. Aziz it left thinking about women again, but in a different way: less definite, more intense. Sometimes poetry had this effect on him, sometimes it only increased his local desires, and he never knew beforehand which effect would ensue: he could discover no rule for this or for anything else in life.

Hamidullah had called in on his way to a worrying committee of notables, nationalist in tendency, where Hindus, Moslems, two Sikhs, two Parsis, a Jain, and a Native Christian tried to like one another more than came natural to them. As long as someone abused the English, all went well, but nothing constructive had been achieved, and if the English were to leave India, the committee would vanish also. He was glad that Aziz, whom he loved and whose family was connected with his own, took no interest in politics, which ruin the character and career, yet nothing can be achieved without them. He thought of Cambridge—sadly, as of another poem that had ended. How happy he had been there, twenty years ago! Politics had not mattered in Mr. and Mrs. Bannister’s rectory. There, games, work, and



pleasant society had interwoven, and appeared to be sufficient substructure for a national life. Here all was wire-pulling and fear. Messrs. Syed Mohammed and Haq—he couldn't even trust them, although they had come in his carriage, and the schoolboy was a scorpion. Bending down, he said, "Aziz, Aziz, my dear boy, we must be going, we are already late. Get well quickly, for I do not know what our little circle would do without you."

"I shall not forget those affectionate words," replied Aziz.

"Add mine to them," said the engineer.

"Thank you, Mr. Syed Mohammed, I will."

"And mine," "And, sir, accept mine," cried the others, stirred each according to his capacity towards goodwill. Little ineffectual unquenchable flames! The company continued to sit on the bed and to chew sugarcane, which Hassan had run for into the bazaar, and Aziz drank a cup of spiced milk. Presently there was the sound of another carriage. Dr. Panna Lal had arrived, driven by horrid Mr. Ram Chand. The atmosphere of a sick-room was at once re-established, and the invalid retired under his quilt.

"Gentlemen, you will excuse, I have come to enquire by Major Callendar's orders," said the Hindu, nervous of the den of fanatics into which his curiosity had called him.

"Here he lies," said Hamidullah, indicating the prostrate form.

"Dr. Aziz, Dr. Aziz, I come to enquire."

Aziz presented an expressionless face to the thermometer.

"Your hand also, please." He took it, gazed at the flies on the ceiling, and finally announced "Some temperature."

"I think not much," said Ram Chand, desirous of fomenting trouble.

"Some; he should remain in bed," repeated Dr. Panna Lal, and shook the thermometer down, so that its altitude remained for ever unknown. He loathed his young colleague since the disasters with Dapple, and he would

have liked to do him a bad turn and report to Major Callendar that he was shamming. But he might want a day in bed himself soon,—besides, though Major Callendar always believed the worst of natives, he never believed them when they carried tales about one another. Sympathy seemed the safer course. “How is stomach?” he enquired, “how head?” And catching sight of the empty cup, he recommended a milk diet.

“This is a great relief to us, it is very good of you to call, Doctor Sahib,” Said Hamidullah, buttering him up a bit.

“It is only my duty.”

“We know how busy you are.”

“Yes, that is true.”

“And how much illness there is in the city.”

The doctor suspected a trap in this remark; if he admitted that there was or was not illness, either statement might be used against him. “There is always illness,” he replied, “and I am always busy—it is a doctor’s nature.”

“He has not a minute, he is due double sharp at Government College now,” said Ram Chand.

“You attend Professor Godbole there perhaps?”

The doctor looked professional and was silent.

“We hope his diarrhoea is ceasing.”

“He progresses, but not from diarrhoea.”

“We are in some anxiety over him—he and Dr. Aziz are great friends. If you could tell us the name of his complaint we should be grateful to you.”

After a cautious pause he said, “Hæmorrhoids.”

“And so much, my dear Rafi, for your cholera,” hooted Aziz, unable to restrain himself.

“Cholera, cholera, what next, what now?” cried the doctor, greatly fussed. “Who spreads such untrue reports about my patients?”

Hamidullah pointed to the culprit.

“I hear cholera, I hear bubonic plague, I hear every species of lie. Where will it end, I ask myself sometimes. This city is full of misstatements, and the originators of them ought to be discovered and punished authoritatively.”

“Rafi, do you hear that? Now why do you stuff us up with all this humbug?”

The schoolboy murmured that another boy had told him, also that the bad English grammar the Government obliged them to use often gave the wrong meaning for words, and so led scholars into mistakes.

“That is no reason you should bring a charge against a doctor,” said Ram Chand.

“Exactly, exactly,” agreed Hamidullah, anxious to avoid an unpleasantness. Quarrels spread so quickly and so far, and Messrs. Syed Mohammed and Haq looked cross, and ready to fly out. “You must apologize properly, Rafi, I can see your uncle wishes it,” he said. “You have not yet said that you are sorry for the trouble you have caused this gentleman by your carelessness.”

“It is only a boy,” said Dr. Panna Lal, appeased.

“Even boys must learn,” said Ram Chand.

“Your own son failing to pass the lowest standard, I think,” said Syed Mohammed suddenly.

“Oh, indeed? Oh yes, perhaps. He has not the advantage of a relative in the Prosperity Printing Press.”

“Nor you the advantage of conducting their cases in the Courts any longer.”

Their voices rose. They attacked one another with obscure allusions and had a silly quarrel. Hamidullah and the doctor tried to make peace between them. In the midst of the din someone said, “I say! Is he ill or isn’t he ill?” Mr. Fielding had entered unobserved. All rose to their feet, and Hassan, to do an Englishman honour, struck with a sugar-cane at the coil of flies.

Aziz said, “Sit down,” coldly. What a room! What a meeting! Squalor and ugly talk, the floor strewn with fragments of cane and nuts, and spotted with ink, the pictures crooked upon the dirty walls, no punkah! He hadn’t meant to live like this or among these third-rate people. And in his confusion he thought only of the insignificant Rafi, whom he had laughed at, and allowed to be teased. The boy must be sent away happy, or hospitality would have failed, along the whole line.

“It is good of Mr. Fielding to condescend to visit our friend,” said the police inspector. “We are touched by this great kindness.”

“Don’t talk to him like that, he doesn’t want it, and he doesn’t want three chairs; he’s not three Englishmen,” he flashed. “Rafi, come here. Sit down again. I’m delighted you could come with Mr. Hamidullah, my dear boy; it will help me to recover, seeing you.”

“Forgive my mistakes,” said Rafi, to consolidate himself.

“Well, are you ill, Aziz, or aren’t you?” Fielding repeated.

“No doubt Major Callendar has told you that I am shamming.”

“Well, are you?” The company laughed, friendly and pleased. “An Englishman at his best,” they thought; “so genial.”

“Enquire from Dr. Panna Lal.”

“You’re sure I don’t tire you by stopping?”

“Why, no! There are six people present in my small room already. Please remain seated, if you will excuse the informality.” He turned away and continued to address Rafi, who was terrified at the arrival of his Principal, remembered that he had tried to spread slander about him, and yearned to get away.

“He is ill and he is not ill,” said Hamidullah, offering a cigarette. “And I suppose that most of us are in that same case.”

Fielding agreed; he and the pleasant sensitive barrister got on well. They were fairly intimate and beginning to trust each other.

“The whole world looks to be dying, still it doesn’t die, so we must assume the existence of a beneficent Providence.”

“Oh, that is true, how true!” said the policeman, thinking religion had been praised.

“Does Mr. Fielding think it’s true?.”

“Think which true? The world isn’t dying. I’m certain of that!”

“No, no—the existence of Providence.”

“Well, I don’t believe in Providence.”

“But how then can you believe in God?” asked Syed Mohammed.

“I don’t believe in God.”

A tiny movement as of “I told you so!” passed round the company, and Aziz looked up for an instant, scandalized. “Is it correct that most are atheists in England now?” Hamidullah enquired.

“The educated thoughtful people? I should say so, though they don’t like the name. The truth is that the West doesn’t bother much over belief and disbelief in these days. Fifty years ago, or even when you and I were young, much more fuss was made.”

“And does not morality also decline?”

“It depends what you call—yes, yes, I suppose morality does decline.”

“Excuse the question, but if this is the case, how is England justified in holding India?”

There they were! Politics again. “It’s a question I can’t get my mind on to,” he replied. “I’m out here personally because I needed a job. I cannot tell you why England is here or whether she ought to be here. It’s beyond me.”

“Well-qualified Indians also need jobs in the educational.”

“I guess they do; I got in first,” said Fielding, smiling.

“Then excuse me again—is it fair an Englishman should occupy one when Indians are available? Of course I mean nothing personally. Personally we are delighted you should be here, and we benefit greatly by this frank talk.”

There is only one answer to a conversation of this type: “England holds India for her good.” Yet Fielding was disinclined to give it. The zeal for honesty had eaten him up. He said, “I’m delighted to be here too—that’s my answer, there’s my only excuse. I can’t tell you anything about fairness. It mayn’t have been fair I should have been born. I take up some other fellow’s air, don’t I, whenever I breathe? Still, I’m glad it’s happened, and I’m glad I’m out here. However big a badmash one is—if one’s happy in consequence, that is some justification.”

The Indians were bewildered. The line of thought was not alien to them, but the words were too definite and bleak. Unless a sentence paid a few compliments to Justice and Morality in passing, its grammar wounded their ears and paralysed their minds. What they said and what they felt were (except in the case of affection) seldom the same. They had numerous mental conventions and when these were flouted they found it very difficult to function. Hamidullah bore up best. “And those Englishmen who are not delighted to be in India—have they no excuse?” he asked.

“None. Chuck ’em out.”

“It may be difficult to separate them from the rest,” he laughed.

“Worse than difficult, wrong,” said Mr. Ram Chand. “No Indian gentleman approves chucking out as a proper thing. Here we differ from those other nations. We are so spiritual.”

“Oh that is true, how true!” said the police inspector.

“Is it true, Mr. Haq? I don’t consider us spiritual. We can’t co-ordinate, we can’t co-ordinate, it only comes to that. We can’t keep engagements, we can’t catch trains. What more than this is the so-called spirituality of India? You and I ought to be at the Committee of Notables, we’re not; our friend Dr. Lal ought to be with his patients, he isn’t. So we go on, and so we shall continue to go, I think, until the end of time.”

“It is not the end of time, it is scarcely ten-thirty, ha, ha!” cried Dr. Panna Lal, who was again in confident mood. “Gentlemen, if I may be allowed to say a few words, what an interesting talk, also thankfulness and gratitude to Mr. Fielding in the first place teaches our sons and gives them all the great benefits of his experience and judgment——”

“Dr. Lal!”

“Dr. Aziz?”

“You sit on my leg.”

“I beg pardon, but some might say your leg kicks.”

“Come along, we tire the invalid in either case,” said Fielding, and they filed out—four Mohammedans, two Hindus and the Englishman. They stood on the verandah while their conveyances were summoned out of various patches of shade.

“Aziz has a high opinion of you, he only did not speak because of his illness.”

“I quite understand,” said Fielding, who was rather disappointed with his call. The Club comment, “making himself cheap as usual,” passed through his mind. He couldn’t even get his horse brought up. He had liked Aziz so much at their first meeting, and had hoped for developments.



## CHAPTER X

The heat had leapt forward in the last hour, the street was deserted as if a catastrophe had cleaned off humanity during the inconclusive talk. Opposite Aziz' bungalow stood a large unfinished house belonging to two brothers, astrologers, and a squirrel hung head-downwards on it, pressing its belly against burning scaffolding and twitching a mangy tail. It seemed the only occupant of the house, and the squeals it gave were in tune with the infinite, no doubt, but not attractive except to other squirrels. More noises came from a dusty tree, where brown birds creaked and floundered about looking for insects; another bird, the invisible coppersmith, had started his "ponk ponk." It matters so little to the majority of living beings what the minority, that calls itself human, desires or decides. Most of the inhabitants of India do not mind how India is governed. Nor are the lower animals of England concerned about England, but in the tropics the indifference is more prominent, the inarticulate world is closer at hand and readier to resume control as soon as men are tired. When the seven gentlemen who had held such various opinions inside the bungalow came out of it, they were aware of a common burden, a vague threat which they called "the bad weather coming." They felt that they could not do their work, or would not be paid enough for doing it. The space between them and their carriages, instead of being empty, was clogged with a medium that pressed against their flesh, the carriage cushions scalded their trousers, their eyes pricked, domes of hot water accumulated under their head-gear and poured down their cheeks. Salaaming feebly, they dispersed for the interior of other bungalows, to recover their self-esteem and the qualities that distinguished them from each other.

All over the city and over much of India the same retreat on the part of humanity was beginning, into cellars, up hills, under trees. April, herald of horrors, is at hand. The sun was returning to his kingdom with power but without beauty—that was the sinister feature. If only there had been beauty! His cruelty would have been tolerable then. Through excess of light, he

failed to triumph, he also; in his yellowy-white overflow not only matter, but brightness itself lay drowned. He was not the unattainable friend, either of men or birds or other suns, he was not the eternal promise, the never-withdrawn suggestion that haunts our consciousness; he was merely a creature, like the rest, and so debarred from glory.

## CHAPTER XI

Although the Indians had driven off, and Fielding could see his horse standing in a small shed in the corner of the compound, no one troubled to bring it to him. He started to get it himself, but was stopped by a call from the house. Aziz was sitting up in bed, looking dishevelled and sad. "Here's your home," he said sardonically. "Here's the celebrated hospitality of the East. Look at the flies. Look at the chunam coming off the walls. Isn't it jolly? Now I suppose you want to be off, having seen an Oriental interior."

"Anyhow, you want to rest."

"I can rest the whole day, thanks to worthy Dr. Lal. Major Callendar's spy, I suppose you know, but this time it didn't work. I am allowed to have a slight temperature."

"Callendar doesn't trust anyone, English or Indian: that's his character, and I wish you weren't under him; but you are, and that's that."

"Before you go, for you are evidently in a great hurry, will you please unlock that drawer? Do you see a piece of brown paper at the top?"

"Yes."

"Open it."

"Who is this?"

"She was my wife. You are the first Englishman she has ever come before. Now put her photograph away."

He was astonished, as a traveller who suddenly sees, between the stones of the desert, flowers. The flowers have been there all the time, but suddenly he sees them. He tried to look at the photograph, but in itself it

was just a woman in a sari, facing the world. He muttered, “Really, I don’t know why you pay me this great compliment, Aziz, but I do appreciate it.”

“Oh, it’s nothing, she was not a highly educated woman or even beautiful, but put it away. You would have seen her, so why should you not see her photograph?”

“You would have allowed me to see her?”

“Why not? I believe in the purdah, but I should have told her you were my brother, and she would have seen you. Hamidullah saw her, and several others.”

“Did she think they were your brothers?”

“Of course not, but the word exists and is convenient. All men are my brothers, and as soon as one behaves as such he may see my wife.”

“And when the whole world behaves as such, there will be no more purdah?”

“It is because you can say and feel such a remark as that, that I show you the photograph,” said Aziz gravely.

“It is beyond the power of most men. It is because you behave well while I behave badly that I show it you. I never expected you to come back just now when I called you. I thought, ‘He has certainly done with me; I have insulted him.’ Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need, we do not even realize it ourselves. But we know when it has been given. We do not forget, though we may seem to. Kindness, more kindness, and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope.” His voice seemed to arise from a dream. Altering it, yet still deep below his normal surface, he said, “We can’t build up India except on what we feel. What is the use of all these reforms, and Conciliation Committees for Mohurram, and shall we cut the tazia short or shall we carry it another route, and Councils of Notables and official parties where the English sneer at our skins?”

“It’s beginning at the wrong end, isn’t it? I know, but institutions and the governments don’t.” He looked again at the photograph. The lady faced the world at her husband’s wish and her own, but how bewildering she found it, the echoing contradictory world!

“Put her away, she is of no importance, she is dead,” said Aziz gently. “I showed her to you because I have nothing else to show. You may look round the whole of my bungalow now, and empty everything. I have no other secrets, my three children live away with their grandmamma, and that is all.”

Fielding sat down by the bed, flattered at the trust reposed in him, yet rather sad. He felt old. He wished that he too could be carried away on waves of emotion. The next time they met, Aziz might be cautious and standoffish. He realized this, and it made him sad that he should realize it. Kindness, kindness, and more kindness—yes, that he might supply, but was that really all that the queer nation needed? Did it not also demand an occasional intoxication of the blood? What had he done to deserve this outburst of confidence, and what hostage could he give in exchange? He looked back at his own life. What a poor crop of secrets it had produced! There were things in it that he had shown to no one, but they were so uninteresting, it wasn’t worth while lifting a purdah on their account. He’d been in love, engaged to be married, lady broke it off, memories of her and thoughts about her had kept him from other women for a time; then indulgence, followed by repentance and equilibrium. Meagre really except the equilibrium, and Aziz didn’t want to have that confided to him—he would have called it “everything ranged coldly on shelves.”

“I shall not really be intimate with this fellow,” Fielding thought, and then “nor with anyone.” That was the corollary. And he had to confess that he really didn’t mind, that he was content to help people, and like them as long as they didn’t object, and if they objected pass on serenely. Experience can do much, and all that he had learnt in England and Europe was an assistance to him, and helped him towards clarity, but clarity prevented him from experiencing something else.

“How did you like the two ladies you met last Thursday?” he asked.

Aziz shook his head distastefully. The question reminded him of his rash remark about the Marabar Caves.

“How do you like Englishwomen generally?”

“Hamidullah liked them in England. Here we never look at them. Oh no, much too careful. Let’s talk of something else.”

“Hamidullah’s right: they are much nicer in England. There’s something that doesn’t suit them out here.”

Aziz after another silence said, “Why are you not married?”

Fielding was pleased that he had asked. “Because I have more or less come through without it,” he replied.

“I was thinking of telling you a little about myself some day if I can make it interesting enough. The lady I liked wouldn’t marry me—that is the main point, but that’s fifteen years ago and now means nothing.”

“But you haven’t children.”

“None.”

“Excuse the following question: have you any illegitimate children?”

“No. I’d willingly tell you if I had.”

“Then your name will entirely die out.”

“It must.”

“Well.” He shook his head. “This indifference is what the Oriental will never understand.”

“I don’t care for children.”

“Caring has nothing to do with it,” he said impatiently.

“I don’t feel their absence, I don’t want them weeping around my death-bed and being polite about me afterwards, which I believe is the general notion. I’d far rather leave a thought behind me than a child. Other people can have children. No obligation, with England getting so chock-a-block and overrunning India for jobs.”

“Why don’t you marry Miss Quested?”

“Good God! why, the girl’s a prig.”

“Prig, prig? Kindly explain. Isn’t that a bad word?”

“Oh, I don’t know her, but she struck me as one of the more pathetic products of Western education. She depresses me.”

“But prig, Mr. Fielding? How’s that?”

“She goes on and on as if she’s at a lecture—trying ever so hard to understand India and life, and occasionally taking a note.”

“I thought her so nice and sincere.”

“So she probably is,” said Fielding, ashamed of his roughness: any suggestion that he should marry always does produce overstatements on the part of the bachelor, and a mental breeze. “But I can’t marry her if I wanted to, for she has just become engaged to the City Magistrate.”

“Has she indeed? I am so glad!” he exclaimed with relief, for this exempted him from the Marabar expedition: he would scarcely be expected to entertain regular Anglo-Indians.

“It’s the old mother’s doing. She was afraid her dear boy would choose for himself, so she brought out the girl on purpose, and flung them together until it happened.”

“Mrs. Moore did not mention that to me among her plans.”

“I may have got it wrong—I’m out of club gossip. But anyhow they’re engaged to be married.”

“Yes, you’re out of it, my poor chap,” he smiled. “No Miss Quersted for Mr. Fielding. However, she was not beautiful. She has practically no breasts, if you come to think of it.”

He smiled too, but found a touch of bad taste in the reference to a lady’s breasts.

“For the City Magistrate they shall be sufficient perhaps, and he for her. For you I shall arrange a lady with breasts like mangoes. . . .”

“No, you won’t.”

“I will not really, and besides your position makes it dangerous for you.” His mind had slipped from matrimony to Calcutta. His face grew grave. Fancy if he had persuaded the Principal to accompany him there, and then got him into trouble! And abruptly he took up a new attitude towards his friend, the attitude of the protector who knows the dangers of India and is admonitory. “You can’t be too careful in every way, Mr. Fielding; whatever you say or do in this damned country there is always some envious fellow on the look-out. You may be surprised to know that there were at least three spies sitting here when you came to enquire. I was really a good deal upset that you talked in that fashion about God. They will certainly report it.”

“To whom?”

“That’s all very well, but you spoke against morality also, and you said you had come to take other people’s jobs. All that was very unwise. This is an awful place for scandal. Why, actually one of your own pupils was listening.”

“Thanks for telling me that; yes, I must try and be more careful. If I’m interested, I’m apt to forget myself. Still, it doesn’t do real harm.”

“But speaking out may get you into trouble.”

“It’s often done so in the past.”

“There, listen to that! But the end of it might be that you lost your job.”



“If I do, I do. I shall survive it. I travel light.”

“Travel light! You are a most extraordinary race,” said Aziz, turning away as if he were going to sleep, and immediately turning back again. “Is it your climate, or what?”

“Plenty of Indians travel light too—saddhus and such. It’s one of the things I admire about your country. Any man can travel light until he has a wife or children. That’s part of my case against marriage. I’m a holy man minus the holiness. Hand that on to your three spies, and tell them to put it in their pipes.”

Aziz was charmed and interested, and turned the new idea over in his mind. So this was why Mr. Fielding and a few others were so fearless! They had nothing to lose. But he himself was rooted in society and Islam. He belonged to a tradition which bound him, and he had brought children into the world, the society of the future. Though he lived so vaguely in this flimsy bungalow, nevertheless he was placed, placed.

“I can’t be sacked from my job, because my job’s Education. I believe in teaching people to be individuals, and to understand other individuals. It’s the only thing I do believe in. At Government College, I mix it up with trigonometry, and so on. When I’m a saddhu, I shall mix it up with something else.”

He concluded his manifesto, and both were silent. The eye-flies became worse than ever and danced close up to their pupils, or crawled into their ears. Fielding hit about wildly. The exercise made him hot, and he got up to go.

“You might tell your servant to bring my horse. He doesn’t seem to appreciate my Urdu.”

“I know. I gave him orders not to. Such are the tricks we play on unfortunate Englishmen. Poor Mr. Fielding! But I will release you now. Oh dear! With the exception of yourself and Hamidullah, I have no one to talk to in this place. You like Hamidullah, don’t you?”

“Very much.”

“Do you promise to come at once to us when you are in trouble?”

“I never can be in trouble.”

“There goes a queer chap, I trust he won’t come to grief,” thought Aziz, left alone. His period of admiration was over, and he reacted towards patronage. It was difficult for him to remain in awe of anyone who played with all his cards on the table. Fielding, he discovered on closer acquaintance, was truly warm-hearted and unconventional, but not what can be called wise. That frankness of speech in the presence of Ram Chand, Rafi and Co. was dangerous and inelegant. It served no useful end.

But they were friends, brothers. That part was settled, their compact had been subscribed by the photograph, they trusted one another, affection had triumphed for once in a way. He dropped off to sleep amid the happier memories of the last two hours—poetry of Ghalib, female grace, good old Hamidullah, good Fielding, his honoured wife and dear boys. He passed into a region where these joys had no enemies but bloomed harmoniously in an eternal garden, or ran down watershoots of ribbed marble, or rose into domes whereunder were inscribed, black against white, the ninety-nine attributes of God.

## PART II: CAVES

## CHAPTER XII

The Ganges, though flowing from the foot of Vishnu and through Siva's hair, is not an ancient stream. Geology, looking further than religion, knows of a time when neither the river nor the Himalayas that nourished it existed, and an ocean flowed over the holy places of Hindustan. The mountains rose, their debris silted up the ocean, the gods took their seats on them and contrived the river, and the India we call immemorial came into being. But India is really far older. In the days of the prehistoric ocean the southern part of the peninsula already existed, and the high places of Dravidia have been land since land began, and have seen on the one side the sinking of a continent that joined them to Africa, and on the other the upheaval of the Himalayas from a sea. They are older than anything in the world. No water has ever covered them, and the sun who has watched them for countless æons may still discern in their outlines forms that were his before our globe was torn from his bosom. If flesh of the sun's flesh is to be touched anywhere, it is here, among the incredible antiquity of these hills.

Yet even they are altering. As Himalayan India rose, this India, the primal, has been depressed, and is slowly re-entering the curve of the earth. It may be that in æons to come an ocean will flow here too, and cover the sun-born rocks with slime. Meanwhile the plain of the Ganges encroaches on them with something of the sea's action. They are sinking beneath the newer lands. Their main mass is untouched, but at the edge their outposts have been cut off and stand knee-deep, throat-deep, in the advancing soil. There is something unspeakable in these outposts. They are like nothing else in the world, and a glimpse of them makes the breath catch. They rise abruptly, insanely, without the proportion that is kept by the wildest hills elsewhere, they bear no relation to anything dreamt or seen. To call them "uncanny" suggests ghosts, and they are older than all spirit. Hinduism has scratched and plastered a few rocks, but the shrines are unfrequented, as if pilgrims, who generally seek the extraordinary, had here found too much of it. Some sādhus did once settle in a cave, but they were smoked out, and

even Buddha, who must have passed this way down to the Bo Tree of Gya, shunned a renunciation more complete than his own, and has left no legend of struggle or victory in the Marabar.

The caves are readily described. A tunnel eight feet long, five feet high, three feet wide, leads to a circular chamber about twenty feet in diameter. This arrangement occurs again and again throughout the group of hills, and this is all, this is a Marabar Cave. Having seen one such cave, having seen two, having seen three, four, fourteen, twenty-four, the visitor returns to Chandrapore uncertain whether he has had an interesting experience or a dull one or any experience at all. He finds it difficult to discuss the caves, or to keep them apart in his mind, for the pattern never varies, and no carving, not even a bees'-nest or a bat distinguishes one from another. Nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation—for they have one—does not depend upon human speech. It is as if the surrounding plain or the passing birds have taken upon themselves to exclaim “extraordinary,” and the word has taken root in the air, and been inhaled by mankind.

They are dark caves. Even when they open towards the sun, very little light penetrates down the entrance tunnel into the circular chamber. There is little to see, and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit: the walls of the circular chamber have been most marvellously polished. The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid with lovely colours divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and grey interpose, exquisite nebulae, shadings fainter than the tail of a comet or the midday moon, all the evanescent life of the granite, only here visible. Fists and fingers thrust above the advancing soil—here at last is their skin, finer than any covering acquired by the animals, smoother than windless water, more voluptuous than love. The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all the caves.

Only the wall of the circular chamber has been polished thus. The sides of the tunnel are left rough, they impinge as an afterthought upon the internal perfection. An entrance was necessary, so mankind made one. But

elsewhere, deeper in the granite, are there certain chambers that have no entrances? Chambers never unsealed since the arrival of the gods. Local report declares that these exceed in number those that can be visited, as the dead exceed the living—four hundred of them, four thousand or million. Nothing is inside them, they were sealed up before the creation of pestilence or treasure; if mankind grew curious and excavated, nothing, nothing would be added to the sum of good or evil. One of them is rumoured within the boulder that swings on the summit of the highest of the hills; a bubble-shaped cave that has neither ceiling nor floor, and mirrors its own darkness in every direction infinitely. If the boulder falls and smashes, the cave will smash too—empty as an Easter egg. The boulder because of its hollowness sways in the wind, and even moves when a crow perches upon it: hence its name and the name of its stupendous pedestal: the Kawa Dol.

## CHAPTER XIII

These hills look romantic in certain lights and at suitable distances, and seen of an evening from the upper verandah of the club they caused Miss Quested to say conversationally to Miss Derek that she should like to have gone, that Dr. Aziz at Mr. Fielding's had said he would arrange something, and that Indians seem rather forgetful. She was overheard by the servant who offered them vermouths. This servant understood English. And he was not exactly a spy, but he kept his ears open, and Mahmoud Ali did not exactly bribe him, but did encourage him to come and squat with his own servants, and would happen to stroll their way when he was there. As the story travelled, it accreted emotion and Aziz learnt with horror that the ladies were deeply offended with him, and had expected an invitation daily. He thought his facile remark had been forgotten. Endowed with two memories, a temporary and a permanent, he had hitherto relegated the caves to the former. Now he transferred them once for all, and pushed the matter through. They were to be a stupendous replica of the tea party. He began by securing Fielding and old Godbole, and then commissioned Fielding to approach Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested when they were alone—by this device Ronny, their official protector, could be circumvented. Fielding didn't like the job much; he was busy, caves bored him, he foresaw friction and expense, but he would not refuse the first favour his friend had asked from him, and did as required. The ladies accepted. It was a little inconvenient in the present press of their engagements, still, they hoped to manage it after consulting Mr. Heaslop. Consulted, Ronny raised no objection, provided Fielding undertook full responsibility for their comfort. He was not enthusiastic about the picnic, but, then, no more were the ladies—no one was enthusiastic, yet it took place.

Aziz was terribly worried. It was not a long expedition—a train left Chandrapore just before dawn, another would bring them back for tiffin—but he was only a little official still, and feared to acquit himself dishonourably. He had to ask Major Callendar for half a day's leave, and be

refused because of his recent malingering; despair; renewed approach of Major Callendar through Fielding, and contemptuous snarling permission. He had to borrow cutlery from Mahmoud Ali without inviting him. Then there was the question of alcohol; Mr. Fielding, and perhaps the ladies, were drinkers, so must he provide whisky-sodas and ports? There was the problem of transport from the wayside station of Marabar to the caves. There was the problem of Professor Godbole and his food, and of Professor Godbole and other people's food—two problems, not one problem. The Professor was not a very strict Hindu—he would take tea, fruit, soda-water and sweets, whoever cooked them, and vegetables and rice if cooked by a Brahman; but not meat, not cakes lest they contained eggs, and he would not allow anyone else to eat beef: a slice of beef upon a distant plate would wreck his happiness. Other people might eat mutton, they might eat ham. But over ham Aziz' own religion raised its voice: he did not fancy other people eating ham. Trouble after trouble encountered him, because he had challenged the spirit of the Indian earth, which tries to keep men in compartments.

At last the moment arrived.

His friends thought him most unwise to mix himself up with English ladies, and warned him to take every precaution against unpunctuality. Consequently he spent the previous night at the station. The servants were huddled on the platform, enjoined not to stray. He himself walked up and down with old Mohammed Latif, who was to act as major-domo. He felt insecure and also unreal. A car drove up, and he hoped Fielding would get out of it, to lend him solidity. But it contained Mrs. Moore, Miss Quested, and their Goanese servant. He rushed to meet them, suddenly happy. "But you've come, after all. Oh how very very kind of you!" he cried. "This is the happiest moment in all my life."

The ladies were civil. It was not the happiest moment in their lives, still, they looked forward to enjoying themselves as soon as the bother of the early start was over. They had not seen him since the expedition was arranged, and they thanked him adequately.

"You don't require tickets—please stop your servant. There are no tickets on the Marabar branch line; it is its peculiarity. You come to the carriage



and rest till Mr. Fielding joins us. Did you know you are to travel purdah? Will you like that?"

They replied that they should like it. The train had come in, and a crowd of dependents were swarming over the seats of the carriage like monkeys. Aziz had borrowed servants from his friends, as well as bringing his own three, and quarrels over precedence were resulting. The ladies' servant stood apart, with a sneering expression on his face. They had hired him while they were still globe-trotters, at Bombay. In a hotel or among smart people he was excellent, but as soon as they consorted with anyone whom he thought second-rate he left them to their disgrace.

The night was still dark, but had acquired the temporary look that indicates its end. Perched on the roof of a shed, the station-master's hens began to dream of kites instead of owls. Lamps were put out, in order to save the trouble of putting them out later; the smell of tobacco and the sound of spitting arose from third-class passengers in dark corners; heads were unshrouded, teeth cleaned on the twigs of a tree. So convinced was a junior official that another sun would rise, that he rang a bell with enthusiasm. This upset the servants. They shrieked that the train was starting, and ran to both ends of it to intercede. Much had still to enter the purdah carriage—a box bound with brass, a melon wearing a fez, a towel containing guavas, a step-ladder and a gun. The guests played up all right. They had no race-consciousness—Mrs. Moore was too old, Miss Quested too new—and they behaved to Aziz as to any young man who had been kind to them in the country. This moved him deeply. He had expected them to arrive with Mr. Fielding, instead of which they trusted themselves to be with him a few moments alone.

"Send back your servant," he suggested. "He is unnecessary. Then we shall all be Moslems together."

"And he is such a horrible servant. Antony, you can go; we don't want you," said the girl impatiently.

"Master told me to come."

"Mistress tells you to go."

“Master says, keep near the ladies all the morning.”

“Well, your ladies won’t have you.” She turned to the host. “Do get rid of him, Dr. Aziz!”

“Mohammed Latif!” he called.

The poor relative exchanged fezzes with the melon, and peeped out of the window of the railway carriage, whose confusion he was superintending.

“Here is my cousin, Mr. Mohammed Latif. Oh no, don’t shake hands. He is an Indian of the old-fashioned sort, he prefers to salaam. There, I told you so. Mohammed Latif, how beautifully you salaam. See, he hasn’t understood; he knows no English.”

“You spick lie,” said the old man gently.

“I spick a lie! Oh, jolly good. Isn’t he a funny old man? We will have great jokes with him later. He does all sorts of little things. He is not nearly as stupid as you think, and awfully poor. It’s lucky ours is a large family.” He flung an arm round the grubby neck. “But you get inside, make yourselves at home; yes, you lie down.” The celebrated Oriental confusion appeared at last to be at an end. “Excuse me, now I must meet our other two guests!”

He was getting nervous again, for it was ten minutes to the time. Still, Fielding was an Englishman, and they never do miss trains, and Godbole was a Hindu and did not count, and, soothed by this logic, he grew calmer as the hour of departure approached. Mohammed Latif had bribed Antony not to come. They walked up and down the platform, talking usefully. They agreed that they had overdone the servants, and must leave two or three behind at Marabar station. And Aziz explained that he might be playing one or two practical jokes at the caves—not out of unkindness, but to make the guests laugh. The old man assented with slight sideways motions of the head: he was always willing to be ridiculed, and he bade Aziz not spare him. Elated by his importance, he began an indecent anecdote.

“Tell me another time, brother, when I have more leisure, for now, as I have already explained, we have to give pleasure to non-Moslems. Three will be Europeans, one a Hindu, which must not be forgotten. Every attention must be paid to Professor Godbole, lest he feel that he is inferior to my other guests.”

“I will discuss philosophy with him.”

“That will be kind of you; but the servants are even more important. We must not convey an impression of disorganization. It can be done, and I expect you to do it . . .”

A shriek from the purdah carriage. The train had started.

“Merciful God!” cried Mohammed Latif. He flung himself at the train, and leapt on to the footboard of a carriage. Aziz did likewise. It was an easy feat, for a branch-line train is slow to assume special airs. “We’re monkeys, don’t worry,” he called, hanging on to a bar and laughing. Then he howled, “Mr. Fielding! Mr. Fielding!”

There were Fielding and old Godbole, held up at the level-crossing. Appalling catastrophe! The gates had been closed earlier than usual. They leapt from their tonga; they gesticulated, but what was the good. So near and yet so far! As the train joggled past over the points, there was time for agonized words.

“Bad, bad, you have destroyed me.”

“Godbole’s pujah did it,” cried the Englishman.

The Brahman lowered his eyes, ashamed of religion. For it was so: he had miscalculated the length of a prayer.

“Jump on, I must have you,” screamed Aziz, beside himself.

“Right, give a hand.”

“He’s not to, he’ll kill himself,” Mrs. Moore protested. He jumped, he failed, missed his friend’s hand, and fell back on to the line. The train

rumbled past. He scrambled on to his feet, and bawled after them, "I'm all right, you're all right, don't worry," and then they passed beyond range of his voice.

"Mrs. Moore, Miss Quested, our expedition is a ruin." He swung himself along the footboard, almost in tears.

"Get in, get in; you'll kill yourself as well as Mr. Fielding. I see no ruin."

"How is that? Oh, explain to me!" he said piteously, like a child.

"We shall be all Moslems together now, as you promised."

She was perfect as always, his dear Mrs. Moore. All the love for her he had felt at the mosque welled up again, the fresher for forgetfulness. There was nothing he would not do for her. He would die to make her happy.

"Get in, Dr. Aziz, you make us giddy," the other lady called. "If they're so foolish as to miss the train, that's their loss, not ours."

"I am to blame. I am the host."

"Nonsense, go to your carriage. We're going to have a delightful time without them."

Not perfect like Mrs. Moore, but very sincere and kind. Wonderful ladies, both of them, and for one precious morning his guests. He felt important and competent. Fielding was a loss personally, being a friend, increasingly dear, yet if Fielding had come, he himself would have remained in leading-strings. "Indians are incapable of responsibility," said the officials, and Hamidullah sometimes said so too. He would show those pessimists that they were wrong. Smiling proudly, he glanced outward at the country, which was still invisible except as a dark movement in the darkness; then upwards at the sky, where the stars of the sprawling Scorpion had begun to pale. Then he dived through a window into a second-class carriage.

"Mohammed Latif, by the way, what is in these caves, brother? Why are we all going to see them?"

Such a question was beyond the poor relative's scope. He could only reply that God and the local villagers knew, and that the latter would gladly act as guides.

## CHAPTER XIV

Most of life is so dull that there is nothing to be said about it, and the books and talk that would describe it as interesting are obliged to exaggerate, in the hope of justifying their own existence. Inside its cocoon of work or social obligation, the human spirit slumbers for the most part, registering the distinction between pleasure and pain, but not nearly as alert as we pretend. There are periods in the most thrilling day during which nothing happens, and though we continue to exclaim, "I do enjoy myself," or, "I am horrified," we are insincere. "As far as I feel anything, it is enjoyment, horror"—it's no more than that really, and a perfectly adjusted organism would be silent.

It so happened that Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested had felt nothing acutely for a fortnight. Ever since Professor Godbole had sung his queer little song, they had lived more or less inside cocoons, and the difference between them was that the elder lady accepted her own apathy, while the younger resented hers. It was Adela's faith that the whole stream of events is important and interesting, and if she grew bored she blamed herself severely and compelled her lips to utter enthusiasms. This was the only insincerity in a character otherwise sincere, and it was indeed the intellectual protest of her youth. She was particularly vexed now because she was both in India and engaged to be married, which double event should have made every instant sublime.

India was certainly dim this morning, though seen under the auspices of Indians. Her wish had been granted, but too late. She could not get excited over Aziz and his arrangements. She was not the least unhappy or depressed, and the various odd objects that surrounded her—the comic "purdah" carriage, the piles of rugs and bolsters, the rolling melons, the scent of sweet oils, the ladder, the brass-bound box, the sudden irruption of Mahmoud Ali's butler from the lavatory with tea and poached eggs upon a tray—they were all new and amusing, and led her to comment

appropriately, but they wouldn't bite into her mind. So she tried to find comfort by reflecting that her main interest would henceforward be Ronny.

“What a nice cheerful servant! What a relief after Antony!”

“They startle one rather. A strange place to make tea in,” said Mrs. Moore, who had hoped for a nap.

“I want to sack Antony. His behaviour on the platform has decided me.”

Mrs. Moore thought that Antony's better self would come to the front at Simla. Miss Quested was to be married at Simla; some cousins, with a house looking straight on to Thibet, had invited her.

“Anyhow, we must get a second servant, because at Simla you will be at the hotel, and I don't think Ronny's Baldeo . . .” She loved plans.

“Very well, you get another servant, and I'll keep Antony with me. I am used to his unappetizing ways. He will see me through the Hot Weather.”

“I don't believe in the Hot Weather. People like Major Callendar who always talk about it—it's in the hope of making one feel inexperienced and small, like their everlasting, ‘I've been twenty years in this country.’”

“I believe in the Hot Weather, but never did I suppose it would bottle me up as it will.” For owing to the sage leisureliness of Ronny and Adela, they could not be married till May, and consequently Mrs. Moore could not return to England immediately after the wedding, which was what she had hoped to do. By May a barrier of fire would have fallen across India and the adjoining sea, and she would have to remain perched up in the Himalayas waiting for the world to get cooler.

“I won't be bottled up,” announced the girl. “I've no patience with these women here who leave their husbands grilling in the plains. Mrs. McBryde hasn't stopped down once since she married; she leaves her quite intelligent husband alone half the year, and then's surprised she's out of touch with him.”

“She has children, you see.”

“Oh yes, that’s true,” said Miss Quested, disconcerted.

“It is the children who are the first consideration. Until they are grown up, and married off. When that happens one has again the right to live for oneself—in the plains or the hills, as suits.”

“Oh yes, you’re perfectly right. I never thought it out.”

“If one has not become too stupid and old.” She handed her empty cup to the servant.

“My idea now is that my cousins shall find me a servant in Simla, at all events to see me through the wedding, after which Ronny means to reorganize his staff entirely. He does it very well for a bachelor; still, when he is married no doubt various changes will have to be made—his old servants won’t want to take their orders from me, and I don’t blame them.”

Mrs. Moore pushed up the shutters and looked out. She had brought Ronny and Adela together by their mutual wish, but really she could not advise them further. She felt increasingly (vision or nightmare?) that, though people are important, the relations between them are not, and that in particular too much fuss has been made over marriage; centuries of carnal embracement, yet man is no nearer to understanding man. And to-day she felt this with such force that it seemed itself a relationship, itself a person who was trying to take hold of her hand.

“Anything to be seen of the hills?”

“Only various shades of the dark.”

“We can’t be far from the place where my hyena was.” She peered into the timeless twilight. The train crossed a nullah. “Pomper, pomper, pomper,” was the sound that the wheels made as they trundled over the bridge, moving very slowly. A hundred yards on came a second nullah, then a third, suggesting the neighbourhood of higher ground. “Perhaps this is mine; anyhow, the road runs parallel with the railway.” Her accident was a



pleasant memory; she felt in her dry, honest way that it had given her a good shake up, and taught her Ronny's true worth. Then she went back to her plans; plans had been a passion with her from girlhood. Now and then she paid tribute to the present, said how friendly and intelligent Aziz was, ate a guava, couldn't eat a fried sweet, practised her Urdu on the servant; but her thoughts ever veered to the manageable future, and to the Anglo-Indian life she had decided to endure. And as she appraised it with its adjuncts of Turtons and Burtons, the train accompanied her sentences, "pomper, pomper," the train half asleep, going nowhere in particular and with no passenger of importance in any of its carriages, the branch-line train, lost on a low embankment between dull fields. Its message—for it had one—avoided her well-equipped mind. Far away behind her, with a shriek that meant business, rushed the Mail, connecting up important towns such as Calcutta and Lahore, where interesting events occur and personalities are developed. She understood that. Unfortunately, India has few important towns. India is the country, fields, fields, then hills, jungle, hills, and more fields. The branch line stops, the road is only practicable for cars to a point, the bullock-carts lumber down the side tracks, paths fray out into the cultivation, and disappear near a splash of red paint. How can the mind take hold of such a country? Generations of invaders have tried, but they remain in exile. The important towns they build are only retreats, their quarrels the malaise of men who cannot find their way home. India knows of their trouble. She knows of the whole world's trouble, to its uttermost depth. She calls "Come" through her hundred mouths, through objects ridiculous and august. But come to what? She has never defined. She is not a promise, only an appeal.

"I will fetch you from Simla when it's cool enough. I will unbottle you in fact," continued the reliable girl. "We then see some of the Mogul stuff—how appalling if we let you miss the Taj!—and then I will see you off at Bombay. Your last glimpse of this country really shall be interesting." But Mrs. Moore had fallen asleep, exhausted by the early start. She was in rather low health, and ought not to have attempted the expedition, but had pulled herself together in case the pleasure of the others should suffer. Her dreams were of the same texture, but there it was her other children who were wanting something, Stella and Ralph, and she was explaining to them that she could not be in two families at once. When she awoke, Adela had

ceased to plan, and leant out of a window, saying, “They’re rather wonderful.”

Astonishing even from the rise of the civil station, here the Marabar were gods to whom earth is a ghost. Kawa Dol was nearest. It shot up in a single slab, on whose summit one rock was poised—if a mass so great can be called one rock. Behind it, recumbent, were the hills that contained the other caves, isolated each from his neighbour by broad channels of the plain. The assemblage, ten in all, shifted a little as the train crept past them, as if observing its arrival.

“I’d not have missed this for anything,” said the girl, exaggerating her enthusiasm. “Look, the sun’s rising—this’ll be absolutely magnificent—come quickly—look. I wouldn’t have missed this for anything. We should never have seen it if we’d stuck to the Turtons and their eternal elephants.”

As she spoke, the sky to the left turned angry orange. Colour throbbed and mounted behind a pattern of trees, grew in intensity, was yet brighter, incredibly brighter, strained from without against the globe of the air. They awaited the miracle. But at the supreme moment, when night should have died and day lived, nothing occurred. It was as if virtue had failed in the celestial fount. The hues in the east decayed, the hills seemed dimmer though in fact better lit, and a profound disappointment entered with the morning breeze. Why, when the chamber was prepared, did the bridegroom not enter with trumpets and shawms, as humanity expects? The sun rose without splendour. He was presently observed trailing yellowish behind the trees, or against insipid sky, and touching the bodies already at work in the fields.

“Ah, that must be the false dawn—isn’t it caused by dust in the upper layers of the atmosphere that couldn’t fall down during the night? I think Mr. McBryde said so. Well, I must admit that England has it as regards sunrises. Do you remember Grasmere?”

“Ah, dearest Grasmere!” Its little lakes and mountains were beloved by them all. Romantic yet manageable, it sprang from a kindlier planet. Here an untidy plain stretched to the knees of the Marabar.

“Good morning, good morning, put on your topis,” shouted Aziz from farther down the train. “Put on your topis at once, the early sun is highly dangerous for heads. I speak as a doctor.”

“Good morning, good morning, put on your own.”

“Not for my thick head,” he laughed, banging it and holding up pads of his hair.

“Nice creature he is,” murmured Adela.

“Listen—Mohammed Latif says ‘Good morning’ next.” Various pointless jests.

“Dr. Aziz, what’s happened to your hills? The train has forgotten to stop.”

“Perhaps it is a circular train and goes back to Chandrapore without a break. Who knows!”

Having wandered off into the plain for a mile, the train slowed up against an elephant. There was a platform too, but it shrivelled into insignificance. An elephant, waving her painted forehead at the morn! “Oh, what a surprise!” called the ladies politely. Aziz said nothing, but he nearly burst with pride and relief. The elephant was the one grand feature of the picnic, and God alone knew what he had gone through to obtain her. Semi-official, she was best approached through the Nawab Bahadur, who was best approached through Nureddin, but he never answered letters, but his mother had great influence with him and was a friend of Hamidullah Begum’s, who had been excessively kind and had promised to call on her provided the broken shutter of the purdah carriage came back soon enough from Calcutta. That an elephant should depend from so long and so slender a string filled Aziz with content, and with humorous appreciation of the East, where the friends of friends are a reality, where everything gets done sometime, and sooner or later every one gets his share of happiness. And Mohammed Latif was likewise content, because two of the guests had missed the train, and consequently he could ride on the howdah instead of following in a cart, and the servants were content because an elephant

increased their self-esteem, and they tumbled out the luggage into the dust with shouts and bangs, issuing orders to one another, and convulsed with goodwill.

“It takes an hour to get there, an hour to get back, and two hours for the caves, which we will call three,” said Aziz, smiling charmingly. There was suddenly something regal about him. “The train back is at eleven-thirty, and you will be sitting down to your tiffin in Chandrapore with Mr. Heaslop at exactly your usual hour, namely, one-fifteen. I know everything about you. Four hours—quite a small expedition—and an hour extra for misfortunes, which occur somewhat frequently among my people. My idea is to plan everything without consulting you; but you, Mrs. Moore, or Miss Quested, you are at any moment to make alterations if you wish, even if it means giving up the caves. Do you agree? Then mount this wild animal.”

The elephant had knelt, grey and isolated, like another hill. They climbed up the ladder, and he mounted shikar fashion, treading first on the sharp edge of the heel and then into the looped-up tail. When Mohammed Latif followed him, the servant who held the end of the tail let go of it according to previous instructions, so that the poor relative slipped and had to cling to the netting over the buttocks. It was a little piece of Court buffoonery, and distressed only the ladies, whom it was intended to divert. Both of them disliked practical jokes. Then the beast rose in two shattering movements, and poised them ten feet above the plain. Immediately below was the scurf of life that an elephant always collects round its feet—villagers, naked babies. The servants flung crockery into tongas. Hassan annexed the stallion intended for Aziz, and defied Mahmood Ali’s man from its altitude. The Brahman who had been hired to cook for Professor Godbole was planted under an acacia tree, to await their return. The train, also hoping to return, wobbled away through the fields, turning its head this way and that like a centipede. And the only other movement to be seen was a movement as of antennae, really the counterpoises of the wells which rose and fell on their pivots of mud all over the plain and dispersed a feeble flow of water. The scene was agreeable rather than not in the mild morning air, but there was little colour in it, and no vitality.

As the elephant moved towards the hills (the pale sun had by this time saluted them to the base, and pencilled shadows down their creases) a new quality occurred, a spiritual silence which invaded more senses than the ear. Life went on as usual, but had no consequences, that is to say, sounds did not echo or thoughts develop. Everything seemed cut off at its root, and therefore infected with illusion. For instance, there were some mounds by the edge of the track, low, serrated, and touched with whitewash. What were these mounds—graves, breasts of the goddess Parvati? The villagers beneath gave both replies. Again, there was a confusion about a snake which was never cleared up. Miss Quested saw a thin, dark object reared on end at the farther side of a watercourse, and said, “A snake!” The villagers agreed, and Aziz explained: yes, a black cobra, very venomous, who had reared himself up to watch the passing of the elephant, But when she looked through Ronny’s field-glasses, she found it wasn’t a snake, but the withered and twisted stump of a toddy-palm. So she said, “It isn’t a snake.” The villagers contradicted her. She had put the word into their minds, and they refused to abandon it. Aziz admitted that it looked like a tree through the glasses, but insisted that it was a black cobra really, and improvised some rubbish about protective mimicry. Nothing was explained, and yet there was no romance. Films of heat, radiated from the Kawa Dol precipices, increased the confusion. They came at irregular intervals and moved capriciously. A patch of field would jump as if it was being fried, and then lie quiet. As they drew closer the radiation stopped.

The elephant walked straight at the Kawa Dol as if she would knock for admission with her forehead, then swerved, and followed a path round its base. The stones plunged straight into the earth, like cliffs into the sea, and while Miss Quested was remarking on this, and saying that it was striking, the plain quietly disappeared, peeled off, so to speak, and nothing was to be seen on either side but the granite, very dead and quiet. The sky dominated as usual, but seemed unhealthily near, adhering like a ceiling to the summits of the precipices. It was as if the contents of the corridor had never been changed. Occupied by his own munificence, Aziz noticed nothing. His guests noticed a little. They did not feel that it was an attractive place or quite worth visiting, and wished it could have turned into some Mohammedan object, such as a mosque, which their host would have appreciated and explained. His ignorance became evident, and was really

rather a drawback. In spite of his gay, confident talk, he had no notion how to treat this particular aspect of India; he was lost in it without Professor Godbole, like themselves.

The corridor narrowed, then widened into a sort of tray. Here, more or less, was their goal. A ruined tank held a little water which would do for the animals, and close above the mud was punched a black hole—the first of the caves. Three hills encircled the tray. Two of them pumped out heat busily, but the third was in shadow, and here they camped.

“A horrid, stuffy place really,” murmured Mrs. Moore to herself.

“How quick your servants are!” Miss Quested exclaimed. For a cloth had already been laid, with a vase of artificial flowers in its centre, and Mahmoud Ali’s butler offered them poached eggs and tea for the second time.

“I thought we would eat this before our caves, and breakfast after.”

“Isn’t this breakfast?”

“This breakfast? Did you think I should treat you so strangely?” He had been warned that English people never stop eating, and that he had better nourish them every two hours until a solid meal was ready.

“How very well it is all arranged.”

“That you shall tell me when I return to Chandrapore. Whatever disgraces I bring upon myself, you remain my guests.” He spoke gravely now. They were dependent on him for a few hours, and he felt grateful to them for placing themselves in such a position. All was well so far; the elephant held a fresh cut bough to her lips, the tonga shafts stuck up into the air, the kitchen-boy peeled potatoes, Hassan shouted, and Mohammed Latif stood as he ought, with a peeled switch in his hand. The expedition was a success, and it was Indian; an obscure young man had been allowed to show courtesy to visitors from another country, which is what all Indians long to do—even cynics like Mahmoud Ali—but they never have the chance. Hospitality had been achieved, they were “his” guests; his honour

was involved in their happiness, and any discomfort they endured would tear his own soul.

Like most Orientals, Aziz overrated hospitality, mistaking it for intimacy, and not seeing that it is tainted with the sense of possession. It was only when Mrs. Moore or Fielding was near him that he saw further, and knew that it is more blessed to receive than to give. These two had strange and beautiful effects on him—they were his friends, his for ever, and he theirs for ever; he loved them so much that giving and receiving became one. He loved them even better than the Hamidullahs, because he had surmounted obstacles to meet them, and this stimulates a generous mind. Their images remained somewhere in his soul up to his dying day, permanent additions. He looked at her now as she sat on a deck-chair, sipping his tea, and had for a moment a joy that held the seeds of its own decay, for it would lead him to think, “Oh, what more can I do for her?” and so back to the dull round of hospitality. The black bullets of his eyes filled with soft expressive light, and he said, “Do you ever remember our mosque, Mrs. Moore?”

“I do. I do,” she said, suddenly vital and young.

“And how rough and rude I was, and how good you were.”

“And how happy we both were.”

“Friendships last longest that begin like that, I think. Shall I ever entertain your other children?”

“Do you know about the others? She will never talk about them to me,” said Miss Quested, unintentionally breaking a spell.

“Ralph and Stella, yes, I know everything about them. But we must not forget to visit our caves. One of the dreams of my life is accomplished in having you both here as my guests. You cannot imagine how you have honoured me. I feel like the Emperor Babur.”

“Why like him?” she enquired, rising.

“Because my ancestors came down with him from Afghanistan. They joined him at Herat. He also had often no more elephants than one, none sometimes, but he never ceased showing hospitality. When he fought or hunted or ran away, he would always stop for a time among hills, just like us; he would never let go of hospitality and pleasure, and if there was only a little food, he would have it arranged nicely, and if only one musical instrument, he would compel it to play a beautiful tune. I take him as my ideal. He is the poor gentleman, and he became a great king.”

“I thought another Emperor is your favourite—I forget the name—you mentioned him at Mr. Fielding’s: what my book calls Aurangzebe.”

“Alamgir? Oh yes, he was of course the more pious. But Babur—never in his whole life did he betray a friend, so I can only think of him this morning. And you know how he died? He laid down his life for his son. A death far more difficult than battle. They were caught in the heat. They should have gone back to Kabul for the bad weather, but could not for reasons of state, and at Agra Humayun fell sick. Babur walked round the bed three times, and said, ‘I have borne it away,’ and he did bear it away; the fever left his son and came to him instead, and he died. That is why I prefer Babur to Alamgir. I ought not to do so, but I do. However, I mustn’t delay you. I see you are ready to start.”

“Not at all,” she said, sitting down by Mrs. Moore again. “We enjoy talk like this very much.” For at last he was talking about what he knew and felt, talking as he had in Fielding’s garden-house; he was again the Oriental guide whom they appreciated.

“I always enjoy conversing about the Moguls. It is the chief pleasure I know. You see, those first six emperors were all most wonderful men, and as soon as one of them is mentioned, no matter which, I forget everything else in the world except the other five. You could not find six such kings in all the countries of the earth, not, I mean, coming one after the other—father, son.”

“Tell us something about Akbar.”



“Ah, you have heard the name of Akbar. Good. Hamidullah—whom you shall meet—will tell you that Akbar is the greatest of all. I say, ‘Yes, Akbar is very wonderful, but half a Hindu; he was not a true Moslem, which makes Hamidullah cry, ‘No more was Babur, he drank wine.’ But Babur always repented afterwards, which makes the entire difference, and Akbar never repented of the new religion he invented instead of the Holy Koran.”

“But wasn’t Akbar’s new religion very fine? It was to embrace the whole of India.”

“Miss Quested, fine but foolish. You keep your religion, I mine. That is the best. Nothing embraces the whole of India, nothing, nothing, and that was Akbar’s mistake.”

“Oh, do you feel that, Dr. Aziz?” she said thoughtfully. “I hope you’re not right. There will have to be something universal in this country—I don’t say religion, for I’m not religious, but something, or how else are barriers to be broken down?”

She was only recommending the universal brotherhood he sometimes dreamed of, but as soon as it was put into prose it became untrue.

“Take my own case,” she continued—it was indeed her own case that had animated her. “I don’t know whether you happen to have heard, but I’m going to marry Mr. Heaslop.”

“On which my heartiest congratulations.”

“Mrs. Moore, may I put our difficulty to Dr. Aziz—I mean our Anglo-Indian one?”

“It is your difficulty, not mine, my dear.”

“Ah, that’s true. Well, by marrying Mr. Heaslop, I shall become what is known as an Anglo-Indian.”

He held up his hand in protest. “Impossible. Take back such a terrible remark.”

“But I shall; it’s inevitable. I can’t avoid the label. What I do hope to avoid is the mentality. Women like——” She stopped, not quite liking to mention names; she would boldly have said “Mrs. Turton and Mrs. Callendar” a fortnight ago. “Some women are so—well, ungenerous and snobby about Indians, and I should feel too ashamed for words if I turned like them, but—and here’s my difficulty—there’s nothing special about me, nothing specially good or strong, which will help me to resist my environment and avoid becoming like them. I’ve most lamentable defects. That’s why I want Akbar’s ‘universal religion’ or the equivalent to keep me decent and sensible. Do you see what I mean?”

Her remarks pleased him, but his mind shut up tight because she had alluded to her marriage. He was not going to be mixed up in that side of things. “You are certain to be happy with any relative of Mrs. Moore’s,” he said with a formal bow.

“Oh, my happiness—that’s quite another problem. I want to consult you about this Anglo-Indian difficulty. Can you give me any advice?”

“You are absolutely unlike the others, I assure you. You will never be rude to my people.”

“I am told we all get rude after a year.”

“Then you are told a lie,” he flashed, for she had spoken the truth and it touched him on the raw; it was itself an insult in these particular circumstances. He recovered himself at once and laughed, but her error broke up their conversation—their civilization it had almost been—which scattered like the petals of a desert flower, and left them in the middle of the hills. “Come along,” he said, holding out a hand to each. They got up a little reluctantly, and addressed themselves to sightseeing.

The first cave was tolerably convenient. They skirted the puddle of water, and then climbed up over some unattractive stones, the sun crashing on their backs. Bending their heads, they disappeared one by one into the interior of the hills. The small black hole gaped where their varied forms and colours had momentarily functioned. They were sucked in like water down a drain. Bland and bald rose the precipices; bland and glutinous the

sky that connected the precipices; solid and white, a Brahminy kite flapped between the rocks with a clumsiness that seemed intentional. Before man, with his itch for the seemly, had been born, the planet must have looked thus. The kite flapped away. . . . Before birds, perhaps. . . . And then the hole belched and humanity returned.

A Marabar cave had been horrid as far as Mrs. Moore was concerned, for she had nearly fainted in it, and had some difficulty in preventing herself from saying so as soon as she got into the air again. It was natural enough: she had always suffered from faintness, and the cave had become too full, because all their retinue followed them. Crammed with villagers and servants, the circular chamber began to smell. She lost Aziz and Adela in the dark, didn't know who touched her, couldn't breathe, and some vile naked thing struck her face and settled on her mouth like a pad. She tried to regain the entrance tunnel, but an influx of villagers swept her back. She hit her head. For an instant she went mad, hitting and gasping like a fanatic. For not only did the crush and stench alarm her; there was also a terrifying echo.

Professor Godbole had never mentioned an echo; it never impressed him, perhaps. There are some exquisite echoes in India; there is the whisper round the dome at Bijapur; there are the long, solid sentences that voyage through the air at Mandu, and return unbroken to their creator. The echo in a Marabar cave is not like these, it is entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever is said, the same monotonous noise replies, and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof. "Boum" is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it, or "bou-oum," or "ou-boum,"—utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce "boum." Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is too small to complete a circle but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an overlapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake composed of small snakes, which writhe independently.

After Mrs. Moore all the others poured out. She had given the signal for the reflux. Aziz and Adela both emerged smiling and she did not want him to think his treat was a failure, so smiled too. As each person emerged she

looked for a villain, but none was there, and she realized that she had been among the mildest individuals, whose only desire was to honour her, and that the naked pad was a poor little baby, astride its mother's hip. Nothing evil had been in the cave, but she had not enjoyed herself; no, she had not enjoyed herself, and she decided not to visit a second one.

“Did you see the reflection of his match—rather pretty?” asked Adela.

“I forget . . .”

“But he says this isn't a good cave, the best are on the Kawa Dol.”

“I don't think I shall go on to there. I dislike climbing.”

“Very well, let's sit down again in the shade until breakfast's ready.”

“Ah, but that'll disappoint him so; he has taken such trouble. You should go on; you don't mind.”

“Perhaps I ought to,” said the girl, indifferent to what she did, but desirous of being amiable.

The servants, etc., were scrambling back to the camp, pursued by grave censures from Mohammed Latif. Aziz came to help the guests over the rocks. He was at the summit of his powers, vigorous and humble, too sure of himself to resent criticism, and he was sincerely pleased when he heard they were altering his plans. “Certainly, Miss Quested, so you and I will go together, and leave Mrs. Moore here, and we will not be long, yet we will not hurry, because we know that will be her wish.”

“Quite right. I'm sorry not to come too, but I'm a poor walker.”

“Dear Mrs. Moore, what does anything matter so long as you are my guests? I am very glad you are *not* coming, which sounds strange, but you are treating me with true frankness, as a friend.”

“Yes, I am your friend,” she said, laying her hand on his sleeve, and thinking, despite her fatigue, how very charming, how very good, he was, and how deeply she desired his happiness. “So may I make another

suggestion? Don't let so many people come with you this time. I think you may find it more convenient."

"Exactly, exactly," he cried, and, rushing to the other extreme, forbade all except one guide to accompany Miss Quested and him to the Kawa Dol. "Is that all right?" he enquired.

"Quite right, now enjoy yourselves, and when you come back tell me all about it." And she sank into the deck-chair.

If they reached the big pocket of caves, they would be away nearly an hour. She took out her writing-pad, and began, "Dear Stella, Dear Ralph," then stopped, and looked at the queer valley and their feeble invasion of it. Even the elephant had become a nobody. Her eye rose from it to the entrance tunnel. No, she did not wish to repeat that experience. The more she thought over it, the more disagreeable and frightening it became. She minded it much more now than at the time. The crush and the smells she could forget, but the echo began in some indescribable way to undermine her hold on life. Coming at a moment when she chanced to be fatigued, it had managed to murmur, "Pathos, piety, courage—they exist, but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value." If one had spoken vileness in that place, or quoted lofty poetry, the comment would have been the same—"ou-boum." If one had spoken with the tongues of angels and pleaded for all the unhappiness and misunderstanding in the world, past, present, and to come, for all the misery men must undergo whatever their opinion and position, and however much they dodge or bluff—it would amount to the same, the serpent would descend and return to the ceiling. Devils are of the North, and poems can be written about them, but no one could romanticize the Marabar because it robbed infinity and eternity of their vastness, the only quality that accommodates them to mankind.

She tried to go on with her letter, reminding herself that she was only an elderly woman who had got up too early in the morning and journeyed too far, that the despair creeping over her was merely her despair, her personal weakness, and that even if she got a sunstroke and went mad the rest of the world would go on. But suddenly, at the edge of her mind, Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine

words from “Let there be Light” to “It is finished” only amounted to “boum.” Then she was terrified over an area larger than usual; the universe, never comprehensible to her intellect, offered no repose to her soul, the mood of the last two months took definite form at last, and she realized that she didn’t want to write to her children, didn’t want to communicate with anyone, not even with God. She sat motionless with horror, and, when old Mohammed Latif came up to her, thought he would notice a difference. For a time she thought, “I am going to be ill,” to comfort herself, then she surrendered to the vision. She lost all interest, even in Aziz, and the affectionate and sincere words that she had spoken to him seemed no longer hers but the air’s.

## CHAPTER XV

Miss Quested and Aziz and a guide continued the slightly tedious expedition. They did not talk much, for the sun was getting high. The air felt like a warm bath into which hotter water is trickling constantly, the temperature rose and rose, the boulders said, "I am alive," the small stones answered, "I am almost alive." Between the chinks lay the ashes of little plants. They meant to climb to the rocking-stone on the summit, but it was too far, and they contented themselves with the big group of caves. *En route* for these, they encountered several isolated caves, which the guide persuaded them to visit, but really there was nothing to see; they lit a match, admired its reflection in the polish, tested the echo and came out again. Aziz was "pretty sure they should come on some interesting old carvings soon," but only meant he wished there were some carvings. His deeper thoughts were about the breakfast. Symptoms of disorganization had appeared as he left the camp. He ran over the menu: an English breakfast, porridge and mutton chops, but some Indian dishes to cause conversation, and pan afterwards. He had never liked Miss Quested as much as Mrs. Moore, and had little to say to her, less than ever now that she would marry a British official.

Nor had Adela much to say to him. If his mind was with the breakfast, hers was mainly with her marriage. Simla next week, get rid of Antony, a view of Thibet, tiresome wedding bells, Agra in October, see Mrs. Moore comfortably off from Bombay—the procession passed before her again, blurred by the heat, and then she turned to the more serious business of her life at Chandrapore. There were real difficulties here—Ronny's limitations and her own—but she enjoyed facing difficulties, and decided that if she could control her peevishness (always her weak point), and neither rail against Anglo-India nor succumb to it, their married life ought to be happy and profitable. She mustn't be too theoretical; she would deal with each problem as it came up, and trust to Ronny's common sense and her own. Luckily, each had abundance of common sense and good will.

But as she toiled over a rock that resembled an inverted saucer, she thought, “What about love?” The rock was nicked by a double row of footholds, and somehow the question was suggested by them. Where had she seen footholds before? Oh yes, they were the pattern traced in the dust by the wheels of the Nawab Bahadur’s car. She and Ronny—no, they did not love each other.

“Do I take you too fast?” enquired Aziz, for she had paused, a doubtful expression on her face. The discovery had come so suddenly that she felt like a mountaineer whose rope had broken. Not to love the man one’s going to marry! Not to find it out till this moment! Not even to have asked oneself the question until now! Something else to think out. Vexed rather than appalled, she stood still, her eyes on the sparkling rock. There was esteem and animal contact at dusk, but the emotion that links them was absent. Ought she to break her engagement off? She was inclined to think not—it would cause so much trouble to others; besides, she wasn’t convinced that love is necessary to a successful union. If love is everything, few marriages would survive the honeymoon. “No, I’m all right, thanks,” she said, and, her emotions well under control, resumed the climb, though she felt a bit dashed. Aziz held her hand, the guide adhered to the surface like a lizard and scampered about as if governed by a personal centre of gravity.

“Are you married, Dr. Aziz?” she asked, stopping again, and frowning.

“Yes, indeed, do come and see my wife”—for he felt it more artistic to have his wife alive for a moment.

“Thank you,” she said absently.

“She is not in Chandrapore just now.”

“And have you children?”

“Yes, indeed, three,” he replied in firmer tones.

“Are they a great pleasure to you?”

“Why, naturally, I adore them,” he laughed.



“I suppose so.” What a handsome little Oriental he was, and no doubt his wife and children were beautiful too, for people usually get what they already possess. She did not admire him with any personal warmth, for there was nothing of the vagrant in her blood, but she guessed he might attract women of his own race and rank, and she regretted that neither she nor Ronny had physical charm. It does make a difference in a relationship—beauty, thick hair, a fine skin. Probably this man had several wives—Mohammedans always insist on their full four, according to Mrs. Turton. And having no one else to speak to on that eternal rock, she gave rein to the subject of marriage and said in her honest, decent, inquisitive way: “Have you one wife or more than one?”

The question shocked the young man very much. It challenged a new conviction of his community, and new convictions are more sensitive than old. If she had said, “Do you worship one god or several?” he would not have objected. But to ask an educated Indian Moslem how many wives he has—appalling, hideous! He was in trouble how to conceal his confusion. “One, one in my own particular case,” he sputtered, and let go of her hand. Quite a number of caves were at the top of the track, and thinking, “Damn the English even at their best,” he plunged into one of them to recover his balance. She followed at her leisure, quite unconscious that she had said the wrong thing, and not seeing him, she also went into a cave, thinking with half her mind “sight-seeing bores me,” and wondering with the other half about marriage.

## CHAPTER XVI

He waited in his cave a minute, and lit a cigarette, so that he could remark on rejoining her, "I bolted in to get out of the draught," or something of the sort. When he returned, he found the guide, alone, with his head on one side. He had heard a noise, he said, and then Aziz heard it too: the noise of a motor-car. They were now on the outer shoulder of the Kawa Dol, and by scrambling twenty yards they got a glimpse of the plain. A car was coming towards the hills down the Chandrapore road. But they could not get a good view of it, because the precipitous bastion curved at the top, so that the base was not easily seen and the car disappeared as it came nearer. No doubt it would stop almost exactly beneath them, at the place where the pukka road degenerated into a path, and the elephant had turned to sidle into the hills.

He ran back, to tell the strange news to his guest. The guide explained that she had gone into a cave. "Which cave?"

He indicated the group vaguely.

"You should have kept her in sight, it was your duty," said Aziz severely. "Here are twelve caves at least. How am I to know which contains my guest? Which is the cave I was in myself?"

The same vague gesture. And Aziz, looking again, could not even be sure he had returned to the same group. Caves appeared in every direction—it seemed their original spawning place—and the orifices were always the same size. He thought, "Merciful Heavens, Miss Quested is lost," then pulled himself together, and began to look for her calmly.

"Shout!" he commanded.

When they had done this for awhile, the guide explained that to shout is useless, because a Marabar cave can hear no sound but its own. Aziz wiped

his head, and sweat began to stream inside his clothes. The place was so confusing; it was partly a terrace, partly a zigzag, and full of grooves that led this way and that like snake-tracks. He tried to go into every one, but he never knew where he had started. Caves got behind caves or confabulated in pairs, and some were at the entrance of a gully.

“Come here!” he called gently, and when the guide was in reach, he struck him in the face for a punishment. The man fled, and he was left alone. He thought, “This is the end of my career, my guest is lost.” And then he discovered the simple and sufficient explanation of the mystery.

Miss Quested wasn't lost. She had joined the people in the car—friends of hers, no doubt, Mr. Heaslop perhaps. He had a sudden glimpse of her, far down the gully—only a glimpse, but there she was quite plain, framed between rocks, and speaking to another lady. He was so relieved that he did not think her conduct odd. Accustomed to sudden changes of plan, he supposed that she had run down the Kawa Dol impulsively, in the hope of a little drive. He started back alone towards his camp, and almost at once caught sight of something which would have disquieted him very much a moment before: Miss Quested's field-glasses. They were lying at the verge of a cave, half-way down an entrance tunnel. He tried to hang them over his shoulder, but the leather strap had broken, so he put them into his pocket instead. When he had gone a few steps, he thought she might have dropped something else, so he went back to look.

But the previous difficulty recurred: he couldn't identify the cave. Down in the plain he heard the car starting; however, he couldn't catch a second glimpse of that. So he scrambled down the valley-face of the hill towards Mrs. Moore, and here he was more successful: the colour and confusion of his little camp soon appeared, and in the midst of it he saw an Englishman's topi, and beneath it—oh joy!—smiled not Mr. Heaslop, but Fielding.

“Fielding! Oh, I have so wanted you!” he cried, dropping the “Mr.” for the first time.

And his friend ran to meet him, all so pleasant and jolly, no dignity, shouting explanations and apologies about the train. Fielding had come in the newly arrived car—Miss Derek's car—that other lady was Miss Derek.

Chatter, chatter, all the servants leaving their cooking to listen. Excellent Miss Derek! She had met Fielding by chance at the post office, said, "Why haven't you gone to the Marabar?" heard how he missed the train, offered to run him there and then. Another nice English lady. Where was she? Left with car and chauffeur while Fielding found camp. Car couldn't get up—no, of course not—hundreds of people must go down to escort Miss Derek and show her the way. The elephant in person. . . .

"Aziz, can I have a drink?"

"Certainly not." He flew to get one.

"Mr. Fielding!" called Mrs. Moore, from her patch of shade; they had not spoken yet, because his arrival had coincided with the torrent from the hill.

"Good morning again!" he cried, relieved to find all well.

"Mr. Fielding, have you seen Miss Quested?"

"But I've only just arrived. Where is she?"

"I do not know."

"Aziz! Where have you put Miss Quested to?" Aziz, who was returning with a drink in his hand, had to think for a moment. His heart was full of new happiness. The picnic, after a nasty shock or two, had developed into something beyond his dreams, for Fielding had not only come, but brought an uninvited guest. "Oh, she's all right," he said; "she went down to see Miss Derek. Well, here's luck! Chin-chin!"

"Here's luck, but chin-chin I do refuse," laughed Fielding, who detested the phrase. "Here's to India!"

"Here's luck, and here's to England!"

Miss Derek's chauffeur stopped the cavalcade which was starting to escort his mistress up, and informed it that she had gone back with the other young lady to Chandrapore; she had sent him to say so. She was driving herself.

“Oh yes, that’s quite likely,” said Aziz. “I knew they’d gone for a spin.”

“Chandrapore? The man’s made a mistake,” Fielding exclaimed.

“Oh no, why?” He was disappointed, but made light of it; no doubt the two young ladies were great friends. He would prefer to give breakfast to all four; still, guests must do as they wish, or they become prisoners. He went away cheerfully to inspect the porridge and the ice.

“What’s happened?” asked Fielding, who felt at once that something had gone queer. All the way out Miss Derek had chattered about the picnic, called it an unexpected treat, and said that she preferred Indians who didn’t invite her to their entertainments to those who did it. Mrs. Moore sat swinging her foot, and appeared sulky and stupid. She said: “Miss Derek is most unsatisfactory and restless, always in a hurry, always wanting something new; she will do anything in the world except go back to the Indian lady who pays her.”

Fielding, who didn’t dislike Miss Derek, replied: “She wasn’t in a hurry when I left her. There was no question of returning to Chandrapore. It looks to me as if Miss Quested’s in the hurry.”

“Adela?—she’s never been in a hurry in her life,” said the old lady sharply.

“I say it’ll prove to be Miss Quested’s wish, in fact I know it is,” persisted the schoolmaster. He was annoyed—chiefly with himself. He had begun by missing a train—a sin he was never guilty of—and now that he did arrive it was to upset Aziz’ arrangements for the second time. He wanted someone to share the blame, and frowned at Mrs. Moore rather magisterially. “Aziz is a charming fellow,” he announced.

“I know,” she answered, with a yawn.

“He has taken endless trouble to make a success of our picnic.”

They knew one another very little, and felt rather awkward at being drawn together by an Indian. The racial problem can take subtle forms. In

their case it had induced a sort of jealousy, a mutual suspicion. He tried to goad her enthusiasm; she scarcely spoke. Aziz fetched them to breakfast.

“It is quite natural about Miss Quested,” he remarked, for he had been working the incident a little in his mind, to get rid of its roughnesses. “We were having an interesting talk with our guide, then the car was seen, so she decided to go down to her friend.” Incurably inaccurate, he already thought that this was what had occurred. He was inaccurate because he was sensitive. He did not like to remember Miss Quested’s remark about polygamy, because it was unworthy of a guest, so he put it from his mind, and with it the knowledge that he had bolted into a cave to get away from her. He was inaccurate because he desired to honour her, and—facts being entangled—he had to arrange them in her vicinity, as one tidies the ground after extracting a weed. Before breakfast was over, he had told a good many lies. “She ran to her friend, I to mine,” he went on, smiling. “And now I am with my friends and they are with me and each other, which is happiness.”

Loving them both, he expected them to love each other. They didn’t want to. Fielding thought with hostility, “I knew these women would make trouble,” and Mrs. Moore thought, “This man, having missed the train, tries to blame us”; but her thoughts were feeble; since her faintness in the cave she was sunk in apathy and cynicism. The wonderful India of her opening weeks, with its cool nights and acceptable hints of infinity, had vanished.

Fielding ran up to see one cave. He wasn’t impressed. Then they got on the elephant and the picnic began to unwind out of the corridor and escaped under the precipice towards the railway station, pursued by stabs of hot air. They came to the place where he had quitted the car. A disagreeable thought now struck him, and he said: “Aziz, exactly where and how did you leave Miss Quested?”

“Up there.” He indicated the Kawa Dol cheerfully.

“But how——” A gully, or rather a crease, showed among the rocks at this place; it was scurfy with cactuses. “I suppose the guide helped her.”

“Oh, rather, most helpful.”

“Is there a path off the top?”

“Millions of paths, my dear fellow.”

Fielding could see nothing but the crease. Everywhere else the glaring granite plunged into the earth.

“But you saw them get down safe?”

“Yes, yes, she and Miss Derek, and go off in the car.”

“Then the guide came back to you?”

“Exactly. Got a cigarette?”

“I hope she wasn’t ill,” pursued the Englishman. The crease continued as a nullah across the plain, the water draining off this way towards the Ganges.

“She would have wanted me, if she was ill, to attend her.”

“Yes, that sounds sense.”

“I see you’re worrying, let’s talk of other things,” he said kindly. “Miss Quested was always to do what she wished, it was our arrangement. I see you are worrying on my account, but really I don’t mind, I never notice trifles.”

“I do worry on your account. I consider they have been impolite!” said Fielding, lowering his voice. “She had no right to dash away from your party, and Miss Derek had no right to abet her.”

So touchy as a rule, Aziz was unassailable. The wings that uplifted him did not falter, because he was a Mogul emperor who had done his duty. Perched on his elephant, he watched the Marabar Hills recede, and saw again, as provinces of his kingdom, the grim untidy plain, the frantic and feeble movements of the buckets, the white shrines, the shallow graves, the suave sky, the snake that looked like a tree. He had given his guests as good a time as he could, and if they came late or left early that was not his affair.

Mrs. Moore slept, swaying against the rods of the howdah, Mohammed Latif embraced her with efficiency and respect, and by his own side sat Fielding, whom he began to think of as “Cyril.”

“Aziz, have you figured out what this picnic will cost you?”

“Sh! my dear chap, don’t mention that part. Hundreds and hundreds of rupees. The completed account will be too awful; my friends’ servants have robbed me right and left, and as for an elephant, she apparently eats gold. I can trust you not to repeat this. And M.L.—please employ initials, he listens—is far the worst of all.”

“I told you he’s no good.”

“He is plenty of good for himself; his dishonesty will ruin me.”

“Aziz, how monstrous!”

“I am delighted with him really, he has made my guests comfortable; besides, it is my duty to employ him, he is my cousin. If money goes, money comes. If money stays, death comes. Did you ever hear that useful Urdu proverb? Probably not, for I have just invented it.”

“My proverbs are: A penny saved is a penny earned; A stitch in time saves nine; Look before you leap; and the British Empire rests on them. You will never kick us out, you know, until you cease employing M.L.’s and such.”

“Oh, kick you out? Why should I trouble over that dirty job? Leave it to the politicians. . . . No, when I was a student I got excited over your damned countrymen, certainly; but if they’ll let me get on with my profession and not be too rude to me officially, I really don’t ask for more.”

“But you do; you take them to a picnic.”

“This picnic is nothing to do with English or Indian; it is an expedition of friends.”



So the cavalcade ended, partly pleasant, partly not; the Brahman cook was picked up, the train arrived, pushing its burning throat over the plain, and the twentieth century took over from the sixteenth. Mrs. Moore entered her carriage, the three men went to theirs, adjusted the shutters, turned on the electric fan and tried to get some sleep. In the twilight, all resembled corpses, and the train itself seemed dead though it moved—a coffin from the scientific north which troubled the scenery four times a day. As it left the Marabars, their nasty little cosmos disappeared, and gave place to the Marabars seen from a distance, finite and rather romantic. The train halted once under a pump, to drench the stock of coal in its tender. Then it caught sight of the main line in the distance, took courage, and bumped forward, rounded the civil station, surmounted the level-crossing (the rails were scorching now), and clanked to a stand-still. Chandrapore, Chandrapore! The expedition was over.

And as it ended, as they sat up in the gloom and prepared to enter ordinary life, suddenly the long drawn strangeness of the morning snapped. Mr. Haq, the Inspector of Police, flung open the door of their carriage and said in shrill tones: “Dr. Aziz, it is my highly painful duty to arrest you.”

“Hullo, some mistake,” said Fielding, at once taking charge of the situation.

“Sir, they are my instructions. I know nothing.”

“On what charge do you arrest him?”

“I am under instructions not to say.”

“Don’t answer me like that. Produce your warrant.”

“Sir, excuse me, no warrant is required under these particular circumstances. Refer to Mr. McBryde.”

“Very well, so we will. Come along, Aziz, old man; nothing to fuss about, some blunder.”

“Dr. Aziz, will you kindly come?—a closed conveyance stands in readiness.”

The young man sobbed—his first sound—and tried to escape out of the opposite door on to the line.

“That will compel me to use force,” Mr. Haq wailed.

“Oh, for God’s sake——” cried Fielding, his own nerves breaking under the contagion, and pulled him back before a scandal started, and shook him like a baby. A second later, and he would have been out, whistles blowing, a man-hunt. . . . “Dear fellow, we’re coming to McBryde together, and enquire what’s gone wrong—he’s a decent fellow, it’s all unintentional . . . he’ll apologize. Never, never act the criminal.”

“My children and my name!” he gasped, his wings broken.

“Nothing of the sort. Put your hat straight and take my arm. I’ll see you through.”

“Ah, thank God, he comes,” the Inspector exclaimed. They emerged into the midday heat, arm in arm. The station was seething. Passengers and porters rushed out of every recess, many Government servants, more police. Ronny escorted Mrs. Moore. Mohammed Latif began wailing. And before they could make their way through the chaos, Fielding was called off by the authoritative tones of Mr. Turton, and Aziz went on to prison alone.

## CHAPTER XVII

The Collector had watched the arrest from the interior of the waiting-room, and throwing open its perforated doors of zinc, he was now revealed like a god in a shrine. When Fielding entered the doors clapped to, and were guarded by a servant, while a punkah, to mark the importance of the moment, flapped dirty petticoats over their heads. The Collector could not speak at first. His face was white, fanatical, and rather beautiful—the expression that all English faces were to wear at Chandrapore for many days. Always brave and unselfish, he was now fused by some white and generous heat; he would have killed himself, obviously, if he had thought it right to do so. He spoke at last. “The worst thing in my whole career has happened,” he said. “Miss Quested has been insulted in one of the Marabar caves.”

“Oh no, oh no, no,” gasped the other, feeling sickish.

“She escaped—by God’s grace.”

“Oh no, no, but not Aziz . . . not Aziz . . .”

He nodded.

“Absolutely impossible, grotesque.”

“I called you to preserve you from the odium that would attach to you if you were seen accompanying him to the Police Station,” said Turton, paying no attention to his protest, indeed scarcely hearing it.

He repeated “Oh no,” like a fool. He couldn’t frame other words. He felt that a mass of madness had arisen and tried to overwhelm them all; it had to be shoved back into its pit somehow, and he didn’t know how to do it, because he did not understand madness: he had always gone about sensibly

and quietly until a difficulty came right. “Who lodges this infamous charge?” he asked, pulling himself together.

“Miss Derek and—the victim herself. . . .” He nearly broke down, unable to repeat the girl’s name.

“Miss Quested herself definitely accuses him of——”

He nodded and turned his face away.

“Then she’s mad.”

“I cannot pass that last remark,” said the Collector, waking up to the knowledge that they differed, and trembling with fury. “You will withdraw it instantly. It is the type of remark you have permitted yourself to make ever since you came to Chandrapore.”

“I’m excessively sorry, sir; I certainly withdraw it unconditionally.” For the man was half mad himself.

“Pray, Mr. Fielding, what induced you to speak to me in such a tone?”

“The news gave me a very great shock, so I must ask you to forgive me. I cannot believe that Dr. Aziz is guilty.”

He slammed his hand on the table. “That—that is a repetition of your insult in an aggravated form.”

“If I may venture to say so, no,” said Fielding, also going white, but sticking to his point. “I make no reflection on the good faith of the two ladies, but the charge they are bringing against Aziz rests upon some mistake, and five minutes will clear it up. The man’s manner is perfectly natural; besides, I know him to be incapable of infamy.”

“It does indeed rest upon a mistake,” came the thin, biting voice of the other. “It does indeed. I have had twenty-five years’ experience of this country”—he paused, and “twenty-five years” seemed to fill the waiting-room with their staleness and ungenerosity—“and during those twenty-five years I have never known anything but disaster result when English people

and Indians attempt to be intimate socially. Intercourse, yes. Courtesy, by all means. Intimacy—never, never. The whole weight of my authority is against it. I have been in charge at Chandrapore for six years, and if everything has gone smoothly, if there has been mutual respect and esteem, it is because both peoples kept to this simple rule. New-comers set our traditions aside, and in an instant what you see happens, the work of years is undone and the good name of my District ruined for a generation. I—I—can't see the end of this day's work, Mr. Fielding. You, who are imbued with modern ideas—no doubt you can. I wish I had never lived to see its beginning, I know that. It is the end of me. That a lady, that a young lady engaged to my most valued subordinate—that she—an English girl fresh from England—that I should have lived——”

Involved in his own emotions, he broke down. What he had said was both dignified and pathetic, but had it anything to do with Aziz? Nothing at all, if Fielding was right. It is impossible to regard a tragedy from two points of view, and whereas Turton had decided to avenge the girl, he hoped to save the man. He wanted to get away and talk to McBryde, who had always been friendly to him, was on the whole sensible, and could, anyhow, be trusted to keep cool.

“I came down particularly on your account—while poor Heaslop got his mother away. I regarded it as the most friendly thing I could do. I meant to tell you that there will be an informal meeting at the club this evening to discuss the situation, but I am doubtful whether you will care to come. Your visits there are always infrequent.”

“I shall certainly come, sir, and I am most grateful to you for all the trouble you have taken over me. May I venture to ask—where Miss Quested is.”

He replied with a gesture; she was ill.

“Worse and worse, appalling,” he said feelingly.

But the Collector looked at him sternly, because he was keeping his head. He had not gone mad at the phrase “an English girl fresh from England,” he had not rallied to the banner of race. He was still after facts, though the herd

had decided on emotion. Nothing enrages Anglo-India more than the lantern of reason if it is exhibited for one moment after its extinction is decreed. All over Chandrapore that day the Europeans were putting aside their normal personalities and sinking themselves in their community. Pity, wrath, heroism, filled them, but the power of putting two and two together was annihilated.

Terminating the interview, the Collector walked on to the platform. The confusion there was revolting. A chuprassi of Ronny's had been told to bring up some trifles belonging to the ladies, and was appropriating for himself various articles to which he had no right; he was a camp follower of the angry English. Mohammed Latif made no attempt to resist him. Hassan flung off his turban, and wept. All the comforts that had been provided so liberally were rolled about and wasted in the sun. The Collector took in the situation at a glance, and his sense of justice functioned though he was insane with rage. He spoke the necessary word, and the looting stopped. Then he drove off to his bungalow and gave rein to his passions again. When he saw the coolies asleep in the ditches or the shopkeepers rising to salute him on their little platforms, he said to himself: "I know what you're like at last; you shall pay for this, you shall squeal."

## CHAPTER XVIII

Mr. McBryde, the District Superintendent of Police, was the most reflective and best educated of the Chandrapore officials. He had read and thought a good deal, and, owing to a somewhat unhappy marriage, had evolved a complete philosophy of life. There was much of the cynic about him, but nothing of the bully; he never lost his temper or grew rough, and he received Aziz with courtesy, was almost reassuring. "I have to detain you until you get bail," he said, "but no doubt your friends will be applying for it, and of course they will be allowed to visit you, under regulations. I am given certain information, and have to act on it—I'm not your judge." Aziz was led off weeping. Mr. McBryde was shocked at his downfall, but no Indian ever surprised him, because he had a theory about climatic zones. The theory ran: "All unfortunate natives are criminals at heart, for the simple reason that they live south of latitude 30. They are not to blame, they have not a dog's chance—we should be like them if we settled here." Born at Karachi, he seemed to contradict his theory, and would sometimes admit as much with a sad, quiet smile.

"Another of them found out," he thought, as he set to work to draft his statement to the Magistrate.

He was interrupted by the arrival of Fielding.

He imparted all he knew without reservations. Miss Derek had herself driven in the Mudkul car about an hour ago, she and Miss Quested both in a terrible state. They had gone straight to his bungalow where he happened to be, and there and then he had taken down the charge and arranged for the arrest at the railway station.

"What is the charge, precisely?"

"That he followed her into the cave and made insulting advances. She hit at him with her field-glasses; he pulled at them and the strap broke, and that

is how she got away. When we searched him just now, they were in his pocket.”

“Oh no, oh no, no; it’ll be cleared up in five minutes,” he cried again.

“Have a look at them.”

The strap had been newly broken, the eye-piece was jammed. The logic of evidence said “Guilty.”

“Did she say any more?”

“There was an echo that appears to have frightened her. Did you go into those caves?”

“I saw one of them. There was an echo. Did it get on her nerves?”

“I couldn’t worry her overmuch with questions. She’ll have plenty to go through in the witness-box. They don’t bear thinking about, these next weeks. I wish the Marabar Hills and all they contain were at the bottom of the sea. Evening after evening one saw them from the club, and they were just a harmless name. . . . Yes, we start already.” For a visiting card was brought; Vakil Mahmood Ali, legal adviser to the prisoner, asked to be allowed to see him. McBryde sighed, gave permission, and continued: “I heard some more from Miss Derek—she is an old friend of us both and talks freely; well—her account is that you went off to locate the camp, and almost at once she heard stones falling on the Kawa Dol and saw Miss Quested running straight down the face of a precipice. Well. She climbed up a sort of gully to her, and found her practically done for—her helmet off \_\_\_\_\_”

“Was a guide not with her?” interrupted Fielding.

“No. She had got among some cactuses. Miss Derek saved her life coming just then—she was beginning to fling herself about. She helped her down to the car. Miss Quested couldn’t stand the Indian driver, cried, ‘Keep him away’—and it was that that put our friend on the track of what had happened. They made straight for our bungalow, and are there now. That’s



the story as far as I know it yet. She sent the driver to join you. I think she behaved with great sense.”

“I suppose there’s no possibility of my seeing Miss Quested?” he asked suddenly.

“I hardly think that would do. Surely.”

“I was afraid you’d say that. I should very much like to.”

“She is in no state to see anyone. Besides, you don’t know her well.”

“Hardly at all. . . . But you see I believe she’s under some hideous delusion, and that that wretched boy is innocent.”

The policeman started in surprise, and a shadow passed over his face, for he could not bear his dispositions to be upset. “I had no idea that was in your mind,” he said, and looked for support at the signed deposition, which lay before him.

“Those field-glasses upset me for a minute, but I’ve thought since: it’s impossible that, having attempted to assault her, he would put her glasses into his pocket.”

“Quite possible, I’m afraid; when an Indian goes bad, he goes not only very bad, but very queer.”

“I don’t follow.”

“How should you? When you think of crime you think of English crime. The psychology here is different. I dare say you’ll tell me next that he was quite normal when he came down from the hill to greet you. No reason he should not be. Read any of the Mutiny records; which, rather than the Bhagavad Gita, should be your Bible in this country. Though I’m not sure that the one and the other are not closely connected. Am I not being beastly? But, you see, Fielding, as I’ve said to you once before, you’re a schoolmaster, and consequently you come across these people at their best. That’s what puts you wrong. They can be charming as boys. But I know

them as they really are, after they have developed into men. Look at this, for instance.” He held up Aziz’ pocket-case. “I am going through the contents. They are not edifying. Here is a letter from a friend who apparently keeps a brothel.”

“I don’t want to hear his private letters.”

“It’ll have to be quoted in Court, as bearing on his morals. He was fixing up to see women at Calcutta.”

“Oh, that’ll do, that’ll do.”

McBryde stopped, naively puzzled. It was obvious to him that any two sahibs ought to pool all they knew about any Indian, and he could not think where the objection came in.

“I dare say you have the right to throw stones at a young man for doing that, but I haven’t. I did the same at his age.”

So had the Superintendent of Police, but he considered that the conversation had taken a turn that was undesirable. He did not like Fielding’s next remark either.

“Miss Quersted really cannot be seen? You do know that for a certainty?”

“You have never explained to me what’s in your mind here. Why on earth do you want to see her?”

“On the off chance of her recanting before you send in that report and he’s committed for trial, and the whole thing goes to blazes. Old man, don’t argue about this, but do of your goodness just ring up your wife or Miss Derek and enquire. It’ll cost you nothing.”

“It’s no use ringing up them,” he replied, stretching out for the telephone. “Callendar settles a question like that, of course. You haven’t grasped that she’s seriously ill.”

“He’s sure to refuse, it’s all he exists for,” said the other desperately.

The expected answer came back: the Major would not hear of the patient being troubled.

“I only wanted to ask her whether she is certain, dead certain, that it was Aziz who followed her into the cave.”

“Possibly my wife might ask her that much.”

“But *I* wanted to ask her. I want someone who believes in him to ask her.”

“What difference does that make?”

“She is among people who disbelieve in Indians.”

“Well, she tells her own story, doesn’t she?”

“I know, but she tells it to you.”

McBryde raised his eyebrows, murmuring: “A bit too finespun. Anyhow, Callendar won’t hear of you seeing her. I’m sorry to say he gave a bad account just now. He says that she is by no means out of danger.”

They were silent. Another card was brought into the office—Hamidullah’s. The opposite army was gathering.

“I must put this report through now, Fielding.”

“I wish you wouldn’t.”

“How can I not?”

“I feel that things are rather unsatisfactory as well as most disastrous. We are heading for a most awful smash. I can see your prisoner, I suppose.”

He hesitated. “His own people seem in touch with him all right.”

“Well, when he’s done with them.”

“I wouldn’t keep you waiting; good heavens, you take precedence of any Indian visitor, of course. I meant what’s the good. Why mix yourself up with pitch?”

“I say he’s innocent——”

“Innocence or guilt, why mix yourself up? What’s the good?”

“Oh, good, good,” he cried, feeling that every earth was being stopped. “One’s got to breathe occasionally, at least I have. I mayn’t see her, and now I mayn’t see him. I promised him to come up here with him to you, but Turton called me off before I could get two steps.”

“Sort of all-white thing the Burra Sahib would do,” he muttered sentimentally. And trying not to sound patronizing, he stretched his hand over the table, and said: “We shall all have to hang together, old man, I’m afraid. I’m your junior in years, I know, but very much your senior in service; you don’t happen to know this poisonous country as well as I do, and you must take it from me that the general situation is going to be nasty at Chandrapore during the next few weeks, very nasty indeed.”

“So I have just told you.”

“But at a time like this there’s no room for—well—personal views. The man who doesn’t toe the line is lost.”

“I see what you mean.”

“No, you don’t see entirely. He not only loses himself, he weakens his friends. If you leave the line, you leave a gap in the line. These jackals”—he pointed at the lawyers’ cards—“are looking with all their eyes for a gap.”

“Can I visit Aziz?” was his answer.

“No.” Now that he knew of Turton’s attitude, the policeman had no doubts. “You may see him on a magistrate’s order, but on my own responsibility I don’t feel justified. It might lead to more complications.”

He paused, reflecting that if he had been either ten years younger or ten years longer in India, he would have responded to McBryde's appeal. The bit between his teeth, he then said, "To whom do I apply for an order?"

"City Magistrate."

"That sounds comfortable!"

"Yes, one can't very well worry poor Heaslop."

More "evidence" appeared at this moment—the table-drawer from Aziz' bungalow, borne with triumph in a corporal's arms.

"Photographs of women. Ah!"

"That's his wife," said Fielding, wincing.

"How do you know that?"

"He told me."

McBryde gave a faint, incredulous smile, and started rummaging in the drawer. His face became inquisitive and slightly bestial. "Wife indeed, I know those wives!" he was thinking. Aloud he said: "Well, you must trot off now, old man, and the Lord help us, the Lord help us all. . ."

As if his prayer had been heard, there was a sudden rickety-dacket on a temple bell.

## CHAPTER XIX

Hamidullah was the next stage. He was waiting outside the Superintendent's office, and sprang up respectfully when he saw Fielding. To the Englishman's passionate "It's all a mistake," he answered, "Ah, ah, has some evidence come?"

"It will come," said Fielding, holding his hand.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Fielding; but when once an Indian has been arrested, we do not know where it will stop." His manner was deferential. "You are very good to greet me in this public fashion, I appreciate it; but, Mr. Fielding, nothing convinces a magistrate except evidence. Did Mr. McBryde make any remark when my card came in? Do you think my application annoyed him, will prejudice him against my friend at all? If so, I will gladly retire."

"He's not annoyed, and if he was, what does it matter?"

"Ah, it's all very well for you to speak like that, but we have to live in this country."

The leading barrister of Chandrapore, with the dignified manner and Cambridge degree, had been rattled. He too loved Aziz, and knew he was calumniated; but faith did not rule his heart, and he prated of "policy" and "evidence" in a way that saddened the Englishman. Fielding, too, had his anxieties—he didn't like the field-glasses or the discrepancy over the guide—but he relegated them to the edge of his mind, and forbade them to infect its core. Aziz *was* innocent, and all action must be based on that, and the people who said he was guilty were wrong, and it was hopeless to try to propitiate them. At the moment when he was throwing in his lot with Indians, he realized the profundity of the gulf that divided him from them. They always do something disappointing. Aziz had tried to run away from the police, Mohammed Latif had not checked the pilfering. And now Hamidullah!—instead of raging and denouncing, he temporized. Are

Indians cowards? No, but they are bad starters and occasionally jib. Fear is everywhere; the British Raj rests on it; the respect and courtesy Fielding himself enjoyed were unconscious acts of propitiation. He told Hamidullah to cheer up, all would end well; and Hamidullah did cheer up, and became pugnacious and sensible. McBryde's remark, "If you leave the line, you leave a gap in the line," was being illustrated.

"First and foremost, the question of bail . . ."

Application must be made this afternoon. Fielding wanted to stand surety. Hamidullah thought the Nawab Bahadur should be approached.

"Why drag in him, though?"

To drag in everyone was precisely the barrister's aim. He then suggested that the lawyer in charge of the case would be a Hindu; the defence would then make a wider appeal. He mentioned one or two names—men from a distance who would not be intimidated by local conditions—and said he should prefer Amritrao, a Calcutta barrister, who had a high reputation professionally and personally, but who was notoriously anti-British.

Fielding demurred; this seemed to him going to the other extreme. Aziz must be cleared, but with a minimum of racial hatred. Amritrao was loathed at the club. His retention would be regarded as a political challenge.

"Oh no, we must hit with all our strength. When I saw my friend's private papers carried in just now in the arms of a dirty policeman, I said to myself, 'Amritrao is the man to clear up this.'"

There was a lugubrious pause. The temple bell continued to jangle harshly. The interminable and disastrous day had scarcely reached its afternoon. Continuing their work, the wheels of Dominion now propelled a messenger on a horse from the Superintendent to the Magistrate with an official report of arrest. "Don't complicate, let the cards play themselves," entreated Fielding, as he watched the man disappear into dust. "We're bound to win, there's nothing else we can do. She will never be able to substantiate the charge."

This comforted Hamidullah, who remarked with complete sincerity, “At a crisis, the English are really unequalled.”

“Good-bye, then, my dear Hamidullah (we must drop the ‘Mr.’ now). Give Aziz my love when you see him, and tell him to keep calm, calm, calm. I shall go back to the College now. If you want me, ring me up; if you don’t, don’t, for I shall be very busy.”

“Good-bye, my dear Fielding, and you actually are on our side against your own people?”

“Yes. Definitely.”

He regretted taking sides. To slink through India unlabelled was his aim. Henceforward he would be called “anti-British,” “seditious”—terms that bored him, and diminished his utility. He foresaw that besides being a tragedy, there would be a muddle; already he saw several tiresome little knots, and each time his eye returned to them, they were larger. Born in freedom, he was not afraid of muddle, but he recognized its existence.

This section of the day concluded in a queer vague talk with Professor Godbole. The interminable affair of the Russell’s Viper was again in question. Some weeks before, one of the masters at the College, an unpopular Parsi, had found a Russell’s Viper nosing round his class-room. Perhaps it had crawled in of itself, but perhaps it had not, and the staff still continued to interview their Principal about it, and to take up his time with their theories. The reptile is so poisonous that he did not like to cut them short, and this they knew. Thus when his mind was bursting with other troubles and he was debating whether he should compose a letter of appeal to Miss Quested, he was obliged to listen to a speech which lacked both basis and conclusion, and floated through air. At the end of it Godbole said, “May I now take my leave?”—always an indication that he had not come to his point yet. “Now I take my leave, I must tell you how glad I am to hear that after all you succeeded in reaching the Marabar. I feared my unpunctuality had prevented you, but you went (a far pleasanter method) in Miss Derek’s car. I hope the expedition was a successful one.”

“The news has not reached you yet, I can see.”



“Oh yes.”

“No; there has been a terrible catastrophe about Aziz.”

“Oh yes. That is all round the College.”

“Well, the expedition where that occurs can scarcely be called a successful one,” said Fielding, with an amazed stare.

“I cannot say. I was not present.”

He stared again—a most useless operation, for no eye could see what lay at the bottom of the Brahman’s mind, and yet he had a mind and a heart too, and all his friends trusted him, without knowing why. “I am most frightfully cut up,” he said.

“So I saw at once on entering your office. I must not detain you, but I have a small private difficulty on which I want your help; I am leaving your service shortly, as you know.”

“Yes, alas!”

“And am returning to my birthplace in Central India to take charge of education there. I want to start a High School there on sound English lines, that shall be as like Government College as possible.”

“Well?” he sighed, trying to take an interest.

“At present there is only vernacular education at Mau. I shall feel it my duty to change all that. I shall advise His Highness to sanction at least a High School in the Capital, and if possible another in each pargana.”

Fielding sunk his head on his arms; really, Indians were sometimes unbearable.

“The point—the point on which I desire your help is this: what name should be given to the school?”

“A name? A name for a school?” he said, feeling sickish suddenly, as he had done in the waiting-room.

“Yes, a name, a suitable title, by which it can be called, by which it may be generally known.”

“Really—I have no names for schools in my head. I can think of nothing but our poor Aziz. Have you grasped that at the present moment he is in prison?”

“Oh yes. Oh no, I do not expect an answer to my question now. I only meant that when you are at leisure, you might think the matter over, and suggest two or three alternative titles for schools. I had thought of the ‘Mr. Fielding High School,’ but failing that, the ‘King-Emperor George the Fifth.’”

“Godbole!”

The old fellow put his hands together, and looked sly and charming.

“Is Aziz innocent or guilty?”

“That is for the Court to decide. The verdict will be in strict accordance with the evidence, I make no doubt.”

“Yes, yes, but your personal opinion. Here’s a man we both like, generally esteemed; he lives here quietly doing his work. Well, what’s one to make of it? Would he or would he not do such a thing?”

“Ah, that is rather a different question from your previous one, and also more difficult: I mean difficult in our philosophy. Dr. Aziz is a most worthy young man, I have a great regard for him; but I think you are asking me whether the individual can commit good actions or evil actions, and that is rather difficult for us.” He spoke without emotion and in short tripping syllables.

“I ask you: did he do it or not? Is that plain? I know he didn’t, and from that I start. I mean to get at the true explanation in a couple of days. My last

notion is that it's the guide who went round with them. Malice on Miss Quested's part—it couldn't be that, though Hamidullah thinks so. She has certainly had some appalling experience. But you tell me, oh no—because good and evil are the same.”

“No, not exactly, please, according to our philosophy. Because nothing can be performed in isolation. All perform a good action, when one is performed, and when an evil action is performed, all perform it. To illustrate my meaning, let me take the case in point as an example.

“I am informed that an evil action was performed in the Marabar Hills, and that a highly esteemed English lady is now seriously ill in consequence. My answer to that is this: that action was performed by Dr. Aziz.” He stopped and sucked in his thin cheeks. “It was performed by the guide.” He stopped again. “It was performed by you.” Now he had an air of daring and of coyness. “It was performed by me.” He looked shyly down the sleeve of his own coat. “And by my students. It was even performed by the lady herself. When evil occurs, it expresses the whole of the universe. Similarly when good occurs.”

“And similarly when suffering occurs, and so on and so forth, and everything is anything and nothing something,” he muttered in his irritation, for he needed the solid ground.

“Excuse me, you are now again changing the basis of our discussion. We were discussing good and evil. Suffering is merely a matter for the individual. If a young lady has sunstroke, that is a matter of no significance to the universe. Oh no, not at all. Oh no, not the least. It is an isolated matter, it only concerns herself. If she thought her head did not ache, she would not be ill, and that would end it. But it is far otherwise in the case of good and evil. They are not what we think them, they are what they are, and each of us has contributed to both.”

“You're preaching that evil and good are the same.”

“Oh no, excuse me once again. Good and evil are different, as their names imply. But, in my own humble opinion, they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other, and the

difference between presence and absence is great, as great as my feeble mind can grasp. Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence, and we are therefore entitled to repeat, ‘Come, come, come, come.’” And in the same breath, as if to cancel any beauty his words might have contained, he added, “But did you have time to visit any of the interesting Marabar antiquities?”

Fielding was silent, trying to meditate and rest his brain.

“Did you not even see the tank by the usual camping ground?” he nagged.

“Yes, yes,” he answered distractedly, wandering over half a dozen things at once.

“That is good, then you saw the Tank of the Dagger.” And he related a legend which might have been acceptable if he had told it at the tea-party a fortnight ago. It concerned a Hindu Rajah who had slain his own sister’s son, and the dagger with which he performed the deed remained clamped to his hand until in the course of years he came to the Marabar Hills, where he was thirsty and wanted to drink but saw a thirsty cow and ordered the water to be offered to her first, which, when done, “dagger fell from his hand, and to commemorate miracle he built Tank.” Professor Godbole’s conversations frequently culminated in a cow. Fielding received this one in gloomy silence.

In the afternoon he obtained a permit and saw Aziz, but found him unapproachable through misery. “You deserted me,” was the only coherent remark. He went away to write his letter to Miss Quested. Even if it reached her, it would do no good, and probably the McBrydes would withhold it. Miss Quested did pull him up short. She was such a dry, sensible girl, and quite without malice: the last person in Chandrapore wrongfully to accuse an Indian.

## CHAPTER XX

Although Miss Quested had not made herself popular with the English, she brought out all that was fine in their character. For a few hours an exalted emotion gushed forth, which the women felt even more keenly than the men, if not for so long. “What can we do for our sister?” was the only thought of Mesdames Callendar and Lesley, as they drove through the pelting heat to enquire. Mrs. Turton was the only visitor admitted to the sick-room. She came out ennobled by an unselfish sorrow. “She is my own darling girl,” were the words she spoke, and then, remembering that she had called her “not pukka” and resented her engagement to young Heaslop, she began to cry. No one had ever seen the Collector’s wife cry. Capable of tears—yes, but always reserving them for some adequate occasion, and now it had come. Ah, why had they not all been kinder to the stranger, more patient, given her not only hospitality but their hearts? The tender core of the heart that is so seldom used—they employed it for a little, under the stimulus of remorse. If all is over (as Major Callendar implied), well, all is over, and nothing can be done, but they retained some responsibility in her grievous wrong that they couldn’t define. If she wasn’t one of them, they ought to have made her one, and they could never do that now, she had passed beyond their invitation. “Why don’t one think more of other people?” sighed pleasure-loving Miss Derek. These regrets only lasted in their pure form for a few hours. Before sunset, other considerations adulterated them, and the sense of guilt (so strangely connected with our first sight of any suffering) had begun to wear away.

People drove into the club with studious calm—the jog-trot of country gentlefolk between green hedgerows, for the natives must not suspect that they were agitated. They exchanged the usual drinks, but everything tasted different, and then they looked out at the palisade of cactuses stabbing the purple throat of the sky; they realized that they were thousands of miles from any scenery that they understood. The club was fuller than usual, and several parents had brought their children into the rooms reserved for

adults, which gave the air of the Residency at Lucknow. One young mother—a brainless but most beautiful girl—sat on a low ottoman in the smoking-room with her baby in her arms; her husband was away in the district, and she dared not return to her bungalow in case the “niggers attacked.” The wife of a small railway official, she was generally snubbed; but this evening, with her abundant figure and masses of corn-gold hair, she symbolized all that is worth fighting and dying for; more permanent a symbol, perhaps, than poor Adela. “Don’t worry, Mrs. Blakiston, those drums are only Mohurram,” the men would tell her.

“Then they’ve started,” she moaned, clasping the infant and rather wishing he would not blow bubbles down his chin at such a moment as this. “No, of course not, and anyhow, they’re not coming to the club.” “And they’re not coming to the Burra Sahib’s bungalow either, my dear, and that’s where you and your baby’ll sleep tonight,” answered Mrs. Turton, towering by her side like Pallas Athene, and determining in the future not to be such a snob.

The Collector clapped his hands for silence. He was much calmer than when he had flown out at Fielding. He was indeed always calmer when he addressed several people than in a *tête-à-tête*. “I want to talk specially to the ladies,” he said. “Not the least cause for alarm. Keep cool, keep cool. Don’t go out more than you can help, don’t go into the city, don’t talk before your servants. That’s all.”

“Harry, is there any news from the city?” asked his wife, standing at some distance from him, and also assuming her public-safety voice. The rest were silent during the august colloquy.

“Everything absolutely normal.”

“I had gathered as much. Those drums are merely Mohurram, of course.”

“Merely the preparations for it—the Procession is not till next week.”

“Quite so, not till Monday.”

“Mr. McBryde’s down there disguised as a Holy Man,” said Mrs. Callendar.

“That’s exactly the sort of thing that must not be said,” he remarked, pointing at her. “Mrs. Callendar, be more careful than that, please, in these times.”

“I . . . well, I . . .” She was not offended, his severity made her feel safe.

“Any more questions? Necessary questions.”

“Is the—where is he——” Mrs. Lesley quavered.

“Jail. Bail has been refused.”

Fielding spoke next. He wanted to know whether there was an official bulletin about Miss Quested’s health, or whether the grave reports were due to gossip. His question produced a bad effect, partly because he had pronounced her name; she, like Aziz, was always referred to by a periphrasis.

“I hope Callendar may be able to let us know how things are going before long.”

“I fail to see how that last question can be termed a necessary question,” said Mrs. Turton.

“Will all ladies leave the smoking-room now, please?” he cried, clapping his hands again. “And remember what I have said. We look to you to help us through a difficult time, and you can help us by behaving as if everything is normal. It is all I ask. Can I rely on you?”

“Yes, indeed, Burra Sahib,” they chorused out of peaked, anxious faces. They moved out, subdued yet elated, Mrs. Blakiston in their midst like a sacred flame. His simple words had reminded them that they were an outpost of Empire. By the side of their compassionate love for Adela another sentiment sprang up which was to strangle it in the long run. Its first

signs were prosaic and small. Mrs. Turton made her loud, hard jokes at bridge, Mrs. Lesley began to knit a comforter.

When the smoking-room was clear, the Collector sat on the edge of a table, so that he could dominate without formality. His mind whirled with contradictory impulses. He wanted to avenge Miss Quested and punish Fielding, while remaining scrupulously fair. He wanted to flog every native that he saw, but to do nothing that would lead to a riot or to the necessity for military intervention. The dread of having to call in the troops was vivid to him; soldiers put one thing straight, but leave a dozen others crooked, and they love to humiliate the civilian administration. One soldier was in the room this evening—a stray subaltern from a Gurkha regiment; he was a little drunk, and regarded his presence as providential. The Collector sighed. There seemed nothing for it but the old weary business of compromise and moderation. He longed for the good old days when an Englishman could satisfy his own honour and no questions asked afterwards. Poor young Heaslop had taken a step in this direction, by refusing bail, but the Collector couldn't feel this was wise of poor young Heaslop. Not only would the Nawab Bahadur and others be angry, but the Government of India itself also watches—and behind it is that caucus of cranks and cravens, the British Parliament. He had constantly to remind himself that, in the eyes of the law, Aziz was not yet guilty, and the effort fatigued him.

The others, less responsible, could behave naturally. They had started speaking of “women and children”—that phrase that exempts the male from sanity when it has been repeated a few times. Each felt that all he loved best in the world was at stake, demanded revenge, and was filled with a not unpleasing glow, in which the chilly and half-known features of Miss Quested vanished, and were replaced by all that is sweetest and warmest in the private life. “But it's the women and children,” they repeated, and the Collector knew he ought to stop them intoxicating themselves, but he hadn't the heart. “They ought to be compelled to give hostages,” etc. Many of the said women and children were leaving for the Hill Station in a few days, and the suggestion was made that they should be packed off at once in a special train.



“*And* a jolly suggestion,” the subaltern cried. “The army’s got to come in sooner or later. (A special train was in his mind inseparable from troops.) This would never have happened if Barabas Hill was under military control. Station a bunch of Gurkhas at the entrance of the cave was all that was wanted.”

“Mrs. Blakiston was saying if only there were a few Tommies,” remarked someone.

“English no good,” he cried, getting his loyalties mixed. “Native troops for this country. Give me the sporting type of native, give me Gurkhas, give me Rajputs, give me Jats, give me the Punjabi, give me Sikhs, give me Marathas, Bhils, Afridis and Pathans, and really if it comes to that, I don’t mind if you give me the scums of the bazaars. Properly led, mind. I’d lead them anywhere——”

The Collector nodded at him pleasantly, and said to his own people: “Don’t start carrying arms about. I want everything to go on precisely as usual, until there’s cause for the contrary. Get the womenfolk off to the hills, but do it quietly, and for Heaven’s sake no more talk of special trains. Never mind what you think or feel. Possibly I have feelings too. One isolated Indian has attempted—is charged with an attempted crime.” He flipped his forehead hard with his finger-nail, and they all realized that he felt as deeply as they did, and they loved him, and determined not to increase his difficulties. “Act upon that fact until there are more facts,” he concluded. “Assume every Indian is an angel.”

They murmured, “Right you are, Burra Sahib. . . . Angels. . . . Exactly. . . .” From the subaltern: “Exactly what I said. The native’s all right if you get him alone. Lesley! Lesley! You remember the one I had a knock with on your Maidan last month. Well, he was all right. Any native who plays polo is all right. What you’ve got to stamp on is these educated classes, and, mind, I do know what I’m talking about this time.”

The smoking-room door opened, and let in a feminine buzz. Mrs. Turton called out, “She’s better,” and from both sections of the community a sigh of joy and relief rose. The Civil Surgeon, who had brought the good news, came in. His cumbrous, pasty face looked ill-tempered. He surveyed the

company, saw Fielding crouched below him on an ottoman, and said, "H'm!"

Everyone began pressing him for details. "No one's out of danger in this country as long as they have a temperature," was his answer. He appeared to resent his patient's recovery, and no one who knew the old Major and his ways was surprised at this.

"Squat down, Callendar; tell us all about it."

"Take me some time to do that."

"How's the old lady?"

"Temperature."

"My wife heard she was sinking."

"So she may be. I guarantee nothing. I really can't be plagued with questions, Lesley."

"Sorry, old man."

"Heaslop's just behind me."

At the name of Heaslop a fine and beautiful expression was renewed on every face. Miss Quested was only a victim, but young Heaslop was a martyr; he was the recipient of all the evil intended against them by the country they had tried to serve; he was bearing the sahib's cross. And they fretted because they could do nothing for him in return; they felt so craven sitting on softness and attending the course of the law.

"I wish to God I hadn't given my jewel of an assistant leave. I'd cut my tongue out first. To feel I'm responsible, that's what hits me. To refuse, and then give in under pressure. That is what I did, my sons, that is what I did."

Fielding took his pipe from his mouth and looked at it thoughtfully. Thinking him afraid, the other went on: "I understood an Englishman was to accompany the expedition. That is why I gave in."

“No one blames you, my dear Callendar,” said the Collector, looking down. “We are all to blame in the sense that we ought to have seen the expedition was insufficiently guaranteed, and stopped it. I knew about it myself; we lent our car this morning to take the ladies to the station. We are all implicated in that sense, but not an atom of blame attaches to you personally.”

“I don’t feel that. I wish I could. Responsibility is a very awful thing, and I’ve no use for the man who shirks it.” His eyes were directed on Fielding. Those who knew that Fielding had undertaken to accompany and missed the early train were sorry for him; it was what is to be expected when a man mixes himself up with natives; always ends in some indignity. The Collector, who knew more, kept silent, for the official in him still hoped that Fielding would toe the line. The conversation turned to women and children again, and under its cover Major Callendar got hold of the subaltern, and set him on to bait the schoolmaster. Pretending to be more drunk than he really was, he began to make semi-offensive remarks.

“Heard about Miss Quested’s servant?” reinforced the Major.

“No, what about him?”

“Heaslop warned Miss Quested’s servant last night never to lose sight of her. Prisoner got hold of this and managed to leave him behind. Bribe him. Heaslop has just found out the whole story, with names and sums—a well-known pimp to those people gave the money, Mohammed Latif by name. So much for the servant. What about the Englishman—our friend here? How did they get rid of him? Money again.”

Fielding rose to his feet, supported by murmurs and exclamations, for no one yet suspected his integrity.

“Oh, I’m being misunderstood, apologies,” said the Major offensively. “I didn’t mean they bribed Mr. Fielding.”

“Then what do you mean?”

“They paid the other Indian to make you late—Godbole. He was saying his prayers. I know those prayers!”

“That’s ridiculous . . .” He sat down again, trembling with rage; person after person was being dragged into the mud.

Having shot this bolt, the Major prepared the next. “Heaslop also found out something from his mother. Aziz paid a herd of natives to suffocate her in a cave. That was the end of her, or would have been only she got out. Nicely planned, wasn’t it? Neat. Then he could go on with the girl. He and she and a guide, provided by the same Mohammed Latif. Guide now can’t be found. Pretty.” His voice broke into a roar. “It’s not the time for sitting down. It’s the time for action. Call in the troops and clear the bazaars.”

The Major’s outbursts were always discounted, but he made everyone uneasy on this occasion. The crime was even worse than they had supposed—the unspeakable limit of cynicism, untouched since 1857. Fielding forgot his anger on poor old Godbole’s behalf, and became thoughtful; the evil was propagating in every direction, it seemed to have an existence of its own, apart from anything that was done or said by individuals, and he understood better why both Aziz and Hamidullah had been inclined to lie down and die. His adversary saw that he was in trouble, and now ventured to say, “I suppose nothing that’s said inside the club will go outside the club?” winking the while at Lesley.

“Why should it?” responded Lesley.

“Oh, nothing. I only heard a rumour that a certain member here present has been seeing the prisoner this afternoon. You can’t run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, at least not in this country.”

“Does anyone here present want to?”

Fielding was determined not to be drawn again. He had something to say, but it should be at his own moment. The attack failed to mature, because the Collector did not support it. Attention shifted from him for a time. Then the buzz of women broke out again. The door had been opened by Ronny.

The young man looked exhausted and tragic, also gentler than usual. He always showed deference to his superiors, but now it came straight from his heart. He seemed to appeal for their protection in the insult that had befallen him, and they, in instinctive homage, rose to their feet. But every human act in the East is tainted with officialism, and while honouring him they condemned Aziz and India. Fielding realized this, and he remained seated. It was an ungracious, a caddish thing to do, perhaps an unsound thing to do, but he felt he had been passive long enough, and that he might be drawn into the wrong current if he did not make a stand. Ronny, who had not seen him, said in husky tones, “Oh please—please all sit down, I only want to listen what has been decided.”

“Heaslop, I’m telling them I’m against any show of force,” said the Collector apologetically. “I don’t know whether you will feel as I do, but that is how I am situated. When the verdict is obtained, it will be another matter.”

“You are sure to know best; I have no experience, Burra Sahib.”

“How is your mother, old boy?”

“Better, thank you. I wish everyone would sit down.”

“Some have never got up,” the young soldier said.

“And the Major brings us an excellent report of Miss Quested,” Turton went on.

“I do, I do, I’m satisfied.”

“You thought badly of her earlier, did you not, Major? That’s why I refused bail.”

Callendar laughed with friendly inwardness, and said, “Heaslop, Heaslop, next time bail’s wanted, ring up the old doctor before giving it; his shoulders are broad, and, speaking in the strictest confidence, don’t take the old doctor’s opinion too seriously. He’s a blithering idiot, we can always leave it at that, but he’ll do the little he can towards keeping in quod the ——” He broke off with affected politeness. “Oh, but he has one of his friends here.”

The subaltern called, “Stand up, you swine.”

“Mr. Fielding, what has prevented you from standing up?” said the Collector, entering the fray at last. It was the attack for which Fielding had waited, and to which he must reply.

“May I make a statement, sir?”

“Certainly.”

Seasoned and self-contained, devoid of the fervours of nationality or youth, the schoolmaster did what was for him a comparatively easy thing. He stood up and said, “I believe Dr. Aziz to be innocent.”

“You have a right to hold that opinion if you choose, but pray is that any reason why you should insult Mr. Heaslop?”

“May I conclude my statement?”

“Certainly.”

“I am waiting for the verdict of the courts. If he is guilty I resign from my service, and leave India. I resign from the club now.”

“Hear, hear!” said voices, not entirely hostile, for they liked the fellow for speaking out.

“You have not answered my question. Why did you not stand when Mr. Heaslop entered?”

“With all deference, sir, I am not here to answer questions, but to make a personal statement, and I have concluded it.”

“May I ask whether you have taken over charge of this District?”

Fielding moved towards the door.

“One moment, Mr. Fielding. You are not to go yet, please. Before you leave the club, from which you do very well to resign, you will express some detestation of the crime, and you will apologize to Mr. Heaslop.”

“Are you speaking to me officially, sir?”

The Collector, who never spoke otherwise, was so infuriated that he lost his head. He cried, “Leave this room at once, and I deeply regret that I demeaned myself to meet you at the station. You have sunk to the level of your associates; you are weak, weak, that is what is wrong with you——”

“I want to leave the room, but cannot while this gentleman prevents me,” said Fielding lightly; the subaltern had got across his path.

“Let him go,” said Ronny, almost in tears.

It was the only appeal that could have saved the situation. Whatever Heaslop wished must be done. There was a slight scuffle at the door, from which Fielding was propelled, a little more quickly than is natural, into the room where the ladies were playing cards. “Fancy if I’d fallen or got angry,” he thought. Of course he was a little angry. His peers had never offered him violence or called him weak before, besides Heaslop had heaped coals of fire on his head. He wished he had not picked the quarrel over poor suffering Heaslop, when there were cleaner issues at hand.

However, there it was, done, muddled through, and to cool himself and regain mental balance he went on to the upper verandah for a moment, where the first object he saw was the Marabar Hills. At this distance and hour they leapt into beauty; they were Monsalvat, Walhalla, the towers of a cathedral, peopled with saints and heroes, and covered with flowers. What miscreant lurked in them, presently to be detected by the activities of the law? Who was the guide, and had he been found yet? What was the “echo” of which the girl complained? He did not know, but presently he would know. Great is information, and she shall prevail. It was the last moment of the light, and as he gazed at the Marabar Hills they seemed to move graciously towards him like a queen, and their charm became the sky’s. At the moment they vanished they were everywhere, the cool benediction of the night descended, the stars sparkled, and the whole universe was a hill. Lovely, exquisite moment—but passing the Englishman with averted face and on swift wings. He experienced nothing himself; it was as if someone had told him there was such a moment, and he was obliged to believe. And he felt dubious and discontented suddenly, and wondered whether he was really and truly successful as a human being. After forty years’ experience, he had learnt to manage his life and make the best of it on advanced European lines, had developed his personality, explored his limitations, controlled his passions—and he had done it all without becoming either pedantic or worldly. A creditable achievement, but as the moment passed, he felt he ought to have been working at something else the whole time,—he didn’t know at what, never would know, never could know, and that was why he felt sad.



## CHAPTER XXI

Dismissing his regrets, as inappropriate to the matter in hand, he accomplished the last section of the day by riding off to his new allies. He was glad that he had broken with the club, for he would have picked up scraps of gossip there, and reported them down in the city, and he was glad to be denied this opportunity. He would miss his billiards, and occasional tennis, and cracks with McBryde, but really that was all, so light did he travel. At the entrance of the bazaars, a tiger made his horse shy—a youth dressed up as a tiger, the body striped brown and yellow, a mask over the face. Mohurram was working up. The city beat a good many drums, but seemed good-tempered. He was invited to inspect a small tazia—a flimsy and frivolous erection, more like a crinoline than the tomb of the grandson of the Prophet, done to death at Kerbela. Excited children were pasting coloured paper over its ribs. The rest of the evening he spent with the Nawab Bahadur, Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali, and others of the confederacy. The campaign was also working up. A telegram had been sent to the famous Amritrao, and his acceptance received. Application for bail was to be renewed—it could not well be withheld now that Miss Quested was out of danger. The conference was serious and sensible, but marred by a group of itinerant musicians, who were allowed to play in the compound. Each held a large earthenware jar, containing pebbles, and jerked it up and down in time to a doleful chant. Distracted by the noise, he suggested their dismissal, but the Nawab Bahadur vetoed it; he said that musicians, who had walked many miles, might bring good luck.

Late at night, he had an inclination to tell Professor Godbole of the tactical and moral error he had made in being rude to Heaslop, and to hear what he would say. But the old fellow had gone to bed, and slipped off unmolested to his new job in a day or two: he always did possess the knack of slipping off.

## CHAPTER XXII

Adela lay for several days in the McBrydes' bungalow. She had been touched by the sun, also hundreds of cactus spines had to be picked out of her flesh. Hour after hour Miss Derek and Mrs. McBryde examined her through magnifying glasses, always coming on fresh colonies, tiny hairs that might snap off and be drawn into the blood if they were neglected. She lay passive beneath their fingers, which developed the shock that had begun in the cave. Hitherto she had not much minded whether she was touched or not: her senses were abnormally inert and the only contact she anticipated was that of mind. Everything now was transferred to the surface of her body, which began to avenge itself, and feed unhealthily. People seemed very much alike, except that some would come close while others kept away. "In space things touch, in time things part," she repeated to herself while the thorns were being extracted—her brain so weak that she could not decide whether the phrase was a philosophy or a pun.

They were kind to her, indeed over-kind, the men too respectful, the women too sympathetic; whereas Mrs. Moore, the only visitor she wanted, kept away. No one understood her trouble, or knew why she vibrated between hard commonsense and hysteria. She would begin a speech as if nothing particular had happened. "I went into this detestable cave," she would say dryly, "and I remember scratching the wall with my finger-nail, to start the usual echo, and then as I was saying there was this shadow, or sort of shadow, down the entrance tunnel, bottling me up. It seemed like an age, but I suppose the whole thing can't have lasted thirty seconds really. I hit at him with the glasses, he pulled me round the cave by the strap, it broke, I escaped, that's all. He never actually touched me once. It all seems such nonsense." Then her eyes would fill with tears. "Naturally I'm upset, but I shall get over it." And then she would break down entirely, and the women would feel she was one of themselves and cry too, and men in the next room murmur: "Good God, good God!" No one realized that she thought tears vile, a degradation more subtle than anything endured in the

Marabar, a negation of her advanced outlook and the natural honesty of her mind. Adela was always trying to “think the incident out,” always reminding herself that no harm had been done. There was “the shock,” but what is that? For a time her own logic would convince her, then she would hear the echo again, weep, declare she was unworthy of Ronny, and hope her assailant would get the maximum penalty. After one of these bouts, she longed to go out into the bazaars and ask pardon from everyone she met, for she felt in some vague way that she was leaving the world worse than she found it. She felt that it was her crime, until the intellect, reawakening, pointed out to her that she was inaccurate here, and set her again upon her sterile round.

If only she could have seen Mrs. Moore! The old lady had not been well either, and was disinclined to come out, Ronny reported. And consequently the echo flourished, raging up and down like a nerve in the faculty of her hearing, and the noise in the cave, so unimportant intellectually, was prolonged over the surface of her life. She had struck the polished wall—for no reason—and before the comment had died away, he followed her, and the climax was the falling of her field-glasses. The sound had spouted after her when she escaped, and was going on still like a river that gradually floods the plain. Only Mrs. Moore could drive it back to its source and seal the broken reservoir. Evil was loose . . . she could even hear it entering the lives of others. . . . And Adela spent days in this atmosphere of grief and depression. Her friends kept up their spirits by demanding holocausts of natives, but she was too worried and weak to do that.

When the cactus thorns had all been extracted, and her temperature fallen to normal, Ronny came to fetch her away. He was worn with indignation and suffering, and she wished she could comfort him; but intimacy seemed to caricature itself, and the more they spoke the more wretched and self-conscious they became. Practical talk was the least painful, and he and McBryde now told her one or two things which they had concealed from her during the crisis, by the doctor’s orders. She learnt for the first time of the Mohurram troubles. There had nearly been a riot. The last day of the festival, the great procession left its official route, and tried to enter the civil station, and a telephone had been cut because it interrupted the advance of one of the larger paper towers. McBryde and his police had pulled the thing

straight—a fine piece of work. They passed on to another and very painful subject: the trial. She would have to appear in court, identify the prisoner, and submit to cross-examination by an Indian lawyer.

“Can Mrs. Moore be with me?” was all she said.

“Certainly, and I shall be there myself,” Ronny replied. “The case won’t come before me; they’ve objected to me on personal grounds. It will be at Chandrapore—we thought at one time it would be transferred elsewhere.”

“Miss Quested realizes what all that means, though,” said McBryde sadly. “The case will come before Das.”

Das was Ronny’s assistant—own brother to the Mrs. Bhattacharya whose carriage had played them false last month. He was courteous and intelligent, and with the evidence before him could only come to one conclusion; but that he should be judge over an English girl had convulsed the station with wrath, and some of the women had sent a telegram about it to Lady Mellanby, the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor.

“I must come before someone.”

“That’s—that’s the way to face it. You have the pluck, Miss Quested.” He grew very bitter over the arrangements, and called them “the fruits of democracy.” In the old days an Englishwoman would not have had to appear, nor would any Indian have dared to discuss her private affairs. She would have made her deposition, and judgment would have followed. He apologized to her for the condition of the country, with the result that she gave one of her sudden little shoots of tears. Ronny wandered miserably about the room while she cried, treading upon the flowers of the Kashmir carpet that so inevitably covered it or drumming on the brass Benares bowls. “I do this less every day, I shall soon be quite well,” she said, blowing her nose and feeling hideous.

“What I need is something to do. That is why I keep on with this ridiculous crying.”

“It’s not ridiculous, we think you wonderful,” said the policeman very sincerely. “It only bothers us that we can’t help you more. Your stopping here—at such a time—is the greatest honour this house——” He too was overcome with emotion. “By the way, a letter came here for you while you were ill,” he continued. “I opened it, which is a strange confession to make. Will you forgive me? The circumstances are peculiar. It is from Fielding.”

“Why should he write to me?”

“A most lamentable thing has happened. The defence got hold of him.”

“He’s a crank, a crank,” said Ronny lightly.

“That’s your way of putting it, but a man can be a crank without being a cad. Miss Quested had better know how he behaved to you. If you don’t tell her, somebody else will.” He told her. “He is now the mainstay of the defence, I needn’t add. He is the one righteous Englishman in a horde of tyrants. He receives deputations from the bazaar, and they all chew betel nut and smear one another’s hands with scent. It is not easy to enter into the mind of such a man. His students are on strike—out of enthusiasm for him they won’t learn their lessons. If it weren’t for Fielding one would never have had the Mohurram trouble. He has done a very grave disservice to the whole community. The letter lay here a day or two, waiting till you were well enough, then the situation got so grave that I decided to open it in case it was useful to us.”

“Is it?” she said feebly.

“Not at all. He only has the impertinence to suggest you have made a mistake.”

“Would that I had!” She glanced through the letter, which was careful and formal in its wording. “Dr. Aziz is innocent,” she read. Then her voice began to tremble again. “But think of his behaviour to you, Ronny. When you had already to bear so much for my sake! It was shocking of him. My dear, how can I repay you? How can one repay when one has nothing to give? What is the use of personal relationships when everyone brings less and less to them? I feel we ought all to go back into the desert for centuries

and try and get good. I want to begin at the beginning. All the things I thought I'd learnt are just a hindrance, they're not knowledge at all. I'm not fit for personal relationships. Well, let's go, let's go. Of course Mr. Fielding's letter doesn't count; he can think and write what he likes, only he shouldn't have been rude to you when you had so much to bear. That's what matters. . . . I don't want your arm, I'm a magnificent walker, so don't touch me, please."

Mrs. McBryde wished her an affectionate good-bye—a woman with whom she had nothing in common and whose intimacy oppressed her. They would have to meet now, year after year, until one of their husbands was superannuated. Truly Anglo-India had caught her with a vengeance, and perhaps it served her right for having tried to take up a line of her own. Humbled yet repelled, she gave thanks. "Oh, we must help one another, we must take the rough with the smooth," said Mrs. McBryde. Miss Derek was there too, still making jokes about her comic Maharajah and Rani. Required as a witness at the trial, she had refused to send back the Mudkul car; they would be frightfully sick. Both Mrs. McBryde and Miss Derek kissed her, and called her by her Christian name. Then Ronny drove her back. It was early in the morning, for the day, as the hot weather advanced, swelled like a monster at both ends, and left less and less room for the movements of mortals.

As they neared his bungalow, he said: "Mother's looking forward to seeing you, but of course she's old, one mustn't forget that. Old people never take things as one expects, in my opinion." He seemed warning her against approaching disappointment, but she took no notice. Her friendship with Mrs. Moore was so deep and real that she felt sure it would last, whatever else happened. "What can I do to make things easier for you? it's you who matter," she sighed.

"Dear old girl to say so."

"Dear old boy." Then she cried: "Ronny, she isn't ill too?"

He reassured her; Major Callendar was not dissatisfied.

“But you’ll find her—irritable. We are an irritable family. Well, you’ll see for yourself. No doubt my own nerves are out of order, and I expected more from mother when I came in from the office than she felt able to give. She is sure to make a special effort for you; still, I don’t want your home-coming to be a disappointing one. Don’t expect too much.”

The house came in sight. It was a replica of the bungalow she had left. Puffy, red, and curiously severe, Mrs. Moore was revealed upon a sofa. She didn’t get up when they entered, and the surprise of this roused Adela from her own troubles.

“Here you are both back,” was the only greeting.

Adela sat down and took her hand. It withdrew, and she felt that just as others repelled her, so did she repel Mrs. Moore.

“Are you all right? You appeared all right when I left,” said Ronny, trying not to speak crossly, but he had instructed her to give the girl a pleasant welcome, and he could not but feel annoyed.

“I am all right,” she said heavily. “As a matter of fact I have been looking at my return ticket. It is interchangeable, so I have a much larger choice of boats home than I thought.”

“We can go into that later, can’t we?”

“Ralph and Stella may be wanting to know when I arrive.”

“There is plenty of time for all such plans. How do you think our Adela looks?”

“I am counting on you to help me through; it is such a blessing to be with you again, everyone else is a stranger,” said the girl rapidly.

But Mrs. Moore showed no inclination to be helpful. A sort of resentment emanated from her. She seemed to say: “Am I to be bothered for ever?” Her Christian tenderness had gone, or had developed into a hardness, a just irritation against the human race; she had taken no interest at the

arrest, asked scarcely any questions, and had refused to leave her bed on the awful last night of Mohurram, when an attack was expected on the bungalow.

“I know it’s all nothing; I must be sensible, I do try——” Adela continued, working again towards tears.

“I shouldn’t mind if it had happened anywhere else; at least I really don’t know where it did happen.”

Ronny supposed that he understood what she meant: she could not identify or describe the particular cave, indeed almost refused to have her mind cleared up about it, and it was recognized that the defence would try to make capital out of this during the trial. He reassured her: the Marabar caves were notoriously like one another; indeed, in the future they were to be numbered in sequence with white paint.

“Yes, I mean that, at least not exactly; but there is this echo that I keep on hearing.”

“Oh, what of the echo?” asked Mrs. Moore, paying attention to her for the first time.

“I can’t get rid of it.”

“I don’t suppose you ever will.”

Ronny had emphasized to his mother that Adela would arrive in a morbid state, yet she was being positively malicious.

“Mrs. Moore, what is this echo?”

“Don’t you know?”

“No—what is it? oh, do say! I felt you would be able to explain it . . . this will comfort me so. . . .”

“If you don’t know, you don’t know; I can’t tell you.”



“I think you’re rather unkind not to say.”

“Say, say, say,” said the old lady bitterly. “As if anything can be said! I have spent my life in saying or in listening to sayings; I have listened too much. It is time I was left in peace. Not to die,” she added sourly. “No doubt you expect me to die, but when I have seen you and Ronny married, and seen the other two and whether they want to be married—I’ll retire then into a cave of my own.” She smiled, to bring down her remark into ordinary life and thus add to its bitterness. “Somewhere where no young people will come asking questions and expecting answers. Some shelf.”

“Quite so, but meantime a trial is coming on,” said her son hotly, “and the notion of most of us is that we’d better pull together and help one another through, instead of being disagreeable. Are you going to talk like that in the witness-box?”

“Why should I be in the witness-box?”

“To confirm certain points in our evidence.”

“I have nothing to do with your ludicrous law courts,” she said, angry. “I will not be dragged in at all.”

“I won’t have her dragged in, either; I won’t have any more trouble on my account,” cried Adela, and again took the hand, which was again withdrawn. “Her evidence is not the least essential.”

“I thought she would want to give it. No one blames you, mother, but the fact remains that you dropped off at the first cave, and encouraged Adela to go on with him alone, whereas if you’d been well enough to keep on too nothing would have happened. He planned it, I know. Still, you fell into his trap just like Fielding and Antony before you. . . . Forgive me for speaking so plainly, but you’ve no right to take up this high and mighty attitude about law courts. If you’re ill, that’s different; but you say you’re all right and you seem so, in which case I thought you’d want to take your part, I did really.”

“I’ll not have you worry her whether she’s well or ill,” said Adela, leaving the sofa and taking his arm; then dropped it with a sigh and sat

down again. But he was pleased she had rallied to him and surveyed his mother patronizingly. He had never felt easy with her. She was by no means the dear old lady outsiders supposed, and India had brought her into the open.

“I shall attend your marriage, but not your trial,” she informed them, tapping her knee; she had become very restless, and rather ungraceful. “Then I shall go to England.”

“You can’t go to England in May, as you agreed.”

“I have changed my mind.”

“Well, we’d better end this unexpected wrangle,” said the young man, striding about. “You appear to want to be left out of everything, and that’s enough.”

“My body, my miserable body,” she sighed. “Why isn’t it strong? Oh, why can’t I walk away and be gone? Why can’t I finish my duties and be gone? Why do I get headaches and puff when I walk? And all the time this to do and that to do and this to do in your way and that to do in her way, and everything sympathy and confusion and bearing one another’s burdens. Why can’t this be done and that be done in my way and they be done and I at peace? Why has anything to be done, I cannot see. Why all this marriage, marriage? . . . The human race would have become a single person centuries ago if marriage was any use. And all this rubbish about love, love in a church, love in a cave, as if there is the least difference, and I held up from my business over such trifles!”

“What do you want?” he said, exasperated. “Can you state it in simple language? If so, do.”

“I want my pack of patience cards.”

“Very well, get them.”

He found, as he expected, that the poor girl was crying. And, as always, an Indian close outside the window, a mali in this case, picking up sounds.

Much upset, he sat silent for a moment, thinking over his mother and her senile intrusions. He wished he had never asked her to visit India, or become under any obligation to her.

“Well, my dear girl, this isn’t much of a home-coming,” he said at last. “I had no idea she had this up her sleeve.”

Adela had stopped crying. An extraordinary expression was on her face, half relief, half horror. She repeated, “Aziz, Aziz.”

They all avoided mentioning that name. It had become synonymous with the power of evil. He was “the prisoner,” “the person in question,” “the defence,” and the sound of it now rang out like the first note of new symphony.

“Aziz . . . have I made a mistake?”

“You’re over-tired,” he cried, not much surprised.

“Ronny, he’s innocent; I made an awful mistake.”

“Well, sit down anyhow.” He looked round the room, but only two sparrows were chasing one another. She obeyed and took hold of his hand. He stroked it and she smiled, and gasped as if she had risen to the surface of the water, then touched her ear.

“My echo’s better.”

“That’s good. You’ll be perfectly well in a few days, but you must save yourself up for the trial. Das is a very good fellow, we shall all be with you.”

“But Ronny, dear Ronny, perhaps there oughtn’t to be any trial.”

“I don’t quite know what you’re saying, and I don’t think you do.”

“If Dr. Aziz never did it he ought to be let out.”

A shiver like impending death passed over Ronny. He said hurriedly, “He was let out—until the Mohurram riot, when he had to be put in again.” To divert her, he told her the story, which was held to be amusing. Nureddin had stolen the Nawab Bahadur’s car and driven Aziz into a ditch in the dark. Both of them had fallen out, and Nureddin had cut his face open. Their wailing had been drowned by the cries of the faithful, and it was quite a time before they were rescued by the police. Nureddin was taken to the Minto Hospital, Aziz restored to prison, with an additional charge against him of disturbing the public peace. “Half a minute,” he remarked when the anecdote was over, and went to the telephone to ask Callendar to look in as soon as he found it convenient, because she hadn’t borne the journey well.

When he returned, she was in a nervous crisis, but it took a different form—she clung to him, and sobbed, “Help me to do what I ought. Aziz is good. You heard your mother say so.”

“Heard what?”

“He’s good; I’ve been so wrong to accuse him.”

“Mother never said so.”

“Didn’t she?” she asked, quite reasonable, open to every suggestion anyway.

“She never mentioned that name once.”

“But, Ronny, I heard her.”

“Pure illusion. You can’t be quite well, can you, to make up a thing like that.”

“I suppose I can’t. How amazing of me!”

“I was listening to all she said, as far as it could be listened to; she gets very incoherent.”

“When her voice dropped she said it—towards the end, when she talked about love—love—I couldn’t follow, but just then she said: ‘Doctor Aziz

never did it.””

“Those words?”

“The idea more than the words.”

“Never, never, my dear girl. Complete illusion. His name was not mentioned by anyone. Look here—you are confusing this with Fielding’s letter.”

“That’s it, that’s it,” she cried, greatly relieved. “I knew I’d heard his name somewhere. I am so grateful to you for clearing this up—it’s the sort of mistake that worries me, and proves I’m neurotic.”

“So you won’t go saying he’s innocent again, will you? for every servant I’ve got is a spy.” He went to the window. The mali had gone, or rather had turned into two small children—impossible they should know English, but he sent them packing. “They all hate us,” he explained. “It’ll be all right after the verdict, for I will say this for them, they do accept the accomplished fact; but at present they’re pouring out money like water to catch us tripping, and a remark like yours is the very thing they look out for. It would enable them to say it was a put-up job on the part of us officials. You see what I mean.”

Mrs. Moore came back, with the same air of ill-temper, and sat down with a flump by the card-table. To clear the confusion up, Ronny asked her point-blank whether she had mentioned the prisoner. She could not understand the question and the reason of it had to be explained. She replied: “I never said his name,” and began to play patience.

“I thought you said, ‘Aziz is an innocent man,’ but it was in Mr. Fielding’s letter.”

“Of course he is innocent,” she answered indifferently: it was the first time she had expressed an opinion on the point.

“You see, Ronny, I was right,” said the girl.

“You were not right, she never said it.”

“But she thinks it.”

“Who cares what she thinks?”

“Red nine on black ten——” from the card-table.

“She can think, and Fielding too, but there’s such a thing as evidence, I suppose.”

“I know, but——”

“Is it again my duty to talk?” asked Mrs. Moore, looking up. “Apparently, as you keep interrupting me.”

“Only if you have anything sensible to say.”

“Oh, how tedious . . . trivial . . .” and as when she had scoffed at love, love, love, her mind seemed to move towards them from a great distance and out of darkness. “Oh, why is everything still my duty? when shall I be free from your fuss? Was he in the cave and were you in the cave and on and on . . . and Unto us a Son is born, unto us a Child is given . . . and am I good and is he bad and are we saved? . . . and ending everything the echo.”

“I don’t hear it so much,” said Adela, moving towards her. “You send it away, you do nothing but good, you are so good.”

“I am not good, no, bad.” She spoke more calmly and resumed her cards, saying as she turned them up, “A bad old woman, bad, bad, detestable. I used to be good with the children growing up, also I meet this young man in his mosque, I wanted him to be happy. Good, happy, small people. They do not exist, they were a dream. . . . But I will not help you to torture him for what he never did. There are different ways of evil and I prefer mine to yours.”

“Have you any evidence in the prisoner’s favour?” said Ronny in the tones of the just official. “If so, it is your bounden duty to go into the witness-box for him instead of for us. No one will stop you.”

“One knows people’s characters, as you call them,” she retorted disdainfully, as if she really knew more than character but could not impart it. “I have heard both English and Indians speak well of him, and I felt it isn’t the sort of thing he would do.”

“Feeble, mother, feeble.”

“Most feeble.”

“And most inconsiderate to Adela.”

Adela said: “It would be so appalling if I was wrong. I should take my own life.”

He turned on her with: “What was I warning you just now? You know you’re right, and the whole station knows it.”

“Yes, he . . . This is very, very awful. I’m as certain as ever he followed me . . . only, wouldn’t it be possible to withdraw the case? I dread the idea of giving evidence more and more, and you are all so good to women here and you have so much more power than in England—look at Miss Derek’s motor-car. Oh, of course it’s out of the question, I’m ashamed to have mentioned it; please forgive me.”

“That’s all right,” he said inadequately. “Of course I forgive you, as you call it. But the case has to come before a magistrate now; it really must, the machinery has started.”

“She has started the machinery; it will work to its end.”

Adela inclined towards tears in consequence of this unkind remark, and Ronny picked up the list of steamship sailings with an excellent notion in his head. His mother ought to leave India at once: she was doing no good to herself or to anyone else there.

## CHAPTER XXIII

Lady Mellanby, wife to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, had been gratified by the appeal addressed to her by the ladies of Chandrapore. She could not do anything—besides, she was sailing for England; but she desired to be informed if she could show sympathy in any other way. Mrs. Turton replied that Mr. Heaslop's mother was trying to get a passage, but had delayed too long, and all the boats were full; could Lady Mellanby use her influence? Not even Lady Mellanby could expand the dimensions of a P. and O., but she was a very, very nice woman, and she actually wired offering the unknown and obscure old lady accommodation in her own reserved cabin. It was like a gift from heaven; humble and grateful, Ronny could not but reflect that there are compensations for every woe. His name was familiar at Government House owing to poor Adela, and now Mrs. Moore would stamp it on Lady Mellanby's imagination, as they journeyed across the Indian Ocean and up the Red Sea. He had a return of tenderness for his mother—as we do for our relatives when they receive conspicuous and unexpected honour. She was not negligible, she could still arrest the attention of a high official's wife.

So Mrs. Moore had all she wished; she escaped the trial, the marriage, and the hot weather; she would return to England in comfort and distinction, and see her other children. At her son's suggestion, and by her own desire, she departed. But she accepted her good luck without enthusiasm. She had come to that state where the horror of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time—the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly people are involved. If this world is not to our taste, well, at all events there is Heaven, Hell, Annihilation—one or other of those large things, that huge scenic background of stars, fires, blue or black air. All heroic endeavour, and all that is known as art, assumes that there is such a background, just as all practical endeavour, when the world is to our taste, assumes that the world is all. But in the twilight of the double vision, a spiritual muddledom is set up for which no high-sounding words



can be found; we can neither act nor refrain from action, we can neither ignore nor respect Infinity. Mrs. Moore had always inclined to resignation. As soon as she landed in India it seemed to her good, and when she saw the water flowing through the mosque-tank, or the Ganges, or the moon, caught in the shawl of night with all the other stars, it seemed a beautiful goal and an easy one. To be one with the universe! So dignified and simple. But there was always some little duty to be performed first, some new card to be turned up from the diminishing pack and placed, and while she was pottering about, the Marabar struck its gong.

What had spoken to her in that scoured-out cavity of the granite? What dwelt in the first of the caves? Something very old and very small. Before time, it was before space also. Something snub-nosed, incapable of generosity—the undying worm itself. Since hearing its voice, she had not entertained one large thought, she was actually envious of Adela. All this fuss over a frightened girl! Nothing had happened, “and if it had,” she found herself thinking with the cynicism of a withered priestess, “if it had, there are worse evils than love.” The unspeakable attempt presented itself to her as love: in a cave, in a church—Boum, it amounts to the same. Visions are supposed to entail profundity, but—— Wait till you get one, dear reader! The abyss also may be petty, the serpent of eternity made of maggots; her constant thought was: “Less attention should be paid to my future daughter-in-law and more to me, there is no sorrow like my sorrow,” although when the attention was paid she rejected it irritably.

Her son couldn't escort her to Bombay, for the local situation continued acute, and all officials had to remain at their posts. Antony couldn't come either, in case he never returned to give his evidence. So she travelled with no one who could remind her of the past. This was a relief. The heat had drawn back a little before its next advance, and the journey was not unpleasant. As she left Chandrapore the moon, full again, shone over the Ganges and touched the shrinking channels into threads of silver, then veered and looked into her window. The swift and comfortable mail-train slid with her through the night, and all the next day she was rushing through Central India, through landscapes that were baked and bleached but had not the hopeless melancholy of the plain. She watched the indestructible life of man and his changing faces, and the houses he has built for himself and

God, and they appeared to her not in terms of her own trouble but as things to see. There was, for instance, a place called Asirgarh which she passed at sunset and identified on a map—an enormous fortress among wooded hills. No one had ever mentioned Asirgarh to her, but it had huge and noble bastions and to the right of them was a mosque. She forgot it. Ten minutes later, Asirgarh reappeared. The mosque was to the left of the bastions now. The train in its descent through the Vindyas had described a semicircle round Asirgarh. What could she connect it with except its own name? Nothing; she knew no one who lived there. But it had looked at her twice and seemed to say: “I do not vanish.” She woke in the middle of the night with a start, for the train was falling over the western cliff. Moonlit pinnacles rushed up at her like the fringes of a sea; then a brief episode of plain, the real sea, and the soupy dawn of Bombay. “I have not seen the right places,” she thought, as she saw embayed in the platforms of the Victoria Terminus the end of the rails that had carried her over a continent and could never carry her back. She would never visit Asirgarh or the other untouched places; neither Delhi nor Agra nor the Rajputana cities nor Kashmir, nor the obscurer marvels that had sometimes shone through men’s speech: the bilingual rock of Girnar, the statue of Shri Belgola, the ruins of Mandu and Hampi, temples of Khajraha, gardens of Shalimar. As she drove through the huge city which the West has built and abandoned with a gesture of despair, she longed to stop, though it was only Bombay, and disentangle the hundred Indias that passed each other in its streets. The feet of the horses moved her on, and presently the boat sailed and thousands of coco-nut palms appeared all round the anchorage and climbed the hills to wave her farewell. “So you thought an echo was India; you took the Marabar caves as final?” they laughed. “What have we in common with them, or they with Asirgarh? Good-bye!” Then the steamer rounded Colaba, the continent swung about, the cliff of the Ghats melted into the haze of a tropic sea. Lady Mellanby turned up and advised her not to stand in the heat: “We are safely out of the frying-pan,” said Lady Mellanby, “it will never do to fall into the fire.”

## CHAPTER XXIV

Making sudden changes of gear, the heat accelerated its advance after Mrs. Moore's departure until existence had to be endured and crime punished with the thermometer at a hundred and twelve. Electric fans hummed and spat, water splashed on to screens, ice clinked, and outside these defences, between a greyish sky and a yellowish earth, clouds of dust moved hesitatingly. In Europe life retreats out of the cold, and exquisite fireside myths have resulted—Balder, Persephone—but here the retreat is from the source of life, the treacherous sun, and no poetry adorns it because disillusionment cannot be beautiful. Men yearn for poetry though they may not confess it; they desire that joy shall be graceful and sorrow august and infinity have a form, and India fails to accommodate them. The annual helter-skelter of April, when irritability and lust spread like a canker, is one of her comments on the orderly hopes of humanity. Fish manage better; fish, as the tanks dry, wriggle into the mud and wait for the rains to uncake them. But men try to be harmonious all the year round, and the results are occasionally disastrous. The triumphant machine of civilization may suddenly hitch and be immobilized into a car of stone, and at such moments the destiny of the English seems to resemble their predecessors', who also entered the country with intent to refashion it, but were in the end worked into its pattern and covered with its dust.

Adela, after years of intellectualism, had resumed her morning kneel to Christianity. There seemed no harm in it, it was the shortest and easiest cut to the unseen, and she could tack her troubles on to it. Just as the Hindu clerks asked Lakshmi for an increase in pay, so did she implore Jehovah for a favourable verdict. God who saves the King will surely support the police. Her deity returned a consoling reply, but the touch of her hands on her face started prickly heat, and she seemed to swallow and expectorate the same insipid clot of air that had weighed on her lungs all the night. Also the voice of Mrs. Turton disturbed her. "Are you ready, young lady?" it pealed from the next room.

“Half a minute,” she murmured. The Turtens had received her after Mrs. Moore left. Their kindness was incredible, but it was her position not her character that moved them; she was the English girl who had had the terrible experience, and for whom too much could not be done. No one, except Ronny, had any idea of what passed in her mind, and he only dimly, for where there is officialism every human relationship suffers. In her sadness she said to him, “I bring you nothing but trouble; I was right on the Maidan, we had better just be friends,” but he protested, for the more she suffered the more highly he valued her. Did she love him? This question was somehow dragged up with the Marabar, it had been in her mind as she entered the fatal cave. Was she capable of loving anyone?

“Miss Quested, Adela, what d’ye call yourself, it’s half-past seven; we ought to think of starting for that Court when you feel inclined.”

“She’s saying her prayers,” came the Collector’s voice.

“Sorry, my dear; take your time. . . . Was your chhota hazri all right?”

“I can’t eat; might I have a little brandy?” she asked, deserting Jehovah.

When it was brought, she shuddered, and said she was ready to go.

“Drink it up; not a bad notion, a peg.”

“I don’t think it’ll really help me, Burra Sahib.”

“You sent brandy down to the Court, didn’t you, Mary?”

“I should think I did, champagne too.”

“I’ll thank you this evening, I’m all to pieces now,” said the girl, forming each syllable carefully as if her trouble would diminish if it were accurately defined. She was afraid of reticence, in case something that she herself did not perceive took shape beneath it, and she had rehearsed with Mr. McBryde in an odd, mincing way her terrible adventure in the cave, how the man had never actually touched her but dragged her about, and so on. Her aim this morning was to announce, meticulously, that the strain was

appalling, and she would probably break down under Mr. Amritrao's cross-examination and disgrace her friends. "My echo has come back again badly," she told them.

"How about aspirin?"

"It is not a headache, it is an echo."

Unable to dispel the buzzing in her ears, Major Callendar had diagnosed it as a fancy, which must not be encouraged. So the Turtons changed the subject. The cool little lick of the breeze was passing over the earth, dividing night from day; it would fail in ten minutes, but they might profit by it for their drive down into the city.

"I am sure to break down," she repeated.

"You won't," said the Collector, his voice full of tenderness.

"Of course she won't, she's a real sport."

"But Mrs. Turton . . ."

"Yes, my dear child?"

"If I do break down, it is of no consequence. It would matter in some trials, not in this. I put it to myself in the following way: I can really behave as I like, cry, be absurd, I am sure to get my verdict, unless Mr. Das is most frightfully unjust."

"You're bound to win," he said calmly, and did not remind her that there was bound to be an appeal. The Nawab Bahadur had financed the defence, and would ruin himself sooner than let an "innocent Moslem perish," and other interests, less reputable, were in the background too. The case might go up from court to court, with consequences that no official could foresee. Under his very eyes, the temper of Chandrapore was altering. As his car turned out of the compound, there was a tap of silly anger on its paint—a pebble thrown by a child. Some larger stones were dropped near the mosque. In the Maidan, a squad of native police on motor cycles waited to

escort them through the bazaars. The Collector was irritated and muttered, "McBryde's an old woman"; but Mrs. Turton said, "Really, after Mohurram a show of force will do no harm; it's ridiculous to pretend they don't hate us, do give up that farce." He replied in an odd, sad voice, "I don't hate them, I don't know why," and he didn't hate them; for if he did, he would have had to condemn his own career as a bad investment. He retained a contemptuous affection for the pawns he had moved about for so many years, they must be worth his pains. "After all, it's our women who make everything more difficult out here," was his inmost thought, as he caught sight of some obscenities upon a long blank wall, and beneath his chivalry to Miss Quested resentment lurked, waiting its day—perhaps there is a grain of resentment in all chivalry. Some students had gathered in front of the City Magistrate's Court—hysterical boys whom he would have faced if alone, but he told the driver to work round to the rear of the building. The students jeered, and Rafi (hiding behind a comrade that he might not be identified) called out the English were cowards.

They gained Ronny's private room, where a group of their own sort had collected. None were cowardly, all nervy, for queer reports kept coming in. The Sweepers had just struck, and half the commodes of Chandrapore remained desolate in consequence—only half, and Sweepers from the District, who felt less strongly about the innocence of Dr. Aziz, would arrive in the afternoon, and break the strike, but why should the grotesque incident occur? And a number of Mohammedan ladies had sworn to take no food until the prisoner was acquitted; their death would make little difference, indeed, being invisible, they seemed dead already, nevertheless it was disquieting. A new spirit seemed abroad, a rearrangement, which no one in the stern little band of whites could explain. There was a tendency to see Fielding at the back of it: the idea that he was weak and cranky had been dropped. They abused Fielding vigorously: he had been seen driving up with the two counsels, Amritrao and Mahmoud Ali; he encouraged the Boy Scout movement for seditious reasons; he received letters with foreign stamps on them, and was probably a Japanese spy. This morning's verdict would break the renegade, but he had done his country and the Empire incalculable disservice. While they denounced him, Miss Quested lay back with her hands on the arms of her chair and her eyes closed, reserving her

strength. They noticed her after a time, and felt ashamed of making so much noise.

“Can we do nothing for you?” Miss Derek said.

“I don’t think so, Nancy, and I seem able to do nothing for myself.”

“But you’re strictly forbidden to talk like that; you’re wonderful.”

“Yes indeed,” came the reverent chorus.

“My old Das is all right,” said Ronny, starting a new subject in low tones.

“Not one of them’s all right,” contradicted Major Callendar.

“Das is, really.”

“You mean he’s more frightened of acquitting than convicting, because if he acquits he’ll lose his job,” said Lesley with a clever little laugh.

Ronny did mean that, but he cherished “illusions” about his own subordinates (following the finer traditions of his service here), and he liked to maintain that his old Das really did possess moral courage of the Public School brand. He pointed out that—from one point of view—it was good that an Indian was taking the case. Conviction was inevitable; so better let an Indian pronounce it, there would be less fuss in the long run. Interested in the argument, he let Adela become dim in his mind.

“In fact, you disapprove of the appeal I forwarded to Lady Mellanby,” said Mrs. Turton with considerable heat. “Pray don’t apologize, Mr. Heaslop; I am accustomed to being in the wrong.”

“I didn’t mean that . . .”

“All right. I said don’t apologize.”

“Those swine are always on the look-out for a grievance,” said Lesley, to propitiate her.

“Swine, I should think so,” the Major echoed. “And what’s more, I’ll tell you what. What’s happened is a damn good thing really, barring of course its application to present company. It’ll make them squeal and it’s time they did squeal. I’ve put the fear of God into them at the hospital anyhow. You should see the grandson of our so-called leading loyalist.” He tittered brutally as he described poor Nureddin’s present appearance.

“His beauty’s gone, five upper teeth, two lower and a nostril. . . . Old Panna Lal brought him the looking-glass yesterday and he blubbered. . . . I laughed; I laughed, I tell you, and so would you; that used to be one of these buck niggers, I thought, now he’s all septic; damn him, blast his soul—er—I believe he was unspeakably immoral—er——” He subsided, nudged in the ribs, but added, “I wish I’d had the cutting up of my late assistant too; nothing’s too bad for these people.”

“At last some sense is being talked,” Mrs. Turton cried, much to her husband’s discomfort.

“That’s what I say; I say there’s not such a thing as cruelty after a thing like this.”

“Exactly, and remember it afterwards, you men. You’re weak, weak, weak. Why, they ought to crawl from here to the caves on their hands and knees whenever an Englishwoman’s in sight, they oughtn’t to be spoken to, they ought to be spat at, they ought to be ground into the dust, we’ve been far too kind with our Bridge Parties and the rest.”

She paused. Profiting by her wrath, the heat had invaded her. She subsided into a lemon squash, and continued between the sips to murmur, “Weak, weak.” And the process was repeated. The issues Miss Quested had raised were so much more important than she was herself that people inevitably forgot her.

Presently the case was called.

Their chairs preceded them into the Court, for it was important that they should look dignified. And when the chuprassies had made all ready, they filed into the ramshackly room with a condescending air, as if it was a booth



at a fair. The Collector made a small official joke as he sat down, at which his entourage smiled, and the Indians, who could not hear what he said, felt that some new cruelty was afoot, otherwise the sahibs would not chuckle.

The Court was crowded and of course very hot, and the first person Adela noticed in it was the humblest of all who were present, a person who had no bearing officially upon the trial: the man who pulled the punkah. Almost naked, and splendidly formed, he sat on a raised platform near the back, in the middle of the central gangway, and he caught her attention as she came in, and he seemed to control the proceedings. He had the strength and beauty that sometimes come to flower in Indians of low birth. When that strange race nears the dust and is condemned as untouchable, then nature remembers the physical perfection that she accomplished elsewhere, and throws out a god—not many, but one here and there, to prove to society how little its categories impress her. This man would have been notable anywhere: among the thin-hammed, flat-chested mediocrities of Chandrapore he stood out as divine, yet he was of the city, its garbage had nourished him, he would end on its rubbish heaps. Pulling the rope towards him, relaxing it rhythmically, sending swirls of air over others, receiving none himself, he seemed apart from human destinies, a male fate, a winnowing of souls. Opposite him, also on a platform, sat the little assistant magistrate, cultivated, self-conscious, and conscientious. The punkah wallah was none of these things: he scarcely knew that he existed and did not understand why the Court was fuller than usual, indeed he did not know that it was fuller than usual, didn't even know he worked a fan, though he thought he pulled a rope. Something in his aloofness impressed the girl from middle-class England, and rebuked the narrowness of her sufferings. In virtue of what had she collected this roomful of people together? Her particular brand of opinions, and the suburban Jehovah who sanctified them—by what right did they claim so much importance in the world, and assume the title of civilization? Mrs. Moore—she looked round, but Mrs. Moore was far away on the sea; it was the kind of question they might have discussed on the voyage out before the old lady had turned disagreeable and queer.

While thinking of Mrs. Moore she heard sounds, which gradually grew more distinct. The epoch-making trial had started, and the Superintendent

of Police was opening the case for the prosecution.

Mr. McBryde was not at pains to be an interesting speaker; he left eloquence to the defence, who would require it. His attitude was, "Everyone knows the man's guilty, and I am obliged to say so in public before he goes to the Andamans." He made no moral or emotional appeal, and it was only by degrees that the studied negligence of his manner made itself felt, and lashed part of the audience to fury. Laboriously did he describe the genesis of the picnic. The prisoner had met Miss Quested at an entertainment given by the Principal of Government College, and had there conceived his intentions concerning her: prisoner was a man of loose life, as documents found upon him at his arrest would testify, also his fellow-assistant, Dr. Panna Lal, was in a position to throw light on his character, and Major Callendar himself would speak. Here Mr. McBryde paused. He wanted to keep the proceedings as clean as possible, but Oriental Pathology, his favourite theme, lay around him, and he could not resist it. Taking off his spectacles, as was his habit before enunciating a general truth, he looked into them sadly, and remarked that the darker races are physically attracted by the fairer, but not *vice versa*—not a matter for bitterness this, not a matter for abuse, but just a fact which any scientific observer will confirm.

"Even when the lady is so uglier than the gentleman?" The comment fell from nowhere, from the ceiling perhaps. It was the first interruption, and the Magistrate felt bound to censure it. "Turn that man out," he said. One of the native policemen took hold of a man who had said nothing, and turned him out roughly.

Mr. McBryde resumed his spectacles and proceeded. But the comment had upset Miss Quested. Her body resented being called ugly, and trembled.

"Do you feel faint, Adela?" asked Miss Derek, who tended her with loving indignation.

"I never feel anything else, Nancy. I shall get through, but it's awful, awful."

This led to the first of a series of scenes. Her friends began to fuss around her, and the Major called out, "I must have better arrangements than this

made for my patient; why isn't she given a seat on the platform? She gets no air."

Mr. Das looked annoyed and said: "I shall be happy to accommodate Miss Quested with a chair up here in view of the particular circumstances of her health." The chuprassies passed up not one chair but several, and the entire party followed Adela on to the platform, Mr. Fielding being the only European who remained in the body of the hall.

"That's better," remarked Mrs. Turton, as she settled herself.

"Thoroughly desirable change for several reasons," replied the Major.

The Magistrate knew that he ought to censure this remark, but did not dare to. Callendar saw that he was afraid, and called out authoritatively, "Right, McBryde, go ahead now; sorry to have interrupted you."

"Are you all right yourselves?" asked the Superintendent.

"We shall do, we shall do."

"Go on, Mr. Das, we are not here to disturb you," said the Collector patronizingly. Indeed, they had not so much disturbed the trial as taken charge of it.

While the prosecution continued, Miss Quested examined the hall—timidly at first, as though it would scorch her eyes. She observed to left and right of the punkah man many a half-known face. Beneath her were gathered all the wreckage of her silly attempt to see India—the people she had met at the Bridge Party, the man and his wife who hadn't sent their carriage, the old man who would lend his car, various servants, villagers, officials, and the prisoner himself. There he sat—strong, neat little Indian with very black hair, and pliant hands. She viewed him without special emotion. Since they last met, she had elevated him into a principle of evil, but now he seemed to be what he had always been—a slight acquaintance. He was negligible, devoid of significance, dry like a bone, and though he was "guilty" no atmosphere of sin surrounded him. "I suppose he *is* guilty. Can I possibly have made a mistake?" she thought. For this question still

occurred to her intellect, though since Mrs. Moore's departure it had ceased to trouble her conscience.

Pleader Mahmoud Ali now arose, and asked with ponderous and ill-judged irony whether his client could be accommodated on the platform too: even Indians felt unwell sometimes, though naturally Major Callendar did not think so, being in charge of a Government Hospital. "Another example of their exquisite sense of humour," sang Miss Derek. Ronny looked at Mr. Das to see how he would handle the difficulty, and Mr. Das became agitated, and snubbed Pleader Mahmoud Ali severely.

"Excuse me——" It was the turn of the eminent barrister from Calcutta. He was a fine-looking man, large and bony, with grey closely cropped hair. "We object to the presence of so many European ladies and gentlemen upon the platform," he said in an Oxford voice. "They will have the effect of intimidating our witnesses. Their place is with the rest of the public in the body of the hall. We have no objection to Miss Quested remaining on the platform, since she has been unwell; we shall extend every courtesy to her throughout, despite the scientific truths revealed to us by the District Superintendent of Police; but we do object to the others."

"Oh, cut the cackle and let's have the verdict," the Major growled.

The distinguished visitor gazed at the Magistrate respectfully.

"I agree to that," said Mr. Das, hiding his face desperately in some papers. "It was only to Miss Quested that I gave permission to sit up here. Her friends should be so excessively kind as to climb down."

"Well done, Das, quite sound," said Ronny with devastating honesty.

"Climb down, indeed, what incredible impertinence!" Mrs. Turton cried.

"Do come quietly, Mary," murmured her husband.

"Hi! my patient can't be left unattended."

"Do you object to the Civil Surgeon remaining, Mr. Amritrao?"

“I should object. A platform confers authority.”

“Even when it’s one foot high; so come along all,” said the Collector, trying to laugh.

“Thank you very much, sir,” said Mr. Das, greatly relieved. “Thank you, Mr. Heaslop; thank you ladies all.”

And the party, including Miss Quested, descended from its rash eminence. The news of their humiliation spread quickly, and people jeered outside. Their special chairs followed them. Mahmoud Ali (who was quite silly and useless with hatred) objected even to these; by whose authority had special chairs been introduced, why had the Nawab Bahadur not been given one? etc. People began to talk all over the room, about chairs ordinary and special, strips of carpet, platforms one foot high.

But the little excursion had a good effect on Miss Quested’s nerves. She felt easier now that she had seen all the people who were in the room. It was like knowing the worst. She was sure now that she should come through “all right”—that is to say, without spiritual disgrace, and she passed the good news on to Ronny and Mrs. Turton. They were too much agitated with the defeat to British prestige to be interested. From where she sat, she could see the renegade Mr. Fielding. She had had a better view of him from the platform, and knew that an Indian child perched on his knee. He was watching the proceedings, watching her. When their eyes met, he turned his away, as if direct intercourse was of no interest to him.

The Magistrate was also happier. He had won the battle of the platform, and gained confidence. Intelligent and impartial, he continued to listen to the evidence, and tried to forget that later on he should have to pronounce a verdict in accordance with it. The Superintendent trundled steadily forward: he had expected these outbursts of insolence—they are the natural gestures of an inferior race, and he betrayed no hatred of Aziz, merely an abysmal contempt.

The speech dealt at length with the “prisoner’s dupes,” as they were called—Fielding, the servant Antony, the Nawab Bahadur. This aspect of the case had always seemed dubious to Miss Quested, and she had asked

the police not to develop it. But they were playing for a heavy sentence, and wanted to prove that the assault was premeditated. And in order to illustrate the strategy, they produced a plan of the Marabar Hills, showing the route that the party had taken, and the “Tank of the Dagger” where they had camped.

The Magistrate displayed interest in archæology.

An elevation of a specimen cave was produced; it was lettered “Buddhist Cave.”

“Not Buddhist, I think, Jain. . . .”

“In which cave is the offence alleged, the Buddhist or the Jain?” asked Mahmoud Ali, with the air of unmasking a conspiracy.

“All the Marabar caves are Jain.”

“Yes, sir; then in which Jain cave?”

“You will have an opportunity of putting such questions later.”

Mr. McBryde smiled faintly at their fatuity. Indians invariably collapse over some such point as this. He knew that the defence had some wild hope of establishing an alibi, that they had tried (unsuccessfully) to identify the guide, and that Fielding and Hamidullah had gone out to the Kawa Dol and paced and measured all one moonlit night. “Mr. Lesley says they’re Buddhist, and he ought to know if anyone does. But may I call attention to the shape?” And he described what had occurred there. Then he spoke of Miss Derek’s arrival, of the scramble down the gully, of the return of the two ladies to Chandrapore, and of the document Miss Quersted signed on her arrival, in which mention was made of the field-glasses. And then came the culminating evidence: the discovery of the field-glasses on the prisoner. “I have nothing to add at present,” he concluded, removing his spectacles. “I will now call my witnesses. The facts will speak for themselves. The prisoner is one of those individuals who have led a double life. I dare say his degeneracy gained upon him gradually. He has been very cunning at concealing, as is usual with the type, and pretending to be a respectable

member of society, getting a Government position even. He is now entirely vicious and beyond redemption, I am afraid. He behaved most cruelly, most brutally, to another of his guests, another English lady. In order to get rid of her, and leave him free for his crime, he crushed her into a cave among his servants. However, that is by the way.”

But his last words brought on another storm, and suddenly a new name, Mrs. Moore, burst on the court like a whirlwind. Mahmoud Ali had been enraged, his nerves snapped; he shrieked like a maniac, and asked whether his client was charged with murder as well as rape, and who was this second English lady.

“I don’t propose to call her.”

“You don’t because you can’t, you have smuggled her out of the country; she is Mrs. Moore, she would have proved his innocence, she was on our side, she was poor Indians’ friend.”

“You could have called her yourself,” cried the Magistrate. “Neither side called her, neither must quote her as evidence.”

“She was kept from us until too late—I learn too late—this is English justice, here is your British Raj. Give us back Mrs. Moore for five minutes only, and she will save my friend, she will save the name of his sons; don’t rule her out, Mr. Das; take back those words as you yourself are a father; tell me where they have put her, oh, Mrs. Moore. . . .”

“If the point is of any interest, my mother should have reached Aden,” said Ronny dryly; he ought not to have intervened, but the onslaught had startled him.

“Imprisoned by you there because she knew the truth.” He was almost out of his mind, and could be heard saying above the tumult: “I ruin my career, no matter; we are all to be ruined one by one.”

“This is no way to defend your case,” counselled the Magistrate.

“I am not defending a case, nor are you trying one. We are both of us slaves.”

“Mr. Mahmoud Ali, I have already warned you, and unless you sit down I shall exercise my authority.”

“Do so; this trial is a farce, I am going.” And he handed his papers to Amritrao and left, calling from the door histrionically yet with intense passion, “Aziz, Aziz—farewell for ever.” The tumult increased, the invocation of Mrs. Moore continued, and people who did not know what the syllables meant repeated them like a charm. They became Indianized into Esmis Esmoor, they were taken up in the street outside. In vain the Magistrate threatened and expelled. Until the magic exhausted itself, he was powerless.

“Unexpected,” remarked Mr. Turton.

Ronny furnished the explanation. Before she sailed, his mother had taken to talk about the Marabar in her sleep, especially in the afternoon when servants were on the verandah, and her disjointed remarks on Aziz had doubtless been sold to Mahmoud Ali for a few annas: that kind of thing never ceases in the East.

“I thought they’d try something of the sort. Ingenious.” He looked into their wide-open mouths. “They get just like over their religion,” he added calmly. “Start and can’t stop. I’m sorry for your old Das, he’s not getting much of a show.”



“Mr. Heaslop, how disgraceful dragging in your dear mother,” said Miss Derek, bending forward.

“It’s just a trick, and they happened to pull it off. Now one sees why they had Mahmoud Ali—just to make a scene on the chance. It is his speciality.” But he disliked it more than he showed. It was revolting to hear his mother travestied into Esmiss Esmoor, a Hindu goddess.

“Esmiss Esmoor  
Esmiss Esmoor  
Esmiss Esmoor  
Esmiss Esmoor. . . .”

“Ronny——”

“Yes, old girl?”

“Isn’t it all queer.”

“I’m afraid it’s very upsetting for you.”

“Not the least. I don’t mind it.”

“Well, that’s good.”

She had spoken more naturally and healthily than usual. Bending into the middle of her friends, she said: “Don’t worry about me, I’m much better than I was; I don’t feel the least faint; I shall be all right, and thank you all, thank you, thank you for your kindness.” She had to shout her gratitude, for the chant, Esmiss Esmoor, went on.

Suddenly it stopped. It was as if the prayer had been heard, and the relics exhibited. “I apologize for my colleague,” said Mr. Amritrao, rather to everyone’s surprise. “He is an intimate friend of our client, and his feelings have carried him away.”

“Mr. Mahmoud Ali will have to apologize in person,” the Magistrate said.

“Exactly, sir, he must. But we had just learnt that Mrs. Moore had important evidence which she desired to give. She was hurried out of the country by her son before she could give it; and this unhinged Mr. Mahmoud Ali—coming as it does upon an attempt to intimidate our only other European witness, Mr. Fielding. Mr. Mahmoud Ali would have said nothing had not Mrs. Moore been claimed as a witness by the police.” He sat down.

“An extraneous element is being introduced into the case,” said the Magistrate. “I must repeat that as a witness Mrs. Moore does not exist. Neither you, Mr. Amritrao, nor, Mr. McBryde, you, have any right to surmise what that lady would have said. She is not here, and consequently she can say nothing.”

“Well, I withdraw my reference,” said the Superintendent wearily. “I would have done so fifteen minutes ago if I had been given the chance. She is not of the least importance to me.”

“I have already withdrawn it for the defence.” He added with forensic humour: “Perhaps you can persuade the gentlemen outside to withdraw it too,” for the refrain in the street continued.

“I am afraid my powers do not extend so far,” said Das, smiling.

So peace was restored, and when Adela came to give her evidence the atmosphere was quieter than it had been since the beginning of the trial. Experts were not surprised. There is no stay in your native. He blazes up over a minor point, and has nothing left for the crisis. What he seeks is a grievance, and this he had found in the supposed abduction of an old lady. He would now be less aggrieved when Aziz was deported.

But the crisis was still to come.

Adela had always meant to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, and she had rehearsed this as a difficult task—difficult, because her disaster in the cave was connected, though by a thread, with another part of her life, her engagement to Ronny. She had thought of love just before she went in, and had innocently asked Aziz what marriage was like, and she supposed

that her question had roused evil in him. To recount this would have been incredibly painful, it was the one point she wanted to keep obscure; she was willing to give details that would have distressed other girls, but this story of her private failure she dared not allude to, and she dreaded being examined in public in case something came out. But as soon as she rose to reply, and heard the sound of her own voice, she feared not even that. A new and unknown sensation protected her, like magnificent armour. She didn't think what had happened, or even remember in the ordinary way of memory, but she returned to the Marabar Hills, and spoke from them across a sort of darkness to Mr. McBryde. The fatal day recurred, in every detail, but now she was of it and not of it at the same time, and this double relation gave it indescribable splendour. Why had she thought the expedition "dull"? Now the sun rose again, the elephant waited, the pale masses of the rock flowed round her and presented the first cave; she entered, and a match was reflected in the polished walls—all beautiful and significant, though she had been blind to it at the time. Questions were asked, and to each she found the exact reply; yes, she had noticed the "Tank of the Dagger," but not known its name; yes, Mrs. Moore had been tired after the first cave and sat in the shadow of a great rock, near the dried-up mud. Smoothly the voice in the distance proceeded, leading along the paths of truth, and the airs from the punkah behind her wafted her on. . . .

" . . . the prisoner and the guide took you on to the Kawa Dol, no one else being present?"

"The most wonderfully shaped of those hills. Yes." As she spoke, she created the Kawa Dol, saw the niches up the curve of the stone, and felt the heat strike her face. And something caused her to add: "No one else was present to my knowledge. We appeared to be alone."

"Very well, there is a ledge half-way up the hill, or broken ground rather, with caves scattered near the beginning of a nullah."

"I know where you mean."

"You went alone into one of those caves?"

"That is quite correct."

“And the prisoner followed you.”

“Now we’ve got ’im,” from the Major.

She was silent. The court, the place of question, awaited her reply. But she could not give it until Aziz entered the place of answer.

“The prisoner followed you, didn’t he?” he repeated in the monotonous tones that they both used; they were employing agreed words throughout, so that this part of the proceedings held no surprises.

“May I have half a minute before I reply to that, Mr. McBryde?”

“Certainly.”

Her vision was of several caves. She saw herself in one, and she was also outside it, watching its entrance, for Aziz to pass in. She failed to locate him. It was the doubt that had often visited her, but solid and attractive, like the hills, “I am not——” Speech was more difficult than vision. “I am not quite sure.”

“I beg your pardon?” said the Superintendent of Police.

“I cannot be sure . . .”

“I didn’t catch that answer.” He looked scared, his mouth shut with a snap. “You are on that landing, or whatever we term it, and you have entered a cave. I suggest to you that the prisoner followed you.”

She shook her head.

“What do you mean, please?”

“No,” she said in a flat, unattractive voice. Slight noises began in various parts of the room, but no one yet understood what was occurring except Fielding. He saw that she was going to have a nervous breakdown and that his friend was saved.

“What is that, what are you saying? Speak up, please.” The Magistrate bent forward.

“I’m afraid I have made a mistake.”

“What nature of mistake?”

“Dr. Aziz never followed me into the cave.”

The Superintendent slammed down his papers, then picked them up and said calmly: “Now, Miss Quested, let us go on. I will read you the words of the deposition which you signed two hours later in my bungalow.”

“Excuse me, Mr. McBryde, you cannot go on. I am speaking to the witness myself. And the public will be silent. If it continues to talk, I have the court cleared. Miss Quested, address your remarks to me, who am the Magistrate in charge of the case, and realize their extreme gravity. Remember you speak on oath, Miss Quested.”

“Dr. Aziz never——”

“I stop these proceedings on medical grounds,” cried the Major on a word from Turton, and all the English rose from their chairs at once, large white figures behind which the little magistrate was hidden. The Indians rose too, hundreds of things went on at once, so that afterwards each person gave a different account of the catastrophe.

“You withdraw the charge? Answer me,” shrieked the representative of Justice.

Something that she did not understand took hold of the girl and pulled her through. Though the vision was over, and she had returned to the insipidity of the world, she remembered what she had learnt. Atonement and confession—they could wait. It was in hard prosaic tones that she said, “I withdraw everything.”

“Enough—sit down. Mr. McBryde, do you wish to continue in the face of this?”

The Superintendent gazed at his witness as if she was a broken machine, and said, "Are you mad?"

"Don't question her, sir; you have no longer the right."

"Give me time to consider——"

"Sahib, you will have to withdraw; this becomes a scandal," boomed the Nawab Bahadur suddenly from the back of the court.

"He shall not," shouted Mrs. Turton against the gathering tumult. "Call the other witnesses; we're none of us safe——" Ronny tried to check her, and she gave him an irritable blow, then screamed insults at Adela.

The Superintendent moved to the support of his friends, saying nonchalantly to the Magistrate as he did so, "Right, I withdraw."

Mr. Das rose, nearly dead with the strain. He had controlled the case, just controlled it. He had shown that an Indian can preside. To those who could hear him he said, "The prisoner is released without one stain on his character; the question of costs will be decided elsewhere."

And then the flimsy framework of the court broke up, the shouts of derision and rage culminated, people screamed and cursed, kissed one another, wept passionately. Here were the English, whom their servants protected, there Aziz fainted in Hamidullah's arms. Victory on this side, defeat on that—complete for one moment was the antithesis. Then life returned to its complexities, person after person struggled out of the room to their various purposes, and before long no one remained on the scene of the fantasy but the beautiful naked god. Unaware that anything unusual had occurred, he continued to pull the cord of his punkah, to gaze at the empty dais and the overturned special chairs, and rhythmically to agitate the clouds of descending dust.

## CHAPTER XXV

Miss Quested had renounced her own people. Turning from them, she was drawn into a mass of Indians of the shopkeeping class, and carried by them towards the public exit of the court. The faint, indescribable smell of the bazaars invaded her, sweeter than a London slum, yet more disquieting: a tuft of scented cotton wool, wedged in an old man's ear, fragments of pan between his black teeth, odorous powders, oils—the Scented East of tradition, but blended with human sweat as if a great king had been entangled in ignominy and could not free himself, or as if the heat of the sun had boiled and fried all the glories of the earth into a single mess. They paid no attention to her. They shook hands over her shoulder, shouted through her body—for when the Indian does ignore his rulers, he becomes genuinely unaware of their existence. Without part in the universe she had created, she was flung against Mr. Fielding.

“What do you want here?”

Knowing him for her enemy, she passed on into the sunlight without speaking.

He called after her, “Where are you going, Miss Quested?”

“I don't know.”

“You can't wander about like that. Where's the car you came in?”

“I shall walk.”

“What madness . . . there's supposed to be a riot on . . . the police have struck, no one knows what'll happen next. Why don't you keep to your own people?”

“Ought I to join them?” she said, without emotion. She felt emptied, valueless; there was no more virtue in her.

“You can’t, it’s too late. How are you to get round to the private entrance now? Come this way with me—quick—I’ll put you into my carriage.”

“Cyril, Cyril, don’t leave me,” called the shattered voice of Aziz.

“I’m coming back. . . . This way, and don’t argue.” He gripped her arm. “Excuse manners, but I don’t know anyone’s position. Send my carriage back any time to-morrow, if you please.”

“But where am I to go in it?”

“Where you like. How should I know your arrangements?”

The victoria was safe in a quiet side lane, but there were no horses, for the sais, not expecting the trial would end so abruptly, had led them away to visit a friend. She got into it obediently. The man could not leave her, for the confusion increased, and spots of it sounded fanatical. The main road through the bazaars was blocked, and the English were gaining the civil station by by-ways; they were caught like caterpillars, and could have been killed off easily.

“What—what have you been doing?” he cried suddenly. “Playing a game, studying life, or what?”

“Sir, I intend these for you, sir,” interrupted a student, running down the lane with a garland of jasmine on his arm.

“I don’t want the rubbish; get out.”

“Sir, I am a horse, we shall be your horses,” another cried as he lifted the shafts of the victoria into the air.

“Fetch my sais, Rafi; there’s a good chap.”

“No, sir, this is an honour for us.”



Fielding wearied of his students. The more they honoured him the less they obeyed. They lassoed him with jasmine and roses, scratched the splash-board against a wall, and recited a poem, the noise of which filled the lane with a crowd.

“Hurry up, sir; we pull you in a procession.” And, half affectionate, half impudent, they bundled him in.

“I don’t know whether this suits you, but anyhow you’re safe,” he remarked. The carriage jerked into the main bazaar, where it created some sensation. Miss Quested was so loathed in Chandrapore that her recantation was discredited, and the rumour ran that she had been stricken by the Deity in the middle of her lies. But they cheered when they saw her sitting by the heroic Principal (some addressed her as Mrs. Moore!), and they garlanded her to match him. Half gods, half guys, with sausages of flowers round their necks, the pair were dragged in the wake of Aziz’ victorious landau. In the applause that greeted them some derision mingled. The English always stick together! That was the criticism. Nor was it unjust. Fielding shared it himself, and knew that if some misunderstanding occurred, and an attack was made on the girl by his allies, he would be obliged to die in her defence. He didn’t want to die for her, he wanted to be rejoicing with Aziz.

Where was the procession going? To friends, to enemies, to Aziz’ bungalow, to the Collector’s bungalow, to the Minto Hospital where the Civil Surgeon would eat dust and the patients (confused with prisoners) be released, to Delhi, Simla. The students thought it was going to Government College. When they reached a turning, they twisted the victoria to the right, ran it by side lanes down a hill and through a garden gate into the mango plantation, and, as far as Fielding and Miss Quested were concerned, all was peace and quiet. The trees were full of glossy foliage and slim green fruit, the tank slumbered; and beyond it rose the exquisite blue arches of the garden-house. “Sir, we fetch the others; sir, it is a somewhat heavy load for our arms,” were heard. Fielding took the refugee to his office, and tried to telephone to McBryde. But this he could not do; the wires had been cut. All his servants had decamped. Once more he was unable to desert her. He assigned her a couple of rooms, provided her with ice and drinks and biscuits, advised her to lie down, and lay down himself—there was nothing

else to do. He felt restless and thwarted as he listened to the retreating sounds of the procession, and his joy was rather spoilt by bewilderment. It was a victory, but such a queer one.

At that moment Aziz was crying, "Cyril, Cyril . . ." Crammed into a carriage with the Nawab Bahadur, Hamidullah, Mahmoud Ali, his own little boys, and a heap of flowers, he was not content; he wanted to be surrounded by all who loved him. Victory gave no pleasure, he had suffered too much. From the moment of his arrest he was done for, he had dropped like a wounded animal; he had despaired, not through cowardice, but because he knew that an Englishwoman's word would always outweigh his own. "It is fate," he said; and, "It is fate," when he was imprisoned anew after Mohurram. All that existed, in that terrible time, was affection, and affection was all that he felt in the first painful moments of his freedom. "Why isn't Cyril following? Let us turn back." But the procession could not turn back. Like a snake in a drain, it advanced down the narrow bazaar towards the basin of the Maidan, where it would turn about itself, and decide on its prey.

"Forward, forward," shrieked Mahmoud Ali, whose every utterance had become a yell. "Down with the Collector, down with the Superintendent of Police."

"Mr. Mahmoud Ali, this is not wise," implored the Nawab Bahadur: he knew that nothing was gained by attacking the English, who had fallen into their own pit and had better be left there; moreover, he had great possessions and deprecated anarchy.

"Cyril, again you desert," cried Aziz.

"Yet some orderly demonstration is necessary," said Hamidullah, "otherwise they will still think we are afraid."

"Down with the Civil Surgeon . . . rescue Nureddin."

"Nureddin?"

"They are torturing him."

“Oh, my God . . .”—for this, too, was a friend.

“They are not. I will not have my grandson made an excuse for an attack on the hospital,” the old man protested.

“They are. Callendar boasted so before the trial. I heard through the tatties; he said, ‘I have tortured that nigger.’”

“Oh, my God, my God. . . . He called him a nigger, did he?”

“They put pepper instead of antiseptic on the wounds.”

“Mr. Mahmoud Ali, impossible; a little roughness will not hurt the boy, he needs discipline.”

“Pepper. Civil Surgeon said so. They hope to destroy us one by one; they shall fail.”

The new injury lashed the crowd to fury. It had been aimless hitherto, and had lacked a grievance. When they reached the Maidan and saw the sallow arcades of the Minto they shambled towards it howling. It was near midday. The earth and sky were insanely ugly, the spirit of evil again strode abroad. The Nawab Bahadur alone struggled against it, and told himself that the rumour must be untrue. He had seen his grandson in the ward only last week. But he too was carried forward over the new precipice. To rescue, to maltreat Major Callendar in revenge, and then was to come the turn of the civil station generally.

But disaster was averted, and averted by Dr. Panna Lal.

Dr. Panna Lal had offered to give evidence for the prosecution in the hope of pleasing the English, also because he hated Aziz. When the case broke down, he was in a very painful position. He saw the crash coming sooner than most people, slipped from the court before Mr. Das had finished, and drove Dapple off through the bazaars, in flight from the wrath to come. In the hospital he should be safe, for Major Callendar would protect him. But the Major had not come, and now things were worse than ever, for here was a mob, entirely desirous of his blood, and the orderlies

were mutinous and would not help him over the back wall, or rather hoisted him and let him drop back, to the satisfaction of the patients. In agony he cried, "Man can but die the once," and waddled across the compound to meet the invasion, salaaming with one hand and holding up a pale yellow umbrella in the other. "Oh, forgive me," he whined as he approached the victorious landau. "Oh, Dr. Aziz, forgive the wicked lies I told." Aziz was silent, the others thickened their throats and threw up their chins in token of scorn. "I was afraid, I was mislaid," the suppliant continued. "I was mislaid here, there, and everywhere as regards your character. Oh, forgive the poor old hakim who gave you milk when ill! Oh, Nawab Bahadur, whoever merciful, is it my poor little dispensary you require? Take every cursed bottle." Agitated, but alert, he saw them smile at his indifferent English, and suddenly he started playing the buffoon, flung down his umbrella, trod through it, and struck himself upon the nose. He knew what he was doing, and so did they. There was nothing pathetic or eternal in the degradation of such a man. Of ignoble origin, Dr. Panna Lal possessed nothing that could be disgraced, and he wisely decided to make the other Indians feel like kings, because it would put them into better tempers. When he found they wanted Nureddin, he skipped like a goat, he scuttled like a hen to do their bidding, the hospital was saved, and to the end of his life he could not understand why he had not obtained promotion on the morning's work. "Promptness, sir, promptness similar to you," was the argument he employed to Major Callendar when claiming it.

When Nureddin emerged, his face all bandaged, there was a roar of relief as though the Bastille had fallen. It was the crisis of the march, and the Nawab Bahadur managed to get the situation into hand. Embracing the young man publicly, he began a speech about Justice, Courage, Liberty, and Prudence, ranged under heads, which cooled the passion of the crowd. He further announced that he should give up his British-conferred title, and live as a private gentleman, plain Mr. Zulfiqar, for which reason he was instantly proceeding to his country seat. The landau turned, the crowd accompanied it, the crisis was over. The Marabar caves had been a terrible strain on the local administration; they altered a good many lives and wrecked several careers, but they did not break up a continent or even dislocate a district.

“We will have rejoicings to-night,” the old man said. “Mr. Hamidullah, I depute you to bring out our friends Fielding and Amritrao, and to discover whether the latter will require special food. The others will keep with me. We shall not go out to Dilkusha until the cool of the evening, of course. I do not know the feelings of other gentlemen; for my own part, I have a slight headache, and I wish I had thought to ask our good Panna Lal for aspirin.”

For the heat was claiming its own. Unable to madden, it stupefied, and before long most of the Chandrapore combatants were asleep. Those in the civil station kept watch a little, fearing an attack, but presently they too entered the world of dreams—that world in which a third of each man’s life is spent, and which is thought by some pessimists to be a premonition of eternity.

## CHAPTER XXVI

Evening approached by the time Fielding and Miss Quested met and had the first of their numerous curious conversations. He had hoped, when he woke up, to find someone had fetched her away, but the College remained isolated from the rest of the universe. She asked whether she could have “a sort of interview,” and, when he made no reply, said, “Have you any explanation of my extraordinary behaviour?”

“None,” he said curtly. “Why make such a charge if you were going to withdraw it?”

“Why, indeed.”

“I ought to feel grateful to you, I suppose, but——”

“I don’t expect gratitude. I only thought you might care to hear what I have to say.”

“Oh, well,” he grumbled, feeling rather schoolboyish. “I don’t think a discussion between us is desirable. To put it frankly, I belong to the other side in this ghastly affair.”

“Would it not interest you to hear my side?”

“Not much.”

“I shouldn’t tell you in confidence, of course. So you can hand on all my remarks to your side, for there is one great mercy that has come out of all to-day’s misery: I have no longer any secrets. My echo has gone—I call the buzzing sound in my ears an echo. You see, I have been unwell ever since that expedition to the caves, and possibly before it.”

The remark interested him rather; it was what he had sometimes suspected himself. “What kind of illness?” he enquired.

She touched her head at the side, then shook it.

“That was my first thought, the day of the arrest: hallucination.”

“Do you think that would be so?” she asked with great humility. “What should have given me an hallucination?”

“One of three things certainly happened in the Marabar,” he said, getting drawn into a discussion against his will. “One of four things. Either Aziz is guilty, which is what your friends think; or you invented the charge out of malice, which is what my friends think; or you have had an hallucination. I’m very much inclined”—getting up and striding about—“now that you tell me that you felt unwell before the expedition—it’s an important piece of evidence—I believe that you yourself broke the strap of the field-glasses; you were alone in that cave the whole time.”

“Perhaps. . . .”

“Can you remember when you first felt out of sorts?”

“When I came to tea with you there, in that garden-house.”

“A somewhat unlucky party. Aziz and old Godbole were both ill after it too.”

“I was not ill—it is far too vague to mention: it is all mixed up with my private affairs. I enjoyed the singing . . . but just about then a sort of sadness began that I couldn’t detect at the time . . . no, nothing as solid as sadness: living at half pressure expresses it best. Half pressure. I remember going on to polo with Mr. Heaslop at the Maidan. Various other things happened—it doesn’t matter what, but I was under par for all of them. I was certainly in that state when I saw the caves, and you suggest (nothing shocks or hurts me)—you suggest that I had an hallucination there, the sort of thing—though in an awful form—that makes some women think they’ve had an offer of marriage when none was made.”

“You put it honestly, anyhow.”

“I was brought up to be honest; the trouble is it gets me nowhere.”

Liking her better, he smiled and said, “It’ll get us to heaven.”

“Will it?”

“If heaven existed.”

“Do you not believe in heaven, Mr. Fielding, may I ask?” she said, looking at him shyly.

“I do not. Yet I believe that honesty gets us there.”

“How can that be?”

“Let us go back to hallucinations. I was watching you carefully through your evidence this morning, and if I’m right, the hallucination (what you call half pressure—quite as good a word) disappeared suddenly.”

She tried to remember what she had felt in court, but could not; the vision disappeared whenever she wished to interpret it. “Events presented themselves to me in their logical sequence,” was what she said, but it hadn’t been that at all.

“My belief—and of course I was listening carefully, in hope you would make some slip—my belief is that poor McBryde exorcised you. As soon as he asked you a straightforward question, you gave a straightforward answer, and broke down.”

“Exorcise in that sense. I thought you meant I’d seen a ghost.”

“I don’t go to that length!”

“People whom I respect very much believe in ghosts,” she said rather sharply. “My friend Mrs. Moore does.”

“She’s an old lady.”



“I think you need not be impolite to her, as well as to her son.”

“I did not intend to be rude. I only meant it is difficult, as we get on in life, to resist the supernatural. I’ve felt it coming on me myself. I still jog on without it, but what a temptation, at forty-five, to pretend that the dead live again; one’s own dead; no one else’s matter.”

“Because the dead don’t live again.”

“I fear not.”

“So do I.”

There was a moment’s silence, such as often follows the triumph of rationalism. Then he apologized handsomely enough for his behaviour to Heaslop at the club.

“What does Dr. Aziz say of me?” she asked, after another pause.

“He—he has not been capable of thought in his misery, naturally he’s very bitter,” said Fielding, a little awkward, because such remarks as Aziz had made were not merely bitter, they were foul. The underlying notion was, “It disgraces me to have been mentioned in connection with such a hag.” It enraged him that he had been accused by a woman who had no personal beauty; sexually, he was a snob. This had puzzled and worried Fielding. Sensuality, as long as it is straight-forward, did not repel him, but this derived sensuality—the sort that classes a mistress among motor-cars if she is beautiful, and among eye-flies if she isn’t—was alien to his own emotions, and he felt a barrier between himself and Aziz whenever it arose. It was, in a new form, the old, old trouble that eats the heart out of every civilization: snobbery, the desire for possessions, creditable appendages; and it is to escape this rather than the lusts of the flesh that saints retreat into the Himalayas. To change the subject, he said, “But let me conclude my analysis. We are agreed that he is not a villain and that you are not one, and we aren’t really sure that it was an hallucination. There’s a fourth possibility which we must touch on: was it somebody else?”

“The guide.”

“Exactly, the guide. I often think so. Unluckily Aziz hit him on the face, and he got a fright and disappeared. It is most unsatisfactory, and we hadn’t the police to help us, the guide was of no interest to them.”

“Perhaps it was the guide,” she said quietly; the question had lost interest for her suddenly.

“Or could it have been one of that gang of Pathans who have been drifting through the district?”

“Someone who was in another cave, and followed me when the guide was looking away? Possibly.”

At that moment Hamidullah joined them, and seemed not too pleased to find them closeted together. Like everyone else in Chandrapore, he could make nothing of Miss Quested’s conduct. He had overheard their last remark. “Hullo, my dear Fielding,” he said. “So I run you down at last. Can you come out at once to Dilkusha?”

“At once?”

“I hope to leave in a moment, don’t let me interrupt,” said Adela.

“The telephone has been broken; Miss Quested can’t ring up her friends,” he explained.

“A great deal has been broken, more than will ever be mended,” said the other. “Still, there should be some way of transporting this lady back to the civil lines. The resources of civilization are numerous.” He spoke without looking at Miss Quested, and he ignored the slight movement she made towards him with her hand.

Fielding, who thought the meeting might as well be friendly, said, “Miss Quested has been explaining a little about her conduct of this morning.”

“Perhaps the age of miracles has returned. One must be prepared for everything, our philosophers say.”

“It must have seemed a miracle to the onlookers,” said Adela, addressing him nervously. “The fact is that I realized before it was too late that I had made a mistake, and had just enough presence of mind to say so. That is all my extraordinary conduct amounts to.”

“All it amounts to, indeed,” he retorted, quivering with rage but keeping himself in hand, for he felt she might be setting another trap. “Speaking as a private individual, in a purely informal conversation, I admired your conduct, and I was delighted when our warm-hearted students garlanded you. But, like Mr. Fielding, I am surprised; indeed, surprise is too weak a word. I see you drag my best friend into the dirt, damage his health and ruin his prospects in a way you cannot conceive owing to your ignorance of our society and religion, and then suddenly you get up in the witness-box: ‘Oh no, Mr. McBryde, after all I am not quite sure, you may as well let him go.’ Am I mad? I keep asking myself. Is it a dream, and if so, when did it start? And without doubt it is a dream that has not yet finished. For I gather you have not done with us yet, and it is now the turn of the poor old guide who conducted you round the caves.”

“Not at all, we were only discussing possibilities,” interposed Fielding.

“An interesting pastime, but a lengthy one. There are one hundred and seventy million Indians in this notable peninsula, and of course one or other of them entered the cave. Of course some Indian is the culprit, we must never doubt that. And since, my dear Fielding, these possibilities will take you some time”—here he put his arm over the Englishman’s shoulder and swayed him to and fro gently—“don’t you think you had better come out to the Nawab Bahadur’s—or I should say to Mr. Zulfiqar’s, for that is the name he now requires us to call him by.”

“Gladly, in a minute . . .”

“I have just settled my movements,” said Miss Quested. “I shall go to the Dak Bungalow.”

“Not the Turtons’?” said Hamidullah, goggle-eyed. “I thought you were their guest.”

The Dak Bungalow of Chandrapore was below the average, and certainly servantless. Fielding, though he continued to sway with Hamidullah, was thinking on independent lines, and said in a moment: "I have a better idea than that, Miss Quested. You must stop here at the College. I shall be away at least two days, and you can have the place entirely to yourself, and make your plans at your convenience."

"I don't agree at all," said Hamidullah, with every symptom of dismay. "The idea is a thoroughly bad one. There may quite well be another demonstration to-night, and suppose an attack is made on the College. You would be held responsible for this lady's safety, my dear fellow."

"They might equally attack the Dak Bungalow."

"Exactly, but the responsibility there ceases to be yours."

"Quite so. I have given trouble enough."

"Do you hear? The lady admits it herself. It's not an attack from our people I fear—you should see their orderly conduct at the hospital; what we must guard against is an attack secretly arranged by the police for the purpose of discrediting you. McBryde keeps plenty of roughs for this purpose, and this would be the very opportunity for him."

"Never mind. She is not going to the Dak Bungalow," said Fielding. He had a natural sympathy for the down-trodden—that was partly why he rallied from Aziz—and had become determined not to leave the poor girl in the lurch. Also, he had a new-born respect for her, consequent on their talk. Although her hard schoolmistressy manner remained, she was no longer examining life, but being examined by it; she had become a real person.

"Then where is she to go? We shall never have done with her!" For Miss Quested had not appealed to Hamidullah. If she had shown emotion in court, broke down, beat her breast, and invoked the name of God, she would have summoned forth his imagination and generosity—he had plenty of both. But while relieving the Oriental mind, she had chilled it, with the result that he could scarcely believe she was sincere, and indeed from his standpoint she was not. For her behaviour rested on cold justice and

honesty; she had felt, while she recanted, no passion of love for those whom she had wronged. Truth is not truth in that exacting land unless there go with it kindness and more kindness and kindness again, unless the Word that was with God also is God. And the girl's sacrifice—so creditable according to Western notions—was rightly rejected, because, though it came from her heart, it did not include her heart. A few garlands from students was all that India ever gave her in return.

“But where is she to have her dinner, where is she to sleep? I say here, here, and if she is hit on the head by roughs, she is hit on the head. That is my contribution. Well, Miss Quested?”

“You are very kind. I should have said yes, I think, but I agree with Mr. Hamidullah. I must give no more trouble to you. I believe my best plan is to return to the Turtons, and see if they will allow me to sleep, and if they turn me away I must go to the Dak. The Collector would take me in, I know, but Mrs. Turton said this morning that she would never see me again.” She spoke without bitterness, or, as Hamidullah thought, without proper pride. Her aim was to cause the minimum of annoyance.

“Far better stop here than expose yourself to insults from that preposterous woman.”

“Do you find her preposterous? I used to. I don't now.”

“Well, here's our solution,” said the barrister, who had terminated his slightly minatory caress and strolled to the window. “Here comes the City Magistrate. He comes in a third-class band-ghari for purposes of disguise, he comes unattended, but here comes the City Magistrate.”

“At last,” said Adela sharply, which caused Fielding to glance at her.

“He comes, he comes, he comes. I cringe. I tremble.”

“Will you ask him what he wants, Mr. Fielding?”

“He wants you, of course.”

“He may not even know I’m here.”

“I’ll see him first, if you prefer.”

When he had gone, Hamidullah said to her bitingly: “Really, really. Need you have exposed Mr. Fielding to this further discomfort? He is far too considerate.” She made no reply, and there was complete silence between them until their host returned.

“He has some news for you,” he said. “You’ll find him on the verandah. He prefers not to come in.”

“Does he tell me to come out to him?”

“Whether he tells you or not, you will go, I think,” said Hamidullah.

She paused, then said, “Perfectly right,” and then said a few words of thanks to the Principal for his kindness to her during the day.

“Thank goodness, that’s over,” he remarked, not escorting her to the verandah, for he held it unnecessary to see Ronny again.

“It was insulting of him not to come in.”

“He couldn’t very well after my behaviour to him at the Club. Heaslop doesn’t come out badly. Besides, Fate has treated him pretty roughly to-day. He has had a cable to the effect that his mother’s dead, poor old soul.”

“Oh, really. Mrs. Moore. I’m sorry,” said Hamidullah rather indifferently.

“She died at sea.”

“The heat, I suppose.”

“Presumably.”

“May is no month to allow an old lady to travel in.”

“Quite so. Heaslop ought never to have let her go, and he knows it. Shall we be off?”

“Let us wait until the happy couple leave the compound clear . . . they really are intolerable dawdling there. Ah well, Fielding, you don’t believe in Providence, I remember. I do. This is Heaslop’s punishment for abducting our witness in order to stop us establishing our alibi.”

“You go rather too far there. The poor old lady’s evidence could have had no value, shout and shriek Mahmoud Ali as he will. She couldn’t see through the Kawa Dol even if she had wanted to. Only Miss Quested could have saved him.”

“She loved Aziz, he says, also India, and he loved her.”

“Love is of no value in a witness, as a barrister ought to know. But I see there is about to be an Esmiss Esmoor legend at Chandrapore, my dear Hamidullah, and I will not impede its growth.”

The other smiled, and looked at his watch. They both regretted the death, but they were middle-aged men, who had invested their emotions elsewhere, and outbursts of grief could not be expected from them over a slight acquaintance. It’s only one’s own dead who matter. If for a moment the sense of communion in sorrow came to them, it passed. How indeed is it possible for one human being to be sorry for all the sadness that meets him on the face of the earth, for the pain that is endured not only by men, but by animals and plants, and perhaps by the stones? The soul is tired in a moment, and in fear of losing the little she does understand, she retreats to the permanent lines which habit or chance have dictated, and suffers there. Fielding had met the dead woman only two or three times, Hamidullah had seen her in the distance once, and they were far more occupied with the coming gathering at Dilkusha, the “victory” dinner, for which they would be most victoriously late.

They agreed not to tell Aziz about Mrs. Moore till the morrow, because he was fond of her, and the bad news might spoil his fun.

“Oh, this is unbearable!” muttered Hamidullah. For Miss Quested was back again.

“Mr. Fielding, has Ronny told you of this new misfortune?”

He bowed.

“Ah me!” She sat down, and seemed to stiffen into a monument.

“Heaslop is waiting for you, I think.”

“I do so long to be alone. She was my best friend, far more to me than to him. I can’t bear to be with Ronny . . . I can’t explain . . . Could you do me the very great kindness of letting me stop after all?”

Hamidullah swore violently in the vernacular.

“I should be pleased, but does Mr. Heaslop wish it?”

“I didn’t ask him, we are too much upset—it’s so complex, not like what unhappiness is supposed to be. Each of us ought to be alone, and think. Do come and see Ronny again.”

“I think he should come in this time,” said Fielding, feeling that this much was due to his own dignity. “Do ask him to come.”

She returned with him. He was half miserable, half arrogant—indeed, a strange mix-up—and broke at once into uneven speech. “I came to bring Miss Quested away, but her visit to the Turtons has ended, and there is no other arrangement so far, mine are bachelor quarters now——”

Fielding stopped him courteously. “Say no more, Miss Quested stops here. I only wanted to be assured of your approval. Miss Quested, you had better send for your own servant if he can be found, but I will leave orders with mine to do all they can for you, also I’ll let the Scouts know. They have guarded the College ever since it was closed, and may as well go on. I really think you’ll be as safe here as anywhere. I shall be back Thursday.”



Meanwhile Hamidullah, determined to spare the enemy no incidental pain, had said to Ronny: "We hear, sir, that your mother has died. May we ask where the cable came from?"

"Aden."

"Ah, you were boasting she had reached Aden, in court."

"But she died on leaving Bombay," broke in Adela. "She was dead when they called her name this morning. She must have been buried at sea."

Somehow this stopped Hamidullah, and he desisted from his brutality, which had shocked Fielding more than anyone else. He remained silent while the details of Miss Quested's occupation of the College were arranged, merely remarking to Ronny, "It is clearly to be understood, sir, that neither Mr. Fielding nor any of us are responsible for this lady's safety at Government College," to which Ronny agreed. After that, he watched the semi-chivalrous behavings of the three English with quiet amusement; he thought Fielding had been incredibly silly and weak, and he was amazed by the younger people's want of proper pride. When they were driving out to Dilkusha, hours late, he said to Amritrao, who accompanied them: "Mr. Amritrao, have you considered what sum Miss Quested ought to pay as compensation?"

"Twenty thousand rupees."

No more was then said, but the remark horrified Fielding. He couldn't bear to think of the queer honest girl losing her money and possibly her young man too. She advanced into his consciousness suddenly. And, fatigued by the merciless and enormous day, he lost his usual sane view of human intercourse, and felt that we exist not in ourselves, but in terms of each others' minds—a notion for which logic offers no support and which had attacked him only once before, the evening after the catastrophe, when from the verandah of the club he saw the fists and fingers of the Marabar swell until they included the whole night sky.

## CHAPTER XXVII

“Aziz, are you awake?”

“No, so let us have a talk; let us dream plans for the future.”

“I am useless at dreaming.”

“Good night then, dear fellow.”

The Victory Banquet was over, and the revellers lay on the roof of plain Mr. Zulfiqar’s mansion, asleep, or gazing through mosquito nets at the stars. Exactly above their heads hung the constellation of the Lion, the disc of Regulus so large and bright that it resembled a tunnel, and when this fancy was accepted all the other stars seemed tunnels too.

“Are you content with our day’s work, Cyril?” the voice on his left continued.

“Are you?”

“Except that I ate too much. ‘How is stomach, how head?’—I say, Panna Lal and Callendar ’ll get the sack.”

“There’ll be a general move at Chandrapore.”

“And you’ll get promotion.”

“They can’t well move me down, whatever their feelings.”

“In any case we spend our holidays together, and visit Kashmir, possibly Persia, for I shall have plenty of money. Paid to me on account of the injury sustained by my character,” he explained with cynical calm. “While with me you shall never spend a single pie. This is what I have always wished, and as the result of my misfortunes it has come.”

“You have won a great victory . . .” began Fielding.

“I know, my dear chap, I know; your voice need not become so solemn and anxious. I know what you are going to say next: Let, oh let Miss Quested off paying, so that the English may say, ‘Here is a native who has actually behaved like a gentleman; if it was not for his black face we would almost allow him to join our club.’ The approval of your compatriots no longer interests me, I have become anti-British, and ought to have done so sooner, it would have saved me numerous misfortunes.”

“Including knowing me.”

“I say, shall we go and pour water on to Mohammed Latif’s face? He is so funny when this is done to him asleep.”

The remark was not a question but a full-stop. Fielding accepted it as such and there was a pause, pleasantly filled by a little wind which managed to brush the top of the house. The banquet, though riotous, had been agreeable, and now the blessings of leisure—unknown to the West, which either works or idles—descended on the motley company. Civilization strays about like a ghost here, revisiting the ruins of empire, and is to be found not in great works of art or mighty deeds, but in the gestures well-bred Indians make when they sit or lie down. Fielding, who had dressed up in native costume, learnt from his excessive awkwardness in it that all his motions were makeshifts, whereas when the Nawab Bahadur stretched out his hand for food or Nureddin applauded a song, something beautiful had been accomplished which needed no development. This restfulness of gesture—it is the Peace that passeth Understanding, after all, it is the social equivalent of Yoga. When the whirring of action ceases, it becomes visible, and reveals a civilization which the West can disturb but will never acquire. The hand stretches out for ever, the lifted knee has the eternity though not the sadness of the grave. Aziz was full of civilization this evening, complete, dignified, rather hard, and it was with diffidence that the other said: “Yes, certainly you must let off Miss Quested easily. She must pay all your costs, that is only fair, but do not treat her like a conquered enemy.”

“Is she wealthy? I depute you to find out.”

“The sums mentioned at dinner when you all got so excited—they would ruin her, they are perfectly preposterous. Look here . . .”

“I am looking, though it gets a bit dark. I see Cyril Fielding to be a very nice chap indeed and my best friend, but in some ways a fool. You think that by letting Miss Quested off easily I shall make a better reputation for myself and Indians generally. No, no. It will be put down to weakness and the attempt to gain promotion officially. I have decided to have nothing more to do with British India, as a matter of fact. I shall seek service in some Moslem State, such as Hyderabad, Bhopal, where Englishmen cannot insult me any more. Don’t counsel me otherwise.”

“In the course of a long talk with Miss Quested . . .”

“I don’t want to hear your long talks.”

“Be quiet. In the course of a long talk with Miss Quested I have begun to understand her character. It’s not an easy one, she being a prig. But she is perfectly genuine and very brave. When she saw she was wrong, she pulled herself up with a jerk and said so. I want you to realize what that means. All her friends around her, the entire British Raj pushing her forward. She stops, sends the whole thing to smithereens. In her place I should have funked it. But she stopped, and almost did she become a national heroine, but my students ran us down a side street before the crowd caught flame. Do treat her considerately. She really mustn’t get the worst of both worlds. I know what all these”—he indicated the shrouded forms on the roof—“will want, but you mustn’t listen to them. Be merciful. Act like one of your six Mogul Emperors, or all the six rolled into one.”

“Not even Mogul Emperors showed mercy until they received an apology.”

“She’ll apologize if that’s the trouble,” he cried, sitting up. “Look, I’ll make you an offer. Dictate to me whatever form of words you like, and this time to-morrow I’ll bring it back signed. This is not instead of any public apology she may make you in law. It’s an addition.”

“Dear Dr. Aziz, I wish you had come into the cave; I am an awful old hag, and it is my last chance.’ Will she sign that?”

“Well good night, good night, it’s time to go to sleep, after that.”

“Good night, I suppose it is.”

“Oh, I wish you wouldn’t make that kind of remark,” he continued after a pause. “It is the one thing in you I can’t put up with.”

“I put up with all things in you, so what is to be done?”

“Well, you hurt me by saying it; good night.”

There was silence, then dreamily but with deep feeling the voice said: “Cyril, I have had an idea which will satisfy your tender mind: I shall consult Mrs. Moore.” Opening his eyes, and beholding thousands of stars, he could not reply, they silenced him.

“Her opinion will solve everything; I can trust her so absolutely. If she advises me to pardon this girl, I shall do so. She will counsel me nothing against my real and true honour, as you might.”

“Let us discuss that to-morrow morning.”

“Is it not strange? I keep on forgetting she has left India. During the shouting of her name in court I fancied she was present. I had shut my eyes, I confused myself on purpose to deaden the pain. Now this very instant I forgot again. I shall be obliged to write. She is now far away, well on her way towards Ralph and Stella.”

“To whom?”

“To those other children.”

“I have not heard of other children.”

“Just as I have two boys and a girl, so has Mrs. Moore. She told me in the mosque.”

“I knew her so slightly.”

“I have seen her but three times, but I know she is an Oriental.”

“You are so fantastic. . . . Miss Quested, you won’t treat her generously; while over Mrs. Moore there is this elaborate chivalry. Miss Quested anyhow behaved decently this morning, whereas the old lady never did anything for you at all, and it’s pure conjecture that she would have come forward in your favour, it only rests on servants’ gossip. Your emotions never seem in proportion to their objects, Aziz.”

“Is emotion a sack of potatoes, so much the pound, to be measured out? Am I a machine? I shall be told I can use up my emotions by using them, next.”

“I should have thought you could. It sounds common sense. You can’t eat your cake and have it, even in the world of the spirit.”

“If you are right, there is no point in any friendship; it all comes down to give and take, or give and return, which is disgusting, and we had better all leap over this parapet and kill ourselves. Is anything wrong with you this evening that you grow so materialistic?”

“Your unfairness is worse than my materialism.”

“I see. Anything further to complain of?” He was good-tempered and affectionate but a little formidable. Imprisonment had made channels for his character, which would never fluctuate as widely now as in the past. “Because it is far better you put all your difficulties before me, if we are to be friends for ever. You do not like Mrs. Moore, and are annoyed because I do; however, you will like her in time.”

When a person, really dead, is supposed to be alive, an unhealthiness infects the conversation. Fielding could not stand the tension any longer and blurted out: “I’m sorry to say Mrs. Moore’s dead.”

But Hamidullah, who had been listening to all their talk, and did not want the festive evening spoilt, cried from the adjoining bed: “Aziz, he is trying

to pull your leg; don't believe him, the villain."

"I do not believe him," said Aziz; he was inured to practical jokes, even of this type.

Fielding said no more. Facts are facts, and everyone would learn of Mrs. Moore's death in the morning. But it struck him that people are not really dead until they are felt to be dead. As long as there is some misunderstanding about them, they possess a sort of immortality. An experience of his own confirmed this. Many years ago he had lost a great friend, a woman, who believed in the Christian heaven, and assured him that after the changes and chances of this mortal life they would meet in it again. Fielding was a blank, frank atheist, but he respected every opinion his friend held: to do this is essential in friendship. And it seemed to him for a time that the dead awaited him, and when the illusion faded it left behind it an emptiness that was almost guilt: "This really is the end," he thought, "and I gave her the final blow." He had tried to kill Mrs. Moore this evening, on the roof of the Nawab Bahadur's house; but she still eluded him, and the atmosphere remained tranquil. Presently the moon rose—the exhausted crescent that precedes the sun—and shortly after men and oxen began their interminable labour, and the gracious interlude, which he had tried to curtail, came to its natural conclusion.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

Dead she was—committed to the deep while still on the southward track, for the boats from Bombay cannot point towards Europe until Arabia has been rounded; she was further in the tropics than ever achieved while on shore, when the sun touched her for the last time and her body was lowered into yet another India—the Indian Ocean. She left behind her sore discomfort, for a death gives a ship a bad name. Who was this Mrs. Moore? When Aden was reached, Lady Mellanby cabled, wrote, did all that was kind, but the wife of a Lieutenant-Governor does not bargain for such an experience; and she repeated: “I had only seen the poor creature for a few hours when she was taken ill; really this has been needlessly distressing, it spoils one’s home-coming.” A ghost followed the ship up the Red Sea, but failed to enter the Mediterranean. Somewhere about Suez there is always a social change: the arrangements of Asia weaken and those of Europe begin to be felt, and during the transition Mrs. Moore was shaken off. At Port Said the grey blustery north began. The weather was so cold and bracing that the passengers felt it must have broken in the land they had left, but it became hotter steadily there in accordance with its usual law.

The death took subtler and more lasting shapes in Chandrapore. A legend sprang up that an Englishman had killed his mother for trying to save an Indian’s life—and there was just enough truth in this to cause annoyance to the authorities. Sometimes it was a cow that had been killed—or a crocodile with the tusks of a boar had crawled out of the Ganges. Nonsense of this type is more difficult to combat than a solid lie. It hides in rubbish heaps and moves when no one is looking. At one period two distinct tombs containing Esmis Esmoor’s remains were reported: one by the tannery, the other up near the goods station. Mr. McBryde visited them both and saw signs of the beginning of a cult—earthenware saucers and so on. Being an experienced official, he did nothing to irritate it, and after a week or so, the rash died down. “There’s propaganda behind all this,” he said, forgetting that a hundred years ago, when Europeans still made their home in the



country-side and appealed to its imagination, they occasionally became local demons after death—not a whole god, perhaps, but part of one, adding an epithet or gesture to what already existed, just as the gods contribute to the great gods, and they to the philosophic Brahm.

Ronny reminded himself that his mother had left India at her own wish, but his conscience was not clear. He had behaved badly to her, and he had either to repent (which involved a mental overturn), or to persist in unkindness towards her. He chose the latter course. How tiresome she had been with her patronage of Aziz! What a bad influence upon Adela! And now she still gave trouble with ridiculous “tombs,” mixing herself up with natives. She could not help it, of course, but she had attempted similar exasperating expeditions in her lifetime, and he reckoned it against her. The young man had much to worry him—the heat, the local tension, the approaching visit of the Lieutenant-Governor, the problems of Adela—and threading them all together into a grotesque garland were these Indianizations of Mrs. Moore. What does happen to one’s mother when she dies? Presumably she goes to heaven, anyhow she clears out. Ronny’s religion was of the sterilized Public School brand, which never goes bad, even in the tropics. Wherever he entered, mosque, cave, or temple, he retained the spiritual outlook of the Fifth Form, and condemned as “weakening” any attempt to understand them. Pulling himself together, he dismissed the mater from his mind. In due time he and his half-brother and -sister would put up a tablet to her in the Northamptonshire church where she had worshipped, recording the dates of her birth and death and the fact that she had been buried at sea. This would be sufficient.

And Adela—she would have to depart too; he hoped she would have made the suggestion herself ere now. He really could not marry her—it would mean the end of his career. Poor lamentable Adela. . . . She remained at Government College, by Fielding’s courtesy—unsuitable and humiliating, but no one would receive her at the civil station. He postponed all private talk until the award against her was decided. Aziz was suing her for damages in the sub-judge’s court. Then he would ask her to release him. She had killed his love, and it had never been very robust; they would never have achieved betrothal but for the accident to the Nawab Bahadur’s car.

She belonged to the callow academic period of his life which he had outgrown—Grasmere, serious talks and walks, that sort of thing.

## CHAPTER XXIX

The visit of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province formed the next stage in the decomposition of the Marabar. Sir Gilbert, though not an enlightened man, held enlightened opinions. Exempted by a long career in the Secretariate from personal contact with the peoples of India, he was able to speak of them urbanely, and to deplore racial prejudice. He applauded the outcome of the trial, and congratulated Fielding on having taken “the broad, the sensible, the only possible charitable view from the first. Speaking confidentially . . .” he proceeded. Fielding deprecated confidences, but Sir Gilbert insisted on imparting them; the affair had been “mishandled by certain of our friends up the hill” who did not realize that “the hands of the clock move forward, not back,” etc., etc. One thing he could guarantee: the Principal would receive a most cordial invitation to rejoin the club, and he begged, nay commanded him, to accept. He returned to his Himalayan altitudes well satisfied; the amount of money Miss Quested would have to pay, the precise nature of what had happened in the caves—these were local details, and did not concern him.

Fielding found himself drawn more and more into Miss Quested’s affairs. The College remained closed and he ate and slept at Hamidullah’s, so there was no reason she should not stop on if she wished. In her place he would have cleared out, sooner than submit to Ronny’s half-hearted and distracted civilities, but she was waiting for the hour-glass of her sojourn to run through. A house to live in, a garden to walk in during the brief moment of the cool—that was all she asked, and he was able to provide them. Disaster had shown her her limitations, and he realized now what a fine loyal character she was. Her humility was touching. She never repined at getting the worst of both worlds; she regarded it as the due punishment of her stupidity. When he hinted to her that a personal apology to Aziz might be seemly, she said sadly: “Of course. I ought to have thought of it myself, my instincts never help me. Why didn’t I rush up to him after the trial? Yes, of course I will write him an apology, but please will you dictate it?” Between

them they concocted a letter, sincere, and full of moving phrases, but it was not moving as a letter. "Shall I write another?" she enquired. "Nothing matters if I can undo the harm I have caused. I can do this right, and that right; but when the two are put together they come wrong. That's the defect of my character. I have never realized it until now. I thought that if I was just and asked questions I would come through every difficulty." He replied: "Our letter is a failure for a simple reason which we had better face: you have no real affection for Aziz, or Indians generally." She assented. "The first time I saw you, you were wanting to see India, not Indians, and it occurred to me: Ah, that won't take us far. Indians know whether they are liked or not—they cannot be fooled here. Justice never satisfies them, and that is why the British Empire rests on sand." Then she said: "Do I like anyone, though?" Presumably she liked Heaslop, and he changed the subject, for this side of her life did not concern him.

His Indian friends were, on the other hand, a bit above themselves. Victory, which would have made the English sanctimonious, made them aggressive. They wanted to develop an offensive, and tried to do so by discovering new grievances and wrongs, many of which had no existence. They suffered from the usual disillusion that attends warfare. The aims of battle and the fruits of conquest are never the same; the latter have their value and only the saint rejects them, but their hint of immortality vanishes as soon as they are held in the hand. Although Sir Gilbert had been courteous, almost obsequious, the fabric he represented had in no wise bowed its head. British officialism remained, as all-pervading and as unpleasant as the sun; and what was next to be done against it was not very obvious, even to Mahmoud Ali. Loud talk and trivial lawlessness were attempted, and behind them continued a genuine but vague desire for education. "Mr. Fielding, we must all be educated promptly."

Aziz was friendly and domineering. He wanted Fielding to "give in to the East," as he called it, and live in a condition of affectionate dependence upon it. "You can trust me, Cyril." No question of that, and Fielding had no roots among his own people. Yet he really couldn't become a sort of Mohammed Latif. When they argued about it something racial intruded—not bitterly, but inevitably, like the colour of their skins: coffee-colour versus pinko-grey. And Aziz would conclude: "Can't you see that I'm

grateful to you for your help and want to reward you?" And the other would retort: "If you want to reward me, let Miss Quested off paying."

The insensitiveness about Adela displeased him. It would, from every point of view, be right to treat her generously, and one day he had the notion of appealing to the memory of Mrs. Moore. Aziz had this high and fantastic estimate of Mrs. Moore. Her death had been a real grief to his warm heart; he wept like a child and ordered his three children to weep also. There was no doubt that he respected and loved her. Fielding's first attempt was a failure. The reply was: "I see your trick. I want revenge on them. Why should I be insulted and suffer and the contents of my pockets read and my wife's photograph taken to the police station? Also I want the money—to educate my little boys, as I explained to her." But he began to weaken, and Fielding was not ashamed to practise a little necromancy. Whenever the question of compensation came up, he introduced the dead woman's name. Just as other propagandists invented her a tomb, so did he raise a questionable image of her in the heart of Aziz, saying nothing that he believed to be untrue, but producing something that was probably far from the truth. Aziz yielded suddenly. He felt it was Mrs. Moore's wish that he should spare the woman who was about to marry her son, that it was the only honour he could pay her, and he renounced with a passionate and beautiful outburst the whole of the compensation money, claiming only costs. It was fine of him, and, as he foresaw, it won him no credit with the English. They still believed he was guilty, they believed it to the end of their careers, and retired Anglo-Indians in Tunbridge Wells or Cheltenham still murmur to each other: "That Marabar case which broke down because the poor girl couldn't face giving her evidence—that was another bad case."

When the affair was thus officially ended, Ronny, who was about to be transferred to another part of the Province, approached Fielding with his usual constraint and said: "I wish to thank you for the help you have given Miss Quested. She will not of course trespass on your hospitality further; she has as a matter of fact decided to return to England. I have just arranged about her passage for her. I understand she would like to see you."

"I shall go round at once."

On reaching the College, he found her in some upset. He learnt that the engagement had been broken by Ronny. "Far wiser of him," she said pathetically. "I ought to have spoken myself, but I drifted on wondering what would happen. I would willingly have gone on spoiling his life through inertia—one has nothing to do, one belongs nowhere and becomes a public nuisance without realizing it." In order to reassure him, she added: "I speak only of India. I am not astray in England. I fit in there—no, don't think I shall do harm in England. When I am forced back there, I shall settle down to some career. I have sufficient money left to start myself, and heaps of friends of my own type. I shall be quite all right." Then sighing: "But oh, the trouble I've brought on everyone here. . . . I can never get over it. My carefulness as to whether we should marry or not . . . and in the end Ronny and I part and aren't even sorry. We ought never to have thought of marriage. Weren't you amazed when our engagement was originally announced?"

"Not much. At my age one's seldom amazed," he said, smiling. "Marriage is too absurd in any case. It begins and continues for such very slight reasons. The social business props it up on one side, and the theological business on the other, but neither of them are marriage, are they? I've friends who can't remember why they married, no more can their wives. I suspect that it mostly happens haphazard, though afterwards various noble reasons are invented. About marriage I am cynical."

"I am not. This false start has been all my own fault. I was bringing to Ronny nothing that ought to be brought, that was why he rejected me really. I entered that cave thinking: Am I fond of him? I have not yet told you that, Mr. Fielding. I didn't feel justified. Tenderness, respect, personal intercourse—I tried to make them take the place—of——"

"I no longer want love," he said, supplying the word.

"No more do I. My experiences here have cured me. But I want others to want it."

"But to go back to our first talk (for I suppose this is our last one)—when you entered that cave, who did follow you, or did no one follow you? Can you now say? I don't like it left in air."

“Let us call it the guide,” she said indifferently. “It will never be known. It’s as if I ran my finger along that polished wall in the dark, and cannot get further. I am up against something, and so are you. Mrs. Moore—she did know.”

“How could she have known what we don’t?”

“Telepathy, possibly.”

The pert, meagre word fell to the ground. Telepathy? What an explanation! Better withdraw it, and Adela did so. She was at the end of her spiritual tether, and so was he. Were there worlds beyond which they could never touch, or did all that is possible enter their consciousness? They could not tell. They only realized that their outlook was more or less similar, and found in this a satisfaction. Perhaps life is a mystery, not a muddle; they could not tell. Perhaps the hundred Indias which fuss and squabble so tiresomely are one, and the universe they mirror is one. They had not the apparatus for judging.

“Write to me when you get to England.”

“I shall, often. You have been excessively kind. Now that I’m going, I realize it. I wish I could do something for you in return, but I see you’ve all you want.”

“I think so,” he replied after a pause. “I have never felt more happy and secure out here. I really do get on with Indians, and they do trust me. It’s pleasant that I haven’t had to resign my job. It’s pleasant to be praised by an L.-G. Until the next earthquake I remain as I am.”

“Of course this death has been troubling me.”

“Aziz was so fond of her too.”

“But it has made me remember that we must all die: all these personal relations we try to live by are temporary. I used to feel death selected people, it is a notion one gets from novels, because some of the characters

are usually left talking at the end. Now ‘death spares no one’ begins to be real.”

“Don’t let it become too real, or you’ll die yourself. That is the objection to meditating upon death. We are subdued to what we work in. I have felt the same temptation, and had to sheer off. I want to go on living a bit.”

“So do I.”

A friendliness, as of dwarfs shaking hands, was in the air. Both man and woman were at the height of their powers—sensible, honest, even subtle. They spoke the same language, and held the same opinions, and the variety of age and sex did not divide them. Yet they were dissatisfied. When they agreed, “I want to go on living a bit,” or, “I don’t believe in God,” the words were followed by a curious backwash as though the universe had displaced itself to fill up a tiny void, or as though they had seen their own gestures from an immense height—dwarfs talking, shaking hands and assuring each other that they stood on the same footing of insight. They did not think they were wrong, because as soon as honest people think they are wrong instability sets up. Not for them was an infinite goal behind the stars, and they never sought it. But wistfulness descended on them now, as on other occasions; the shadow of the shadow of a dream fell over their clear-cut interests, and objects never seen again seemed messages from another world.

“And I do like you so very much, if I may say so,” he affirmed.

“I’m glad, for I like you. Let’s meet again.”

“We will, in England, if I ever take home leave.”

“But I suppose you’re not likely to do that yet.”

“Quite a chance. I have a scheme on now as a matter of fact.”

“Oh, that would be very nice.”



So it petered out. Ten days later Adela went off, by the same route as her dead friend. The final beat up before the monsoon had come. The country was stricken and blurred. Its houses, trees and fields were all modelled out of the same brown paste, and the sea at Bombay slid about like broth against the quays. Her last Indian adventure was with Antony, who followed her on to the boat and tried to blackmail her. She had been Mr. Fielding's mistress, Antony said. Perhaps Antony was discontented with his tip. She rang the cabin bell and had him turned out, but his statement created rather a scandal, and people did not speak to her much during the first part of the voyage. Through the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea she was left to herself, and to the dregs of Chandrapore.

With Egypt the atmosphere altered. The clean sands, heaped on each side of the canal, seemed to wipe off everything that was difficult and equivocal, and even Port Said looked pure and charming in the light of a rose-grey morning. She went on shore there with an American missionary, they walked out to the Lesseps statue, they drank the tonic air of the Levant. "To what duties, Miss Quested, are you returning in your own country after your taste of the tropics?" the missionary asked.

"Observe, I don't say to what do you turn, but to what do you *re*-turn. Every life ought to contain both a turn and a *re*-turn. This celebrated pioneer (he pointed to the statue) will make my question clear. He turns to the East, he *re*-turns to the West. You can see it from the cute position of his hands, one of which holds a string of sausages." The missionary looked at her humorously, in order to cover the emptiness of his mind. He had no idea what he meant by "turn" and "return," but he often used words in pairs, for the sake of moral brightness. "I see," she replied. Suddenly, in the Mediterranean clarity, she had seen. Her first duty on returning to England was to look up those other children of Mrs. Moore's, Ralph and Stella, then she would turn to her profession. Mrs. Moore had tended to keep the products of her two marriages apart, and Adela had not come across the younger branch so far.

## CHAPTER XXX

Another local consequence of the trial was a Hindu-Moslem entente. Loud protestations of amity were exchanged by prominent citizens, and there went with them a genuine desire for a good understanding. Aziz, when he was at the hospital one day, received a visit from rather a sympathetic figure: Mr. Das. The magistrate sought two favours from him: a remedy for shingles and a poem for his brother-in-law's new monthly magazine. He accorded both.

“My dear Das, why, when you tried to send me to prison, should I try to send Mr. Bhattacharya a poem? Eh? That is naturally entirely a joke. I will write him the best I can, but I thought your magazine was for Hindus.”

“It is not for Hindus, but Indians generally,” he said timidly.

“There is no such person in existence as the general Indian.”

“There was not, but there may be when you have written a poem. You are our hero; the whole city is behind you, irrespective of creed.”

“I know, but will it last?”

“I fear not,” said Das, who had much mental clearness. “And for that reason, if I may say so, do not introduce too many Persian expressions into the poem, and not too much about the bulbul.”

“Half a sec,” said Aziz, biting his pencil. He was writing out a prescription. “Here you are. . . . Is not this better than a poem?”

“Happy the man who can compose both.”

“You are full of compliments to-day.”

“I know you bear me a grudge for trying that case,” said the other, stretching out his hand impulsively. “You are so kind and friendly, but always I detect irony beneath your manner.”

“No, no, what nonsense!” protested Aziz. They shook hands, in a half-embrace that typified the entente. Between people of distant climes there is always the possibility of romance, but the various branches of Indians know too much about each other to surmount the unknowable easily. The approach is prosaic. “Excellent,” said Aziz, patting a stout shoulder and thinking, “I wish they did not remind me of cow-dung”; Das thought, “Some Moslems are very violent.” They smiled wistfully, each spying the thought in the other’s heart, and Das, the more articulate, said: “Excuse my mistakes, realize my limitations. Life is not easy as we know it on the earth.”

“Oh, well, about this poem—how did you hear I sometimes scribbled?” he asked, much pleased, and a good deal moved—for literature had always been a solace to him, something that the ugliness of facts could not spoil.

“Professor Godbole often mentioned it, before his departure for Mau.”

“How did he hear?”

“He too was a poet; do you not divine each other?”

Flattered by the invitation, he got to work that evening. The feel of the pen between his fingers generated bulbuls at once. His poem was again about the decay of Islam and the brevity of love; as sad and sweet as he could contrive, but not nourished by personal experience, and of no interest to these excellent Hindus. Feeling dissatisfied, he rushed to the other extreme, and wrote a satire, which was too libellous to print. He could only express pathos or venom, though most of his life had no concern with either. He loved poetry—science was merely an acquisition, which he laid aside when unobserved like his European dress—and this evening he longed to compose a new song which should be acclaimed by multitudes and even sung in the fields. In what language shall it be written? And what shall it announce? He vowed to see more of Indians who were not Mohammedans, and never to look backward. It is the only healthy course.

Of what help, in this latitude and hour, are the glories of Cordova and Samarcand? They have gone, and while we lament them the English occupy Delhi and exclude us from East Africa. Islam itself, though true, throws cross-lights over the path to freedom. The song of the future must transcend creed.

The poem for Mr. Bhattacharya never got written, but it had an effect. It led him towards the vague and bulky figure of a mother-land. He was without natural affection for the land of his birth, but the Marabar Hills drove him to it. Half closing his eyes, he attempted to love India. She must imitate Japan. Not until she is a nation will her sons be treated with respect. He grew harder and less approachable. The English, whom he had laughed at or ignored, persecuted him everywhere; they had even thrown nets over his dreams. "My great mistake has been taking our rulers as a joke," he said to Hamidullah next day; who replied with a sigh: "It is far the wisest way to take them, but not possible in the long run. Sooner or later a disaster such as yours occurs, and reveals their secret thoughts about our character. If God himself descended from heaven into their club and said you were innocent, they would disbelieve him. Now you see why Mahmoud Ali and self waste so much time over intrigues and associate with creatures like Ram Chand."

"I cannot endure committees. I shall go right away."

"Where to? Turtons and Burtons, all are the same."

"But not in an Indian state."

"I believe the Politicals are obliged to have better manners. It amounts to no more."

"I do want to get away from British India, even to a poor job. I think I could write poetry there. I wish I had lived in Babur's time and fought and written for him. Gone, gone, and not even any use to say 'Gone, gone,' for it weakens us while we say it. We need a king, Hamidullah; it would make our lives easier. As it is, we must try to appreciate these quaint Hindus. My notion now is to try for some post as doctor in one of their states."

"Oh, that is going much too far."

“It is not going as far as Mr. Ram Chand.”

“But the money, the money—they will never pay an adequate salary, those savage Rajahs.”

“I shall never be rich anywhere, it is outside my character.”

“If you had been sensible and made Miss Quested pay——”

“I chose not to. Discussion of the past is useless,” he said, with sudden sharpness of tone. “I have allowed her to keep her fortune and buy herself a husband in England, for which it will be very necessary. Don’t mention the matter again.”

“Very well, but your life must continue a poor man’s; no holidays in Kashmir for you yet, you must stick to your profession and rise to a highly paid post, not retire to a jungle-state and write poems. Educate your children, read the latest scientific periodicals, compel European doctors to respect you. Accept the consequences of your own actions like a man.”

Aziz winked at him slowly and said: “We are not in the law courts. There are many ways of being a man; mine is to express what is deepest in my heart.”

“To such a remark there is certainly no reply,” said Hamidullah, moved. Recovering himself and smiling, he said: “Have you heard this naughty rumour that Mohammed Latif has got hold of?”

“Which?”

“When Miss Quested stopped in the College, Fielding used to visit her . . . rather too late in the evening, the servants say.”

“A pleasant change for her if he did,” said Aziz, making a curious face.

“But you understand my meaning?”

The young man winked again and said: “Just! Still, your meaning doesn’t help me out of my difficulties. I am determined to leave Chandrapore. The

problem is, for where? I am determined to write poetry. The problem is, about what? You give me no assistance.” Then, surprising both Hamidullah and himself, he had an explosion of nerves. “But who does give me assistance? No one is my friend. All are traitors, even my own children. I have had enough of friends.”

“I was going to suggest we go behind the purdah, but your three treacherous children are there, so you will not want to.”

“I am sorry, it is ever since I was in prison my temper is strange; take me, forgive me.”

“Nureddin’s mother is visiting my wife now. That is all right, I think.”

“They come before me separately, but not so far together. You had better prepare them for the united shock of my face.”

“No, let us surprise them without warning, far too much nonsense still goes on among our ladies. They pretended at the time of your trial they would give up purdah; indeed, those of them who can write composed a document to that effect, and now it ends in humbug. You know how deeply they all respect Fielding, but not one of them has seen him. My wife says she will, but always when he calls there is some excuse—she is not feeling well, she is ashamed of the room, she has no nice sweets to offer him, only Elephants’ Ears, and if I say Elephants’ Ears are Mr. Fielding’s favourite sweet, she replies that he will know how badly hers are made, so she cannot see him on their account. For fifteen years, my dear boy, have I argued with my begum, for fifteen years, and never gained a point, yet the missionaries inform us our women are down-trodden. If you want a subject for a poem, take this: The Indian lady as she is and not as she is supposed to be.”

## CHAPTER XXXI

Aziz had no sense of evidence. The sequence of his emotions decided his beliefs, and led to the tragic coolness between himself and his English friend. They had conquered but were not to be crowned. Fielding was away at a conference, and after the rumour about Miss Quested had been with him undisturbed for a few days, he assumed it was true. He had no objection on moral grounds to his friends amusing themselves, and Cyril, being middle-aged, could no longer expect the pick of the female market, and must take his amusement where he could find it. But he resented him making up to this particular woman, whom he still regarded as his enemy; also, why had he not been told? What is friendship without confidences? He himself had told things sometimes regarded as shocking, and the Englishman had listened, tolerant, but surrendering nothing in return.

He met Fielding at the railway station on his return, agreed to dine with him, and then started taxing him by the oblique method, outwardly merry. An avowed European scandal there was—Mr. McBryde and Miss Derek. Miss Derek's faithful attachment to Chandrapore was now explained: Mr. McBryde had been caught in her room, and his wife was divorcing him. "That pure-minded fellow. However, he will blame the Indian climate. Everything is our fault really. Now, have I not discovered an important piece of news for you, Cyril?"

"Not very," said Fielding, who took little interest in distant sins. "Listen to mine." Aziz' face lit up. "At the conference, it was settled. . . ."

"This evening will do for schoolmastery. I should go straight to the Minto now, the cholera looks bad. We begin to have local cases as well as imported. In fact, the whole of life is somewhat sad. The new Civil Surgeon is the same as the last, but does not yet dare to be. That is all any administrative change amounts to. All my suffering has won nothing for us. But look here, Cyril, while I remember it. There's gossip about you as well

as McBryde. They say that you and Miss Quested became also rather too intimate friends. To speak perfectly frankly, they say you and she have been guilty of impropriety.”

“They would say that.”

“It’s all over the town, and may injure your reputation. You know, everyone is by no means your supporter. I have tried all I could to silence such a story.”

“Don’t bother. Miss Quested has cleared out at last.”

“It is those who stop in the country, not those who leave it, whom such a story injures. Imagine my dismay and anxiety. I could scarcely get a wink of sleep. First my name was coupled with her and now it is yours.”

“Don’t use such exaggerated phrases.”

“As what?”

“As dismay and anxiety.”

“Have I not lived all my life in India? Do I not know what produces a bad impression here?” His voice shot up rather crossly.

“Yes, but the scale, the scale. You always get the scale wrong, my dear fellow. A pity there is this rumour, but such a very small pity—so small that we may as well talk of something else.”

“You mind for Miss Quested’s sake, though. I can see from your face.”

“As far as I do mind. I travel light.”

“Cyril, that boastfulness about travelling light will be your ruin. It is raising up enemies against you on all sides, and makes me feel excessively uneasy.”

“What enemies?”



Since Aziz had only himself in mind, he could not reply. Feeling a fool, he became angrier. "I have given you list after list of the people who cannot be trusted in this city. In your position I should have the sense to know I was surrounded by enemies. You observe I speak in a low voice. It is because I see your sais is new. How do I know he isn't a spy?" He lowered his voice: "Every third servant is a spy."

"Now, what is the matter?" he asked, smiling.

"Do you contradict my last remark?"

"It simply doesn't affect me. Spies are as thick as mosquitoes, but it's years before I shall meet the one that kills me. You've something else in your mind."

"I've not; don't be ridiculous."

"You have. You're cross with me about something or other."

Any direct attack threw him out of action. Presently he said: "So you and Madamsell Adela used to amuse one another in the evening, naughty boy."

Those drab and high-minded talks had scarcely made for dalliance. Fielding was so startled at the story being taken seriously, and so disliked being called a naughty boy, that he lost his head and cried: "You little rotter! Well, I'm damned. Amusement indeed. Is it likely at such a time?"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I'm sure. The licentious Oriental imagination was at work," he replied, speaking gaily, but cut to the heart; for hours after his mistake he bled inwardly.

"You see, Aziz, the circumstances . . . also the girl was still engaged to Heaslop, also I never felt . . ."

"Yes, yes; but you didn't contradict what I said, so I thought it was true. Oh dear, East and West. Most misleading. Will you please put your little rotter down at his hospital?"

"You're not offended?"

“Most certainly I am not.”

“If you are, this must be cleared up later on.”

“It has been,” he answered, dignified. “I believe absolutely what you say, and of that there need be no further question.”

“But the way I said it must be cleared up. I was unintentionally rude. Unreserved regrets.”

“The fault is entirely mine.”

Tangles like this still interrupted their intercourse. A pause in the wrong place, an intonation misunderstood, and a whole conversation went awry. Fielding had been startled, not shocked, but how convey the difference? There is always trouble when two people do not think of sex at the same moment, always mutual resentment and surprise, even when the two people are of the same race. He began to recapitulate his feelings about Miss Quested. Aziz cut him short with: “But I believe you, I believe. Mohammed Latif shall be severely punished for inventing this.”

“Oh, leave it alone, like all gossip—it’s merely one of those half-alive things that try to crowd out real life. Take no notice, it’ll vanish, like poor old Mrs. Moore’s tombs.”

“Mohammed Latif has taken to intriguing. We are already much displeased with him. Will it satisfy you if we send him back to his family without a present?”

“We’ll discuss M.L. at dinner.”

His eyes went clotted and hard. “Dinner. This is most unlucky—— I forgot. I have promised to dine with Das.”

“Bring Das to me.”

“He will have invited other friends.”

“You are coming to dinner with me as arranged,” said Fielding, looking away. “I don’t stand this. You are coming to dinner with me. You come.”

They had reached the hospital now. Fielding continued round the Maidan alone. He was annoyed with himself, but counted on dinner to pull things straight. At the post office he saw the Collector. Their vehicles were parked side by side while their servants competed in the interior of the building. “Good morning; so you are back,” said Turton icily. “I should be glad if you will put in your appearance at the club this evening.”

“I have accepted re-election, sir. Do you regard it as necessary I should come? I should be glad to be excused; indeed, I have a dinner engagement this evening.”

“It is not a question of your feelings, but of the wish of the Lieutenant-Governor. Perhaps you will ask me whether I speak officially. I do. I shall expect you this evening at six. We shall not interfere with your subsequent plans.”

He attended the grim little function in due course. The skeletons of hospitality rattled—“Have a peg, have a drink.” He talked for five minutes to Mrs. Blakiston, who was the only surviving female. He talked to McBryde, who was defiant about his divorce, conscious that he had sinned as a sahib. He talked to Major Roberts, the new Civil Surgeon; and to young Milner, the new City Magistrate; but the more the club changed, the more it promised to be the same thing. “It is no good,” he thought, as he returned past the mosque, “we all build upon sand; and the more modern the country gets, the worse’ll be the crash. In the old eighteenth century, when cruelty and injustice raged, an invisible power repaired their ravages. Everything echoes now; there’s no stopping the echo. The original sound may be harmless, but the echo is always evil.” This reflection about an echo lay at the verge of Fielding’s mind. He could never develop it. It belonged to the universe that he had missed or rejected. And the mosque missed it too. Like himself, those shallow arcades provided but a limited asylum. “There is no God but God” doesn’t carry us far through the complexities of matter and spirit; it is only a game with words, really, a religious pun, not a religious truth.

He found Aziz overtired and dispirited, and he determined not to allude to their misunderstanding until the end of the evening; it would be more acceptable then. He made a clean breast about the club—said he had only gone under compulsion, and should never attend again unless the order was renewed. “In other words, probably never; for I am going quite soon to England.”

“I thought you might end in England,” he said very quietly, then changed the conversation. Rather awkwardly they ate their dinner, then went out to sit in the Mogul garden-house.

“I am only going for a little time. On official business. My service is anxious to get me away from Chandrapore for a bit. It is obliged to value me highly, but does not care for me. The situation is somewhat humorous.”

“What is the nature of the business? Will it leave you much spare time?”

“Enough to see my friends.”

“I expected you to make such a reply. You are a faithful friend. Shall we now talk about something else?”

“Willingly. What subject?”

“Poetry,” he said, with tears in his eyes. “Let us discuss why poetry has lost the power of making men brave. My mother’s father was also a poet, and fought against you in the Mutiny. I might equal him if there was another mutiny. As it is, I am a doctor, who has won a case and has three children to support, and whose chief subject of conversation is official plans.”

“Let us talk about poetry.” He turned his mind to the innocuous subject. “You people are sadly circumstanced. Whatever are you to write about? You cannot say, ‘The rose is faded,’ for evermore. We know it’s faded. Yet you can’t have patriotic poetry of the ‘India, my India’ type, when it’s nobody’s India.”

“I like this conversation. It may lead to something interesting.”

“You are quite right in thinking that poetry must touch life. When I knew you first, you used it as an incantation.”

“I was a child when you knew me first. Everyone was my friend then. The Friend: a Persian expression for God. But I do not want to be a religious poet either.”

“I hoped you would be.”

“Why, when you yourself are an atheist?”

“There is something in religion that may not be true, but has not yet been sung.”

“Explain in detail.”

“Something that the Hindus have perhaps found.”

“Let them sing it.”

“Hindus are unable to sing.”

“Cyril, you sometimes make a sensible remark. That will do for poetry for the present. Let us now return to your English visit.”

“We haven’t discussed poetry for two seconds,” said the other, smiling.

But Aziz was addicted to cameos. He held the tiny conversation in his hand, and felt it epitomized his problem. For an instant he recalled his wife, and, as happens when a memory is intense, the past became the future, and he saw her with him in a quiet Hindu jungle native state, far away from foreigners. He said: “I suppose you will visit Miss Quested.”

“If I have time. It will be strange seeing her in Hampstead.”

“What is Hampstead?”

“An artistic and thoughtful little suburb of London——”

“And there she lives in comfort: you will enjoy seeing her. . . . Dear me, I’ve got a headache this evening. Perhaps I am going to have cholera. With your permission, I’ll leave early.”

“When would you like the carriage?”

“Don’t trouble—I’ll bike.”

“But you haven’t got your bicycle. My carriage fetched you—let it take you away.”

“Sound reasoning,” he said, trying to be gay. “I have not got my bicycle. But I am seen too often in your carriage. I am thought to take advantage of your generosity by Mr. Ram Chand.” He was out of sorts and uneasy. The conversation jumped from topic to topic in a broken-backed fashion. They were affectionate and intimate, but nothing clicked tight.

“Aziz, you have forgiven me the stupid remark I made this morning?”

“When you called me a little rotter?”

“Yes, to my eternal confusion. You know how fond I am of you.”

“That is nothing, of course, we all of us make mistakes. In a friendship such as ours a few slips are of no consequence.”

But as he drove off, something depressed him—a dull pain of body or mind, waiting to rise to the surface. When he reached the bungalow he wanted to return and say something very affectionate; instead, he gave the sais a heavy tip, and sat down gloomily on the bed, and Hassan massaged him incompetently. The eye-flies had colonized the top of an almeira; the red stains on the durry were thicker, for Mohammed Latif had slept here during his imprisonment and spat a good deal; the table drawer was scarred where the police had forced it open; everything in Chandrapore was used up, including the air. The trouble rose to the surface now: he was suspicious; he suspected his friend of intending to marry Miss Quested for the sake of her money, and of going to England for that purpose.

“Huzoor?”—for he had muttered.

“Look at those flies on the ceiling. Why have you not drowned them?”

“Huzoor, they return.”

“Like all evil things.”

To divert the conversation, Hassan related how the kitchen-boy had killed a snake, good, but killed it by cutting it in two, bad, because it becomes two snakes.

“When he breaks a plate, does it become two plates?”

“Glasses and a new teapot will similarly be required, also for myself a coat.”

Aziz sighed. Each for himself. One man needs a coat, another a rich wife; each approaches his goal by a clever detour. Fielding had saved the girl a fine of twenty thousand rupees, and now followed her to England. If he desired to marry her, all was explained; she would bring him a larger dowry. Aziz did not believe his own suspicions—better if he had, for then he would have denounced and cleared the situation up. Suspicion and belief could in his mind exist side by side. They sprang from different sources, and need never intermingle. Suspicion in the Oriental is a sort of malignant tumour, a mental malady, that makes him self-conscious and unfriendly suddenly; he trusts and mistrusts at the same time in a way the Westerner cannot comprehend. It is his demon, as the Westerner’s is hypocrisy. Aziz was seized by it, and his fancy built a satanic castle, of which the foundation had been laid when he talked at Dilkusha under the stars. The girl had surely been Cyril’s mistress when she stopped in the College—Mohammed Latif was right. But was that all? Perhaps it was Cyril who followed her into the cave. . . . No; impossible. Cyril hadn’t been on the Kawa Dol at all. Impossible. Ridiculous. Yet the fancy left him trembling with misery. Such treachery—if true—would have been the worst in Indian history; nothing so vile, not even the murder of Afzul Khan by Sivaji. He was shaken, as though by a truth, and told Hassan to leave him.

Next day he decided to take his children back to Mussoorie. They had come down for the trial, that he might bid them farewell, and had stayed on at Hamidullah's for the rejoicings. Major Roberts would give him leave, and during his absence Fielding would go off to England. The idea suited both his beliefs and his suspicions. Events would prove which was right, and preserve, in either case, his dignity.

Fielding was conscious of something hostile, and because he was really fond of Aziz his optimism failed him. Travelling light is less easy as soon as affection is involved. Unable to jog forward in the serene hope that all would come right, he wrote an elaborate letter in the rather modern style: "It is on my mind that you think me a prude about women. I had rather you thought anything else of me. If I live impeccably now, it is only because I am well on the forties—a period of revision. In the eighties I shall revise again. And before the nineties come—I shall be revised! But, alive or dead, I am absolutely devoid of morals. Do kindly grasp this about me." Aziz did not care for the letter at all. It hurt his delicacy. He liked confidences, however gross, but generalizations and comparisons always repelled him. Life is not a scientific manual. He replied coldly, regretting his inability to return from Mussoorie before his friend sailed: "But I must take my poor little holiday while I can. All must be economy henceforward, all hopes of Kashmir have vanished for ever and ever. When you return I shall be slaving far away in some new post."

And Fielding went, and in the last gutterings of Chandrapore—heaven and earth both looking like toffee—the Indian's bad fancies were confirmed. His friends encouraged them, for though they had liked the Principal, they felt uneasy at his getting to know so much about their private affairs. Mahmoud Ali soon declared that treachery was afoot. Hamidullah murmured, "Certainly of late he no longer addressed us with his former frankness," and warned Aziz "not to expect too much—he and she are, after all, both members of another race." "Where are my twenty thousand rupees?" he thought. He was absolutely indifferent to money—not merely generous with it, but promptly paying his debts when he could remember to do so—yet these rupees haunted his mind, because he had been tricked about them, and allowed them to escape overseas, like so much of the wealth of India. Cyril would marry Miss Quested—he grew certain of



it, all the unexplained residue of the Marabar contributing. It was the natural conclusion of the horrible senseless picnic, and before long he persuaded himself that the wedding had actually taken place.

## CHAPTER XXXII

Egypt was charming—a green strip of carpet and walking up and down it four sorts of animals and one sort of man. Fielding's business took him there for a few days. He re-embarked at Alexandria—bright blue sky, constant wind, clean low coast-line, as against the intricacies of Bombay. Crete welcomed him next with the long snowy ridge of its mountains, and then came Venice. As he landed on the piazzetta a cup of beauty was lifted to his lips, and he drank with a sense of disloyalty. The buildings of Venice, like the mountains of Crete and the fields of Egypt, stood in the right place, whereas in poor India everything was placed wrong. He had forgotten the beauty of form among idol temples and lumpy hills; indeed, without form, how can there be beauty? Form stammered here and there in a mosque, became rigid through nervousness even, but oh these Italian churches! San Giorgio standing on the island which could scarcely have risen from the waves without it, the Salute holding the entrance of a canal which, but for it, would not be the Grand Canal! In the old undergraduate days he had wrapped himself up in the many-coloured blanket of St. Mark's, but something more precious than mosaics and marbles was offered to him now: the harmony between the works of man and the earth that upholds them, the civilization that has escaped muddle, the spirit in a reasonable form, with flesh and blood subsisting. Writing picture post-cards to his Indian friends, he felt that all of them would miss the joys he experienced now, the joys of form, and that this constituted a serious barrier. They would see the sumptuousness of Venice, not its shape, and though Venice was not Europe, it was part of the Mediterranean harmony. The Mediterranean is the human norm. When men leave that exquisite lake, whether through the Bosphorus or the Pillars of Hercules, they approach the monstrous and extraordinary; and the southern exit leads to the strangest experience of all. Turning his back on it yet again, he took the train northward, and tender romantic fancies that he thought were dead for ever, flowered when he saw the buttercups and daisies of June.

## PART III: TEMPLE

## CHAPTER XXXIII

Some hundreds of miles westward of the Marabar Hills, and two years later in time, Professor Narayan Godbole stands in the presence of God. God is not born yet—that will occur at midnight—but He has also been born centuries ago, nor can He ever be born, because He is the Lord of the Universe, who transcends human processes. He is, was not, is not, was. He and Professor Godbole stood at opposite ends of the same strip of carpet.

“Tukaram, Tukaram,  
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.  
Tukaram, Tukaram,  
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.  
Tukaram, Tukaram,  
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.  
Tukaram, Tukaram,  
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.  
Tukaram. . . .”

This corridor in the palace at Mau opened through other corridors into a courtyard. It was of beautiful hard white stucco, but its pillars and vaulting could scarcely be seen behind coloured rags, iridescent balls, chandeliers of opaque pink glass, and murky photographs framed crookedly. At the end was the small but famous shrine of the dynastic cult, and the God to be born was largely a silver image the size of a teaspoon. Hindus sat on either side of the carpet where they could find room, or overflowed into the adjoining corridors and the courtyard—Hindus, Hindus only, mild-featured men, mostly villagers, for whom anything outside their villages passed in a dream. They were the toiling ryot, whom some call the real India. Mixed with them sat a few tradesmen out of the little town, officials, courtiers, scions of the ruling house. Schoolboys kept inefficient order. The assembly was in a tender, happy state unknown to an English crowd, it seethed like a beneficent potion. When the villagers broke cordon for a glimpse of the

silver image, a most beautiful and radiant expression came into their faces, a beauty in which there was nothing personal, for it caused them all to resemble one another during the moment of its indwelling, and only when it was withdrawn did they revert to individual clods. And so with the music. Music there was, but from so many sources that the sum-total was untrammelled. The braying banging crooning melted into a single mass which trailed round the palace before joining the thunder. Rain fell at intervals throughout the night.

It was the turn of Professor Godbole's choir. As Minister of Education, he gained this special honour. When the previous group of singers dispersed into the crowd, he pressed forward from the back, already in full voice, that the chain of sacred sounds might be uninterrupted. He was barefoot and in white, he wore a pale blue turban; his gold pince-nez had caught in a jasmine garland, and lay sideways down his nose. He and the six colleagues who supported him clashed their cymbals, hit small drums, droned upon a portable harmonium, and sang:

“Tukaram, Tukaram,  
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.  
Tukaram, Tukaram,  
Thou art my father and mother and everybody.  
Tukaram, Tukaram. . . .”

They sang not even to the God who confronted them, but to a saint; they did not one thing which the non-Hindu would feel dramatically correct; this approaching triumph of India was a muddle (as we call it), a frustration of reason and form. Where was the God Himself, in whose honour the congregation had gathered? Indistinguishable in the jumble of His own altar, huddled out of sight amid images of inferior descent, smothered under rose-leaves, overhung by oleographs, outblazed by golden tablets representing the Rajah's ancestors, and entirely obscured, when the wind blew, by the tattered foliage of a banana. Hundreds of electric lights had been lit in His honour (worked by an engine whose thumps destroyed the rhythm of the hymn). Yet His face could not be seen. Hundreds of His silver dishes were piled around Him with the minimum of effect. The inscriptions which the poets of the State had composed were hung where they could not

be read, or had twitched their drawing-pins out of the stucco, and one of them (composed in English to indicate His universality) consisted, by an unfortunate slip of the draughtsman, of the words, "God si Love."

God si Love. Is this the first message of India?

"Tukaram, Tukaram . . .,"

continued the choir, reinforced by a squabble behind the purdah curtain, where two mothers tried to push their children at the same moment to the front. A little girl's leg shot out like an eel. In the courtyard, drenched by the rain, the small Europeanized band stumbled off into a waltz. "Nights of Gladness" they were playing. The singers were not perturbed by this rival, they lived beyond competition. It was long before the tiny fragment of Professor Godbole that attended to outside things decided that his pince-nez was in trouble, and that until it was adjusted he could not choose a new hymn. He laid down one cymbal, with the other he clashed the air, with his free hand he fumbled at the flowers round his neck. A colleague assisted him. Singing into one another's grey moustaches, they disentangled the chain from the tinsel into which it had sunk. Godbole consulted the music-book, said a word to the drummer, who broke rhythm, made a thick little blur of sound, and produced a new rhythm. This was more exciting, the inner images it evoked more definite, and the singers' expressions became fatuous and languid. They loved all men, the whole universe, and scraps of their past, tiny splinters of detail, emerged for a moment to melt into the universal warmth. Thus Godbole, though she was not important to him, remembered an old woman he had met in Chandrapore days. Chance brought her into his mind while it was in this heated state, he did not select her, she happened to occur among the throng of soliciting images, a tiny splinter, and he impelled her by his spiritual force to that place where completeness can be found. Completeness, not reconstruction. His senses grew thinner, he remembered a wasp seen he forgot where, perhaps on a stone. He loved the wasp equally, he impelled it likewise, he was imitating God. And the stone where the wasp clung—could he . . . no, he could not, he had been wrong to attempt the stone, logic and conscious effort had seduced, he came back to the strip of red carpet and discovered that he was dancing upon it. Up and down, a third of the way to the altar and back

again, clashing his cymbals, his little legs twinkling, his companions dancing with him and each other. Noise, noise, the Europeanized band louder, incense on the altar, sweat, the blaze of lights, wind in the bananas, noise, thunder, eleven-fifty by his wrist-watch, seen as he threw up his hands and detached the tiny reverberation that was his soul. Louder shouts in the crowd. He danced on. The boys and men who were squatting in the aisles were lifted forcibly and dropped without changing their shapes into the laps of their neighbours. Down the path thus cleared advanced a litter. It was the aged ruler of the state, brought against the advice of his physicians to witness the Birth ceremony.

No one greeted the Rajah, nor did he wish it; this was no moment for human glory. Nor could the litter be set down, lest it defiled the temple by becoming a throne. He was lifted out of it while its feet remained in air, and deposited on the carpet close to the altar, his immense beard was straightened, his legs tucked under him, a paper containing red powder was placed in his hand. There he sat, leaning against a pillar, exhausted with illness, his eyes magnified by many unshed tears.

He had not to wait long. In a land where all else was unpunctual, the hour of the Birth was chronometrically observed. Three minutes before it was due, a Brahman brought forth a model of the village of Gokul (the Bethlehem in that nebulous story) and placed it in front of the altar. The model was on a wooden tray about a yard square; it was of clay, and was gaily blue and white with streamers and paint. Here, upon a chair too small for him and with a head too large, sat King Kansa, who is Herod, directing the murder of some Innocents, and in a corner, similarly proportioned, stood the father and mother of the Lord, warned to depart in a dream. The model was not holy, but more than a decoration, for it diverted men from the actual image of the God, and increased their sacred bewilderment. Some of the villagers thought the Birth had occurred, saying with truth that the Lord must have been born, or they could not see Him. But the clock struck midnight, and simultaneously the rending note of the conch broke forth, followed by the trumpeting of elephants; all who had packets of powder threw them at the altar, and in the rosy dust and incense, and clanging and shouts, Infinite Love took upon itself the form of SHRI KRISHNA, and saved the world. All sorrow was annihilated, not only for Indians, but for

foreigners, birds, caves, railways, and the stars; all became joy, all laughter; there had never been disease nor doubt, misunderstanding, cruelty, fear. Some jumped in the air, others flung themselves prone and embraced the bare feet of the universal lover; the women behind the purdah slapped and shrieked; the little girl slipped out and danced by herself, her black pigtailed flying. Not an orgy of the body; the tradition of that shrine forbade it. But the human spirit had tried by a desperate contortion to ravish the unknown, flinging down science and history in the struggle, yes, beauty herself. Did it succeed? Books written afterwards say "Yes." But how, if there is such an event, can it be remembered afterwards? How can it be expressed in anything but itself? Not only from the unbeliever are mysteries hid, but the adept himself cannot retain them. He may think, if he chooses, that he has been with God, but as soon as he thinks it, it becomes history, and falls under the rules of time.

A cobra of papier-mâché now appeared on the carpet, also a wooden cradle swinging from a frame. Professor Godbole approached the latter with a red silk napkin in his arms. The napkin was God, not that it was, and the image remained in the blur of the altar. It was just a napkin, folded into a shape which indicated a baby's. The Professor dandled it and gave it to the Rajah, who, making a great effort, said, "I name this child Shri Krishna," and tumbled it into the cradle. Tears poured from his eyes, because he had seen the Lord's salvation. He was too weak to exhibit the silk baby to his people, his privilege in former years. His attendants lifted him up, a new path was cleared through the crowd, and he was carried away to a less sacred part of the palace. There, in a room accessible to Western science by an outer staircase, his physician, Dr. Aziz, awaited him. His Hindu physician, who had accompanied him to the shrine, briefly reported his symptoms. As the ecstasy receded, the invalid grew fretful. The bumping of the steam engine that worked the dynamo disturbed him, and he asked for what reason it had been introduced into his home. They replied that they would enquire, and administered a sedative.

Down in the sacred corridors, joy had seethed to jollity. It was their duty to play various games to amuse the newly born God, and to simulate his sports with the wanton dairymaids of Brindaban. Butter played a prominent part in these. When the cradle had been removed, the principal nobles of the



state gathered together for an innocent frolic. They removed their turbans, and one put a lump of butter on his forehead, and waited for it to slide down his nose into his mouth. Before it could arrive, another stole up behind him, snatched the melting morsel, and swallowed it himself. All laughed exultantly at discovering that the divine sense of humour coincided with their own. “God si love!” There is fun in heaven. God can play practical jokes upon Himself, draw chairs away from beneath His own posteriors, set His own turbans on fire, and steal His own petticoats when He bathes. By sacrificing good taste, this worship achieved what Christianity has shirked: the inclusion of merriment. All spirit as well as all matter must participate in salvation, and if practical jokes are banned, the circle is incomplete. Having swallowed the butter, they played another game which chanced to be graceful: the fondling of Shri Krishna under the similitude of a child. A pretty red and gold ball is thrown, and he who catches it chooses a child from the crowd, raises it in his arms, and carries it round to be caressed. All stroke the darling creature for the Creator’s sake, and murmur happy words. The child is restored to his parents, the ball thrown on, and another child becomes for a moment the World’s Desire. And the Lord bounds hither and thither through the aisles, chance, and the sport of chance, irradiating little mortals with His immortality. . . . When they had played this long enough—and being exempt from boredom, they played it again and again, they played it again and again—they took many sticks and hit them together, whack smack, as though they fought the Pandava wars, and threshed and churned with them, and later on they hung from the roof of the temple, in a net, a great black earthenware jar, which was painted here and there with red, and wreathed with dried figs. Now came a rousing sport. Springing up, they struck at the jar with their sticks. It cracked, broke, and a mass of greasy rice and milk poured on to their faces. They ate and smeared one another’s mouths, and dived between each other’s legs for what had been pashed upon the carpet. This way and that spread the divine mess, until the line of schoolboys, who had somewhat fended off the crowd, broke for their share. The corridors, the courtyard, were filled with benign confusion. Also the flies awoke and claimed their share of God’s bounty. There was no quarrelling, owing to the nature of the gift, for blessed is the man who confers it on another, he imitates God. And those “imitations,” those “substitutions,” continued to flicker through the assembly for many hours, awaking in each man, according to his capacity, an emotion that he would

not have had otherwise. No definite image survived; at the Birth it was questionable whether a silver doll or a mud village, or a silk napkin, or an intangible spirit, or a pious resolution, had been born. Perhaps all these things! Perhaps none! Perhaps all birth is an allegory! Still, it was the main event of the religious year. It caused strange thoughts. Covered with grease and dust, Professor Godbole had once more developed the life of his spirit. He had, with increasing vividness, again seen Mrs. Moore, and round her faintly clinging forms of trouble. He was a Brahman, she Christian, but it made no difference, it made no difference whether she was a trick of his memory or a telepathic appeal. It was his duty, as it was his desire, to place himself in the position of the God and to love her, and to place himself in her position and to say to the God, "Come, come, come, come." This was all he could do. How inadequate! But each according to his own capacities, and he knew that his own were small. "One old Englishwoman and one little, little wasp," he thought, as he stepped out of the temple into the grey of a pouring wet morning. "It does not seem much, still it is more than I am myself."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

Dr. Aziz left the palace at the same time. As he returned to his house—which stood in a pleasant garden further up the main street of the town—he could see his old patron paddling and capering in the slush ahead. “Hullo!” he called, and it was the wrong remark, for the devotee indicated by circular gestures of his arms that he did not desire to be disturbed. He added, “Sorry,” which was right, for Godbole twisted his head till it didn’t belong to his body, and said in a strained voice that had no connection with his mind: “He arrived at the European Guest House perhaps—at least possibly.”

“Did he? Since when?”

But time was too definite. He waved his arm more dimly and disappeared. Aziz knew who “he” was—Fielding—but he refused to think about him, because it disturbed his life, and he still trusted the floods to prevent him from arriving. A fine little river issued from his garden gate and gave him much hope. It was impossible that anyone could get across from Deora in such weather as this. Fielding’s visit was official. He had been transferred from Chandrapore, and sent on a tour through Central India to see what the remoter states were doing with regard to English education. He had married, he had done the expected with Miss Quested, and Aziz had no wish to see him again.

“Dear old Godbole,” he thought, and smiled. He had no religious curiosity, and had never discovered the meaning of this annual antic, but he was well assured that Godbole was a dear old man. He had come to Mau through him and remained on his account. Without him he could never have grasped problems so totally different from those of Chandrapore. For here the cleavage was between Brahman and non-Brahman; Moslems and English were quite out of the running, and sometimes not mentioned for days. Since Godbole was a Brahman, Aziz was one also for purposes of

intrigue: they would often joke about it together. The fissures in the Indian soil are infinite: Hinduism, so solid from a distance, is riven into sects and clans, which radiate and join, and change their names according to the aspect from which they are approached. Study it for years with the best teachers, and when you raise your head, nothing they have told you quite fits. Aziz, the day of his inauguration, had remarked: "I study nothing, I respect"—making an excellent impression. There was now a minimum of prejudice against him. Nominally under a Hindu doctor, he was really chief medicine man to the court. He had to drop inoculation and such Western whims, but even at Chandrapore his profession had been a game, centring round the operating table, and here in the backwoods he let his instruments rust, ran his little hospital at half steam, and caused no undue alarm.

His impulse to escape from the English was sound. They had frightened him permanently, and there are only two reactions against fright: to kick and scream on committees, or to retreat to a remote jungle, where the sahib seldom comes. His old lawyer friends wanted him to stop in British India and help agitate, and might have prevailed, but for the treachery of Fielding. The news had not surprised him in the least. A rift had opened between them after the trial when Cyril had not joined in his procession; those advocacies of the girl had increased it; then came the post-cards from Venice, so cold, so unfriendly that all agreed that something was wrong; and finally, after a silence, the expected letter from Hampstead. Mahmoud Ali was with him at the time. "Some news that will surprise you. I am to marry someone whom you know. . ." He did not read further. "Here it comes, answer for me——" and he threw it to Mahmoud Ali. Subsequent letters he destroyed unopened. It was the end of a foolish experiment. And though sometimes at the back of his mind he felt that Fielding had made sacrifices for him, it was now all confused with his genuine hatred of the English. "I am an Indian at last," he thought, standing motionless in the rain.

Life passed pleasantly, the climate was healthy so that the children could be with him all the year round, and he had married again—not exactly a marriage, but he liked to regard it as one—and he read his Persian, wrote his poetry, had his horse, and sometimes got some shikar while the good Hindus looked the other way. His poems were all on one topic—Oriental

womanhood. “The purdah must go,” was their burden, “otherwise we shall never be free.” And he declared (fantastically) that India would not have been conquered if women as well as men had fought at Plassy. “But we do not show our women to the foreigner”—not explaining how this was to be managed, for he was writing a poem. Bulbuls and roses would still persist, the pathos of defeated Islam remained in his blood and could not be expelled by modernities. Illogical poems—like their writer. Yet they struck a true note: there cannot be a mother-land without new homes. In one poem—the only one funny old Godbole liked—he had skipped over the mother-land (whom he did not truly love) and gone straight to internationality. “Ah, that is bhakti; ah, my young friend, that is different and very good. Ah, India, who seems not to move, will go straight there while the other nations waste their time. May I translate this particular one into Hindi? In fact, it might be rendered into Sanskrit almost, it is so enlightened. Yes, of course, all your other poems are very good too. His Highness was saying to Colonel Maggs last time he came that we are proud of you”—simpering slightly.

Colonel Maggs was the Political Agent for the neighbourhood and Aziz’ dejected opponent. The Criminal Investigation Department kept an eye on Aziz ever since the trial—they had nothing actionable against him, but Indians who have been unfortunate must be watched, and to the end of his life he remained under observation, thanks to Miss Quested’s mistake. Colonel Maggs learnt with concern that a suspect was coming to Mau, and, adopting a playful manner, rallied the old Rajah for permitting a Moslem doctor to approach his sacred person. A few years ago, the Rajah would have taken the hint, for the Political Agent then had been a formidable figure, descending with all the thunders of Empire when it was most inconvenient, turning the polity inside out, requiring motor-cars and tiger-hunts, trees cut down that impeded the view from the Guest House, cows milked in his presence, and generally arrogating the control of internal affairs. But there had been a change of policy in high quarters. Local thunders were no longer endorsed, and the group of little states that composed the agency discovered this and began comparing notes with fruitful result. To see how much, or how little, Colonel Maggs would stand, became an agreeable game at Mau, which was played by all the departments of State. He had to stand the appointment of Dr. Aziz. The Rajah did not take the hint, but replied that Hindus were less exclusive than

formerly, thanks to the enlightened commands of the Viceroy, and he felt it his duty to move with the times.

Yes, all had gone well hitherto, but now, when the rest of the state was plunged in its festival, he had a crisis of a very different sort. A note awaited him at his house. There was no doubt that Fielding had arrived overnight, nor much doubt that Godbole knew of his arrival, for the note was addressed to him, and he had read it before sending it on to Aziz, and had written in the margin, "Is not this delightful news, but unfortunately my religious duties prevent me from taking any action." Fielding announced that he had inspected Mudkul (Miss Derek's former preserve), that he had nearly been drowned at Deora, that he had reached Mau according to timetable, and hoped to remain there two days, studying the various educational innovations of his old friend. Nor had he come alone. His wife and her brother accompanied him. And then the note turned into the sort of note that always did arrive from the State Guest House. Wanting something. No eggs. Mosquito nets torn. When would they pay their respects to His Highness? Was it correct that a torchlight procession would take place? If so, might they view it? They didn't want to give trouble, but if they might stand in a balcony, or if they might go out in a boat. . . . Aziz tore the note up. He had had enough of showing Miss Quested native life. Treacherous hideous harridan! Bad people altogether. He hoped to avoid them, though this might be difficult, for they would certainly be held up for several days at Mau. Down country, the floods were even worse, and the pale grey faces of lakes had appeared in the direction of the Asirgarh railway station.

## CHAPTER XXXV

Long before he discovered Mau, another young Mohammedan had retired there—a saint. His mother said to him, “Free prisoners.” So he took a sword and went up to the fort. He unlocked a door, and the prisoners streamed out and resumed their previous occupations, but the police were too much annoyed and cut off the young man’s head. Ignoring its absence, he made his way over the rocks that separate the fort and the town, killing policemen as he went, and he fell outside his mother’s house, having accomplished her orders. Consequently there are two shrines to him to-day—that of the Head above, and that of the Body below—and they are worshipped by the few Mohammedans who live near, and by Hindus also. “There is no God but God”; that symmetrical injunction melts in the mild airs of Mau; it belongs to pilgrimages and universities, not to feudalism and agriculture. When Aziz arrived, and found that even Islam was idolatrous, he grew scornful, and longed to purify the place, like Alamgir. But soon he didn’t mind, like Akbar. After all, this saint had freed prisoners, and he himself had lain in prison. The Shrine of the Body lay in his own garden and produced a weekly crop of lamps and flowers, and when he saw them he recalled his sufferings. The Shrine of the Head made a nice short walk for the children. He was off duty the morning after the great pujan, and he told them to come. Jemila held his hand. Ahmed and Karim ran in front, arguing what the body looked like as it came staggering down, and whether they would have been frightened if they met it. He didn’t want them to grow up superstitious, so he rebuked them, and they answered yes father, for they were well brought up, but, like himself, they were impervious to argument, and after a polite pause they continued saying what their natures compelled them to say.

A slim, tall eight-sided building stood at the top of the slope, among some bushes. This was the Shrine of the Head. It had not been roofed, and was indeed merely a screen. Inside it crouched a humble dome, and inside that, visible through a grille, was a truncated gravestone, swathed in calico.

The inner angles of the screen were cumbered with bees' nests, and a gentle shower of broken wings and other aerial oddments kept falling, and had strewn the damp pavement with their flue. Ahmed, apprized by Mohammed Latif of the character of the bee, said, "They will not hurt us, whose lives are chaste," and pushed boldly in; his sister was more cautious. From the shrine they went to a mosque, which, in size and design, resembled a fire-screen; the arcades of Chandrapore had shrunk to a flat piece of ornamental stucco, with protuberances at either end to suggest minarets. The funny little thing didn't even stand straight, for the rock on which it had been put was slipping down the hill. It, and the shrine, were a strange outcome of the protests of Arabia.

They wandered over the old fort, now deserted, and admired the various views. The scenery, according to their standards, was delightful—the sky grey and black, bellyfuls of rain all over it, the earth pocked with pools of water and slimy with mud. A magnificent monsoon—the best for three years, the tanks already full, bumper crops possible. Out towards the river (the route by which the Fieldings had escaped from Deora) the downpour had been enormous, the mails had to be pulled across by ropes. They could just see the break in the forest trees where the gorge came through, and the rocks above that marked the site of the diamond mine, glistening with wet. Close beneath was the suburban residence of the Junior Rani, isolated by floods, and Her Highness, lax about purdah, to be seen paddling with her handmaidens in the garden and waving her sari at the monkeys on the roof. But better not look close beneath, perhaps—nor towards the European Guest House either. Beyond the Guest House rose another grey-green gloom of hills, covered with temples like little white flames. There were over two hundred gods in that direction alone, who visited each other constantly, and owned numerous cows, and all the betel-leaf industry, besides having shares in the Asirgarh motor omnibus. Many of them were in the palace at this moment, having the time of their lives; others, too large or proud to travel, had sent symbols to represent them. The air was thick with religion and rain.

Their white shirts fluttering, Ahmed and Karim ran about over the fort, shrieking with joy. Presently they intersected a line of prisoners, who were looking aimlessly at an old bronze gun. "Which of you is to be pardoned?"



they asked. For to-night was the procession of the Chief God, when He would leave the palace, escorted by the whole power of the State, and pass by the Jail, which stood down in the town now. As He did so, troubling the waters of our civilization, one prisoner would be released, and then He would proceed to the great Mau tank that stretched as far as the Guest House garden, where something else would happen, some final or subsidiary apotheosis, after which He would submit to the experience of sleep. The Aziz family did not grasp as much as this, being Moslem, but the visit to the Jail was common knowledge. Smiling, with downcast eyes, the prisoners discussed with the gentry their chances of salvation. Except for the irons on their legs, they resembled other men, nor did they feel different. Five of them, who had not yet been brought to trial, could expect no pardon, but all who had been convicted were full of hope. They did not distinguish between the God and the Rajah in their minds, both were too far above them; but the guard was better educated, and ventured to enquire after His Highness's health.

“It always improves,” replied the medicine man. As a matter of fact, the Rajah was dead, the ceremony overnight had overtaxed his strength. His death was being concealed lest the glory of the festival were dimmed. The Hindu physician, the Private Secretary, and a confidential servant remained with the corpse, while Aziz had assumed the duty of being seen in public, and misleading people. He had liked the ruler very much, and might not prosper under his successor, yet he could not worry over such problems yet, for he was involved in the illusion he helped to create. The children continued to run about, hunting for a frog to put in Mohammed Latif's bed, the little fools. Hundreds of frogs lived in their own garden, but they must needs catch one up on the fort. They reported two topis below. Fielding and his brother-in-law, instead of resting after their journey, were climbing the slope to the saint's tomb!

“Throw stones?” asked Karim.

“Put powdered glass in their pan?”

“Ahmed, come here for such wickedness.” He raised his hand to smite his firstborn, but allowed it to be kissed instead. It was sweet to have his sons with him at this moment, and to know they were affectionate and

brave. He pointed out that the Englishmen were State guests, so must not be poisoned, and received, as always, gentle yet enthusiastic assent to his words.

The two visitors entered the octagon, but rushed out at once pursued by some bees. Hither and thither they ran, beating their heads; the children shrieked with derision, and out of heaven, as if a plug had been pulled, fell a jolly dollop of rain. Aziz had not meant to greet his former friend, but the incident put him into an excellent temper. He felt compact and strong. He shouted out, "Hullo, gentlemen, are you in trouble?"

The brother-in-law exclaimed; a bee had got him.

"Lie down in a pool of water, my dear sir—here are plenty. Don't come near me. . . . I cannot control them, they are State bees; complain to His Highness of their behaviour." There was no real danger, for the rain was increasing. The swarm retired to the shrine. He went up to the stranger and pulled a couple of stings out of his wrist, remarking, "Come, pull yourself together and be a man."

"How do you do, Aziz, after all this time? I heard you were settled in here," Fielding called to him, but not in friendly tones. "I suppose a couple of stings don't signify."

"Not the least. I'll send an embrocation over to the Guest House. I heard you were settled in there."

"Why have you not answered my letters?" he asked, going straight for the point, but not reaching it, owing to buckets of rain. His companion, new to the country, cried, as the drops drummed on his topi, that the bees were renewing their attack. Fielding checked his antics rather sharply, then said: "Is there a short cut down to our carriage? We must give up our walk. The weather's pestilential."

"Yes. That way."

"Are you not coming down yourself?"

Aziz sketched a comic salaam; like all Indians, he was skilful in the slightest impertinences. "I tremble, I obey," the gesture said, and it was not lost upon Fielding. They walked down a rough path to the road—the two men first; the brother-in-law (boy rather than man) next, in a state over his arm, which hurt; the three Indian children last, noisy and impudent—all six wet through.

"How goes it, Aziz?"

"In my usual health."

"Are you making anything out of your life here?"

"How much do you make out of yours?"

"Who is in charge of the Guest House?" he asked, giving up his slight effort to recapture their intimacy, and growing more official; he was older and sterner.

"His Highness's Private Secretary, probably."

"Where is he, then?"

"I don't know."

"Because not a soul's been near us since we arrived."

"Really."

"I wrote beforehand to the Durbar, and asked if a visit was convenient. I was told it was, and arranged my tour accordingly; but the Guest House servants appear to have no definite instructions, we can't get any eggs, also my wife wants to go out in the boat."

"There are two boats."

"Exactly, and no oars."

"Colonel Maggs broke the oars when here last."

“All four?”

“He is a most powerful man.”

“If the weather lifts, we want to see your torchlight procession from the water this evening,” he pursued. “I wrote to Godbole about it, but he has taken no notice; it’s a place of the dead.”

“Perhaps your letter never reached the Minister in question.”

“Will there be any objection to English people watching the procession?”

“I know nothing at all about the religion here. I should never think of watching it myself.”

“We had a very different reception both at Mudkul and Deora, they were kindness itself at Deora, the Maharajah and Maharani wanted us to see everything.”

“You should never have left them.”

“Jump in, Ralph”—they had reached the carriage.

“Jump in, Mr. Quested, and Mr. Fielding.”

“Who on earth is Mr. Quested?”

“Do I mispronounce that well known name? Is he not your wife’s brother?”

“Who on earth do you suppose I’ve married?”

“I’m only Ralph Moore,” said the boy, blushing, and at that moment there fell another pailful of the rain, and made a mist round their feet. Aziz tried to withdraw, but it was too late.

“Quested? Quested? Don’t you know that my wife was Mrs. Moore’s daughter?”

He trembled, and went purplish grey; he hated the news, hated hearing the name Moore.

“Perhaps this explains your odd attitude?”

“And pray what is wrong with my attitude?”

“The preposterous letter you allowed Mahmoud Ali to write for you.”

“This is a very useless conversation, I consider.”

“However did you make such a mistake?” said Fielding, more friendly than before, but scathing and scornful. “It’s almost unbelievable. I should think I wrote you half a dozen times, mentioning my wife by name. Miss Quested! What an extraordinary notion!” From his smile, Aziz guessed that Stella was beautiful. “Miss Quested is our best friend, she introduced us, but . . . what an amazing notion. Aziz, we must thrash this misunderstanding out later on. It is clearly some devilry of Mahmoud Ali’s. He knows perfectly well I married Miss Moore. He called her ‘Heaslop’s sister’ in his insolent letter to me.”

The name woke furies in him. “So she is, and here is Heaslop’s brother, and you his brother-in-law, and good-bye.” Shame turned into a rage that brought back his self-respect. “What does it matter to me who you marry? Don’t trouble me here at Mau is all I ask. I do not want you, I do not want one of you in my private life, with my dying breath I say it. Yes, yes, I made a foolish blunder; despise me and feel cold. I thought you married my enemy. I never read your letter. Mahmoud Ali deceived me. I thought you’d stolen my money, but”—he clapped his hands together, and his children gathered round him—“it’s as if you stole it. I forgive Mahmoud Ali all things, because he loved me.” Then pausing, while the rain exploded like pistols, he said, “My heart is for my own people henceforward,” and turned away. Cyril followed him through the mud, apologizing, laughing a little, wanting to argue and reconstruct, pointing out with irrefragable logic that he had married, not Heaslop’s betrothed, but Heaslop’s sister. What difference did it make at this hour of the day? He had built his life on a mistake, but he had built it. Speaking in Urdu, that the children might

understand, he said: "Please do not follow us, whomever you marry. I wish no Englishman or Englishwoman to be my friend."

He returned to the house excited and happy. It had been an uneasy, uncanny moment when Mrs. Moore's name was mentioned, stirring memories. "Esmiss Esmoor . . ."—as though she was coming to help him. She had always been so good, and that youth whom he had scarcely looked at was her son, Ralph Moore, Stella and Ralph, whom he had promised to be kind to, and Stella had married Cyril.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

All the time the palace ceased not to thrum and tum-tum. The revelation was over, but its effect lasted, and its effect was to make men feel that the revelation had not yet come. Hope existed despite fulfilment, as it will be in heaven. Although the God had been born, His procession—loosely supposed by many to be the birth—had not taken place. In normal years, the middle hours of this day were signalized by performances of great beauty in the private apartments of the Rajah. He owned a consecrated troupe of men and boys, whose duty it was to dance various actions and meditations of his faith before him. Seated at his ease, he could witness the Three Steps by which the Saviour ascended the universe to the discomfiture of Indra, also the death of the dragon, the mountain that turned into an umbrella, and the saddhu who (with comic results) invoked the God before dining. All culminated in the dance of the milkmaidens before Krishna, and in the still greater dance of Krishna before the milkmaidens, when the music and the musicians swirled through the dark blue robes of the actors into their tinsel crowns, and all became one. The Rajah and his guests would then forget that this was a dramatic performance, and would worship the actors. Nothing of the sort could occur to-day, because death interrupts. It interrupted less here than in Europe, its pathos was less poignant, its irony less cruel. There were two claimants to the throne, unfortunately, who were in the palace now and suspected what had happened, yet they made no trouble, because religion is a living force to the Hindus, and can at certain moments fling down everything that is petty and temporary in their natures. The festival flowed on, wild and sincere, and all men loved each other, and avoided by instinct whatever could cause inconvenience or pain.

Aziz could not understand this, any more than an average Christian could. He was puzzled that Mau should suddenly be purged from suspicion and self-seeking. Although he was an outsider, and excluded from their rites, they were always particularly charming to him at this time; he and his household received small courtesies and presents, just because he was

outside. He had nothing to do all day, except to send the embrocation over to the Guest House, and towards sunset he remembered it, and looked round his house for a local palliative, for the dispensary was shut. He found a tin of ointment belonging to Mohammed Latif, who was unwilling it should be removed, for magic words had been spoken over it while it was being boiled down, but Aziz promised that he would bring it back after application to the stings: he wanted an excuse for a ride.

The procession was beginning to form as he passed the palace. A large crowd watched the loading of the State palanquin, the prow of which protruded in the form of a silver dragon's head through the lofty half-opened door. Gods, big and little, were getting aboard. He averted his eyes, for he never knew how much he was supposed to see, and nearly collided with the Minister of Education. "Ah, you might make me late"—meaning that the touch of a non-Hindu would necessitate another bath; the words were spoken without moral heat. "Sorry," said Aziz. The other smiled, and again mentioned the Guest House party, and when he heard that Fielding's wife was not Miss Quested after all, remarked "Ah, no, he married the sister of Mr. Heaslop. Ah, exactly, I have known that for over a year"—also without heat. "Why did you not tell me? Your silence plunged me into a pretty pickle." Godbole, who had never been known to tell anyone anything, smiled again, and said in deprecating tones: "Never be angry with me. I am, as far as my limitations permit, your true friend; besides, it is my holy festival." Aziz always felt like a baby in that strange presence, a baby who unexpectedly receives a toy. He smiled also, and turned his horse into a lane, for the crush increased. The Sweepers' Band was arriving. Playing on sieves and other emblems of their profession, they marched straight at the gate of the palace with the air of a victorious army. All other music was silent, for this was ritually the moment of the Despised and Rejected; the God could not issue from his temple until the unclean Sweepers played their tune, they were the spot of filth without which the spirit cannot cohere. For an instant the scene was magnificent. The doors were thrown open, and the whole court was seen inside, barefoot and dressed in white robes; in the fairway stood the Ark of the Lord, covered with cloth of gold and flanked by peacock fans and by stiff circular banners of crimson. It was full to the brim with statuettes and flowers. As it rose from the earth on the shoulders of its bearers, the friendly sun of the monsoons shone forth and flooded the



world with colour, so that the yellow tigers painted on the palace walls seemed to spring, and pink and green skeins of cloud to link up the upper sky. The palanquin moved. . . . The lane was full of State elephants, who would follow it, their howdahs empty out of humility. Aziz did not pay attention to these sanctities, for they had no connection with his own; he felt bored, slightly cynical, like his own dear Emperor Babur, who came down from the north and found in Hindustan no good fruit, no fresh water or witty conversation, not even a friend.

The lane led quickly out of the town on to high rocks and jungle. Here he drew rein and examined the great Mau tank, which lay exposed beneath him to its remotest curve. Reflecting the evening clouds, it filled the nether-world with an equal splendour, so that earth and sky leant toward one another, about to clash in ecstasy. He spat, cynical again, more cynical than before. For in the centre of the burnished circle a small black blot was advancing—the Guest House boat. Those English had improvised something to take the place of oars, and were proceeding in their work of patrolling India. The sight endeared the Hindus by comparison, and looking back at the milk-white hump of the palace, he hoped that they would enjoy carrying their idol about, for at all events it did not pry into other people's lives. This pose of "seeing India" which had seduced him to Miss Quested at Chandrapore was only a form of ruling India; no sympathy lay behind it; he knew exactly what was going on in the boat as the party gazed at the steps down which the image would presently descend, and debated how near they might row without getting into trouble officially.

He did not give up his ride, for there would be servants at the Guest House whom he could question; a little information never comes amiss. He took the path by the sombre promontory that contained the royal tombs. Like the palace, they were of snowy stucco, and gleamed by their internal light, but their radiance grew ghostly under approaching night. The promontory was covered with lofty trees, and the fruit-bats were unhooking from the boughs and making kissing sounds as they grazed the surface of the tank; hanging upside down all the day, they had grown thirsty. The signs of the contented Indian evening multiplied; frogs on all sides, cow-dung burning eternally; a flock of belated hornbills overhead, looking like winged skeletons as they flapped across the gloaming. There was death in

the air, but not sadness; a compromise had been made between destiny and desire, and even the heart of man acquiesced.

The European Guest House stood two hundred feet above the water, on the crest of a rocky and wooded spur that jutted from the jungle. By the time Aziz arrived, the water had paled to a film of mauve-grey, and the boat vanished entirely. A sentry slept in the Guest House porch, lamps burned in the cruciform of the deserted rooms. He went from one room to another, inquisitive, and malicious. Two letters lying on the piano rewarded him, and he pounced and read them promptly. He was not ashamed to do this. The sanctity of private correspondence has never been ratified by the East. Moreover, Mr. McBryde had read all his letters in the past, and spread their contents. One letter—the more interesting of the two—was from Heaslop to Fielding. It threw light on the mentality of his former friend, and it hardened him further against him. Much of it was about Ralph Moore, who appeared to be almost an imbecile. “Hand on my brother whenever suits you. I write to you because he is sure to make a bad bunderbust.” Then: “I quite agree—life is too short to cherish grievances, also I’m relieved you feel able to come into line with the Oppressors of India to some extent. We need all the support we can get. I hope that next time Stella comes my way she will bring you with her, when I will make you as comfortable as a bachelor can—it’s certainly time we met. My sister’s marriage to you coming after my mother’s death and my own difficulties did upset me, and I was unreasonable. It is about time we made it up properly, as you say—let us leave it at faults on both sides. Glad about your son and heir. When next any of you write to Adela, do give her some sort of message from me, for I should like to make my peace with her too. You are lucky to be out of British India at the present moment. Incident after incident, all due to propaganda, but we can’t lay our hands on the connecting thread. The longer one lives here, the more certain one gets that everything hangs together. My personal opinion is, it’s the Jews.”

Thus far the red-nosed boy. Aziz was distracted for a moment by blurred sounds coming from over the water; the procession was under way. The second letter was from Miss Quested to Mrs. Fielding. It contained one or two interesting touches. The writer hoped that “Ralph will enjoy his India more than I did mine,” and appeared to have given him money for this

purpose—"my debt which I shall never repay in person." What debt did Miss Quested imagine she owed the country? He did not relish the phrase. Talk of Ralph's health. It was all "Stella and Ralph," even "Cyril" and "Ronny"—all so friendly and sensible, and written in a spirit he could not command. He envied the easy intercourse that is only possible in a nation whose women are free. These five people were making up their little difficulties, and closing their broken ranks against the alien. Even Heaslop was coming in. Hence the strength of England, and in a spurt of temper he hit the piano, and since the notes had swollen and stuck together in groups of threes, he produced a remarkable noise.

"Oh, oh, who is that?" said a nervous and respectful voice; he could not remember where he had heard its tones before. Something moved in the twilight of an adjoining room. He replied, "State doctor, ridden over to enquire, very little English," slipped the letters into his pocket, and to show that he had free entry to the Guest House, struck the piano again.

Ralph Moore came into the light.

What a strange-looking youth, tall, prematurely aged, the big blue eyes faded with anxiety, the hair impoverished and tousled! Not a type that is often exported imperially. The doctor in Aziz thought, "Born of too old a mother," the poet found him rather beautiful.

"I was unable to call earlier owing to pressure of work. How are the celebrated bee-stings?" he asked patronizingly.

"I—I was resting, they thought I had better; they throb rather."

His timidity and evident "newness" had complicated effects on the malcontent. Speaking threateningly, he said, "Come here, please, allow me to look." They were practically alone, and he could treat the patient as Callendar had treated Nureddin.

"You said this morning——"

"The best of doctors make mistakes. Come here, please, for the diagnosis under the lamp. I am pressed for time."

“Aough——”

“What is the matter, pray?”

“Your hands are unkind.”

He started and glanced down at them. The extraordinary youth was right, and he put them behind his back before replying with outward anger: “What the devil have my hands to do with you? This is a most strange remark. I am a qualified doctor, who will not hurt you.”

“I don’t mind pain, there is no pain.”

“No pain?”

“Not really.”

“Excellent news,” sneered Aziz.

“But there is cruelty.”

“I have brought you some salve, but how to put it on in your present nervous state becomes a problem,” he continued, after a pause.

“Please leave it with me.”

“Certainly not. It returns to my dispensary at once.” He stretched forward, and the other retreated to the farther side of a table. “Now, do you want me to treat your stings, or do you prefer an English doctor? There is one at Asirgarh. Asirgarh is forty miles away, and the Ringnod dam broken. Now you see how you are placed. I think I had better see Mr. Fielding about you; this is really great nonsense, your present behaviour.”

“They are out in a boat,” he replied, glancing about him for support.

Aziz feigned intense surprise. “They have not gone in the direction of Mau, I hope. On a night like this the people become most fanatical.” And, as if to confirm him, there was a sob, as though the lips of a giant had parted; the procession was approaching the Jail.

“You should not treat us like this,” he challenged, and this time Aziz was checked, for the voice, though frightened, was not weak.

“Like what?”

“Dr. Aziz, we have done you no harm.”

“Aha, you know my name, I see. Yes, I am Aziz. No, of course your great friend Miss Quested did me no harm at the Marabar.”

Drowning his last words, all the guns of the State went off. A rocket from the Jail garden gave the signal. The prisoner had been released, and was kissing the feet of the singers. Rose-leaves fall from the houses, sacred spices and coco-nut are brought forth. . . . It was the half-way moment; the God had extended His temple, and paused exultantly. Mixed and confused in their passage, the rumours of salvation entered the Guest House. They were startled and moved on to the porch, drawn by the sudden illumination. The bronze gun up on the fort kept flashing, the town was a blur of light, in which the houses seemed dancing, and the palace waving little wings. The water below, the hills and sky above, were not involved as yet; there was still only a little light and song struggling among the shapeless lumps of the universe. The song became audible through much repetition; the choir was repeating and inverting the names of deities.

“Radhakrishna Radhakrishna,  
Radhakrishna Radhakrishna,  
Krishnaradha Radhakrishna,  
Radhakrishna Radhakrishna,”

they sang, and woke the sleeping sentry in the Guest House; he leant upon his iron-tipped spear.

“I must go back now, good night,” said Aziz, and held out his hand, completely forgetting that they were not friends, and focusing his heart on something more distant than the caves, something beautiful. His hand was taken, and then he remembered how detestable he had been, and said gently, “Don’t you think me unkind any more?”

“No.”

“How can you tell, you strange fellow?”

“Not difficult, the one thing I always know.”

“Can you always tell whether a stranger is your friend?”

“Yes.”

“Then you are an Oriental.” He unclasped as he spoke, with a little shudder. Those words—he had said them to Mrs. Moore in the mosque in the beginning of the cycle, from which, after so much suffering, he had got free. Never be friends with the English! Mosque, caves, mosque, caves. And here he was starting again. He handed the magic ointment to him. “Take this, think of me when you use it. I shall never want it back. I must give you one little present, and it is all I have got; you are Mrs. Moore’s son.”

“I am that,” he murmured to himself; and a part of Aziz’ mind that had been hidden seemed to move and force its way to the top.

“But you are Heaslop’s brother also, and alas, the two nations cannot be friends.”

“I know. Not yet.”

“Did your mother speak to you about me?”

“Yes.” And with a swerve of voice and body that Aziz did not follow he added, “In her letters, in her letters. She loved you.”

“Yes, your mother was my best friend in all the world.” He was silent, puzzled by his own great gratitude. What did this eternal goodness of Mrs. Moore amount to? To nothing, if brought to the test of thought. She had not borne witness in his favour, nor visited him in the prison, yet she had stolen to the depths of his heart, and he always adored her. “This is our monsoon, the best weather,” he said, while the lights of the procession waved as though embroidered on an agitated curtain. “How I wish she could have

seen them, our rains. Now is the time when all things are happy, young and old. They are happy out there with their savage noise, though we cannot follow them; the tanks are all full so they dance, and this is India. I wish you were not with officials, then I would show you my country, but I cannot. Perhaps I will just take you out on the water now, for one short half-hour.”

Was the cycle beginning again? His heart was too full to draw back. He must slip out in the darkness, and do this one act of homage to Mrs. Moore’s son. He knew where the oars were—hidden to deter the visitors from going out—and he brought the second pair, in case they met the other boat; the Fieldings had pushed themselves out with long poles, and might get into difficulties, for the wind was rising.

Once on the water, he became easy. One kind action was with him always a channel for another, and soon the torrent of his hospitality gushed forth and he began doing the honours of Mau and persuading himself that he understood the wild procession, which increased in lights and sounds as the complications of its ritual developed. There was little need to row, for the freshening gale blew them in the direction they desired. Thorns scratched the keel, they ran into an islet and startled some cranes. The strange temporary life of the August flood-water bore them up and seemed as though it would last for ever.

The boat was a rudderless dinghy. Huddled up in the stern, with the spare pair of oars in his arms, the guest asked no questions about details. There was presently a flash of lightning, followed by a second flash—little red scratches on the ponderous sky. “Was that the Rajah?” he asked.

“What—what do you mean?”

“Row back.”

“But there’s no Rajah—nothing——”

“Row back, you will see what I mean.”

Aziz found it hard work against the advancing wind. But he fixed his eyes on the pin of light that marked the Guest House and backed a few strokes.

“There . . .”

Floating in the darkness was a king, who sat under a canopy, in shining royal robes. . . .

“I can’t tell you what that is, I’m sure,” he whispered. “His Highness is dead. I think we should go back at once.”

They were close to the promontory of the tombs, and had looked straight into the chhatra of the Rajah’s father through an opening in the trees. That was the explanation. He had heard of the image—made to imitate life at enormous expense—but he had never chanced to see it before, though he frequently rowed on the lake. There was only one spot from which it could be seen, and Ralph had directed him to it. Hastily he pulled away, feeling that his companion was not so much a visitor as a guide. He remarked, “Shall we go back now?”

“There is still the procession.”

“I’d rather not go nearer—they have such strange customs, and might hurt you.”

“A little nearer.”

Aziz obeyed. He knew with his heart that this was Mrs. Moore’s son, and indeed until his heart was involved he knew nothing. “Radhakrishna Radhakrishna Radhakrishna Radhakrishna Krishnaradha,” went the chant, then suddenly changed, and in the interstice he heard, almost certainly, the syllables of salvation that had sounded during his trial at Chandrapore.

“Mr. Moore, don’t tell anyone that the Rajah is dead. It is a secret still, I am supposed not to say. We pretend he is alive until after the festival, to prevent unhappiness. Do you want to go still nearer?”



“Yes.”

He tried to keep the boat out of the glare of the torches that began to star the other shore. Rockets kept going off, also the guns. Suddenly, closer than he had calculated, the palanquin of Krishna appeared from behind a ruined wall, and descended the carven glistening water-steps. On either side of it the singers tumbled, a woman prominent, a wild and beautiful young saint with flowers in her hair. She was praising God without attributes—thus did she apprehend Him. Others praised Him without attributes, seeing Him in this or that organ of the body or manifestation of the sky. Down they rushed to the foreshore and stood in the small waves, and a sacred meal was prepared, of which those who felt worthy partook. Old Godbole detected the boat, which was drifting in on the gale, and he waved his arms—whether in wrath or joy Aziz never discovered. Above stood the secular power of Mau—elephants, artillery, crowds—and high above them a wild tempest started, confined at first to the upper regions of the air. Gusts of wind mixed darkness and light, sheets of rain cut from the north, stopped, cut from the south, began rising from below, and across them struggled the singers, sounding every note but terror, and preparing to throw God away, God Himself, (not that God can be thrown) into the storm. Thus was He thrown year after year, and were others thrown—little images of Ganpati, baskets of ten-day corn, tiny tazias after Mohurram—scapegoats, husks, emblems of passage; a passage not easy, not now, not here, not to be apprehended except when it is unattainable; the God to be thrown was an emblem of that.

The village of Gokul reappeared upon its tray. It was the substitute for the silver image, which never left its haze of flowers; on behalf of another symbol, it was to perish. A servitor took it in his hands, and tore off the blue and white streamers. He was naked, broad-shouldered, thin-waisted—the Indian body again triumphant—and it was his hereditary office to close the gates of salvation. He entered the dark waters, pushing the village before him, until the clay dolls slipped off their chairs and began to gutter in the rain, and King Kansa was confounded with the father and mother of the Lord. Dark and solid, the little waves sipped, then a great wave washed and then English voices cried “Take care!”

The boats had collided with each other.

The four outsiders flung out their arms and grappled, and, with oars and poles sticking out, revolved like a mythical monster in the whirlwind. The worshippers howled with wrath or joy, as they drifted forward helplessly against the servitor. Who awaited them, his beautiful dark face expressionless, and as the last morsels melted on his tray, it struck them.

The shock was minute, but Stella, nearest to it, shrank into her husband's arms, then reached forward, then flung herself against Aziz, and her motions capsized them. They plunged into the warm, shallow water, and rose struggling into a tornado of noise. The oars, the sacred tray, the letters of Ronny and Adela, broke loose and floated confusedly. Artillery was fired, drums beaten, the elephants trumpeted, and drowning all an immense peal of thunder, unaccompanied by lightning, cracked like a mallet on the dome.

That was the climax, as far as India admits of one. The rain settled in steadily to its job of wetting everybody and everything through, and soon spoiled the cloth of gold on the palanquin and the costly disc-shaped banners. Some of the torches went out, fireworks didn't catch, there began to be less singing, and the tray returned to Professor Godbole, who picked up a fragment of the mud adhering and smeared it on his forehead without much ceremony. Whatever had happened had happened, and while the intruders picked themselves up, the crowds of Hindus began a desultory move back into the town. The image went back too, and on the following day underwent a private death of its own, when some curtains of magenta and green were lowered in front of the dynastic shrine. The singing went on even longer . . . ragged edges of religion . . . unsatisfactory and undramatic tangles. . . . "God is love." Looking back at the great blur of the last twenty-four hours, no man could say where was the emotional centre of it, any more than he could locate the heart of a cloud.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

Friends again, yet aware that they could meet no more, Aziz and Fielding went for their last ride in the Mau jungles. The floods had abated and the Rajah was officially dead, so the Guest House party were departing next morning, as decorum required. What with the mourning and the festival, the visit was a failure.

Fielding had scarcely seen Godbole, who promised every day to show him over the King-Emperor George Fifth High School, his main objective, but always made some excuse. This afternoon Aziz let out what had happened: the King-Emperor had been converted into a granary, and the Minister of Education did not like to admit this to his former Principal. The school had been opened only last year by the Agent to the Governor-General, and it still flourished on paper; he hoped to start it again before its absence was remarked and to collect its scholars before they produced children of their own. Fielding laughed at the tangle and waste of energy, but he did not travel as lightly as in the past; education was a continuous concern to him, because his income and the comfort of his family depended on it. He knew that few Indians think education good in itself, and he deplored this now on the widest grounds. He began to say something heavy on the subject of Native States, but the friendliness of Aziz distracted him. This reconciliation was a success, anyhow. After the funny shipwreck there had been no more nonsense or bitterness, and they went back laughingly to their old relationship as if nothing had happened. Now they rode between jolly bushes and rocks. Presently the ground opened into full sunlight and they saw a grassy slope bright with butterflies, also a cobra, which crawled across doing nothing in particular, and disappeared among some custard apple trees. There were round white clouds in the sky, and white pools on the earth; the hills in the distance were purple. The scene was as park-like as England, but did not cease being queer. They drew rein, to give the cobra elbow-room, and Aziz produced a letter that he wanted to send to Miss Quested. A charming letter. He wanted to thank his old enemy for her fine

behaviour two years back: perfectly plain was it now that she had behaved well. “As I fell into our largest Mau tank under circumstances our other friends will relate, I thought how brave Miss Quested was, and decided to tell her so, despite my imperfect English. Through you I am happy here with my children instead of in a prison, of that I make no doubt. My children shall be taught to speak of you with the greatest affection and respect.”

“Miss Quested will be greatly pleased. I am glad you have seen her courage at last.”

“I want to do kind actions all round and wipe out the wretched business of the Marabar for ever. I have been so disgracefully hasty, thinking you meant to get hold of my money: as bad a mistake as the cave itself.”

“Aziz, I wish you would talk to my wife. She too believes that the Marabar is wiped out.”

“How so?”

“I don’t know, perhaps she might tell you, she won’t tell me. She has ideas I don’t share—indeed, when I’m away from her I think them ridiculous. When I’m with her, I suppose because I’m fond of her, I feel different, I feel half dead and half blind. My wife’s after something. You and I and Miss Quested are, roughly speaking, not after anything. We jog on as decently as we can, you a little in front—a laudable little party. But my wife is not with us.”

“What are you meaning? Is Stella not faithful to you, Cyril? This fills me with great concern.”

Fielding hesitated. He was not quite happy about his marriage. He was passionate physically again—the final flare-up before the clinkers of middle age—and he knew that his wife did not love him as much as he loved her, and he was ashamed of pestering her. But during the visit to Mau the situation had improved. There seemed a link between them at last—that link outside either participant that is necessary to every relationship. In the language of theology, their union had been blessed. He could assure Aziz

that Stella was not only faithful to him, but likely to become more so; and trying to express what was not clear to himself, he added dully that different people had different points of view. "If you won't talk about the Marabar to Stella, why won't you talk to Ralph? He is a wise boy really. And (same metaphor) he rides a little behind her, though with her."

"Tell him also, I have nothing to say to him, but he is indeed a wise boy and has always one Indian friend. I partly love him because he brought me back to you to say good-bye. For this is good-bye, Cyril, though to think about it will spoil our ride and make us sad."

"No, we won't think about it." He too felt that this was their last free intercourse. All the stupid misunderstandings had been cleared up, but socially they had no meeting-place. He had thrown in his lot with Anglo-India by marrying a countrywoman, and he was acquiring some of its limitations, and already felt surprise at his own past heroism. Would he to-day defy all his own people for the sake of a stray Indian? Aziz was a memento, a trophy, they were proud of each other, yet they must inevitably part. And, anxious to make what he could of this last afternoon, he forced himself to speak intimately about his wife, the person most dear to him. He said: "From her point of view, Mau has been a success. It calmed her—both of them suffer from restlessness. She found something soothing, some solution of her queer troubles here." After a silence—myriads of kisses around them as the earth drew the water in—he continued: "Do you know anything about this Krishna business?"

"My dear chap, officially they call it Gokul Ashtami. All the State offices are closed, but how else should it concern you and me?"

"Gokul is the village where Krishna was born—well, more or less born, for there's the same hovering between it and another village as between Bethlehem and Nazareth. What I want to discover is its spiritual side, if it has one."

"It is useless discussing Hindus with me. Living with them teaches me no more. When I think I annoy them, I do not. When I think I don't annoy them, I do. Perhaps they will sack me for tumbling on to their dolls'-house;

on the other hand, perhaps they will double my salary. Time will prove. Why so curious about them?”

“It’s difficult to explain. I never really understood or liked them, except an occasional scrap of Godbole. Does the old fellow still say ‘Come, come?’”

“Oh, presumably.”

Fielding sighed, opened his lips, shut them, then said with a little laugh, “I can’t explain, because it isn’t in words at all, but why do my wife and her brother like Hinduism, though they take no interest in its forms? They won’t talk to me about this. They know I think a certain side of their lives is a mistake, and are shy. That’s why I wish you would talk to them, for at all events you’re Oriental.”

Aziz refused to reply. He didn’t want to meet Stella and Ralph again, knew they didn’t want to meet him, was incurious about their secrets, and felt good old Cyril to be a bit clumsy. Something—not a sight, but a sound—flitted past him, and caused him to re-read his letter to Miss Quested. Hadn’t he wanted to say something else to her? Taking out his pen, he added: “For my own part, I shall henceforth connect you with the name that is very sacred in my mind, namely, Mrs. Moore.” When he had finished, the mirror of the scenery was shattered, the meadow disintegrated into butterflies. A poem about Mecca—the Caaba of Union—the thorn-bushes where pilgrims die before they have seen the Friend—they flitted next; he thought of his wife; and then the whole semi-mystic, semi-sensuous overturn, so characteristic of his spiritual life, came to end like a landslip and rested in its due place, and he found himself riding in the jungle with his dear Cyril.

“Oh, shut up,” he said. “Don’t spoil our last hour with foolish questions. Leave Krishna alone, and talk about something sensible.”

They did. All the way back to Mau they wrangled about politics. Each had hardened since Chandrapore, and a good knock about proved enjoyable. They trusted each other, although they were going to part, perhaps because they were going to part. Fielding had “no further use for

politeness,” he said, meaning that the British Empire really can’t be abolished because it’s rude. Aziz retorted, “Very well, and we have no use for you,” and glared at him with abstract hate. Fielding said: “Away from us, Indians go to seed at once. Look at the King-Emperor High School! Look at you, forgetting your medicine and going back to charms. Look at your poems.”—“Jolly good poems, I’m getting published Bombay side.”—“Yes, and what do they say? Free our women and India will be free. Try it, my lad. Free your own lady in the first place, and see who’ll wash Ahmed Karim and Jamila’s faces. A nice situation!”

Aziz grew more excited. He rose in his stirrups and pulled at his horse’s head in the hope it would rear. Then he should feel in a battle. He cried: “Clear out, all you Turtons and Burtons. We wanted to know you ten years back—now it’s too late. If we see you and sit on your committees, it’s for political reasons, don’t you make any mistake.” His horse did rear. “Clear out, clear out, I say. Why are we put to so much suffering? We used to blame you, now we blame ourselves, we grow wiser. Until England is in difficulties we keep silent, but in the next European war—aha, aha! Then is our time.” He paused, and the scenery, though it smiled, fell like a gravestone on any human hope. They cantered past a temple to Hanuman—God so loved the world that he took monkey’s flesh upon him—and past a Saivite temple, which invited to lust, but under the semblance of eternity, its obscenities bearing no relation to those of our flesh and blood. They splashed through butterflies and frogs; great trees with leaves like plates rose among the brushwood. The divisions of daily life were returning, the shrine had almost shut.

“Who do you want instead of the English? The Japanese?” jeered Fielding, drawing rein.

“No, the Afghans. My own ancestors.”

“Oh, your Hindu friends will like that, won’t they?”

“It will be arranged—a conference of Oriental statesmen.”

“It will indeed be arranged.”

“Old story of ‘We will rob every man and rape every woman from Peshawar to Calcutta,’ I suppose, which you get some nobody to repeat and then quote every week in the *Pioneer* in order to frighten us into retaining you! We know!” Still he couldn’t quite fit in Afghans at Mau, and, finding he was in a corner, made his horse rear again until he remembered that he had, or ought to have, a mother-land. Then he shouted: “India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one! Hurrah! Hurrah for India! Hurrah! Hurrah!”

India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth-century sisterhood! Waddling in at this hour of the world to take her seat! She, whose only peer was the Holy Roman Empire, she shall rank with Guatemala and Belgium perhaps! Fielding mocked again. And Aziz in an awful rage danced this way and that, not knowing what to do, and cried: “Down with the English anyhow. That’s certain. Clear out, you fellows, double quick, I say. We may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don’t make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it’s fifty five-hundred years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then”—he rode against him furiously—“and then,” he concluded, half kissing him, “you and I shall be friends.”

“Why can’t we be friends now?” said the other, holding him affectionately. “It’s what I want. It’s what you want.”

But the horses didn’t want it—they swerved apart; the earth didn’t want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn’t want it, they said in their hundred voices, “No, not yet,” and the sky said, “No, not there.”



WEYBRIDGE, 1924.

[End]

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# Jude the Obscure



Thomas Hardy

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# JUDE THE OBSCURE

by Thomas Hardy

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# CONTENTS

PREFACE

## **PART FIRST—At Marygreen**

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VI

Chapter VII

Chapter VIII

Chapter IX

Chapter X

Chapter XI

## **PART SECOND—At Christminster**

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VI

Chapter VII

## **PART THIRD—At Melchester**

Chapter I

Chapter II  
Chapter III  
Chapter IV  
Chapter V  
Chapter VI  
Chapter VII  
Chapter VIII  
Chapter IX  
Chapter X

**PART FOURTH—At Shaston**

Chapter I  
Chapter II  
Chapter III  
Chapter IV  
Chapter V  
Chapter VI

**PART FIFTH—At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere**

Chapter I  
Chapter II  
Chapter III  
Chapter IV  
Chapter V  
Chapter VI  
Chapter VII  
Chapter VIII

**PART SIXTH—At Christminster Again**

Chapter I  
Chapter II  
Chapter III



Chapter IV  
Chapter V  
Chapter VI  
Chapter VII  
Chapter VIII  
Chapter IX  
Chapter X  
Chapter XI

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## PREFACE

The history of this novel (whose birth in its present shape has been much retarded by the necessities of periodical publication) is briefly as follows. The scheme was jotted down in 1890, from notes made in 1887 and onward, some of the circumstances being suggested by the death of a woman in the former year. The scenes were revisited in October, 1892; the narrative was written in outline in 1892 and the spring of 1893, and at full length, as it now appears, from August, 1893, onward into the next year; the whole, with the exception of a few chapters, being in the hands of the publisher by the end of 1894. It was begun as a serial story in HARPER'S MAGAZINE at the end of November, 1894, and was continued in monthly parts.

But, as in the case of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the magazine version was, for various reasons, abridged and modified in some degree, the present edition being the first in which the whole appears as originally written. And in the difficulty of coming to an early decision in the matter of a title, the tale was issued under a provisional name—two such titles having, in fact, been successively adopted. The present and final title, deemed on the whole the best, was one of the earliest thought of.

For a novel addressed by a man to men and women of full age, which attempts to deal unaffectedly with the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of the strongest passion known to humanity, and to point, without a mincing of words, the tragedy of unfulfilled aims, I am not aware that there is anything in the handling to which exception can be taken.

Like former productions of this pen, *Jude the Obscure* is simply an endeavor to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings, or personal impressions, the question of their consistency or their discordance, of their permanence or their transitoriness, being regarded as not of the first moment.

T.H.

*August, 1895.*

Part First  
AT MARYGREEN

*“Yea, many there be that have run out of their wits for women, and become servants for their sakes. Many also have perished, have erred, and sinned, for women... O ye men, how can it be but women should be strong, seeing they do thus?”—ESDRAS.*

# I

The schoolmaster was leaving the village, and everybody seemed sorry. The miller at Cresscombe lent him the small white tilted cart and horse to carry his goods to the city of his destination, about twenty miles off, such a vehicle proving of quite sufficient size for the departing teacher's effects. For the schoolhouse had been partly furnished by the managers, and the only cumbersome article possessed by the master, in addition to the packing-case of books, was a cottage piano that he had bought at an auction during the year in which he thought of learning instrumental music. But the enthusiasm having waned he had never acquired any skill in playing, and the purchased article had been a perpetual trouble to him ever since in moving house.

The rector had gone away for the day, being a man who disliked the sight of changes. He did not mean to return till the evening, when the new school-teacher would have arrived and settled in, and everything would be smooth again.

The blacksmith, the farm bailiff, and the schoolmaster himself were standing in perplexed attitudes in the parlour before the instrument. The master had remarked that even if he got it into the cart he should not know what to do with it on his arrival at Christminster, the city he was bound for, since he was only going into temporary lodgings just at first.

A little boy of eleven, who had been thoughtfully assisting in the packing, joined the group of men, and as they rubbed their chins he spoke up, blushing at the sound of his own voice: "Aunt have got a great fuel-house, and it could be put there, perhaps, till you've found a place to settle in, sir."

"A proper good notion," said the blacksmith.

It was decided that a deputation should wait on the boy's aunt—an old maiden resident—and ask her if she would house the piano till Mr. Phillotson should send for it. The smith and the bailiff started to see about

the practicability of the suggested shelter, and the boy and the schoolmaster were left standing alone.

“Sorry I am going, Jude?” asked the latter kindly.

Tears rose into the boy’s eyes, for he was not among the regular day scholars, who came unromantically close to the schoolmaster’s life, but one who had attended the night school only during the present teacher’s term of office. The regular scholars, if the truth must be told, stood at the present moment afar off, like certain historic disciples, indisposed to any enthusiastic volunteering of aid.

The boy awkwardly opened the book he held in his hand, which Mr. Phillotson had bestowed on him as a parting gift, and admitted that he was sorry.

“So am I,” said Mr. Phillotson.

“Why do you go, sir?” asked the boy.

“Ah—that would be a long story. You wouldn’t understand my reasons, Jude. You will, perhaps, when you are older.”

“I think I should now, sir.”

“Well—don’t speak of this everywhere. You know what a university is, and a university degree? It is the necessary hallmark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching. My scheme, or dream, is to be a university graduate, and then to be ordained. By going to live at Christminster, or near it, I shall be at headquarters, so to speak, and if my scheme is practicable at all, I consider that being on the spot will afford me a better chance of carrying it out than I should have elsewhere.”

The smith and his companion returned. Old Miss Fawley’s fuel-house was dry, and eminently practicable; and she seemed willing to give the instrument standing-room there. It was accordingly left in the school till the evening, when more hands would be available for removing it; and the schoolmaster gave a final glance round.

The boy Jude assisted in loading some small articles, and at nine o’clock Mr. Phillotson mounted beside his box of books and other *impedimenta*, and bade his friends good-bye.

“I shan’t forget you, Jude,” he said, smiling, as the cart moved off. “Be a good boy, remember; and be kind to animals and birds, and read all you

can. And if ever you come to Christminster remember you hunt me out for old acquaintance' sake."

The cart creaked across the green, and disappeared round the corner by the rectory-house. The boy returned to the draw-well at the edge of the greensward, where he had left his buckets when he went to help his patron and teacher in the loading. There was a quiver in his lip now and after opening the well-cover to begin lowering the bucket he paused and leant with his forehead and arms against the framework, his face wearing the fixity of a thoughtful child's who has felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time. The well into which he was looking was as ancient as the village itself, and from his present position appeared as a long circular perspective ending in a shining disk of quivering water at a distance of a hundred feet down. There was a lining of green moss near the top, and nearer still the hart's-tongue fern.

He said to himself, in the melodramatic tones of a whimsical boy, that the schoolmaster had drawn at that well scores of times on a morning like this, and would never draw there any more. "I've seen him look down into it, when he was tired with his drawing, just as I do now, and when he rested a bit before carrying the buckets home! But he was too clever to bide here any longer—a small sleepy place like this!"

A tear rolled from his eye into the depths of the well. The morning was a little foggy, and the boy's breathing unfurled itself as a thicker fog upon the still and heavy air. His thoughts were interrupted by a sudden outcry:

"Bring on that water, will ye, you idle young harlican!"

It came from an old woman who had emerged from her door towards the garden gate of a green-thatched cottage not far off. The boy quickly waved a signal of assent, drew the water with what was a great effort for one of his stature, landed and emptied the big bucket into his own pair of smaller ones, and pausing a moment for breath, started with them across the patch of clammy greensward whereon the well stood—nearly in the centre of the little village, or rather hamlet of Marygreen.

It was as old-fashioned as it was small, and it rested in the lap of an undulating upland adjoining the North Wessex downs. Old as it was, however, the well-shaft was probably the only relic of the local history that remained absolutely unchanged. Many of the thatched and dormered dwelling-houses had been pulled down of late years, and many trees felled

on the green. Above all, the original church, hump-backed, wood-turreted, and quaintly hipped, had been taken down, and either cracked up into heaps of road-metal in the lane, or utilized as pig-sty walls, garden seats, guard-stones to fences, and rockeries in the flower-beds of the neighbourhood. In place of it a tall new building of modern Gothic design, unfamiliar to English eyes, had been erected on a new piece of ground by a certain obliterator of historic records who had run down from London and back in a day. The site whereon so long had stood the ancient temple to the Christian divinities was not even recorded on the green and level grass-plot that had immemorially been the churchyard, the obliterated graves being commemorated by eighteen-penny cast-iron crosses warranted to last five years.



## II

Slender as was Jude Fawley's frame he bore the two brimming house-buckets of water to the cottage without resting. Over the door was a little rectangular piece of blue board, on which was painted in yellow letters, "Drusilla Fawley, Baker." Within the little lead panes of the window—this being one of the few old houses left—were five bottles of sweets, and three buns on a plate of the willow pattern.

While emptying the buckets at the back of the house he could hear an animated conversation in progress within-doors between his great-aunt, the Drusilla of the sign-board, and some other villagers. Having seen the school-master depart, they were summing up particulars of the event, and indulging in predictions of his future.

"And who's he?" asked one, comparatively a stranger, when the boy entered.

"Well ye med ask it, Mrs. Williams. He's my great-nephew—come since you was last this way." The old inhabitant who answered was a tall, gaunt woman, who spoke tragically on the most trivial subject, and gave a phrase of her conversation to each auditor in turn. "He come from Mellstock, down in South Wessex, about a year ago—worse luck for 'n, Belinda" (turning to the right) "where his father was living, and was took wi' the shakings for death, and died in two days, as you know, Caroline" (turning to the left). "It would ha' been a blessing if Goddy-mighty had took thee too, wi' thy mother and father, poor useless boy! But I've got him here to stay with me till I can see what's to be done with un, though I am obliged to let him earn any penny he can. Just now he's a-scaring of birds for Farmer Troutham. It keeps him out of mischty. Why do ye turn away, Jude?" she continued, as the boy, feeling the impact of their glances like slaps upon his face, moved aside.

The local washerwoman replied that it was perhaps a very good plan of Miss or Mrs. Fawley's (as they called her indifferently) to have him with

her—"to kip 'ee company in your loneliness, fetch water, shet the winder-shetters o' nights, and help in the bit o' baking."

Miss Fawley doubted it. ... "Why didn't ye get the schoolmaster to take 'ee to Christminster wi' un, and make a scholar of 'ee," she continued, in frowning pleasantry. "I'm sure he couldn't ha' took a better one. The boy is crazy for books, that he is. It runs in our family rather. His cousin Sue is just the same—so I've heard; but I have not seen the child for years, though she was born in this place, within these four walls, as it happened. My niece and her husband, after they were married, didn' get a house of their own for some year or more; and then they only had one till—Well, I won't go into that. Jude, my child, don't you ever marry. 'Tisn't for the Fawleys to take that step any more. She, their only one, was like a child o' my own, Belinda, till the split come! Ah, that a little maid should know such changes!"

Jude, finding the general attention again centering on himself, went out to the bakehouse, where he ate the cake provided for his breakfast. The end of his spare time had now arrived, and emerging from the garden by getting over the hedge at the back he pursued a path northward, till he came to a wide and lonely depression in the general level of the upland, which was sown as a corn-field. This vast concave was the scene of his labours for Mr. Troutham the farmer, and he descended into the midst of it.

The brown surface of the field went right up towards the sky all round, where it was lost by degrees in the mist that shut out the actual verge and accentuated the solitude. The only marks on the uniformity of the scene were a rick of last year's produce standing in the midst of the arable, the rooks that rose at his approach, and the path athwart the fallow by which he had come, trodden now by he hardly knew whom, though once by many of his own dead family.

"How ugly it is here!" he murmured.

The fresh harrow-lines seemed to stretch like the channellings in a piece of new corduroy, lending a meanly utilitarian air to the expanse, taking away its gradations, and depriving it of all history beyond that of the few recent months, though to every clod and stone there really attached associations enough and to spare—echoes of songs from ancient harvest-days, of spoken words, and of sturdy deeds. Every inch of ground had been

the site, first or last, of energy, gaiety, horse-play, bickerings, weariness. Groups of gleaners had squatted in the sun on every square yard. Love-matches that had populated the adjoining hamlet had been made up there between reaping and carrying. Under the hedge which divided the field from a distant plantation girls had given themselves to lovers who would not turn their heads to look at them by the next harvest; and in that ancient cornfield many a man had made love-promises to a woman at whose voice he had trembled by the next seed-time after fulfilling them in the church adjoining. But this neither Jude nor the rooks around him considered. For them it was a lonely place, possessing, in the one view, only the quality of a work-ground, and in the other that of a granary good to feed in.

The boy stood under the rick before mentioned, and every few seconds used his clacker or rattle briskly. At each clack the rooks left off pecking, and rose and went away on their leisurely wings, burnished like tassets of mail, afterwards wheeling back and regarding him warily, and descending to feed at a more respectful distance.

He sounded the clacker till his arm ached, and at length his heart grew sympathetic with the birds' thwarted desires. They seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them. Why should he frighten them away? They took upon more and more the aspect of gentle friends and pensioners—the only friends he could claim as being in the least degree interested in him, for his aunt had often told him that she was not. He ceased his rattling, and they alighted anew.

“Poor little dears!” said Jude, aloud. “You *shall* have some dinner—you shall. There is enough for us all. Farmer Troutham can afford to let you have some. Eat, then my dear little birdies, and make a good meal!”

They stayed and ate, inky spots on the nut-brown soil, and Jude enjoyed their appetite. A magic thread of fellow-feeling united his own life with theirs. Puny and sorry as those lives were, they much resembled his own.

His clacker he had by this time thrown away from him, as being a mean and sordid instrument, offensive both to the birds and to himself as their friend. All at once he became conscious of a smart blow upon his buttocks, followed by a loud clack, which announced to his surprised senses that the clacker had been the instrument of offence used. The birds and Jude started up simultaneously, and the dazed eyes of the latter beheld the

farmer in person, the great Troutham himself, his red face glaring down upon Jude's cowering frame, the clacker swinging in his hand.

“So it's ‘Eat my dear birdies,’ is it, young man? ‘Eat, dear birdies,’ indeed! I'll tickle your breeches, and see if you say, ‘Eat, dear birdies,’ again in a hurry! And you've been idling at the schoolmaster's too, instead of coming here, ha'n't ye, hey? That's how you earn your sixpence a day for keeping the rooks off my corn!”

Whilst saluting Jude's ears with this impassioned rhetoric, Troutham had seized his left hand with his own left, and swinging his slim frame round him at arm's-length, again struck Jude on the hind parts with the flat side of Jude's own rattle, till the field echoed with the blows, which were delivered once or twice at each revolution.

“Don't 'ee, sir—please don't 'ee!” cried the whirling child, as helpless under the centrifugal tendency of his person as a hooked fish swinging to land, and beholding the hill, the rick, the plantation, the path, and the rooks going round and round him in an amazing circular race. “I—I sir—only meant that—there was a good crop in the ground—I saw 'em sow it—and the rooks could have a little bit for dinner—and you wouldn't miss it, sir—and Mr. Phillotson said I was to be kind to 'em—oh, oh, oh!”

This truthful explanation seemed to exasperate the farmer even more than if Jude had stoutly denied saying anything at all, and he still smacked the whirling urchin, the clacks of the instrument continuing to resound all across the field and as far as the ears of distant workers—who gathered thereupon that Jude was pursuing his business of clacking with great assiduity—and echoing from the brand-new church tower just behind the mist, towards the building of which structure the farmer had largely subscribed, to testify his love for God and man.

Presently Troutham grew tired of his punitive task, and depositing the quivering boy on his legs, took a sixpence from his pocket and gave it him in payment for his day's work, telling him to go home and never let him see him in one of those fields again.

Jude leaped out of arm's reach, and walked along the trackway weeping—not from the pain, though that was keen enough; not from the perception of the flaw in the terrestrial scheme, by which what was good for God's birds was bad for God's gardener; but with the awful sense that he had

wholly disgraced himself before he had been a year in the parish, and hence might be a burden to his great-aunt for life.

With this shadow on his mind he did not care to show himself in the village, and went homeward by a roundabout track behind a high hedge and across a pasture. Here he beheld scores of coupled earthworms lying half their length on the surface of the damp ground, as they always did in such weather at that time of the year. It was impossible to advance in regular steps without crushing some of them at each tread.

Though Farmer Troutham had just hurt him, he was a boy who could not himself bear to hurt anything. He had never brought home a nest of young birds without lying awake in misery half the night after, and often reinstating them and the nest in their original place the next morning. He could scarcely bear to see trees cut down or lopped, from a fancy that it hurt them; and late pruning, when the sap was up and the tree bled profusely, had been a positive grief to him in his infancy. This weakness of character, as it may be called, suggested that he was the sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life should signify that all was well with him again. He carefully picked his way on tiptoe among the earthworms, without killing a single one.

On entering the cottage he found his aunt selling a penny loaf to a little girl, and when the customer was gone she said, "Well, how do you come to be back here in the middle of the morning like this?"

"I'm turned away."

"What?"

"Mr. Troutham have turned me away because I let the rooks have a few peckings of corn. And there's my wages—the last I shall ever hae!"

He threw the sixpence tragically on the table.

"Ah!" said his aunt, suspending her breath. And she opened upon him a lecture on how she would now have him all the spring upon her hands doing nothing. "If you can't skeer birds, what can ye do? There! don't ye look so deedy! Farmer Troutham is not so much better than myself, come to that. But 'tis as Job said, 'Now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.' His father was my father's journeyman, anyhow, and I must

have been a fool to let 'ee go to work for 'n, which I shouldn't ha' done but to keep 'ee out of mischty."

More angry with Jude for demeaning her by coming there than for dereliction of duty, she rated him primarily from that point of view, and only secondarily from a moral one.

"Not that you should have let the birds eat what Farmer Troutham planted. Of course you was wrong in that. Jude, Jude, why didstn't go off with that schoolmaster of thine to Christminster or somewhere? But, oh no—poor or'nary child—there never was any sprawl on thy side of the family, and never will be!"

"Where is this beautiful city, Aunt—this place where Mr. Phillotson is gone to?" asked the boy, after meditating in silence.

"Lord! you ought to know where the city of Christminster is. Near a score of miles from here. It is a place much too good for you ever to have much to do with, poor boy, I'm a-thinking."

"And will Mr. Phillotson always be there?"

"How can I tell?"

"Could I go to see him?"

"Lord, no! You didn't grow up hereabout, or you wouldn't ask such as that. We've never had anything to do with folk in Christminster, nor folk in Christminster with we."

Jude went out, and, feeling more than ever his existence to be an undemanded one, he lay down upon his back on a heap of litter near the pig-sty. The fog had by this time become more translucent, and the position of the sun could be seen through it. He pulled his straw hat over his face, and peered through the interstices of the plaiting at the white brightness, vaguely reflecting. Growing up brought responsibilities, he found. Events did not rhyme quite as he had thought. Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for. That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony. As you got older, and felt yourself to be at the centre of your time, and not at a point in its circumference, as you had felt when you were little, you were seized with a sort of shuddering, he perceived. All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and shook it, and warped it.

If he could only prevent himself growing up! He did not want to be a man.

Then, like the natural boy, he forgot his despondency, and sprang up. During the remainder of the morning he helped his aunt, and in the afternoon, when there was nothing more to be done, he went into the village. Here he asked a man whereabouts Christminster lay.

“Christminster? Oh, well, out by there yonder; though I’ve never bin there—not I. I’ve never had any business at such a place.”

The man pointed north-eastward, in the very direction where lay that field in which Jude had so disgraced himself. There was something unpleasant about the coincidence for the moment, but the fearsomeness of this fact rather increased his curiosity about the city. The farmer had said he was never to be seen in that field again; yet Christminster lay across it, and the path was a public one. So, stealing out of the hamlet, he descended into the same hollow which had witnessed his punishment in the morning, never swerving an inch from the path, and climbing up the long and tedious ascent on the other side till the track joined the highway by a little clump of trees. Here the ploughed land ended, and all before him was bleak open down.

### III

Not a soul was visible on the hedgeless highway, or on either side of it, and the white road seemed to ascend and diminish till it joined the sky. At the very top it was crossed at right angles by a green “ridgeway”—the Ickneild Street and original Roman road through the district. This ancient track ran east and west for many miles, and down almost to within living memory had been used for driving flocks and herds to fairs and markets. But it was now neglected and overgrown.

The boy had never before strayed so far north as this from the nestling hamlet in which he had been deposited by the carrier from a railway station southward, one dark evening some few months earlier, and till now he had had no suspicion that such a wide, flat, low-lying country lay so near at hand, under the very verge of his upland world. The whole northern semicircle between east and west, to a distance of forty or fifty miles, spread itself before him; a bluer, moister atmosphere, evidently, than that he breathed up here.

Not far from the road stood a weather-beaten old barn of reddish-grey brick and tile. It was known as the Brown House by the people of the locality. He was about to pass it when he perceived a ladder against the eaves; and the reflection that the higher he got, the further he could see, led Jude to stand and regard it. On the slope of the roof two men were repairing the tiling. He turned into the ridgeway and drew towards the barn.

When he had wistfully watched the workmen for some time he took courage, and ascended the ladder till he stood beside them.

“Well, my lad, and what may you want up here?”

“I wanted to know where the city of Christminster is, if you please.”

“Christminster is out across there, by that clump. You can see it—at least you can on a clear day. Ah, no, you can’t now.”



The other tiler, glad of any kind of diversion from the monotony of his labour, had also turned to look towards the quarter designated. "You can't often see it in weather like this," he said. "The time I've noticed it is when the sun is going down in a blaze of flame, and it looks like—I don't know what."

"The heavenly Jerusalem," suggested the serious urchin.

"Ay—though I should never ha' thought of it myself. ... But I can't see no Christminster to-day."

The boy strained his eyes also; yet neither could he see the far-off city. He descended from the barn, and abandoning Christminster with the versatility of his age he walked along the ridge-track, looking for any natural objects of interest that might lie in the banks thereabout. When he repassed the barn to go back to Marygreen he observed that the ladder was still in its place, but that the men had finished their day's work and gone away.

It was waning towards evening; there was still a faint mist, but it had cleared a little except in the damper tracts of subjacent country and along the river-courses. He thought again of Christminster, and wished, since he had come two or three miles from his aunt's house on purpose, that he could have seen for once this attractive city of which he had been told. But even if he waited here it was hardly likely that the air would clear before night. Yet he was loth to leave the spot, for the northern expanse became lost to view on retreating towards the village only a few hundred yards.

He ascended the ladder to have one more look at the point the men had designated, and perched himself on the highest rung, overlying the tiles. He might not be able to come so far as this for many days. Perhaps if he prayed, the wish to see Christminster might be forwarded. People said that, if you prayed, things sometimes came to you, even though they sometimes did not. He had read in a tract that a man who had begun to build a church, and had no money to finish it, knelt down and prayed, and the money came in by the next post. Another man tried the same experiment, and the money did not come; but he found afterwards that the breeches he knelt in were made by a wicked Jew. This was not discouraging, and turning on the ladder Jude knelt on the third rung, where, resting against those above it, he prayed that the mist might rise.

He then seated himself again, and waited. In the course of ten or fifteen minutes the thinning mist dissolved altogether from the northern horizon, as it had already done elsewhere, and about a quarter of an hour before the time of sunset the westward clouds parted, the sun's position being partially uncovered, and the beams streaming out in visible lines between two bars of slaty cloud. The boy immediately looked back in the old direction.

Some way within the limits of the stretch of landscape, points of light like the topaz gleamed. The air increased in transparency with the lapse of minutes, till the topaz points showed themselves to be the vanes, windows, wet roof slates, and other shining spots upon the spires, domes, freestone-work, and varied outlines that were faintly revealed. It was Christminster, unquestionably; either directly seen, or miraged in the peculiar atmosphere.

The spectator gazed on and on till the windows and vanes lost their shine, going out almost suddenly like extinguished candles. The vague city became veiled in mist. Turning to the west, he saw that the sun had disappeared. The foreground of the scene had grown funereally dark, and near objects put on the hues and shapes of chimaeras.

He anxiously descended the ladder, and started homewards at a run, trying not to think of giants, Herne the Hunter, Apollyon lying in wait for Christian, or of the captain with the bleeding hole in his forehead and the corpses round him that remutined every night on board the bewitched ship. He knew that he had grown out of belief in these horrors, yet he was glad when he saw the church tower and the lights in the cottage windows, even though this was not the home of his birth, and his great-aunt did not care much about him.

Inside and round about that old woman's "shop" window, with its twenty-four little panes set in lead-work, the glass of some of them oxidized with age, so that you could hardly see the poor penny articles exhibited within, and forming part of a stock which a strong man could have carried, Jude had his outer being for some long tideless time. But his dreams were as gigantic as his surroundings were small.

Through the solid barrier of cold cretaceous upland to the northward he was always beholding a gorgeous city—the fancied place he had likened to the new Jerusalem, though there was perhaps more of the painter's

imagination and less of the diamond merchant's in his dreams thereof than in those of the Apocalyptic writer. And the city acquired a tangibility, a permanence, a hold on his life, mainly from the one nucleus of fact that the man for whose knowledge and purposes he had so much reverence was actually living there; not only so, but living among the more thoughtful and mentally shining ones therein.

In sad wet seasons, though he knew it must rain at Christminster too, he could hardly believe that it rained so drearily there. Whenever he could get away from the confines of the hamlet for an hour or two, which was not often, he would steal off to the Brown House on the hill and strain his eyes persistently; sometimes to be rewarded by the sight of a dome or spire, at other times by a little smoke, which in his estimate had some of the mysticism of incense.

Then the day came when it suddenly occurred to him that if he ascended to the point of view after dark, or possibly went a mile or two further, he would see the night lights of the city. It would be necessary to come back alone, but even that consideration did not deter him, for he could throw a little manliness into his mood, no doubt.

The project was duly executed. It was not late when he arrived at the place of outlook, only just after dusk, but a black north-east sky, accompanied by a wind from the same quarter, made the occasion dark enough. He was rewarded; but what he saw was not the lamps in rows, as he had half expected. No individual light was visible, only a halo or glow-fog over-arching the place against the black heavens behind it, making the light and the city seem distant but a mile or so.

He set himself to wonder on the exact point in the glow where the schoolmaster might be—he who never communicated with anybody at Marygreen now; who was as if dead to them here. In the glow he seemed to see Phillotson promenading at ease, like one of the forms in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

He had heard that breezes travelled at the rate of ten miles an hour, and the fact now came into his mind. He parted his lips as he faced the north-east, and drew in the wind as if it were a sweet liquor.

“You,” he said, addressing the breeze caressingly “were in Christminster city between one and two hours ago, floating along the streets, pulling

round the weather-cocks, touching Mr. Phillotson's face, being breathed by him; and now you are here, breathed by me—you, the very same."

Suddenly there came along this wind something towards him—a message from the place—from some soul residing there, it seemed. Surely it was the sound of bells, the voice of the city, faint and musical, calling to him, "We are happy here!"

He had become entirely lost to his bodily situation during this mental leap, and only got back to it by a rough recalling. A few yards below the brow of the hill on which he paused a team of horses made its appearance, having reached the place by dint of half an hour's serpentine progress from the bottom of the immense declivity. They had a load of coals behind them—a fuel that could only be got into the upland by this particular route. They were accompanied by a carter, a second man, and a boy, who now kicked a large stone behind one of the wheels, and allowed the panting animals to have a long rest, while those in charge took a flagon off the load and indulged in a drink round.

They were elderly men, and had genial voices. Jude addressed them, inquiring if they had come from Christminster.

"Heaven forbid, with this load!" said they.

"The place I mean is that one yonder." He was getting so romantically attached to Christminster that, like a young lover alluding to his mistress, he felt bashful at mentioning its name again. He pointed to the light in the sky—hardly perceptible to their older eyes.

"Yes. There do seem a spot a bit brighter in the nor'-east than elsewhere, though I shouldn't ha' noticed it myself, and no doubt it med be Christminster."

Here a little book of tales which Jude had tucked up under his arm, having brought them to read on his way hither before it grew dark, slipped and fell into the road. The carter eyed him while he picked it up and straightened the leaves.

"Ah, young man," he observed, "you'd have to get your head screwed on t'other way before you could read what they read there."

"Why?" asked the boy.

"Oh, they never look at anything that folks like we can understand," the carter continued, by way of passing the time. "On'y foreign tongues used

in the days of the Tower of Babel, when no two families spoke alike. They read that sort of thing as fast as a night-hawk will whir. 'Tis all learning there—nothing but learning, except religion. And that's learning too, for I never could understand it. Yes, 'tis a serious-minded place. Not but there's wenches in the streets o' nights... You know, I suppose, that they raise pa'sons there like radishes in a bed? And though it do take—how many years, Bob?—five years to turn a lirruring hobble-de-hoy chap into a solemn preaching man with no corrupt passions, they'll do it, if it can be done, and polish un off like the workmen they be, and turn un out wi' a long face, and a long black coat and waistcoat, and a religious collar and hat, same as they used to wear in the Scriptures, so that his own mother wouldn't know un sometimes. ... There, 'tis their business, like anybody else's."

"But how should you know"

"Now don't you interrupt, my boy. Never interrupt your senyers. Move the fore hoss aside, Bobby; here's som'at coming... You must mind that I be a-talking of the college life. 'Em lives on a lofty level; there's no gainsaying it, though I myself med not think much of 'em. As we be here in our bodies on this high ground, so be they in their minds—noble-minded men enough, no doubt—some on 'em—able to earn hundreds by thinking out loud. And some on 'em be strong young fellows that can earn a'most as much in silver cups. As for music, there's beautiful music everywhere in Christminster. You med be religious, or you med not, but you can't help striking in your homely note with the rest. And there's a street in the place—the main street—that ha'n't another like it in the world. I should think I did know a little about Christminster!"

By this time the horses had recovered breath and bent to their collars again. Jude, throwing a last adoring look at the distant halo, turned and walked beside his remarkably well-informed friend, who had no objection to telling him as they moved on more yet of the city—its towers and halls and churches. The waggon turned into a cross-road, whereupon Jude thanked the carter warmly for his information, and said he only wished he could talk half as well about Christminster as he.

"Well, 'tis oonly what has come in my way," said the carter unboastfully. "I've never been there, no more than you; but I've picked up the knowledge here and there, and you be welcome to it. A-getting about

the world as I do, and mixing with all classes of society, one can't help hearing of things. A friend o' mine, that used to clane the boots at the Crozier Hotel in Christminster when he was in his prime, why, I knowed un as well as my own brother in his later years."

Jude continued his walk homeward alone, pondering so deeply that he forgot to feel timid. He suddenly grew older. It had been the yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to—for some place which he could call admirable. Should he find that place in this city if he could get there? Would it be a spot in which, without fear of farmers, or hindrance, or ridicule, he could watch and wait, and set himself to some mighty undertaking like the men of old of whom he had heard? As the halo had been to his eyes when gazing at it a quarter of an hour earlier, so was the spot mentally to him as he pursued his dark way.

"It is a city of light," he said to himself.

"The tree of knowledge grows there," he added a few steps further on.

"It is a place that teachers of men spring from and go to."

"It is what you may call a castle, manned by scholarship and religion."

After this figure he was silent a long while, till he added:

"It would just suit me."

## IV

Walking somewhat slowly by reason of his concentration, the boy—an ancient man in some phases of thought, much younger than his years in others—was overtaken by a light-footed pedestrian, whom, notwithstanding the gloom, he could perceive to be wearing an extraordinarily tall hat, a swallow-tailed coat, and a watch-chain that danced madly and threw around scintillations of sky-light as its owner swung along upon a pair of thin legs and noiseless boots. Jude, beginning to feel lonely, endeavoured to keep up with him.

“Well, my man! I’m in a hurry, so you’ll have to walk pretty fast if you keep alongside of me. Do you know who I am?”

“Yes, I think. Physician Vilbert?”

“Ah—I’m known everywhere, I see! That comes of being a public benefactor.”

Vilbert was an itinerant quack-doctor, well known to the rustic population, and absolutely unknown to anybody else, as he, indeed, took care to be, to avoid inconvenient investigations. Cottagers formed his only patients, and his Wessex-wide repute was among them alone. His position was humbler and his field more obscure than those of the quacks with capital and an organized system of advertising. He was, in fact, a survival. The distances he traversed on foot were enormous, and extended nearly the whole length and breadth of Wessex. Jude had one day seen him selling a pot of coloured lard to an old woman as a certain cure for a bad leg, the woman arranging to pay a guinea, in instalments of a shilling a fortnight, for the precious salve, which, according to the physician, could only be obtained from a particular animal which grazed on Mount Sinai, and was to be captured only at great risk to life and limb. Jude, though he already had his doubts about this gentleman’s medicines, felt him to be unquestionably a travelled personage, and one who might be a trustworthy source of information on matters not strictly professional.

“I s’pose you’ve been to Christminster, Physician?”

“I have—many times,” replied the long thin man. “That’s one of my centres.”

“It’s a wonderful city for scholarship and religion?”

“You’d say so, my boy, if you’d seen it. Why, the very sons of the old women who do the washing of the colleges can talk in Latin—not good Latin, that I admit, as a critic: dog-Latin—cat-Latin, as we used to call it in my undergraduate days.”

“And Greek?”

“Well—that’s more for the men who are in training for bishops, that they may be able to read the New Testament in the original.”

“I want to learn Latin and Greek myself.”

“A lofty desire. You must get a grammar of each tongue.”

“I mean to go to Christminster some day.”

“Whenever you do, you say that Physician Vilbert is the only proprietor of those celebrated pills that infallibly cure all disorders of the alimentary system, as well as asthma and shortness of breath. Two and threepence a box—specially licensed by the government stamp.”

“Can you get me the grammars if I promise to say it hereabout?”

“I’ll sell you mine with pleasure—those I used as a student.”

“Oh, thank you, sir!” said Jude gratefully, but in gasps, for the amazing speed of the physician’s walk kept him in a dog-trot which was giving him a stitch in the side.

“I think you’d better drop behind, my young man. Now I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll get you the grammars, and give you a first lesson, if you’ll remember, at every house in the village, to recommend Physician Vilbert’s golden ointment, life-drops, and female pills.”

“Where will you be with the grammars?”

“I shall be passing here this day fortnight at precisely this hour of five-and-twenty minutes past seven. My movements are as truly timed as those of the planets in their courses.”

“Here I’ll be to meet you,” said Jude.

“With orders for my medicines?”



“Yes, Physician.”

Jude then dropped behind, waited a few minutes to recover breath, and went home with a consciousness of having struck a blow for Christminster.

Through the intervening fortnight he ran about and smiled outwardly at his inward thoughts, as if they were people meeting and nodding to him—smiled with that singularly beautiful irradiation which is seen to spread on young faces at the inception of some glorious idea, as if a supernatural lamp were held inside their transparent natures, giving rise to the flattering fancy that heaven lies about them then.

He honestly performed his promise to the man of many cures, in whom he now sincerely believed, walking miles hither and thither among the surrounding hamlets as the Physician’s agent in advance. On the evening appointed he stood motionless on the plateau, at the place where he had parted from Vilbert, and there awaited his approach. The road-physician was fairly up to time; but, to the surprise of Jude on striking into his pace, which the pedestrian did not diminish by a single unit of force, the latter seemed hardly to recognize his young companion, though with the lapse of the fortnight the evenings had grown light. Jude thought it might perhaps be owing to his wearing another hat, and he saluted the physician with dignity.

“Well, my boy?” said the latter abstractedly.

“I’ve come,” said Jude.

“You? who are you? Oh yes—to be sure! Got any orders, lad?”

“Yes.” And Jude told him the names and addresses of the cottagers who were willing to test the virtues of the world-renowned pills and salve. The quack mentally registered these with great care.

“And the Latin and Greek grammars?” Jude’s voice trembled with anxiety.

“What about them?”

“You were to bring me yours, that you used before you took your degree.”

“Ah, yes, yes! Forgot all about it—all! So many lives depending on my attention, you see, my man, that I can’t give so much thought as I would like to other things.”

Jude controlled himself sufficiently long to make sure of the truth; and he repeated, in a voice of dry misery, "You haven't brought 'em!"

"No. But you must get me some more orders from sick people, and I'll bring the grammars next time."

Jude dropped behind. He was an unsophisticated boy, but the gift of sudden insight which is sometimes vouchsafed to children showed him all at once what shoddy humanity the quack was made of. There was to be no intellectual light from this source. The leaves dropped from his imaginary crown of laurel; he turned to a gate, leant against it, and cried bitterly.

The disappointment was followed by an interval of blankness. He might, perhaps, have obtained grammars from Alfredston, but to do that required money, and a knowledge of what books to order; and though physically comfortable, he was in such absolute dependence as to be without a farthing of his own.

At this date Mr. Phillotson sent for his pianoforte, and it gave Jude a lead. Why should he not write to the schoolmaster, and ask him to be so kind as to get him the grammars in Christminster? He might slip a letter inside the case of the instrument, and it would be sure to reach the desired eyes. Why not ask him to send any old second-hand copies, which would have the charm of being mellowed by the university atmosphere?

To tell his aunt of his intention would be to defeat it. It was necessary to act alone.

After a further consideration of a few days he did act, and on the day of the piano's departure, which happened to be his next birthday, clandestinely placed the letter inside the packing-case, directed to his much-admired friend, being afraid to reveal the operation to his aunt Drusilla, lest she should discover his motive, and compel him to abandon his scheme.

The piano was despatched, and Jude waited days and weeks, calling every morning at the cottage post office before his great-aunt was stirring. At last a packet did indeed arrive at the village, and he saw from the ends of it that it contained two thin books. He took it away into a lonely place, and sat down on a felled elm to open it.

Ever since his first ecstasy or vision of Christminster and its possibilities, Jude had meditated much and curiously on the probable sort

of process that was involved in turning the expressions of one language into those of another. He concluded that a grammar of the required tongue would contain, primarily, a rule, prescription, or clue of the nature of a secret cipher, which, once known, would enable him, by merely applying it, to change at will all words of his own speech into those of the foreign one. His childish idea was, in fact, a pushing to the extremity of mathematical precision what is everywhere known as Grimm's Law—an aggrandizement of rough rules to ideal completeness. Thus he assumed that the words of the required language were always to be found somewhere latent in the words of the given language by those who had the art to uncover them, such art being furnished by the books aforesaid.

When, therefore, having noted that the packet bore the postmark of Christminster, he cut the string, opened the volumes, and turned to the Latin grammar, which chanced to come uppermost, he could scarcely believe his eyes.

The book was an old one—thirty years old, soiled, scribbled wantonly over with a strange name in every variety of enmity to the letterpress, and marked at random with dates twenty years earlier than his own day. But this was not the cause of Jude's amazement. He learnt for the first time that there was no law of transmutation, as in his innocence he had supposed (there was, in some degree, but the grammarian did not recognize it), but that every word in both Latin and Greek was to be individually committed to memory at the cost of years of plodding.

Jude flung down the books, lay backward along the broad trunk of the elm, and was an utterly miserable boy for the space of a quarter of an hour. As he had often done before, he pulled his hat over his face and watched the sun peering insidiously at him through the interstices of the straw. This was Latin and Greek, then, was it this grand delusion! The charm he had supposed in store for him was really a labour like that of Israel in Egypt.

What brains they must have in Christminster and the great schools, he presently thought, to learn words one by one up to tens of thousands! There were no brains in his head equal to this business; and as the little sun-rays continued to stream in through his hat at him, he wished he had never seen a book, that he might never see another, that he had never been born.

Somebody might have come along that way who would have asked him his trouble, and might have cheered him by saying that his notions were further advanced than those of his grammarian. But nobody did come, because nobody does; and under the crushing recognition of his gigantic error Jude continued to wish himself out of the world.

## V

During the three or four succeeding years a quaint and singular vehicle might have been discerned moving along the lanes and by-roads near Marygreen, driven in a quaint and singular way.

In the course of a month or two after the receipt of the books Jude had grown callous to the shabby trick played him by the dead languages. In fact, his disappointment at the nature of those tongues had, after a while, been the means of still further glorifying the erudition of Christminster. To acquire languages, departed or living in spite of such obstinacies as he now knew them inherently to possess, was a herculean performance which gradually led him on to a greater interest in it than in the presupposed patent process. The mountain-weight of material under which the ideas lay in those dusty volumes called the classics piqued him into a dogged, mouselike subtlety of attempt to move it piecemeal.

He had endeavoured to make his presence tolerable to his crusty maiden aunt by assisting her to the best of his ability, and the business of the little cottage bakery had grown in consequence. An aged horse with a hanging head had been purchased for eight pounds at a sale, a creaking cart with a whity-brown tilt obtained for a few pounds more, and in this turn-out it became Jude's business thrice a week to carry loaves of bread to the villagers and solitary cotters immediately round Marygreen.

The singularity aforesaid lay, after all, less in the conveyance itself than in Jude's manner of conducting it along its route. Its interior was the scene of most of Jude's education by "private study." As soon as the horse had learnt the road and the houses at which he was to pause awhile, the boy, seated in front, would slip the reins over his arm, ingeniously fix open, by means of a strap attached to the tilt, the volume he was reading, spread the dictionary on his knees, and plunge into the simpler passages from Caesar, Virgil, or Horace, as the case might be, in his purblind stumbling way, and with an expenditure of labour that would have made a tender-hearted pedagogue shed tears; yet somehow getting at the meaning of what he

read, and divining rather than beholding the spirit of the original, which often to his mind was something else than that which he was taught to look for.

The only copies he had been able to lay hands on were old Delphin editions, because they were superseded, and therefore cheap. But, bad for idle schoolboys, it did so happen that they were passably good for him. The hampered and lonely itinerant conscientiously covered up the marginal readings, and used them merely on points of construction, as he would have used a comrade or tutor who should have happened to be passing by. And though Jude may have had little chance of becoming a scholar by these rough and ready means, he was in the way of getting into the groove he wished to follow.

While he was busied with these ancient pages, which had already been thumbed by hands possibly in the grave, digging out the thoughts of these minds so remote yet so near, the bony old horse pursued his rounds, and Jude would be aroused from the woes of Dido by the stoppage of his cart and the voice of some old woman crying, "Two to-day, baker, and I return this stale one."

He was frequently met in the lanes by pedestrians and others without his seeing them, and by degrees the people of the neighbourhood began to talk about his method of combining work and play (such they considered his reading to be), which, though probably convenient enough to himself, was not altogether a safe proceeding for other travellers along the same roads. There were murmurs. Then a private resident of an adjoining place informed the local policeman that the baker's boy should not be allowed to read while driving, and insisted that it was the constable's duty to catch him in the act, and take him to the police court at Alfredston, and get him fined for dangerous practices on the highway. The policeman thereupon lay in wait for Jude, and one day accosted him and cautioned him.

As Jude had to get up at three o'clock in the morning to heat the oven, and mix and set in the bread that he distributed later in the day, he was obliged to go to bed at night immediately after laying the sponge; so that if he could not read his classics on the highways he could hardly study at all. The only thing to be done was, therefore, to keep a sharp eye ahead and around him as well as he could in the circumstances, and slip away his books as soon as anybody loomed in the distance, the policeman in

particular. To do that official justice, he did not put himself much in the way of Jude's bread-cart, considering that in such a lonely district the chief danger was to Jude himself, and often on seeing the white tilt over the hedges he would move in another direction.

On a day when Fawley was getting quite advanced, being now about sixteen, and had been stumbling through the "Carmen Sæculare," on his way home, he found himself to be passing over the high edge of the plateau by the Brown House. The light had changed, and it was the sense of this which had caused him to look up. The sun was going down, and the full moon was rising simultaneously behind the woods in the opposite quarter. His mind had become so impregnated with the poem that, in a moment of the same impulsive emotion which years before had caused him to kneel on the ladder, he stopped the horse, alighted, and glancing round to see that nobody was in sight, knelt down on the roadside bank with open book. He turned first to the shiny goddess, who seemed to look so softly and critically at his doings, then to the disappearing luminary on the other hand, as he began:

"Phœbe silvarumque potens Diana!"

The horse stood still till he had finished the hymn, which Jude repeated under the sway of a polytheistic fancy that he would never have thought of humouring in broad daylight.

Reaching home, he mused over his curious superstition, innate or acquired, in doing this, and the strange forgetfulness which had led to such a lapse from common sense and custom in one who wished, next to being a scholar, to be a Christian divine. It had all come of reading heathen works exclusively. The more he thought of it the more convinced he was of his inconsistency. He began to wonder whether he could be reading quite the right books for his object in life. Certainly there seemed little harmony between this pagan literature and the mediæval colleges at Christminster, that ecclesiastical romance in stone.

Ultimately he decided that in his sheer love of reading he had taken up a wrong emotion for a Christian young man. He had dabbled in Clarke's Homer, but had never yet worked much at the New Testament in the Greek, though he possessed a copy, obtained by post from a second-hand bookseller. He abandoned the now familiar Ionic for a new dialect, and for

a long time onward limited his reading almost entirely to the Gospels and Epistles in Griesbach's text. Moreover, on going into Alfredston one day, he was introduced to patristic literature by finding at the bookseller's some volumes of the Fathers which had been left behind by an insolvent clergyman of the neighbourhood.

As another outcome of this change of groove he visited on Sundays all the churches within a walk, and deciphered the Latin inscriptions on fifteenth-century brasses and tombs. On one of these pilgrimages he met with a hunch-backed old woman of great intelligence, who read everything she could lay her hands on, and she told him more yet of the romantic charms of the city of light and lore. Thither he resolved as firmly as ever to go.

But how live in that city? At present he had no income at all. He had no trade or calling of any dignity or stability whatever on which he could subsist while carrying out an intellectual labour which might spread over many years.

What was most required by citizens? Food, clothing, and shelter. An income from any work in preparing the first would be too meagre; for making the second he felt a distaste; the preparation of the third requisite he inclined to. They built in a city; therefore he would learn to build. He thought of his unknown uncle, his cousin Susanna's father, an ecclesiastical worker in metal, and somehow mediæval art in any material was a trade for which he had rather a fancy. He could not go far wrong in following his uncle's footsteps, and engaging himself awhile with the carcasses that contained the scholar souls.

As a preliminary he obtained some small blocks of freestone, metal not being available, and suspending his studies awhile, occupied his spare half-hours in copying the heads and capitals in his parish church.

There was a stone-mason of a humble kind in Alfredston, and as soon as he had found a substitute for himself in his aunt's little business, he offered his services to this man for a trifling wage. Here Jude had the opportunity of learning at least the rudiments of freestone-working. Some time later he went to a church-builder in the same place, and under the architect's direction became handy at restoring the dilapidated masonries of several village churches round about.



Not forgetting that he was only following up this handicraft as a prop to lean on while he prepared those greater engines which he flattered himself would be better fitted for him, he yet was interested in his pursuit on its own account. He now had lodgings during the week in the little town, whence he returned to Marygreen village every Saturday evening. And thus he reached and passed his nineteenth year.

## VI

At this memorable date of his life he was, one Saturday, returning from Alfredston to Marygreen about three o'clock in the afternoon. It was fine, warm, and soft summer weather, and he walked with his tools at his back, his little chisels clinking faintly against the larger ones in his basket. It being the end of the week he had left work early, and had come out of the town by a round-about route which he did not usually frequent, having promised to call at a flour-mill near Cresscombe to execute a commission for his aunt.

He was in an enthusiastic mood. He seemed to see his way to living comfortably in Christminster in the course of a year or two, and knocking at the doors of one of those strongholds of learning of which he had dreamed so much. He might, of course, have gone there now, in some capacity or other, but he preferred to enter the city with a little more assurance as to means than he could be said to feel at present. A warm self-content suffused him when he considered what he had already done. Now and then as he went along he turned to face the peeps of country on either side of him. But he hardly saw them; the act was an automatic repetition of what he had been accustomed to do when less occupied; and the one matter which really engaged him was the mental estimate of his progress thus far.

“I have acquired quite an average student's power to read the common ancient classics, Latin in particular.” This was true, Jude possessing a facility in that language which enabled him with great ease to himself to beguile his lonely walks by imaginary conversations therein.

“I have read two books of the *Iliad*, besides being pretty familiar with passages such as the speech of Phoenix in the ninth book, the fight of Hector and Ajax in the fourteenth, the appearance of Achilles unarmed and his heavenly armour in the eighteenth, and the funeral games in the twenty-third. I have also done some Hesiod, a little scrap of Thucydides,

and a lot of the Greek Testament... I wish there was only one dialect all the same.

“I have done some mathematics, including the first six and the eleventh and twelfth books of Euclid; and algebra as far as simple equations.

“I know something of the Fathers, and something of Roman and English history.

“These things are only a beginning. But I shall not make much farther advance here, from the difficulty of getting books. Hence I must next concentrate all my energies on settling in Christminster. Once there I shall so advance, with the assistance I shall there get, that my present knowledge will appear to me but as childish ignorance. I must save money, and I will; and one of those colleges shall open its doors to me—shall welcome whom now it would spurn, if I wait twenty years for the welcome.

“I’ll be D.D. before I have done!”

And then he continued to dream, and thought he might become even a bishop by leading a pure, energetic, wise, Christian life. And what an example he would set! If his income were £5000 a year, he would give away £4500 in one form and another, and live sumptuously (for him) on the remainder. Well, on second thoughts, a bishop was absurd. He would draw the line at an archdeacon. Perhaps a man could be as good and as learned and as useful in the capacity of archdeacon as in that of bishop. Yet he thought of the bishop again.

“Meanwhile I will read, as soon as I am settled in Christminster, the books I have not been able to get hold of here: Livy, Tacitus, Herodotus, Æschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes—”

“Ha, ha, ha! Hoity-toity!” The sounds were expressed in light voices on the other side of the hedge, but he did not notice them. His thoughts went on:

“—Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Lucretius, Epictetus, Seneca, Antoninus. Then I must master other things: the Fathers thoroughly; Bede and ecclesiastical history generally; a smattering of Hebrew—I only know the letters as yet—”

“Hoity-toity!”

“—but I can work hard. I have staying power in abundance, thank God! and it is that which tells... Yes, Christminster shall be my Alma Mater; and I'll be her beloved son, in whom she shall be well pleased.”

In his deep concentration on these transactions of the future Jude's walk had slackened, and he was now standing quite still, looking at the ground as though the future were thrown thereon by a magic lantern. On a sudden something smacked him sharply in the ear, and he became aware that a soft cold substance had been flung at him, and had fallen at his feet.

A glance told him what it was—a piece of flesh, the characteristic part of a barrow-pig, which the countrymen used for greasing their boots, as it was useless for any other purpose. Pigs were rather plentiful hereabout, being bred and fattened in large numbers in certain parts of North Wessex.

On the other side of the hedge was a stream, whence, as he now for the first time realized, had come the slight sounds of voices and laughter that had mingled with his dreams. He mounted the bank and looked over the fence. On the further side of the stream stood a small homestead, having a garden and pig-sties attached; in front of it, beside the brook, three young women were kneeling, with buckets and platters beside them containing heaps of pigs' chitterlings, which they were washing in the running water. One or two pairs of eyes slyly glanced up, and perceiving that his attention had at last been attracted, and that he was watching them, they braced themselves for inspection by putting their mouths demurely into shape and recommencing their rinsing operations with assiduity.

“Thank you!” said Jude severely.

“I *didn't* throw it, I tell you!” asserted one girl to her neighbour, as if unconscious of the young man's presence.

“Nor I,” the second answered.

“Oh, Anny, how can you!” said the third.

“If I had thrown anything at all, it shouldn't have been *that!*”

“Pooh! I don't care for him!” And they laughed and continued their work, without looking up, still ostentatiously accusing each other.

Jude grew sarcastic as he wiped his face, and caught their remarks.

“*You* didn't do it—oh no!” he said to the up-stream one of the three.

She whom he addressed was a fine dark-eyed girl, not exactly handsome, but capable of passing as such at a little distance, despite some coarseness of skin and fibre. She had a round and prominent bosom, full lips, perfect teeth, and the rich complexion of a Cochin hen's egg. She was a complete and substantial female animal—no more, no less; and Jude was almost certain that to her was attributable the enterprise of attracting his attention from dreams of the humaner letters to what was simmering in the minds around him.

“That you'll never be told,” said she deedly.

“Whoever did it was wasteful of other people's property.”

“Oh, that's nothing.”

“But you want to speak to me, I suppose?”

“Oh yes; if you like to.”

“Shall I clamber across, or will you come to the plank above here?”

Perhaps she foresaw an opportunity; for somehow or other the eyes of the brown girl rested in his own when he had said the words, and there was a momentary flash of intelligence, a dumb announcement of affinity *in posse* between herself and him, which, so far as Jude Fawley was concerned, had no sort of premeditation in it. She saw that he had singled her out from the three, as a woman is singled out in such cases, for no reasoned purpose of further acquaintance, but in commonplace obedience to conjunctive orders from headquarters, unconsciously received by unfortunate men when the last intention of their lives is to be occupied with the feminine.

Springing to her feet, she said: “Bring back what is lying there.”

Jude was now aware that no message on any matter connected with her father's business had prompted her signal to him. He set down his basket of tools, picked up the scrap of offal, beat a pathway for himself with his stick, and got over the hedge. They walked in parallel lines, one on each bank of the stream, towards the small plank bridge. As the girl drew nearer to it, she gave without Jude perceiving it, an adroit little suck to the interior of each of her cheeks in succession, by which curious and original manœuvre she brought as by magic upon its smooth and rotund surface a perfect dimple, which she was able to retain there as long as she continued

to smile. This production of dimples at will was a not unknown operation, which many attempted, but only a few succeeded in accomplishing.

They met in the middle of the plank, and Jude, tossing back her missile, seemed to expect her to explain why she had audaciously stopped him by this novel artillery instead of by hailing him.

But she, slyly looking in another direction, swayed herself backwards and forwards on her hand as it clutched the rail of the bridge; till, moved by amatory curiosity, she turned her eyes critically upon him.

“You don’t think *I* would shy things at you?”

“Oh no.”

“We are doing this for my father, who naturally doesn’t want anything thrown away. He makes that into dubbin.” She nodded towards the fragment on the grass.

“What made either of the others throw it, I wonder?” Jude asked, politely accepting her assertion, though he had very large doubts as to its truth.

“Impudence. Don’t tell folk it was I, mind!”

“How can I? I don’t know your name.”

“Ah, no. Shall I tell it to you?”

“Do!”

“Arabella Donn. I’m living here.”

“I must have known it if I had often come this way. But I mostly go straight along the high-road.”

“My father is a pig-breeder, and these girls are helping me wash the innerds for black-puddings and such like.”

They talked a little more and a little more, as they stood regarding each other and leaning against the hand-rail of the bridge. The unvoiced call of woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella’s personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention—almost against his will, and in a way new to his experience. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that till this moment Jude had never looked at a woman to consider her as such, but had vaguely regarded the sex as beings outside his life and purposes. He gazed from her eyes to her mouth, thence to her bosom, and

to her full round naked arms, wet, mottled with the chill of the water, and firm as marble.

“What a nice-looking girl you are!” he murmured, though the words had not been necessary to express his sense of her magnetism.

“Ah, you should see me Sundays!” she said piquantly.

“I don’t suppose I could?” he answered

“That’s for you to think on. There’s nobody after me just now, though there med be in a week or two.” She had spoken this without a smile, and the dimples disappeared.

Jude felt himself drifting strangely, but could not help it. “Will you let me?”

“I don’t mind.”

By this time she had managed to get back one dimple by turning her face aside for a moment and repeating the odd little sucking operation before mentioned, Jude being still unconscious of more than a general impression of her appearance. “Next Sunday?” he hazarded. “To-morrow, that is?”

“Yes.”

“Shall I call?”

“Yes.”

She brightened with a little glow of triumph, swept him almost tenderly with her eyes in turning, and retracing her steps down the brookside grass rejoined her companions.

Jude Fawley shouldered his tool-basket and resumed his lonely way, filled with an ardour at which he mentally stood at gaze. He had just inhaled a single breath from a new atmosphere, which had evidently been hanging round him everywhere he went, for he knew not how long, but had somehow been divided from his actual breathing as by a sheet of glass. The intentions as to reading, working, and learning, which he had so precisely formulated only a few minutes earlier, were suffering a curious collapse into a corner, he knew not how.

“Well, it’s only a bit of fun,” he said to himself, faintly conscious that to common sense there was something lacking, and still more obviously something redundant in the nature of this girl who had drawn him to her

which made it necessary that he should assert mere sportiveness on his part as his reason in seeking her—something in her quite antipathetic to that side of him which had been occupied with literary study and the magnificent Christminster dream. It had been no vestal who chose *that* missile for opening her attack on him. He saw this with his intellectual eye, just for a short fleeting while, as by the light of a falling lamp one might momentarily see an inscription on a wall before being enshrouded in darkness. And then this passing discriminative power was withdrawn, and Jude was lost to all conditions of things in the advent of a fresh and wild pleasure, that of having found a new channel for emotional interest hitherto unsuspected, though it had lain close beside him. He was to meet this enkindling one of the other sex on the following Sunday.

Meanwhile the girl had joined her companions, and she silently resumed her flicking and sousing of the chitterlings in the pellucid stream.

“Caught un, my dear?” laconically asked the girl called Anny.

“I don’t know. I wish I had thrown something else than that!” regretfully murmured Arabella.

“Lord! he’s nobody, though you med think so. He used to drive old Drusilla Fawley’s bread-cart out at Marygreen, till he ’prenticed himself at Alfredston. Since then he’s been very stuck up, and always reading. He wants to be a scholar, they say.”

“Oh, I don’t care what he is, or anything about ’n. Don’t you think it, my child!”

“Oh, don’t ye! You needn’t try to deceive us! What did you stay talking to him for, if you didn’t want un? Whether you do or whether you don’t, he’s as simple as a child. I could see it as you courted on the bridge, when he looked at ’ee as if he had never seen a woman before in his born days. Well, he’s to be had by any woman who can get him to care for her a bit, if she likes to set herself to catch him the right way.”



## VII

The next day Jude Fawley was pausing in his bedroom with the sloping ceiling, looking at the books on the table, and then at the black mark on the plaster above them, made by the smoke of his lamp in past months.

It was Sunday afternoon, four-and-twenty hours after his meeting with Arabella Donn. During the whole bygone week he had been resolving to set this afternoon apart for a special purpose,—the re-reading of his Greek Testament—his new one, with better type than his old copy, following Griesbach's text as amended by numerous correctors, and with variorum readings in the margin. He was proud of the book, having obtained it by boldly writing to its London publisher, a thing he had never done before.

He had anticipated much pleasure in this afternoon's reading, under the quiet roof of his great-aunt's house as formerly, where he now slept only two nights a week. But a new thing, a great hitch, had happened yesterday in the gliding and noiseless current of his life, and he felt as a snake must feel who has sloughed off its winter skin, and cannot understand the brightness and sensitiveness of its new one.

He would not go out to meet her, after all. He sat down, opened the book, and with his elbows firmly planted on the table, and his hands to his temples, began at the beginning:

### **Ἡ ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ.**

Had he promised to call for her? Surely he had! She would wait indoors, poor girl, and waste all her afternoon on account of him. There was a something in her, too, which was very winning, apart from promises. He ought not to break faith with her. Even though he had only Sundays and week-day evenings for reading he could afford one afternoon, seeing that other young men afforded so many. After to-day he would never probably see her again. Indeed, it would be impossible, considering what his plans were.

In short, as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him—something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto. This seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions, and moved him along, as a violent schoolmaster a schoolboy he has seized by the collar, in a direction which tended towards the embrace of a woman for whom he had no respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality.

H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ was no more heeded, and the predestinate Jude sprang up and across the room. Foreseeing such an event he had already arrayed himself in his best clothes. In three minutes he was out of the house and descending by the path across the wide vacant hollow of corn-ground which lay between the village and the isolated house of Arabella in the dip beyond the upland.

As he walked he looked at his watch. He could be back in two hours, easily, and a good long time would still remain to him for reading after tea.

Passing the few unhealthy fir-trees and cottage where the path joined the highway he hastened along, and struck away to the left, descending the steep side of the country to the west of the Brown House. Here at the base of the chalk formation he neared the brook that oozed from it, and followed the stream till he reached her dwelling. A smell of piggeries came from the back, and the grunting of the originators of that smell. He entered the garden, and knocked at the door with the knob of his stick.

Somebody had seen him through the window, for a male voice on the inside said:

“Arabella! Here’s your young man come coorting! Mizzle, my girl!”

Jude winced at the words. Courting in such a businesslike aspect as it evidently wore to the speaker was the last thing he was thinking of. He was going to walk with her, perhaps kiss her; but “courting” was too coolly purposeful to be anything but repugnant to his ideas. The door was opened and he entered, just as Arabella came downstairs in radiant walking attire.

“Take a chair, Mr. What’s-your-name?” said her father, an energetic, black-whiskered man, in the same businesslike tones Jude had heard from outside.

“I’d rather go out at once, wouldn’t you?” she whispered to Jude.

“Yes,” said he. “We’ll walk up to the Brown House and back, we can do it in half an hour.”

Arabella looked so handsome amid her untidy surroundings that he felt glad he had come, and all the misgivings vanished that had hitherto haunted him.

First they clambered to the top of the great down, during which ascent he had occasionally to take her hand to assist her. Then they bore off to the left along the crest into the ridgeway, which they followed till it intersected the high-road at the Brown House aforesaid, the spot of his former fervid desires to behold Christminster. But he forgot them now. He talked the commonest local twaddle to Arabella with greater zest than he would have felt in discussing all the philosophies with all the Dons in the recently adored university, and passed the spot where he had knelt to Diana and Phœbus without remembering that there were any such people in the mythology, or that the sun was anything else than a useful lamp for illuminating Arabella’s face. An indescribable lightness of heel served to lift him along; and Jude, the incipient scholar, prospective D.D., professor, bishop, or what not, felt himself honoured and glorified by the condescension of this handsome country wench in agreeing to take a walk with him in her Sunday frock and ribbons.

They reached the Brown House barn—the point at which he had planned to turn back. While looking over the vast northern landscape from this spot they were struck by the rising of a dense volume of smoke from the neighbourhood of the little town which lay beneath them at a distance of a couple of miles.

“It is a fire,” said Arabella. “Let’s run and see it—do! It is not far!”

The tenderness which had grown up in Jude’s bosom left him no will to thwart her inclination now—which pleased him in affording him excuse for a longer time with her. They started off down the hill almost at a trot; but on gaining level ground at the bottom, and walking a mile, they found that the spot of the fire was much further off than it had seemed.

Having begun their journey, however, they pushed on; but it was not till five o’clock that they found themselves on the scene,—the distance being altogether about half-a-dozen miles from Marygreen, and three from Arabella’s. The conflagration had been got under by the time they reached

it, and after a short inspection of the melancholy ruins they retraced their steps—their course lying through the town of Alfredston.

Arabella said she would like some tea, and they entered an inn of an inferior class, and gave their order. As it was not for beer they had a long time to wait. The maid-servant recognized Jude, and whispered her surprise to her mistress in the background, that he, the student “who kept himself up so particular,” should have suddenly descended so low as to keep company with Arabella. The latter guessed what was being said, and laughed as she met the serious and tender gaze of her lover—the low and triumphant laugh of a careless woman who sees she is winning her game.

They sat and looked round the room, and at the picture of Samson and Delilah which hung on the wall, and at the circular beer-stains on the table, and at the spittoons underfoot filled with sawdust. The whole aspect of the scene had that depressing effect on Jude which few places can produce like a tap-room on a Sunday evening when the setting sun is slanting in, and no liquor is going, and the unfortunate wayfarer finds himself with no other haven of rest.

It began to grow dusk. They could not wait longer, really, for the tea, they said. “Yet what else can we do?” asked Jude. “It is a three-mile walk for you.”

“I suppose we can have some beer,” said Arabella.

“Beer, oh yes. I had forgotten that. Somehow it seems odd to come to a public-house for beer on a Sunday evening.”

“But we didn’t.”

“No, we didn’t.” Jude by this time wished he was out of such an uncongenial atmosphere; but he ordered the beer, which was promptly brought.

Arabella tasted it. “Ugh!” she said.

Jude tasted. “What’s the matter with it?” he asked. “I don’t understand beer very much now, it is true. I like it well enough, but it is bad to read on, and I find coffee better. But this seems all right.”

“Adulterated—I can’t touch it!” She mentioned three or four ingredients that she detected in the liquor beyond malt and hops, much to Jude’s surprise.

“How much you know!” he said good-humouredly.

Nevertheless she returned to the beer and drank her share, and they went on their way. It was now nearly dark, and as soon as they had withdrawn from the lights of the town they walked closer together, till they touched each other. She wondered why he did not put his arm round her waist, but he did not; he merely said what to himself seemed a quite bold enough thing: "Take my arm."

She took it, thoroughly, up to the shoulder. He felt the warmth of her body against his, and putting his stick under his other arm held with his right hand her right as it rested in its place.

"Now we are well together, dear, aren't we?" he observed.

"Yes," said she; adding to herself: "Rather mild!"

"How fast I have become!" he was thinking.

Thus they walked till they reached the foot of the upland, where they could see the white highway ascending before them in the gloom. From this point the only way of getting to Arabella's was by going up the incline, and dipping again into her valley on the right. Before they had climbed far they were nearly run into by two men who had been walking on the grass unseen.

"These lovers—you find 'em out o' doors in all seasons and weathers—lovers and homeless dogs only," said one of the men as they vanished down the hill.

Arabella tittered lightly.

"Are we lovers?" asked Jude.

"You know best."

"But you can tell me?"

For answer she inclined her head upon his shoulder. Jude took the hint, and encircling her waist with his arm, pulled her to him and kissed her.

They walked now no longer arm in arm but, as she had desired, clasped together. After all, what did it matter since it was dark, said Jude to himself. When they were half-way up the long hill they paused as by arrangement, and he kissed her again. They reached the top, and he kissed her once more.

"You can keep your arm there, if you would like to," she said gently.

He did so, thinking how trusting she was.

Thus they slowly went towards her home. He had left his cottage at half-past three, intending to be sitting down again to the New Testament by half-past five. It was nine o'clock when, with another embrace, he stood to deliver her up at her father's door.

She asked him to come in, if only for a minute, as it would seem so odd otherwise, and as if she had been out alone in the dark. He gave way, and followed her in. Immediately that the door was opened he found, in addition to her parents, several neighbours sitting round. They all spoke in a congratulatory manner, and took him seriously as Arabella's intended partner.

They did not belong to his set or circle, and he felt out of place and embarrassed. He had not meant this: a mere afternoon of pleasant walking with Arabella, that was all he had meant. He did not stay longer than to speak to her stepmother, a simple, quiet woman without features or character; and bidding them all good night plunged with a sense of relief into the track over the down.

But that sense was only temporary: Arabella soon re-asserted her sway in his soul. He walked as if he felt himself to be another man from the Jude of yesterday. What were his books to him? what were his intentions, hitherto adhered to so strictly, as to not wasting a single minute of time day by day? "Wasting!" It depended on your point of view to define that: he was just living for the first time: not wasting life. It was better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson; ay, or a pope!

When he got back to the house his aunt had gone to bed, and a general consciousness of his neglect seemed written on the face of all things confronting him. He went upstairs without a light, and the dim interior of his room accosted him with sad inquiry. There lay his book open, just as he had left it, and the capital letters on the title-page regarded him with fixed reproach in the grey starlight, like the unclosed eyes of a dead man:

**H KAINH ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ.**

\* \* \* \* \*

Jude had to leave early next morning for his usual week of absence at lodgings; and it was with a sense of futility that he threw into his basket upon his tools and other necessaries the unread book he had brought with him.

He kept his impassioned doings a secret almost from himself. Arabella, on the contrary, made them public among all her friends and acquaintances.

Retracing by the light of dawn the road he had followed a few hours earlier under cover of darkness, with his sweetheart by his side, he reached the bottom of the hill, where he walked slowly, and stood still. He was on the spot where he had given her the first kiss. As the sun had only just risen it was possible that nobody had passed there since. Jude looked on the ground and sighed. He looked closely, and could just discern in the damp dust the imprints of their feet as they had stood locked in each other's arms. She was not there now, and "the embroidery of imagination upon the stuff of nature" so depicted her past presence that a void was in his heart which nothing could fill. A pollard willow stood close to the place, and that willow was different from all other willows in the world. Utter annihilation of the six days which must elapse before he could see her again as he had promised would have been his intensest wish if he had had only the week to live.

An hour and a half later Arabella came along the same way with her two companions of the Saturday. She passed unheeding the scene of the kiss, and the willow that marked it, though chattering freely on the subject to the other two.

"And what did he tell 'ee next?"

"Then he said—" And she related almost word for word some of his tenderest speeches. If Jude had been behind the fence he would have felt not a little surprised at learning how very few of his sayings and doings on the previous evening were private.

"You've got him to care for 'ee a bit, 'nation if you han't!" murmured Anny judicially. "It's well to be you!"

In a few moments Arabella replied in a curiously low, hungry tone of latent sensuousness: "I've got him to care for me: yes! But I want him to more than care for me; I want him to have me—to marry me! I must have him. I can't do without him. He's the sort of man I long for. I shall go mad

if I can't give myself to him altogether! I felt I should when I first saw him!"

"As he is a romancing, straightfor'ard, honest chap, he's to be had, and as a husband, if you set about catching him in the right way."

Arabella remained thinking awhile. "What med be the right way?" she asked.

"Oh you don't know—you don't!" said Sarah, the third girl.

"On my word I don't!—No further, that is, than by plain courting, and taking care he don't go too far!"

The third girl looked at the second. "She *don't* know!"

"'Tis clear she don't!" said Anny.

"And having lived in a town, too, as one may say! Well, we can teach 'ee som'at then, as well as you us."

"Yes. And how do you mean—a sure way to gain a man? Take me for an innocent, and have done wi' it!"

"As a husband."

"As a husband."

"A countryman that's honourable and serious-minded such as he; God forbid that I should say a sojer, or sailor, or commercial gent from the towns, or any of them that be slippery with poor women! I'd do no friend that harm!"

"Well, such as he, of course!"

Arabella's companions looked at each other, and turning up their eyes in drollery began smirking. Then one went up close to Arabella, and, although nobody was near, imparted some information in a low tone, the other observing curiously the effect upon Arabella.

"Ah!" said the last-named slowly. "I own I didn't think of that way! ... But suppose he *isn't* honourable? A woman had better not have tried it!"

"Nothing venture nothing have! Besides, you make sure that he's honourable before you begin. You'd be safe enough with yours. I wish I had the chance! Lots of girls do it; or do you think they'd get married at all?"

Arabella pursued her way in silent thought. "I'll try it!" she whispered; but not to them.



## VIII

One week's end Jude was as usual walking out to his aunt's at Marygreen from his lodging in Alfredston, a walk which now had large attractions for him quite other than his desire to see his aged and morose relative. He diverged to the right before ascending the hill with the single purpose of gaining, on his way, a glimpse of Arabella that should not come into the reckoning of regular appointments. Before quite reaching the homestead his alert eye perceived the top of her head moving quickly hither and thither over the garden hedge. Entering the gate he found that three young unfattened pigs had escaped from their sty by leaping clean over the top, and that she was endeavouring unassisted to drive them in through the door which she had set open. The lines of her countenance changed from the rigidity of business to the softness of love when she saw Jude, and she bent her eyes languishingly upon him. The animals took advantage of the pause by doubling and bolting out of the way.

"They were only put in this morning!" she cried, stimulated to pursue in spite of her lover's presence. "They were drove from Spaddleholt Farm only yesterday, where Father bought 'em at a stiff price enough. They are wanting to get home again, the stupid toads! Will you shut the garden gate, dear, and help me to get 'em in. There are no men folk at home, only Mother, and they'll be lost if we don't mind."

He set himself to assist, and dodged this way and that over the potato rows and the cabbages. Every now and then they ran together, when he caught her for a moment and kissed her. The first pig was got back promptly; the second with some difficulty; the third a long-legged creature, was more obstinate and agile. He plunged through a hole in the garden hedge, and into the lane.

"He'll be lost if I don't follow 'n!" said she. "Come along with me!"

She rushed in full pursuit out of the garden, Jude alongside her, barely contriving to keep the fugitive in sight. Occasionally they would shout to

some boy to stop the animal, but he always wriggled past and ran on as before.

“Let me take your hand, darling,” said Jude. “You are getting out of breath.” She gave him her now hot hand with apparent willingness, and they trotted along together.

“This comes of driving ’em home,” she remarked. “They always know the way back if you do that. They ought to have been carted over.”

By this time the pig had reached an unfastened gate admitting to the open down, across which he sped with all the agility his little legs afforded. As soon as the pursuers had entered and ascended to the top of the high ground it became apparent that they would have to run all the way to the farmer’s if they wished to get at him. From this summit he could be seen as a minute speck, following an unerring line towards his old home.

“It is no good!” cried Arabella. “He’ll be there long before we get there. It don’t matter now we know he’s not lost or stolen on the way. They’ll see it is ours, and send un back. Oh dear, how hot I be!”

Without relinquishing her hold of Jude’s hand she swerved aside and flung herself down on the sod under a stunted thorn, precipitately pulling Jude on to his knees at the same time.

“Oh, I ask pardon—I nearly threw you down, didn’t I! But I am so tired!”

She lay supine, and straight as an arrow, on the sloping sod of this hill-top, gazing up into the blue miles of sky, and still retaining her warm hold of Jude’s hand. He reclined on his elbow near her.

“We’ve run all this way for nothing,” she went on, her form heaving and falling in quick pants, her face flushed, her full red lips parted, and a fine dew of perspiration on her skin. “Well—why don’t you speak, deary?”

“I’m blown too. It was all up hill.”

They were in absolute solitude—the most apparent of all solitudes, that of empty surrounding space. Nobody could be nearer than a mile to them without their seeing him. They were, in fact, on one of the summits of the county, and the distant landscape around Christminster could be discerned from where they lay. But Jude did not think of that then.

“Oh, I can see such a pretty thing up this tree,” said Arabella. “A sort of a—caterpillar, of the most loveliest green and yellow you ever came

across!”

“Where?” said Jude, sitting up.

“You can’t see him there—you must come here,” said she.

He bent nearer and put his head in front of hers. “No—I can’t see it,” he said.

“Why, on the limb there where it branches off—close to the moving leaf—there!” She gently pulled him down beside her.

“I don’t see it,” he repeated, the back of his head against her cheek. “But I can, perhaps, standing up.” He stood accordingly, placing himself in the direct line of her gaze.

“How stupid you are!” she said crossly, turning away her face.

“I don’t care to see it, dear: why should I?” he replied looking down upon her. “Get up, Abby.”

“Why?”

“I want you to let me kiss you. I’ve been waiting to ever so long!”

She rolled round her face, remained a moment looking deedly aslant at him; then with a slight curl of the lip sprang to her feet, and exclaiming abruptly “I must mizzle!” walked off quickly homeward. Jude followed and rejoined her.

“Just one!” he coaxed.

“Shan’t!” she said.

He, surprised: “What’s the matter?”

She kept her two lips resentfully together, and Jude followed her like a pet lamb till she slackened her pace and walked beside him, talking calmly on indifferent subjects, and always checking him if he tried to take her hand or clasp her waist. Thus they descended to the precincts of her father’s homestead, and Arabella went in, nodding good-bye to him with a supercilious, affronted air.

“I expect I took too much liberty with her, somehow,” Jude said to himself, as he withdrew with a sigh and went on to Marygreen.

On Sunday morning the interior of Arabella’s home was, as usual, the scene of a grand weekly cooking, the preparation of the special Sunday dinner. Her father was shaving before a little glass hung on the mullion of the window, and her mother and Arabella herself were shelling beans hard

by. A neighbour passed on her way home from morning service at the nearest church, and seeing Donn engaged at the window with the razor, nodded and came in.

She at once spoke playfully to Arabella: "I zeed 'ee running with 'un—hee-hee! I hope 'tis coming to something?"

Arabella merely threw a look of consciousness into her face without raising her eyes.

"He's for Christminster, I hear, as soon as he can get there."

"Have you heard that lately—quite lately?" asked Arabella with a jealous, tigerish indrawing of breath.

"Oh no! But it has been known a long time that it is his plan. He's on'y waiting here for an opening. Ah well: he must walk about with somebody, I s'pose. Young men don't mean much now-a-days. 'Tis a sip here and a sip there with 'em. 'Twas different in my time."

When the gossip had departed Arabella said suddenly to her mother: "I want you and Father to go and inquire how the Edlins be, this evening after tea. Or no—there's evening service at Fensworth—you can walk to that."

"Oh? What's up to-night, then?"

"Nothing. Only I want the house to myself. He's shy; and I can't get un to come in when you are here. I shall let him slip through my fingers if I don't mind, much as I care for 'n!"

"If it is fine we med as well go, since you wish."

In the afternoon Arabella met and walked with Jude, who had now for weeks ceased to look into a book of Greek, Latin, or any other tongue. They wandered up the slopes till they reached the green track along the ridge, which they followed to the circular British earth-bank adjoining, Jude thinking of the great age of the trackway, and of the drovers who had frequented it, probably before the Romans knew the country. Up from the level lands below them floated the chime of church bells. Presently they were reduced to one note, which quickened, and stopped.

"Now we'll go back," said Arabella, who had attended to the sounds.

Jude assented. So long as he was near her he minded little where he was. When they arrived at her house he said lingeringly: "I won't come in. Why are you in such a hurry to go in to-night? It is not near dark."

“Wait a moment,” said she. She tried the handle of the door and found it locked.

“Ah—they are gone to church,” she added. And searching behind the scraper she found the key and unlocked the door. “Now, you’ll come in a moment?” she asked lightly. “We shall be all alone.”

“Certainly,” said Jude with alacrity, the case being unexpectedly altered.

Indoors they went. Did he want any tea? No, it was too late: he would rather sit and talk to her. She took off her jacket and hat, and they sat down—naturally enough close together.

“Don’t touch me, please,” she said softly. “I am part egg-shell. Or perhaps I had better put it in a safe place.” She began unfastening the collar of her gown.

“What is it?” said her lover.

“An egg—a cochin’s egg. I am hatching a very rare sort. I carry it about everywhere with me, and it will get hatched in less than three weeks.”

“Where do you carry it?”

“Just here.” She put her hand into her bosom and drew out the egg, which was wrapped in wool, outside it being a piece of pig’s bladder, in case of accidents. Having exhibited it to him she put it back, “Now mind you don’t come near me. I don’t want to get it broke, and have to begin another.”

“Why do you do such a strange thing?”

“It’s an old custom. I suppose it is natural for a woman to want to bring live things into the world.”

“It is very awkward for me just now,” he said, laughing.

“It serves you right. There—that’s all you can have of me”

She had turned round her chair, and, reaching over the back of it, presented her cheek to him gingerly.

“That’s very shabby of you!”

“You should have caught me a minute ago when I had put the egg down! There!” she said defiantly, “I am without it now!” She had quickly withdrawn the egg a second time; but before he could quite reach her she had put it back as quickly, laughing with the excitement of her strategy. Then there was a little struggle, Jude making a plunge for it and capturing

it triumphantly. Her face flushed; and becoming suddenly conscious he flushed also.

They looked at each other, panting; till he rose and said: "One kiss, now I can do it without damage to property; and I'll go!"

But she had jumped up too. "You must find me first!" she cried.

Her lover followed her as she withdrew. It was now dark inside the room, and the window being small he could not discover for a long time what had become of her, till a laugh revealed her to have rushed up the stairs, whither Jude rushed at her heels.

## IX

It was some two months later in the year, and the pair had met constantly during the interval. Arabella seemed dissatisfied; she was always imagining, and waiting, and wondering.

One day she met the itinerant Vilbert. She, like all the cottagers thereabout, knew the quack well, and she began telling him of her experiences. Arabella had been gloomy, but before he left her she had grown brighter. That evening she kept an appointment with Jude, who seemed sad.

“I am going away,” he said to her. “I think I ought to go. I think it will be better both for you and for me. I wish some things had never begun! I was much to blame, I know. But it is never too late to mend.”

Arabella began to cry. “How do you know it is not too late?” she said. “That’s all very well to say! I haven’t told you yet!” and she looked into his face with streaming eyes.

“What?” he asked, turning pale. “Not...?”

“Yes! And what shall I do if you desert me?”

“Oh, Arabella—how can you say that, my dear! You *know* I wouldn’t desert you!”

“Well then—”

“I have next to no wages as yet, you know; or perhaps I should have thought of this before... But, of course if that’s the case, we must marry! What other thing do you think I could dream of doing?”

“I thought—I thought, deary, perhaps you would go away all the more for that, and leave me to face it alone!”

“You knew better! Of course I never dreamt six months ago, or even three, of marrying. It is a complete smashing up of my plans—I mean my plans before I knew you, my dear. But what are they, after all! Dreams

about books, and degrees, and impossible fellowships, and all that. Certainly we'll marry: we must!"

That night he went out alone, and walked in the dark self-communing. He knew well, too well, in the secret centre of his brain, that Arabella was not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind. Yet, such being the custom of the rural districts among honourable young men who had drifted so far into intimacy with a woman as he unfortunately had done, he was ready to abide by what he had said, and take the consequences. For his own soothing he kept up a factitious belief in her. His idea of her was the thing of most consequence, not Arabella herself, he sometimes said laconically.

The bans were put in and published the very next Sunday. The people of the parish all said what a simple fool young Fawley was. All his reading had only come to this, that he would have to sell his books to buy saucepans. Those who guessed the probable state of affairs, Arabella's parents being among them, declared that it was the sort of conduct they would have expected of such an honest young man as Jude in reparation of the wrong he had done his innocent sweetheart. The parson who married them seemed to think it satisfactory too. And so, standing before the aforesaid officiator, the two swore that at every other time of their lives till death took them, they would assuredly believe, feel, and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks. What was as remarkable as the undertaking itself was the fact that nobody seemed at all surprised at what they swore.

Fawley's aunt being a baker she made him a bride-cake, saying bitterly that it was the last thing she could do for him, poor silly fellow; and that it would have been far better if, instead of his living to trouble her, he had gone underground years before with his father and mother. Of this cake Arabella took some slices, wrapped them up in white note-paper, and sent them to her companions in the pork-dressing business, Anny and Sarah, labelling each packet "*In remembrance of good advice.*"

The prospects of the newly married couple were certainly not very brilliant even to the most sanguine mind. He, a stone-mason's apprentice, nineteen years of age, was working for half wages till he should be out of his time. His wife was absolutely useless in a town-lodging, where he at first had considered it would be necessary for them to live. But the urgent need of adding to income in ever so little a degree caused him to take a



lonely roadside cottage between the Brown House and Marygreen, that he might have the profits of a vegetable garden, and utilize her past experiences by letting her keep a pig. But it was not the sort of life he had bargained for, and it was a long way to walk to and from Alfredston every day. Arabella, however, felt that all these make-shifts were temporary; she had gained a husband; that was the thing—a husband with a lot of earning power in him for buying her frocks and hats when he should begin to get frightened a bit, and stick to his trade, and throw aside those stupid books for practical undertakings.

So to the cottage he took her on the evening of the marriage, giving up his old room at his aunt's—where so much of the hard labour at Greek and Latin had been carried on.

A little chill overspread him at her first unrobing. A long tail of hair, which Arabella wore twisted up in an enormous knob at the back of her head, was deliberately unfastened, stroked out, and hung upon the looking-glass which he had bought her.

“What—it wasn't your own?” he said, with a sudden distaste for her.

“Oh no—it never is nowadays with the better class.”

“Nonsense! Perhaps not in towns. But in the country it is supposed to be different. Besides, you've enough of your own, surely?”

“Yes, enough as country notions go. But in town the men expect more, and when I was barmaid at Aldbrickham—”

“Barmaid at Aldbrickham?”

“Well, not exactly barmaid—I used to draw the drink at a public-house there—just for a little time; that was all. Some people put me up to getting this, and I bought it just for a fancy. The more you have the better in Aldbrickham, which is a finer town than all your Christminsters. Every lady of position wears false hair—the barber's assistant told me so.”

Jude thought with a feeling of sickness that though this might be true to some extent, for all that he knew, many unsophisticated girls would and did go to towns and remain there for years without losing their simplicity of life and embellishments. Others, alas, had an instinct towards artificiality in their very blood, and became adepts in counterfeiting at the first glimpse of it. However, perhaps there was no great sin in a woman adding to her hair, and he resolved to think no more of it.

A new-made wife can usually manage to excite interest for a few weeks, even though the prospects of the household ways and means are cloudy. There is a certain piquancy about her situation, and her manner to her acquaintance at the sense of it, which carries off the gloom of facts, and renders even the humblest bride independent awhile of the real. Mrs. Jude Fawley was walking in the streets of Alfredston one market-day with this quality in her carriage when she met Anny her former friend, whom she had not seen since the wedding.

As usual they laughed before talking; the world seemed funny to them without saying it.

“So it turned out a good plan, you see!” remarked the girl to the wife. “I knew it would with such as him. He’s a dear good fellow, and you ought to be proud of un.”

“I am,” said Mrs. Fawley quietly.

“And when do you expect?”

“Ssh! Not at all.”

“What!”

“I was mistaken.”

“Oh, Arabella, Arabella; you be a deep one! Mistaken! well, that’s clever—it’s a real stroke of genius! It is a thing I never thought o’, wi’ all my experience! I never thought beyond bringing about the real thing—not that one could sham it!”

“Don’t you be too quick to cry sham! ’Twasn’t sham. I didn’t know.”

“My word—won’t he be in a taking! He’ll give it to ’ee o’ Saturday nights! Whatever it was, he’ll say it was a trick—a double one, by the Lord!”

“I’ll own to the first, but not to the second... Pooh—he won’t care! He’ll be glad I was wrong in what I said. He’ll shake down, bless ’ee—men always do. What can ’em do otherwise? Married is married.”

Nevertheless it was with a little uneasiness that Arabella approached the time when in the natural course of things she would have to reveal that the alarm she had raised had been without foundation. The occasion was one evening at bedtime, and they were in their chamber in the lonely cottage by the wayside to which Jude walked home from his work every day. He

had worked hard the whole twelve hours, and had retired to rest before his wife. When she came into the room he was between sleeping and waking, and was barely conscious of her undressing before the little looking-glass as he lay.

One action of hers, however, brought him to full cognition. Her face being reflected towards him as she sat, he could perceive that she was amusing herself by artificially producing in each cheek the dimple before alluded to, a curious accomplishment of which she was mistress, effecting it by a momentary suction. It seemed to him for the first time that the dimples were far oftener absent from her face during his intercourse with her nowadays than they had been in the earlier weeks of their acquaintance.

“Don’t do that, Arabella!” he said suddenly. “There is no harm in it, but—I don’t like to see you.”

She turned and laughed. “Lord, I didn’t know you were awake!” she said. “How countrified you are! That’s nothing.”

“Where did you learn it?”

“Nowhere that I know of. They used to stay without any trouble when I was at the public-house; but now they won’t. My face was fatter then.”

“I don’t care about dimples. I don’t think they improve a woman—particularly a married woman, and of full-sized figure like you.”

“Most men think otherwise.”

“I don’t care what most men think, if they do. How do you know?”

“I used to be told so when I was serving in the tap-room.”

“Ah—that public-house experience accounts for your knowing about the adulteration of the ale when we went and had some that Sunday evening. I thought when I married you that you had always lived in your father’s house.”

“You ought to have known better than that, and seen I was a little more finished than I could have been by staying where I was born. There was not much to do at home, and I was eating my head off, so I went away for three months.”

“You’ll soon have plenty to do now, dear, won’t you?”

“How do you mean?”

“Why, of course—little things to make.”

“Oh.”

“When will it be? Can’t you tell me exactly, instead of in such general terms as you have used?”

“Tell you?”

“Yes—the date.”

“There’s nothing to tell. I made a mistake.”

“What?”

“It was a mistake.”

He sat bolt upright in bed and looked at her. “How can that be?”

“Women fancy wrong things sometimes.”

“But—! Why, of course, so unprepared as I was, without a stick of furniture, and hardly a shilling, I shouldn’t have hurried on our affair, and brought you to a half-furnished hut before I was ready, if it had not been for the news you gave me, which made it necessary to save you, ready or no... Good God!”

“Don’t take on, dear. What’s done can’t be undone.”

“I have no more to say!”

He gave the answer simply, and lay down; and there was silence between them.

When Jude awoke the next morning he seemed to see the world with a different eye. As to the point in question he was compelled to accept her word; in the circumstances he could not have acted otherwise while ordinary notions prevailed. But how came they to prevail?

There seemed to him, vaguely and dimly, something wrong in a social ritual which made necessary a cancelling of well-formed schemes involving years of thought and labour, of foregoing a man’s one opportunity of showing himself superior to the lower animals, and of contributing his units of work to the general progress of his generation, because of a momentary surprise by a new and transitory instinct which had nothing in it of the nature of vice, and could be only at the most called weakness. He was inclined to inquire what he had done, or she lost, for that matter, that he deserved to be caught in a gin which would cripple him, if not her also, for the rest of a lifetime? There was perhaps

something fortunate in the fact that the immediate reason of his marriage had proved to be non-existent. But the marriage remained.

## X

The time arrived for killing the pig which Jude and his wife had fattened in their sty during the autumn months, and the butchering was timed to take place as soon as it was light in the morning, so that Jude might get to Alfredston without losing more than a quarter of a day.

The night had seemed strangely silent. Jude looked out of the window long before dawn, and perceived that the ground was covered with snow—snow rather deep for the season, it seemed, a few flakes still falling.

“I’m afraid the pig-killer won’t be able to come,” he said to Arabella.

“Oh, he’ll come. You must get up and make the water hot, if you want Challow to scald him. Though I like singeing best.”

“I’ll get up,” said Jude. “I like the way of my own county.”

He went downstairs, lit the fire under the copper, and began feeding it with bean-stalks, all the time without a candle, the blaze flinging a cheerful shine into the room; though for him the sense of cheerfulness was lessened by thoughts on the reason of that blaze—to heat water to scald the bristles from the body of an animal that as yet lived, and whose voice could be continually heard from a corner of the garden. At half-past six, the time of appointment with the butcher, the water boiled, and Jude’s wife came downstairs.

“Is Challow come?” she asked.

“No.”

They waited, and it grew lighter, with the dreary light of a snowy dawn. She went out, gazed along the road, and returning said, “He’s not coming. Drunk last night, I expect. The snow is not enough to hinder him, surely!”

“Then we must put it off. It is only the water boiled for nothing. The snow may be deep in the valley.”

“Can’t be put off. There’s no more victuals for the pig. He ate the last mixing o’ barleymeal yesterday morning.”

“Yesterday morning? What has he lived on since?”

“Nothing.”

“What—he has been starving?”

“Yes. We always do it the last day or two, to save bother with the innerds. What ignorance, not to know that!”

“That accounts for his crying so. Poor creature!”

“Well—you must do the sticking—there’s no help for it. I’ll show you how. Or I’ll do it myself—I think I could. Though as it is such a big pig I had rather Challow had done it. However, his basket o’ knives and things have been already sent on here, and we can use ’em.”

“Of course you shan’t do it,” said Jude. “I’ll do it, since it must be done.”

He went out to the sty, shovelled away the snow for the space of a couple of yards or more, and placed the stool in front, with the knives and ropes at hand. A robin peered down at the preparations from the nearest tree, and, not liking the sinister look of the scene, flew away, though hungry. By this time Arabella had joined her husband, and Jude, rope in hand, got into the sty, and noosed the affrighted animal, who, beginning with a squeak of surprise, rose to repeated cries of rage. Arabella opened the sty-door, and together they hoisted the victim on to the stool, legs upward, and while Jude held him Arabella bound him down, looping the cord over his legs to keep him from struggling.

The animal’s note changed its quality. It was not now rage, but the cry of despair; long-drawn, slow and hopeless.

“Upon my soul I would sooner have gone without the pig than have had this to do!” said Jude. “A creature I have fed with my own hands.”

“Don’t be such a tender-hearted fool! There’s the sticking-knife—the one with the point. Now whatever you do, don’t stick un too deep.”

“I’ll stick him effectually, so as to make short work of it. That’s the chief thing.”

“You must not!” she cried. “The meat must be well bled, and to do that he must die slow. We shall lose a shilling a score if the meat is red and bloody! Just touch the vein, that’s all. I was brought up to it, and I know.

Every good butcher keeps un bleeding long. He ought to be eight or ten minutes dying, at least.”

“He shall not be half a minute if I can help it, however the meat may look,” said Jude determinedly. Scraping the bristles from the pig’s upturned throat, as he had seen the butchers do, he slit the fat; then plunged in the knife with all his might.

“Od damn it all!” she cried, “that ever I should say it! You’ve over-stuck un! And I telling you all the time—”

“Do be quiet, Arabella, and have a little pity on the creature!”

“Hold up the pail to catch the blood, and don’t talk!”

However unworkmanlike the deed, it had been mercifully done. The blood flowed out in a torrent instead of in the trickling stream she had desired. The dying animal’s cry assumed its third and final tone, the shriek of agony; his glazing eyes riveting themselves on Arabella with the eloquently keen reproach of a creature recognizing at last the treachery of those who had seemed his only friends.

“Make un stop that!” said Arabella. “Such a noise will bring somebody or other up here, and I don’t want people to know we are doing it ourselves.” Picking up the knife from the ground whereon Jude had flung it, she slipped it into the gash, and slit the windpipe. The pig was instantly silent, his dying breath coming through the hole.

“That’s better,” she said.

“It is a hateful business!” said he.

“Pigs must be killed.”

The animal heaved in a final convulsion, and, despite the rope, kicked out with all his last strength. A tablespoonful of black clot came forth, the trickling of red blood having ceased for some seconds.

“That’s it; now he’ll go,” said she. “Artful creatures—they always keep back a drop like that as long as they can!”

The last plunge had come so unexpectedly as to make Jude stagger, and in recovering himself he kicked over the vessel in which the blood had been caught.

“There!” she cried, thoroughly in a passion. “Now I can’t make any blackpot. There’s a waste, all through you!”



Jude put the pail upright, but only about a third of the whole steaming liquid was left in it, the main part being splashed over the snow, and forming a dismal, sordid, ugly spectacle—to those who saw it as other than an ordinary obtaining of meat. The lips and nostrils of the animal turned livid, then white, and the muscles of his limbs relaxed.

“Thank God!” Jude said. “He’s dead.”

“What’s God got to do with such a messy job as a pig-killing, I should like to know!” she said scornfully. “Poor folks must live.”

“I know, I know,” said he. “I don’t scold you.”

Suddenly they became aware of a voice at hand.

“Well done, young married volk! I couldn’t have carried it out much better myself, cuss me if I could!” The voice, which was husky, came from the garden-gate, and looking up from the scene of slaughter they saw the burly form of Mr. Challow leaning over the gate, critically surveying their performance.

“’Tis well for ’ee to stand there and glane!” said Arabella. “Owing to your being late the meat is blooded and half spoiled! ’Twon’t fetch so much by a shilling a score!”

Challow expressed his contrition. “You should have waited a bit” he said, shaking his head, “and not have done this—in the delicate state, too, that you be in at present, ma’am. ’Tis risking yourself too much.”

“You needn’t be concerned about that,” said Arabella, laughing. Jude too laughed, but there was a strong flavour of bitterness in his amusement.

Challow made up for his neglect of the killing by zeal in the scalding and scraping. Jude felt dissatisfied with himself as a man at what he had done, though aware of his lack of common sense, and that the deed would have amounted to the same thing if carried out by deputy. The white snow, stained with the blood of his fellow-mortal, wore an illogical look to him as a lover of justice, not to say a Christian; but he could not see how the matter was to be mended. No doubt he was, as his wife had called him, a tender-hearted fool.

He did not like the road to Alfredston now. It stared him cynically in the face. The wayside objects reminded him so much of his courtship of his wife that, to keep them out of his eyes, he read whenever he could as he walked to and from his work. Yet he sometimes felt that by caring for

books he was not escaping common-place nor gaining rare ideas, every working-man being of that taste now. When passing near the spot by the stream on which he had first made her acquaintance he one day heard voices just as he had done at that earlier time. One of the girls who had been Arabella's companions was talking to a friend in a shed, himself being the subject of discourse, possibly because they had seen him in the distance. They were quite unaware that the shed-walls were so thin that he could hear their words as he passed.

“Howsomever, ’twas I put her up to it! ‘Nothing venture nothing have,’ I said. If I hadn’t she’d no more have been his mis’ess than I.”

“’Tis my belief she knew there was nothing the matter when she told him she was...”

What had Arabella been put up to by this woman, so that he should make her his “mis’ess,” otherwise wife? The suggestion was horribly unpleasant, and it rankled in his mind so much that instead of entering his own cottage when he reached it he flung his basket inside the garden-gate and passed on, determined to go and see his old aunt and get some supper there.

This made his arrival home rather late. Arabella however, was busy melting down lard from fat of the deceased pig, for she had been out on a jaunt all day, and so delayed her work. Dreading lest what he had heard should lead him to say something regrettable to her he spoke little. But Arabella was very talkative, and said among other things that she wanted some money. Seeing the book sticking out of his pocket she added that he ought to earn more.

“An apprentice’s wages are not meant to be enough to keep a wife on, as a rule, my dear.”

“Then you shouldn’t have had one.”

“Come, Arabella! That’s too bad, when you know how it came about.”

“I’ll declare afore Heaven that I thought what I told you was true. Doctor Vilbert thought so. It was a good job for you that it wasn’t so!”

“I don’t mean that,” he said hastily. “I mean before that time. I know it was not your fault; but those women friends of yours gave you bad advice. If they hadn’t, or you hadn’t taken it, we should at this moment have been

free from a bond which, not to mince matters, galls both of us devilishly. It may be very sad, but it is true.”

“Who’s been telling you about my friends? What advice? I insist upon you telling me.”

“Pooh—I’d rather not.”

“But you shall—you ought to. It is mean of ’ee not to!”

“Very well.” And he hinted gently what had been revealed to him. “But I don’t wish to dwell upon it. Let us say no more about it.”

Her defensive manner collapsed. “That was nothing,” she said, laughing coldly. “Every woman has a right to do such as that. The risk is hers.”

“I quite deny it, Bella. She might if no lifelong penalty attached to it for the man, or, in his default, for herself; if the weakness of the moment could end with the moment, or even with the year. But when effects stretch so far she should not go and do that which entraps a man if he is honest, or herself if he is otherwise.”

“What ought I to have done?”

“Given me time... Why do you fuss yourself about melting down that pig’s fat to-night? Please put it away!”

“Then I must do it to-morrow morning. It won’t keep.”

“Very well—do.”

## XI

Next morning, which was Sunday, she resumed operations about ten o'clock; and the renewed work recalled the conversation which had accompanied it the night before, and put her back into the same intractable temper.

“That’s the story about me in Marygreen, is it—that I entrapped ’ee? Much of a catch you were, Lord send!” As she warmed she saw some of Jude’s dear ancient classics on a table where they ought not to have been laid. “I won’t have them books here in the way!” she cried petulantly; and seizing them one by one she began throwing them upon the floor.

“Leave my books alone!” he said. “You might have thrown them aside if you had liked, but as to soiling them like that, it is disgusting!” In the operation of making lard Arabella’s hands had become smeared with the hot grease, and her fingers consequently left very perceptible imprints on the book-covers. She continued deliberately to toss the books severally upon the floor, till Jude, incensed beyond bearing, caught her by the arms to make her leave off. Somehow, in going so, he loosened the fastening of her hair, and it rolled about her ears.

“Let me go!” she said.

“Promise to leave the books alone.”

She hesitated. “Let me go!” she repeated.

“Promise!”

After a pause: “I do.”

Jude relinquished his hold, and she crossed the room to the door, out of which she went with a set face, and into the highway. Here she began to saunter up and down, perversely pulling her hair into a worse disorder than he had caused, and unfastening several buttons of her gown. It was a fine Sunday morning, dry, clear and frosty, and the bells of Alfredston Church could be heard on the breeze from the north. People were going along the road, dressed in their holiday clothes; they were mainly lovers—such pairs

as Jude and Arabella had been when they sported along the same track some months earlier. These pedestrians turned to stare at the extraordinary spectacle she now presented, bonnetless, her dishevelled hair blowing in the wind, her bodice apart, her sleeves rolled above her elbows for her work, and her hands reeking with melted fat. One of the passers said in mock terror: "Good Lord deliver us!"

"See how he's served me!" she cried. "Making me work Sunday mornings when I ought to be going to my church, and tearing my hair off my head, and my gown off my back!"

Jude was exasperated, and went out to drag her in by main force. Then he suddenly lost his heat. Illuminated with the sense that all was over between them, and that it mattered not what she did, or he, her husband stood still, regarding her. Their lives were ruined, he thought; ruined by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union: that of having based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a lifelong comradeship tolerable.

"Going to ill-use me on principle, as your father ill-used your mother, and your father's sister ill-used her husband?" she asked. "All you be a queer lot as husbands and wives!"

Jude fixed an arrested, surprised look on her. But she said no more, and continued her saunter till she was tired. He left the spot, and, after wandering vaguely a little while, walked in the direction of Marygreen. Here he called upon his great-aunt, whose infirmities daily increased.

"Aunt—did my father ill-use my mother, and my aunt her husband?" said Jude abruptly, sitting down by the fire.

She raised her ancient eyes under the rim of the by-gone bonnet that she always wore. "Who's been telling you that?" she said.

"I have heard it spoken of, and want to know all."

"You med so well, I s'pose; though your wife—I reckon 'twas she—must have been a fool to open up that! There isn't much to know after all. Your father and mother couldn't get on together, and they parted. It was coming home from Alfredston market, when you were a baby—on the hill by the Brown House barn—that they had their last difference, and took leave of one another for the last time. Your mother soon afterwards died—

she drowned herself, in short, and your father went away with you to South Wessex, and never came here any more.”

Jude recalled his father’s silence about North Wessex and Jude’s mother, never speaking of either till his dying day.

“It was the same with your father’s sister. Her husband offended her, and she so disliked living with him afterwards that she went away to London with her little maid. The Fawleys were not made for wedlock: it never seemed to sit well upon us. There’s sommat in our blood that won’t take kindly to the notion of being bound to do what we do readily enough if not bound. That’s why you ought to have hearkened to me, and not ha’ married.”

“Where did Father and Mother part—by the Brown House, did you say?”

“A little further on—where the road to Fenworth branches off, and the handpost stands. A gibbet once stood there not onconnected with our history. But let that be.”

In the dusk of that evening Jude walked away from his old aunt’s as if to go home. But as soon as he reached the open down he struck out upon it till he came to a large round pond. The frost continued, though it was not particularly sharp, and the larger stars overhead came out slow and flickering. Jude put one foot on the edge of the ice, and then the other: it cracked under his weight; but this did not deter him. He ploughed his way inward to the centre, the ice making sharp noises as he went. When just about the middle he looked around him and gave a jump. The cracking repeated itself; but he did not go down. He jumped again, but the cracking had ceased. Jude went back to the edge, and stepped upon the ground.

It was curious, he thought. What was he reserved for? He supposed he was not a sufficiently dignified person for suicide. Peaceful death abhorred him as a subject, and would not take him.

What could he do of a lower kind than self-extermination; what was there less noble, more in keeping with his present degraded position? He could get drunk. Of course that was it; he had forgotten. Drinking was the regular, stereotyped resource of the despairing worthless. He began to see now why some men boozed at inns. He struck down the hill northwards and came to an obscure public-house. On entering and sitting down the sight of the picture of Samson and Delilah on the wall caused him to

recognize the place as that he had visited with Arabella on that first Sunday evening of their courtship. He called for liquor and drank briskly for an hour or more.

Staggering homeward late that night, with all his sense of depression gone, and his head fairly clear still, he began to laugh boisterously, and to wonder how Arabella would receive him in his new aspect. The house was in darkness when he entered, and in his stumbling state it was some time before he could get a light. Then he found that, though the marks of pig-dressing, of fats and scallops, were visible, the materials themselves had been taken away. A line written by his wife on the inside of an old envelope was pinned to the cotton blower of the fireplace:

*“Have gone to my friends. Shall not return.”*

All the next day he remained at home, and sent off the carcase of the pig to Alfredston. He then cleaned up the premises, locked the door, put the key in a place she would know if she came back, and returned to his masonry at Alfredston.

At night when he again plodded home he found she had not visited the house. The next day went in the same way, and the next. Then there came a letter from her.

That she had gone tired of him she frankly admitted. He was such a slow old coach, and she did not care for the sort of life he led. There was no prospect of his ever bettering himself or her. She further went on to say that her parents had, as he knew, for some time considered the question of emigrating to Australia, the pig-jobbing business being a poor one nowadays. They had at last decided to go, and she proposed to go with them, if he had no objection. A woman of her sort would have more chance over there than in this stupid country.

Jude replied that he had not the least objection to her going. He thought it a wise course, since she wished to go, and one that might be to the advantage of both. He enclosed in the packet containing the letter the money that had been realized by the sale of the pig, with all he had besides, which was not much.

From that day he heard no more of her except indirectly, though her father and his household did not immediately leave, but waited till his goods and other effects had been sold off. When Jude learnt that there was to be an auction at the house of the Donns he packed his own household

goods into a waggon, and sent them to her at the aforesaid homestead, that she might sell them with the rest, or as many of them as she should choose.

He then went into lodgings at Alfredston, and saw in a shopwindow the little handbill announcing the sale of his father-in-law's furniture. He noted its date, which came and passed without Jude's going near the place, or perceiving that the traffic out of Alfredston by the southern road was materially increased by the auction. A few days later he entered a dingy broker's shop in the main street of the town, and amid a heterogeneous collection of saucepans, a clothes-horse, rolling-pin, brass candlestick, swing looking-glass, and other things at the back of the shop, evidently just brought in from a sale, he perceived a framed photograph, which turned out to be his own portrait.

It was one which he had had specially taken and framed by a local man in bird's-eye maple, as a present for Arabella, and had duly given her on their wedding-day. On the back was still to be read, "*Jude to Arabella*," with the date. She must have thrown it in with the rest of her property at the auction.

"Oh," said the broker, seeing him look at this and the other articles in the heap, and not perceiving that the portrait was of himself, "It is a small lot of stuff that was knocked down to me at a cottage sale out on the road to Marygreen. The frame is a very useful one, if you take out the likeness. You shall have it for a shilling."

The utter death of every tender sentiment in his wife, as brought home to him by this mute and undesigned evidence of her sale of his portrait and gift, was the conclusive little stroke required to demolish all sentiment in him. He paid the shilling, took the photograph away with him, and burnt it, frame and all, when he reached his lodging.

Two or three days later he heard that Arabella and her parents had departed. He had sent a message offering to see her for a formal leave-taking, but she had said that it would be better otherwise, since she was bent on going, which perhaps was true. On the evening following their emigration, when his day's work was done, he came out of doors after supper, and strolled in the starlight along the too familiar road towards the upland whereon had been experienced the chief emotions of his life. It seemed to be his own again.



He could not realize himself. On the old track he seemed to be a boy still, hardly a day older than when he had stood dreaming at the top of that hill, inwardly fired for the first time with ardours for Christminster and scholarship. "Yet I am a man," he said. "I have a wife. More, I have arrived at the still riper stage of having disagreed with her, disliked her, had a scuffle with her, and parted from her."

He remembered then that he was standing not far from the spot at which the parting between his father and his mother was said to have occurred.

A little further on was the summit whence Christminster, or what he had taken for that city, had seemed to be visible. A milestone, now as always, stood at the roadside hard by. Jude drew near it, and felt rather than read the mileage to the city. He remembered that once on his way home he had proudly cut with his keen new chisel an inscription on the back of that milestone, embodying his aspirations. It had been done in the first week of his apprenticeship, before he had been diverted from his purposes by an unsuitable woman. He wondered if the inscription were legible still, and going to the back of the milestone brushed away the nettles. By the light of a match he could still discern what he had cut so enthusiastically so long ago:

**THITHER**  
**J. F.**



The sight of it, unimpaired, within its screen of grass and nettles, lit in his soul a spark of the old fire. Surely his plan should be to move onward through good and ill—to avoid morbid sorrow even though he did see uglinesses in the world? *Bene agere et lætari*—to do good cheerfully—which he had heard to be the philosophy of one Spinoza, might be his own even now.

He might battle with his evil star, and follow out his original intention.

By moving to a spot a little way off he uncovered the horizon in a north-easterly direction. There actually rose the faint halo, a small dim nebulosity, hardly recognizable save by the eye of faith. It was enough for him. He would go to Christminster as soon as the term of his apprenticeship expired.

He returned to his lodgings in a better mood, and said his prayers.

Part Second  
AT CHRISTMINSTER

*“Save his own soul he hath no star.”*—SWINBURNE.

*“Notitiam primosque gradus vicinia fecit;  
Tempore crevit amor.”*—OVID.

## I

The next noteworthy move in Jude's life was that in which he appeared gliding steadily onward through a dusky landscape of some three years' later leafage than had graced his courtship of Arabella, and the disruption of his coarse conjugal life with her. He was walking towards Christminster City, at a point a mile or two to the south-west of it.

He had at last found himself clear of Marygreen and Alfredston: he was out of his apprenticeship, and with his tools at his back seemed to be in the way of making a new start—the start to which, barring the interruption involved in his intimacy and married experience with Arabella, he had been looking forward for about ten years.

Jude would now have been described as a young man with a forcible, meditative, and earnest rather than handsome cast of countenance. He was of dark complexion, with dark harmonizing eyes, and he wore a closely trimmed black beard of more advanced growth than is usual at his age; this, with his great mass of black curly hair, was some trouble to him in combing and washing out the stone-dust that settled on it in the pursuit of his trade. His capabilities in the latter, having been acquired in the country, were of an all-round sort, including monumental stone-cutting, gothic free-stone work for the restoration of churches, and carving of a general kind. In London he would probably have become specialized and have made himself a “moulding mason,” a “foliage sculptor”—perhaps a “statuary.”

He had that afternoon driven in a cart from Alfredston to the village nearest the city in this direction, and was now walking the remaining four miles rather from choice than from necessity, having always fancied himself arriving thus.

The ultimate impulse to come had had a curious origin—one more nearly related to the emotional side of him than to the intellectual, as is often the case with young men. One day while in lodgings at Alfredston he

had gone to Marygreen to see his old aunt, and had observed between the brass candlesticks on her mantelpiece the photograph of a pretty girlish face, in a broad hat with radiating folds under the brim like the rays of a halo. He had asked who she was. His grand-aunt had gruffly replied that she was his cousin Sue Bridehead, of the inimical branch of the family; and on further questioning the old woman had replied that the girl lived in Christminster, though she did not know where, or what she was doing.

His aunt would not give him the photograph. But it haunted him; and ultimately formed a quickening ingredient in his latent intent of following his friend the school master thither.

He now paused at the top of a crooked and gentle declivity, and obtained his first near view of the city. Grey-stoned and dun-roofed, it stood within hail of the Wessex border, and almost with the tip of one small toe within it, at the northernmost point of the crinkled line along which the leisurely Thames strokes the fields of that ancient kingdom. The buildings now lay quiet in the sunset, a vane here and there on their many spires and domes giving sparkle to a picture of sober secondary and tertiary hues.

Reaching the bottom he moved along the level way between pollard willows growing indistinct in the twilight, and soon confronted the outmost lamps of the town—some of those lamps which had sent into the sky the gleam and glory that caught his strained gaze in his days of dreaming, so many years ago. They winked their yellow eyes at him dubiously, and as if, though they had been awaiting him all these years in disappointment at his tarrying, they did not much want him now.

He was a species of Dick Whittington whose spirit was touched to finer issues than a mere material gain. He went along the outlying streets with the cautious tread of an explorer. He saw nothing of the real city in the suburbs on this side. His first want being a lodging he scrutinized carefully such localities as seemed to offer on inexpensive terms the modest type of accommodation he demanded; and after inquiry took a room in a suburb nicknamed “Beersheba,” though he did not know this at the time. Here he installed himself, and having had some tea sallied forth.

It was a windy, whispering, moonless night. To guide himself he opened under a lamp a map he had brought. The breeze ruffled and fluttered it, but he could see enough to decide on the direction he should take to reach the heart of the place.

After many turnings he came up to the first ancient mediæval pile that he had encountered. It was a college, as he could see by the gateway. He entered it, walked round, and penetrated to dark corners which no lamplight reached. Close to this college was another; and a little further on another; and then he began to be encircled as it were with the breath and sentiment of the venerable city. When he passed objects out of harmony with its general expression he allowed his eyes to slip over them as if he did not see them.

A bell began clanging, and he listened till a hundred-and-one strokes had sounded. He must have made a mistake, he thought: it was meant for a hundred.

When the gates were shut, and he could no longer get into the quadrangles, he rambled under the walls and doorways, feeling with his fingers the contours of their mouldings and carving. The minutes passed, fewer and fewer people were visible, and still he serpented among the shadows, for had he not imagined these scenes through ten bygone years, and what mattered a night's rest for once? High against the black sky the flash of a lamp would show crocketed pinnacles and indented battlements. Down obscure alleys, apparently never trodden now by the foot of man, and whose very existence seemed to be forgotten, there would jut into the path porticoes, oriels, doorways of enriched and florid middle-age design, their extinct air being accentuated by the rottenness of the stones. It seemed impossible that modern thought could house itself in such decrepit and superseded chambers.

Knowing not a human being here, Jude began to be impressed with the isolation of his own personality, as with a self-spectre, the sensation being that of one who walked but could not make himself seen or heard. He drew his breath pensively, and, seeming thus almost his own ghost, gave his thoughts to the other ghostly presences with which the nooks were haunted.

During the interval of preparation for this venture, since his wife and furniture's uncompromising disappearance into space, he had read and learnt almost all that could be read and learnt by one in his position, of the worthies who had spent their youth within these reverend walls, and whose souls had haunted them in their maturer age. Some of them, by the accidents of his reading, loomed out in his fancy disproportionately large

by comparison with the rest. The brushings of the wind against the angles, buttresses, and door-jambs were as the passing of these only other inhabitants, the tappings of each ivy leaf on its neighbour were as the mutterings of their mournful souls, the shadows as their thin shapes in nervous movement, making him comrades in his solitude. In the gloom it was as if he ran against them without feeling their bodily frames.

The streets were now deserted, but on account of these things he could not go in. There were poets abroad, of early date and of late, from the friend and eulogist of Shakespeare down to him who has recently passed into silence, and that musical one of the tribe who is still among us. Speculative philosophers drew along, not always with wrinkled foreheads and hoary hair as in framed portraits, but pink-faced, slim, and active as in youth; modern divines sheeted in their surplices, among whom the most real to Jude Fawley were the founders of the religious school called Tractarian; the well-known three, the enthusiast, the poet, and the formularist, the echoes of whose teachings had influenced him even in his obscure home. A start of aversion appeared in his fancy to move them at sight of those other sons of the place, the form in the full-bottomed wig, statesman, rake, reasoner, and sceptic; the smoothly shaven historian so ironically civil to Christianity; with others of the same incredulous temper, who knew each quoad as well as the faithful, and took equal freedom in haunting its cloisters.

He regarded the statesmen in their various types, men of firmer movement and less dreamy air; the scholar, the speaker, the plodder; the man whose mind grew with his growth in years, and the man whose mind contracted with the same.

The scientists and philologists followed on in his mind-sight in an odd impossible combination, men of meditative faces, strained foreheads, and weak-eyed as bats with constant research; then official characters—such men as governor-generals and lord-lieutenants, in whom he took little interest; chief-justices and lord chancellors, silent thin-lipped figures of whom he knew barely the names. A keener regard attached to the prelates, by reason of his own former hopes. Of them he had an ample band—some men of heart, others rather men of head; he who apologized for the Church in Latin; the saintly author of the Evening Hymn; and near them the great

itinerant preacher, hymn-writer, and zealot, shadowed like Jude by his matrimonial difficulties.

Jude found himself speaking out loud, holding conversations with them as it were, like an actor in a melodrama who apostrophizes the audience on the other side of the footlights; till he suddenly ceased with a start at his absurdity. Perhaps those incoherent words of the wanderer were heard within the walls by some student or thinker over his lamp; and he may have raised his head, and wondered what voice it was, and what it betokened. Jude now perceived that, so far as solid flesh went, he had the whole aged city to himself with the exception of a belated townsman here and there, and that he seemed to be catching a cold.

A voice reached him out of the shade; a real and local voice:

“You’ve been a-settin’ a long time on that plinth-stone, young man. What med you be up to?”

It came from a policeman who had been observing Jude without the latter observing him.

Jude went home and to bed, after reading up a little about these men and their several messages to the world from a book or two that he had brought with him concerning the sons of the university. As he drew towards sleep various memorable words of theirs that he had just been conning seemed spoken by them in muttering utterances; some audible, some unintelligible to him. One of the spectres (who afterwards mourned Christminster as “the home of lost causes,” though Jude did not remember this) was now apostrophizing her thus:

“Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! ... Her ineffable charm keeps ever calling us to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection.”

Another voice was that of the Corn Law convert, whose phantom he had just seen in the quadrangle with a great bell. Jude thought his soul might have been shaping the historic words of his master-speech:

“Sir, I may be wrong, but my impression is that my duty towards a country threatened with famine requires that that which has been the ordinary remedy under all similar circumstances should be resorted to now, namely, that there should be free access to the food of man from whatever quarter it may come... Deprive me of office to-morrow, you can



never deprive me of the consciousness that I have exercised the powers committed to me from no corrupt or interested motives, from no desire to gratify ambition, for no personal gain.”

Then the sly author of the immortal Chapter on Christianity: “How shall we excuse the supine inattention of the Pagan and philosophic world, to those evidences [miracles] which were presented by Omnipotence? ... The sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and appeared unconscious of any alterations in the moral or physical government of the world.”

Then the shade of the poet, the last of the optimists:

How the world is made for each of us!

\* \* \* \* \*

And each of the Many helps to recruit  
The life of the race by a general plan.

Then one of the three enthusiasts he had seen just now, the author of the *Apologia*:

“My argument was ... that absolute certitude as to the truths of natural theology was the result of an assemblage of concurring and converging probabilities ... that probabilities which did not reach to logical certainty might create a mental certitude.”

The second of them, no polemic, murmured quieter things:

Why should we faint, and fear to live alone,  
Since all alone, so Heaven has will'd, we die?

He likewise heard some phrases spoken by the phantom with the short face, the genial Spectator:

“When I look upon the tombs of the great, every motion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tombs of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow.”

And lastly a gentle-voiced prelate spoke, during whose meek, familiar rhyme, endeared to him from earliest childhood, Jude fell asleep:

Teach me to live, that I may dread  
The grave as little as my bed.  
Teach me to die...

He did not wake till morning. The ghostly past seemed to have gone, and everything spoke of to-day. He started up in bed, thinking he had overslept himself and then said:

“By Jove—I had quite forgotten my sweet-faced cousin, and that she’s here all the time! ... and my old schoolmaster, too.” His words about his schoolmaster had, perhaps, less zest in them than his words concerning his cousin.

## II

Necessary meditations on the actual, including the mean bread-and-cheese question, dissipated the phantasmal for a while, and compelled Jude to smother high thinkings under immediate needs. He had to get up, and seek for work, manual work; the only kind deemed by many of its professors to be work at all.

Passing out into the streets on this errand he found that the colleges had treacherously changed their sympathetic countenances: some were pompous; some had put on the look of family vaults above ground; something barbaric loomed in the masonries of all. The spirits of the great men had disappeared.

The numberless architectural pages around him he read, naturally, less as an artist-critic of their forms than as an artizan and comrade of the dead handicraftsmen whose muscles had actually executed those forms. He examined the mouldings, stroked them as one who knew their beginning, said they were difficult or easy in the working, had taken little or much time, were trying to the arm, or convenient to the tool.

What at night had been perfect and ideal was by day the more or less defective real. Cruelties, insults, had, he perceived, been inflicted on the aged erections. The condition of several moved him as he would have been moved by maimed sentient beings. They were wounded, broken, sloughing off their outer shape in the deadly struggle against years, weather, and man.

The rottenness of these historical documents reminded him that he was not, after all, hastening on to begin the morning practically as he had intended. He had come to work, and to live by work, and the morning had nearly gone. It was, in one sense, encouraging to think that in a place of crumbling stones there must be plenty for one of his trade to do in the business of renovation. He asked his way to the workyard of the stone-

mason whose name had been given him at Alfredston; and soon heard the familiar sound of the rubbers and chisels.

The yard was a little centre of regeneration. Here, with keen edges and smooth curves, were forms in the exact likeness of those he had seen abraded and time-eaten on the walls. These were the ideas in modern prose which the lichened colleges presented in old poetry. Even some of those antiques might have been called prose when they were new. They had done nothing but wait, and had become poetical. How easy to the smallest building; how impossible to most men.

He asked for the foreman, and looked round among the new traceries, mullions, transoms, shafts, pinnacles, and battlements standing on the bankers half worked, or waiting to be removed. They were marked by precision, mathematical straightness, smoothness, exactitude: there in the old walls were the broken lines of the original idea; jagged curves, disdain of precision, irregularity, disarray.

For a moment there fell on Jude a true illumination; that here in the stone yard was a centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study within the noblest of the colleges. But he lost it under stress of his old idea. He would accept any employment which might be offered him on the strength of his late employer's recommendation; but he would accept it as a provisional thing only. This was his form of the modern vice of unrest.

Moreover he perceived that at best only copying, patching and imitating went on here; which he fancied to be owing to some temporary and local cause. He did not at that time see that mediævalism was as dead as a fern-leaf in a lump of coal; that other developments were shaping in the world around him, in which Gothic architecture and its associations had no place. The deadly animosity of contemporary logic and vision towards so much of what he held in reverence was not yet revealed to him.

Having failed to obtain work here as yet he went away, and thought again of his cousin, whose presence somewhere at hand he seemed to feel in wavelets of interest, if not of emotion. How he wished he had that pretty portrait of her! At last he wrote to his aunt to send it. She did so, with a request, however, that he was not to bring disturbance into the family by going to see the girl or her relations. Jude, a ridiculously affectionate fellow, promised nothing, put the photograph on the mantel-piece, kissed it

—he did not know why—and felt more at home. She seemed to look down and preside over his tea. It was cheering—the one thing uniting him to the emotions of the living city.

There remained the schoolmaster—probably now a reverend parson. But he could not possibly hunt up such a respectable man just yet; so raw and unpolished was his condition, so precarious were his fortunes. Thus he still remained in loneliness. Although people moved round him he virtually saw none. Not as yet having mingled with the active life of the place it was largely non-existent to him. But the saints and prophets in the window-tracery, the paintings in the galleries, the statues, the busts, the gargoyles, the corbel-heads—these seemed to breathe his atmosphere. Like all newcomers to a spot on which the past is deeply graven he heard that past announcing itself with an emphasis altogether unsuspected by, and even incredible to, the habitual residents.

For many days he haunted the cloisters and quadrangles of the colleges at odd minutes in passing them, surprised by impish echoes of his own footsteps, smart as the blows of a mallet. The Christminster “sentiment,” as it had been called, ate further and further into him; till he probably knew more about those buildings materially, artistically, and historically, than any one of their inmates.

It was not till now, when he found himself actually on the spot of his enthusiasm, that Jude perceived how far away from the object of that enthusiasm he really was. Only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common mental life; men who had nothing to do from morning till night but to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. Only a wall—but what a wall!

Every day, every hour, as he went in search of labour, he saw them going and coming also, rubbed shoulders with them, heard their voices, marked their movements. The conversation of some of the more thoughtful among them seemed oftentimes, owing to his long and persistent preparation for this place, to be peculiarly akin to his own thoughts. Yet he was as far from them as if he had been at the antipodes. Of course he was. He was a young workman in a white blouse, and with stone-dust in the creases of his clothes; and in passing him they did not even see him, or hear him, rather saw through him as through a pane of glass at their familiars beyond. Whatever they were to him, he to them was

not on the spot at all; and yet he had fancied he would be close to their lives by coming there.

But the future lay ahead after all; and if he could only be so fortunate as to get into good employment he would put up with the inevitable. So he thanked God for his health and strength, and took courage. For the present he was outside the gates of everything, colleges included: perhaps some day he would be inside. Those palaces of light and leading; he might some day look down on the world through their panes.

At length he did receive a message from the stone-mason's yard—that a job was waiting for him. It was his first encouragement, and he closed with the offer promptly.

He was young and strong, or he never could have executed with such zest the undertakings to which he now applied himself, since they involved reading most of the night after working all the day. First he bought a shaded lamp for four and six-pence, and obtained a good light. Then he got pens, paper, and such other necessary books as he had been unable to obtain elsewhere. Then, to the consternation of his landlady, he shifted all the furniture of his room—a single one for living and sleeping—rigged up a curtain on a rope across the middle, to make a double chamber out of one, hung up a thick blind that nobody should know how he was curtailing the hours of sleep, laid out his books, and sat down.

Having been deeply encumbered by marrying, getting a cottage, and buying the furniture which had disappeared in the wake of his wife, he had never been able to save any money since the time of those disastrous ventures, and till his wages began to come in he was obliged to live in the narrowest way. After buying a book or two he could not even afford himself a fire; and when the nights reeked with the raw and cold air from the Meadows he sat over his lamp in a great-coat, hat, and woollen gloves.

From his window he could perceive the spire of the cathedral, and the ogee dome under which resounded the great bell of the city. The tall tower, tall belfry windows, and tall pinnacles of the college by the bridge he could also get a glimpse of by going to the staircase. These objects he used as stimulants when his faith in the future was dim.

Like enthusiasts in general he made no inquiries into details of procedure. Picking up general notions from casual acquaintance, he never dwelt upon them. For the present, he said to himself, the one thing

necessary was to get ready by accumulating money and knowledge, and await whatever chances were afforded to such an one of becoming a son of the University. "For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it." His desire absorbed him, and left no part of him to weigh its practicability.

At this time he received a nervously anxious letter from his poor old aunt, on the subject which had previously distressed her—a fear that Jude would not be strong-minded enough to keep away from his cousin Sue Bridehead and her relations. Sue's father, his aunt believed, had gone back to London, but the girl remained at Christminster. To make her still more objectionable, she was an artist or designer of some sort in what was called an ecclesiastical warehouse, which was a perfect seed-bed of idolatry, and she was no doubt abandoned to mummeries on that account—if not quite a Papist. (Miss Drusilla Fawley was of her date, Evangelical.)

As Jude was rather on an intellectual track than a theological, this news of Sue's probable opinions did not much influence him one way or the other, but the clue to her whereabouts was decidedly interesting. With an altogether singular pleasure he walked at his earliest spare minutes past the shops answering to his great-aunt's description; and beheld in one of them a young girl sitting behind a desk, who was suspiciously like the original of the portrait. He ventured to enter on a trivial errand, and having made his purchase lingered on the scene. The shop seemed to be kept entirely by women. It contained Anglican books, stationery, texts, and fancy goods: little plaster angels on brackets, Gothic-framed pictures of saints, ebony crosses that were almost crucifixes, prayer-books that were almost missals. He felt very shy of looking at the girl in the desk; she was so pretty that he could not believe it possible that she should belong to him. Then she spoke to one of the two older women behind the counter; and he recognized in the accents certain qualities of his own voice; softened and sweetened, but his own. What was she doing? He stole a glance round. Before her lay a piece of zinc, cut to the shape of a scroll three or four feet long, and coated with a dead-surface paint on one side. Hereon she was designing or illuminating, in characters of Church text, the single word

## A L L E L U J A

“A sweet, saintly, Christian business, hers!” thought he.

Her presence here was now fairly enough explained, her skill in work of this sort having no doubt been acquired from her father’s occupation as an ecclesiastical worker in metal. The lettering on which she was engaged was clearly intended to be fixed up in some chancel to assist devotion.

He came out. It would have been easy to speak to her there and then, but it seemed scarcely honourable towards his aunt to disregard her request so incontinently. She had used him roughly, but she had brought him up: and the fact of her being powerless to control him lent a pathetic force to a wish that would have been inoperative as an argument.

So Jude gave no sign. He would not call upon Sue just yet. He had other reasons against doing so when he had walked away. She seemed so dainty beside himself in his rough working-jacket and dusty trousers that he felt he was as yet unready to encounter her, as he had felt about Mr. Phillotson. And how possible it was that she had inherited the antipathies of her family, and would scorn him, as far as a Christian could, particularly when he had told her that unpleasant part of his history which had resulted in his becoming enchained to one of her own sex whom she would certainly not admire.

Thus he kept watch over her, and liked to feel she was there. The consciousness of her living presence stimulated him. But she remained more or less an ideal character, about whose form he began to weave curious and fantastic day-dreams.

Between two and three weeks afterwards Jude was engaged with some more men, outside Crozier College in Old-time Street, in getting a block of worked freestone from a waggon across the pavement, before hoisting it to the parapet which they were repairing. Standing in position the head man said, “Spaik when he heave! He-ho!” And they heaved.

All of a sudden, as he lifted, his cousin stood close to his elbow, pausing a moment on the bend of her foot till the obstructing object should have been removed. She looked right into his face with liquid, untranslatable



eyes, that combined, or seemed to him to combine, keenness with tenderness, and mystery with both, their expression, as well as that of her lips, taking its life from some words just spoken to a companion, and being carried on into his face quite unconsciously. She no more observed his presence than that of the dust-motes which his manipulations raised into the sunbeams.

His closeness to her was so suggestive that he trembled, and turned his face away with a shy instinct to prevent her recognizing him, though as she had never once seen him she could not possibly do so; and might very well never have heard even his name. He could perceive that though she was a country-girl at bottom, a latter girlhood of some years in London, and a womanhood here, had taken all rawness out of her.

When she was gone he continued his work, reflecting on her. He had been so caught by her influence that he had taken no count of her general mould and build. He remembered now that she was not a large figure, that she was light and slight, of the type dubbed elegant. That was about all he had seen. There was nothing statuesque in her; all was nervous motion. She was mobile, living, yet a painter might not have called her handsome or beautiful. But the much that she was surprised him. She was quite a long way removed from the rusticity that was his. How could one of his cross-grained, unfortunate, almost accursed stock, have contrived to reach this pitch of niceness? London had done it, he supposed.

From this moment the emotion which had been accumulating in his breast as the bottled-up effect of solitude and the poetized locality he dwelt in, insensibly began to precipitate itself on this half-visionary form; and he perceived that, whatever his obedient wish in a contrary direction, he would soon be unable to resist the desire to make himself known to her.

He affected to think of her quite in a family way, since there were crushing reasons why he should not and could not think of her in any other.

The first reason was that he was married, and it would be wrong. The second was that they were cousins. It was not well for cousins to fall in love even when circumstances seemed to favour the passion. The third: even were he free, in a family like his own where marriage usually meant a tragic sadness, marriage with a blood-relation would duplicate the adverse conditions, and a tragic sadness might be intensified to a tragic horror.

Therefore, again, he would have to think of Sue with only a relation's mutual interest in one belonging to him; regard her in a practical way as some one to be proud of; to talk and nod to; later on, to be invited to tea by, the emotion spent on her being rigorously that of a kinsman and well-wisher. So would she be to him a kindly star, an elevating power, a companion in Anglican worship, a tender friend.

### III

But under the various deterrent influences Jude's instinct was to approach her timidly, and the next Sunday he went to the morning service in the Cathedral church of Cardinal College to gain a further view of her, for he had found that she frequently attended there.

She did not come, and he awaited her in the afternoon, which was finer. He knew that if she came at all she would approach the building along the eastern side of the great green quadrangle from which it was accessible, and he stood in a corner while the bell was going. A few minutes before the hour for service she appeared as one of the figures walking along under the college walls, and at sight of her he advanced up the side opposite, and followed her into the building, more than ever glad that he had not as yet revealed himself. To see her, and to be himself unseen and unknown, was enough for him at present.

He lingered awhile in the vestibule, and the service was some way advanced when he was put into a seat. It was a louring, mournful, still afternoon, when a religion of some sort seems a necessity to ordinary practical men, and not only a luxury of the emotional and leisured classes. In the dim light and the baffling glare of the clerestory windows he could discern the opposite worshippers indistinctly only, but he saw that Sue was among them. He had not long discovered the exact seat that she occupied when the chanting of the 119th Psalm in which the choir was engaged reached its second part, *In quo corriget*, the organ changing to a pathetic Gregorian tune as the singers gave forth:

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?

It was the very question that was engaging Jude's attention at this moment. What a wicked worthless fellow he had been to give vent as he had done to an animal passion for a woman, and allow it to lead to such disastrous consequences; then to think of putting an end to himself; then to

go recklessly and get drunk. The great waves of pedal music tumbled round the choir, and, nursed on the supernatural as he had been, it is not wonderful that he could hardly believe that the psalm was not specially set by some regardful Providence for this moment of his first entry into the solemn building. And yet it was the ordinary psalm for the twenty-fourth evening of the month.

The girl for whom he was beginning to nourish an extraordinary tenderness was at this time ensphered by the same harmonies as those which floated into his ears; and the thought was a delight to him. She was probably a frequenter of this place, and, steeped body and soul in church sentiment as she must be by occupation and habit, had, no doubt, much in common with him. To an impressionable and lonely young man the consciousness of having at last found anchorage for his thoughts, which promised to supply both social and spiritual possibilities, was like the dew of Hermon, and he remained throughout the service in a sustaining atmosphere of ecstasy.

Though he was loth to suspect it, some people might have said to him that the atmosphere blew as distinctly from Cyprus as from Galilee.

Jude waited till she had left her seat and passed under the screen before he himself moved. She did not look towards him, and by the time he reached the door she was half-way down the broad path. Being dressed up in his Sunday suit he was inclined to follow her and reveal himself. But he was not quite ready; and, alas, ought he to do so with the kind of feeling that was awakening in him?

For though it had seemed to have an ecclesiastical basis during the service, and he had persuaded himself that such was the case, he could not altogether be blind to the real nature of the magnetism. She was such a stranger that the kinship was affectation, and he said, "It can't be! I, a man with a wife, must not know her!" Still Sue *was* his own kin, and the fact of his having a wife, even though she was not in evidence in this hemisphere, might be a help in one sense. It would put all thought of a tender wish on his part out of Sue's mind, and make her intercourse with him free and fearless. It was with some heartache that he saw how little he cared for the freedom and fearlessness that would result in her from such knowledge.

Some little time before the date of this service in the cathedral the pretty, liquid-eyed, light-footed young woman, Sue Bridehead, had an

afternoon's holiday, and leaving the ecclesiastical establishment in which she not only assisted but lodged, took a walk into the country with a book in her hand. It was one of those cloudless days which sometimes occur in Wessex and elsewhere between days of cold and wet, as if intercalated by caprice of the weather-god. She went along for a mile or two until she came to much higher ground than that of the city she had left behind her. The road passed between green fields, and coming to a stile Sue paused there, to finish the page she was reading, and then looked back at the towers and domes and pinnacles new and old.

On the other side of the stile, in the footpath, she beheld a foreigner with black hair and a sallow face, sitting on the grass beside a large square board whereon were fixed, as closely as they could stand, a number of plaster statuettes, some of them bronzed, which he was re-arranging before proceeding with them on his way. They were in the main reduced copies of ancient marbles, and comprised divinities of a very different character from those the girl was accustomed to see portrayed, among them being a Venus of standard pattern, a Diana, and, of the other sex, Apollo, Bacchus, and Mars. Though the figures were many yards away from her the southwest sun brought them out so brilliantly against the green herbage that she could discern their contours with luminous distinctness; and being almost in a line between herself and the church towers of the city they awoke in her an oddly foreign and contrasting set of ideas by comparison. The man rose, and, seeing her, politely took off his cap, and cried, "I-i-i-mages!" in an accent that agreed with his appearance. In a moment he dexterously lifted upon his knee the great board with its assembled notabilities divine and human, and raised it to the top of his head, bringing them on to her and resting the board on the stile. First he offered her his smaller wares—the busts of kings and queens, then a minstrel, then a winged Cupid. She shook her head.

"How much are these two?" she said, touching with her finger the Venus and the Apollo—the largest figures on the tray.

He said she should have them for ten shillings.

"I cannot afford that," said Sue. She offered considerably less, and to her surprise the image-man drew them from their wire stay and handed them over the stile. She clasped them as treasures.

When they were paid for, and the man had gone, she began to be concerned as to what she should do with them. They seemed so very large now that they were in her possession, and so very naked. Being of a nervous temperament she trembled at her enterprise. When she handled them the white pipeclay came off on her gloves and jacket. After carrying them along a little way openly an idea came to her, and, pulling some huge burdock leaves, parsley, and other rank growths from the hedge, she wrapped up her burden as well as she could in these, so that what she carried appeared to be an enormous armful of green stuff gathered by a zealous lover of nature.

“Well, anything is better than those everlasting church fallals!” she said. But she was still in a trembling state, and seemed almost to wish she had not bought the figures.

Occasionally peeping inside the leaves to see that Venus’s arm was not broken, she entered with her heathen load into the most Christian city in the country by an obscure street running parallel to the main one, and round a corner to the side door of the establishment to which she was attached. Her purchases were taken straight up to her own chamber, and she at once attempted to lock them in a box that was her very own property; but finding them too cumbersome she wrapped them in large sheets of brown paper, and stood them on the floor in a corner.

The mistress of the house, Miss Fontover, was an elderly lady in spectacles, dressed almost like an abbess; a dab at Ritual, as become one of her business, and a worshipper at the ceremonial church of St. Silas, in the suburb of Beersheba before-mentioned, which Jude also had begun to attend. She was the daughter of a clergyman in reduced circumstances, and at his death, which had occurred several years before this date, she boldly avoided penury by taking over a little shop of church requisites and developing it to its present creditable proportions. She wore a cross and beads round her neck as her only ornament, and knew the Christian Year by heart.

She now came to call Sue to tea, and, finding that the girl did not respond for a moment, entered the room just as the other was hastily putting a string round each parcel.

“Something you have been buying, Miss Bridehead?” she asked, regarding the enwrapped objects.

“Yes—just something to ornament my room,” said Sue.

“Well, I should have thought I had put enough here already,” said Miss Fontover, looking round at the Gothic-framed prints of saints, the Church-text scrolls, and other articles which, having become too stale to sell, had been used to furnish this obscure chamber. “What is it? How bulky!” She tore a little hole, about as big as a wafer, in the brown paper, and tried to peep in. “Why, statuary? Two figures? Where did you get them?”

“Oh—I bought them of a travelling man who sells casts—”

“Two saints?”

“Yes.”

“What ones?”

“St. Peter and St.—St. Mary Magdalen.”

“Well—now come down to tea, and go and finish that organ-text, if there’s light enough afterwards.”

These little obstacles to the indulgence of what had been the merest passing fancy created in Sue a great zest for unpacking her objects and looking at them; and at bedtime, when she was sure of being undisturbed, she unrobed the divinities in comfort. Placing the pair of figures on the chest of drawers, a candle on each side of them, she withdrew to the bed, flung herself down thereon, and began reading a book she had taken from her box, which Miss Fontover knew nothing of. It was a volume of Gibbon, and she read the chapter dealing with the reign of Julian the Apostate. Occasionally she looked up at the statuettes, which appeared strange and out of place, there happening to be a Calvary print hanging between them, and, as if the scene suggested the action, she at length jumped up and withdrew another book from her box—a volume of verse—and turned to the familiar poem—

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean:  
The world has grown grey from thy breath!

which she read to the end. Presently she put out the candles, undressed, and finally extinguished her own light.

She was of an age which usually sleeps soundly, yet to-night she kept waking up, and every time she opened her eyes there was enough diffused

light from the street to show her the white plaster figures, standing on the chest of drawers in odd contrast to their environment of text and martyr, and the Gothic-framed Crucifix-picture that was only discernible now as a Latin cross, the figure thereon being obscured by the shades.

On one of these occasions the church clocks struck some small hour. It fell upon the ears of another person who sat bending over his books at a not very distant spot in the same city. Being Saturday night the morrow was one on which Jude had not set his alarm-clock to call him at his usually early time, and hence he had stayed up, as was his custom, two or three hours later than he could afford to do on any other day of the week. Just then he was earnestly reading from his Griesbach's text. At the very time that Sue was tossing and staring at her figures, the policeman and belated citizens passing along under his window might have heard, if they had stood still, strange syllables mumbled with fervour within—words that had for Jude an indescribable enchantment: inexplicable sounds something like these:—

*“All hemin heis Theos ho Pater, ex hou ta panta, kai hemeis eis auton:”*

Till the sounds rolled with reverent loudness, as a book was heard to close:—

*“Kai heis Kurios Iesous Christos, di hou ta panta kai hemeis di autou!”*



## IV

He was a handy man at his trade, an all-round man, as artizans in country-towns are apt to be. In London the man who carves the boss or knob of leafage declines to cut the fragment of moulding which merges in that leafage, as if it were a degradation to do the second half of one whole. When there was not much Gothic moulding for Jude to run, or much window-tracery on the bankers, he would go out lettering monuments or tombstones, and take a pleasure in the change of handiwork.

The next time that he saw her was when he was on a ladder executing a job of this sort inside one of the churches. There was a short morning service, and when the parson entered Jude came down from his ladder, and sat with the half-dozen people forming the congregation, till the prayer should be ended, and he could resume his tapping. He did not observe till the service was half over that one of the women was Sue, who had perforce accompanied the elderly Miss Fontover thither.

Jude sat watching her pretty shoulders, her easy, curiously nonchalant risings and sittings, and her perfunctory genuflexions, and thought what a help such an Anglican would have been to him in happier circumstances. It was not so much his anxiety to get on with his work that made him go up to it immediately the worshipers began to take their leave: it was that he dared not, in this holy spot, confront the woman who was beginning to influence him in such an indescribable manner. Those three enormous reasons why he must not attempt intimate acquaintance with Sue Bridehead, now that his interest in her had shown itself to be unmistakably of a sexual kind, loomed as stubbornly as ever. But it was also obvious that man could not live by work alone; that the particular man Jude, at any rate, wanted something to love. Some men would have rushed incontinently to her, snatched the pleasure of easy friendship which she could hardly refuse, and have left the rest to chance. Not so Jude—at first.

But as the days, and still more particularly the lonely evenings, dragged along, he found himself, to his moral consternation, to be thinking more of

her instead of thinking less of her, and experiencing a fearful bliss in doing what was erratic, informal, and unexpected. Surrounded by her influence all day, walking past the spots she frequented, he was always thinking of her, and was obliged to own to himself that his conscience was likely to be the loser in this battle.

To be sure she was almost an ideality to him still. Perhaps to know her would be to cure himself of this unexpected and unauthorized passion. A voice whispered that, though he desired to know her, he did not desire to be cured.

There was not the least doubt that from his own orthodox point of view the situation was growing immoral. For Sue to be the loved one of a man who was licensed by the laws of his country to love Arabella and none other unto his life's end, was a pretty bad second beginning when the man was bent on such a course as Jude purposed. This conviction was so real with him that one day when, as was frequent, he was at work in a neighbouring village church alone, he felt it to be his duty to pray against his weakness. But much as he wished to be an exemplar in these things he could not get on. It was quite impossible, he found, to ask to be delivered from temptation when your heart's desire was to be tempted unto seventy times seven. So he excused himself. "After all," he said, "it is not altogether an *erotolepsy* that is the matter with me, as at that first time. I can see that she is exceptionally bright; and it is partly a wish for intellectual sympathy, and a craving for loving-kindness in my solitude." Thus he went on adoring her, fearing to realize that it was human perversity. For whatever Sue's virtues, talents, or ecclesiastical saturation, it was certain that those items were not at all the cause of his affection for her.

On an afternoon at this time a young girl entered the stone-mason's yard with some hesitation, and, lifting her skirts to avoid draggling them in the white dust, crossed towards the office.

"That's a nice girl," said one of the men known as Uncle Joe.

"Who is she?" asked another.

"I don't know—I've seen her about here and there. Why, yes, she's the daughter of that clever chap Bridehead who did all the wrought ironwork at St. Silas' ten years ago, and went away to London afterwards. I don't know what he's doing now—not much I fancy—as she's come back here."

Meanwhile the young woman had knocked at the office door and asked if Mr. Jude Fawley was at work in the yard. It so happened that Jude had gone out somewhere or other that afternoon, which information she received with a look of disappointment, and went away immediately. When Jude returned they told him, and described her, whereupon he exclaimed, "Why—that's my cousin Sue!"

He looked along the street after her, but she was out of sight. He had no longer any thought of a conscientious avoidance of her, and resolved to call upon her that very evening. And when he reached his lodging he found a note from her—a first note—one of those documents which, simple and commonplace in themselves, are seen retrospectively to have been pregnant with impassioned consequences. The very unconsciousness of a looming drama which is shown in such innocent first epistles from women to men, or *vice versa*, makes them, when such a drama follows, and they are read over by the purple or lurid light of it, all the more impressive, solemn, and in cases, terrible.

Sue's was of the most artless and natural kind. She addressed him as her dear cousin Jude; said she had only just learnt by the merest accident that he was living in Christminster, and reproached him with not letting her know. They might have had such nice times together, she said, for she was thrown much upon herself, and had hardly any congenial friend. But now there was every probability of her soon going away, so that the chance of companionship would be lost perhaps for ever.

A cold sweat overspread Jude at the news that she was going away. That was a contingency he had never thought of, and it spurred him to write all the more quickly to her. He would meet her that very evening, he said, one hour from the time of writing, at the cross in the pavement which marked the spot of the Martyrdoms.

When he had despatched the note by a boy he regretted that in his hurry he should have suggested to her to meet him out of doors, when he might have said he would call upon her. It was, in fact, the country custom to meet thus, and nothing else had occurred to him. Arabella had been met in the same way, unfortunately, and it might not seem respectable to a dear girl like Sue. However, it could not be helped now, and he moved towards the point a few minutes before the hour, under the glimmer of the newly lighted lamps.

The broad street was silent, and almost deserted, although it was not late. He saw a figure on the other side, which turned out to be hers, and they both converged towards the crossmark at the same moment. Before either had reached it she called out to him:

“I am not going to meet you just there, for the first time in my life! Come further on.”

The voice, though positive and silvery, had been tremulous. They walked on in parallel lines, and, waiting her pleasure, Jude watched till she showed signs of closing in, when he did likewise, the place being where the carriers’ carts stood in the daytime, though there was none on the spot then.

“I am sorry that I asked you to meet me, and didn’t call,” began Jude with the bashfulness of a lover. “But I thought it would save time if we were going to walk.”

“Oh—I don’t mind that,” she said with the freedom of a friend. “I have really no place to ask anybody in to. What I meant was that the place you chose was so horrid—I suppose I ought not to say horrid—I mean gloomy and inauspicious in its associations... But isn’t it funny to begin like this, when I don’t know you yet?” She looked him up and down curiously, though Jude did not look much at her.

“You seem to know me more than I know you,” she added.

“Yes—I have seen you now and then.”

“And you knew who I was, and didn’t speak? And now I am going away!”

“Yes. That’s unfortunate. I have hardly any other friend. I have, indeed, one very old friend here somewhere, but I don’t quite like to call on him just yet. I wonder if you know anything of him—Mr. Phillotson? A parson somewhere about the county I think he is.”

“No—I only know of one Mr. Phillotson. He lives a little way out in the country, at Lumsdon. He’s a village schoolmaster.”

“Ah! I wonder if he’s the same. Surely it is impossible! Only a schoolmaster still! Do you know his Christian name—is it Richard?”

“Yes—it is; I’ve directed books to him, though I’ve never seen him.”

“Then he couldn’t do it!”

Jude's countenance fell, for how could he succeed in an enterprise wherein the great Phillotson had failed? He would have had a day of despair if the news had not arrived during his sweet Sue's presence, but even at this moment he had visions of how Phillotson's failure in the grand university scheme would depress him when she had gone.

"As we are going to take a walk, suppose we go and call upon him?" said Jude suddenly. "It is not late."

She agreed, and they went along up a hill, and through some prettily wooded country. Presently the embattled tower and square turret of the church rose into the sky, and then the school-house. They inquired of a person in the street if Mr. Phillotson was likely to be at home, and were informed that he was always at home. A knock brought him to the school-house door, with a candle in his hand and a look of inquiry on his face, which had grown thin and careworn since Jude last set eyes on him.

That after all these years the meeting with Mr. Phillotson should be of this homely complexion destroyed at one stroke the halo which had surrounded the school-master's figure in Jude's imagination ever since their parting. It created in him at the same time a sympathy with Phillotson as an obviously much chastened and disappointed man. Jude told him his name, and said he had come to see him as an old friend who had been kind to him in his youthful days.

"I don't remember you in the least," said the school-master thoughtfully. "You were one of my pupils, you say? Yes, no doubt; but they number so many thousands by this time of my life, and have naturally changed so much, that I remember very few except the quite recent ones."

"It was out at Marygreen," said Jude, wishing he had not come.

"Yes. I was there a short time. And is this an old pupil, too?"

"No—that's my cousin... I wrote to you for some grammars, if you recollect, and you sent them?"

"Ah—yes!—I do dimly recall that incident."

"It was very kind of you to do it. And it was you who first started me on that course. On the morning you left Marygreen, when your goods were on the waggon, you wished me good-bye, and said your scheme was to be a university man and enter the Church—that a degree was the necessary hall-mark of one who wanted to do anything as a theologian or teacher."

“I remember I thought all that privately; but I wonder I did not keep my own counsel. The idea was given up years ago.”

“I have never forgotten it. It was that which brought me to this part of the country, and out here to see you to-night.”

“Come in,” said Phillotson. “And your cousin, too.”

They entered the parlour of the school-house, where there was a lamp with a paper shade, which threw the light down on three or four books. Phillotson took it off, so that they could see each other better, and the rays fell on the nervous little face and vivacious dark eyes and hair of Sue, on the earnest features of her cousin, and on the schoolmaster’s own maturer face and figure, showing him to be a spare and thoughtful personage of five-and-forty, with a thin-lipped, somewhat refined mouth, a slightly stooping habit, and a black frock coat, which from continued frictions shone a little at the shoulder-blades, the middle of the back, and the elbows.

The old friendship was imperceptibly renewed, the schoolmaster speaking of his experiences, and the cousins of theirs. He told them that he still thought of the Church sometimes, and that though he could not enter it as he had intended to do in former years he might enter it as a licentiate. Meanwhile, he said, he was comfortable in his present position, though he was in want of a pupil-teacher.

They did not stay to supper, Sue having to be indoors before it grew late, and the road was retraced to Christminster. Though they had talked of nothing more than general subjects, Jude was surprised to find what a revelation of woman his cousin was to him. She was so vibrant that everything she did seemed to have its source in feeling. An exciting thought would make her walk ahead so fast that he could hardly keep up with her; and her sensitiveness on some points was such that it might have been misread as vanity. It was with heart-sickness he perceived that, while her sentiments towards him were those of the frankest friendliness only, he loved her more than before becoming acquainted with her; and the gloom of the walk home lay not in the night overhead, but in the thought of her departure.

“Why must you leave Christminster?” he said regretfully. “How can you do otherwise than cling to a city in whose history such men as Newman, Pusey, Ward, Keble, loom so large!”

“Yes—they do. Though how large do they loom in the history of the world? ... What a funny reason for caring to stay! I should never have thought of it!” She laughed.

“Well—I must go,” she continued. “Miss Fontover, one of the partners whom I serve, is offended with me, and I with her; and it is best to go.”

“How did that happen?”

“She broke some statuary of mine.”

“Oh? Wilfully?”

“Yes. She found it in my room, and though it was my property she threw it on the floor and stamped on it, because it was not according to her taste, and ground the arms and the head of one of the figures all to bits with her heel—a horrid thing!”

“Too Catholic-Apostolic for her, I suppose? No doubt she called them popish images and talked of the invocation of saints.”

“No... No, she didn’t do that. She saw the matter quite differently.”

“Ah! Then I am surprised!”

“Yes. It was for quite some other reason that she didn’t like my patron-saints. So I was led to retort upon her; and the end of it was that I resolved not to stay, but to get into an occupation in which I shall be more independent.”

“Why don’t you try teaching again? You once did, I heard.”

“I never thought of resuming it; for I was getting on as an art-designer.”

“*Do* let me ask Mr. Phillotson to let you try your hand in his school? If you like it, and go to a training college, and become a first-class certificated mistress, you get twice as large an income as any designer or church artist, and twice as much freedom.”

“Well—ask him. Now I must go in. Good-bye, dear Jude! I am so glad we have met at last. We needn’t quarrel because our parents did, need we?”

Jude did not like to let her see quite how much he agreed with her, and went his way to the remote street in which he had his lodging.

To keep Sue Bridehead near him was now a desire which operated without regard of consequences, and the next evening he again set out for

Lumsdon, fearing to trust to the persuasive effects of a note only. The school-master was unprepared for such a proposal.

“What I rather wanted was a second year’s transfer, as it is called,” he said. “Of course your cousin would do, personally; but she has had no experience. Oh—she has, has she? Does she really think of adopting teaching as a profession?”

Jude said she was disposed to do so, he thought, and his ingenious arguments on her natural fitness for assisting Mr. Phillotson, of which Jude knew nothing whatever, so influenced the schoolmaster that he said he would engage her, assuring Jude as a friend that unless his cousin really meant to follow on in the same course, and regarded this step as the first stage of an apprenticeship, of which her training in a normal school would be the second stage, her time would be wasted quite, the salary being merely nominal.

The day after this visit Phillotson received a letter from Jude, containing the information that he had again consulted his cousin, who took more and more warmly to the idea of tuition; and that she had agreed to come. It did not occur for a moment to the schoolmaster and recluse that Jude’s ardour in promoting the arrangement arose from any other feelings towards Sue than the instinct of co-operation common among members of the same family.



## V

The schoolmaster sat in his homely dwelling attached to the school, both being modern erections; and he looked across the way at the old house in which his teacher Sue had a lodging. The arrangement had been concluded very quickly. A pupil-teacher who was to have been transferred to Mr. Phillotson's school had failed him, and Sue had been taken as stop-gap. All such provisional arrangements as these could only last till the next annual visit of H.M. Inspector, whose approval was necessary to make them permanent. Having taught for some two years in London, though she had abandoned that vocation of late, Miss Bridehead was not exactly a novice, and Phillotson thought there would be no difficulty in retaining her services, which he already wished to do, though she had only been with him three or four weeks. He had found her quite as bright as Jude had described her; and what master-tradesman does not wish to keep an apprentice who saves him half his labour?

It was a little over half-past eight o'clock in the morning and he was waiting to see her cross the road to the school, when he would follow. At twenty minutes to nine she did cross, a light hat tossed on her head; and he watched her as a curiosity. A new emanation, which had nothing to do with her skill as a teacher, seemed to surround her this morning. He went to the school also, and Sue remained governing her class at the other end of the room, all day under his eye. She certainly was an excellent teacher.

It was part of his duty to give her private lessons in the evening, and some article in the Code made it necessary that a respectable, elderly woman should be present at these lessons when the teacher and the taught were of different sexes. Richard Phillotson thought of the absurdity of the regulation in this case, when he was old enough to be the girl's father; but he faithfully acted up to it; and sat down with her in a room where Mrs. Hawes, the widow at whose house Sue lodged, occupied herself with sewing. The regulation was, indeed, not easy to evade, for there was no other sitting-room in the dwelling.

Sometimes as she figured—it was arithmetic that they were working at—she would involuntarily glance up with a little inquiring smile at him, as if she assumed that, being the master, he must perceive all that was passing in her brain, as right or wrong. Phillotson was not really thinking of the arithmetic at all, but of her, in a novel way which somehow seemed strange to him as preceptor. Perhaps she knew that he was thinking of her thus.

For a few weeks their work had gone on with a monotony which in itself was a delight to him. Then it happened that the children were to be taken to Christminster to see an itinerant exhibition, in the shape of a model of Jerusalem, to which schools were admitted at a penny a head in the interests of education. They marched along the road two and two, she beside her class with her simple cotton sunshade, her little thumb cocked up against its stem; and Phillotson behind in his long dangling coat, handling his walking-stick genteelly, in the musing mood which had come over him since her arrival. The afternoon was one of sun and dust, and when they entered the exhibition room few people were present but themselves. The model of the ancient city stood in the middle of the apartment, and the proprietor, with a fine religious philanthropy written on his features, walked round it with a pointer in his hand, showing the young people the various quarters and places known to them by name from reading their Bibles; Mount Moriah, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the City of Zion, the walls and the gates, outside one of which there was a large mound like a tumulus, and on the mound a little white cross. The spot, he said, was Calvary.

“I think,” said Sue to the schoolmaster, as she stood with him a little in the background, “that this model, elaborate as it is, is a very imaginary production. How does anybody know that Jerusalem was like this in the time of Christ? I am sure this man doesn’t.”

“It is made after the best conjectural maps, based on actual visits to the city as it now exists.”

“I fancy we have had enough of Jerusalem,” she said, “considering we are not descended from the Jews. There was nothing first-rate about the place, or people, after all—as there was about Athens, Rome, Alexandria, and other old cities.”

“But my dear girl, consider what it is to us!”

She was silent, for she was easily repressed; and then perceived behind the group of children clustered round the model a young man in a white flannel jacket, his form being bent so low in his intent inspection of the Valley of Jehoshaphat that his face was almost hidden from view by the Mount of Olives. "Look at your cousin Jude," continued the schoolmaster. "He doesn't think we have had enough of Jerusalem!"

"Ah—I didn't see him!" she cried in her quick, light voice. "Jude—how seriously you are going into it!"

Jude started up from his reverie, and saw her. "Oh—Sue!" he said, with a glad flush of embarrassment. "These are your school-children, of course! I saw that schools were admitted in the afternoons, and thought you might come; but I got so deeply interested that I didn't remember where I was. How it carries one back, doesn't it! I could examine it for hours, but I have only a few minutes, unfortunately; for I am in the middle of a job out here."

"Your cousin is so terribly clever that she criticizes it unmercifully," said Phillotson, with good-humoured satire. "She is quite sceptical as to its correctness."

"No, Mr. Phillotson, I am not—altogether! I hate to be what is called a clever girl—there are too many of that sort now!" answered Sue sensitively. "I only meant—I don't know what I meant—except that it was what you don't understand!"

"*I* know your meaning," said Jude ardently (although he did not). "And I think you are quite right."

"That's a good Jude—I know *you* believe in me!" She impulsively seized his hand, and leaving a reproachful look on the schoolmaster turned away to Jude, her voice revealing a tremor which she herself felt to be absurdly uncalled for by sarcasm so gentle. She had not the least conception how the hearts of the twain went out to her at this momentary revelation of feeling, and what a complication she was building up thereby in the futures of both.

The model wore too much of an educational aspect for the children not to tire of it soon, and a little later in the afternoon they were all marched back to Lumsdon, Jude returning to his work. He watched the juvenile flock in their clean frocks and pinafores, filing down the street towards the country beside Phillotson and Sue, and a sad, dissatisfied sense of being

out of the scheme of the latter's lives had possession of him. Phillotson had invited him to walk out and see them on Friday evening, when there would be no lessons to give to Sue, and Jude had eagerly promised to avail himself of the opportunity.

Meanwhile the scholars and teachers moved homewards, and the next day, on looking on the blackboard in Sue's class, Phillotson was surprised to find upon it, skilfully drawn in chalk, a perspective view of Jerusalem, with every building shown in its place.

"I thought you took no interest in the model, and hardly looked at it?" he said.

"I hardly did," said she, "but I remembered that much of it."

"It is more than I had remembered myself."

Her Majesty's school-inspector was at that time paying "surprise-visits" in this neighbourhood to test the teaching unawares; and two days later, in the middle of the morning lessons, the latch of the door was softly lifted, and in walked my gentleman, the king of terrors—to pupil-teachers.

To Mr. Phillotson the surprise was not great; like the lady in the story, he had been played that trick too many times to be unprepared. But Sue's class was at the further end of the room, and her back was towards the entrance; the inspector therefore came and stood behind her and watched her teaching some half-minute before she became aware of his presence. She turned, and realized that an oft-dreaded moment had come. The effect upon her timidity was such that she uttered a cry of fright. Phillotson, with a strange instinct of solicitude quite beyond his control, was at her side just in time to prevent her falling from faintness. She soon recovered herself, and laughed; but when the inspector had gone there was a reaction, and she was so white that Phillotson took her into his room, and gave her some brandy to bring her round. She found him holding her hand.

"You ought to have told me," she gasped petulantly, "that one of the inspector's surprise-visits was imminent! Oh, what shall I do! Now he'll write and tell the managers that I am no good, and I shall be disgraced for ever!"

"He won't do that, my dear little girl. You are the best teacher ever I had!"

He looked so gently at her that she was moved, and regretted that she had upbraided him. When she was better she went home.

Jude in the meantime had been waiting impatiently for Friday. On both Wednesday and Thursday he had been so much under the influence of his desire to see her that he walked after dark some distance along the road in the direction of the village, and, on returning to his room to read, found himself quite unable to concentrate his mind on the page. On Friday, as soon as he had got himself up as he thought Sue would like to see him, and made a hasty tea, he set out, notwithstanding that the evening was wet. The trees overhead deepened the gloom of the hour, and they dripped sadly upon him, impressing him with forebodings—illogical forebodings; for though he knew that he loved her he also knew that he could not be more to her than he was.

On turning the corner and entering the village the first sight that greeted his eyes was that of two figures under one umbrella coming out of the vicarage gate. He was too far back for them to notice him, but he knew in a moment that they were Sue and Phillotson. The latter was holding the umbrella over her head, and they had evidently been paying a visit to the vicar—probably on some business connected with the school work. And as they walked along the wet and deserted lane Jude saw Phillotson place his arm round the girl's waist; whereupon she gently removed it; but he replaced it; and she let it remain, looking quickly round her with an air of misgiving. She did not look absolutely behind her, and therefore did not see Jude, who sank into the hedge like one struck with a blight. There he remained hidden till they had reached Sue's cottage and she had passed in, Phillotson going on to the school hard by.

“Oh, he's too old for her—too old!” cried Jude in all the terrible sickness of hopeless, handicapped love.

He could not interfere. Was he not Arabella's? He was unable to go on further, and retraced his steps towards Christminster. Every tread of his feet seemed to say to him that he must on no account stand in the schoolmaster's way with Sue. Phillotson was perhaps twenty years her senior, but many a happy marriage had been made in such conditions of age. The ironical clinch to his sorrow was given by the thought that the intimacy between his cousin and the schoolmaster had been brought about entirely by himself.

## VI

Jude's old and embittered aunt lay unwell at Marygreen, and on the following Sunday he went to see her—a visit which was the result of a victorious struggle against his inclination to turn aside to the village of Lumsdon and obtain a miserable interview with his cousin, in which the word nearest his heart could not be spoken, and the sight which had tortured him could not be revealed.

His aunt was now unable to leave her bed, and a great part of Jude's short day was occupied in making arrangements for her comfort. The little bakery business had been sold to a neighbour, and with the proceeds of this and her savings she was comfortably supplied with necessaries and more, a widow of the same village living with her and ministering to her wants. It was not till the time had nearly come for him to leave that he obtained a quiet talk with her, and his words tended insensibly towards his cousin.

“Was Sue born here?”

“She was—in this room. They were living here at that time. What made 'ee ask that?”

“Oh—I wanted to know.”

“Now you've been seeing her!” said the harsh old woman. “And what did I tell 'ee?”

“Well—that I was not to see her.”

“Have you gossiped with her?”

“Yes.”

“Then don't keep it up. She was brought up by her father to hate her mother's family; and she'll look with no favour upon a working chap like you—a townish girl as she's become by now. I never cared much about her. A pert little thing, that's what she was too often, with her tight-strained nerves. Many's the time I've smacked her for her impertinence. Why, one

day when she was walking into the pond with her shoes and stockings off, and her petticoats pulled above her knees, afore I could cry out for shame, she said: ‘Move on, Aunty! This is no sight for modest eyes!’”

“She was a little child then.”

“She was twelve if a day.”

“Well—of course. But now she’s older she’s of a thoughtful, quivering, tender nature, and as sensitive as—”

“Jude!” cried his aunt, springing up in bed. “Don’t you be a fool about her!”

“No, no, of course not.”

“Your marrying that woman Arabella was about as bad a thing as a man could possibly do for himself by trying hard. But she’s gone to the other side of the world, and med never trouble you again. And there’ll be a worse thing if you, tied and bound as you be, should have a fancy for Sue. If your cousin is civil to you, take her civility for what it is worth. But anything more than a relation’s good wishes it is stark madness for ’ee to give her. If she’s townish and wanton it med bring ’ee to ruin.”

“Don’t say anything against her, Aunt! Don’t, please!”

A relief was afforded to him by the entry of the companion and nurse of his aunt, who must have been listening to the conversation, for she began a commentary on past years, introducing Sue Bridehead as a character in her recollections. She described what an odd little maid Sue had been when a pupil at the village school across the green opposite, before her father went to London—how, when the vicar arranged readings and recitations, she appeared on the platform, the smallest of them all, “in her little white frock, and shoes, and pink sash”; how she recited “Excelsior,” “There was a sound of revelry by night,” and “The Raven”; how during the delivery she would knit her little brows and glare round tragically, and say to the empty air, as if some real creature stood there—

“Ghastly, grim, and ancient Raven,  
wandering from the Nightly shore,  
Tell me what thy lordly name is  
on the Night’s Plutonian shore!”

“She’d bring up the nasty carrion bird that clear,” corroborated the sick woman reluctantly, “as she stood there in her little sash and things, that you could see un a’most before your very eyes. You too, Jude, had the same trick as a child of seeming to see things in the air.”

The neighbour told also of Sue’s accomplishments in other kinds:

“She was not exactly a tomboy, you know; but she could do things that only boys do, as a rule. I’ve seen her hit in and steer down the long slide on yonder pond, with her little curls blowing, one of a file of twenty moving along against the sky like shapes painted on glass, and up the back slide without stopping. All boys except herself; and then they’d cheer her, and then she’d say, ‘Don’t be saucy, boys,’ and suddenly run indoors. They’d try to coax her out again. But ’a wouldn’t come.”

These retrospective visions of Sue only made Jude the more miserable that he was unable to woo her, and he left the cottage of his aunt that day with a heavy heart. He would fain have glanced into the school to see the room in which Sue’s little figure had so glorified itself; but he checked his desire and went on.

It being Sunday evening some villagers who had known him during his residence here were standing in a group in their best clothes. Jude was startled by a salute from one of them:

“Ye’ve got there right enough, then!”

Jude showed that he did not understand.

“Why, to the seat of l’arning—the ‘City of Light’ you used to talk to us about as a little boy! Is it all you expected of it?”

“Yes; more!” cried Jude.

“When I was there once for an hour I didn’t see much in it for my part; auld crumbling buildings, half church, half almshouse, and not much going on at that.”

“You are wrong, John; there is more going on than meets the eye of a man walking through the streets. It is a unique centre of thought and religion—the intellectual and spiritual granary of this country. All that silence and absence of goings-on is the stillness of infinite motion—the sleep of the spinning-top, to borrow the simile of a well-known writer.”

“Oh, well, it med be all that, or it med not. As I say, I didn’t see nothing of it the hour or two I was there; so I went in and had a pot o’ beer, and a



penny loaf, and a ha'porth o' cheese, and waited till it was time to come along home. You've j'ined a college by this time, I suppose?"

"Ah, no!" said Jude. "I am almost as far off that as ever."

"How so?"

Jude slapped his pocket.

"Just what we thought! Such places be not for such as you—only for them with plenty o' money."

"There you are wrong," said Jude, with some bitterness. "They are for such ones!"

Still, the remark was sufficient to withdraw Jude's attention from the imaginative world he had lately inhabited, in which an abstract figure, more or less himself, was steeping his mind in a sublimation of the arts and sciences, and making his calling and election sure to a seat in the paradise of the learned. He was set regarding his prospects in a cold northern light. He had lately felt that he could not quite satisfy himself in his Greek—in the Greek of the dramatists particularly. So fatigued was he sometimes after his day's work that he could not maintain the critical attention necessary for thorough application. He felt that he wanted a coach—a friend at his elbow to tell him in a moment what sometimes would occupy him a weary month in extracting from unanticipative, clumsy books.

It was decidedly necessary to consider facts a little more closely than he had done of late. What was the good, after all, of using up his spare hours in a vague labour called "private study" without giving an outlook on practicabilities?

"I ought to have thought of this before," he said, as he journeyed back. "It would have been better never to have embarked in the scheme at all than to do it without seeing clearly where I am going, or what I am aiming at... This hovering outside the walls of the colleges, as if expecting some arm to be stretched out from them to lift me inside, won't do! I must get special information."

The next week accordingly he sought it. What at first seemed an opportunity occurred one afternoon when he saw an elderly gentleman, who had been pointed out as the head of a particular college, walking in the public path of a parklike enclosure near the spot at which Jude chanced

to be sitting. The gentleman came nearer, and Jude looked anxiously at his face. It seemed benign, considerate, yet rather reserved. On second thoughts Jude felt that he could not go up and address him; but he was sufficiently influenced by the incident to think what a wise thing it would be for him to state his difficulties by letter to some of the best and most judicious of these old masters, and obtain their advice.

During the next week or two he accordingly placed himself in such positions about the city as would afford him glimpses of several of the most distinguished among the provosts, wardens, and other heads of houses; and from those he ultimately selected five whose physiognomies seemed to say to him that they were appreciative and far-seeing men. To these five he addressed letters, briefly stating his difficulties, and asking their opinion on his stranded situation.

When the letters were posted Jude mentally began to criticize them; he wished they had not been sent. "It is just one of those intrusive, vulgar, pushing, applications which are so common in these days," he thought. "Why couldn't I know better than address utter strangers in such a way? I may be an impostor, an idle scamp, a man with a bad character, for all that they know to the contrary... Perhaps that's what I am!"

Nevertheless, he found himself clinging to the hope of some reply as to his one last chance of redemption. He waited day after day, saying that it was perfectly absurd to expect, yet expecting. While he waited he was suddenly stirred by news about Phillotson. Phillotson was giving up the school near Christminster, for a larger one further south, in Mid-Wessex. What this meant; how it would affect his cousin; whether, as seemed possible, it was a practical move of the schoolmaster's towards a larger income, in view of a provision for two instead of one, he would not allow himself to say. And the tender relations between Phillotson and the young girl of whom Jude was passionately enamoured effectually made it repugnant to Jude's tastes to apply to Phillotson for advice on his own scheme.

Meanwhile the academic dignitaries to whom Jude had written vouchsafed no answer, and the young man was thus thrown back entirely on himself, as formerly, with the added gloom of a weakened hope. By indirect inquiries he soon perceived clearly what he had long uneasily suspected, that to qualify himself for certain open scholarships and

exhibitions was the only brilliant course. But to do this a good deal of coaching would be necessary, and much natural ability. It was next to impossible that a man reading on his own system, however widely and thoroughly, even over the prolonged period of ten years, should be able to compete with those who had passed their lives under trained teachers and had worked to ordained lines.

The other course, that of buying himself in, so to speak, seemed the only one really open to men like him, the difficulty being simply of a material kind. With the help of his information he began to reckon the extent of this material obstacle, and ascertained, to his dismay, that, at the rate at which, with the best of fortune, he would be able to save money, fifteen years must elapse before he could be in a position to forward testimonials to the head of a college and advance to a matriculation examination. The undertaking was hopeless.

He saw what a curious and cunning glamour the neighbourhood of the place had exercised over him. To get there and live there, to move among the churches and halls and become imbued with the *genius loci*, had seemed to his dreaming youth, as the spot shaped its charms to him from its halo on the horizon, the obvious and ideal thing to do. "Let me only get there," he had said with the fatuousness of Crusoe over his big boat, "and the rest is but a matter of time and energy." It would have been far better for him in every way if he had never come within sight and sound of the delusive precincts, had gone to some busy commercial town with the sole object of making money by his wits, and thence surveyed his plan in true perspective. Well, all that was clear to him amounted to this, that the whole scheme had burst up, like an iridescent soap-bubble, under the touch of a reasoned inquiry. He looked back at himself along the vista of his past years, and his thought was akin to Heine's:

Above the youth's inspired and flashing eyes  
I see the motley mocking fool's-cap rise!

Fortunately he had not been allowed to bring his disappointment into his dear Sue's life by involving her in this collapse. And the painful details of his awakening to a sense of his limitations should now be spared her as far as possible. After all, she had only known a little part of the miserable

struggle in which he had been engaged thus unequipped, poor, and unforeseeing.

He always remembered the appearance of the afternoon on which he awoke from his dream. Not quite knowing what to do with himself, he went up to an octagonal chamber in the lantern of a singularly built theatre that was set amidst this quaint and singular city. It had windows all round, from which an outlook over the whole town and its edifices could be gained. Jude's eyes swept all the views in succession, meditatively, mournfully, yet sturdily. Those buildings and their associations and privileges were not for him. From the looming roof of the great library, into which he hardly ever had time to enter, his gaze travelled on to the varied spires, halls, gables, streets, chapels, gardens, quadrangles, which composed the ensemble of this unrivalled panorama. He saw that his destiny lay not with these, but among the manual toilers in the shabby purlieu which he himself occupied, unrecognized as part of the city at all by its visitors and panegyrists, yet without whose denizens the hard readers could not read nor the high thinkers live.

He looked over the town into the country beyond, to the trees which screened her whose presence had at first been the support of his heart, and whose loss was now a maddening torture. But for this blow he might have borne with his fate. With Sue as companion he could have renounced his ambitions with a smile. Without her it was inevitable that the reaction from the long strain to which he had subjected himself should affect him disastrously. Phillotson had no doubt passed through a similar intellectual disappointment to that which now enveloped him. But the schoolmaster had been since blest with the consolation of sweet Sue, while for him there was no consoler.

Descending to the streets, he went listlessly along till he arrived at an inn, and entered it. Here he drank several glasses of beer in rapid succession, and when he came out it was night. By the light of the flickering lamps he rambled home to supper, and had not long been sitting at table when his landlady brought up a letter that had just arrived for him. She laid it down as if impressed with a sense of its possible importance, and on looking at it Jude perceived that it bore the embossed stamp of one of the colleges whose heads he had addressed. "*One*—at last!" cried Jude.

The communication was brief, and not exactly what he had expected; though it really was from the master in person. It ran thus:

BIBLIOLL COLLEGE.

SIR,—I have read your letter with interest; and, judging from your description of yourself as a working-man, I venture to think that you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course. That, therefore, is what I advise you to do. Yours faithfully,

T. TETUPHENAY.

To Mr. J. FAWLEY, Stone-mason.

This terribly sensible advice exasperated Jude. He had known all that before. He knew it was true. Yet it seemed a hard slap after ten years of labour, and its effect upon him just now was to make him rise recklessly from the table, and, instead of reading as usual, to go downstairs and into the street. He stood at a bar and tossed off two or three glasses, then unconsciously sauntered along till he came to a spot called The Fourways in the middle of the city, gazing abstractedly at the groups of people like one in a trance, till, coming to himself, he began talking to the policeman fixed there.

That officer yawned, stretched out his elbows, elevated himself an inch and a half on the balls of his toes, smiled, and looking humorously at Jude, said, "You've had a wet, young man."

"No; I've only begun," he replied cynically.

Whatever his wetness, his brains were dry enough. He only heard in part the policeman's further remarks, having fallen into thought on what struggling people like himself had stood at that crossway, whom nobody ever thought of now. It had more history than the oldest college in the city. It was literally teeming, stratified, with the shades of human groups, who had met there for tragedy, comedy, farce; real enactments of the intensest kind. At Fourways men had stood and talked of Napoleon, the loss of America, the execution of King Charles, the burning of the Martyrs, the Crusades, the Norman Conquest, possibly of the arrival of Caesar. Here the

two sexes had met for loving, hating, coupling, parting; had waited, had suffered, for each other; had triumphed over each other; cursed each other in jealousy, blessed each other in forgiveness.

He began to see that the town life was a book of humanity infinitely more palpitating, varied, and compendious than the gown life. These struggling men and women before him were the reality of Christminster, though they knew little of Christ or Minster. That was one of the humours of things. The floating population of students and teachers, who did know both in a way, were not Christminster in a local sense at all.

He looked at his watch, and, in pursuit of this idea, he went on till he came to a public hall, where a promenade concert was in progress. Jude entered, and found the room full of shop youths and girls, soldiers, apprentices, boys of eleven smoking cigarettes, and light women of the more respectable and amateur class. He had tapped the real Christminster life. A band was playing, and the crowd walked about and jostled each other, and every now and then a man got upon a platform and sang a comic song.

The spirit of Sue seemed to hover round him and prevent his flirting and drinking with the frolicsome girls who made advances—wistful to gain a little joy. At ten o'clock he came away, choosing a circuitous route homeward to pass the gates of the college whose head had just sent him the note.

The gates were shut, and, by an impulse, he took from his pocket the lump of chalk which as a workman he usually carried there, and wrote along the wall:

*“I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?”—Job xii. 3.*

## VII

The stroke of scorn relieved his mind, and the next morning he laughed at his self-conceit. But the laugh was not a healthy one. He re-read the letter from the master, and the wisdom in its lines, which had at first exasperated him, chilled and depressed him now. He saw himself as a fool indeed.

Deprived of the objects of both intellect and emotion, he could not proceed to his work. Whenever he felt reconciled to his fate as a student, there came to disturb his calm his hopeless relations with Sue. That the one affined soul he had ever met was lost to him through his marriage returned upon him with cruel persistency, till, unable to bear it longer, he again rushed for distraction to the real Christminster life. He now sought it out in an obscure and low-ceiled tavern up a court which was well known to certain worthies of the place, and in brighter times would have interested him simply by its quaintness. Here he sat more or less all the day, convinced that he was at bottom a vicious character, of whom it was hopeless to expect anything.

In the evening the frequenters of the house dropped in one by one, Jude still retaining his seat in the corner, though his money was all spent, and he had not eaten anything the whole day except a biscuit. He surveyed his gathering companions with all the equanimity and philosophy of a man who has been drinking long and slowly, and made friends with several: to wit, Tinker Taylor, a decayed church-ironmonger who appeared to have been of a religious turn in earlier years, but was somewhat blasphemous now; also a red-nosed auctioneer; also two Gothic masons like himself, called Uncle Jim and Uncle Joe. There were present, too, some clerks, and a gown- and surplice-maker's assistant; two ladies who sported moral characters of various depths of shade, according to their company, nicknamed "Bower o' Bliss" and "Freckles"; some horsey men "in the know" of betting circles; a travelling actor from the theatre, and two devil-may-care young men who proved to be gownless undergraduates; they had

slipped in by stealth to meet a man about bull-pups, and stayed to drink and smoke short pipes with the racing gents aforesaid, looking at their watches every now and then.

The conversation waxed general. Christminster society was criticized, the dons, magistrates, and other people in authority being sincerely pitied for their shortcomings, while opinions on how they ought to conduct themselves and their affairs to be properly respected, were exchanged in a large-minded and disinterested manner.

Jude Fawley, with the self-conceit, effrontery, and *aplomb* of a strong-brained fellow in liquor, threw in his remarks somewhat peremptorily; and his aims having been what they were for so many years, everything the others said turned upon his tongue, by a sort of mechanical craze, to the subject of scholarship and study, the extent of his own learning being dwelt upon with an insistence that would have appeared pitiable to himself in his sane hours.

“I don’t care a damn,” he was saying, “for any provost, warden, principal, fellow, or cursed master of arts in the university! What I know is that I’d lick ’em on their own ground if they’d give me a chance, and show ’em a few things they are not up to yet!”

“Hear, hear!” said the undergraduates from the corner, where they were talking privately about the pups.

“You always was fond o’ books, I’ve heard,” said Tinker Taylor, “and I don’t doubt what you state. Now with me ’twas different. I always saw there was more to be learnt outside a book than in; and I took my steps accordingly, or I shouldn’t have been the man I am.”

“You aim at the Church, I believe?” said Uncle Joe. “If you are such a scholar as to pitch yer hopes so high as that, why not give us a specimen of your scholarship? Canst say the Creed in Latin, man? That was how they once put it to a chap down in my country.”

“I should think so!” said Jude haughtily.

“Not he! Like his conceit!” screamed one of the ladies.

“Just you shut up, Bower o’ Bliss!” said one of the undergraduates. “Silence!” He drank off the spirits in his tumbler, rapped with it on the counter, and announced, “The gentleman in the corner is going to rehearse



the Articles of his Belief, in the Latin tongue, for the edification of the company.”

“I won’t!” said Jude.

“Yes—have a try!” said the surplice-maker.

“You can’t!” said Uncle Joe.

“Yes, he can!” said Tinker Taylor.

“I’ll swear I can!” said Jude. “Well, come now, stand me a small Scotch cold, and I’ll do it straight off.”

“That’s a fair offer,” said the undergraduate, throwing down the money for the whisky.

The barmaid concocted the mixture with the bearing of a person compelled to live amongst animals of an inferior species, and the glass was handed across to Jude, who, having drunk the contents, stood up and began rhetorically, without hesitation:

*“Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, Factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.”*

“Good! Excellent Latin!” cried one of the undergraduates, who, however, had not the slightest conception of a single word.

A silence reigned among the rest in the bar, and the maid stood still, Jude’s voice echoing sonorously into the inner parlour, where the landlord was dozing, and bringing him out to see what was going on. Jude had declaimed steadily ahead, and was continuing:

*“Crucifixus etiam pro nobis: sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas.”*

“That’s the Nicene,” sneered the second undergraduate. “And we wanted the Apostles’!”

“You didn’t say so! And every fool knows, except you, that the Nicene is the most historic creed!”

“Let un go on, let un go on!” said the auctioneer.

But Jude’s mind seemed to grow confused soon, and he could not get on. He put his hand to his forehead, and his face assumed an expression of pain.

“Give him another glass—then he’ll fetch up and get through it,” said Tinker Taylor.

Somebody threw down threepence, the glass was handed, Jude stretched out his arm for it without looking, and having swallowed the liquor, went on in a moment in a revived voice, raising it as he neared the end with the manner of a priest leading a congregation:

*“Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur. Qui locutus est per prophetas.*

*“Et unam Catholicam et Apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum Baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto Resurrectionem mortuorum. Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.”*

“Well done!” said several, enjoying the last word, as being the first and only one they had recognized.

Then Jude seemed to shake the fumes from his brain, as he stared round upon them.

“You pack of fools!” he cried. “Which one of you knows whether I have said it or no? It might have been the Ratcatcher’s Daughter in double Dutch for all that your besotted heads can tell! See what I have brought myself to—the crew I have come among!”

The landlord, who had already had his license endorsed for harbouring queer characters, feared a riot, and came outside the counter; but Jude, in his sudden flash of reason, had turned in disgust and left the scene, the door slamming with a dull thud behind him.

He hastened down the lane and round into the straight broad street, which he followed till it merged in the highway, and all sound of his late companions had been left behind. Onward he still went, under the influence of a childlike yearning for the one being in the world to whom it seemed possible to fly—an unreasoning desire, whose ill judgement was not apparent to him now. In the course of an hour, when it was between ten and eleven o’clock, he entered the village of Lumsdon, and reaching the cottage, saw that a light was burning in a downstairs room, which he assumed, rightly as it happened, to be hers.

Jude stepped close to the wall, and tapped with his finger on the pane, saying impatiently, “Sue, Sue!”

She must have recognized his voice, for the light disappeared from the apartment, and in a second or two the door was unlocked and opened, and

Sue appeared with a candle in her hand.

“Is it Jude? Yes, it is! My dear, dear cousin, what’s the matter?”

“Oh, I am—I couldn’t help coming, Sue!” said he, sinking down upon the doorstep. “I am so wicked, Sue—my heart is nearly broken, and I could not bear my life as it was! So I have been drinking, and blaspheming, or next door to it, and saying holy things in disreputable quarters—repeating in idle bravado words which ought never to be uttered but reverently! Oh, do anything with me, Sue—kill me—I don’t care! Only don’t hate me and despise me like all the rest of the world!”

“You are ill, poor dear! No, I won’t despise you; of course I won’t! Come in and rest, and let me see what I can do for you. Now lean on me, and don’t mind.” With one hand holding the candle and the other supporting him, she led him indoors, and placed him in the only easy chair the meagrely furnished house afforded, stretching his feet upon another, and pulling off his boots. Jude, now getting towards his sober senses, could only say, “Dear, dear Sue!” in a voice broken by grief and contrition.

She asked him if he wanted anything to eat, but he shook his head. Then telling him to go to sleep, and that she would come down early in the morning and get him some breakfast, she bade him good-night and ascended the stairs.

Almost immediately he fell into a heavy slumber, and did not wake till dawn. At first he did not know where he was, but by degrees his situation cleared to him, and he beheld it in all the ghastliness of a right mind. She knew the worst of him—the very worst. How could he face her now? She would soon be coming down to see about breakfast, as she had said, and there would he be in all his shame confronting her. He could not bear the thought, and softly drawing on his boots, and taking his hat from the nail on which she had hung it, he slipped noiselessly out of the house.

His fixed idea was to get away to some obscure spot and hide, and perhaps pray; and the only spot which occurred to him was Marygreen. He called at his lodging in Christminster, where he found awaiting him a note of dismissal from his employer; and having packed up he turned his back upon the city that had been such a thorn in his side, and struck southward into Wessex. He had no money left in his pocket, his small savings, deposited at one of the banks in Christminster, having fortunately been left untouched. To get to Marygreen, therefore, his only course was walking;

and the distance being nearly twenty miles, he had ample time to complete on the way the sobering process begun in him.

At some hour of the evening he reached Alfredston. Here he pawned his waistcoat, and having gone out of the town a mile or two, slept under a rick that night. At dawn he rose, shook off the hayseeds and stems from his clothes, and started again, breasting the long white road up the hill to the downs, which had been visible to him a long way off, and passing the milestone at the top, whereon he had carved his hopes years ago.

He reached the ancient hamlet while the people were at breakfast. Weary and mud-bespattered, but quite possessed of his ordinary clearness of brain, he sat down by the well, thinking as he did so what a poor Christ he made. Seeing a trough of water near he bathed his face, and went on to the cottage of his great-aunt, whom he found breakfasting in bed, attended by the woman who lived with her.

“What—out o’ work?” asked his relative, regarding him through eyes sunken deep, under lids heavy as pot-covers, no other cause for his tumbled appearance suggesting itself to one whose whole life had been a struggle with material things.

“Yes,” said Jude heavily. “I think I must have a little rest.”

Refreshed by some breakfast, he went up to his old room and lay down in his shirt-sleeves, after the manner of the artizan. He fell asleep for a short while, and when he awoke it was as if he had awakened in hell. It *was* hell—“the hell of conscious failure,” both in ambition and in love. He thought of that previous abyss into which he had fallen before leaving this part of the country; the deepest deep he had supposed it then; but it was not so deep as this. That had been the breaking in of the outer bulwarks of his hope: this was of his second line.

If he had been a woman he must have screamed under the nervous tension which he was now undergoing. But that relief being denied to his virility, he clenched his teeth in misery, bringing lines about his mouth like those in the Laocoön, and corrugations between his brows.

A mournful wind blew through the trees, and sounded in the chimney like the pedal notes of an organ. Each ivy leaf overgrowing the wall of the churchless church-yard hard by, now abandoned, pecked its neighbour smartly, and the vane on the new Victorian-Gothic church in the new spot had already begun to creak. Yet apparently it was not always the outdoor

wind that made the deep murmurs; it was a voice. He guessed its origin in a moment or two; the curate was praying with his aunt in the adjoining room. He remembered her speaking of him. Presently the sounds ceased, and a step seemed to cross the landing. Jude sat up, and shouted "Hoi!"

The step made for his door, which was open, and a man looked in. It was a young clergyman.

"I think you are Mr. Highridge," said Jude. "My aunt has mentioned you more than once. Well, here I am, just come home; a fellow gone to the bad; though I had the best intentions in the world at one time. Now I am melancholy mad, what with drinking and one thing and another."

Slowly Jude unfolded to the curate his late plans and movements, by an unconscious bias dwelling less upon the intellectual and ambitious side of his dream, and more upon the theological, though this had, up till now, been merely a portion of the general plan of advancement.

"Now I know I have been a fool, and that folly is with me," added Jude in conclusion. "And I don't regret the collapse of my university hopes one jot. I wouldn't begin again if I were sure to succeed. I don't care for social success any more at all. But I do feel I should like to do some good thing; and I bitterly regret the Church, and the loss of my chance of being her ordained minister."

The curate, who was a new man to this neighbourhood, had grown deeply interested, and at last he said: "If you feel a real call to the ministry, and I won't say from your conversation that you do not, for it is that of a thoughtful and educated man, you might enter the Church as a licentiate. Only you must make up your mind to avoid strong drink."

"I could avoid that easily enough, if I had any kind of hope to support me!"

Part Third  
AT MELCHESTER

*“For there was no other girl, O bridegroom, like her!”*  
—SAPPHO (H. T. Wharton).

## I

It was a new idea—the ecclesiastical and altruistic life as distinct from the intellectual and emulative life. A man could preach and do good to his fellow-creatures without taking double-firsts in the schools of Christminster, or having anything but ordinary knowledge. The old fancy which had led on to the culminating vision of the bishopric had not been an ethical or theological enthusiasm at all, but a mundane ambition masquerading in a surplice. He feared that his whole scheme had degenerated to, even though it might not have originated in, a social unrest which had no foundation in the nobler instincts; which was purely an artificial product of civilization. There were thousands of young men on the same self-seeking track at the present moment. The sensual hind who ate, drank, and lived carelessly with his wife through the days of his vanity was a more likable being than he.

But to enter the Church in such an unscholarly way that he could not in any probability rise to a higher grade through all his career than that of the humble curate wearing his life out in an obscure village or city slum—that might have a touch of goodness and greatness in it; that might be true religion, and a purgatorial course worthy of being followed by a remorseful man.

The favourable light in which this new thought showed itself by contrast with his foregone intentions cheered Jude, as he sat there, shabby and lonely; and it may be said to have given, during the next few days, the *coup de grâce* to his intellectual career—a career which had extended over the greater part of a dozen years. He did nothing, however, for some long stagnant time to advance his new desire, occupying himself with little local jobs in putting up and lettering headstones about the neighbouring villages, and submitting to be regarded as a social failure, a returned purchase, by the half-dozen or so of farmers and other country-people who condescended to nod to him.

The human interest of the new intention—and a human interest is indispensable to the most spiritual and self-sacrificing—was created by a letter from Sue, bearing a fresh postmark. She evidently wrote with anxiety, and told very little about her own doings, more than that she had passed some sort of examination for a Queen's Scholarship, and was going to enter a training college at Melchester to complete herself for the vocation she had chosen, partly by his influence. There was a theological college at Melchester; Melchester was a quiet and soothing place, almost entirely ecclesiastical in its tone; a spot where worldly learning and intellectual smartness had no establishment; where the altruistic feeling that he did possess would perhaps be more highly estimated than a brilliancy which he did not.

As it would be necessary that he should continue for a time to work at his trade while reading up Divinity, which he had neglected at Christminster for the ordinary classical grind, what better course for him than to get employment at the further city, and pursue this plan of reading? That his excessive human interest in the new place was entirely of Sue's making, while at the same time Sue was to be regarded even less than formerly as proper to create it, had an ethical contradictoriness to which he was not blind. But that much he conceded to human frailty, and hoped to learn to love her only as a friend and kinswoman.

He considered that he might so mark out his coming years as to begin his ministry at the age of thirty—an age which much attracted him as being that of his exemplar when he first began to teach in Galilee. This would allow him plenty of time for deliberate study, and for acquiring capital by his trade to help his aftercourse of keeping the necessary terms at a theological college.

Christmas had come and passed, and Sue had gone to the Melchester Normal School. The time was just the worst in the year for Jude to get into new employment, and he had written suggesting to her that he should postpone his arrival for a month or so, till the days had lengthened. She had acquiesced so readily that he wished he had not proposed it—she evidently did not much care about him, though she had never once reproached him for his strange conduct in coming to her that night, and his silent disappearance. Neither had she ever said a word about her relations with Mr. Phillotson.



Suddenly, however, quite a passionate letter arrived from Sue. She was quite lonely and miserable, she told him. She hated the place she was in; it was worse than the ecclesiastical designer's; worse than anywhere. She felt utterly friendless; could he come immediately?—though when he did come she would only be able to see him at limited times, the rules of the establishment she found herself in being strict to a degree. It was Mr. Phillotson who had advised her to come there, and she wished she had never listened to him.

Phillotson's suit was not exactly prospering, evidently; and Jude felt unreasonably glad. He packed up his things and went to Melchester with a lighter heart than he had known for months.

This being the turning over a new leaf he duly looked about for a temperance hotel, and found a little establishment of that description in the street leading from the station. When he had had something to eat he walked out into the dull winter light over the town bridge, and turned the corner towards the Close. The day was foggy, and standing under the walls of the most graceful architectural pile in England he paused and looked up. The lofty building was visible as far as the roofridge; above, the dwindling spire rose more and more remotely, till its apex was quite lost in the mist drifting across it.

The lamps now began to be lighted, and turning to the west front he walked round. He took it as a good omen that numerous blocks of stone were lying about, which signified that the cathedral was undergoing restoration or repair to a considerable extent. It seemed to him, full of the superstitions of his beliefs, that this was an exercise of forethought on the part of a ruling Power, that he might find plenty to do in the art he practised while waiting for a call to higher labours.

Then a wave of warmth came over him as he thought how near he now stood to the bright-eyed vivacious girl with the broad forehead and pile of dark hair above it; the girl with the kindling glance, daringly soft at times—something like that of the girls he had seen in engravings from paintings of the Spanish school. She was here—actually in this Close—in one of the houses confronting this very west façade.

He went down the broad gravel path towards the building. It was an ancient edifice of the fifteenth century, once a palace, now a training-school, with mullioned and transomed windows, and a courtyard in front

shut in from the road by a wall. Jude opened the gate and went up to the door through which, on inquiring for his cousin, he was gingerly admitted to a waiting-room, and in a few minutes she came.

Though she had been here such a short while, she was not as he had seen her last. All her bounding manner was gone; her curves of motion had become subdued lines. The screens and subtleties of convention had likewise disappeared. Yet neither was she quite the woman who had written the letter that summoned him. That had plainly been dashed off in an impulse which second thoughts had somewhat regretted; thoughts that were possibly of his recent self-disgrace. Jude was quite overcome with emotion.

“You don’t—think me a demoralized wretch—for coming to you as I was—and going so shamefully, Sue?”

“Oh, I have tried not to! You said enough to let me know what had caused it. I hope I shall never have any doubt of your worthiness, my poor Jude! And I am glad you have come!”

She wore a murrey-coloured gown with a little lace collar. It was made quite plain, and hung about her slight figure with clinging gracefulness. Her hair, which formerly she had worn according to the custom of the day was now twisted up tightly, and she had altogether the air of a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline, an under-brightness shining through from the depths which that discipline had not yet been able to reach.

She had come forward prettily, but Jude felt that she had hardly expected him to kiss her, as he was burning to do, under other colours than those of cousinship. He could not perceive the least sign that Sue regarded him as a lover, or ever would do so, now that she knew the worst of him, even if he had the right to behave as one; and this helped on his growing resolve to tell her of his matrimonial entanglement, which he had put off doing from time to time in sheer dread of losing the bliss of her company.

Sue came out into the town with him, and they walked and talked with tongues centred only on the passing moments. Jude said he would like to buy her a little present of some sort, and then she confessed, with something of shame, that she was dreadfully hungry. They were kept on very short allowances in the college, and a dinner, tea, and supper all in one was the present she most desired in the world. Jude thereupon took her

to an inn and ordered whatever the house afforded, which was not much. The place, however, gave them a delightful opportunity for a *tête-à-tête*, nobody else being in the room, and they talked freely.

She told him about the school as it was at that date, and the rough living, and the mixed character of her fellow-students, gathered together from all parts of the diocese, and how she had to get up and work by gas-light in the early morning, with all the bitterness of a young person to whom restraint was new. To all this he listened; but it was not what he wanted especially to know—her relations with Phillotson. That was what she did not tell. When they had sat and eaten, Jude impulsively placed his hand upon hers; she looked up and smiled, and took his quite freely into her own little soft one, dividing his fingers and coolly examining them, as if they were the fingers of a glove she was purchasing.

“Your hands are rather rough, Jude, aren’t they?” she said.

“Yes. So would yours be if they held a mallet and chisel all day.”

“I don’t dislike it, you know. I think it is noble to see a man’s hands subdued to what he works in... Well, I’m rather glad I came to this training-school, after all. See how independent I shall be after the two years’ training! I shall pass pretty high, I expect, and Mr. Phillotson will use his influence to get me a big school.”

She had touched the subject at last. “I had a suspicion, a fear,” said Jude, “that he—cared about you rather warmly, and perhaps wanted to marry you.”

“Now don’t be such a silly boy!”

“He has said something about it, I expect.”

“If he had, what would it matter? An old man like him!”

“Oh, come, Sue; he’s not so very old. And I know what I saw him doing —”

“Not kissing me—that I’m certain!”

“No. But putting his arm round your waist.”

“Ah—I remember. But I didn’t know he was going to.”

“You are wriggling out if it, Sue, and it isn’t quite kind!”

Her ever-sensitive lip began to quiver, and her eye to blink, at something this reproof was deciding her to say.

“I know you’ll be angry if I tell you everything, and that’s why I don’t want to!”

“Very well, then, dear,” he said soothingly. “I have no real right to ask you, and I don’t wish to know.”

“I shall tell you!” said she, with the perverseness that was part of her. “This is what I have done: I have promised—I have promised—that I will marry him when I come out of the training-school two years hence, and have got my certificate; his plan being that we shall then take a large double school in a great town—he the boys’ and I the girls’—as married school-teachers often do, and make a good income between us.”

“Oh, Sue! ... But of course it is right—you couldn’t have done better!”

He glanced at her and their eyes met, the reproach in his own belying his words. Then he drew his hand quite away from hers, and turned his face in estrangement from her to the window. Sue regarded him passively without moving.

“I knew you would be angry!” she said with an air of no emotion whatever. “Very well—I am wrong, I suppose! I ought not to have let you come to see me! We had better not meet again; and we’ll only correspond at long intervals, on purely business matters!”

This was just the one thing he would not be able to bear, as she probably knew, and it brought him round at once. “Oh yes, we will,” he said quickly. “Your being engaged can make no difference to me whatever. I have a perfect right to see you when I want to; and I shall!”

“Then don’t let us talk of it any more. It is quite spoiling our evening together. What does it matter about what one is going to do two years hence!”

She was something of a riddle to him, and he let the subject drift away. “Shall we go and sit in the cathedral?” he asked, when their meal was finished.

“Cathedral? Yes. Though I think I’d rather sit in the railway station,” she answered, a remnant of vexation still in her voice. “That’s the centre of the town life now. The cathedral has had its day!”

“How modern you are!”

“So would you be if you had lived so much in the Middle Ages as I have done these last few years! The cathedral was a very good place four or five

centuries ago; but it is played out now... I am not modern, either. I am more ancient than mediævalism, if you only knew.”

Jude looked distressed.

“There—I won’t say any more of that!” she cried. “Only you don’t know how bad I am, from your point of view, or you wouldn’t think so much of me, or care whether I was engaged or not. Now there’s just time for us to walk round the Close, then I must go in, or I shall be locked out for the night.”

He took her to the gate and they parted. Jude had a conviction that his unhappy visit to her on that sad night had precipitated this marriage engagement, and it did anything but add to his happiness. Her reproach had taken that shape, then, and not the shape of words. However, next day he set about seeking employment, which it was not so easy to get as at Christminster, there being, as a rule, less stone-cutting in progress in this quiet city, and hands being mostly permanent. But he edged himself in by degrees. His first work was some carving at the cemetery on the hill; and ultimately he became engaged on the labour he most desired—the cathedral repairs, which were very extensive, the whole interior stonework having been overhauled, to be largely replaced by new. It might be a labour of years to get it all done, and he had confidence enough in his own skill with the mallet and chisel to feel that it would be a matter of choice with himself how long he would stay.

The lodgings he took near the Close Gate would not have disgraced a curate, the rent representing a higher percentage on his wages than mechanics of any sort usually care to pay. His combined bed and sitting-room was furnished with framed photographs of the rectories and deaneries at which his landlady had lived as trusted servant in her time, and the parlour downstairs bore a clock on the mantelpiece inscribed to the effect that it was presented to the same serious-minded woman by her fellow-servants on the occasion of her marriage. Jude added to the furniture of his room by unpacking photographs of the ecclesiastical carvings and monuments that he had executed with his own hands; and he was deemed a satisfactory acquisition as tenant of the vacant apartment.

He found an ample supply of theological books in the city book-shops, and with these his studies were recommenced in a different spirit and direction from his former course. As a relaxation from the Fathers, and

such stock works as Paley and Butler, he read Newman, Pusey, and many other modern lights. He hired a harmonium, set it up in his lodging, and practised chants thereon, single and double.

## II

“To-morrow is our grand day, you know. Where shall we go?”

“I have leave from three till nine. Wherever we can get to and come back from in that time. Not ruins, Jude—I don’t care for them.”

“Well—Wardour Castle. And then we can do Fonthill if we like—all in the same afternoon.”

“Wardour is Gothic ruins—and I hate Gothic!”

“No. Quite otherwise. It is a classic building—Corinthian, I think; with a lot of pictures.”

“Ah—that will do. I like the sound of Corinthian. We’ll go.”

Their conversation had run thus some few weeks later, and next morning they prepared to start. Every detail of the outing was a facet reflecting a sparkle to Jude, and he did not venture to meditate on the life of inconsistency he was leading. His Sue’s conduct was one lovely conundrum to him; he could say no more.

There duly came the charm of calling at the college door for her; her emergence in a nunlike simplicity of costume that was rather enforced than desired; the traipsing along to the station, the porters’ “B’your leave!” the screaming of the trains—everything formed the basis of a beautiful crystallization. Nobody stared at Sue, because she was so plainly dressed, which comforted Jude in the thought that only himself knew the charms those habiliments subdued. A matter of ten pounds spent in a drapery-shop, which had no connection with her real life or her real self, would have set all Melchester staring. The guard of the train thought they were lovers, and put them into a compartment all by themselves.

“That’s a good intention wasted!” said she.

Jude did not respond. He thought the remark unnecessarily cruel, and partly untrue.

They reached the park and castle and wandered through the picture-galleries, Jude stopping by preference in front of the devotional pictures by Del Sarto, Guido Reni, Spagnoletto, Sassoferrato, Carlo Dolce, and others. Sue paused patiently beside him, and stole critical looks into his face as, regarding the Virgins, Holy Families, and Saints, it grew reverent and abstracted. When she had thoroughly estimated him at this, she would move on and wait for him before a Lely or Reynolds. It was evident that her cousin deeply interested her, as one might be interested in a man puzzling out his way along a labyrinth from which one had one's self escaped.

When they came out a long time still remained to them and Jude proposed that as soon as they had had something to eat they should walk across the high country to the north of their present position, and intercept the train of another railway leading back to Melchester, at a station about seven miles off. Sue, who was inclined for any adventure that would intensify the sense of her day's freedom, readily agreed; and away they went, leaving the adjoining station behind them.

It was indeed open country, wide and high. They talked and bounded on, Jude cutting from a little covert a long walking-stick for Sue as tall as herself, with a great crook, which made her look like a shepherdess. About half-way on their journey they crossed a main road running due east and west—the old road from London to Land's End. They paused, and looked up and down it for a moment, and remarked upon the desolation which had come over this once lively thoroughfare, while the wind dipped to earth and scooped straws and hay-stems from the ground.

They crossed the road and passed on, but during the next half-mile Sue seemed to grow tired, and Jude began to be distressed for her. They had walked a good distance altogether, and if they could not reach the other station it would be rather awkward. For a long time there was no cottage visible on the wide expanse of down and turnip-land; but presently they came to a sheepfold, and next to the shepherd, pitching hurdles. He told them that the only house near was his mother's and his, pointing to a little dip ahead from which a faint blue smoke arose, and recommended them to go on and rest there.

This they did, and entered the house, admitted by an old woman without a single tooth, to whom they were as civil as strangers can be when their



only chance of rest and shelter lies in the favour of the householder.

“A nice little cottage,” said Jude.

“Oh, I don’t know about the niceness. I shall have to thatch it soon, and where the thatch is to come from I can’t tell, for straw do get that dear, that ’twill soon be cheaper to cover your house wi’ chainey plates than thatch.”

They sat resting, and the shepherd came in. “Don’t ’ee mind I,” he said with a deprecating wave of the hand; “bide here as long as ye will. But mid you be thinking o’ getting back to Melchester to-night by train? Because you’ll never do it in this world, since you don’t know the lie of the country. I don’t mind going with ye some o’ the ways, but even then the train mid be gone.”

They started up.

“You can bide here, you know, over the night—can’t ’em, Mother? The place is welcome to ye. ’Tis hard lying, rather, but volk may do worse.” He turned to Jude and asked privately: “Be you a married couple?”

“Hsh—no!” said Jude.

“Oh—I meant nothing ba’dy—not I! Well then, she can go into Mother’s room, and you and I can lie in the outer chimmer after they’ve gone through. I can call ye soon enough to catch the first train back. You’ve lost this one now.”

On consideration they decided to close with this offer, and drew up and shared with the shepherd and his mother the boiled bacon and greens for supper.

“I rather like this,” said Sue, while their entertainers were clearing away the dishes. “Outside all laws except gravitation and germination.”

“You only think you like it; you don’t: you are quite a product of civilization,” said Jude, a recollection of her engagement reviving his soreness a little.

“Indeed I am not, Jude. I like reading and all that, but I crave to get back to the life of my infancy and its freedom.”

“Do you remember it so well? You seem to me to have nothing unconventional at all about you.”

“Oh, haven’t I! You don’t know what’s inside me.”

“What?”

“The Ishmaelite.”

“An urban miss is what you are.”

She looked severe disagreement, and turned away.

The shepherd aroused them the next morning, as he had said. It was bright and clear, and the four miles to the train were accomplished pleasantly. When they had reached Melchester, and walked to the Close, and the gables of the old building in which she was again to be immured rose before Sue’s eyes, she looked a little scared. “I expect I shall catch it!” she murmured.

They rang the great bell and waited.

“Oh, I bought something for you, which I had nearly forgotten,” she said quickly, searching her pocket. “It is a new little photograph of me. Would you like it?”

“*Would I!*” He took it gladly, and the porter came. There seemed to be an ominous glance on his face when he opened the gate. She passed in, looking back at Jude, and waving her hand.

### III

The seventy young women, of ages varying in the main from nineteen to one-and-twenty, though several were older, who at this date filled the species of nunnery known as the Training-School at Melchester, formed a very mixed community, which included the daughters of mechanics, curates, surgeons, shopkeepers, farmers, dairy-men, soldiers, sailors, and villagers. They sat in the large school-room of the establishment on the evening previously described, and word was passed round that Sue Bridehead had not come in at closing-time.

“She went out with her young man,” said a second-year’s student, who knew about young men. “And Miss Traceley saw her at the station with him. She’ll have it hot when she does come.”

“She said he was her cousin,” observed a youthful new girl.

“That excuse has been made a little too often in this school to be effectual in saving our souls,” said the head girl of the year, drily.

The fact was that, only twelve months before, there had occurred a lamentable seduction of one of the pupils who had made the same statement in order to gain meetings with her lover. The affair had created a scandal, and the management had consequently been rough on cousins ever since.

At nine o’clock the names were called, Sue’s being pronounced three times sonorously by Miss Traceley without eliciting an answer.

At a quarter past nine the seventy stood up to sing the “Evening Hymn,” and then knelt down to prayers. After prayers they went in to supper, and every girl’s thought was, Where is Sue Bridehead? Some of the students, who had seen Jude from the window, felt that they would not mind risking her punishment for the pleasure of being kissed by such a kindly-faced young man. Hardly one among them believed in the cousinship.

Half an hour later they all lay in their cubicles, their tender feminine faces upturned to the flaring gas-jets which at intervals stretched down the

long dormitories, every face bearing the legend "The Weaker" upon it, as the penalty of the sex wherein they were moulded, which by no possible exertion of their willing hearts and abilities could be made strong while the inexorable laws of nature remain what they are. They formed a pretty, suggestive, pathetic sight, of whose pathos and beauty they were themselves unconscious, and would not discover till, amid the storms and strains of after-years, with their injustice, loneliness, child-bearing, and bereavement, their minds would revert to this experience as to something which had been allowed to slip past them insufficiently regarded.

One of the mistresses came in to turn out the lights, and before doing so gave a final glance at Sue's cot, which remained empty, and at her little dressing-table at the foot, which, like all the rest, was ornamented with various girlish trifles, framed photographs being not the least conspicuous among them. Sue's table had a moderate show, two men in their filigree and velvet frames standing together beside her looking-glass.

"Who are these men—did she ever say?" asked the mistress. "Strictly speaking, relations' portraits only are allowed on these tables, you know."

"One—the middle-aged man," said a student in the next bed—"is the schoolmaster she served under—Mr. Phillotson."

"And the other—this undergraduate in cap and gown—who is he?"

"He is a friend, or was. She has never told his name."

"Was it either of these two who came for her?"

"No."

"You are sure 'twas not the undergraduate?"

"Quite. He was a young man with a black beard."

The lights were promptly extinguished, and till they fell asleep the girls indulged in conjectures about Sue, and wondered what games she had carried on in London and at Christminster before she came here, some of the more restless ones getting out of bed and looking from the mullioned windows at the vast west front of the cathedral opposite, and the spire rising behind it.

When they awoke the next morning they glanced into Sue's nook, to find it still without a tenant. After the early lessons by gas-light, in half-toilet, and when they had come up to dress for breakfast, the bell of the entrance gate was heard to ring loudly. The mistress of the dormitory went

away, and presently came back to say that the principal's orders were that nobody was to speak to Bridehead without permission.

When, accordingly, Sue came into the dormitory to hastily tidy herself, looking flushed and tired, she went to her cubicle in silence, none of them coming out to greet her or to make inquiry. When they had gone downstairs they found that she did not follow them into the dining-hall to breakfast, and they then learnt that she had been severely reprimanded, and ordered to a solitary room for a week, there to be confined, and take her meals, and do all her reading.

At this the seventy murmured, the sentence being, they thought, too severe. A round robin was prepared and sent in to the principal, asking for a remission of Sue's punishment. No notice was taken. Towards evening, when the geography mistress began dictating her subject, the girls in the class sat with folded arms.

"You mean that you are not going to work?" said the mistress at last. "I may as well tell you that it has been ascertained that the young man Bridehead stayed out with was not her cousin, for the very good reason that she has no such relative. We have written to Christminster to ascertain."

"We are willing to take her word," said the head girl.

"This young man was discharged from his work at Christminster for drunkenness and blasphemy in public-houses, and he has come here to live, entirely to be near her."

However, they remained stolid and motionless, and the mistress left the room to inquire from her superiors what was to be done.

Presently, towards dusk, the pupils, as they sat, heard exclamations from the first-year's girls in an adjoining classroom, and one rushed in to say that Sue Bridehead had got out of the back window of the room in which she had been confined, escaped in the dark across the lawn, and disappeared. How she had managed to get out of the garden nobody could tell, as it was bounded by the river at the bottom, and the side door was locked.

They went and looked at the empty room, the casement between the middle mullions of which stood open. The lawn was again searched with a lantern, every bush and shrub being examined, but she was nowhere

hidden. Then the porter of the front gate was interrogated, and on reflection he said that he remembered hearing a sort of splashing in the stream at the back, but he had taken no notice, thinking some ducks had come down the river from above.

“She must have walked through the river!” said a mistress.

“Or drowned herself,” said the porter.

The mind of the matron was horrified—not so much at the possible death of Sue as at the possible half-column detailing that event in all the newspapers, which, added to the scandal of the year before, would give the college an unenviable notoriety for many months to come.

More lanterns were procured, and the river examined; and then, at last, on the opposite shore, which was open to the fields, some little boot-tracks were discerned in the mud, which left no doubt that the too excitable girl had waded through a depth of water reaching nearly to her shoulders—for this was the chief river of the county, and was mentioned in all the geography books with respect. As Sue had not brought disgrace upon the school by drowning herself, the matron began to speak superciliously of her, and to express gladness that she was gone.

On the self-same evening Jude sat in his lodgings by the Close Gate. Often at this hour after dusk he would enter the silent Close, and stand opposite the house that contained Sue, and watch the shadows of the girls’ heads passing to and fro upon the blinds, and wish he had nothing else to do but to sit reading and learning all day what many of the thoughtless inmates despised. But to-night, having finished tea and brushed himself up, he was deep in the perusal of the Twenty-ninth Volume of Pusey’s Library of the Fathers, a set of books which he had purchased of a second-hand dealer at a price that seemed to him to be one of miraculous cheapness for that invaluable work. He fancied he heard something rattle lightly against his window; then he heard it again. Certainly somebody had thrown gravel. He rose and gently lifted the sash.

“Jude!” (from below).

“Sue!”

“Yes—it is! Can I come up without being seen?”

“Oh yes!”

“Then don’t come down. Shut the window.”

Jude waited, knowing that she could enter easily enough, the front door being opened merely by a knob which anybody could turn, as in most old country towns. He palpitated at the thought that she had fled to him in her trouble as he had fled to her in his. What counterparts they were! He unlatched the door of his room, heard a stealthy rustle on the dark stairs, and in a moment she appeared in the light of his lamp. He went up to seize her hand, and found she was clammy as a marine deity, and that her clothes clung to her like the robes upon the figures in the Parthenon frieze.

“I’m so cold!” she said through her chattering teeth. “Can I come by your fire, Jude?”

She crossed to his little grate and very little fire, but as the water dripped from her as she moved, the idea of drying herself was absurd. “Whatever have you done, darling?” he asked, with alarm, the tender epithet slipping out unawares.

“Walked through the largest river in the county—that’s what I’ve done! They locked me up for being out with you; and it seemed so unjust that I couldn’t bear it, so I got out of the window and escaped across the stream!” She had begun the explanation in her usual slightly independent tones, but before she had finished the thin pink lips trembled, and she could hardly refrain from crying.

“Dear Sue!” he said. “You must take off all your things! And let me see—you must borrow some from the landlady. I’ll ask her.”

“No, no! Don’t let her know, for God’s sake! We are so near the school that they’ll come after me!”

“Then you must put on mine. You don’t mind?”

“Oh no.”

“My Sunday suit, you know. It is close here.” In fact, everything was close and handy in Jude’s single chamber, because there was not room for it to be otherwise. He opened a drawer, took out his best dark suit, and giving the garments a shake, said, “Now, how long shall I give you?”

“Ten minutes.”

Jude left the room and went into the street, where he walked up and down. A clock struck half-past seven, and he returned. Sitting in his only arm-chair he saw a slim and fragile being masquerading as himself on a Sunday, so pathetic in her defencelessness that his heart felt big with the

sense of it. On two other chairs before the fire were her wet garments. She blushed as he sat down beside her, but only for a moment.

“I suppose, Jude, it is odd that you should see me like this and all my things hanging there? Yet what nonsense! They are only a woman’s clothes—sexless cloth and linen... I wish I didn’t feel so ill and sick! Will you dry my clothes now? Please do, Jude, and I’ll get a lodging by and by. It is not late yet.”

“No, you shan’t, if you are ill. You must stay here. Dear, dear Sue, what can I get for you?”

“I don’t know! I can’t help shivering. I wish I could get warm.” Jude put on her his great-coat in addition, and then ran out to the nearest public-house, whence he returned with a little bottle in his hand. “Here’s six of best brandy,” he said. “Now you drink it, dear; all of it.”

“I can’t out of the bottle, can I?” Jude fetched the glass from the dressing-table, and administered the spirit in some water. She gasped a little, but gulped it down, and lay back in the armchair.

She then began to relate circumstantially her experiences since they had parted; but in the middle of her story her voice faltered, her head nodded, and she ceased. She was in a sound sleep. Jude, dying of anxiety lest she should have caught a chill which might permanently injure her, was glad to hear the regular breathing. He softly went nearer to her, and observed that a warm flush now rosed her hitherto blue cheeks, and felt that her hanging hand was no longer cold. Then he stood with his back to the fire regarding her, and saw in her almost a divinity.



## IV

Jude's reverie was interrupted by the creak of footsteps ascending the stairs.

He whisked Sue's clothing from the chair where it was drying, thrust it under the bed, and sat down to his book. Somebody knocked and opened the door immediately. It was the landlady.

"Oh, I didn't know whether you was in or not, Mr. Fawley. I wanted to know if you would require supper. I see you've a young gentleman—"

"Yes, ma'am. But I think I won't come down to-night. Will you bring supper up on a tray, and I'll have a cup of tea as well."

It was Jude's custom to go downstairs to the kitchen, and eat his meals with the family, to save trouble. His landlady brought up the supper, however, on this occasion, and he took it from her at the door.

When she had descended he set the teapot on the hob, and drew out Sue's clothes anew; but they were far from dry. A thick woollen gown, he found, held a deal of water. So he hung them up again, and enlarged his fire and mused as the steam from the garments went up the chimney.

Suddenly she said, "Jude!"

"Yes. All right. How do you feel now?"

"Better. Quite well. Why, I fell asleep, didn't I? What time is it? Not late surely?"

"It is past ten."

"Is it really? What *shall* I do!" she said, starting up.

"Stay where you are."

"Yes; that's what I want to do. But I don't know what they would say! And what will you do?"

"I am going to sit here by the fire all night, and read. To-morrow is Sunday, and I haven't to go out anywhere. Perhaps you will be saved a

severe illness by resting there. Don't be frightened. I'm all right. Look here, what I have got for you. Some supper."

When she had sat upright she breathed plaintively and said, "I do feel rather weak still. I thought I was well; and I ought not to be here, ought I?" But the supper fortified her somewhat, and when she had had some tea and had lain back again she was bright and cheerful.

The tea must have been green, or too long drawn, for she seemed preternaturally wakeful afterwards, though Jude, who had not taken any, began to feel heavy; till her conversation fixed his attention.

"You called me a creature of civilization, or something, didn't you?" she said, breaking a silence. "It was very odd you should have done that."

"Why?"

"Well, because it is provokingly wrong. I am a sort of negation of it."

"You are very philosophical. 'A negation' is profound talking."

"Is it? Do I strike you as being learned?" she asked, with a touch of raillery.

"No—not learned. Only you don't talk quite like a girl—well, a girl who has had no advantages."

"I have had advantages. I don't know Latin and Greek, though I know the grammars of those tongues. But I know most of the Greek and Latin classics through translations, and other books too. I read Lemprière, Catullus, Martial, Juvenal, Lucian, Beaumont and Fletcher, Boccaccio, Scarron, De Brantôme, Sterne, De Foe, Smollett, Fielding, Shakespeare, the Bible, and other such; and found that all interest in the unwholesome part of those books ended with its mystery."

"You have read more than I," he said with a sigh. "How came you to read some of those queerer ones?"

"Well," she said thoughtfully, "it was by accident. My life has been entirely shaped by what people call a peculiarity in me. I have no fear of men, as such, nor of their books. I have mixed with them—one or two of them particularly—almost as one of their own sex. I mean I have not felt about them as most women are taught to feel—to be on their guard against attacks on their virtue; for no average man—no man short of a sensual savage—will molest a woman by day or night, at home or abroad, unless she invites him. Until she says by a look 'Come on' he is always afraid to,

and if you never say it, or look it, he never comes. However, what I was going to say is that when I was eighteen I formed a friendly intimacy with an undergraduate at Christminster, and he taught me a great deal, and lent me books which I should never have got hold of otherwise.”

“Is your friendship broken off?”

“Oh yes. He died, poor fellow, two or three years after he had taken his degree and left Christminster.”

“You saw a good deal of him, I suppose?”

“Yes. We used to go about together—on walking tours, reading tours, and things of that sort—like two men almost. He asked me to live with him, and I agreed to by letter. But when I joined him in London I found he meant a different thing from what I meant. He wanted me to be his mistress, in fact, but I wasn’t in love with him—and on my saying I should go away if he didn’t agree to *my* plan, he did so. We shared a sitting-room for fifteen months; and he became a leader-writer for one of the great London dailies; till he was taken ill, and had to go abroad. He said I was breaking his heart by holding out against him so long at such close quarters; he could never have believed it of woman. I might play that game once too often, he said. He came home merely to die. His death caused a terrible remorse in me for my cruelty—though I hope he died of consumption and not of me entirely. I went down to Sandbourne to his funeral, and was his only mourner. He left me a little money—because I broke his heart, I suppose. That’s how men are—so much better than women!”

“Good heavens!—what did you do then?”

“Ah—now you are angry with me!” she said, a contralto note of tragedy coming suddenly into her silvery voice. “I wouldn’t have told you if I had known!”

“No, I am not. Tell me all.”

“Well, I invested his money, poor fellow, in a bubble scheme, and lost it. I lived about London by myself for some time, and then I returned to Christminster, as my father—who was also in London, and had started as an art metal-worker near Long-Acre—wouldn’t have me back; and I got that occupation in the artist-shop where you found me... I said you didn’t know how bad I was!”

Jude looked round upon the arm-chair and its occupant, as if to read more carefully the creature he had given shelter to. His voice trembled as he said: "However you have lived, Sue, I believe you are as innocent as you are unconventional!"

"I am not particularly innocent, as you see, now that I have

‘twitched the robe  
From that blank lay-figure your fancy draped,’”

said she, with an ostensible sneer, though he could hear that she was brimming with tears. "But I have never yielded myself to any lover, if that's what you mean! I have remained as I began."

"I quite believe you. But some women would not have remained as they began."

"Perhaps not. Better women would not. People say I must be cold-natured—sexless—on account of it. But I won't have it! Some of the most passionately erotic poets have been the most self-contained in their daily lives."

"Have you told Mr. Phillotson about this university scholar friend?"

"Yes—long ago. I have never made any secret of it to anybody."

"What did he say?"

"He did not pass any criticism—only said I was everything to him, whatever I did; and things like that."

Jude felt much depressed; she seemed to get further and further away from him with her strange ways and curious unconsciousness of gender.

"Aren't you *really* vexed with me, dear Jude?" she suddenly asked, in a voice of such extraordinary tenderness that it hardly seemed to come from the same woman who had just told her story so lightly. "I would rather offend anybody in the world than you, I think!"

"I don't know whether I am vexed or not. I know I care very much about you!"

"I care as much for you as for anybody I ever met."

"You don't care *more*! There, I ought not to say that. Don't answer it!"

There was another long silence. He felt that she was treating him cruelly, though he could not quite say in what way. Her very helplessness

seemed to make her so much stronger than he.

“I am awfully ignorant on general matters, although I have worked so hard,” he said, to turn the subject. “I am absorbed in theology, you know. And what do you think I should be doing just about now, if you weren’t here? I should be saying my evening prayers. I suppose you wouldn’t like —”

“Oh no, no,” she answered, “I would rather not, if you don’t mind. I should seem so—such a hypocrite.”

“I thought you wouldn’t join, so I didn’t propose it. You must remember that I hope to be a useful minister some day.”

“To be ordained, I think you said?”

“Yes.”

“Then you haven’t given up the idea?—I thought that perhaps you had by this time.”

“Of course not. I fondly thought at first that you felt as I do about that, as you were so mixed up in Christminster Anglicanism. And Mr. Phillotson—”

“I have no respect for Christminster whatever, except, in a qualified degree, on its intellectual side,” said Sue Bridehead earnestly. “My friend I spoke of took that out of me. He was the most irreligious man I ever knew, and the most moral. And intellect at Christminster is new wine in old bottles. The mediævalism of Christminster must go, be sloughed off, or Christminster itself will have to go. To be sure, at times one couldn’t help having a sneaking liking for the traditions of the old faith, as preserved by a section of the thinkers there in touching and simple sincerity; but when I was in my saddest, rightest mind I always felt,

‘O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted  
Gods!’”...

“Sue, you are not a good friend of mine to talk like that!”

“Then I won’t, dear Jude!” The emotional throat-note had come back, and she turned her face away.

“I still think Christminster has much that is glorious; though I was resentful because I couldn’t get there.” He spoke gently, and resisted his

impulse to pique her on to tears.

“It is an ignorant place, except as to the townspeople, artizans, drunkards, and paupers,” she said, perverse still at his differing from her. “*They* see life as it is, of course; but few of the people in the colleges do. You prove it in your own person. You are one of the very men Christminster was intended for when the colleges were founded; a man with a passion for learning, but no money, or opportunities, or friends. But you were elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires’ sons.”

“Well, I can do without what it confers. I care for something higher.”

“And I for something broader, truer,” she insisted. “At present intellect in Christminster is pushing one way, and religion the other; and so they stand stock-still, like two rams butting each other.”

“What would Mr. Phillotson—”

“It is a place full of fetishists and ghost-seers!”

He noticed that whenever he tried to speak of the schoolmaster she turned the conversation to some generalizations about the offending university. Jude was extremely, morbidly, curious about her life as Phillotson’s *protégée* and betrothed; yet she would not enlighten him.

“Well, that’s just what I am, too,” he said. “I am fearful of life, spectre-seeing always.”

“But you are good and dear!” she murmured.

His heart bumped, and he made no reply.

“You are in the Tractarian stage just now, are you not?” she added, putting on flippancy to hide real feeling, a common trick with her. “Let me see—when was I there? In the year eighteen hundred and—”

“There’s a sarcasm in that which is rather unpleasant to me, Sue. Now will you do what I want you to? At this time I read a chapter, and then say prayers, as I told you. Now will you concentrate your attention on any book of these you like, and sit with your back to me, and leave me to my custom? You are sure you won’t join me?”

“I’ll look at you.”

“No. Don’t tease, Sue!”

“Very well—I’ll do just as you bid me, and I won’t vex you, Jude,” she replied, in the tone of a child who was going to be good for ever after,

turning her back upon him accordingly. A small Bible other than the one he was using lay near her, and during his retreat she took it up, and turned over the leaves.

“Jude,” she said brightly, when he had finished and come back to her; “will you let me make you a *new* New Testament, like the one I made for myself at Christminster?”

“Oh yes. How was that made?”

“I altered my old one by cutting up all the Epistles and Gospels into separate *brochures*, and rearranging them in chronological order as written, beginning the book with Thessalonians, following on with the Epistles, and putting the Gospels much further on. Then I had the volume rebound. My university friend Mr.—but never mind his name, poor boy—said it was an excellent idea. I know that reading it afterwards made it twice as interesting as before, and twice as understandable.”

“H’m!” said Jude, with a sense of sacrilege.

“And what a literary enormity this is,” she said, as she glanced into the pages of Solomon’s Song. “I mean the synopsis at the head of each chapter, explaining away the real nature of that rhapsody. You needn’t be alarmed: nobody claims inspiration for the chapter headings. Indeed, many divines treat them with contempt. It seems the drollest thing to think of the four-and-twenty elders, or bishops, or whatever number they were, sitting with long faces and writing down such stuff.”

Jude looked pained. “You are quite Voltairean!” he murmured.

“Indeed? Then I won’t say any more, except that people have no right to falsify the Bible! I *hate* such hum-bug as could attempt to plaster over with ecclesiastical abstractions such ecstatic, natural, human love as lies in that great and passionate song!” Her speech had grown spirited, and almost petulant at his rebuke, and her eyes moist. “I *wish* I had a friend here to support me; but nobody is ever on my side!”

“But my dear Sue, my very dear Sue, I am not against you!” he said, taking her hand, and surprised at her introducing personal feeling into mere argument.

“Yes you are, yes you are!” she cried, turning away her face that he might not see her brimming eyes. “You are on the side of the people in the training-school—at least you seem almost to be! What I insist on is, that

to explain such verses as this: ‘Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?’ by the note: ‘*The Church professeth her faith,*’ is supremely ridiculous!”

“Well then, let it be! You make such a personal matter of everything! I am—only too inclined just now to apply the words profanely. You know *you* are fairest among women to me, come to that!”

“But you are not to say it now!” Sue replied, her voice changing to its softest note of severity. Then their eyes met, and they shook hands like cronies in a tavern, and Jude saw the absurdity of quarrelling on such a hypothetical subject, and she the silliness of crying about what was written in an old book like the Bible.

“I won’t disturb your convictions—I really won’t!” she went on soothingly, for now he was rather more ruffled than she. “But I did want and long to ennoble some man to high aims; and when I saw you, and knew you wanted to be my comrade, I—shall I confess it?—thought that man might be you. But you take so much tradition on trust that I don’t know what to say.”

“Well, dear; I suppose one must take some things on trust. Life isn’t long enough to work out everything in Euclid problems before you believe it. I take Christianity.”

“Well, perhaps you might take something worse.”

“Indeed I might. Perhaps I have done so!” He thought of Arabella.

“I won’t ask what, because we are going to be *very* nice with each other, aren’t we, and never, never, vex each other any more?” She looked up trustfully, and her voice seemed trying to nestle in his breast.

“I shall always care for you!” said Jude.

“And I for you. Because you are single-hearted, and forgiving to your faulty and tiresome little Sue!”

He looked away, for that epicene tenderness of hers was too harrowing. Was it that which had broken the heart of the poor leader-writer; and was he to be the next one? ... But Sue was so dear! ... If he could only get over the sense of her sex, as she seemed to be able to do so easily of his, what a comrade she would make; for their difference of opinion on conjectural subjects only drew them closer together on matters of daily human experience. She was nearer to him than any other woman he had ever met,



and he could scarcely believe that time, creed, or absence, would ever divide him from her.

But his grief at her incredulities returned. They sat on till she fell asleep again, and he nodded in his chair likewise. Whenever he aroused himself he turned her things, and made up the fire anew. About six o'clock he awoke completely, and lighting a candle, found that her clothes were dry. Her chair being a far more comfortable one than his she still slept on inside his great-coat, looking warm as a new bun and boyish as a Ganymede. Placing the garments by her and touching her on the shoulder he went downstairs, and washed himself by starlight in the yard.

## V

When he returned she was dressed as usual.

“Now could I get out without anybody seeing me?” she asked. “The town is not yet astir.”

“But you have had no breakfast.”

“Oh, I don’t want any! I fear I ought not to have run away from that school! Things seem so different in the cold light of morning, don’t they? What Mr. Phillotson will say I don’t know! It was quite by his wish that I went there. He is the only man in the world for whom I have any respect or fear. I hope he’ll forgive me; but he’ll scold me dreadfully, I expect!”

“I’ll go to him and explain—” began Jude.

“Oh no, you shan’t. I don’t care for him! He may think what he likes—I shall do just as I choose!”

“But you just this moment said—”

“Well, if I did, I shall do as I like for all him! I have thought of what I shall do—go to the sister of one of my fellow-students in the training-school, who has asked me to visit her. She has a school near Shaston, about eighteen miles from here—and I shall stay there till this has blown over, and I get back to the training-school again.”

At the last moment he persuaded her to let him make her a cup of coffee, in a portable apparatus he kept in his room for use on rising to go to his work every day before the household was astir.

“Now a dew-bit to eat with it,” he said; “and off we go. You can have a regular breakfast when you get there.”

They went quietly out of the house, Jude accompanying her to the station. As they departed along the street a head was thrust out of an upper window of his lodging and quickly withdrawn. Sue still seemed sorry for her rashness, and to wish she had not rebelled; telling him at parting that she would let him know as soon as she got re-admitted to the training-

school. They stood rather miserably together on the platform; and it was apparent that he wanted to say more.

“I want to tell you something—two things,” he said hurriedly as the train came up. “One is a warm one, the other a cold one!”

“Jude,” she said. “I know one of them. And you mustn’t!”

“What?”

“You mustn’t love me. You are to like me—that’s all!”

Jude’s face became so full of complicated glooms that hers was agitated in sympathy as she bade him adieu through the carriage window. And then the train moved on, and waving her pretty hand to him she vanished away.

Melchester was a dismal place enough for Jude that Sunday of her departure, and the Close so hateful that he did not go once to the cathedral services. The next morning there came a letter from her, which, with her usual promptitude, she had written directly she had reached her friend’s house. She told him of her safe arrival and comfortable quarters, and then added:—

What I really write about, dear Jude, is something I said to you at parting. You had been so very good and kind to me that when you were out of sight I felt what a cruel and ungrateful woman I was to say it, and it has reproached me ever since. *If you want to love me, Jude, you may:* I don’t mind at all; and I’ll never say again that you mustn’t!

Now I won’t write any more about that. You do forgive your thoughtless friend for her cruelty? and won’t make her miserable by saying you don’t?—Ever,

SUE.

It would be superfluous to say what his answer was; and how he thought what he would have done had he been free, which should have rendered a long residence with a female friend quite unnecessary for Sue. He felt he might have been pretty sure of his own victory if it had come to a conflict between Phillotson and himself for the possession of her.

Yet Jude was in danger of attaching more meaning to Sue’s impulsive note than it really was intended to bear.

After the lapse of a few days he found himself hoping that she would write again. But he received no further communication; and in the intensity of his solicitude he sent another note, suggesting that he should pay her a visit some Sunday, the distance being under eighteen miles.

He expected a reply on the second morning after despatching his missive; but none came. The third morning arrived; the postman did not stop. This was Saturday, and in a feverish state of anxiety about her he sent off three brief lines stating that he was coming the following day, for he felt sure something had happened.

His first and natural thought had been that she was ill from her immersion; but it soon occurred to him that somebody would have written for her in such a case. Conjectures were put an end to by his arrival at the village school-house near Shaston on the bright morning of Sunday, between eleven and twelve o'clock, when the parish was as vacant as a desert, most of the inhabitants having gathered inside the church, whence their voices could occasionally be heard in unison.

A little girl opened the door. "Miss Bridehead is up-stairs," she said. "And will you please walk up to her?"

"Is she ill?" asked Jude hastily.

"Only a little—not very."

Jude entered and ascended. On reaching the landing a voice told him which way to turn—the voice of Sue calling his name. He passed the doorway, and found her lying in a little bed in a room a dozen feet square.

"Oh, Sue!" he cried, sitting down beside her and taking her hand. "How is this! You couldn't write?"

"No—it wasn't that!" she answered. "I did catch a bad cold—but I could have written. Only I wouldn't!"

"Why not?—frightening me like this!"

"Yes—that was what I was afraid of! But I had decided not to write to you any more. They won't have me back at the school—that's why I couldn't write. Not the fact, but the reason!"

"Well?"

"They not only won't have me, but they gave me a parting piece of advice—"

“What?”

She did not answer directly. “I vowed I never would tell you, Jude—it is so vulgar and distressing!”

“Is it about us?”

“Yes.”

“But do tell me!”

“Well—somebody has sent them baseless reports about us, and they say you and I ought to marry as soon as possible, for the sake of my reputation! ... There—now I have told you, and I wish I hadn’t!”

“Oh, poor Sue!”

“I don’t think of you like that means! It did just *occur* to me to regard you in the way they think I do, but I hadn’t begun to. I *have* recognized that the cousinship was merely nominal, since we met as total strangers. But my marrying you, dear Jude—why, of course, if I had reckoned upon marrying you I shouldn’t have come to you so often! And I never supposed you thought of such a thing as marrying me till the other evening; when I began to fancy you did love me a little. Perhaps I ought not to have been so intimate with you. It is all my fault. Everything is my fault always!”

The speech seemed a little forced and unreal, and they regarded each other with a mutual distress.

“I was so blind at first!” she went on. “I didn’t see what you felt at all. Oh, you have been unkind to me—you have—to look upon me as a sweetheart without saying a word, and leaving me to discover it myself! Your attitude to me has become known; and naturally they think we’ve been doing wrong! I’ll never trust you again!”

“Yes, Sue,” he said simply; “I am to blame—more than you think. I was quite aware that you did not suspect till within the last meeting or two what I was feeling about you. I admit that our meeting as strangers prevented a sense of relationship, and that it was a sort of subterfuge to avail myself of it. But don’t you think I deserve a little consideration for concealing my wrong, very wrong, sentiments, since I couldn’t help having them?”

She turned her eyes doubtfully towards him, and then looked away as if afraid she might forgive him.

By every law of nature and sex a kiss was the only rejoinder that fitted the mood and the moment, under the suasion of which Sue's undemonstrative regard of him might not inconceivably have changed its temperature. Some men would have cast scruples to the winds, and ventured it, oblivious both of Sue's declaration of her neutral feelings, and of the pair of autographs in the vestry chest of Arabella's parish church. Jude did not. He had, in fact, come in part to tell his own fatal story. It was upon his lips; yet at the hour of this distress he could not disclose it. He preferred to dwell upon the recognized barriers between them.

"Of course—I know you don't—care about me in any particular way," he sorrowed. "You ought not, and you are right. You belong to—Mr. Phillotson. I suppose he has been to see you?"

"Yes," she said shortly, her face changing a little. "Though I didn't ask him to come. You are glad, of course, that he has been! But I shouldn't care if he didn't come any more!"

It was very perplexing to her lover that she should be piqued at his honest acquiescence in his rival, if Jude's feelings of love were deprecated by her. He went on to something else.

"This will blow over, dear Sue," he said. "The training-school authorities are not all the world. You can get to be a student in some other, no doubt."

"I'll ask Mr. Phillotson," she said decisively.

Sue's kind hostess now returned from church, and there was no more intimate conversation. Jude left in the afternoon, hopelessly unhappy. But he had seen her, and sat with her. Such intercourse as that would have to content him for the remainder of his life. The lesson of renunciation it was necessary and proper that he, as a parish priest, should learn.

But the next morning when he awoke he felt rather vexed with her, and decided that she was rather unreasonable, not to say capricious. Then, in illustration of what he had begun to discern as one of her redeeming characteristics there came promptly a note, which she must have written almost immediately he had gone from her:

Forgive me for my petulance yesterday! I was horrid to you; I know it, and I feel perfectly miserable at my horridness. It was so dear of you not to be angry! Jude,

please still keep me as your friend and associate, with all my faults. I'll try not to be like it again.

I am coming to Melchester on Saturday, to get my things away from the T. S., &c. I could walk with you for half an hour, if you would like?—Your repentant

SUE.

Jude forgave her straightway, and asked her to call for him at the cathedral works when she came.

## VI

Meanwhile a middle-aged man was dreaming a dream of great beauty concerning the writer of the above letter. He was Richard Phillotson, who had recently removed from the mixed village school at Lumsdon near Christminster, to undertake a large boys' school in his native town of Shaston, which stood on a hill sixty miles to the south-west as the crow flies.

A glance at the place and its accessories was almost enough to reveal that the schoolmaster's plans and dreams so long indulged in had been abandoned for some new dream with which neither the Church nor literature had much in common. Essentially an unpractical man, he was now bent on making and saving money for a practical purpose—that of keeping a wife, who, if she chose, might conduct one of the girls' schools adjoining his own; for which purpose he had advised her to go into training, since she would not marry him offhand.

About the time that Jude was removing from Marygreen to Melchester, and entering on adventures at the latter place with Sue, the schoolmaster was settling down in the new school-house at Shaston. All the furniture being fixed, the books shelved, and the nails driven, he had begun to sit in his parlour during the dark winter nights and re-attempt some of his old studies—one branch of which had included Roman-Britannic antiquities—an unremunerative labour for a national school-master but a subject, that, after his abandonment of the university scheme, had interested him as being a comparatively unworked mine; practicable to those who, like himself, had lived in lonely spots where these remains were abundant, and were seen to compel inferences in startling contrast to accepted views on the civilization of that time.

A resumption of this investigation was the outward and apparent hobby of Phillotson at present—his ostensible reason for going alone into fields where causeways, dykes, and tumuli abounded, or shutting himself up in his house with a few urns, tiles, and mosaics he had collected, instead of



calling round upon his new neighbours, who for their part had showed themselves willing enough to be friendly with him. But it was not the real, or the whole, reason, after all. Thus on a particular evening in the month, when it had grown quite late—to near midnight, indeed—and the light of his lamp, shining from his window at a salient angle of the hill-top town over infinite miles of valley westward, announced as by words a place and person given over to study, he was not exactly studying.

The interior of the room—the books, the furniture, the schoolmaster's loose coat, his attitude at the table, even the flickering of the fire, bespoke the same dignified tale of undistracted research—more than creditable to a man who had had no advantages beyond those of his own making. And yet the tale, true enough till latterly, was not true now. What he was regarding was not history. They were historic notes, written in a bold womanly hand at his dictation some months before, and it was the clerical rendering of word after word that absorbed him.

He presently took from a drawer a carefully tied bundle of letters, few, very few, as correspondence counts nowadays. Each was in its envelope just as it had arrived, and the handwriting was of the same womanly character as the historic notes. He unfolded them one by one and read them musingly. At first sight there seemed in these small documents to be absolutely nothing to muse over. They were straightforward, frank letters, signed “Sue B—”; just such ones as would be written during short absences, with no other thought than their speedy destruction, and chiefly concerning books in reading and other experiences of a training school, forgotten doubtless by the writer with the passing of the day of their inditing. In one of them—quite a recent note—the young woman said that she had received his considerate letter, and that it was honourable and generous of him to say he would not come to see her oftener than she desired (the school being such an awkward place for callers, and because of her strong wish that her engagement to him should not be known, which it would infallibly be if he visited her often). Over these phrases the school-master pored. What precise shade of satisfaction was to be gathered from a woman's gratitude that the man who loved her had not been often to see her? The problem occupied him, distracted him.

He opened another drawer, and found therein an envelope, from which he drew a photograph of Sue as a child, long before he had known her,

standing under trellis-work with a little basket in her hand. There was another of her as a young woman, her dark eyes and hair making a very distinct and attractive picture of her, which just disclosed, too, the thoughtfulness that lay behind her lighter moods. It was a duplicate of the one she had given Jude, and would have given to any man. Phillotson brought it half-way to his lips, but withdrew it in doubt at her perplexing phrases: ultimately kissing the dead pasteboard with all the passionateness, and more than all the devotion, of a young man of eighteen.

The schoolmaster's was an unhealthy-looking, old-fashioned face, rendered more old-fashioned by his style of shaving. A certain gentlemanliness had been imparted to it by nature, suggesting an inherent wish to do rightly by all. His speech was a little slow, but his tones were sincere enough to make his hesitation no defect. His greying hair was curly, and radiated from a point in the middle of his crown. There were four lines across his forehead, and he only wore spectacles when reading at night. It was almost certainly a renunciation forced upon him by his academic purpose, rather than a distaste for women, which had hitherto kept him from closing with one of the sex in matrimony.

Such silent proceedings as those of this evening were repeated many and oft times when he was not under the eye of the boys, whose quick and penetrating regard would frequently become almost intolerable to the self-conscious master in his present anxious care for Sue, making him, in the grey hours of morning, dread to meet anew the gimlet glances, lest they should read what the dream within him was.

He had honourably acquiesced in Sue's announced wish that he was not often to visit her at the training school; but at length, his patience being sorely tried, he set out one Saturday afternoon to pay her an unexpected call. There the news of her departure—expulsion as it might almost have been considered—was flashed upon him without warning or mitigation as he stood at the door expecting in a few minutes to behold her face; and when he turned away he could hardly see the road before him.

Sue had, in fact, never written a line to her suitor on the subject, although it was fourteen days old. A short reflection told him that this proved nothing, a natural delicacy being as ample a reason for silence as any degree of blameworthiness.

They had informed him at the school where she was living, and having no immediate anxiety about her comfort, his thoughts took the direction of a burning indignation against the training school committee. In his bewilderment Phillotson entered the adjacent cathedral, just now in a direly dismantled state by reason of the repairs. He sat down on a block of freestone, regardless of the dusty imprint it made on his breeches; and his listless eyes following the movements of the workmen he presently became aware that the reputed culprit, Sue's lover Jude, was one amongst them.

Jude had never spoken to his former hero since the meeting by the model of Jerusalem. Having inadvertently witnessed Phillotson's tentative courtship of Sue in the lane there had grown up in the younger man's mind a curious dislike to think of the elder, to meet him, to communicate in any way with him; and since Phillotson's success in obtaining at least her promise had become known to Jude, he had frankly recognized that he did not wish to see or hear of his senior any more, learn anything of his pursuits, or even imagine again what excellencies might appertain to his character. On this very day of the schoolmaster's visit Jude was expecting Sue, as she had promised; and when therefore he saw the schoolmaster in the nave of the building, saw, moreover, that he was coming to speak to him, he felt no little embarrassment; which Phillotson's own embarrassment prevented his observing.

Jude joined him, and they both withdrew from the other workmen to the spot where Phillotson had been sitting. Jude offered him a piece of sackcloth for a cushion, and told him it was dangerous to sit on the bare block.

"Yes; yes," said Phillotson abstractedly, as he reseated himself, his eyes resting on the ground as if he were trying to remember where he was. "I won't keep you long. It was merely that I have heard that you have seen my little friend Sue recently. It occurred to me to speak to you on that account. I merely want to ask—about her."

"I think I know what!" Jude hurriedly said. "About her escaping from the training school, and her coming to me?"

"Yes."

"Well"—Jude for a moment felt an unprincipled and fiendish wish to annihilate his rival at all cost. By the exercise of that treachery which love

for the same woman renders possible to men the most honourable in every other relation of life, he could send off Phillotson in agony and defeat by saying that the scandal was true, and that Sue had irretrievably committed herself with him. But his action did not respond for a moment to his animal instinct; and what he said was, "I am glad of your kindness in coming to talk plainly to me about it. You know what they say?—that I ought to marry her."

"What!"

"And I wish with all my soul I could!"

Phillotson trembled, and his naturally pale face acquired a corpselike sharpness in its lines. "I had no idea that it was of this nature! God forbid!"

"No, no!" said Jude aghast. "I thought you understood? I mean that were I in a position to marry her, or someone, and settle down, instead of living in lodgings here and there, I should be glad!"

What he had really meant was simply that he loved her.

"But—since this painful matter has been opened up—what really happened?" asked Phillotson, with the firmness of a man who felt that a sharp smart now was better than a long agony of suspense hereafter. "Cases arise, and this is one, when even ungenerous questions must be put to make false assumptions impossible, and to kill scandal."

Jude explained readily; giving the whole series of adventures, including the night at the shepherd's, her wet arrival at his lodging, her indisposition from her immersion, their vigil of discussion, and his seeing her off next morning.

"Well now," said Phillotson at the conclusion, "I take it as your final word, and I know I can believe you, that the suspicion which led to her rustication is an absolutely baseless one?"

"It is," said Jude solemnly. "Absolutely. So help me God!"

The schoolmaster rose. Each of the twain felt that the interview could not comfortably merge in a friendly discussion of their recent experiences, after the manner of friends; and when Jude had taken him round, and shown him some features of the renovation which the old cathedral was undergoing, Phillotson bade the young man good-day and went away.

This visit took place about eleven o'clock in the morning; but no Sue appeared. When Jude went to his dinner at one he saw his beloved ahead of him in the street leading up from the North Gate, walking as if no way looking for him. Speedily overtaking her he remarked that he had asked her to come to him at the cathedral, and she had promised.

"I have been to get my things from the college," she said—an observation which he was expected to take as an answer, though it was not one. Finding her to be in this evasive mood he felt inclined to give her the information so long withheld.

"You have not seen Mr. Phillotson to-day?" he ventured to inquire.

"I have not. But I am not going to be cross-examined about him; and if you ask anything more I won't answer!"

"It is very odd that—" He stopped, regarding her.

"What?"

"That you are often not so nice in your real presence as you are in your letters!"

"Does it really seem so to you?" said she, smiling with quick curiosity. "Well, that's strange; but I feel just the same about you, Jude. When you are gone away I seem such a coldhearted—"

As she knew his sentiment towards her Jude saw that they were getting upon dangerous ground. It was now, he thought, that he must speak as an honest man.

But he did not speak, and she continued: "It was that which made me write and say—I didn't mind your loving me—if you wanted to, much!"

The exultation he might have felt at what that implied, or seemed to imply, was nullified by his intention, and he rested rigid till he began: "I have never told you—"

"Yes you have," murmured she.

"I mean, I have never told you my history—all of it."

"But I guess it. I know nearly."

Jude looked up. Could she possibly know of that morning performance of his with Arabella; which in a few months had ceased to be a marriage more completely than by death? He saw that she did not.

“I can’t quite tell you here in the street,” he went on with a gloomy tongue. “And you had better not come to my lodgings. Let us go in here.”

The building by which they stood was the market-house; it was the only place available; and they entered, the market being over, and the stalls and areas empty. He would have preferred a more congenial spot, but, as usually happens, in place of a romantic field or solemn aisle for his tale, it was told while they walked up and down over a floor littered with rotten cabbage-leaves, and amid all the usual squalors of decayed vegetable matter and unsaleable refuse. He began and finished his brief narrative, which merely led up to the information that he had married a wife some years earlier, and that his wife was living still. Almost before her countenance had time to change she hurried out the words,

“Why didn’t you tell me before!”

“I couldn’t. It seemed so cruel to tell it.”

“To yourself, Jude. So it was better to be cruel to me!”

“No, dear darling!” cried Jude passionately. He tried to take her hand, but she withdrew it. Their old relations of confidence seemed suddenly to have ended, and the antagonisms of sex to sex were left without any counter-poising predilections. She was his comrade, friend, unconscious sweetheart no longer; and her eyes regarded him in estranged silence.

“I was ashamed of the episode in my life which brought about the marriage,” he continued. “I can’t explain it precisely now. I could have done it if you had taken it differently!”

“But how can I?” she burst out. “Here I have been saying, or writing, that—that you might love me, or something of the sort!—just out of charity—and all the time—oh, it is perfectly damnable how things are!” she said, stamping her foot in a nervous quiver.

“You take me wrong, Sue! I never thought you cared for me at all, till quite lately; so I felt it did not matter! Do you care for me, Sue?—you know how I mean?—I don’t like ‘out of charity’ at all!”

It was a question which in the circumstances Sue did not choose to answer.

“I suppose she—your wife—is—a very pretty woman, even if she’s wicked?” she asked quickly.

“She’s pretty enough, as far as that goes.”

“Prettier than I am, no doubt!”

“You are not the least alike. And I have never seen her for years... But she’s sure to come back—they always do!”

“How strange of you to stay apart from her like this!” said Sue, her trembling lip and lumpy throat belying her irony. “You, such a religious man. How will the demi-gods in your Pantheon—I mean those legendary persons you call saints—intercede for you after this? Now if I had done such a thing it would have been different, and not remarkable, for I at least don’t regard marriage as a sacrament. Your theories are not so advanced as your practice!”

“Sue, you are terribly cutting when you like to be—a perfect Voltaire! But you must treat me as you will!”

When she saw how wretched he was she softened, and trying to blink away her sympathetic tears said with all the winning reproachfulness of a heart-hurt woman: “Ah—you should have told me before you gave me that idea that you wanted to be allowed to love me! I had no feeling before that moment at the railway-station, except—” For once Sue was as miserable as he, in her attempts to keep herself free from emotion, and her less than half-success.

“Don’t cry, dear!” he implored.

“I am—not crying—because I meant to—love you; but because of your want of—confidence!”

They were quite screened from the market-square without, and he could not help putting out his arm towards her waist. His momentary desire was the means of her rallying. “No, no!” she said, drawing back stringently, and wiping her eyes. “Of course not! It would be hypocrisy to pretend that it would be meant as from my cousin; and it can’t be in any other way.”

They moved on a dozen paces, and she showed herself recovered. It was distracting to Jude, and his heart would have ached less had she appeared anyhow but as she did appear; essentially large-minded and generous on reflection, despite a previous exercise of those narrow womanly humours on impulse that were necessary to give her sex.

“I don’t blame you for what you couldn’t help,” she said, smiling. “How should I be so foolish? I do blame you a little bit for not telling me before.

But, after all, it doesn't matter. We should have had to keep apart, you see, even if this had not been in your life."

"No, we shouldn't, Sue! This is the only obstacle."

"You forget that I must have loved you, and wanted to be your wife, even if there had been no obstacle," said Sue, with a gentle seriousness which did not reveal her mind. "And then we are cousins, and it is bad for cousins to marry. And—I am engaged to somebody else. As to our going on together as we were going, in a sort of friendly way, the people round us would have made it unable to continue. Their views of the relations of man and woman are limited, as is proved by their expelling me from the school. Their philosophy only recognizes relations based on animal desire. The wide field of strong attachment where desire plays, at least, only a secondary part, is ignored by them—the part of—who is it?—Venus Urania."

Her being able to talk learnedly showed that she was mistress of herself again; and before they parted she had almost regained her vivacious glance, her reciprocity of tone, her gay manner, and her second-thought attitude of critical largeness towards others of her age and sex.

He could speak more freely now. "There were several reasons against my telling you rashly. One was what I have said; another, that it was always impressed upon me that I ought not to marry—that I belonged to an odd and peculiar family—the wrong breed for marriage."

"Ah—who used to say that to you?"

"My great-aunt. She said it always ended badly with us Fawleys."

"That's strange. My father used to say the same to me!"

They stood possessed by the same thought, ugly enough, even as an assumption: that a union between them, had such been possible, would have meant a terrible intensification of unfitness—two bitters in one dish.

"Oh, but there can't be anything in it!" she said with nervous lightness. "Our family have been unlucky of late years in choosing mates—that's all."

And then they pretended to persuade themselves that all that had happened was of no consequence, and that they could still be cousins and friends and warm correspondents, and have happy genial times when they met, even if they met less frequently than before. Their parting was in



good friendship, and yet Jude's last look into her eyes was tinged with inquiry, for he felt that he did not even now quite know her mind.

## VII

Tidings from Sue a day or two after passed across Jude like a withering blast.

Before reading the letter he was led to suspect that its contents were of a somewhat serious kind by catching sight of the signature—which was in her full name, never used in her correspondence with him since her first note:

MY DEAR JUDE,—I have something to tell you which perhaps you will not be surprised to hear, though certainly it may strike you as being accelerated (as the railway companies say of their trains). Mr. Phillotson and I are to be married quite soon—in three or four weeks. We had intended, as you know, to wait till I had gone through my course of training and obtained my certificate, so as to assist him, if necessary, in the teaching. But he generously says he does not see any object in waiting, now I am not at the training school. It is so good of him, because the awkwardness of my situation has really come about by my fault in getting expelled.

Wish me joy. Remember I say you are to, and you mustn't refuse!—Your affectionate cousin,

SUSANNA FLORENCE MARY BRIDEHEAD.

Jude staggered under the news; could eat no breakfast; and kept on drinking tea because his mouth was so dry. Then presently he went back to his work and laughed the usual bitter laugh of a man so confronted. Everything seemed turning to satire. And yet, what could the poor girl do? he asked himself, and felt worse than shedding tears.

“O Susanna Florence Mary!” he said as he worked. “You don’t know what marriage means!”

Could it be possible that his announcement of his own marriage had pricked her on to this, just as his visit to her when in liquor may have pricked her on to her engagement? To be sure, there seemed to exist these other and sufficient reasons, practical and social, for her decision; but Sue was not a very practical or calculating person; and he was compelled to think that a pique at having his secret sprung upon her had moved her to give way to Phillotson’s probable representations, that the best course to prove how unfounded were the suspicions of the school authorities would be to marry him off-hand, as in fulfilment of an ordinary engagement. Sue had, in fact, been placed in an awkward corner. Poor Sue!

He determined to play the Spartan; to make the best of it, and support her; but he could not write the requested good wishes for a day or two. Meanwhile there came another note from his impatient little dear:

Jude, will you give me away? I have nobody else who could do it so conveniently as you, being the only married relation I have here on the spot, even if my father were friendly enough to be willing, which he isn’t. I hope you won’t think it a trouble? I have been looking at the marriage service in the prayer-book, and it seems to me very humiliating that a giver-away should be required at all. According to the ceremony as there printed, my bridegroom chooses me of his own will and pleasure; but I don’t choose him. Somebody *gives* me to him, like a she-ass or she-goat, or any other domestic animal. Bless your exalted views of woman, O churchman! But I forget: I am no longer privileged to tease you.—Ever,

SUSANNA FLORENCE MARY BRIDEHEAD.

Jude screwed himself up to heroic key; and replied:

MY DEAR SUE,—Of course I wish you joy! And also of course I will give you away. What I suggest is that, as you have no house of your own, you do not marry from your

school friend's, but from mine. It would be more proper, I think, since I am, as you say, the person nearest related to you in this part of the world.

I don't see why you sign your letter in such a new and terribly formal way? Surely you care a bit about me still!—  
Ever your affectionate,

JUDE.

What had jarred on him even more than the signature was a little sting he had been silent on—the phrase “married relation”—What an idiot it made him seem as her lover! If Sue had written that in satire, he could hardly forgive her; if in suffering—ah, that was another thing!

His offer of his lodging must have commended itself to Phillotson at any rate, for the schoolmaster sent him a line of warm thanks, accepting the convenience. Sue also thanked him. Jude immediately moved into more commodious quarters, as much to escape the espionage of the suspicious landlady who had been one cause of Sue's unpleasant experience as for the sake of room.

Then Sue wrote to tell him the day fixed for the wedding; and Jude decided, after inquiry, that she should come into residence on the following Saturday, which would allow of a ten days' stay in the city prior to the ceremony, sufficiently representing a nominal residence of fifteen.

She arrived by the ten o'clock train on the day aforesaid, Jude not going to meet her at the station, by her special request, that he should not lose a morning's work and pay, she said (if this were her true reason). But so well by this time did he know Sue that the remembrance of their mutual sensitiveness at emotional crises might, he thought, have weighed with her in this. When he came home to dinner she had taken possession of her apartment.

She lived in the same house with him, but on a different floor, and they saw each other little, an occasional supper being the only meal they took together, when Sue's manner was something like that of a scared child. What she felt he did not know; their conversation was mechanical, though she did not look pale or ill. Phillotson came frequently, but mostly when Jude was absent. On the morning of the wedding, when Jude had given

himself a holiday, Sue and her cousin had breakfast together for the first and last time during this curious interval; in his room—the parlour—which he had hired for the period of Sue's residence. Seeing, as women do, how helpless he was in making the place comfortable, she bustled about.

“What's the matter, Jude?” she said suddenly.

He was leaning with his elbows on the table and his chin on his hands, looking into a futurity which seemed to be sketched out on the tablecloth.

“Oh—nothing!”

“You are ‘father’, you know. That's what they call the man who gives you away.”

Jude could have said “Phillotson's age entitles him to be called that!” But he would not annoy her by such a cheap retort.

She talked incessantly, as if she dreaded his indulgence in reflection, and before the meal was over both he and she wished they had not put such confidence in their new view of things, and had taken breakfast apart. What oppressed Jude was the thought that, having done a wrong thing of this sort himself, he was aiding and abetting the woman he loved in doing a like wrong thing, instead of imploring and warning her against it. It was on his tongue to say, “You have quite made up your mind?”

After breakfast they went out on an errand together moved by a mutual thought that it was the last opportunity they would have of indulging in unceremonious companionship. By the irony of fate, and the curious trick in Sue's nature of tempting Providence at critical times, she took his arm as they walked through the muddy street—a thing she had never done before in her life—and on turning the corner they found themselves close to a grey perpendicular church with a low-pitched roof—the church of St. Thomas.

“That's the church,” said Jude.

“Where I am going to be married?”

“Yes.”

“Indeed!” she exclaimed with curiosity. “How I should like to go in and see what the spot is like where I am so soon to kneel and do it.”

Again he said to himself, “She does not realize what marriage means!”

He passively acquiesced in her wish to go in, and they entered by the western door. The only person inside the gloomy building was a charwoman cleaning. Sue still held Jude's arm, almost as if she loved him. Cruelly sweet, indeed, she had been to him that morning; but his thoughts of a penance in store for her were tempered by an ache:

... I can find no way  
How a blow should fall, such as falls on men,  
Nor prove too much for your womanhood!

They strolled undemonstratively up the nave towards the altar railing, which they stood against in silence, turning then and walking down the nave again, her hand still on his arm, precisely like a couple just married. The too suggestive incident, entirely of her making, nearly broke down Jude.

"I like to do things like this," she said in the delicate voice of an epicure in emotions, which left no doubt that she spoke the truth.

"I know you do!" said Jude.

"They are interesting, because they have probably never been done before. I shall walk down the church like this with my husband in about two hours, shan't I!"

"No doubt you will!"

"Was it like this when you were married?"

"Good God, Sue—don't be so awfully merciless! ... There, dear one, I didn't mean it!"

"Ah—you are vexed!" she said regretfully, as she blinked away an access of eye moisture. "And I promised never to vex you! ... I suppose I ought not to have asked you to bring me in here. Oh, I oughtn't! I see it now. My curiosity to hunt up a new sensation always leads me into these scrapes. Forgive me! ... You will, won't you, Jude?"

The appeal was so remorseful that Jude's eyes were even wetter than hers as he pressed her hand for Yes.

"Now we'll hurry away, and I won't do it any more!" she continued humbly; and they came out of the building, Sue intending to go on to the station to meet Phillotson. But the first person they encountered on

entering the main street was the schoolmaster himself, whose train had arrived sooner than Sue expected. There was nothing really to demur to in her leaning on Jude's arm; but she withdrew her hand, and Jude thought that Phillotson had looked surprised.

"We have been doing such a funny thing!" said she, smiling candidly. "We've been to the church, rehearsing as it were. Haven't we, Jude?"

"How?" said Phillotson curiously.

Jude inwardly deplored what he thought to be unnecessary frankness; but she had gone too far not to explain all, which she accordingly did, telling him how they had marched up to the altar.

Seeing how puzzled Phillotson seemed, Jude said as cheerfully as he could, "I am going to buy her another little present. Will you both come to the shop with me?"

"No," said Sue, "I'll go on to the house with him"; and requesting her lover not to be a long time she departed with the schoolmaster.

Jude soon joined them at his rooms, and shortly after they prepared for the ceremony. Phillotson's hair was brushed to a painful extent, and his shirt collar appeared stiffer than it had been for the previous twenty years. Beyond this he looked dignified and thoughtful, and altogether a man of whom it was not unsafe to predict that he would make a kind and considerate husband. That he adored Sue was obvious; and she could almost be seen to feel that she was undeserving his adoration.

Although the distance was so short he had hired a fly from the Red Lion, and six or seven women and children had gathered by the door when they came out. The schoolmaster and Sue were unknown, though Jude was getting to be recognized as a citizen; and the couple were judged to be some relations of his from a distance, nobody supposing Sue to have been a recent pupil at the training school.

In the carriage Jude took from his pocket his extra little wedding-present, which turned out to be two or three yards of white tulle, which he threw over her bonnet and all, as a veil.

"It looks so odd over a bonnet," she said. "I'll take the bonnet off."

"Oh no—let it stay," said Phillotson. And she obeyed.

When they had passed up the church and were standing in their places Jude found that the antecedent visit had certainly taken off the edge of this

performance, but by the time they were half-way on with the service he wished from his heart that he had not undertaken the business of giving her away. How could Sue have had the temerity to ask him to do it—a cruelty possibly to herself as well as to him? Women were different from men in such matters. Was it that they were, instead of more sensitive, as reputed, more callous, and less romantic; or were they more heroic? Or was Sue simply so perverse that she wilfully gave herself and him pain for the odd and mournful luxury of practising long-suffering in her own person, and of being touched with tender pity for him at having made him practise it? He could perceive that her face was nervously set, and when they reached the trying ordeal of Jude giving her to Phillotson she could hardly command herself; rather, however, as it seemed, from her knowledge of what her cousin must feel, whom she need not have had there at all, than from self-consideration. Possibly she would go on inflicting such pains again and again, and grieving for the sufferer again and again, in all her colossal inconsistency.

Phillotson seemed not to notice, to be surrounded by a mist which prevented his seeing the emotions of others. As soon as they had signed their names and come away, and the suspense was over, Jude felt relieved.

The meal at his lodging was a very simple affair, and at two o'clock they went off. In crossing the pavement to the fly she looked back; and there was a frightened light in her eyes. Could it be that Sue had acted with such unusual foolishness as to plunge into she knew not what for the sake of asserting her independence of him, of retaliating on him for his secrecy? Perhaps Sue was thus venturesome with men because she was childishly ignorant of that side of their natures which wore out women's hearts and lives.

When her foot was on the carriage-step she turned round, saying that she had forgotten something. Jude and the landlady offered to get it.

“No,” she said, running back. “It is my handkerchief. I know where I left it.”

Jude followed her back. She had found it, and came holding it in her hand. She looked into his eyes with her own tearful ones, and her lips suddenly parted as if she were going to avow something. But she went on; and whatever she had meant to say remained unspoken.



## VIII

Jude wondered if she had really left her handkerchief behind; or whether it were that she had miserably wished to tell him of a love that at the last moment she could not bring herself to express.

He could not stay in his silent lodging when they were gone, and fearing that he might be tempted to drown his misery in alcohol he went upstairs, changed his dark clothes for his white, his thin boots for his thick, and proceeded to his customary work for the afternoon.

But in the cathedral he seemed to hear a voice behind him, and to be possessed with an idea that she would come back. She could not possibly go home with Phillotson, he fancied. The feeling grew and stirred. The moment that the clock struck the last of his working hours he threw down his tools and rushed homeward. "Has anybody been for me?" he asked.

Nobody had been there.

As he could claim the downstairs sitting-room till twelve o'clock that night he sat in it all the evening; and even when the clock had struck eleven, and the family had retired, he could not shake off the feeling that she would come back and sleep in the little room adjoining his own in which she had slept so many previous days. Her actions were always unpredictable: why should she not come? Gladly would he have compounded for the denial of her as a sweetheart and wife by having her live thus as a fellow-lodger and friend, even on the most distant terms. His supper still remained spread, and going to the front door, and softly setting it open, he returned to the room and sat as watchers sit on Old-Midsummer eves, expecting the phantom of the Beloved. But she did not come.

Having indulged in this wild hope he went upstairs, and looked out of the window, and pictured her through the evening journey to London, whither she and Phillotson had gone for their holiday; their rattling along through the damp night to their hotel, under the same sky of ribbed cloud as that he beheld, through which the moon showed its position rather than

its shape, and one or two of the larger stars made themselves visible as faint nebulae only. It was a new beginning of Sue's history. He projected his mind into the future, and saw her with children more or less in her own likeness around her. But the consolation of regarding them as a continuation of her identity was denied to him, as to all such dreamers, by the wilfulness of Nature in not allowing issue from one parent alone. Every desired renewal of an existence is debased by being half alloy. "If at the estrangement or death of my lost love, I could go and see her child—hers solely—there would be comfort in it!" said Jude. And then he again uneasily saw, as he had latterly seen with more and more frequency, the scorn of Nature for man's finer emotions, and her lack of interest in his aspirations.

The oppressive strength of his affection for Sue showed itself on the morrow and following days yet more clearly. He could no longer endure the light of the Melchester lamps; the sunshine was as drab paint, and the blue sky as zinc. Then he received news that his old aunt was dangerously ill at Marygreen, which intelligence almost coincided with a letter from his former employer at Christminster, who offered him permanent work of a good class if he would come back. The letters were almost a relief to him. He started to visit Aunt Drusilla, and resolved to go onward to Christminster to see what worth there might be in the builder's offer.

Jude found his aunt even worse than the communication from the Widow Edlin had led him to expect. There was every possibility of her lingering on for weeks or months, though little likelihood. He wrote to Sue informing her of the state of her aunt, and suggesting that she might like to see her aged relative alive. He would meet her at Alfredston Road, the following evening, Monday, on his way back from Christminster, if she could come by the up-train which crossed his down-train at that station. Next morning, according, he went on to Christminster, intending to return to Alfredston soon enough to keep the suggested appointment with Sue.

The city of learning wore an estranged look, and he had lost all feeling for its associations. Yet as the sun made vivid lights and shades of the mullioned architecture of the façades, and drew patterns of the crinkled battlements on the young turf of the quadrangles, Jude thought he had never seen the place look more beautiful. He came to the street in which he had first beheld Sue. The chair she had occupied when, leaning over her

ecclesiastical scrolls, a hog-hair brush in her hand, her girlish figure had arrested the gaze of his inquiring eyes, stood precisely in its former spot, empty. It was as if she were dead, and nobody had been found capable of succeeding her in that artistic pursuit. Hers was now the city phantom, while those of the intellectual and devotional worthies who had once moved him to emotion were no longer able to assert their presence there.

However, here he was; and in fulfilment of his intention he went on to his former lodging in "Beersheba," near the ritualistic church of St. Silas. The old landlady who opened the door seemed glad to see him again, and bringing some lunch informed him that the builder who had employed him had called to inquire his address.

Jude went on to the stone-yard where he had worked. But the old sheds and bankers were distasteful to him; he felt it impossible to engage himself to return and stay in this place of vanished dreams. He longed for the hour of the homeward train to Alfredston, where he might probably meet Sue.

Then, for one ghastly half-hour of depression caused by these scenes, there returned upon him that feeling which had been his undoing more than once—that he was not worth the trouble of being taken care of either by himself or others; and during this half-hour he met Tinker Taylor, the bankrupt ecclesiastical ironmonger, at Fourways, who proposed that they should adjourn to a bar and drink together. They walked along the street till they stood before one of the great palpitating centres of Christminster life, the inn wherein he formerly had responded to the challenge to rehearse the Creed in Latin—now a popular tavern with a spacious and inviting entrance, which gave admittance to a bar that had been entirely renovated and refitted in modern style since Jude's residence here.

Tinker Taylor drank off his glass and departed, saying it was too stylish a place now for him to feel at home in unless he was drunker than he had money to be just then. Jude was longer finishing his, and stood abstractedly silent in the, for the minute, almost empty place. The bar had been gutted and newly arranged throughout, mahogany fixtures having taken the place of the old painted ones, while at the back of the standing-space there were stuffed sofa-benches. The room was divided into compartments in the approved manner, between which were screens of ground glass in mahogany framing, to prevent toppers in one compartment

being put to the blush by the recognitions of those in the next. On the inside of the counter two barmaids leant over the white-handled beer-engines, and the row of little silvered taps inside, dripping into a pewter trough.

Feeling tired, and having nothing more to do till the train left, Jude sat down on one of the sofas. At the back of the barmaids rose bevel-edged mirrors, with glass shelves running along their front, on which stood precious liquids that Jude did not know the name of, in bottles of topaz, sapphire, ruby and amethyst. The moment was enlivened by the entrance of some customers into the next compartment, and the starting of the mechanical tell-tale of monies received, which emitted a ting-ting every time a coin was put in.

The barmaid attending to this compartment was invisible to Jude's direct glance, though a reflection of her back in the glass behind her was occasionally caught by his eyes. He had only observed this listlessly, when she turned her face for a moment to the glass to set her hair tidy. Then he was amazed to discover that the face was Arabella's.

If she had come on to his compartment she would have seen him. But she did not, this being presided over by the maiden on the other side. Abby was in a black gown, with white linen cuffs and a broad white collar, and her figure, more developed than formerly, was accentuated by a bunch of daffodils that she wore on her left bosom. In the compartment she served stood an electro-plated fountain of water over a spirit-lamp, whose blue flame sent a steam from the top, all this being visible to him only in the mirror behind her; which also reflected the faces of the men she was attending to—one of them a handsome, dissipated young fellow, possibly an undergraduate, who had been relating to her an experience of some humorous sort.

“Oh, Mr. Cockman, now! How can you tell such a tale to me in my innocence!” she cried gaily. “Mr. Cockman, what do you use to make your moustache curl so beautiful?” As the young man was clean shaven, the retort provoked a laugh at his expense.

“Come!” said he, “I'll have a curaçao; and a light, please.”

She served the liqueur from one of the lovely bottles and striking a match held it to his cigarette with ministering archness while he whiffed.

“Well, have you heard from your husband lately, my dear?” he asked.

“Not a sound,” said she.

“Where is he?”

“I left him in Australia; and I suppose he’s there still.”

Jude’s eyes grew rounder.

“What made you part from him?”

“Don’t you ask questions, and you won’t hear lies.”

“Come then, give me my change, which you’ve been keeping from me for the last quarter of an hour; and I’ll romantically vanish up the street of this picturesque city.”

She handed the change over the counter, in taking which he caught her fingers and held them. There was a slight struggle and titter, and he bade her good-bye and left.

Jude had looked on with the eye of a dazed philosopher. It was extraordinary how far removed from his life Arabella now seemed to be. He could not realize their nominal closeness. And, this being the case, in his present frame of mind he was indifferent to the fact that Arabella was his wife indeed.

The compartment that she served emptied itself of visitors, and after a brief thought he entered it, and went forward to the counter. Arabella did not recognize him for a moment. Then their glances met. She started; till a humorous impudence sparkled in her eyes, and she spoke.

“Well, I’m blest! I thought you were underground years ago!”

“Oh!”

“I never heard anything of you, or I don’t know that I should have come here. But never mind! What shall I treat you to this afternoon? A Scotch and soda? Come, anything that the house will afford, for old acquaintance’ sake!”

“Thanks, Arabella,” said Jude without a smile. “But I don’t want anything more than I’ve had.” The fact was that her unexpected presence there had destroyed at a stroke his momentary taste for strong liquor as completely as if it had whisked him back to his milk-fed infancy.

“That’s a pity, now you could get it for nothing.”

“How long have you been here?”

“About six weeks. I returned from Sydney three months ago. I always liked this business, you know.”

“I wonder you came to this place!”

“Well, as I say, I thought you were gone to glory, and being in London I saw the situation in an advertisement. Nobody was likely to know me here, even if I had minded, for I was never in Christminster in my growing up.”

“Why did you return from Australia?”

“Oh, I had my reasons... Then you are not a don yet?”

“No.”

“Not even a reverend?”

“No.”

“Nor so much as a rather reverend dissenting gentleman?”

“I am as I was.”

“True—you look so.” She idly allowed her fingers to rest on the pull of the beer-engine as she inspected him critically. He observed that her hands were smaller and whiter than when he had lived with her, and that on the hand which pulled the engine she wore an ornamental ring set with what seemed to be real sapphires—which they were, indeed, and were much admired as such by the young men who frequented the bar.

“So you pass as having a living husband,” he continued.

“Yes. I thought it might be awkward if I called myself a widow, as I should have liked.”

“True. I am known here a little.”

“I didn’t mean on that account—for as I said I didn’t expect you. It was for other reasons.”

“What were they?”

“I don’t care to go into them,” she replied evasively. “I make a very good living, and I don’t know that I want your company.”

Here a chappie with no chin, and a moustache like a lady’s eyebrow, came and asked for a curiously compounded drink, and Arabella was obliged to go and attend to him. “We can’t talk here,” she said, stepping back a moment. “Can’t you wait till nine? Say yes, and don’t be a fool. I

can get off duty two hours sooner than usual, if I ask. I am not living in the house at present.”

He reflected and said gloomily, “I’ll come back. I suppose we’d better arrange something.”

“Oh, bother arranging! I’m not going to arrange anything!”

“But I must know a thing or two; and, as you say, we can’t talk here. Very well; I’ll call for you.”

Depositing his unemptied glass he went out and walked up and down the street. Here was a rude flounce into the pellucid sentimentality of his sad attachment to Sue. Though Arabella’s word was absolutely untrustworthy, he thought there might be some truth in her implication that she had not wished to disturb him, and had really supposed him dead. However, there was only one thing now to be done, and that was to play a straightforward part, the law being the law, and the woman between whom and himself there was no more unity than between east and west, being in the eye of the Church one person with him.

Having to meet Arabella here, it was impossible to meet Sue at Alfredston as he had promised. At every thought of this a pang had gone through him; but the conjuncture could not be helped. Arabella was perhaps an intended intervention to punish him for his unauthorized love. Passing the evening, therefore, in a desultory waiting about the town wherein he avoided the precincts of every cloister and hall, because he could not bear to behold them, he repaired to the tavern bar while the hundred and one strokes were resounding from the Great Bell of Cardinal College, a coincidence which seemed to him gratuitous irony. The inn was now brilliantly lighted up, and the scene was altogether more brisk and gay. The faces of the barmaidens had risen in colour, each having a pink flush on her cheek; their manners were still more vivacious than before—more abandoned, more excited, more sensuous, and they expressed their sentiments and desires less euphemistically, laughing in a lackadaisical tone, without reserve.

The bar had been crowded with men of all sorts during the previous hour, and he had heard from without the hubbub of their voices; but the customers were fewer at last. He nodded to Arabella, and told her that she would find him outside the door when she came away.

“But you must have something with me first,” she said with great good humour. “Just an early night-cap: I always do. Then you can go out and wait a minute, as it is best we should not be seen going together.” She drew a couple of liqueur glasses of brandy; and though she had evidently, from her countenance, already taken in enough alcohol either by drinking or, more probably, from the atmosphere she had breathed for so many hours, she finished hers quickly. He also drank his, and went outside the house.

In a few minutes she came, in a thick jacket and a hat with a black feather. “I live quite near,” she said, taking his arm, “and can let myself in by a latch-key at any time. What arrangement do you want to come to?”

“Oh—none in particular,” he answered, thoroughly sick and tired, his thoughts again reverting to Alfredston, and the train he did not go by; the probable disappointment of Sue that he was not there when she arrived, and the missed pleasure of her company on the long and lonely climb by starlight up the hills to Marygreen. “I ought to have gone back really! My aunt is on her deathbed, I fear.”

“I’ll go over with you to-morrow morning. I think I could get a day off.”

There was something particularly uncongenial in the idea of Arabella, who had no more sympathy than a tigress with his relations or him, coming to the bedside of his dying aunt, and meeting Sue. Yet he said, “Of course, if you’d like to, you can.”

“Well, that we’ll consider... Now, until we have come to some agreement it is awkward our being together here—where you are known, and I am getting known, though without any suspicion that I have anything to do with you. As we are going towards the station, suppose we take the nine-forty train to Aldbrickham? We shall be there in little more than half an hour, and nobody will know us for one night, and we shall be quite free to act as we choose till we have made up our minds whether we’ll make anything public or not.”

“As you like.”

“Then wait till I get two or three things. This is my lodging. Sometimes when late I sleep at the hotel where I am engaged, so nobody will think anything of my staying out.”

She speedily returned, and they went on to the railway, and made the half-hour’s journey to Aldbrickham, where they entered a third-rate inn



near the station in time for a late supper.

## IX

On the morrow between nine and half-past they were journeying back to Christminster, the only two occupants of a compartment in a third-class railway-carriage. Having, like Jude, made rather a hasty toilet to catch the train, Arabella looked a little frowsy, and her face was very far from possessing the animation which had characterized it at the bar the night before. When they came out of the station she found that she still had half an hour to spare before she was due at the bar. They walked in silence a little way out of the town in the direction of Alfredston. Jude looked up the far highway.

“Ah ... poor feeble me!” he murmured at last.

“What?” said she.

“This is the very road by which I came into Christminster years ago full of plans!”

“Well, whatever the road is I think my time is nearly up, as I have to be in the bar by eleven o’clock. And as I said, I shan’t ask for the day to go with you to see your aunt. So perhaps we had better part here. I’d sooner not walk up Chief Street with you, since we’ve come to no conclusion at all.”

“Very well. But you said when we were getting up this morning that you had something you wished to tell me before I left?”

“So I had—two things—one in particular. But you wouldn’t promise to keep it a secret. I’ll tell you now if you promise? As an honest woman I wish you to know it... It was what I began telling you in the night—about that gentleman who managed the Sydney hotel.” Arabella spoke somewhat hurriedly for her. “You’ll keep it close?”

“Yes—yes—I promise!” said Jude impatiently. “Of course I don’t want to reveal your secrets.”

“Whenever I met him out for a walk, he used to say that he was much taken with my looks, and he kept pressing me to marry him. I never

thought of coming back to England again; and being out there in Australia, with no home of my own after leaving my father, I at last agreed, and did.”

“What—marry him?”

“Yes.”

“Regularly—legally—in church?”

“Yes. And lived with him till shortly before I left. It was stupid, I know; but I did! There, now I’ve told you. Don’t round upon me! He talks of coming back to England, poor old chap. But if he does, he won’t be likely to find me.”

Jude stood pale and fixed.

“Why the devil didn’t you tell me last, night!” he said.

“Well—I didn’t... Won’t you make it up with me, then?”

“So in talking of ‘your husband’ to the bar gentlemen you meant him, of course—not me!”

“Of course... Come, don’t fuss about it.”

“I have nothing more to say!” replied Jude. “I have nothing at all to say about the—crime—you’ve confessed to!”

“Crime! Pooh. They don’t think much of such as that over there! Lots of ’em do it... Well, if you take it like that I shall go back to him! He was very fond of me, and we lived honourable enough, and as respectable as any married couple in the colony! How did I know where you were?”

“I won’t go blaming you. I could say a good deal; but perhaps it would be misplaced. What do you wish me to do?”

“Nothing. There was one thing more I wanted to tell you; but I fancy we’ve seen enough of one another for the present! I shall think over what you said about your circumstances, and let you know.”

Thus they parted. Jude watched her disappear in the direction of the hotel, and entered the railway station close by. Finding that it wanted three-quarters of an hour of the time at which he could get a train back to Alfredston, he strolled mechanically into the city as far as to the Fourways, where he stood as he had so often stood before, and surveyed Chief Street stretching ahead, with its college after college, in picturesqueness unrivalled except by such Continental vistas as the Street of Palaces in Genoa; the lines of the buildings being as distinct in the

morning air as in an architectural drawing. But Jude was far from seeing or criticizing these things; they were hidden by an indescribable consciousness of Arabella's midnight contiguity, a sense of degradation at his revived experiences with her, of her appearance as she lay asleep at dawn, which set upon his motionless face a look as of one accurst. If he could only have felt resentment towards her he would have been less unhappy; but he pitied while he contemned her.

Jude turned and retraced his steps. Drawing again towards the station he started at hearing his name pronounced—less at the name than at the voice. To his great surprise no other than Sue stood like a vision before him—her look bodeful and anxious as in a dream, her little mouth nervous, and her strained eyes speaking reproachful inquiry.

“Oh, Jude—I am so glad—to meet you like this!” she said in quick, uneven accents not far from a sob. Then she flushed as she observed his thought that they had not met since her marriage.

They looked away from each other to hide their emotion, took each other's hand without further speech, and went on together awhile, till she glanced at him with furtive solicitude. “I arrived at Alfredston station last night, as you asked me to, and there was nobody to meet me! But I reached Marygreen alone, and they told me Aunt was a trifle better. I sat up with her, and as you did not come all night I was frightened about you—I thought that perhaps, when you found yourself back in the old city, you were upset at—at thinking I was—married, and not there as I used to be; and that you had nobody to speak to; so you had tried to drown your gloom—as you did at that former time when you were disappointed about entering as a student, and had forgotten your promise to me that you never would again. And this, I thought, was why you hadn't come to meet me!”

“And you came to hunt me up, and deliver me, like a good angel!”

“I thought I would come by the morning train and try to find you—in case—in case—”

“I did think of my promise to you, dear, continually! I shall never break out again as I did, I am sure. I may have been doing nothing better, but I was not doing that—I loathe the thought of it.”

“I am glad your staying had nothing to do with that. But,” she said, the faintest pout entering into her tone, “you didn't come back last night and meet me, as you engaged to!”

“I didn’t—I am sorry to say. I had an appointment at nine o’clock—too late for me to catch the train that would have met yours, or to get home at all.”

Looking at his loved one as she appeared to him now, in his tender thought the sweetest and most disinterested comrade that he had ever had, living largely in vivid imaginings, so ethereal a creature that her spirit could be seen trembling through her limbs, he felt heartily ashamed of his earthliness in spending the hours he had spent in Arabella’s company. There was something rude and immoral in thrusting these recent facts of his life upon the mind of one who, to him, was so uncarnate as to seem at times impossible as a human wife to any average man. And yet she was Phillotson’s. How she had become such, how she lived as such, passed his comprehension as he regarded her to-day.

“You’ll go back with me?” he said. “There’s a train just now. I wonder how my aunt is by this time... And so, Sue, you really came on my account all this way! At what an early time you must have started, poor thing!”

“Yes. Sitting up watching alone made me all nerves for you, and instead of going to bed when it got light I started. And now you won’t frighten me like this again about your morals for nothing?”

He was not so sure that she had been frightened about his morals for nothing. He released her hand till they had entered the train,—it seemed the same carriage he had lately got out of with another—where they sat down side by side, Sue between him and the window. He regarded the delicate lines of her profile, and the small, tight, applelike convexities of her bodice, so different from Arabella’s amplitudes. Though she knew he was looking at her she did not turn to him, but kept her eyes forward, as if afraid that by meeting his own some troublous discussion would be initiated.

“Sue—you are married now, you know, like me; and yet we have been in such a hurry that we have not said a word about it!”

“There’s no necessity,” she quickly returned.

“Oh well—perhaps not... But I wish”

“Jude—don’t talk about *me*—I wish you wouldn’t!” she entreated. “It distresses me, rather. Forgive my saying it! ... Where did you stay last

night?”

She had asked the question in perfect innocence, to change the topic. He knew that, and said merely, “At an inn,” though it would have been a relief to tell her of his meeting with an unexpected one. But the latter’s final announcement of her marriage in Australia bewildered him lest what he might say should do his ignorant wife an injury.

Their talk proceeded but awkwardly till they reached Alfredston. That Sue was not as she had been, but was labelled “Phillotson,” paralyzed Jude whenever he wanted to commune with her as an individual. Yet she seemed unaltered—he could not say why. There remained the five-mile extra journey into the country, which it was just as easy to walk as to drive, the greater part of it being uphill. Jude had never before in his life gone that road with Sue, though he had with another. It was now as if he carried a bright light which temporarily banished the shady associations of the earlier time.

Sue talked; but Jude noticed that she still kept the conversation from herself. At length he inquired if her husband were well.

“O yes,” she said. “He is obliged to be in the school all the day, or he would have come with me. He is so good and kind that to accompany me he would have dismissed the school for once, even against his principles—for he is strongly opposed to giving casual holidays—only I wouldn’t let him. I felt it would be better to come alone. Aunt Drusilla, I knew, was so very eccentric; and his being almost a stranger to her now would have made it irksome to both. Since it turns out that she is hardly conscious I am glad I did not ask him.”

Jude had walked moodily while this praise of Phillotson was being expressed. “Mr. Phillotson obliges you in everything, as he ought,” he said.

“Of course.”

“You ought to be a happy wife.”

“And of course I am.”

“Bride, I might almost have said, as yet. It is not so many weeks since I gave you to him, and—”

“Yes, I know! I know!” There was something in her face which belied her late assuring words, so strictly proper and so lifelessly spoken that they might have been taken from a list of model speeches in “The Wife’s

Guide to Conduct.” Jude knew the quality of every vibration in Sue’s voice, could read every symptom of her mental condition; and he was convinced that she was unhappy, although she had not been a month married. But her rushing away thus from home, to see the last of a relative whom she had hardly known in her life, proved nothing; for Sue naturally did such things as those.

“Well, you have my good wishes now as always, Mrs. Phillotson.”

She reproached him by a glance.

“No, you are not Mrs. Phillotson,” murmured Jude. “You are dear, free Sue Bridehead, only you don’t know it! Wifedom has not yet squashed up and digested you in its vast maw as an atom which has no further individuality.”

Sue put on a look of being offended, till she answered, “Nor has husbandom you, so far as I can see!”

“But it has!” he said, shaking his head sadly.

When they reached the lone cottage under the firs, between the Brown House and Marygreen, in which Jude and Arabella had lived and quarrelled, he turned to look at it. A squalid family lived there now. He could not help saying to Sue: “That’s the house my wife and I occupied the whole of the time we lived together. I brought her home to that house.”

She looked at it. “That to you was what the school-house at Shaston is to me.”

“Yes; but I was not very happy there as you are in yours.”

She closed her lips in retortive silence, and they walked some way till she glanced at him to see how he was taking it. “Of course I may have exaggerated your happiness—one never knows,” he continued blandly.

“Don’t think that, Jude, for a moment, even though you may have said it to sting me! He’s as good to me as a man can be, and gives me perfect liberty—which elderly husbands don’t do in general... If you think I am not happy because he’s too old for me, you are wrong.”

“I don’t think anything against him—to you dear.”

“And you won’t say things to distress me, will you?”

“I will not.”

He said no more, but he knew that, from some cause or other, in taking Phillotson as a husband, Sue felt that she had done what she ought not to have done.

They plunged into the concave field on the other side of which rose the village—the field wherein Jude had received a thrashing from the farmer many years earlier. On ascending to the village and approaching the house they found Mrs. Edlin standing at the door, who at sight of them lifted her hands deprecatingly. “She’s downstairs, if you’ll believe me!” cried the widow. “Out o’ bed she got, and nothing could turn her. What will come o’ t I do not know!”

On entering, there indeed by the fireplace sat the old woman, wrapped in blankets, and turning upon them a countenance like that of Sebastiano’s Lazarus. They must have looked their amazement, for she said in a hollow voice:

“Ah—sceered ye, have I! I wasn’t going to bide up there no longer, to please nobody! ’Tis more than flesh and blood can bear, to be ordered to do this and that by a feller that don’t know half as well as you do yourself! ... Ah—you’ll rue this marrying as well as he!” she added, turning to Sue. “All our family do—and nearly all everybody else’s. You should have done as I did, you simpleton! And Phillotson the schoolmaster, of all men! What made ’ee marry him?”

“What makes most women marry, Aunt?”

“Ah! You mean to say you loved the man!”

“I don’t meant to say anything definite.”

“Do ye love un?”

“Don’t ask me, Aunt.”

“I can mind the man very well. A very civil, honourable liver; but Lord!—I don’t want to wownd your feelings, but—there be certain men here and there that no woman of any niceness can stomach. I should have said he was one. I don’t say so *now*, since you must ha’ known better than I—but that’s what I *should* have said!”

Sue jumped up and went out. Jude followed her, and found her in the outhouse, crying.

“Don’t cry, dear!” said Jude in distress. “She means well, but is very crusty and queer now, you know.”



“Oh no—it isn’t that!” said Sue, trying to dry her eyes. “I don’t mind her roughness one bit.”

“What is it, then?”

“It is that what she says is—is true!”

“God—what—you don’t like him?” asked Jude.

“I don’t mean that!” she said hastily. “That I ought—perhaps I ought not to have married!”

He wondered if she had really been going to say that at first. They went back, and the subject was smoothed over, and her aunt took rather kindly to Sue, telling her that not many young women newly married would have come so far to see a sick old crone like her. In the afternoon Sue prepared to depart, Jude hiring a neighbour to drive her to Alfredston.

“I’ll go with you to the station, if you’d like?” he said.

She would not let him. The man came round with the trap, and Jude helped her into it, perhaps with unnecessary attention, for she looked at him prohibitively.

“I suppose—I may come to see you some day, when I am back again at Melchester?” he half-crossly observed.

She bent down and said softly: “No, dear—you are not to come yet. I don’t think you are in a good mood.”

“Very well,” said Jude. “Good-bye!”

“Good-bye!” She waved her hand and was gone.

“She’s right! I won’t go!” he murmured.

He passed the evening and following days in mortifying by every possible means his wish to see her, nearly starving himself in attempts to extinguish by fasting his passionate tendency to love her. He read sermons on discipline, and hunted up passages in Church history that treated of the Ascetics of the second century. Before he had returned from Marygreen to Melchester there arrived a letter from Arabella. The sight of it revived a stronger feeling of self-condemnation for his brief return to her society than for his attachment to Sue.

The letter, he perceived, bore a London postmark instead of the Christminster one. Arabella informed him that a few days after their parting in the morning at Christminster, she had been surprised by an

affectionate letter from her Australian husband, formerly manager of the hotel in Sydney. He had come to England on purpose to find her; and had taken a free, fully-licensed public, in Lambeth, where he wished her to join him in conducting the business, which was likely to be a very thriving one, the house being situated in an excellent, densely populated, gin-drinking neighbourhood, and already doing a trade of £200 a month, which could be easily doubled.

As he had said that he loved her very much still, and implored her to tell him where she was, and as they had only parted in a slight tiff, and as her engagement in Christminster was only temporary, she had just gone to join him as he urged. She could not help feeling that she belonged to him more than to Jude, since she had properly married him, and had lived with him much longer than with her first husband. In thus wishing Jude good-bye she bore him no ill-will, and trusted he would not turn upon her, a weak woman, and inform against her, and bring her to ruin now that she had a chance of improving her circumstances and leading a genteel life.

## X

Jude returned to Melchester, which had the questionable recommendation of being only a dozen and a half miles from his Sue's now permanent residence. At first he felt that this nearness was a distinct reason for not going southward at all; but Christminster was too sad a place to bear, while the proximity of Shaston to Melchester might afford him the glory of worsting the Enemy in a close engagement, such as was deliberately sought by the priests and virgins of the early Church, who, disdaining an ignominious flight from temptation, became even chamber-partners with impunity. Jude did not pause to remember that, in the laconic words of the historian, "insulted Nature sometimes vindicated her rights" in such circumstances.

He now returned with feverish desperation to his study for the priesthood—in the recognition that the single-mindedness of his aims, and his fidelity to the cause, had been more than questionable of late. His passion for Sue troubled his soul; yet his lawful abandonment to the society of Arabella for twelve hours seemed instinctively a worse thing—even though she had not told him of her Sydney husband till afterwards. He had, he verily believed, overcome all tendency to fly to liquor—which, indeed, he had never done from taste, but merely as an escape from intolerable misery of mind. Yet he perceived with despondency that, taken all round, he was a man of too many passions to make a good clergyman; the utmost he could hope for was that in a life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit the former might not always be victorious.

As a hobby, auxiliary to his readings in Divinity, he developed his slight skill in church-music and thorough-bass, till he could join in part-singing from notation with some accuracy. A mile or two from Melchester there was a restored village church, to which Jude had originally gone to fix the new columns and capitals. By this means he had become acquainted with the organist, and the ultimate result was that he joined the choir as a bass voice.

He walked out to this parish twice every Sunday, and sometimes in the week. One evening about Easter the choir met for practice, and a new hymn which Jude had heard of as being by a Wessex composer was to be tried and prepared for the following week. It turned out to be a strangely emotional composition. As they all sang it over and over again its harmonies grew upon Jude, and moved him exceedingly.

When they had finished he went round to the organist to make inquiries. The score was in manuscript, the name of the composer being at the head, together with the title of the hymn: "The Foot of the Cross."

"Yes," said the organist. "He is a local man. He is a professional musician at Kennetbridge—between here and Christminster. The vicar knows him. He was brought up and educated in Christminster traditions, which accounts for the quality of the piece. I think he plays in the large church there, and has a surpliced choir. He comes to Melchester sometimes, and once tried to get the cathedral organ when the post was vacant. The hymn is getting about everywhere this Easter."

As he walked humming the air on his way home, Jude fell to musing on its composer, and the reasons why he composed it. What a man of sympathies he must be! Perplexed and harassed as he himself was about Sue and Arabella, and troubled as was his conscience by the complication of his position, how he would like to know that man! "He of all men would understand my difficulties," said the impulsive Jude. If there were any person in the world to choose as a confidant, this composer would be the one, for he must have suffered, and throbbed, and yearned.

In brief, ill as he could afford the time and money for the journey, Fawley resolved, like the child that he was, to go to Kennetbridge the very next Sunday. He duly started, early in the morning, for it was only by a series of crooked railways that he could get to the town. About mid-day he reached it, and crossing the bridge into the quaint old borough he inquired for the house of the composer.

They told him it was a red brick building some little way further on. Also that the gentleman himself had just passed along the street not five minutes before.

"Which way?" asked Jude with alacrity.

"Straight along homeward from church."

Jude hastened on, and soon had the pleasure of observing a man in a black coat and a black slouched felt hat no considerable distance ahead. Stretching out his legs yet more widely, he stalked after. "A hungry soul in pursuit of a full soul!" he said. "I must speak to that man!"

He could not, however, overtake the musician before he had entered his own house, and then arose the question if this were an expedient time to call. Whether or not he decided to do so there and then, now that he had got here, the distance home being too great for him to wait till late in the afternoon. This man of soul would understand scant ceremony, and might be quite a perfect adviser in a case in which an earthly and illegitimate passion had cunningly obtained entrance into his heart through the opening afforded for religion.

Jude accordingly rang the bell, and was admitted.

The musician came to him in a moment, and being respectably dressed, good-looking, and frank in manner, Jude obtained a favourable reception. He was nevertheless conscious that there would be a certain awkwardness in explaining his errand.

"I have been singing in the choir of a little church near Melchester," he said. "And we have this week practised 'The Foot of the Cross,' which I understand, sir, that you composed?"

"I did—a year or so ago."

"I—like it. I think it supremely beautiful!"

"Ah well—other people have said so too. Yes, there's money in it, if I could only see about getting it published. I have other compositions to go with it, too; I wish I could bring them out; for I haven't made a five-pound note out of any of them yet. These publishing people—they want the copyright of an obscure composer's work, such as mine is, for almost less than I should have to pay a person for making a fair manuscript copy of the score. The one you speak of I have lent to various friends about here and Melchester, and so it has got to be sung a little. But music is a poor staff to lean on—I am giving it up entirely. You must go into trade if you want to make money nowadays. The wine business is what I am thinking of. This is my forthcoming list—it is not issued yet—but you can take one."

He handed Jude an advertisement list of several pages in booklet shape, ornamentally margined with a red line, in which were set forth the various clarets, champagnes, ports, sherries, and other wines with which he purposed to initiate his new venture. It took Jude more than by surprise that the man with the soul was thus and thus; and he felt that he could not open up his confidences.

They talked a little longer, but constrainedly, for when the musician found that Jude was a poor man his manner changed from what it had been while Jude's appearance and address deceived him as to his position and pursuits. Jude stammered out something about his feelings in wishing to congratulate the author on such an exalted composition, and took an embarrassed leave.

All the way home by the slow Sunday train, sitting in the fireless waiting-rooms on this cold spring day, he was depressed enough at his simplicity in taking such a journey. But no sooner did he reach his Melchester lodging than he found awaiting him a letter which had arrived that morning a few minutes after he had left the house. It was a contrite little note from Sue, in which she said, with sweet humility, that she felt she had been horrid in telling him he was not to come to see her, that she despised herself for having been so conventional; and that he was to be sure to come by the eleven-forty-five train that very Sunday, and have dinner with them at half-past one.

Jude almost tore his hair at having missed this letter till it was too late to act upon its contents; but he had chastened himself considerably of late, and at last his chimerical expedition to Kennetbridge really did seem to have been another special intervention of Providence to keep him away from temptation. But a growing impatience of faith, which he had noticed in himself more than once of late, made him pass over in ridicule the idea that God sent people on fools' errands. He longed to see her; he was angry at having missed her: and he wrote instantly, telling her what had happened, and saying he had not enough patience to wait till the following Sunday, but would come any day in the week that she liked to name.

Since he wrote a little over-ardently, Sue, as her manner was, delayed her reply till Thursday before Good Friday, when she said he might come that afternoon if he wished, this being the earliest day on which she could welcome him, for she was now assistant-teacher in her husband's school.

Jude therefore got leave from the cathedral works at the trifling expense of a stoppage of pay, and went.

Part Fourth  
AT SHASTON

*“Whoso prefers either Matrimony or other Ordinance before the Good of Man and the plain Exigence of Charity, let him profess Papist, or Protestant, or what he will, he is no better than a Pharisee.”—J. MILTON.*



# I

Shaston, the ancient British Palladour,

From whose foundation first such strange reports arise,

(as Drayton sang it), was, and is, in itself the city of a dream. Vague imaginings of its castle, its three mints, its magnificent apsidal abbey, the chief glory of South Wessex, its twelve churches, its shrines, chantries, hospitals, its gabled freestone mansions—all now ruthlessly swept away—throw the visitor, even against his will, into a pensive melancholy, which the stimulating atmosphere and limitless landscape around him can scarcely dispel. The spot was the burial-place of a king and a queen, of abbots and abbesses, saints and bishops, knights and squires. The bones of King Edward “the Martyr,” carefully removed hither for holy preservation, brought Shaston a renown which made it the resort of pilgrims from every part of Europe, and enabled it to maintain a reputation extending far beyond English shores. To this fair creation of the great Middle-Age the Dissolution was, as historians tell us, the death-knell. With the destruction of the enormous abbey the whole place collapsed in a general ruin: the Martyr’s bones met with the fate of the sacred pile that held them, and not a stone is now left to tell where they lie.

The natural picturesqueness and singularity of the town still remain; but strange to say these qualities, which were noted by many writers in ages when scenic beauty is said to have been unappreciated, are passed over in this, and one of the queerest and quaintest spots in England stands virtually unvisited to-day.

It has a unique position on the summit of a steep and imposing scarp, rising on the north, south, and west sides of the borough out of the deep alluvial Vale of Blackmoor, the view from the Castle Green over three counties of verdant pasture—South, Mid, and Nether Wessex—being as sudden a surprise to the unexpectant traveller’s eyes as the medicinal air is

to his lungs. Impossible to a railway, it can best be reached on foot, next best by light vehicles; and it is hardly accessible to these but by a sort of isthmus on the north-east, that connects it with the high chalk table-land on that side.

Such is, and such was, the now world-forgotten Shaston or Palladour. Its situation rendered water the great want of the town; and within living memory, horses, donkeys and men may have been seen toiling up the winding ways to the top of the height, laden with tubs and barrels filled from the wells beneath the mountain, and hawkers retailing their contents at the price of a halfpenny a bucketful.

This difficulty in the water supply, together with two other odd facts, namely, that the chief graveyard slopes up as steeply as a roof behind the church, and that in former times the town passed through a curious period of corruption, conventual and domestic, gave rise to the saying that Shaston was remarkable for three consolations to man, such as the world afforded not elsewhere. It was a place where the churchyard lay nearer heaven than the church steeple, where beer was more plentiful than water, and where there were more wanton women than honest wives and maids. It is also said that after the Middle Ages the inhabitants were too poor to pay their priests, and hence were compelled to pull down their churches, and refrain altogether from the public worship of God; a necessity which they bemoaned over their cups in the settles of their inns on Sunday afternoons. In those days the Shastonians were apparently not without a sense of humour.

There was another peculiarity—this a modern one—which Shaston appeared to owe to its site. It was the resting-place and headquarters of the proprietors of wandering vans, shows, shooting-galleries, and other itinerant concerns, whose business lay largely at fairs and markets. As strange wild birds are seen assembled on some lofty promontory, meditatively pausing for longer flights, or to return by the course they followed thither, so here, in this cliff-town, stood in stultified silence the yellow and green caravans bearing names not local, as if surprised by a change in the landscape so violent as to hinder their further progress; and here they usually remained all the winter till they turned to seek again their old tracks in the following spring.

It was to this breezy and whimsical spot that Jude ascended from the nearest station for the first time in his life about four o'clock one afternoon, and entering on the summit of the peak after a toilsome climb, passed the first houses of the aerial town; and drew towards the school-house. The hour was too early; the pupils were still in school, humming small, like a swarm of gnats; and he withdrew a few steps along Abbey Walk, whence he regarded the spot which fate had made the home of all he loved best in the world. In front of the schools, which were extensive and stone-built, grew two enormous beeches with smooth mouse-coloured trunks, as such trees will only grow on chalk uplands. Within the mullioned and transomed windows he could see the black, brown, and flaxen crowns of the scholars over the sills, and to pass the time away he walked down to the level terrace where the abbey gardens once had spread, his heart throbbing in spite of him.

Unwilling to enter till the children were dismissed he remained here till young voices could be heard in the open air, and girls in white pinafores over red and blue frocks appeared dancing along the paths which the abbess, prioress, subprioress, and fifty nuns had demurely paced three centuries earlier. Retracing his steps he found that he had waited too long, and that Sue had gone out into the town at the heels of the last scholar, Mr. Phillotson having been absent all the afternoon at a teachers' meeting at Shottsford.

Jude went into the empty schoolroom and sat down, the girl who was sweeping the floor having informed him that Mrs. Phillotson would be back again in a few minutes. A piano stood near—actually the old piano that Phillotson had possessed at Marygreen—and though the dark afternoon almost prevented him seeing the notes Jude touched them in his humble way, and could not help modulating into the hymn which had so affected him in the previous week.

A figure moved behind him, and thinking it was still the girl with the broom Jude took no notice, till the person came close and laid her fingers lightly upon his bass hand. The imposed hand was a little one he seemed to know, and he turned.

“Don't stop,” said Sue. “I like it. I learnt it before I left Melchester. They used to play it in the training school.”

“I can't strum before you! Play it for me.”

“Oh well—I don’t mind.”

Sue sat down, and her rendering of the piece, though not remarkable, seemed divine as compared with his own. She, like him, was evidently touched—to her own surprise—by the recalled air; and when she had finished, and he moved his hand towards hers, it met his own half-way. Jude grasped it—just as he had done before her marriage.

“It is odd,” she said, in a voice quite changed, “that I should care about that air; because—”

“Because what?”

“I am not that sort—quite.”

“Not easily moved?”

“I didn’t quite mean that.”

“Oh, but you *are* one of that sort, for you are just like me at heart!”

“But not at head.”

She played on and suddenly turned round; and by an unpremeditated instinct each clasped the other’s hand again.

She uttered a forced little laugh as she relinquished his quickly. “How funny!” she said. “I wonder what we both did that for?”

“I suppose because we are both alike, as I said before.”

“Not in our thoughts! Perhaps a little in our feelings.”

“And they rule thoughts... Isn’t it enough to make one blaspheme that the composer of that hymn is one of the most commonplace men I ever met!”

“What—you know him?”

“I went to see him.”

“Oh, you goose—to do just what I should have done! Why did you?”

“Because we are not alike,” he said drily.

“Now we’ll have some tea,” said Sue. “Shall we have it here instead of in my house? It is no trouble to get the kettle and things brought in. We don’t live at the school you know, but in that ancient dwelling across the way called Old-Grove Place. It is so antique and dismal that it depresses me dreadfully. Such houses are very well to visit, but not to live in—I feel crushed into the earth by the weight of so many previous lives there spent.

In a new place like these schools there is only your own life to support. Sit down, and I'll tell Ada to bring the tea-things across."

He waited in the light of the stove, the door of which she flung open before going out, and when she returned, followed by the maiden with tea, they sat down by the same light, assisted by the blue rays of a spirit-lamp under the brass kettle on the stand.

"This is one of your wedding-presents to me," she said, signifying the latter.

"Yes," said Jude.

The kettle of his gift sang with some satire in its note, to his mind; and to change the subject he said, "Do you know of any good readable edition of the uncanonical books of the New Testament? You don't read them in the school I suppose?"

"Oh dear no!—'twould alarm the neighbourhood... Yes, there is one. I am not familiar with it now, though I was interested in it when my former friend was alive. Cowper's *Apocryphal Gospels*."

"That sounds like what I want." His thoughts, however reverted with a twinge to the "former friend"—by whom she meant, as he knew, the university comrade of her earlier days. He wondered if she talked of him to Phillotson.

"The Gospel of Nicodemus is very nice," she went on to keep him from his jealous thoughts, which she read clearly, as she always did. Indeed when they talked on an indifferent subject, as now, there was ever a second silent conversation passing between their emotions, so perfect was the reciprocity between them. "It is quite like the genuine article. All cut up into verses, too; so that it is like one of the other evangelists read in a dream, when things are the same, yet not the same. But, Jude, do you take an interest in those questions still? Are you getting up *Apologetica*?"

"Yes. I am reading Divinity harder than ever."

She regarded him curiously.

"Why do you look at me like that?" said Jude.

"Oh—why do you want to know?"

"I am sure you can tell me anything I may be ignorant of in that subject. You must have learnt a lot of everything from your dear dead friend!"

“We won’t get on to that now!” she coaxed. “Will you be carving out at that church again next week, where you learnt the pretty hymn?”

“Yes, perhaps.”

“That will be very nice. Shall I come and see you there? It is in this direction, and I could come any afternoon by train for half an hour?”

“No. Don’t come!”

“What—aren’t we going to be friends, then, any longer, as we used to be?”

“No.”

“I didn’t know that. I thought you were always going to be kind to me!”

“No, I am not.”

“What have I done, then? I am sure I thought we two—” The *tremolo* in her voice caused her to break off.

“Sue, I sometimes think you are a flirt,” said he abruptly.

There was a momentary pause, till she suddenly jumped up; and to his surprise he saw by the kettle-flame that her face was flushed.

“I can’t talk to you any longer, Jude!” she said, the tragic contralto note having come back as of old. “It is getting too dark to stay together like this, after playing morbid Good Friday tunes that make one feel what one shouldn’t! ... We mustn’t sit and talk in this way any more. Yes—you must go away, for you mistake me! I am very much the reverse of what you say so cruelly—Oh, Jude, it *was* cruel to say that! Yet I can’t tell you the truth—I should shock you by letting you know how I give way to my impulses, and how much I feel that I shouldn’t have been provided with attractiveness unless it were meant to be exercised! Some women’s love of being loved is insatiable; and so, often, is their love of loving; and in the last case they may find that they can’t give it continuously to the chamber-officer appointed by the bishop’s licence to receive it. But you are so straightforward, Jude, that you can’t understand me! ... Now you must go. I am sorry my husband is not at home.”

“Are you?”

“I perceive I have said that in mere convention! Honestly I don’t think I am sorry. It does not matter, either way, sad to say!”

As they had overdone the grasp of hands some time sooner, she touched his fingers but lightly when he went out now. He had hardly gone from the door when, with a dissatisfied look, she jumped on a form and opened the iron casement of a window beneath which he was passing in the path without. "When do you leave here to catch your train, Jude?" she asked.

He looked up in some surprise. "The coach that runs to meet it goes in three-quarters of an hour or so."

"What will you do with yourself for the time?"

"Oh—wander about, I suppose. Perhaps I shall go and sit in the old church."

"It does seem hard of me to pack you off so! You have thought enough of churches, Heaven knows, without going into one in the dark. Stay there."

"Where?"

"Where you are. I can talk to you better like this than when you were inside... It was so kind and tender of you to give up half a day's work to come to see me! ... You are Joseph the dreamer of dreams, dear Jude. And a tragic Don Quixote. And sometimes you are St. Stephen, who, while they were stoning him, could see Heaven opened. Oh, my poor friend and comrade, you'll suffer yet!"

Now that the high window-sill was between them, so that he could not get at her, she seemed not to mind indulging in a frankness she had feared at close quarters.

"I have been thinking," she continued, still in the tone of one brimful of feeling, "that the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns. I am called Mrs. Richard Phillotson, living a calm wedded life with my counterpart of that name. But I am not really Mrs. Richard Phillotson, but a woman tossed about, all alone, with aberrant passions, and unaccountable antipathies... Now you mustn't wait longer, or you will lose the coach. Come and see me again. You must come to the house then."

"Yes!" said Jude. "When shall it be?"

"To-morrow week. Good-bye—good-bye!" She stretched out her hand and stroked his forehead pitifully—just once. Jude said good-bye, and

went away into the darkness.

Passing along Bimport Street he thought he heard the wheels of the coach departing, and, truly enough, when he reached the Duke's Arms in the Market Place the coach had gone. It was impossible for him to get to the station on foot in time for this train, and he settled himself perforce to wait for the next—the last to Melchester that night.

He wandered about awhile, obtained something to eat; and then, having another half-hour on his hands, his feet involuntarily took him through the venerable graveyard of Trinity Church, with its avenues of limes, in the direction of the schools again. They were entirely in darkness. She had said she lived over the way at Old-Grove Place, a house which he soon discovered from her description of its antiquity.

A glimmering candlelight shone from a front window, the shutters being yet unclosed. He could see the interior clearly—the floor sinking a couple of steps below the road without, which had become raised during the centuries since the house was built. Sue, evidently just come in, was standing with her hat on in this front parlour or sitting-room, whose walls were lined with wainscoting of panelled oak reaching from floor to ceiling, the latter being crossed by huge moulded beams only a little way above her head. The mantelpiece was of the same heavy description, carved with Jacobean pilasters and scroll-work. The centuries did, indeed, ponderously overhang a young wife who passed her time here.

She had opened a rosewood work-box, and was looking at a photograph. Having contemplated it a little while she pressed it against her bosom, and put it again in its place.

Then becoming aware that she had not obscured the windows she came forward to do so, candle in hand. It was too dark for her to see Jude without, but he could see her face distinctly, and there was an unmistakable tearfulness about the dark, long-lashed eyes.

She closed the shutters, and Jude turned away to pursue his solitary journey home. "Whose photograph was she looking at?" he said. He had once given her his; but she had others, he knew. Yet it was his, surely?

He knew he should go to see her again, according to her invitation. Those earnest men he read of, the saints, whom Sue, with gentle irreverence, called his demi-gods, would have shunned such encounters if they doubted their own strength. But he could not. He might fast and pray



during the whole interval, but the human was more powerful in him than the Divine.

## II

However, if God disposed not, woman did. The next morning but one brought him this note from her:

Don't come next week. On your own account don't! We were too free, under the influence of that morbid hymn and the twilight. Think no more than you can help of

SUSANNA FLORENCE MARY.

The disappointment was keen. He knew her mood, the look of her face, when she subscribed herself at length thus. But, whatever her mood, he could not say she was wrong in her view. He replied:

I acquiesce. You are right. It is a lesson in renunciation which I suppose I ought to learn at this season.

JUDE.

He despatched the note on Easter Eve, and there seemed a finality in their decisions. But other forces and laws than theirs were in operation. On Easter Monday morning he received a message from the Widow Edlin, whom he had directed to telegraph if anything serious happened:

Your aunt is sinking. Come at once.

He threw down his tools and went. Three and a half hours later he was crossing the downs about Marygreen, and presently plunged into the concave field across which the short cut was made to the village. As he ascended on the other side a labouring man, who had been watching his approach from a gate across the path, moved uneasily, and prepared to

speak. "I can see in his face that she is dead," said Jude. "Poor Aunt Drusilla!"

It was as he had supposed, and Mrs. Edlin had sent out the man to break the news to him.

"She wouldn't have knowed 'ee. She lay like a doll wi' glass eyes; so it didn't matter that you wasn't here," said he.

Jude went on to the house, and in the afternoon, when everything was done, and the layers-out had finished their beer, and gone, he sat down alone in the silent place. It was absolutely necessary to communicate with Sue, though two or three days earlier they had agreed to mutual severance. He wrote in the briefest terms:

Aunt Drusilla is dead, having been taken almost suddenly.  
The funeral is on Friday afternoon.

He remained in and about Marygreen through the intervening days, went out on Friday morning to see that the grave was finished, and wondered if Sue would come. She had not written, and that seemed to signify rather that she would come than that she would not. Having timed her by her only possible train, he locked the door about mid-day, and crossed the hollow field to the verge of the upland by the Brown House, where he stood and looked over the vast prospect northwards, and over the nearer landscape in which Alfredston stood. Two miles behind it a jet of white steam was travelling from the left to the right of the picture.

There was a long time to wait, even now, till he would know if she had arrived. He did wait, however, and at last a small hired vehicle pulled up at the bottom of the hill, and a person alighted, the conveyance going back, while the passenger began ascending the hill. He knew her; and she looked so slender to-day that it seemed as if she might be crushed in the intensity of a too passionate embrace—such as it was not for him to give. Two-thirds of the way up her head suddenly took a solicitous poise, and he knew that she had at that moment recognized him. Her face soon began a pensive smile, which lasted till, having descended a little way, he met her.

"I thought," she began with nervous quickness, "that it would be so sad to let you attend the funeral alone! And so—at the last moment—I came."

"Dear faithful Sue!" murmured Jude.

With the elusiveness of her curious double nature, however, Sue did not stand still for any further greeting, though it wanted some time to the burial. A pathos so unusually compounded as that which attached to this hour was unlikely to repeat itself for years, if ever, and Jude would have paused, and meditated, and conversed. But Sue either saw it not at all, or, seeing it more than he, would not allow herself to feel it.

The sad and simple ceremony was soon over, their progress to the church being almost at a trot, the bustling undertaker having a more important funeral an hour later, three miles off. Drusilla was put into the new ground, quite away from her ancestors. Sue and Jude had gone side by side to the grave, and now sat down to tea in the familiar house; their lives united at least in this last attention to the dead.

“She was opposed to marriage, from first to last, you say?” murmured Sue.

“Yes. Particularly for members of our family.”

Her eyes met his, and remained on him awhile.

“We are rather a sad family, don’t you think, Jude?”

“She said we made bad husbands and wives. Certainly we make unhappy ones. At all events, I do, for one!”

Sue was silent. “Is it wrong, Jude,” she said with a tentative tremor, “for a husband or wife to tell a third person that they are unhappy in their marriage? If a marriage ceremony is a religious thing, it is possibly wrong; but if it is only a sordid contract, based on material convenience in householding, rating, and taxing, and the inheritance of land and money by children, making it necessary that the male parent should be known—which it seems to be—why surely a person may say, even proclaim upon the housetops, that it hurts and grieves him or her?”

“I have said so, anyhow, to you.”

Presently she went on: “Are there many couples, do you think, where one dislikes the other for no definite fault?”

“Yes, I suppose. If either cares for another person, for instance.”

“But even apart from that? Wouldn’t the woman, for example, be very bad-natured if she didn’t like to live with her husband; merely”—her voice undulated, and he guessed things—“merely because she had a personal feeling against it—a physical objection—a fastidiousness, or whatever it

may be called—although she might respect and be grateful to him? I am merely putting a case. Ought she to try to overcome her pruderies?”

Jude threw a troubled look at her. He said, looking away: “It would be just one of those cases in which my experiences go contrary to my dogmas. Speaking as an order-loving man—which I hope I am, though I fear I am not—I should say, yes. Speaking from experience and unbiased nature, I should say, no. ... Sue, I believe you are not happy!”

“Of course I am!” she contradicted. “How can a woman be unhappy who has only been married eight weeks to a man she chose freely?”

“Chose freely!”

“Why do you repeat it? ... But I have to go back by the six o’clock train. You will be staying on here, I suppose?”

“For a few days to wind up Aunt’s affairs. This house is gone now. Shall I go to the train with you?”

A little laugh of objection came from Sue. “I think not. You may come part of the way.”

“But stop—you can’t go to-night! That train won’t take you to Shaston. You must stay and go back to-morrow. Mrs. Edlin has plenty of room, if you don’t like to stay here?”

“Very well,” she said dubiously. “I didn’t tell him I would come for certain.”

Jude went to the widow’s house adjoining, to let her know; and returning in a few minutes sat down again.

“It is horrible how we are circumstanced, Sue—horrible!” he said abruptly, with his eyes bent to the floor.

“No! Why?”

“I can’t tell you all my part of the gloom. Your part is that you ought not to have married him. I saw it before you had done it, but I thought I mustn’t interfere. I was wrong. I ought to have!”

“But what makes you assume all this, dear?”

“Because—I can see you through your feathers, my poor little bird!”

Her hand lay on the table, and Jude put his upon it. Sue drew hers away.

“That’s absurd, Sue,” cried he, “after what we’ve been talking about! I am more strict and formal than you, if it comes to that; and that you

should object to such an innocent action shows that you are ridiculously inconsistent!”

“Perhaps it was too prudish,” she said repentantly. “Only I have fancied it was a sort of trick of ours—too frequent perhaps. There, you may hold it as much as you like. Is that good of me?”

“Yes; very.”

“But I must tell him.”

“Who?”

“Richard.”

“Oh—of course, if you think it necessary. But as it means nothing it may be bothering him needlessly.”

“Well—are you sure you mean it only as my cousin?”

“Absolutely sure. I have no feelings of love left in me.”

“That’s news. How has it come to be?”

“I’ve seen Arabella.”

She winced at the hit; then said curiously, “When did you see her?”

“When I was at Christminster.”

“So she’s come back; and you never told me! I suppose you will live with her now?”

“Of course—just as you live with your husband.”

She looked at the window pots with the geraniums and cactuses, withered for want of attention, and through them at the outer distance, till her eyes began to grow moist. “What is it?” said Jude, in a softened tone.

“Why should you be so glad to go back to her if—if what you used to say to me is still true—I mean if it were true then! Of course it is not now! How could your heart go back to Arabella so soon?”

“A special Providence, I suppose, helped it on its way.”

“Ah—it isn’t true!” she said with gentle resentment. “You are teasing me—that’s all—because you think I am not happy!”

“I don’t know. I don’t wish to know.”

“If I were unhappy it would be my fault, my wickedness; not that I should have a right to dislike him! He is considerate to me in everything; and he is very interesting, from the amount of general knowledge he has

acquired by reading everything that comes in his way. ... Do you think, Jude, that a man ought to marry a woman his own age, or one younger than himself—eighteen years—as I am than he?”

“It depends upon what they feel for each other.”

He gave her no opportunity of self-satisfaction, and she had to go on unaided, which she did in a vanquished tone, verging on tears:

“I—I think I must be equally honest with you as you have been with me. Perhaps you have seen what it is I want to say?—that though I like Mr. Phillotson as a friend, I don’t like him—it is a torture to me to—live with him as a husband!—There, now I have let it out—I couldn’t help it, although I have been—pretending I am happy.—Now you’ll have a contempt for me for ever, I suppose!” She bent down her face upon her hands as they lay upon the cloth, and silently sobbed in little jerks that made the fragile three-legged table quiver.

“I have only been married a month or two!” she went on, still remaining bent upon the table, and sobbing into her hands. “And it is said that what a woman shrinks from—in the early days of her marriage—she shakes down to with comfortable indifference in half a dozen years. But that is much like saying that the amputation of a limb is no affliction, since a person gets comfortably accustomed to the use of a wooden leg or arm in the course of time!”

Jude could hardly speak, but he said, “I thought there was something wrong, Sue! Oh, I thought there was!”

“But it is not as you think!—there is nothing wrong except my own wickedness, I suppose you’d call it—a repugnance on my part, for a reason I cannot disclose, and what would not be admitted as one by the world in general! ... What tortures me so much is the necessity of being responsive to this man whenever he wishes, good as he is morally!—the dreadful contract to feel in a particular way in a matter whose essence is its voluntariness! ... I wish he would beat me, or be faithless to me, or do some open thing that I could talk about as a justification for feeling as I do! But he does nothing, except that he has grown a little cold since he has found out how I feel. That’s why he didn’t come to the funeral... Oh, I am very miserable—I don’t know what to do! ... Don’t come near me, Jude, because you mustn’t. Don’t—don’t!”

But he had jumped up and put his face against hers—or rather against her ear, her face being inaccessible.

“I told you not to, Jude!”

“I know you did—I only wish to—console you! It all arose through my being married before we met, didn’t it? You would have been my wife, Sue, wouldn’t you, if it hadn’t been for that?”

Instead of replying she rose quickly, and saying she was going to walk to her aunt’s grave in the churchyard to recover herself, went out of the house. Jude did not follow her. Twenty minutes later he saw her cross the village green towards Mrs. Edlin’s, and soon she sent a little girl to fetch her bag, and tell him she was too tired to see him again that night.

In the lonely room of his aunt’s house, Jude sat watching the cottage of the Widow Edlin as it disappeared behind the night shade. He knew that Sue was sitting within its walls equally lonely and disheartened; and again questioned his devotional motto that all was for the best.

He retired to rest early, but his sleep was fitful from the sense that Sue was so near at hand. At some time near two o’clock, when he was beginning to sleep more soundly, he was aroused by a shrill squeak that had been familiar enough to him when he lived regularly at Marygreen. It was the cry of a rabbit caught in a gin. As was the little creature’s habit, it did not soon repeat its cry; and probably would not do so more than once or twice; but would remain bearing its torture till the morrow when the trapper would come and knock it on the head.

He who in his childhood had saved the lives of the earthworms now began to picture the agonies of the rabbit from its lacerated leg. If it were a “bad catch” by the hind-leg, the animal would tug during the ensuing six hours till the iron teeth of the trap had stripped the leg-bone of its flesh, when, should a weak-sprung instrument enable it to escape, it would die in the fields from the mortification of the limb. If it were a “good catch,” namely, by the fore-leg, the bone would be broken and the limb nearly torn in two in attempts at an impossible escape.

Almost half an hour passed, and the rabbit repeated its cry. Jude could rest no longer till he had put it out of its pain, so dressing himself quickly he descended, and by the light of the moon went across the green in the direction of the sound. He reached the hedge bordering the widow’s garden, when he stood still. The faint click of the trap as dragged about by



the writhing animal guided him now, and reaching the spot he struck the rabbit on the back of the neck with the side of his palm, and it stretched itself out dead.

He was turning away when he saw a woman looking out of the open casement at a window on the ground floor of the adjacent cottage. "Jude!" said a voice timidly—Sue's voice. "It is you—is it not?"

"Yes, dear!"

"I haven't been able to sleep at all, and then I heard the rabbit, and couldn't help thinking of what it suffered, till I felt I must come down and kill it! But I am so glad you got there first... They ought not to be allowed to set these steel traps, ought they!"

Jude had reached the window, which was quite a low one, so that she was visible down to her waist. She let go the casement-stay and put her hand upon his, her moonlit face regarding him wistfully.

"Did it keep you awake?" he said.

"No—I was awake."

"How was that?"

"Oh, you know—now! I know you, with your religious doctrines, think that a married woman in trouble of a kind like mine commits a mortal sin in making a man the confidant of it, as I did you. I wish I hadn't, now!"

"Don't wish it, dear," he said. "That may have *been* my view; but my doctrines and I begin to part company."

"I knew it—I knew it! And that's why I vowed I wouldn't disturb your belief. But—I am *so glad* to see you!—and, oh, I didn't mean to see you again, now the last tie between us, Aunt Drusilla, is dead!"

Jude seized her hand and kissed it. "There is a stronger one left!" he said. "I'll never care about my doctrines or my religion any more! Let them go! Let me help you, even if I do love you, and even if you..."

"Don't say it!—I know what you mean; but I can't admit so much as that. There! Guess what you like, but don't press me to answer questions!"

"I wish you were happy, whatever I may be!"

"I *can't* be! So few could enter into my feeling—they would say 'twas my fanciful fastidiousness, or something of that sort, and condemn me... It is none of the natural tragedies of love that's love's usual tragedy in

civilized life, but a tragedy artificially manufactured for people who in a natural state would find relief in parting! ... It would have been wrong, perhaps, for me to tell my distress to you, if I had been able to tell it to anybody else. But I have nobody. And I *must* tell somebody! Jude, before I married him I had never thought out fully what marriage meant, even though I knew. It was idiotic of me—there is no excuse. I was old enough, and I thought I was very experienced. So I rushed on, when I had got into that training school scrape, with all the cock-sureness of the fool that I was! ... I am certain one ought to be allowed to undo what one had done so ignorantly! I daresay it happens to lots of women, only they submit, and I kick... When people of a later age look back upon the barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in, what *will* they say!”

“You are very bitter, darling Sue! How I wish—I wish—”

“You must go in now!”

In a moment of impulse she bent over the sill, and laid her face upon his hair, weeping, and then imprinting a scarcely perceptible little kiss upon the top of his head, withdrawing quickly, so that he could not put his arms round her, as otherwise he unquestionably would have done. She shut the casement, and he returned to his cottage.

### III

Sue's distressful confession recurred to Jude's mind all the night as being a sorrow indeed.

The morning after, when it was time for her to go, the neighbours saw her companion and herself disappearing on foot down the hill path which led into the lonely road to Alfredston. An hour passed before he returned along the same route, and in his face there was a look of exaltation not unmingled with recklessness. An incident had occurred.

They had stood parting in the silent highway, and their tense and passionate moods had led to bewildered inquiries of each other on how far their intimacy ought to go; till they had almost quarrelled, and she said tearfully that it was hardly proper of him as a parson in embryo to think of such a thing as kissing her even in farewell as he now wished to do. Then she had conceded that the fact of the kiss would be nothing: all would depend upon the spirit of it. If given in the spirit of a cousin and a friend she saw no objection: if in the spirit of a lover she could not permit it. "Will you swear that it will not be in that spirit?" she had said.

No: he would not. And then they had turned from each other in estrangement, and gone their several ways, till at a distance of twenty or thirty yards both had looked round simultaneously. That look behind was fatal to the reserve hitherto more or less maintained. They had quickly run back, and met, and embracing most unpremeditatedly, kissed close and long. When they parted for good it was with flushed cheeks on her side, and a beating heart on his.

The kiss was a turning-point in Jude's career. Back again in the cottage, and left to reflection, he saw one thing: that though his kiss of that aerial being had seemed the purest moment of his faultful life, as long as he nourished this unlicensed tenderness it was glaringly inconsistent for him to pursue the idea of becoming the soldier and servant of a religion in which sexual love was regarded as at its best a frailty, and at its worst

damnation. What Sue had said in warmth was really the cold truth. When to defend his affection tooth and nail, to persist with headlong force in impassioned attentions to her, was all he thought of, he was condemned *ipso facto* as a professor of the accepted school of morals. He was as unfit, obviously, by nature, as he had been by social position, to fill the part of a propounder of accredited dogma.

Strange that his first aspiration—towards academical proficiency—had been checked by a woman, and that his second aspiration—towards apostleship—had also been checked by a woman. “Is it,” he said, “that the women are to blame; or is it the artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springs to noose and hold back those who want to progress?”

It had been his standing desire to become a prophet, however humble, to his struggling fellow-creatures, without any thought of personal gain. Yet with a wife living away from him with another husband, and himself in love erratically, the loved one’s revolt against her state being possibly on his account, he had sunk to be barely respectable according to regulation views.

It was not for him to consider further: he had only to confront the obvious, which was that he had made himself quite an impostor as a law-abiding religious teacher.

At dusk that evening he went into the garden and dug a shallow hole, to which he brought out all the theological and ethical works that he possessed, and had stored here. He knew that, in this country of true believers, most of them were not saleable at a much higher price than waste-paper value, and preferred to get rid of them in his own way, even if he should sacrifice a little money to the sentiment of thus destroying them. Lighting some loose pamphlets to begin with, he cut the volumes into pieces as well as he could, and with a three-pronged fork shook them over the flames. They kindled, and lighted up the back of the house, the pigsty, and his own face, till they were more or less consumed.

Though he was almost a stranger here now, passing cottagers talked to him over the garden hedge.

“Burning up your awld aunt’s rubbidge, I suppose? Ay; a lot gets heaped up in nooks and corners when you’ve lived eighty years in one house.”

It was nearly one o'clock in the morning before the leaves, covers, and binding of Jeremy Taylor, Butler, Doddridge, Paley, Pusey, Newman and the rest had gone to ashes, but the night was quiet, and as he turned and turned the paper shreds with the fork, the sense of being no longer a hypocrite to himself afforded his mind a relief which gave him calm. He might go on believing as before, but he professed nothing, and no longer owned and exhibited engines of faith which, as their proprietor, he might naturally be supposed to exercise on himself first of all. In his passion for Sue he could not stand as an ordinary sinner, and not as a whited sepulchre.

Meanwhile Sue, after parting from him earlier in the day, had gone along to the station, with tears in her eyes for having run back and let him kiss her. Jude ought not to have pretended that he was not a lover, and made her give way to an impulse to act unconventionally, if not wrongly. She was inclined to call it the latter; for Sue's logic was extraordinarily compounded, and seemed to maintain that before a thing was done it might be right to do, but that being done it became wrong; or, in other words, that things which were right in theory were wrong in practice.

"I have been too weak, I think!" she jerked out as she pranced on, shaking down tear-drops now and then. "It was burning, like a lover's—oh, it was! And I won't write to him any more, or at least for a long time, to impress him with my dignity! And I hope it will hurt him very much—expecting a letter to-morrow morning, and the next, and the next, and no letter coming. He'll suffer then with suspense—won't he, that's all!—and I am very glad of it!"—Tears of pity for Jude's approaching sufferings at her hands mingled with those which had surged up in pity for herself.

Then the slim little wife of a husband whose person was disagreeable to her, the ethereal, fine-nerved, sensitive girl, quite unfitted by temperament and instinct to fulfil the conditions of the matrimonial relation with Phillotson, possibly with scarce any man, walked fitfully along, and panted, and brought weariness into her eyes by gazing and worrying hopelessly.

Phillotson met her at the arrival station, and, seeing that she was troubled, thought it must be owing to the depressing effect of her aunt's death and funeral. He began telling her of his day's doings, and how his friend Gillingham, a neighbouring schoolmaster whom he had not seen for

years, had called upon him. While ascending to the town, seated on the top of the omnibus beside him, she said suddenly and with an air of self-chastisement, regarding the white road and its bordering bushes of hazel:

“Richard—I let Mr. Fawley hold my hand a long while. I don’t know whether you think it wrong?”

He, waking apparently from thoughts of far different mould, said vaguely, “Oh, did you? What did you do that for?”

“I don’t know. He wanted to, and I let him.”

“I hope it pleased him. I should think it was hardly a novelty.”

They lapsed into silence. Had this been a case in the court of an omniscient judge, he might have entered on his notes the curious fact that Sue had placed the minor for the major indiscretion, and had not said a word about the kiss.

After tea that evening Phillotson sat balancing the school registers. She remained in an unusually silent, tense, and restless condition, and at last, saying she was tired, went to bed early. When Phillotson arrived upstairs, weary with the drudgery of the attendance-numbers, it was a quarter to twelve o’clock. Entering their chamber, which by day commanded a view of some thirty or forty miles over the Vale of Blackmoor, and even into Outer Wessex, he went to the window, and, pressing his face against the pane, gazed with hard-breathing fixity into the mysterious darkness which now covered the far-reaching scene. He was musing, “I think,” he said at last, without turning his head, “that I must get the committee to change the school-stationer. All the copybooks are sent wrong this time.”

There was no reply. Thinking Sue was dozing he went on:

“And there must be a rearrangement of that ventilator in the class-room. The wind blows down upon my head unmercifully and gives me the ear-ache.”

As the silence seemed more absolute than ordinarily he turned round. The heavy, gloomy oak wainscot, which extended over the walls upstairs and down in the dilapidated “Old-Grove Place,” and the massive chimney-piece reaching to the ceiling, stood in odd contrast to the new and shining brass bedstead, and the new suite of birch furniture that he had bought for her, the two styles seeming to nod to each other across three centuries upon the shaking floor.

“Soo!” he said (this being the way in which he pronounced her name).

She was not in the bed, though she had apparently been there—the clothes on her side being flung back. Thinking she might have forgotten some kitchen detail and gone downstairs for a moment to see to it, he pulled off his coat and idled quietly enough for a few minutes, when, finding she did not come, he went out upon the landing, candle in hand, and said again “Soo!”

“Yes!” came back to him in her voice, from the distant kitchen quarter.

“What are you doing down there at midnight—tiring yourself out for nothing!”

“I am not sleepy; I am reading; and there is a larger fire here.”

He went to bed. Some time in the night he awoke. She was not there, even now. Lighting a candle he hastily stepped out upon the landing, and again called her name.

She answered “Yes!” as before, but the tones were small and confined, and whence they came he could not at first understand. Under the staircase was a large clothes-closet, without a window; they seemed to come from it. The door was shut, but there was no lock or other fastening. Phillotson, alarmed, went towards it, wondering if she had suddenly become deranged.

“What are you doing in there?” he asked.

“Not to disturb you I came here, as it was so late.”

“But there’s no bed, is there? And no ventilation! Why, you’ll be suffocated if you stay all night!”

“Oh no, I think not. Don’t trouble about me.”

“But—” Phillotson seized the knob and pulled at the door. She had fastened it inside with a piece of string, which broke at his pull. There being no bedstead she had flung down some rugs and made a little nest for herself in the very cramped quarters the closet afforded.

When he looked in upon her she sprang out of her lair, great-eyed and trembling.

“You ought not to have pulled open the door!” she cried excitedly. “It is not becoming in you! Oh, will you go away; please will you!”

She looked so pitiful and pleading in her white nightgown against the shadowy lumber-hole that he was quite worried. She continued to beseech him not to disturb her.

He said: "I've been kind to you, and given you every liberty; and it is monstrous that you should feel in this way!"

"Yes," said she, weeping. "I know that! It is wrong and wicked of me, I suppose! I am very sorry. But it is not I altogether that am to blame!"

"Who is then? Am I?"

"No—I don't know! The universe, I suppose—things in general, because they are so horrid and cruel!"

"Well, it is no use talking like that. Making a man's house so unseemly at this time o' night! Eliza will hear if we don't mind." (He meant the servant.) "Just think if either of the parsons in this town was to see us now! I hate such eccentricities, Sue. There's no order or regularity in your sentiments! ... But I won't intrude on you further; only I would advise you not to shut the door too tight, or I shall find you stifled to-morrow."

On rising the next morning he immediately looked into the closet, but Sue had already gone downstairs. There was a little nest where she had lain, and spiders' webs hung overhead. "What must a woman's aversion be when it is stronger than her fear of spiders!" he said bitterly.

He found her sitting at the breakfast-table, and the meal began almost in silence, the burghers walking past upon the pavement—or rather roadway, pavements being scarce here—which was two or three feet above the level of the parlour floor. They nodded down to the happy couple their morning greetings, as they went on.

"Richard," she said all at once; "would you mind my living away from you?"

"Away from me? Why, that's what you were doing when I married you. What then was the meaning of marrying at all?"

"You wouldn't like me any the better for telling you."

"I don't object to know."

"Because I thought I could do nothing else. You had got my promise a long time before that, remember. Then, as time went on, I regretted I had promised you, and was trying to see an honourable way to break it off. But



as I couldn't I became rather reckless and careless about the conventions. Then you know what scandals were spread, and how I was turned out of the training school you had taken such time and trouble to prepare me for and get me into; and this frightened me and it seemed then that the one thing I could do would be to let the engagement stand. Of course I, of all people, ought not to have cared what was said, for it was just what I fancied I never did care for. But I was a coward—as so many women are—and my theoretic unconventionality broke down. If that had not entered into the case it would have been better to have hurt your feelings once for all then, than to marry you and hurt them all my life after... And you were so generous in never giving credit for a moment to the rumour."

"I am bound in honesty to tell you that I weighed its probability and inquired of your cousin about it."

"Ah!" she said with pained surprise.

"I didn't doubt you."

"But you inquired!"

"I took his word."

Her eyes had filled. "*He* wouldn't have inquired!" she said. "But you haven't answered me. Will you let me go away? I know how irregular it is of me to ask it—"

"It is irregular."

"But I do ask it! Domestic laws should be made according to temperaments, which should be classified. If people are at all peculiar in character they have to suffer from the very rules that produce comfort in others! ... Will you let me?"

"But we married—"

"What is the use of thinking of laws and ordinances," she burst out, "if they make you miserable when you know you are committing no sin?"

"But you are committing a sin in not liking me."

"I *do* like you! But I didn't reflect it would be—that it would be so much more than that... For a man and woman to live on intimate terms when one feels as I do is adultery, in any circumstances, however legal. There—I've said it! ... Will you let me, Richard?"

"You distress me, Susanna, by such importunity!"

“Why can’t we agree to free each other? We made the compact, and surely we can cancel it—not legally of course; but we can morally, especially as no new interests, in the shape of children, have arisen to be looked after. Then we might be friends, and meet without pain to either. Oh Richard, be my friend and have pity! We shall both be dead in a few years, and then what will it matter to anybody that you relieved me from constraint for a little while? I daresay you think me eccentric, or super-sensitive, or something absurd. Well—why should I suffer for what I was born to be, if it doesn’t hurt other people?”

“But it does—it hurts *me*! And you vowed to love me.”

“Yes—that’s it! I am in the wrong. I always am! It is as culpable to bind yourself to love always as to believe a creed always, and as silly as to vow always to like a particular food or drink!”

“And do you mean, by living away from me, living by yourself?”

“Well, if you insisted, yes. But I meant living with Jude.”

“As his wife?”

“As I choose.”

Phillotson writhed.

Sue continued: “She, or he, ‘who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation.’ J. S. Mill’s words, those are. I have been reading it up. Why can’t you act upon them? I wish to, always.”

“What do I care about J. S. Mill!” moaned he. “I only want to lead a quiet life! Do you mind my saying that I have guessed what never once occurred to me before our marriage—that you were in love, and are in love, with Jude Fawley!”

“You may go on guessing that I am, since you have begun. But do you suppose that if I had been I should have asked you to let me go and live with him?”

The ringing of the school bell saved Phillotson from the necessity of replying at present to what apparently did not strike him as being such a convincing *argumentum ad verecundiam* as she, in her loss of courage at the last moment, meant it to appear. She was beginning to be so puzzling and unstateable that he was ready to throw in with her other little peculiarities the extremest request which a wife could make.

They proceeded to the schools that morning as usual, Sue entering the class-room, where he could see the back of her head through the glass partition whenever he turned his eyes that way. As he went on giving and hearing lessons his forehead and eyebrows twitched from concentrated agitation of thought, till at length he tore a scrap from a sheet of scribbling paper and wrote:

Your request prevents my attending to work at all. I don't know what I am doing! Was it seriously made?

He folded the piece of paper very small, and gave it to a little boy to take to Sue. The child toddled off into the class-room. Phillotson saw his wife turn and take the note, and the bend of her pretty head as she read it, her lips slightly crisped, to prevent undue expression under fire of so many young eyes. He could not see her hands, but she changed her position, and soon the child returned, bringing nothing in reply. In a few minutes, however, one of Sue's class appeared, with a little note similar to his own. These words only were pencilled therein:

I am sincerely sorry to say that it was seriously made.

Phillotson looked more disturbed than before, and the meeting-place of his brows twitched again. In ten minutes he called up the child he had just sent to her, and dispatched another missive:

God knows I don't want to thwart you in any reasonable way. My whole thought is to make you comfortable and happy. But I cannot agree to such a preposterous notion as your going to live with your lover. You would lose everybody's respect and regard; and so should I!

After an interval a similar part was enacted in the class-room, and an answer came:

I know you mean my good. But I don't want to be respectable! To produce "Human development in its richest diversity" (to quote your Humboldt) is to my mind far above respectability. No doubt my tastes are low—in your

view—hopelessly low! If you won't let me go to him, will you grant me this one request—allow me to live in your house in a separate way?

To this he returned no answer.

She wrote again:

I know what you think. But cannot you have pity on me? I beg you to; I implore you to be merciful! I would not ask if I were not almost compelled by what I can't bear! No poor woman has ever wished more than I that Eve had not fallen, so that (as the primitive Christians believed) some harmless mode of vegetation might have peopled Paradise. But I won't trifle! Be kind to me—even though I have not been kind to you! I will go away, go abroad, anywhere, and never trouble you.

Nearly an hour passed, and then he returned an answer:

I do not wish to pain you. How well you *know* I don't! Give me a little time. I am disposed to agree to your last request.

One line from her:

Thank you from my heart, Richard. I do not deserve your kindness.

All day Phillotson bent a dazed regard upon her through the glazed partition; and he felt as lonely as when he had not known her.

But he was as good as his word, and consented to her living apart in the house. At first, when they met at meals, she had seemed more composed under the new arrangement; but the irksomeness of their position worked on her temperament, and the fibres of her nature seemed strained like harp-strings. She talked vaguely and indiscriminately to prevent his talking pertinently.

## IV

Phillotson was sitting up late, as was often his custom, trying to get together the materials for his long-neglected hobby of Roman antiquities. For the first time since reviving the subject he felt a return of his old interest in it. He forgot time and place, and when he remembered himself and ascended to rest it was nearly two o'clock.

His preoccupation was such that, though he now slept on the other side of the house, he mechanically went to the room that he and his wife had occupied when he first became a tenant of Old-Grove Place, which since his differences with Sue had been hers exclusively. He entered, and unconsciously began to undress.

There was a cry from the bed, and a quick movement. Before the schoolmaster had realized where he was he perceived Sue starting up half-awake, staring wildly, and springing out upon the floor on the side away from him, which was towards the window. This was somewhat hidden by the canopy of the bedstead, and in a moment he heard her flinging up the sash. Before he had thought that she meant to do more than get air she had mounted upon the sill and leapt out. She disappeared in the darkness, and he heard her fall below.

Phillotson, horrified, ran downstairs, striking himself sharply against the newel in his haste. Opening the heavy door he ascended the two or three steps to the level of the ground, and there on the gravel before him lay a white heap. Phillotson seized it in his arms, and bringing Sue into the hall seated her on a chair, where he gazed at her by the flapping light of the candle which he had set down in the draught on the bottom stair.

She had certainly not broken her neck. She looked at him with eyes that seemed not to take him in; and though not particularly large in general they appeared so now. She pressed her side and rubbed her arm, as if conscious of pain; then stood up, averting her face, in evident distress at his gaze.

“Thank God—you are not killed! Though it’s not for want of trying—not much hurt I hope?”

Her fall, in fact, had not been a serious one, probably owing to the lowness of the old rooms and to the high level of the ground without. Beyond a scraped elbow and a blow in the side she had apparently incurred little harm.

“I was asleep, I think!” she began, her pale face still turned away from him. “And something frightened me—a terrible dream—I thought I saw you—” The actual circumstances seemed to come back to her, and she was silent.

Her cloak was hanging at the back of the door, and the wretched Phillotson flung it round her. “Shall I help you upstairs?” he asked drearily; for the significance of all this sickened him of himself and of everything.

“No thank you, Richard. I am very little hurt. I can walk.”

“You ought to lock your door,” he mechanically said, as if lecturing in school. “Then no one could intrude even by accident.”

“I have tried—it won’t lock. All the doors are out of order.”

The aspect of things was not improved by her admission. She ascended the staircase slowly, the waving light of the candle shining on her. Phillotson did not approach her, or attempt to ascend himself till he heard her enter her room. Then he fastened up the front door, and returning, sat down on the lower stairs, holding the newel with one hand, and bowing his face into the other. Thus he remained for a long long time—a pitiable object enough to one who had seen him; till, raising his head and sighing a sigh which seemed to say that the business of his life must be carried on, whether he had a wife or no, he took the candle and went upstairs to his lonely room on the other side of the landing.

No further incident touching the matter between them occurred till the following evening, when, immediately school was over, Phillotson walked out of Shaston, saying he required no tea, and not informing Sue where he was going. He descended from the town level by a steep road in a north-westerly direction, and continued to move downwards till the soil changed from its white dryness to a tough brown clay. He was now on the low alluvial beds

Where Duncliffe is the traveller's mark,  
And cloty Stour's a-rolling dark.

More than once he looked back in the increasing obscurity of evening.  
Against the sky was Shaston, dimly visible

On the grey-topp'd height  
Of Paladore, as pale day wore  
Away...<sup>[1]</sup>

[1] William Barnes.

The new-lit lights from its windows burnt with a steady shine as if watching him, one of which windows was his own. Above it he could just discern the pinnacled tower of Trinity Church. The air down here, tempered by the thick damp bed of tenacious clay, was not as it had been above, but soft and relaxing, so that when he had walked a mile or two he was obliged to wipe his face with his handkerchief.

Leaving Duncliffe Hill on the left he proceeded without hesitation through the shade, as a man goes on, night or day, in a district over which he has played as a boy. He had walked altogether about four and a half miles

Where Stour receives her strength,  
From six cleere fountains fed,<sup>[2]</sup>

[2] Drayton.

when he crossed a tributary of the Stour, and reached Leddenton—a little town of three or four thousand inhabitants—where he went on to the boys' school, and knocked at the door of the master's residence.

A boy pupil-teacher opened it, and to Phillotson's inquiry if Mr. Gillingham was at home, replied that he was, going at once off to his own house, and leaving Phillotson to find his way in as he could. He discovered his friend putting away some books from which he had been giving evening lessons. The light of the paraffin lamp fell on Phillotson's face—pale and wretched by contrast with his friend's, who had a cool, practical

look. They had been schoolmates in boyhood, and fellow-students at Wintoncester Training College, many years before this time.

“Glad to see you, Dick! But you don’t look well! Nothing the matter?”

Phillotson advanced without replying, and Gillingham closed the cupboard and pulled up beside his visitor.

“Why you haven’t been here—let me see—since you were married? I called, you know, but you were out; and upon my word it is such a climb after dark that I have been waiting till the days are longer before lumping up again. I am glad you didn’t wait, however.”

Though well-trained and even proficient masters, they occasionally used a dialect-word of their boyhood to each other in private.

“I’ve come, George, to explain to you my reasons for taking a step that I am about to take, so that you, at least, will understand my motives if other people question them anywhen—as they may, indeed certainly will... But anything is better than the present condition of things. God forbid that you should ever have such an experience as mine!”

“Sit down. You don’t mean—anything wrong between you and Mrs. Phillotson?”

“I do... My wretched state is that I’ve a wife I love who not only does not love me, but—but— Well, I won’t say. I know her feeling! I should prefer hatred from her!”

“Ssh!”

“And the sad part of it is that she is not so much to blame as I. She was a pupil-teacher under me, as you know, and I took advantage of her inexperience, and toled her out for walks, and got her to agree to a long engagement before she well knew her own mind. Afterwards she saw somebody else, but she blindly fulfilled her engagement.”

“Loving the other?”

“Yes; with a curious tender solicitude seemingly; though her exact feeling for him is a riddle to me—and to him too, I think—possibly to herself. She is one of the oddest creatures I ever met. However, I have been struck with these two facts; the extraordinary sympathy, or similarity, between the pair. He is her cousin, which perhaps accounts for some of it. They seem to be one person split in two! And with her unconquerable aversion to myself as a husband, even though she may like me as a friend,



'tis too much to bear longer. She has conscientiously struggled against it, but to no purpose. I cannot bear it—I cannot! I can't answer her arguments—she has read ten times as much as I. Her intellect sparkles like diamonds, while mine smoulders like brown paper... She's one too many for me!"

"She'll get over it, good-now?"

"Never! It is—but I won't go into it—there are reasons why she never will. At last she calmly and firmly asked if she might leave me and go to him. The climax came last night, when, owing to my entering her room by accident, she jumped out of window—so strong was her dread of me! She pretended it was a dream, but that was to soothe me. Now when a woman jumps out of window without caring whether she breaks her neck or no, she's not to be mistaken; and this being the case I have come to a conclusion: that it is wrong to so torture a fellow-creature any longer; and I won't be the inhuman wretch to do it, cost what it may!"

"What—you'll let her go? And with her lover?"

"Whom with is her matter. I shall let her go; with him certainly, if she wishes. I know I may be wrong—I know I can't logically, or religiously, defend my concession to such a wish of hers, or harmonize it with the doctrines I was brought up in. Only I know one thing: something within me tells me I am doing wrong in refusing her. I, like other men, profess to hold that if a husband gets such a so-called preposterous request from his wife, the only course that can possibly be regarded as right and proper and honourable in him is to refuse it, and put her virtuously under lock and key, and murder her lover perhaps. But is that essentially right, and proper, and honourable, or is it contemptibly mean and selfish? I don't profess to decide. I simply am going to act by instinct, and let principles take care of themselves. If a person who has blindly walked into a quagmire cries for help, I am inclined to give it, if possible."

"But—you see, there's the question of neighbours and society—what will happen if everybody—"

"Oh, I am not going to be a philosopher any longer! I only see what's under my eyes."

"Well—I don't agree with your instinct, Dick!" said Gillingham gravely. "I am quite amazed, to tell the truth, that such a sedate, plodding fellow as

you should have entertained such a craze for a moment. You said when I called that she was puzzling and peculiar: I think you are!”

“Have you ever stood before a woman whom you know to be intrinsically a good woman, while she has pleaded for release—been the man she has knelt to and implored indulgence of?”

“I am thankful to say I haven’t.”

“Then I don’t think you are in a position to give an opinion. I have been that man, and it makes all the difference in the world, if one has any manliness or chivalry in him. I had not the remotest idea—living apart from women as I have done for so many years—that merely taking a woman to church and putting a ring upon her finger could by any possibility involve one in such a daily, continuous tragedy as that now shared by her and me!”

“Well, I could admit some excuse for letting her leave you, provided she kept to herself. But to go attended by a cavalier—that makes a difference.”

“Not a bit. Suppose, as I believe, she would rather endure her present misery than be made to promise to keep apart from him? All that is a question for herself. It is not the same thing at all as the treachery of living on with a husband and playing him false... However, she has not distinctly implied living with him as wife, though I think she means to... And, to the best of my understanding, it is not an ignoble, merely animal, feeling between the two: that is the worst of it; because it makes me think their affection will be enduring. I did not mean to confess to you that in the first jealous weeks of my marriage, before I had come to my right mind, I hid myself in the school one evening when they were together there, and I heard what they said. I am ashamed of it now, though I suppose I was only exercising a legal right. I found from their manner that an extraordinary affinity, or sympathy, entered into their attachment, which somehow took away all flavour of grossness. Their supreme desire is to be together—to share each other’s emotions, and fancies, and dreams.”

“Platonic!”

“Well no. Shelleyan would be nearer to it. They remind me of—what are their names—Laon and Cythna. Also of Paul and Virginia a little. The more I reflect, the more *entirely* I am on their side!”

“But if people did as you want to do, there’d be a general domestic disintegration. The family would no longer be the social unit.”

“Yes—I am all abroad, I suppose!” said Phillotson sadly. “I was never a very bright reasoner, you remember. ... And yet, I don’t see why the woman and the children should not be the unit without the man.”

“By the Lord Harry!—Matriarchy! ... Does *she* say all this too?”

“Oh no. She little thinks I have out-Sued Sue in this—all in the last twelve hours!”

“It will upset all received opinion hereabout. Good God—what will Shaston say!”

“I don’t say that it won’t. I don’t know—I don’t know! ... As I say, I am only a feeler, not a reasoner.”

“Now,” said Gillingham, “let us take it quietly, and have something to drink over it.” He went under the stairs, and produced a bottle of cider-wine, of which they drank a rummer each. “I think you are rafted, and not yourself,” he continued. “Do go back and make up your mind to put up with a few whims. But keep her. I hear on all sides that she’s a charming young thing.”

“Ah yes! That’s the bitterness of it! Well, I won’t stay. I have a long walk before me.”

Gillingham accompanied his friend a mile on his way, and at parting expressed his hope that this consultation, singular as its subject was, would be the renewal of their old comradeship. “Stick to her!” were his last words, flung into the darkness after Phillotson; from which his friend answered “Aye, aye!”

But when Phillotson was alone under the clouds of night, and no sound was audible but that of the purling tributaries of the Stour, he said, “So Gillingham, my friend, you had no stronger arguments against it than those!”

“I think she ought to be smacked, and brought to her senses—that’s what I think!” murmured Gillingham, as he walked back alone.

The next morning came, and at breakfast Phillotson told Sue:

“You may go—with whom you will. I absolutely and unconditionally agree.”

Having once come to this conclusion it seemed to Phillotson more and more indubitably the true one. His mild serenity at the sense that he was doing his duty by a woman who was at his mercy almost overpowered his grief at relinquishing her.

Some days passed, and the evening of their last meal together had come—a cloudy evening with wind—which indeed was very seldom absent in this elevated place. How permanently it was imprinted upon his vision; that look of her as she glided into the parlour to tea; a slim flexible figure; a face, strained from its roundness, and marked by the pallors of restless days and nights, suggesting tragic possibilities quite at variance with her times of buoyancy; a trying of this morsel and that, and an inability to eat either. Her nervous manner, begotten of a fear lest he should be injured by her course, might have been interpreted by a stranger as displeasure that Phillotson intruded his presence on her for the few brief minutes that remained.

“You had better have a slice of ham or an egg, or something with your tea? You can’t travel on a mouthful of bread and butter.”

She took the slice he helped her to; and they discussed as they sat trivial questions of housekeeping, such as where he would find the key of this or that cupboard, what little bills were paid, and what not.

“I am a bachelor by nature, as you know, Sue,” he said, in a heroic attempt to put her at her ease. “So that being without a wife will not really be irksome to me, as it might be to other men who have had one a little while. I have, too, this grand hobby in my head of writing ‘The Roman Antiquities of Wessex,’ which will occupy all my spare hours.”

“If you will send me some of the manuscript to copy at any time, as you used to, I will do it with so much pleasure!” she said with amenable gentleness. “I should much like to be some help to you still—as a—f-f-friend.”

Phillotson mused, and said: “No, I think we ought to be really separate, if we are to be at all. And for this reason, that I don’t wish to ask you any questions, and particularly wish you not to give me information as to your movements, or even your address... Now, what money do you want? You must have some, you know.”

“Oh, of course, Richard, I couldn’t think of having any of your money to go away from you with! I don’t want any either. I have enough of my own

to last me for a long while, and Jude will let me have—”

“I would rather not know anything about him, if you don’t mind. You are free, absolutely; and your course is your own.”

“Very well. But I’ll just say that I have packed only a change or two of my own personal clothing, and one or two little things besides that are my very own. I wish you would look into my trunk before it is closed. Besides that I have only a small parcel that will go into Jude’s portmanteau.”

“Of course I shall do no such thing as examine your luggage! I wish you would take three-quarters of the household furniture. I don’t want to be bothered with it. I have a sort of affection for a little of it that belonged to my poor mother and father. But the rest you are welcome to whenever you like to send for it.”

“That I shall never do.”

“You go by the six-thirty train, don’t you? It is now a quarter to six.”

“You... You don’t seem very sorry I am going, Richard!”

“Oh no—perhaps not.”

“I like you much for how you have behaved. It is a curious thing that directly I have begun to regard you as not my husband, but as my old teacher, I like you. I won’t be so affected as to say I love you, because you know I don’t, except as a friend. But you do seem that to me!”

Sue was for a few moments a little tearful at these reflections, and then the station omnibus came round to take her up. Phillotson saw her things put on the top, handed her in, and was obliged to make an appearance of kissing her as he wished her good-bye, which she quite understood and imitated. From the cheerful manner in which they parted the omnibus-man had no other idea than that she was going for a short visit.

When Phillotson got back into the house he went upstairs and opened the window in the direction the omnibus had taken. Soon the noise of its wheels died away. He came down then, his face compressed like that of one bearing pain; he put on his hat and went out, following by the same route for nearly a mile. Suddenly turning round he came home.

He had no sooner entered than the voice of his friend Gillingham greeted him from the front room.

“I could make nobody hear; so finding your door open I walked in, and made myself comfortable. I said I would call, you remember.”

“Yes. I am much obliged to you, Gillingham, particularly for coming to-night.”

“How is Mrs.—”

“She is quite well. She is gone—just gone. That’s her tea-cup, that she drank out of only an hour ago. And that’s the plate she—” Phillotson’s throat got choked up, and he could not go on. He turned and pushed the tea-things aside.

“Have you had any tea, by the by?” he asked presently in a renewed voice.

“No—yes—never mind,” said Gillingham, preoccupied. “Gone, you say she is?”

“Yes... I would have died for her; but I wouldn’t be cruel to her in the name of the law. She is, as I understand, gone to join her lover. What they are going to do I cannot say. Whatever it may be she has my full consent to.”

There was a stability, a ballast, in Phillotson’s pronouncement which restrained his friend’s comment. “Shall I—leave you?” he asked.

“No, no. It is a mercy to me that you have come. I have some articles to arrange and clear away. Would you help me?”

Gillingham assented; and having gone to the upper rooms the schoolmaster opened drawers, and began taking out all Sue’s things that she had left behind, and laying them in a large box. “She wouldn’t take all I wanted her to,” he continued. “But when I made up my mind to her going to live in her own way I did make up my mind.”

“Some men would have stopped at an agreement to separate.”

“I’ve gone into all that, and don’t wish to argue it. I was, and am, the most old-fashioned man in the world on the question of marriage—in fact I had never thought critically about its ethics at all. But certain facts stared me in the face, and I couldn’t go against them.”

They went on with the packing silently. When it was done Phillotson closed the box and turned the key.

“There,” he said. “To adorn her in somebody’s eyes; never again in mine!”

## V

Four-and-twenty hours before this time Sue had written the following note to Jude:

It is as I told you; and I am leaving to-morrow evening. Richard and I thought it could be done with less obtrusiveness after dark. I feel rather frightened, and therefore ask you to be sure you are on the Melchester platform to meet me. I arrive at a little to seven. I know you will, of course, dear Jude; but I feel so timid that I can't help begging you to be punctual. He has been so *very* kind to me through it all!

Now to our meeting!

S.

As she was carried by the omnibus farther and farther down from the mountain town—the single passenger that evening—she regarded the receding road with a sad face. But no hesitation was apparent therein.

The up-train by which she was departing stopped by signal only. To Sue it seemed strange that such a powerful organization as a railway train should be brought to a stand-still on purpose for her—a fugitive from her lawful home.

The twenty minutes' journey drew towards its close, and Sue began gathering her things together to alight. At the moment that the train came to a stand-still by the Melchester platform a hand was laid on the door and she beheld Jude. He entered the compartment promptly. He had a black bag in his hand, and was dressed in the dark suit he wore on Sundays and in the evening after work. Altogether he looked a very handsome young fellow, his ardent affection for her burning in his eyes.



“Oh Jude!” She clasped his hand with both hers, and her tense state caused her to simmer over in a little succession of dry sobs. “I—I am so glad! I get out here?”

“No. I get in, dear one! I’ve packed. Besides this bag I’ve only a big box which is labelled.”

“But don’t I get out? Aren’t we going to stay here?”

“We couldn’t possibly, don’t you see. We are known here—I, at any rate, am well known. I’ve booked for Aldbrickham; and here’s your ticket for the same place, as you have only one to here.”

“I thought we should have stayed here,” she repeated.

“It wouldn’t have done at all.”

“Ah! Perhaps not.”

“There wasn’t time for me to write and say the place I had decided on. Aldbrickham is a much bigger town—sixty or seventy thousand inhabitants—and nobody knows anything about us there.”

“And you have given up your cathedral work here?”

“Yes. It was rather sudden—your message coming unexpectedly. Strictly, I might have been made to finish out the week. But I pleaded urgency and I was let off. I would have deserted any day at your command, dear Sue. I have deserted more than that for you!”

“I fear I am doing you a lot of harm. Ruining your prospects of the Church; ruining your progress in your trade; everything!”

“The Church is no more to me. Let it lie! *I* am not to be one of

The soldier-saints who, row on row,  
Burn upward each to his point of bliss,

if any such there be! My point of bliss is not upward, but here.”

“Oh I seem so bad—upsetting men’s courses like this!” said she, taking up in her voice the emotion that had begun in his. But she recovered her equanimity by the time they had travelled a dozen miles.

“He has been so good in letting me go,” she resumed. “And here’s a note I found on my dressing-table, addressed to you.”

“Yes. He’s not an unworthy fellow,” said Jude, glancing at the note. “And I am ashamed of myself for hating him because he married you.”

“According to the rule of women’s whims I suppose I ought to suddenly love him, because he has let me go so generously and unexpectedly,” she answered smiling. “But I am so cold, or devoid of gratitude, or so something, that even this generosity hasn’t made me love him, or repent, or want to stay with him as his wife; although I do feel I like his large-mindedness, and respect him more than ever.”

“It may not work so well for us as if he had been less kind, and you had run away against his will,” murmured Jude.

“That I *never* would have done.”

Jude’s eyes rested musingly on her face. Then he suddenly kissed her; and was going to kiss her again. “No—only once now—please, Jude!”

“That’s rather cruel,” he answered; but acquiesced. “Such a strange thing has happened to me,” Jude continued after a silence. “Arabella has actually written to ask me to get a divorce from her—in kindness to her, she says. She wants to honestly and legally marry that man she has already married virtually; and begs me to enable her to do it.”

“What have you done?”

“I have agreed. I thought at first I couldn’t do it without getting her into trouble about that second marriage, and I don’t want to injure her in any way. Perhaps she’s no worse than I am, after all! But nobody knows about it over here, and I find it will not be a difficult proceeding at all. If she wants to start afresh I have only too obvious reasons for not hindering her.”

“Then you’ll be free?”

“Yes, I shall be free.”

“Where are we booked for?” she asked, with the discontinuity that marked her to-night.

“Aldbrickham, as I said.”

“But it will be very late when we get there?”

“Yes. I thought of that, and I wired for a room for us at the Temperance Hotel there.”

“One?”

“Yes—one.”

She looked at him. “Oh Jude!” Sue bent her forehead against the corner of the compartment. “I thought you might do it; and that I was deceiving you. But I didn’t mean that!”

In the pause which followed, Jude’s eyes fixed themselves with a stultified expression on the opposite seat. “Well!” he said... “Well!”

He remained in silence; and seeing how discomfited he was she put her face against his cheek, murmuring, “Don’t be vexed, dear!”

“Oh—there’s no harm done,” he said. “But—I understood it like that... Is this a sudden change of mind?”

“You have no right to ask me such a question; and I shan’t answer!” she said, smiling.

“My dear one, your happiness is more to me than anything—although we seem to verge on quarrelling so often!—and your will is law to me. I am something more than a mere—selfish fellow, I hope. Have it as you wish!” On reflection his brow showed perplexity. “But perhaps it is that you don’t love me—not that you have become conventional! Much as, under your teaching, I hate convention, I hope it *is* that, not the other terrible alternative!”

Even at this obvious moment for candour Sue could not be quite candid as to the state of that mystery, her heart. “Put it down to my timidity,” she said with hurried evasiveness; “to a woman’s natural timidity when the crisis comes. I may feel as well as you that I have a perfect right to live with you as you thought—from this moment. I may hold the opinion that, in a proper state of society, the father of a woman’s child will be as much a private matter of hers as the cut of her underlinen, on whom nobody will have any right to question her. But partly, perhaps, because it is by his generosity that I am now free, I would rather not be other than a little rigid. If there had been a rope-ladder, and he had run after us with pistols, it would have seemed different, and I may have acted otherwise. But don’t press me and criticize me, Jude! Assume that I haven’t the courage of my opinions. I know I am a poor miserable creature. My nature is not so passionate as yours!”

He repeated simply! “I thought—what I naturally thought. But if we are not lovers, we are not. Phillotson thought so, I am sure. See, here is what

he has written to me.” He opened the letter she had brought, and read:

“I make only one condition—that you are tender and kind to her. I know you love her. But even love may be cruel at times. You are made for each other: it is obvious, palpable, to any unbiased older person. You were all along ‘the shadowy third’ in my short life with her. I repeat, take care of Sue.”

“He’s a good fellow, isn’t he!” she said with latent tears. On reconsideration she added, “He was very resigned to letting me go—too resigned almost! I never was so near being in love with him as when he made such thoughtful arrangements for my being comfortable on my journey, and offering to provide money. Yet I was not. If I loved him ever so little as a wife, I’d go back to him even now.”

“But you don’t, do you?”

“It is true—oh so terribly true!—I don’t.”

“Nor me neither, I half-fear!” he said pettishly. “Nor anybody perhaps! Sue, sometimes, when I am vexed with you, I think you are incapable of real love.”

“That’s not good and loyal of you!” she said, and drawing away from him as far as she could, looked severely out into the darkness. She added in hurt tones, without turning round: “My liking for you is not as some women’s perhaps. But it is a delight in being with you, of a supremely delicate kind, and I don’t want to go further and risk it by—an attempt to intensify it! I quite realized that, as woman with man, it was a risk to come. But, as me with you, I resolved to trust you to set my wishes above your gratification. Don’t discuss it further, dear Jude!”

“Of course, if it would make you reproach yourself... but you do like me very much, Sue? Say you do! Say that you do a quarter, a tenth, as much as I do you, and I’ll be content!”

“I’ve let you kiss me, and that tells enough.”

“Just once or so!”

“Well—don’t be a greedy boy.”

He leant back, and did not look at her for a long time. That episode in her past history of which she had told him—of the poor Christminster graduate whom she had handled thus, returned to Jude’s mind; and he saw himself as a possible second in such a torturing destiny.

“This is a queer elopement!” he murmured. “Perhaps you are making a cat’s paw of me with Phillotson all this time. Upon my word it almost seems so—to see you sitting up there so prim!”

“Now you mustn’t be angry—I won’t let you!” she coaxed, turning and moving nearer to him. “You did kiss me just now, you know; and I didn’t dislike you to, I own it, Jude. Only I don’t want to let you do it again, just yet—considering how we are circumstanced, don’t you see!”

He could never resist her when she pleaded (as she well knew). And they sat side by side with joined hands, till she aroused herself at some thought.

“I can’t possibly go to that Temperance Inn, after your telegraphing that message!”

“Why not?”

“You can see well enough!”

“Very well; there’ll be some other one open, no doubt. I have sometimes thought, since your marrying Phillotson because of a stupid scandal, that under the affectation of independent views you are as enslaved to the social code as any woman I know!”

“Not mentally. But I haven’t the courage of my views, as I said before. I didn’t marry him altogether because of the scandal. But sometimes a woman’s *love of being loved* gets the better of her conscience, and though she is agonized at the thought of treating a man cruelly, she encourages him to love her while she doesn’t love him at all. Then, when she sees him suffering, her remorse sets in, and she does what she can to repair the wrong.”

“You simply mean that you flirted outrageously with him, poor old chap, and then repented, and to make reparation, married him, though you tortured yourself to death by doing it.”

“Well—if you will put it brutally!—it was a little like that—that and the scandal together—and your concealing from me what you ought to have told me before!”

He could see that she was distressed and tearful at his criticisms, and soothed her, saying: “There, dear; don’t mind! Crucify me, if you will! You know you are all the world to me, whatever you do!”

“I am very bad and unprincipled—I know you think that!” she said, trying to blink away her tears.

“I think and know you are my dear Sue, from whom neither length nor breadth, nor things present nor things to come, can divide me!”

Though so sophisticated in many things, she was such a child in others that this satisfied her, and they reached the end of their journey on the best of terms. It was about ten o'clock when they arrived at Aldbrickham, the county town of North Wessex. As she would not go to the Temperance Hotel because of the form of his telegram, Jude inquired for another; and a youth who volunteered to find one wheeled their luggage to the George farther on, which proved to be the inn at which Jude had stayed with Arabella on that one occasion of their meeting after their division for years.

Owing, however, to their now entering it by another door, and to his preoccupation, he did not at first recognize the place. When they had engaged their respective rooms they went down to a late supper. During Jude's temporary absence the waiting-maid spoke to Sue.

“I think, ma'am, I remember your relation, or friend, or whatever he is, coming here once before—late, just like this, with his wife—a lady, at any rate, that wasn't you by no manner of means—jest as med be with you now.”

“Oh do you?” said Sue, with a certain sickness of heart. “Though I think you must be mistaken! How long ago was it?”

“About a month or two. A handsome, full-figured woman. They had this room.”

When Jude came back and sat down to supper Sue seemed moping and miserable. “Jude,” she said to him plaintively, at their parting that night upon the landing, “it is not so nice and pleasant as it used to be with us! I don't like it here—I can't bear the place! And I don't like you so well as I did!”

“How fidgeted you seem, dear! Why do you change like this?”

“Because it was cruel to bring me here!”

“Why?”

“You were lately here with Arabella. There, now I have said it!”

“Dear me, why—” said Jude looking round him. “Yes—it is the same! I really didn’t know it, Sue. Well—it is not cruel, since we have come as we have—two relations staying together.”

“How long ago was it you were here? Tell me, tell me!”

“The day before I met you in Christminster, when we went back to Marygreen together. I told you I had met her.”

“Yes, you said you had met her, but you didn’t tell me all. Your story was that you had met as estranged people, who were not husband and wife at all in Heaven’s sight—not that you had made it up with her.”

“We didn’t make it up,” he said sadly. “I can’t explain, Sue.”

“You’ve been false to me; you, my last hope! And I shall never forget it, never!”

“But by your own wish, dear Sue, we are only to be friends, not lovers! It is so very inconsistent of you to—”

“Friends can be jealous!”

“I don’t see that. You concede nothing to me and I have to concede everything to you. After all, you were on good terms with your husband at that time.”

“No, I wasn’t, Jude. Oh how can you think so! And you have taken me in, even if you didn’t intend to.” She was so mortified that he was obliged to take her into her room and close the door lest the people should hear. “Was it this room? Yes it was—I see by your look it was! I won’t have it for mine! Oh it was treacherous of you to have her again! *I* jumped out of the window!”

“But Sue, she was, after all, my legal wife, if not—”

Slipping down on her knees Sue buried her face in the bed and wept.

“I never knew such an unreasonable—such a dog-in-the-manger feeling,” said Jude. “I am not to approach you, nor anybody else!”

“Oh don’t you *understand* my feeling? Why don’t you? Why are you so gross? *I* jumped out of the window?”

“Jumped out of window?”

“I can’t explain!”

It was true that he did not understand her feelings very well. But he did a little; and began to love her none the less.

“I—I thought you cared for nobody—desired nobody in the world but me at that time—and ever since!” continued Sue.

“It is true. I did not, and don’t now!” said Jude, as distressed as she.

“But you must have thought much of her! Or—”

“No—I need not—you don’t understand me either—women never do! Why should you get into such a tantrum about nothing?”

Looking up from the quilt she pouted provokingly: “If it hadn’t been for that, perhaps I would have gone on to the Temperance Hotel, after all, as you proposed; for I was beginning to think I did belong to you!”

“Oh, it is of no consequence!” said Jude distantly.

“I thought, of course, that she had never been really your wife since she left you of her own accord years and years ago! My sense of it was, that a parting such as yours from her, and mine from him, ended the marriage.”

“I can’t say more without speaking against her, and I don’t want to do that,” said he. “Yet I must tell you one thing, which would settle the matter in any case. She has married another man—really married him! I knew nothing about it till after the visit we made here.”

“Married another? ... It is a crime—as the world treats it, but does not believe.”

“There—now you are yourself again. Yes, it is a crime—as you don’t hold, but would fearfully concede. But I shall never inform against her! And it is evidently a prick of conscience in her that has led her to urge me to get a divorce, that she may remarry this man legally. So you perceive I shall not be likely to see her again.”

“And you didn’t really know anything of this when you saw her?” said Sue more gently, as she rose.

“I did not. Considering all things, I don’t think you ought to be angry, darling!”

“I am not. But I shan’t go to the Temperance Hotel!”

He laughed. “Never mind!” he said. “So that I am near you, I am comparatively happy. It is more than this earthly wretch called Me deserves—you spirit, you disembodied creature, you dear, sweet, tantalizing phantom—hardly flesh at all; so that when I put my arms round you I almost expect them to pass through you as through air! Forgive me



for being gross, as you call it! Remember that our calling cousins when really strangers was a snare. The enmity of our parents gave a piquancy to you in my eyes that was intenser even than the novelty of ordinary new acquaintance.”

“Say those pretty lines, then, from Shelley’s ‘Epipsychidion’ as if they meant me!” she solicited, slanting up closer to him as they stood. “Don’t you know them?”

“I know hardly any poetry,” he replied mournfully.

“Don’t you? These are some of them:

There was a Being whom my spirit oft  
Met on its visioned wanderings far aloft.

\* \* \* \* \*

A seraph of Heaven, too gentle to be human,  
Veiling beneath that radiant form of woman...

Oh it is too flattering, so I won’t go on! But say it’s me! Say it’s me!”

“It is you, dear; exactly like you!”

“Now I forgive you! And you shall kiss me just once there—not very long.” She put the tip of her finger gingerly to her cheek; and he did as commanded. “You do care for me very much, don’t you, in spite of my not—you know?”

“Yes, sweet!” he said with a sigh; and bade her good-night.

## VI

In returning to his native town of Shaston as schoolmaster Phillotson had won the interest and awakened the memories of the inhabitants, who, though they did not honour him for his miscellaneous acquirements as he would have been honoured elsewhere, retained for him a sincere regard. When, shortly after his arrival, he brought home a pretty wife—awkwardly pretty for him, if he did not take care, they said—they were glad to have her settle among them.

For some time after her flight from that home Sue's absence did not excite comment. Her place as monitor in the school was taken by another young woman within a few days of her vacating it, which substitution also passed without remark, Sue's services having been of a provisional nature only. When, however, a month had passed, and Phillotson casually admitted to an acquaintance that he did not know where his wife was staying, curiosity began to be aroused; till, jumping to conclusions, people ventured to affirm that Sue had played him false and run away from him. The schoolmaster's growing languor and listlessness over his work gave countenance to the idea.

Though Phillotson had held his tongue as long as he could, except to his friend Gillingham, his honesty and directness would not allow him to do so when misapprehensions as to Sue's conduct spread abroad. On a Monday morning the chairman of the school committee called, and after attending to the business of the school drew Phillotson aside out of earshot of the children.

"You'll excuse my asking, Phillotson, since everybody is talking of it: is this true as to your domestic affairs—that your wife's going away was on no visit, but a secret elopement with a lover? If so, I condole with you."

"Don't," said Phillotson. "There was no secret about it."

"She has gone to visit friends?"

"No."

“Then what has happened?”

“She has gone away under circumstances that usually call for condolence with the husband. But I gave my consent.”

The chairman looked as if he had not apprehended the remark.

“What I say is quite true,” Phillotson continued testily. “She asked leave to go away with her lover, and I let her. Why shouldn’t I? A woman of full age, it was a question of her own conscience—not for me. I was not her gaoler. I can’t explain any further. I don’t wish to be questioned.”

The children observed that much seriousness marked the faces of the two men, and went home and told their parents that something new had happened about Mrs. Phillotson. Then Phillotson’s little maidservant, who was a schoolgirl just out of her standards, said that Mr. Phillotson had helped in his wife’s packing, had offered her what money she required, and had written a friendly letter to her young man, telling him to take care of her. The chairman of committee thought the matter over, and talked to the other managers of the school, till a request came to Phillotson to meet them privately. The meeting lasted a long time, and at the end the schoolmaster came home, looking as usual pale and worn. Gillingham was sitting in his house awaiting him.

“Well; it is as you said,” observed Phillotson, flinging himself down wearily in a chair. “They have requested me to send in my resignation on account of my scandalous conduct in giving my tortured wife her liberty—or, as they call it, condoning her adultery. But I shan’t resign!”

“I think I would.”

“I won’t. It is no business of theirs. It doesn’t affect me in my public capacity at all. They may expel me if they like.”

“If you make a fuss it will get into the papers, and you’ll never get appointed to another school. You see, they have to consider what you did as done by a teacher of youth—and its effects as such upon the morals of the town; and, to ordinary opinion, your position is indefensible. You must let me say that.”

To this good advice, however, Phillotson would not listen.

“I don’t care,” he said. “I don’t go unless I am turned out. And for this reason; that by resigning I acknowledge I have acted wrongly by her; when

I am more and more convinced every day that in the sight of Heaven and by all natural, straightforward humanity, I have acted rightly.”

Gillingham saw that his rather headstrong friend would not be able to maintain such a position as this; but he said nothing further, and in due time—indeed, in a quarter of an hour—the formal letter of dismissal arrived, the managers having remained behind to write it after Phillotson’s withdrawal. The latter replied that he should not accept dismissal; and called a public meeting, which he attended, although he looked so weak and ill that his friend implored him to stay at home. When he stood up to give his reasons for contesting the decision of the managers he advanced them firmly, as he had done to his friend, and contended, moreover, that the matter was a domestic theory which did not concern them. This they over-ruled, insisting that the private eccentricities of a teacher came quite within their sphere of control, as it touched the morals of those he taught. Phillotson replied that he did not see how an act of natural charity could injure morals.

All the respectable inhabitants and well-to-do fellow-natives of the town were against Phillotson to a man. But, somewhat to his surprise, some dozen or more champions rose up in his defence as from the ground.

It has been stated that Shaston was the anchorage of a curious and interesting group of itinerants, who frequented the numerous fairs and markets held up and down Wessex during the summer and autumn months. Although Phillotson had never spoken to one of these gentlemen they now nobly led the forlorn hope in his defence. The body included two cheap Jacks, a shooting-gallery proprietor and the ladies who loaded the guns, a pair of boxing-masters, a steam-roundabout manager, two travelling broom-makers, who called themselves widows, a gingerbread-stall keeper, a swing-boat owner, and a “test-your-strength” man.

This generous phalanx of supporters, and a few others of independent judgment, whose own domestic experiences had been not without vicissitude, came up and warmly shook hands with Phillotson; after which they expressed their thoughts so strongly to the meeting that issue was joined, the result being a general scuffle, wherein a black board was split, three panes of the school windows were broken, an inkbottle was spilled over a town-councillor’s shirt front, a churchwarden was dealt such a topper with the map of Palestine that his head went right through Samaria,

and many black eyes and bleeding noses were given, one of which, to everybody's horror, was the venerable incumbent's, owing to the zeal of an emancipated chimney-sweep, who took the side of Phillotson's party. When Phillotson saw the blood running down the rector's face he deplored almost in groans the untoward and degrading circumstances, regretted that he had not resigned when called upon, and went home so ill that next morning he could not leave his bed.

The farcical yet melancholy event was the beginning of a serious illness for him; and he lay in his lonely bed in the pathetic state of mind of a middle-aged man who perceives at length that his life, intellectual and domestic, is tending to failure and gloom. Gillingham came to see him in the evenings, and on one occasion mentioned Sue's name.

"She doesn't care anything about me!" said Phillotson. "Why should she?"

"She doesn't know you are ill."

"So much the better for both of us."

"Where are her lover and she living?"

"At Melchester—I suppose; at least he was living there some time ago."

When Gillingham reached home he sat and reflected, and at last wrote an anonymous line to Sue, on the bare chance of its reaching her, the letter being enclosed in an envelope addressed to Jude at the diocesan capital. Arriving at that place it was forwarded to Marygreen in North Wessex, and thence to Aldbrickham by the only person who knew his present address—the widow who had nursed his aunt.

Three days later, in the evening, when the sun was going down in splendour over the lowlands of Blackmoor, and making the Shaston windows like tongues of fire to the eyes of the rustics in that vale, the sick man fancied that he heard somebody come to the house, and a few minutes after there was a tap at the bedroom door. Phillotson did not speak; the door was hesitatingly opened, and there entered—Sue.

She was in light spring clothing, and her advent seemed ghostly—like the flitting in of a moth. He turned his eyes upon her, and flushed; but appeared to check his primary impulse to speak.

"I have no business here," she said, bending her frightened face to him. "But I heard you were ill—very ill; and—and as I know that you recognize

other feelings between man and woman than physical love, I have come.”

“I am not very ill, my dear friend. Only unwell.”

“I didn’t know that; and I am afraid that only a severe illness would have justified my coming!”

“Yes... yes. And I almost wish you had not come! It is a little too soon—that’s all I mean. Still, let us make the best of it. You haven’t heard about the school, I suppose?”

“No—what about it?”

“Only that I am going away from here to another place. The managers and I don’t agree, and we are going to part—that’s all.”

Sue did not for a moment, either now or later, suspect what troubles had resulted to him from letting her go; it never once seemed to cross her mind, and she had received no news whatever from Shaston. They talked on slight and ephemeral subjects, and when his tea was brought up he told the amazed little servant that a cup was to be set for Sue. That young person was much more interested in their history than they supposed, and as she descended the stairs she lifted her eyes and hands in grotesque amazement. While they sipped Sue went to the window and thoughtfully said, “It is such a beautiful sunset, Richard.”

“They are mostly beautiful from here, owing to the rays crossing the mist of the vale. But I lose them all, as they don’t shine into this gloomy corner where I lie.”

“Wouldn’t you like to see this particular one? It is like heaven opened.”

“Ah yes! But I can’t.”

“I’ll help you to.”

“No—the bedstead can’t be shifted.”

“But see how I mean.”

She went to where a swing-glass stood, and taking it in her hands carried it to a spot by the window where it could catch the sunshine, moving the glass till the beams were reflected into Phillotson’s face.

“There—you can see the great red sun now!” she said. “And I am sure it will cheer you—I do so hope it will!” She spoke with a childlike, repentant kindness, as if she could not do too much for him.

Phillotson smiled sadly. "You are an odd creature!" he murmured as the sun glowed in his eyes. "The idea of your coming to see me after what has passed!"

"Don't let us go back upon that!" she said quickly. "I have to catch the omnibus for the train, as Jude doesn't know I have come; he was out when I started; so I must return home almost directly. Richard, I am so very glad you are better. You don't hate me, do you? You have been such a kind friend to me!"

"I am glad to know you think so," said Phillotson huskily. "No. I don't hate you!"

It grew dusk quickly in the gloomy room during their intermittent chat, and when candles were brought and it was time to leave she put her hand in his or rather allowed it to flit through his; for she was significantly light in touch. She had nearly closed the door when he said, "Sue!" He had noticed that, in turning away from him, tears were on her face and a quiver in her lip.

It was bad policy to recall her—he knew it while he pursued it. But he could not help it. She came back.

"Sue," he murmured, "do you wish to make it up, and stay? I'll forgive you and condone everything!"

"Oh you can't, you can't!" she said hastily. "You can't condone it now!"

"*He* is your husband now, in effect, you mean, of course?"

"You may assume it. He is obtaining a divorce from his wife Arabella."

"His wife! It is altogether news to me that he has a wife."

"It was a bad marriage."

"Like yours."

"Like mine. He is not doing it so much on his own account as on hers. She wrote and told him it would be a kindness to her, since then she could marry and live respectably. And Jude has agreed."

"A wife... A kindness to her. Ah, yes; a kindness to her to release her altogether... But I don't like the sound of it. I can forgive, Sue."

"No, no! You can't have me back now I have been so wicked—as to do what I have done!"

There had arisen in Sue's face that incipient fright which showed itself whenever he changed from friend to husband, and which made her adopt any line of defence against marital feeling in him. "I *must* go now. I'll come again—may I?"

"I don't ask you to go, even now. I ask you to stay."

"I thank you, Richard; but I must. As you are not so ill as I thought, I *cannot* stay!"

"She's his—his from lips to heel!" said Phillotson; but so faintly that in closing the door she did not hear it. The dread of a reactionary change in the schoolmaster's sentiments, coupled, perhaps, with a faint shamefacedness at letting even him know what a slipshod lack of thoroughness, from a man's point of view, characterized her transferred allegiance, prevented her telling him of her, thus far, incomplete relations with Jude; and Phillotson lay writhing like a man in hell as he pictured the prettily dressed, maddening compound of sympathy and averseness who bore his name, returning impatiently to the home of her lover.

Gillingham was so interested in Phillotson's affairs, and so seriously concerned about him, that he walked up the hill-side to Shaston two or three times a week, although, there and back, it was a journey of nine miles, which had to be performed between tea and supper, after a hard day's work in school. When he called on the next occasion after Sue's visit his friend was downstairs, and Gillingham noticed that his restless mood had been supplanted by a more fixed and composed one.

"She's been here since you called last," said Phillotson.

"Not Mrs. Phillotson?"

"Yes."

"Ah! You have made it up?"

"No... She just came, patted my pillow with her little white hand, played the thoughtful nurse for half an hour, and went away."

"Well—I'm hanged! A little hussy!"

"What do you say?"

"Oh—nothing!"

"What do you mean?"



“I mean, what a tantalizing, capricious little woman! If she were not your wife—”

“She is not; she’s another man’s except in name and law. And I have been thinking—it was suggested to me by a conversation I had with her—that, in kindness to her, I ought to dissolve the legal tie altogether; which, singularly enough, I think I can do, now she has been back, and refused my request to stay after I said I had forgiven her. I believe that fact would afford me opportunity of doing it, though I did not see it at the moment. What’s the use of keeping her chained on to me if she doesn’t belong to me? I know—I feel absolutely certain—that she would welcome my taking such a step as the greatest charity to her. For though as a fellow-creature she sympathizes with, and pities me, and even weeps for me, as a husband she cannot endure me—she loathes me—there’s no use in mincing words—she loathes me, and my only manly, and dignified, and merciful course is to complete what I have begun... And for worldly reasons, too, it will be better for her to be independent. I have hopelessly ruined my prospects because of my decision as to what was best for us, though she does not know it; I see only dire poverty ahead from my feet to the grave; for I can be accepted as teacher no more. I shall probably have enough to do to make both ends meet during the remainder of my life, now my occupation’s gone; and I shall be better able to bear it alone. I may as well tell you that what has suggested my letting her go is some news she brought me—the news that Fawley is doing the same.”

“Oh—he had a spouse, too? A queer couple, these lovers!”

“Well—I don’t want your opinion on that. What I was going to say is that my liberating her can do her no possible harm, and will open up a chance of happiness for her which she has never dreamt of hitherto. For then they’ll be able to marry, as they ought to have done at first.”

Gillingham did not hurry to reply. “I may disagree with your motive,” he said gently, for he respected views he could not share. “But I think you are right in your determination—if you can carry it out. I doubt, however, if you can.”

## Part Fifth

### AT ALDBRICKHAM AND ELSEWHERE

*“Thy aerial part, and all the fiery parts which are mingled in thee, though by nature they have an upward tendency, still in obedience to the disposition of the universe they are over-powered here in the compound mass the body.”—M. ANTONINUS (Long).*

# I

How Gillingham's doubts were disposed of will most quickly appear by passing over the series of dreary months and incidents that followed the events of the last chapter, and coming on to a Sunday in the February of the year following.

Sue and Jude were living in Aldbrickham, in precisely the same relations that they had established between themselves when she left Shaston to join him the year before. The proceedings in the law-courts had reached their consciousness, but as a distant sound and an occasional missive which they hardly understood.

They had met, as usual, to breakfast together in the little house with Jude's name on it, that he had taken at fifteen pounds a year, with three-pounds-ten extra for rates and taxes, and furnished with his aunt's ancient and lumbering goods, which had cost him about their full value to bring all the way from Marygreen. Sue kept house, and managed everything.

As he entered the room this morning Sue held up a letter she had just received.

"Well; and what is it about?" he said after kissing her.

"That the decree *nisi* in the case of Phillotson *versus* Phillotson and Fawley, pronounced six months ago, has just been made absolute."

"Ah," said Jude, as he sat down.

The same concluding incident in Jude's suit against Arabella had occurred about a month or two earlier. Both cases had been too insignificant to be reported in the papers, further than by name in a long list of other undefended cases.

"Now then, Sue, at any rate, you can do what you like!" He looked at his sweetheart curiously.

"Are we—you and I—just as free now as if we had never married at all?"

“Just as free—except, I believe, that a clergyman may object personally to remarry you, and hand the job on to somebody else.”

“But I wonder—do you think it is really so with us? I know it is generally. But I have an uncomfortable feeling that my freedom has been obtained under false pretences!”

“How?”

“Well—if the truth about us had been known, the decree wouldn’t have been pronounced. It is only, is it, because we have made no defence, and have led them into a false supposition? Therefore is my freedom lawful, however proper it may be?”

“Well—why did you let it be under false pretences? You have only yourself to blame,” he said mischievously.

“Jude—don’t! You ought not to be touchy about that still. You must take me as I am.”

“Very well, darling: so I will. Perhaps you were right. As to your question, we were not obliged to prove anything. That was their business. Anyhow we are living together.”

“Yes. Though not in their sense.”

“One thing is certain, that however the decree may be brought about, a marriage is dissolved when it is dissolved. There is this advantage in being poor obscure people like us—that these things are done for us in a rough and ready fashion. It was the same with me and Arabella. I was afraid her criminal second marriage would have been discovered, and she punished; but nobody took any interest in her—nobody inquired, nobody suspected it. If we’d been patented nobilities we should have had infinite trouble, and days and weeks would have been spent in investigations.”

By degrees Sue acquired her lover’s cheerfulness at the sense of freedom, and proposed that they should take a walk in the fields, even if they had to put up with a cold dinner on account of it. Jude agreed, and Sue went up-stairs and prepared to start, putting on a joyful coloured gown in observance of her liberty; seeing which Jude put on a lighter tie.

“Now we’ll strut arm and arm,” he said, “like any other engaged couple. We’ve a legal right to.”

They rambled out of the town, and along a path over the low-lying lands that bordered it, though these were frosty now, and the extensive seed-

fields were bare of colour and produce. The pair, however, were so absorbed in their own situation that their surroundings were little in their consciousness.

“Well, my dearest, the result of all this is that we can marry after a decent interval.”

“Yes; I suppose we can,” said Sue, without enthusiasm.

“And aren’t we going to?”

“I don’t like to say no, dear Jude; but I feel just the same about it now as I have done all along. I have just the same dread lest an iron contract should extinguish your tenderness for me, and mine for you, as it did between our unfortunate parents.”

“Still, what can we do? I do love you, as you know, Sue.”

“I know it abundantly. But I think I would much rather go on living always as lovers, as we are living now, and only meeting by day. It is so much sweeter—for the woman at least, and when she is sure of the man. And henceforward we needn’t be so particular as we have been about appearances.”

“Our experiences of matrimony with others have not been encouraging, I own,” said he, with some gloom; “either owing to our own dissatisfied, unpractical natures, or by our misfortune. But we two—”

“Should be two dissatisfied ones linked together, which would be twice as bad as before... I think I should begin to be afraid of you, Jude, the moment you had contracted to cherish me under a Government stamp, and I was licensed to be loved on the premises by you—Ugh, how horrible and sordid! Although, as you are, free, I trust you more than any other man in the world.”

“No, no—don’t say I should change!” he expostulated; yet there was misgiving in his own voice also.

“Apart from ourselves, and our unhappy peculiarities, it is foreign to a man’s nature to go on loving a person when he is told that he must and shall be that person’s lover. There would be a much likelier chance of his doing it if he were told not to love. If the marriage ceremony consisted in an oath and signed contract between the parties to cease loving from that day forward, in consideration of personal possession being given, and to avoid each other’s society as much as possible in public, there would be

more loving couples than there are now. Fancy the secret meetings between the perjuring husband and wife, the denials of having seen each other, the clambering in at bedroom windows, and the hiding in closets! There'd be little cooling then."

"Yes; but admitting this, or something like it, to be true, you are not the only one in the world to see it, dear little Sue. People go on marrying because they can't resist natural forces, although many of them may know perfectly well that they are possibly buying a month's pleasure with a life's discomfort. No doubt my father and mother, and your father and mother, saw it, if they at all resembled us in habits of observation. But then they went and married just the same, because they had ordinary passions. But you, Sue, are such a phantasmal, bodiless creature, one who—if you'll allow me to say it—has so little animal passion in you, that you can act upon reason in the matter, when we poor unfortunate wretches of grosser substance can't."

"Well," she sighed, "you've owned that it would probably end in misery for us. And I am not so exceptional a woman as you think. Fewer women like marriage than you suppose, only they enter into it for the dignity it is assumed to confer, and the social advantages it gains them sometimes—a dignity and an advantage that I am quite willing to do without."

Jude fell back upon his old complaint—that, intimate as they were, he had never once had from her an honest, candid declaration that she loved or could love him. "I really fear sometimes that you cannot," he said, with a dubiousness approaching anger. "And you are so reticent. I know that women are taught by other women that they must never admit the full truth to a man. But the highest form of affection is based on full sincerity on both sides. Not being men, these women don't know that in looking back on those he has had tender relations with, a man's heart returns closest to her who was the soul of truth in her conduct. The better class of man, even if caught by airy affectations of dodging and parrying, is not retained by them. A Nemesis attends the woman who plays the game of elusiveness too often, in the utter contempt for her that, sooner or later, her old admirers feel; under which they allow her to go unlamented to her grave."

Sue, who was regarding the distance, had acquired a guilty look; and she suddenly replied in a tragic voice: "I don't think I like you to-day so well

as I did, Jude!”

“Don’t you? Why?”

“Oh, well—you are not nice—too sermony. Though I suppose I am so bad and worthless that I deserve the utmost rigour of lecturing!”

“No, you are not bad. You are a dear. But as slippery as an eel when I want to get a confession from you.”

“Oh yes, I am bad, and obstinate, and all sorts! It is no use your pretending I am not! People who are good don’t want scolding as I do... But now that I have nobody but you, and nobody to defend me, it is very hard that I mustn’t have my own way in deciding how I’ll live with you, and whether I’ll be married or no!”

“Sue, my own comrade and sweetheart, I don’t want to force you either to marry or to do the other thing—of course I don’t! It is too wicked of you to be so pettish! Now we won’t say any more about it, and go on just the same as we have done; and during the rest of our walk we’ll talk of the meadows only, and the floods, and the prospect of the farmers this coming year.”

After this the subject of marriage was not mentioned by them for several days, though living as they were with only a landing between them it was constantly in their minds. Sue was assisting Jude very materially now: he had latterly occupied himself on his own account in working and lettering headstones, which he kept in a little yard at the back of his little house, where in the intervals of domestic duties she marked out the letters full size for him, and blacked them in after he had cut them. It was a lower class of handicraft than were his former performances as a cathedral mason, and his only patrons were the poor people who lived in his own neighbourhood, and knew what a cheap man this “Jude Fawley: Monumental Mason” (as he called himself on his front door) was to employ for the simple memorials they required for their dead. But he seemed more independent than before, and it was the only arrangement under which Sue, who particularly wished to be no burden on him, could render any assistance.

## II

It was an evening at the end of the month, and Jude had just returned home from hearing a lecture on ancient history in the public hall not far off. When he entered, Sue, who had been keeping indoors during his absence, laid out supper for him. Contrary to custom she did not speak. Jude had taken up some illustrated paper, which he perused till, raising his eyes, he saw that her face was troubled.

“Are you depressed, Sue?” he said.

She paused a moment. “I have a message for you,” she answered.

“Somebody has called?”

“Yes. A woman.” Sue’s voice quavered as she spoke, and she suddenly sat down from her preparations, laid her hands in her lap, and looked into the fire. “I don’t know whether I did right or not!” she continued. “I said you were not at home, and when she said she would wait, I said I thought you might not be able to see her.”

“Why did you say that, dear? I suppose she wanted a headstone. Was she in mourning?”

“No. She wasn’t in mourning, and she didn’t want a headstone; and I thought you couldn’t see her.” Sue looked critically and imploringly at him.

“But who was she? Didn’t she say?”

“No. She wouldn’t give her name. But I know who she was—I think I do! It was Arabella!”

“Heaven save us! What should Arabella come for? What made you think it was she?”

“Oh, I can hardly tell. But I know it was! I feel perfectly certain it was—by the light in her eyes as she looked at me. She was a fleshy, coarse woman.”



“Well—I should not have called Arabella coarse exactly, except in speech, though she may be getting so by this time under the duties of the public house. She was rather handsome when I knew her.”

“Handsome! But yes!—so she is!”

“I think I heard a quiver in your little mouth. Well, waiving that, as she is nothing to me, and virtuously married to another man, why should she come troubling us?”

“Are you sure she’s married? Have you definite news of it?”

“No—not definite news. But that was why she asked me to release her. She and the man both wanted to lead a proper life, as I understood.”

“Oh Jude—it was, it *was* Arabella!” cried Sue, covering her eyes with her hand. “And I am so miserable! It seems such an ill omen, whatever she may have come for. You could not possibly see her, could you?”

“I don’t really think I could. It would be so very painful to talk to her now—for her as much as for me. However, she’s gone. Did she say she would come again?”

“No. But she went away very reluctantly.”

Sue, whom the least thing upset, could not eat any supper, and when Jude had finished his he prepared to go to bed. He had no sooner raked out the fire, fastened the doors, and got to the top of the stairs than there came a knock. Sue instantly emerged from her room, which she had but just entered.

“There she is again!” Sue whispered in appalled accents.

“How do you know?”

“She knocked like that last time.”

They listened, and the knocking came again. No servant was kept in the house, and if the summons were to be responded to one of them would have to do it in person. “I’ll open a window,” said Jude. “Whoever it is cannot be expected to be let in at this time.”

He accordingly went into his bedroom and lifted the sash. The lonely street of early retiring workpeople was empty from end to end save of one figure—that of a woman walking up and down by the lamp a few yards off.

“Who’s there?” he asked.

“Is that Mr. Fawley?” came up from the woman, in a voice which was unmistakably Arabella’s.

Jude replied that it was.

“Is it she?” asked Sue from the door, with lips apart.

“Yes, dear,” said Jude. “What do you want, Arabella?” he inquired.

“I beg your pardon, Jude, for disturbing you,” said Arabella humbly. “But I called earlier—I wanted particularly to see you to-night, if I could. I am in trouble, and have nobody to help me!”

“In trouble, are you?”

“Yes.”

There was a silence. An inconvenient sympathy seemed to be rising in Jude’s breast at the appeal. “But aren’t you married?” he said.

Arabella hesitated. “No, Jude, I am not,” she returned. “He wouldn’t, after all. And I am in great difficulty. I hope to get another situation as barmaid soon. But it takes time, and I really am in great distress because of a sudden responsibility that’s been sprung upon me from Australia; or I wouldn’t trouble you—believe me I wouldn’t. I want to tell you about it.”

Sue remained at gaze, in painful tension, hearing every word, but speaking none.

“You are not really in want of money, Arabella?” he asked, in a distinctly softened tone.

“I have enough to pay for the night’s lodging I have obtained, but barely enough to take me back again.”

“Where are you living?”

“In London still.” She was about to give the address, but she said, “I am afraid somebody may hear, so I don’t like to call out particulars of myself so loud. If you could come down and walk a little way with me towards the Prince Inn, where I am staying to-night, I would explain all. You may as well, for old time’s sake!”

“Poor thing! I must do her the kindness of hearing what’s the matter, I suppose,” said Jude in much perplexity. “As she’s going back to-morrow it can’t make much difference.”

“But you can go and see her to-morrow, Jude! Don’t go now, Jude!” came in plaintive accents from the doorway. “Oh, it is only to entrap you, I

know it is, as she did before! Don't go, dear! She is such a low-passioned woman—I can see it in her shape, and hear it in her voice!

“But I shall go,” said Jude. “Don't attempt to detain me, Sue. God knows I love her little enough now, but I don't want to be cruel to her.” He turned to the stairs.

“But she's not your wife!” cried Sue distractedly. “And I—”

“And you are not either, dear, yet,” said Jude.

“Oh, but are you going to her? Don't! Stay at home! Please, please stay at home, Jude, and not go to her, now she's not your wife any more than I!”

“Well, she is, rather more than you, come to that,” he said, taking his hat determinedly. “I've wanted you to be, and I've waited with the patience of Job, and I don't see that I've got anything by my self-denial. I shall certainly give her something, and hear what it is she is so anxious to tell me; no man could do less!”

There was that in his manner which she knew it would be futile to oppose. She said no more, but, turning to her room as meekly as a martyr, heard him go downstairs, unbolt the door, and close it behind him. With a woman's disregard of her dignity when in the presence of nobody but herself, she also trotted down, sobbing articulately as she went. She listened. She knew exactly how far it was to the inn that Arabella had named as her lodging. It would occupy about seven minutes to get there at an ordinary walking pace; seven to come back again. If he did not return in fourteen minutes he would have lingered. She looked at the clock. It was twenty-five minutes to eleven. He *might* enter the inn with Arabella, as they would reach it before closing time; she might get him to drink with her; and Heaven only knew what disasters would befall him then.

In a still suspense she waited on. It seemed as if the whole time had nearly elapsed when the door was opened again, and Jude appeared.

Sue gave a little ecstatic cry. “Oh, I knew I could trust you!—how good you are!”—she began.

“I can't find her anywhere in this street, and I went out in my slippers only. She has walked on, thinking I've been so hard-hearted as to refuse her requests entirely, poor woman. I've come back for my boots, as it is beginning to rain.”

“Oh, but why should you take such trouble for a woman who has served you so badly!” said Sue in a jealous burst of disappointment.

“But, Sue, she’s a woman, and I once cared for her; and one can’t be a brute in such circumstances.”

“She isn’t your wife any longer!” exclaimed Sue, passionately excited. “You *mustn’t* go out to find her! It isn’t right! You *can’t* join her, now she’s a stranger to you. How can you forget such a thing, my dear, dear one!”

“She seems much the same as ever—an erring, careless, unreflecting fellow-creature,” he said, continuing to pull on his boots. “What those legal fellows have been playing at in London makes no difference in my real relations to her. If she was my wife while she was away in Australia with another husband, she’s my wife now.”

“But she wasn’t! That’s just what I hold! There’s the absurdity!— Well—you’ll come straight back, after a few minutes, won’t you, dear? She is too low, too coarse for you to talk to long, Jude, and was always!”

“Perhaps I am coarse too, worse luck! I have the germs of every human infirmity in me, I verily believe—that was why I saw it was so preposterous of me to think of being a curate. I have cured myself of drunkenness I think; but I never know in what new form a suppressed vice will break out in me! I do love you, Sue, though I have danced attendance on you so long for such poor returns! All that’s best and noblest in me loves you, and your freedom from everything that’s gross has elevated me, and enabled me to do what I should never have dreamt myself capable of, or any man, a year or two ago. It is all very well to preach about self-control, and the wickedness of coercing a woman. But I should just like a few virtuous people who have condemned me in the past, about Arabella and other things, to have been in my tantalizing position with you through these late weeks!—they’d believe, I think, that I have exercised some little restraint in always giving in to your wishes—living here in one house, and not a soul between us.”

“Yes, you have been good to me, Jude; I know you have, my dear protector.”

“Well—Arabella has appealed to me for help. I must go out and speak to her, Sue, at least!”

“I can’t say any more!—Oh, if you must, you must!” she said, bursting out into sobs that seemed to tear her heart. “I have nobody but you, Jude, and you are deserting me! I didn’t know you were like this—I can’t bear it, I can’t! If she were yours it would be different!”

“Or if you were.”

“Very well then—if I must I must. Since you will have it so, I agree! I will be. Only I didn’t mean to! And I didn’t want to marry again, either! ... But, yes—I agree, I agree! I do love you. I ought to have known that you would conquer in the long run, living like this!”

She ran across and flung her arms round his neck. “I am not a cold-natured, sexless creature, am I, for keeping you at such a distance? I am sure you don’t think so! Wait and see! I do belong to you, don’t I? I give in!”

“And I’ll arrange for our marriage to-morrow, or as soon as ever you wish.”

“Yes, Jude.”

“Then I’ll let her go,” said he, embracing Sue softly. “I do feel that it would be unfair to you to see her, and perhaps unfair to her. She is not like you, my darling, and never was: it is only bare justice to say that. Don’t cry any more. There; and there; and there!” He kissed her on one side, and on the other, and in the middle, and rebolted the front door.

The next morning it was wet.

“Now, dear,” said Jude gaily at breakfast; “as this is Saturday I mean to call about the banns at once, so as to get the first publishing done to-morrow, or we shall lose a week. Banns will do? We shall save a pound or two.”

Sue absently agreed to banns. But her mind for the moment was running on something else. A glow had passed away from her, and depression sat upon her features.

“I feel I was wickedly selfish last night!” she murmured. “It was sheer unkindness in me—or worse—to treat Arabella as I did. I didn’t care about her being in trouble, and what she wished to tell you! Perhaps it was really something she was justified in telling you. That’s some more of my badness, I suppose! Love has its own dark morality when rivalry enters in

—at least, mine has, if other people’s hasn’t... I wonder how she got on? I hope she reached the inn all right, poor woman.”

“Oh yes: she got on all right,” said Jude placidly.

“I hope she wasn’t shut out, and that she hadn’t to walk the streets in the rain. Do you mind my putting on my waterproof and going to see if she got in? I’ve been thinking of her all the morning.”

“Well—is it necessary? You haven’t the least idea how Arabella is able to shift for herself. Still, darling, if you want to go and inquire you can.”

There was no limit to the strange and unnecessary penances which Sue would meekly undertake when in a contrite mood; and this going to see all sorts of extraordinary persons whose relation to her was precisely of a kind that would have made other people shun them was her instinct ever, so that the request did not surprise him.

“And when you come back,” he added, “I’ll be ready to go about the banns. You’ll come with me?”

Sue agreed, and went off under cloak and umbrella letting Jude kiss her freely, and returning his kisses in a way she had never done before. Times had decidedly changed. “The little bird is caught at last!” she said, a sadness showing in her smile.

“No—only nested,” he assured her.

She walked along the muddy street till she reached the public house mentioned by Arabella, which was not so very far off. She was informed that Arabella had not yet left, and in doubt how to announce herself so that her predecessor in Jude’s affections would recognize her, she sent up word that a friend from Spring Street had called, naming the place of Jude’s residence. She was asked to step upstairs, and on being shown into a room found that it was Arabella’s bedroom, and that the latter had not yet risen. She halted on the turn of her toe till Arabella cried from the bed, “Come in and shut the door,” which Sue accordingly did.

Arabella lay facing the window, and did not at once turn her head: and Sue was wicked enough, despite her penitence, to wish for a moment that Jude could behold her forerunner now, with the daylight full upon her. She may have seemed handsome enough in profile under the lamps, but a frowsiness was apparent this morning; and the sight of her own fresh

charms in the looking-glass made Sue's manner bright, till she reflected what a meanly sexual emotion this was in her, and hated herself for it.

"I've just looked in to see if you got back comfortably last night, that's all," she said gently. "I was afraid afterwards that you might have met with any mishap?"

"Oh—how stupid this is! I thought my visitor was—your friend—your husband—Mrs. Fawley, as I suppose you call yourself?" said Arabella, flinging her head back upon the pillows with a disappointed toss, and ceasing to retain the dimple she had just taken the trouble to produce.

"Indeed I don't," said Sue.

"Oh, I thought you might have, even if he's not really yours. Decency is decency, any hour of the twenty-four."

"I don't know what you mean," said Sue stiffly. "He is mine, if you come to that!"

"He wasn't yesterday."

Sue coloured roseate, and said, "How do you know?"

"From your manner when you talked to me at the door. Well, my dear, you've been quick about it, and I expect my visit last night helped it on—ha-ha! But I don't want to get him away from you."

Sue looked out at the rain, and at the dirty toilet-cover, and at the detached tail of Arabella's hair hanging on the looking-glass, just as it had done in Jude's time; and wished she had not come. In the pause there was a knock at the door, and the chambermaid brought in a telegram for "Mrs. Cartlett."

Arabella opened it as she lay, and her ruffled look disappeared.

"I am much obliged to you for your anxiety about me," she said blandly when the maid had gone; "but it is not necessary you should feel it. My man finds he can't do without me after all, and agrees to stand by the promise to marry again over here that he has made me all along. See here! This is in answer to one from me." She held out the telegram for Sue to read, but Sue did not take it. "He asks me to come back. His little corner public in Lambeth would go to pieces without me, he says. But he isn't going to knock me about when he has had a drop, any more after we are spliced by English law than before! ... As for you, I should coax Jude to

take me before the parson straight off, and have done with it, if I were in your place. I say it as a friend, my dear.”

“He’s waiting to, any day,” returned Sue, with frigid pride.

“Then let him, in Heaven’s name. Life with a man is more businesslike after it, and money matters work better. And then, you see, if you have rows, and he turns you out of doors, you can get the law to protect you, which you can’t otherwise, unless he half-runs you through with a knife, or cracks your noddle with a poker. And if he bolts away from you—I say it friendly, as woman to woman, for there’s never any knowing what a man med do—you’ll have the sticks o’ furniture, and won’t be looked upon as a thief. I shall marry my man over again, now he’s willing, as there was a little flaw in the first ceremony. In my telegram last night which this is an answer to, I told him I had almost made it up with Jude; and that frightened him, I expect! Perhaps I should quite have done it if it hadn’t been for you,” she said laughing; “and then how different our histories might have been from to-day! Never such a tender fool as Jude is if a woman seems in trouble, and coaxes him a bit! Just as he used to be about birds and things. However, as it happens, it is just as well as if I had made it up, and I forgive you. And, as I say, I’d advise you to get the business legally done as soon as possible. You’ll find it an awful bother later on if you don’t.”

“I have told you he is asking me to marry him—to make our natural marriage a legal one,” said Sue, with yet more dignity. “It was quite by my wish that he didn’t the moment I was free.”

“Ah, yes—you are a oneyer too, like myself,” said Arabella, eyeing her visitor with humorous criticism. “Bolted from your first, didn’t you, like me?”

“Good morning!—I must go,” said Sue hastily.

“And I, too, must up and off!” replied the other, springing out of bed so suddenly that the soft parts of her person shook. Sue jumped aside in trepidation. “Lord, I am only a woman—not a six-foot sojer! ... Just a moment, dear,” she continued, putting her hand on Sue’s arm. “I really did want to consult Jude on a little matter of business, as I told him. I came about that more than anything else. Would he run up to speak to me at the station as I am going? You think not. Well, I’ll write to him about it. I didn’t want to write it, but never mind—I will.”



### III

When Sue reached home Jude was awaiting her at the door to take the initial step towards their marriage. She clasped his arm, and they went along silently together, as true comrades oft-times do. He saw that she was preoccupied, and forbore to question her.

“Oh Jude—I’ve been talking to her,” she said at last. “I wish I hadn’t! And yet it is best to be reminded of things.”

“I hope she was civil.”

“Yes. I—I can’t help liking her—just a little bit! She’s not an ungenerous nature; and I am so glad her difficulties have all suddenly ended.” She explained how Arabella had been summoned back, and would be enabled to retrieve her position. “I was referring to our old question. What Arabella has been saying to me has made me feel more than ever how hopelessly vulgar an institution legal marriage is—a sort of trap to catch a man—I can’t bear to think of it. I wish I hadn’t promised to let you put up the banns this morning!”

“Oh, don’t mind me. Any time will do for me. I thought you might like to get it over quickly, now.”

“Indeed, I don’t feel any more anxious now than I did before. Perhaps with any other man I might be a little anxious; but among the very few virtues possessed by your family and mine, dear, I think I may set staunchness. So I am not a bit frightened about losing you, now I really am yours and you really are mine. In fact, I am easier in my mind than I was, for my conscience is clear about Richard, who now has a right to his freedom. I felt we were deceiving him before.”

“Sue, you seem when you are like this to be one of the women of some grand old civilization, whom I used to read about in my bygone, wasted, classical days, rather than a denizen of a mere Christian country. I almost expect you to say at these times that you have just been talking to some friend whom you met in the Via Sacra, about the latest news of Octavia or

Livia; or have been listening to Aspasia's eloquence, or have been watching Praxiteles chiselling away at his latest Venus, while Phryne made complaint that she was tired of posing."

They had now reached the house of the parish clerk. Sue stood back, while her lover went up to the door. His hand was raised to knock when she said: "Jude!"

He looked round.

"Wait a minute, would you mind?"

He came back to her.

"Just let us think," she said timidly. "I had such a horrid dream one night! ... And Arabella—"

"What did Arabella say to you?" he asked.

"Oh, she said that when people were tied up you could get the law of a man better if he beat you—and how when couples quarrelled... Jude, do you think that when you must have me with you by law, we shall be so happy as we are now? The men and women of our family are very generous when everything depends upon their goodwill, but they always kick against compulsion. Don't you dread the attitude that insensibly arises out of legal obligation? Don't you think it is destructive to a passion whose essence is its gratuitousness?"

"Upon my word, love, you are beginning to frighten me, too, with all this foreboding! Well, let's go back and think it over."

Her face brightened. "Yes—so we will!" said she. And they turned from the clerk's door, Sue taking his arm and murmuring as they walked on homeward:

Can you keep the bee from ranging,  
Or the ring-dove's neck from changing?  
No! Nor fetter'd love...

They thought it over, or postponed thinking. Certainly they postponed action, and seemed to live on in a dreamy paradise. At the end of a fortnight or three weeks matters remained unadvanced, and no banns were announced to the ears of any Aldbrickham congregation.

Whilst they were postponing and postponing thus a letter and a newspaper arrived before breakfast one morning from Arabella. Seeing the handwriting Jude went up to Sue's room and told her, and as soon as she was dressed she hastened down. Sue opened the newspaper; Jude the letter. After glancing at the paper she held across the first page to him with her finger on a paragraph; but he was so absorbed in his letter that he did not turn awhile.

"Look!" said she.

He looked and read. The paper was one that circulated in South London only, and the marked advertisement was simply the announcement of a marriage at St. John's Church, Waterloo Road, under the names, "CARTLETT—DONN"; the united pair being Arabella and the inn-keeper.

"Well, it is satisfactory," said Sue complacently. "Though, after this, it seems rather low to do likewise, and I am glad. However, she is provided for now in a way, I suppose, whatever her faults, poor thing. It is nicer that we are able to think that, than to be uneasy about her. I ought, too, to write to Richard and ask him how he is getting on, perhaps?"

But Jude's attention was still absorbed. Having merely glanced at the announcement he said in a disturbed voice: "Listen to this letter. What shall I say or do?"

#### THE THREE HORNS, LAMBETH.

DEAR JUDE (I won't be so distant as to call you Mr. Fawley),  
—I send to-day a newspaper, from which useful document you will learn that I was married over again to Cartlett last Tuesday. So that business is settled right and tight at last. But what I write about more particular is that private affair I wanted to speak to you on when I came down to Aldbrickham. I couldn't very well tell it to your lady friend, and should much have liked to let you know it by word of mouth, as I could have explained better than by letter. The fact is, Jude, that, though I have never informed you before, there was a boy born of our marriage, eight months after I left you, when I was at Sydney, living with my father and mother. All that is easily provable. As I had

separated from you before I thought such a thing was going to happen, and I was over there, and our quarrel had been sharp, I did not think it convenient to write about the birth. I was then looking out for a good situation, so my parents took the child, and he has been with them ever since. That was why I did not mention it when I met you in Christminster, nor at the law proceedings. He is now of an intelligent age, of course, and my mother and father have lately written to say that, as they have rather a hard struggle over there, and I am settled comfortably here, they don't see why they should be encumbered with the child any longer, his parents being alive. I would have him with me here in a moment, but he is not old enough to be of any use in the bar nor will be for years and years, and naturally Cartlett might think him in the way. They have, however, packed him off to me in charge of some friends who happened to be coming home, and I must ask you to take him when he arrives, for I don't know what to do with him. He is lawfully yours, that I solemnly swear. If anybody says he isn't, call them brimstone liars, for my sake. Whatever I may have done before or afterwards, I was honest to you from the time we were married till I went away, and I remain, yours, &c.,

ARABELLA CARTLETT.

Sue's look was one of dismay. "What will you do, dear?" she asked faintly.

Jude did not reply, and Sue watched him anxiously, with heavy breaths.

"It hits me hard!" said he in an under-voice. "It *may* be true! I can't make it out. Certainly, if his birth was exactly when she says, he's mine. I cannot think why she didn't tell me when I met her at Christminster, and came on here that evening with her! ... Ah—I do remember now that she said something about having a thing on her mind that she would like me to know, if ever we lived together again."

"The poor child seems to be wanted by nobody!" Sue replied, and her eyes filled.

Jude had by this time come to himself. "What a view of life he must have, mine or not mine!" he said. "I must say that, if I were better off, I should not stop for a moment to think whose he might be. I would take him and bring him up. The beggarly question of parentage—what is it, after all? What does it matter, when you come to think of it, whether a child is yours by blood or not? All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our general care. That excessive regard of parents for their own children, and their dislike of other people's, is, like class-feeling, patriotism, save-your-own-soul-ism, and other virtues, a mean exclusiveness at bottom."

Sue jumped up and kissed Jude with passionate devotion. "Yes—so it is, dearest! And we'll have him here! And if he isn't yours it makes it all the better. I do hope he isn't—though perhaps I ought not to feel quite that! If he isn't, I should like so much for us to have him as an adopted child!"

"Well, you must assume about him what is most pleasing to you, my curious little comrade!" he said. "I feel that, anyhow, I don't like to leave the unfortunate little fellow to neglect. Just think of his life in a Lambeth pothouse, and all its evil influences, with a parent who doesn't want him, and has, indeed, hardly seen him, and a stepfather who doesn't know him. 'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived!' That's what the boy—*my* boy, perhaps, will find himself saying before long!"

"Oh no!"

"As I was the petitioner, I am really entitled to his custody, I suppose."

"Whether or no, we must have him. I see that. I'll do the best I can to be a mother to him, and we can afford to keep him somehow. I'll work harder. I wonder when he'll arrive?"

"In the course of a few weeks, I suppose."

"I wish—When shall we have courage to marry, Jude?"

"Whenever you have it, I think I shall. It remains with you entirely, dear. Only say the word, and it's done."

"Before the boy comes?"

"Certainly."

"It would make a more natural home for him, perhaps," she murmured.

Jude thereupon wrote in purely formal terms to request that the boy should be sent on to them as soon as he arrived, making no remark whatever on the surprising nature of Arabella's information, nor vouchsafing a single word of opinion on the boy's paternity, nor on whether, had he known all this, his conduct towards her would have been quite the same.

In the down-train that was timed to reach Aldbrickham station about ten o'clock the next evening, a small, pale child's face could be seen in the gloom of a third-class carriage. He had large, frightened eyes, and wore a white woollen cravat, over which a key was suspended round his neck by a piece of common string: the key attracting attention by its occasional shine in the lamplight. In the band of his hat his half-ticket was stuck. His eyes remained mostly fixed on the back of the seat opposite, and never turned to the window even when a station was reached and called. On the other seat were two or three passengers, one of them a working woman who held a basket on her lap, in which was a tabby kitten. The woman opened the cover now and then, whereupon the kitten would put out its head, and indulge in playful antics. At these the fellow-passengers laughed, except the solitary boy bearing the key and ticket, who, regarding the kitten with his saucer eyes, seemed mutely to say: "All laughing comes from misapprehension. Rightly looked at, there is no laughable thing under the sun."

Occasionally, at a stoppage, the guard would look into the compartment and say to the boy, "All right, my man. Your box is safe in the van." The boy would say, "Yes," without animation, would try to smile, and fail.

He was Age masquerading as Juvenility, and doing it so badly that his real self showed through crevices. A ground-swell from ancient years of night seemed now and then to lift the child in this his morning-life, when his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of Time, and appeared not to care about what it saw.

When the other travellers closed their eyes, which they did one by one—even the kitten curling itself up in the basket, weary of its too circumscribed play—the boy remained just as before. He then seemed to be doubly awake, like an enslaved and dwarfed divinity, sitting passive and regarding his companions as if he saw their whole rounded lives rather than their immediate figures.

This was Arabella's boy. With her usual carelessness, she had postponed writing to Jude about him till the eve of his landing, when she could absolutely postpone no longer, though she had known for weeks of his approaching arrival, and had, as she truly said, visited Aldbrickham mainly to reveal the boy's existence and his near home-coming to Jude. This very day on which she had received her former husband's answer at some time in the afternoon, the child reached the London Docks, and the family in whose charge he had come, having put him into a cab for Lambeth and directed the cabman to his mother's house, bade him good-bye, and went their way.

On his arrival at the Three Horns, Arabella had looked him over with an expression that was as good as saying, "You are very much what I expected you to be," had given him a good meal, a little money, and, late as it was getting, dispatched him to Jude by the next train, wishing her husband Cartlett, who was out, not to see him.

The train reached Aldbrickham, and the boy was deposited on the lonely platform beside his box. The collector took his ticket, and, with a meditative sense of the unfitness of things, asked him where he was going by himself at that time of night.

"Going to Spring Street," said the little one impassively.

"Why, that's a long way from here; a'most out in the country; and the folks will be gone to bed."

"I've got to go there."

"You must have a fly for your box."

"No. I must walk."

"Oh well: you'd better leave your box here and send for it. There's a 'bus goes half-way, but you'll have to walk the rest."

"I am not afraid."

"Why didn't your friends come to meet 'ee?"

"I suppose they didn't know I was coming."

"Who is your friends?"

"Mother didn't wish me to say."

"All I can do, then, is to take charge of this. Now walk as fast as you can."

Saying nothing further the boy came out into the street, looking round to see that nobody followed or observed him. When he had walked some little distance he asked for the street of his destination. He was told to go straight on quite into the outskirts of the place.

The child fell into a steady mechanical creep which had in it an impersonal quality—the movement of the wave, or of the breeze, or of the cloud. He followed his directions literally, without an inquiring gaze at anything. It could have been seen that the boy's ideas of life were different from those of the local boys. Children begin with detail, and learn up to the general; they begin with the contiguous, and gradually comprehend the universal. The boy seemed to have begun with the generals of life, and never to have concerned himself with the particulars. To him the houses, the willows, the obscure fields beyond, were apparently regarded not as brick residences, pollards, meadows; but as human dwellings in the abstract, vegetation, and the wide dark world.

He found the way to the little lane, and knocked at the door of Jude's house. Jude had just retired to bed, and Sue was about to enter her chamber adjoining when she heard the knock and came down.

“Is this where Father lives?” asked the child.

“Who?”

“Mr. Fawley, that's his name.”

Sue ran up to Jude's room and told him, and he hurried down as soon as he could, though to her impatience he seemed long.

“What—is it he—so soon?” she asked as Jude came.

She scrutinized the child's features, and suddenly went away into the little sitting-room adjoining. Jude lifted the boy to a level with himself, keenly regarded him with gloomy tenderness, and telling him he would have been met if they had known of his coming so soon, set him provisionally in a chair whilst he went to look for Sue, whose supersensitiveness was disturbed, as he knew. He found her in the dark, bending over an arm-chair. He enclosed her with his arm, and putting his face by hers, whispered, “What's the matter?”

“What Arabella says is true—true! I see you in him!”

“Well: that's one thing in my life as it should be, at any rate.”



“But the other half of him is—*she*! And that’s what I can’t bear! But I ought to—I’ll try to get used to it; yes, I ought!”

“Jealous little Sue! I withdraw all remarks about your sexlessness. Never mind! Time may right things... And Sue, darling; I have an idea! We’ll educate and train him with a view to the university. What I couldn’t accomplish in my own person perhaps I can carry out through him? They are making it easier for poor students now, you know.”

“Oh you dreamer!” said she, and holding his hand returned to the child with him. The boy looked at her as she had looked at him. “Is it you who’s my *real* mother at last?” he inquired.

“Why? Do I look like your father’s wife?”

“Well, yes; ’cept he seems fond of you, and you of him. Can I call you Mother?”

Then a yearning look came over the child and he began to cry. Sue thereupon could not refrain from instantly doing likewise, being a harp which the least wind of emotion from another’s heart could make to vibrate as readily as a radical stir in her own.

“You may call me Mother, if you wish to, my poor dear!” she said, bending her cheek against his to hide her tears.

“What’s this round your neck?” asked Jude with affected calmness.

“The key of my box that’s at the station.”

They bustled about and got him some supper, and made him up a temporary bed, where he soon fell asleep. Both went and looked at him as he lay.

“He called you Mother two or three times before he dropped off,” murmured Jude. “Wasn’t it odd that he should have wanted to!”

“Well—it was significant,” said Sue. “There’s more for us to think about in that one little hungry heart than in all the stars of the sky... I suppose, dear, we must pluck up courage, and get that ceremony over? It is no use struggling against the current, and I feel myself getting intertwined with my kind. Oh Jude, you’ll love me dearly, won’t you, afterwards? I do want to be kind to this child, and to be a mother to him; and our adding the legal form to our marriage might make it easier for me.”

## IV

Their next and second attempt thereat was more deliberately made, though it was begun on the morning following the singular child's arrival at their home.

Him they found to be in the habit of sitting silent, his quaint and weird face set, and his eyes resting on things they did not see in the substantial world.

"His face is like the tragic mask of Melpomene," said Sue. "What is your name, dear? Did you tell us?"

"Little Father Time is what they always called me. It is a nickname; because I look so aged, they say."

"And you talk so, too," said Sue tenderly. "It is strange, Jude, that these preternaturally old boys almost always come from new countries. But what were you christened?"

"I never was."

"Why was that?"

"Because, if I died in damnation, 'twould save the expense of a Christian funeral."

"Oh—your name is not Jude, then?" said his father with some disappointment.

The boy shook his head. "Never heerd on it."

"Of course not," said Sue quickly; "since she was hating you all the time!"

"We'll have him christened," said Jude; and privately to Sue: "The day we are married." Yet the advent of the child disturbed him.

Their position lent them shyness, and having an impression that a marriage at a superintendent registrar's office was more private than an ecclesiastical one, they decided to avoid a church this time. Both Sue and Jude together went to the office of the district to give notice: they had

become such companions that they could hardly do anything of importance except in each other's company.

Jude Fawley signed the form of notice, Sue looking over his shoulder and watching his hand as it traced the words. As she read the four-square undertaking, never before seen by her, into which her own and Jude's names were inserted, and by which that very volatile essence, their love for each other, was supposed to be made permanent, her face seemed to grow painfully apprehensive. "Names and Surnames of the Parties"—(they were to be parties now, not lovers, she thought). "Condition"—(a horrid idea)—"Rank or Occupation"—"Age"—"Dwelling at"—"Length of Residence"—"Church or Building in which the Marriage is to be solemnized"—"District and County in which the Parties respectively dwell."

"It spoils the sentiment, doesn't it!" she said on their way home. "It seems making a more sordid business of it even than signing the contract in a vestry. There is a little poetry in a church. But we'll try to get through with it, dearest, now."

"We will. 'For what man is he that hath betrothed a wife and hath not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.' So said the Jewish law-giver."

"How you know the Scriptures, Jude! You really ought to have been a parson. I can only quote profane writers!"

During the interval before the issuing of the certificate, Sue, in her housekeeping errands, sometimes walked past the office, and furtively glancing in saw affixed to the wall the notice of the purposed clinch to their union. She could not bear its aspect. Coming after her previous experience of matrimony, all the romance of their attachment seemed to be starved away by placing her present case in the same category. She was usually leading little Father Time by the hand, and fancied that people thought him hers, and regarded the intended ceremony as the patching up of an old error.

Meanwhile Jude decided to link his present with his past in some slight degree by inviting to the wedding the only person remaining on earth who was associated with his early life at Marygreen—the aged widow Mrs. Edlin, who had been his great-aunt's friend and nurse in her last illness. He hardly expected that she would come; but she did, bringing singular

presents, in the form of apples, jam, brass snuffers, an ancient pewter dish, a warming-pan, and an enormous bag of goose feathers towards a bed. She was allotted the spare room in Jude's house, whither she retired early, and where they could hear her through the ceiling below, honestly saying the Lord's Prayer in a loud voice, as the Rubric directed.

As, however, she could not sleep, and discovered that Sue and Jude were still sitting up—it being in fact only ten o'clock—she dressed herself again and came down, and they all sat by the fire till a late hour—Father Time included; though, as he never spoke, they were hardly conscious of him.

“Well, I bain't set against marrying as your great-aunt was,” said the widow. “And I hope 'twill be a jocund wedding for ye in all respects this time. Nobody can hope it more, knowing what I do of your families, which is more, I suppose, than anybody else now living. For they have been unlucky that way, God knows.”

Sue breathed uneasily.

“They was always good-hearted people, too—wouldn't kill a fly if they knowed it,” continued the wedding guest. “But things happened to thwart 'em, and if everything wasn't vitty they were upset. No doubt that's how he that the tale is told of came to do what 'a did—if he *were* one of your family.”

“What was that?” said Jude.

“Well—that tale, ye know; he that was gibbeted just on the brow of the hill by the Brown House—not far from the milestone between Marygreen and Alfredston, where the other road branches off. But Lord, 'twas in my grandfather's time; and it medn' have been one of your folk at all.”

“I know where the gibbet is said to have stood, very well,” murmured Jude. “But I never heard of this. What—did this man—my ancestor and Sue's—kill his wife?”

“'Twer not that exactly. She ran away from him, with their child, to her friends; and while she was there the child died. He wanted the body, to bury it where his people lay, but she wouldn't give it up. Her husband then came in the night with a cart, and broke into the house to steal the coffin away; but he was catched, and being obstinate, wouldn't tell what he broke in for. They brought it in burglary, and that's why he was hanged and

gibbeted on Brown House Hill. His wife went mad after he was dead. But it medn't be true that he belonged to ye more than to me."

A small slow voice rose from the shade of the fireside, as if out of the earth: "If I was you, Mother, I wouldn't marry Father!" It came from little Time, and they started, for they had forgotten him.

"Oh, it is only a tale," said Sue cheeringly.

After this exhilarating tradition from the widow on the eve of the solemnization they rose, and, wishing their guest good-night, retired.

The next morning Sue, whose nervousness intensified with the hours, took Jude privately into the sitting-room before starting. "Jude, I want you to kiss me, as a lover, incorporeally," she said, tremulously nestling up to him, with damp lashes. "It won't be ever like this any more, will it? I wish we hadn't begun the business. But I suppose we must go on. How horrid that story was last night! It spoilt my thoughts of to-day. It makes me feel as if a tragic doom overhung our family, as it did the house of Atreus."

"Or the house of Jeroboam," said the quondam theologian.

"Yes. And it seems awful temerity in us two to go marrying! I am going to vow to you in the same words I vowed in to my other husband, and you to me in the same as you used to your other wife; regardless of the deterrent lesson we were taught by those experiments!"

"If you are uneasy I am made unhappy," said he. "I had hoped you would feel quite joyful. But if you don't, you don't. It is no use pretending. It is a dismal business to you, and that makes it so to me!"

"It is unpleasantly like that other morning—that's all," she murmured. "Let us go on now."

They started arm in arm for the office aforesaid, no witness accompanying them except the Widow Edlin. The day was chilly and dull, and a clammy fog blew through the town from "Royal-tower'd Thame." On the steps of the office there were the muddy foot-marks of people who had entered, and in the entry were damp umbrellas. Within the office several persons were gathered, and our couple perceived that a marriage between a soldier and a young woman was just in progress. Sue, Jude, and the widow stood in the background while this was going on, Sue reading the notices of marriage on the wall. The room was a dreary place to two of their temperament, though to its usual frequenters it doubtless seemed

ordinary enough. Law-books in musty calf covered one wall, and elsewhere were post-office directories, and other books of reference. Papers in packets tied with red tape were pigeon-holed around, and some iron safes filled a recess, while the bare wood floor was, like the door-step, stained by previous visitors.

The soldier was sullen and reluctant: the bride sad and timid; she was soon, obviously, to become a mother, and she had a black eye. Their little business was soon done, and the twain and their friends straggled out, one of the witnesses saying casually to Jude and Sue in passing, as if he had known them before: "See the couple just come in? Ha, ha! That fellow is just out of gaol this morning. She met him at the gaol gates, and brought him straight here. She's paying for everything."

Sue turned her head and saw an ill-favoured man, closely cropped, with a broad-faced, pock-marked woman on his arm, ruddy with liquor and the satisfaction of being on the brink of a gratified desire. They jocosely saluted the outgoing couple, and went forward in front of Jude and Sue, whose diffidence was increasing. The latter drew back and turned to her lover, her mouth shaping itself like that of a child about to give way to grief:

"Jude—I don't like it here! I wish we hadn't come! The place gives me the horrors: it seems so unnatural as the climax of our love! I wish it had been at church, if it had to be at all. It is not so vulgar there!"

"Dear little girl," said Jude. "How troubled and pale you look!"

"It must be performed here now, I suppose?"

"No—perhaps not necessarily."

He spoke to the clerk, and came back. "No—we need not marry here or anywhere, unless we like, even now," he said. "We can be married in a church, if not with the same certificate with another he'll give us, I think. Anyhow, let us go out till you are calmer, dear, and I too, and talk it over."

They went out stealthily and guiltily, as if they had committed a misdemeanour, closing the door without noise, and telling the widow, who had remained in the entry, to go home and await them; that they would call in any casual passers as witnesses, if necessary. When in the street they turned into an unfrequented side alley where they walked up and down as they had done long ago in the market-house at Melchester.

“Now, darling, what shall we do? We are making a mess of it, it strikes me. Still, *anything* that pleases you will please me.”

“But Jude, dearest, I am worrying you! You wanted it to be there, didn’t you?”

“Well, to tell the truth, when I got inside I felt as if I didn’t care much about it. The place depressed me almost as much as it did you—it was ugly. And then I thought of what you had said this morning as to whether we ought.”

They walked on vaguely, till she paused, and her little voice began anew: “It seems so weak, too, to vacillate like this! And yet how much better than to act rashly a second time... How terrible that scene was to me! The expression in that flabby woman’s face, leading her on to give herself to that gaol-bird, not for a few hours, as she would, but for a lifetime, as she must. And the other poor soul—to escape a nominal shame which was owing to the weakness of her character, degrading herself to the real shame of bondage to a tyrant who scorned her—a man whom to avoid for ever was her only chance of salvation... This is our parish church, isn’t it? This is where it would have to be, if we did it in the usual way? A service or something seems to be going on.”

Jude went up and looked in at the door. “Why—it is a wedding here too,” he said. “Everybody seems to be on our tack to-day.”

Sue said she supposed it was because Lent was just over, when there was always a crowd of marriages. “Let us listen,” she said, “and find how it feels to us when performed in a church.”

They stepped in, and entered a back seat, and watched the proceedings at the altar. The contracting couple appeared to belong to the well-to-do middle class, and the wedding altogether was of ordinary prettiness and interest. They could see the flowers tremble in the bride’s hand, even at that distance, and could hear her mechanical murmur of words whose meaning her brain seemed to gather not at all under the pressure of her self-consciousness. Sue and Jude listened, and severally saw themselves in time past going through the same form of self-committal.

“It is not the same to her, poor thing, as it would be to me doing it over again with my present knowledge,” Sue whispered. “You see, they are fresh to it, and take the proceedings as a matter of course. But having been awakened to its awful solemnity as we have, or at least as I have, by

experience, and to my own too squeamish feelings perhaps sometimes, it really does seem immoral in me to go and undertake the same thing again with open eyes. Coming in here and seeing this has frightened me from a church wedding as much as the other did from a registry one... We are a weak, tremulous pair, Jude, and what others may feel confident in I feel doubts of—my being proof against the sordid conditions of a business contract again!”

Then they tried to laugh, and went on debating in whispers the object-lesson before them. And Jude said he also thought they were both too thin-skinned—that they ought never to have been born—much less have come together for the most preposterous of all joint ventures for *them*—matrimony.

His betrothed shuddered; and asked him earnestly if he indeed felt that they ought not to go in cold blood and sign that life-undertaking again? “It is awful if you think we have found ourselves not strong enough for it, and knowing this, are proposing to perjure ourselves,” she said.

“I fancy I do think it—since you ask me,” said Jude. “Remember I’ll do it if you wish, own darling.” While she hesitated he went on to confess that, though he thought they ought to be able to do it, he felt checked by the dread of incompetency just as she did—from their peculiarities, perhaps, because they were unlike other people. “We are horribly sensitive; that’s really what’s the matter with us, Sue!” he declared.

“I fancy more are like us than we think!”

“Well, I don’t know. The intention of the contract is good, and right for many, no doubt; but in our case it may defeat its own ends because we are the queer sort of people we are—folk in whom domestic ties of a forced kind snuff out cordiality and spontaneousness.”

Sue still held that there was not much queer or exceptional in them: that all were so. “Everybody is getting to feel as we do. We are a little beforehand, that’s all. In fifty, a hundred, years the descendants of these two will act and feel worse than we. They will see weltering humanity still more vividly than we do now, as

Shapes like our own selves hideously multiplied,  
and will be afraid to reproduce them.”



“What a terrible line of poetry! ... though I have felt it myself about my fellow-creatures, at morbid times.”

Thus they murmured on, till Sue said more brightly:

“Well—the general question is not our business, and why should we plague ourselves about it? However different our reasons are, we come to the same conclusion: that for us particular two, an irrevocable oath is risky. Then, Jude, let us go home without killing our dream! Yes? How good you are, my friend: you give way to all my whims!”

“They accord very much with my own.”

He gave her a little kiss behind a pillar while the attention of everybody present was taken up in observing the bridal procession entering the vestry; and then they came outside the building. By the door they waited till two or three carriages, which had gone away for a while, returned, and the new husband and wife came into the open daylight. Sue sighed.

“The flowers in the bride’s hand are sadly like the garland which decked the heifers of sacrifice in old times!”

“Still, Sue, it is no worse for the woman than for the man. That’s what some women fail to see, and instead of protesting against the conditions they protest against the man, the other victim; just as a woman in a crowd will abuse the man who crushes against her, when he is only the helpless transmitter of the pressure put upon him.”

“Yes—some are like that, instead of uniting with the man against the common enemy, coercion.” The bride and bridegroom had by this time driven off, and the two moved away with the rest of the idlers. “No—don’t let’s do it,” she continued. “At least, just now.”

They reached home, and passing the window arm in arm saw the widow looking out at them. “Well,” cried their guest when they entered, “I said to myself when I zeed ye coming so loving up to the door, ‘They made up their minds at last, then!’”

They briefly hinted that they had not.

“What—and ha’n’t ye really done it? Chok’ it all, that I should have lived to see a good old saying like ‘marry in haste and repent at leisure’ spoiled like this by you two! ’Tis time I got back again to Marygreen—sakes if tidden—if this is what the new notions be leading us to! Nobody thought o’ being afeard o’ matrimony in my time, nor of much else but a

cannon-ball or empty cupboard! Why when I and my poor man were married we thought no more o't than of a game o' dibs!"

"Don't tell the child when he comes in," whispered Sue nervously. "He'll think it has all gone on right, and it will be better that he should not be surprised and puzzled. Of course it is only put off for reconsideration. If we are happy as we are, what does it matter to anybody?"

## V

The purpose of a chronicler of moods and deeds does not require him to express his personal views upon the grave controversy above given. That the twain were happy—between their times of sadness—was indubitable. And when the unexpected apparition of Jude's child in the house had shown itself to be no such disturbing event as it had looked, but one that brought into their lives a new and tender interest of an ennobling and unselfish kind, it rather helped than injured their happiness.

To be sure, with such pleasing anxious beings as they were, the boy's coming also brought with it much thought for the future, particularly as he seemed at present to be singularly deficient in all the usual hopes of childhood. But the pair tried to dismiss, for a while at least, a too strenuously forward view.

There is in Upper Wessex an old town of nine or ten thousand souls; the town may be called Stoke-Barehills. It stands with its gaunt, unattractive, ancient church, and its new red brick suburb, amid the open, chalk-soiled cornlands, near the middle of an imaginary triangle which has for its three corners the towns of Aldbrickham and Wintoncester, and the important military station of Quartershot. The great western highway from London passes through it, near a point where the road branches into two, merely to unite again some twenty miles further westward. Out of this bifurcation and reunion there used to arise among wheeled travellers, before railway days, endless questions of choice between the respective ways. But the question is now as dead as the scot-and-lot freeholder, the road waggoner, and the mail coachman who disputed it; and probably not a single inhabitant of Stoke-Barehills is now even aware that the two roads which part in his town ever meet again; for nobody now drives up and down the great western highway dally.

The most familiar object in Stoke-Barehills nowadays is its cemetery, standing among some picturesque mediæval ruins beside the railway; the modern chapels, modern tombs, and modern shrubs having a look of

intrusiveness amid the crumbling and ivy-covered decay of the ancient walls.

On a certain day, however, in the particular year which has now been reached by this narrative—the month being early June—the features of the town excite little interest, though many visitors arrive by the trains; some down-trains, in especial, nearly emptying themselves here. It is the week of the Great Wessex Agricultural Show, whose vast encampment spreads over the open outskirts of the town like the tents of an investing army. Rows of marquees, huts, booths, pavilions, arcades, porticoes—every kind of structure short of a permanent one—cover the green field for the space of a square half-mile, and the crowds of arrivals walk through the town in a mass, and make straight for the exhibition ground. The way thereto is lined with shows, stalls, and hawkers on foot, who make a market-place of the whole roadway to the show proper, and lead some of the improvident to lighten their pockets appreciably before they reach the gates of the exhibition they came expressly to see.

It is the popular day, the shilling day, and of the fast arriving excursion trains two from different directions enter the two contiguous railway stations at almost the same minute. One, like several which have preceded it, comes from London: the other by a cross-line from Aldbrickham; and from the London train alights a couple; a short, rather bloated man, with a globular stomach and small legs, resembling a top on two pegs, accompanied by a woman of rather fine figure and rather red face, dressed in black material, and covered with beads from bonnet to skirt, that made her glisten as if clad in chain-mail.

They cast their eyes around. The man was about to hire a fly as some others had done, when the woman said, “Don’t be in such a hurry, Cartlett. It isn’t so very far to the show-yard. Let us walk down the street into the place. Perhaps I can pick up a cheap bit of furniture or old china. It is years since I was here—never since I lived as a girl at Aldbrickham, and used to come across for a trip sometimes with my young man.”

“You can’t carry home furniture by excursion train,” said, in a thick voice, her husband, the landlord of The Three Horns, Lambeth; for they had both come down from the tavern in that “excellent, densely populated, gin-drinking neighbourhood,” which they had occupied ever since the advertisement in those words had attracted them thither. The configuration

of the landlord showed that he, too, like his customers, was becoming affected by the liquors he retailed.

“Then I’ll get it sent, if I see any worth having,” said his wife.

They sauntered on, but had barely entered the town when her attention was attracted by a young couple leading a child, who had come out from the second platform, into which the train from Aldbrickham had steamed. They were walking just in front of the inn-keepers.

“Sakes alive!” said Arabella.

“What’s that?” said Cartlett.

“Who do you think that couple is? Don’t you recognize the man?”

“No.”

“Not from the photos I have showed you?”

“Is it Fawley?”

“Yes—of course.”

“Oh, well. I suppose he was inclined for a little sight-seeing like the rest of us.” Cartlett’s interest in Jude whatever it might have been when Arabella was new to him, had plainly flagged since her charms and her idiosyncrasies, her supernumerary hair-coils, and her optional dimples, were becoming as a tale that is told.

Arabella so regulated her pace and her husband’s as to keep just in the rear of the other three, which it was easy to do without notice in such a stream of pedestrians. Her answers to Cartlett’s remarks were vague and slight, for the group in front interested her more than all the rest of the spectacle.

“They are rather fond of one another and of their child, seemingly,” continued the publican.

“*Their* child! ’Tisn’t their child,” said Arabella with a curious, sudden covetousness. “They haven’t been married long enough for it to be theirs!”

But although the smouldering maternal instinct was strong enough in her to lead her to quash her husband’s conjecture, she was not disposed on second thoughts to be more candid than necessary. Mr. Cartlett had no other idea than that his wife’s child by her first husband was with his grandparents at the Antipodes.

“Oh I suppose not. She looks quite a girl.”

“They are only lovers, or lately married, and have the child in charge, as anybody can see.”

All continued to move ahead. The unwitting Sue and Jude, the couple in question, had determined to make this agricultural exhibition within twenty miles of their own town the occasion of a day’s excursion which should combine exercise and amusement with instruction, at small expense. Not regardful of themselves alone, they had taken care to bring Father Time, to try every means of making him kindle and laugh like other boys, though he was to some extent a hindrance to the delightfully unreserved intercourse in their pilgrimages which they so much enjoyed. But they soon ceased to consider him an observer, and went along with that tender attention to each other which the shyest can scarcely disguise, and which these, among entire strangers as they imagined, took less trouble to disguise than they might have done at home. Sue, in her new summer clothes, flexible and light as a bird, her little thumb stuck up by the stem of her white cotton sunshade, went along as if she hardly touched ground, and as if a moderately strong puff of wind would float her over the hedge into the next field. Jude, in his light grey holiday-suit, was really proud of her companionship, not more for her external attractiveness than for her sympathetic words and ways. That complete mutual understanding, in which every glance and movement was as effectual as speech for conveying intelligence between them, made them almost the two parts of a single whole.

The pair with their charge passed through the turnstiles, Arabella and her husband not far behind them. When inside the enclosure the publican’s wife could see that the two ahead began to take trouble with the youngster, pointing out and explaining the many objects of interest, alive and dead; and a passing sadness would touch their faces at their every failure to disturb his indifference.

“How she sticks to him!” said Arabella. “Oh no—I fancy they are not married, or they wouldn’t be so much to one another as that... I wonder!”

“But I thought you said he did marry her?”

“I heard he was going to—that’s all, going to make another attempt, after putting it off once or twice... As far as they themselves are concerned they are the only two in the show. I should be ashamed of making myself so silly if I were he!”

“I don’t see as how there’s anything remarkable in their behaviour. I should never have noticed their being in love, if you hadn’t said so.”

“You never see anything,” she rejoined. Nevertheless Cartlett’s view of the lovers’ or married pair’s conduct was undoubtedly that of the general crowd, whose attention seemed to be in no way attracted by what Arabella’s sharpened vision discerned.

“He’s charmed by her as if she were some fairy!” continued Arabella. “See how he looks round at her, and lets his eyes rest on her. I am inclined to think that she don’t care for him quite so much as he does for her. She’s not a particular warm-hearted creature to my thinking, though she cares for him pretty middling much—as much as she’s able to; and he could make her heart ache a bit if he liked to try—which he’s too simple to do. There—now they are going across to the cart-horse sheds. Come along.”

“I don’t want to see the cart-horses. It is no business of ours to follow these two. If we have come to see the show let us see it in our own way, as they do in theirs.”

“Well—suppose we agree to meet somewhere in an hour’s time—say at that refreshment tent over there, and go about independent? Then you can look at what you choose to, and so can I.”

Cartlett was not loath to agree to this, and they parted—he proceeding to the shed where malting processes were being exhibited, and Arabella in the direction taken by Jude and Sue. Before, however, she had regained their wake a laughing face met her own, and she was confronted by Anny, the friend of her girlhood.

Anny had burst out in hearty laughter at the mere fact of the chance encounter. “I am still living down there,” she said, as soon as she was composed. “I am soon going to be married, but my intended couldn’t come up here to-day. But there’s lots of us come by excursion, though I’ve lost the rest of ’em for the present.”

“Have you met Jude and his young woman, or wife, or whatever she is? I saw ’em by now.”

“No. Not a glimpse of un for years!”

“Well, they are close by here somewhere. Yes—there they are—by that grey horse!”

“Oh, that’s his present young woman—wife did you say? Has he married again?”

“I don’t know.”

“She’s pretty, isn’t she!”

“Yes—nothing to complain of; or jump at. Not much to depend on, though; a slim, fidgety little thing like that.”

“He’s a nice-looking chap, too! You ought to ha’ stuck to un, Arabella.”

“I don’t know but I ought,” murmured she.

Anny laughed. “That’s you, Arabella! Always wanting another man than your own.”

“Well, and what woman don’t I should like to know? As for that body with him—she don’t know what love is—at least what I call love! I can see in her face she don’t.”

“And perhaps, Abby dear, you don’t know what she calls love.”

“I’m sure I don’t wish to! ... Ah—they are making for the art department. I should like to see some pictures myself. Suppose we go that way?— Why, if all Wessex isn’t here, I verily believe! There’s Dr. Vilbert. Haven’t seen him for years, and he’s not looking a day older than when I used to know him. How do you do, Physician? I was just saying that you don’t look a day older than when you knew me as a girl.”

“Simply the result of taking my own pills regular, ma’am. Only two and threepence a box—warranted efficacious by the Government stamp. Now let me advise you to purchase the same immunity from the ravages of time by following my example? Only two-and-three.”

The physician had produced a box from his waistcoat pocket, and Arabella was induced to make the purchase.

“At the same time,” continued he, when the pills were paid for, “you have the advantage of me, Mrs.— Surely not Mrs. Fawley, once Miss Donn, of the vicinity of Marygreen?”

“Yes. But Mrs. Cartlett now.”

“Ah—you lost him, then? Promising young fellow! A pupil of mine, you know. I taught him the dead languages. And believe me, he soon knew nearly as much as I.”



“I lost him; but not as you think,” said Arabella dryly. “The lawyers untied us. There he is, look, alive and lusty; along with that young woman, entering the art exhibition.”

“Ah—dear me! Fond of her, apparently.”

“They *say* they are cousins.”

“Cousinship is a great convenience to their feelings, I should say?”

“Yes. So her husband thought, no doubt, when he divorced her... Shall we look at the pictures, too?”

The trio followed across the green and entered. Jude and Sue, with the child, unaware of the interest they were exciting, had gone up to a model at one end of the building, which they regarded with considerable attention for a long while before they went on. Arabella and her friends came to it in due course, and the inscription it bore was: “Model of Cardinal College, Christminster; by J. Fawley and S. F. M. Bridehead.”

“Admiring their own work,” said Arabella. “How like Jude—always thinking of colleges and Christminster, instead of attending to his business!”

They glanced cursorily at the pictures, and proceeded to the band-stand. When they had stood a little while listening to the music of the military performers, Jude, Sue, and the child came up on the other side. Arabella did not care if they should recognize her; but they were too deeply absorbed in their own lives, as translated into emotion by the military band, to perceive her under her beaded veil. She walked round the outside of the listening throng, passing behind the lovers, whose movements had an unexpected fascination for her to-day. Scrutinizing them narrowly from the rear she noticed that Jude’s hand sought Sue’s as they stood, the two standing close together so as to conceal, as they supposed, this tacit expression of their mutual responsiveness.

“Silly fools—like two children!” Arabella whispered to herself morosely, as she rejoined her companions, with whom she preserved a preoccupied silence.

Anny meanwhile had jokingly remarked to Vilbert on Arabella’s hankering interest in her first husband.

“Now,” said the physician to Arabella, apart; “do you want anything such as this, Mrs. Cartlett? It is not compounded out of my regular

pharmacopœia, but I am sometimes asked for such a thing.” He produced a small phial of clear liquid. “A love-philtre, such as was used by the ancients with great effect. I found it out by study of their writings, and have never known it to fail.”

“What is it made of?” asked Arabella curiously.

“Well—a distillation of the juices of doves’ hearts—otherwise pigeons’—is one of the ingredients. It took nearly a hundred hearts to produce that small bottle full.”

“How do you get pigeons enough?”

“To tell a secret, I get a piece of rock-salt, of which pigeons are inordinately fond, and place it in a dovecot on my roof. In a few hours the birds come to it from all points of the compass—east, west, north, and south—and thus I secure as many as I require. You use the liquid by contriving that the desired man shall take about ten drops of it in his drink. But remember, all this is told you because I gather from your questions that you mean to be a purchaser. You must keep faith with me?”

“Very well—I don’t mind a bottle—to give some friend or other to try it on her young man.” She produced five shillings, the price asked, and slipped the phial in her capacious bosom. Saying presently that she was due at an appointment with her husband, she sauntered away towards the refreshment bar, Jude, his companion, and the child having gone on to the horticultural tent, where Arabella caught a glimpse of them standing before a group of roses in bloom.

She waited a few minutes observing them, and then proceeded to join her spouse with no very amiable sentiments. She found him seated on a stool by the bar, talking to one of the gaily dressed maids who had served him with spirits.

“I should think you had enough of this business at home!” Arabella remarked gloomily. “Surely you didn’t come fifty miles from your own bar to stick in another? Come, take me round the show, as other men do their wives! Dammy, one would think you were a young bachelor, with nobody to look after but yourself!”

“But we agreed to meet here; and what could I do but wait?”

“Well, now we have met, come along,” she returned, ready to quarrel with the sun for shining on her. And they left the tent together, this pot-

bellied man and florid woman, in the antipathetic, recriminatory mood of the average husband and wife of Christendom.

In the meantime the more exceptional couple and the boy still lingered in the pavilion of flowers—an enchanted palace to their appreciative taste—Sue’s usually pale cheeks reflecting the pink of the tinted roses at which she gazed; for the gay sights, the air, the music, and the excitement of a day’s outing with Jude had quickened her blood and made her eyes sparkle with vivacity. She adored roses, and what Arabella had witnessed was Sue detaining Jude almost against his will while she learnt the names of this variety and that, and put her face within an inch of their blooms to smell them.

“I should like to push my face quite into them—the dears!” she had said. “But I suppose it is against the rules to touch them—isn’t it, Jude?”

“Yes, you baby,” said he: and then playfully gave her a little push, so that her nose went among the petals.

“The policeman will be down on us, and I shall say it was my husband’s fault!”

Then she looked up at him, and smiled in a way that told so much to Arabella.

“Happy?” he murmured.

She nodded.

“Why? Because you have come to the great Wessex Agricultural Show—or because *we* have come?”

“You are always trying to make me confess to all sorts of absurdities. Because I am improving my mind, of course, by seeing all these steam-ploughs, and threshing-machines, and chaff-cutters, and cows, and pigs, and sheep.”

Jude was quite content with a baffle from his ever evasive companion. But when he had forgotten that he had put the question, and because he no longer wished for an answer, she went on: “I feel that we have returned to Greek joyousness, and have blinded ourselves to sickness and sorrow, and have forgotten what twenty-five centuries have taught the race since their time, as one of your Christminster luminaries says... There is one immediate shadow, however—only one.” And she looked at the aged child,

whom, though they had taken him to everything likely to attract a young intelligence, they had utterly failed to interest.

He knew what they were saying and thinking. “I am very, very sorry, Father and Mother,” he said. “But please don’t mind!—I can’t help it. I should like the flowers very very much, if I didn’t keep on thinking they’d be all withered in a few days!”

## VI

The unnoticed lives that the pair had hitherto led began, from the day of the suspended wedding onwards, to be observed and discussed by other persons than Arabella. The society of Spring Street and the neighbourhood generally did not understand, and probably could not have been made to understand, Sue and Jude's private minds, emotions, positions, and fears. The curious facts of a child coming to them unexpectedly, who called Jude "Father," and Sue "Mother," and a hitch in a marriage ceremony intended for quietness to be performed at a registrar's office, together with rumours of the undefended cases in the law-courts, bore only one translation to plain minds.

Little Time—for though he was formally turned into "Jude," the apt nickname stuck to him—would come home from school in the evening, and repeat inquiries and remarks that had been made to him by the other boys; and cause Sue, and Jude when he heard them, a great deal of pain and sadness.

The result was that shortly after the attempt at the registrar's the pair went off—to London it was believed—for several days, hiring somebody to look to the boy. When they came back they let it be understood indirectly, and with total indifference and weariness of mien, that they were legally married at last. Sue, who had previously been called Mrs. Bridehead now openly adopted the name of Mrs. Fawley. Her dull, cowed, and listless manner for days seemed to substantiate all this.

But the mistake (as it was called) of their going away so secretly to do the business, kept up much of the mystery of their lives; and they found that they made not such advances with their neighbours as they had expected to do thereby. A living mystery was not much less interesting than a dead scandal.

The baker's lad and the grocer's boy, who at first had used to lift their hats gallantly to Sue when they came to execute their errands, in these

days no longer took the trouble to render her that homage, and the neighbouring artisans' wives looked straight along the pavement when they encountered her.

Nobody molested them, it is true; but an oppressive atmosphere began to encircle their souls, particularly after their excursion to the show, as if that visit had brought some evil influence to bear on them. And their temperaments were precisely of a kind to suffer from this atmosphere, and to be indisposed to lighten it by vigorous and open statements. Their apparent attempt at reparation had come too late to be effective.

The headstone and epitaph orders fell off: and two or three months later, when autumn came, Jude perceived that he would have to return to journey-work again, a course all the more unfortunate just now, in that he had not as yet cleared off the debt he had unavoidably incurred in the payment of the law-costs of the previous year.

One evening he sat down to share the common meal with Sue and the child as usual. "I am thinking," he said to her, "that I'll hold on here no longer. The life suits us, certainly; but if we could get away to a place where we are unknown, we should be lighter hearted, and have a better chance. And so I am afraid we must break it up here, however awkward for you, poor dear!"

Sue was always much affected at a picture of herself as an object of pity, and she saddened.

"Well—I am not sorry," said she presently. "I am much depressed by the way they look at me here. And you have been keeping on this house and furniture entirely for me and the boy! You don't want it yourself, and the expense is unnecessary. But whatever we do, wherever we go, you won't take him away from me, Jude dear? I could not let him go now! The cloud upon his young mind makes him so pathetic to me; I do hope to lift it some day! And he loves me so. You won't take him away from me?"

"Certainly I won't, dear little girl! We'll get nice lodgings, wherever we go. I shall be moving about probably—getting a job here and a job there."

"I shall do something too, of course, till—till— Well, now I can't be useful in the lettering it behoves me to turn my hand to something else."

"Don't hurry about getting employment," he said regretfully. "I don't want you to do that. I wish you wouldn't, Sue. The boy and yourself are

enough for you to attend to.”

There was a knock at the door, and Jude answered it. Sue could hear the conversation:

“Is Mr. Fawley at home? ... Biles and Willis, the building contractors, sent me to know if you’ll undertake the relettering of the ten commandments in a little church they’ve been restoring lately in the country near here.”

Jude reflected, and said he could undertake it.

“It is not a very artistic job,” continued the messenger. “The clergyman is a very old-fashioned chap, and he has refused to let anything more be done to the church than cleaning and repairing.”

“Excellent old man!” said Sue to herself, who was sentimentally opposed to the horrors of over-restoration.

“The Ten Commandments are fixed to the east end,” the messenger went on, “and they want doing up with the rest of the wall there, since he won’t have them carted off as old materials belonging to the contractor in the usual way of the trade.”

A bargain as to terms was struck, and Jude came indoors. “There, you see,” he said cheerfully. “One more job yet, at any rate, and you can help in it—at least you can try. We shall have all the church to ourselves, as the rest of the work is finished.”

Next day Jude went out to the church, which was only two miles off. He found that what the contractor’s clerk had said was true. The tables of the Jewish law towered sternly over the utensils of Christian grace, as the chief ornament of the chancel end, in the fine dry style of the last century. And as their framework was constructed of ornamental plaster they could not be taken down for repair. A portion, crumbled by damp, required renewal; and when this had been done, and the whole cleansed, he began to renew the lettering. On the second morning Sue came to see what assistance she could render, and also because they liked to be together.

The silence and emptiness of the building gave her confidence, and, standing on a safe low platform erected by Jude, which she was nevertheless timid at mounting, she began painting in the letters of the first Table while he set about mending a portion of the second. She was quite pleased at her powers; she had acquired them in the days she painted

illuminated texts for the church-fitting shop at Christminster. Nobody seemed likely to disturb them; and the pleasant twitter of birds, and rustle of October leafage, came in through an open window, and mingled with their talk.

They were not, however, to be left thus snug and peaceful for long. About half-past twelve there came footsteps on the gravel without. The old vicar and his churchwarden entered, and, coming up to see what was being done, seemed surprised to discover that a young woman was assisting. They passed on into an aisle, at which time the door again opened, and another figure entered—a small one, that of little Time, who was crying. Sue had told him where he might find her between school-hours, if he wished. She came down from her perch, and said, “What’s the matter, my dear?”

“I couldn’t stay to eat my dinner in school, because they said—” He described how some boys had taunted him about his nominal mother, and Sue, grieved, expressed her indignation to Jude aloft. The child went into the churchyard, and Sue returned to her work. Meanwhile the door had opened again, and there shuffled in with a businesslike air the white-aproned woman who cleaned the church. Sue recognized her as one who had friends in Spring Street, whom she visited. The church-cleaner looked at Sue, gaped, and lifted her hands; she had evidently recognized Jude’s companion as the latter had recognized her. Next came two ladies, and after talking to the charwoman they also moved forward, and as Sue stood reaching upward, watched her hand tracing the letters, and critically regarded her person in relief against the white wall, till she grew so nervous that she trembled visibly.

They went back to where the others were standing, talking in undertones: and one said—Sue could not hear which—“She’s his wife, I suppose?”

“Some say Yes: some say No,” was the reply from the charwoman.

“Not? Then she ought to be, or somebody’s—that’s very clear!”

“They’ve only been married a very few weeks, whether or no.”

“A strange pair to be painting the Two Tables! I wonder Biles and Willis could think of such a thing as hiring those!”



The churchwarden supposed that Biles and Willis knew of nothing wrong, and then the other, who had been talking to the old woman, explained what she meant by calling them strange people.

The probable drift of the subdued conversation which followed was made plain by the churchwarden breaking into an anecdote, in a voice that everybody in the church could hear, though obviously suggested by the present situation:

“Well, now, it is a curious thing, but my grandfather told me a strange tale of a most immoral case that happened at the painting of the Commandments in a church out by Gaymead—which is quite within a walk of this one. In them days Commandments were mostly done in gilt letters on a black ground, and that’s how they were out where I say, before the owld church was rebuilt. It must have been somewhere about a hundred years ago that them Commandments wanted doing up just as ours do here, and they had to get men from Aldbrickham to do ’em. Now they wished to get the job finished by a particular Sunday, so the men had to work late Saturday night, against their will, for overtime was not paid then as ’tis now. There was no true religion in the country at that date, neither among pa’sons, clerks, nor people, and to keep the men up to their work the vicar had to let ’em have plenty of drink during the afternoon. As evening drawed on they sent for some more themselves; rum, by all account. It got later and later, and they got more and more fuddled, till at last they went a-putting their rum-bottle and rummers upon the communion table, and drawed up a trestle or two, and sate round comfortable and poured out again right hearty bumpers. No sooner had they tossed off their glasses than, so the story goes, they fell down senseless, one and all. How long they bode so they didn’t know, but when they came to themselves there was a terrible thunder-storm a-raging, and they seemed to see in the gloom a dark figure with very thin legs and a curious voot, a-standing on the ladder, and finishing their work. When it got daylight they could see that the work was really finished, and couldn’t at all mind finishing it themselves. They went home, and the next thing they heard was that a great scandal had been caused in the church that Sunday morning, for when the people came and service began, all saw that the Ten Commandments wez painted with the ‘nots’ left out. Decent people wouldn’t attend service there for a long time, and the Bishop had to be sent for to reconsecrate the church. That’s the tradition as I used to hear

it as a child. You must take it for what it is wo'th, but this case to-day has reminded me o't, as I say."

The visitors gave one more glance, as if to see whether Jude and Sue had left the "nots" out likewise, and then severally left the church, even the old woman at last. Sue and Jude, who had not stopped working, sent back the child to school, and remained without speaking; till, looking at her narrowly, he found she had been crying silently.

"Never mind, comrade!" he said. "I know what it is!"

"I can't *bear* that they, and everybody, should think people wicked because they may have chosen to live their own way! It is really these opinions that make the best intentioned people reckless, and actually become immoral!"

"Never be cast down! It was only a funny story."

"Ah, but we suggested it! I am afraid I have done you mischief, Jude, instead of helping you by coming!"

To have suggested such a story was certainly not very exhilarating, in a serious view of their position. However, in a few minutes Sue seemed to see that their position this morning had a ludicrous side, and wiping her eyes she laughed.

"It is droll, after all," she said, "that we two, of all people, with our queer history, should happen to be here painting the Ten Commandments! You a reprobate, and I—in my condition... O dear!" ... And with her hand over her eyes she laughed again silently and intermittently, till she was quite weak.

"That's better," said Jude gaily. "Now we are right again, aren't we, little girl!"

"Oh but it is serious, all the same!" she sighed as she took up the brush and righted herself. "But do you see they don't think we are married? They *won't* believe it! It is extraordinary!"

"I don't care whether they think so or not," said Jude. "I shan't take any more trouble to make them."

They sat down to lunch—which they had brought with them not to hinder time—and having eaten it, were about to set to work anew when a man entered the church, and Jude recognized in him the contractor Willis. He beckoned to Jude, and spoke to him apart.

“Here—I’ve just had a complaint about this,” he said, with rather breathless awkwardness. “I don’t wish to go into the matter—as of course I didn’t know what was going on—but I am afraid I must ask you and her to leave off, and let somebody else finish this! It is best, to avoid all unpleasantness. I’ll pay you for the week, all the same.”

Jude was too independent to make any fuss; and the contractor paid him, and left. Jude picked up his tools, and Sue cleansed her brush. Then their eyes met.

“How could we be so simple as to suppose we might do this!” said she, dropping to her tragic note. “Of course we ought not—I ought not—to have come!”

“I had no idea that anybody was going to intrude into such a lonely place and see us!” Jude returned. “Well, it can’t be helped, dear; and of course I wouldn’t wish to injure Willis’s trade-connection by staying.” They sat down passively for a few minutes, proceeded out of the church, and overtaking the boy pursued their thoughtful way to Aldbrickham.

Fawley had still a pretty zeal in the cause of education, and, as was natural with his experiences, he was active in furthering “equality of opportunity” by any humble means open to him. He had joined an Artizans’ Mutual Improvement Society established in the town about the time of his arrival there; its members being young men of all creeds and denominations, including Churchmen, Congregationalists, Baptists, Unitarians, Positivists, and others—Agnostics had scarcely been heard of at this time—their one common wish to enlarge their minds forming a sufficiently close bond of union. The subscription was small, and the room homely; and Jude’s activity, uncustomary acquirements, and, above all, singular intuition on what to read and how to set about it—begotten of his years of struggle against malignant stars—had led to his being placed on the committee.

A few evenings after his dismissal from the church repairs, and before he had obtained any more work to do, he went to attend a meeting of the aforesaid committee. It was late when he arrived: all the others had come, and as he entered they looked dubiously at him, and hardly uttered a word of greeting. He guessed that something bearing on himself had been either discussed or mooted. Some ordinary business was transacted, and it was disclosed that the number of subscriptions had shown a sudden falling off

for that quarter. One member—a really well-meaning and upright man—began speaking in enigmas about certain possible causes: that it behoved them to look well into their constitution; for if the committee were not respected, and had not at least, in their differences, a common standard of *conduct*, they would bring the institution to the ground. Nothing further was said in Jude's presence, but he knew what this meant; and turning to the table wrote a note resigning his office there and then.

Thus the supersensitive couple were more and more impelled to go away. And then bills were sent in, and the question arose, what could Jude do with his great-aunt's heavy old furniture, if he left the town to travel he knew not whither? This, and the necessity of ready money, compelled him to decide on an auction, much as he would have preferred to keep the venerable goods.

The day of the sale came on; and Sue for the last time cooked her own, the child's, and Jude's breakfast in the little house he had furnished. It chanced to be a wet day; moreover Sue was unwell, and not wishing to desert her poor Jude in such gloomy circumstances, for he was compelled to stay awhile, she acted on the suggestion of the auctioneer's man, and ensconced herself in an upper room, which could be emptied of its effects, and so kept closed to the bidders. Here Jude discovered her; and with the child, and their few trunks, baskets, and bundles, and two chairs and a table that were not in the sale, the two sat in meditative talk.

Footsteps began stamping up and down the bare stairs, the comers inspecting the goods, some of which were of so quaint and ancient a make as to acquire an adventitious value as art. Their door was tried once or twice, and to guard themselves against intrusion Jude wrote "Private" on a scrap of paper, and stuck it upon the panel.

They soon found that, instead of the furniture, their own personal histories and past conduct began to be discussed to an unexpected and intolerable extent by the intending bidders. It was not till now that they really discovered what a fools' paradise of supposed unrecognition they had been living in of late. Sue silently took her companion's hand, and with eyes on each other they heard these passing remarks—the quaint and mysterious personality of Father Time being a subject which formed a large ingredient in the hints and innuendoes. At length the auction began in the room below, whence they could hear each familiar article knocked

down, the highly prized ones cheaply, the unconsidered at an unexpected price.

“People don’t understand us,” he sighed heavily. “I am glad we have decided to go.”

“The question is, where to?”

“It ought to be to London. There one can live as one chooses.”

“No—not London, dear! I know it well. We should be unhappy there.”

“Why?”

“Can’t you think?”

“Because Arabella is there?”

“That’s the chief reason.”

“But in the country I shall always be uneasy lest there should be some more of our late experience. And I don’t care to lessen it by explaining, for one thing, all about the boy’s history. To cut him off from his past I have determined to keep silence. I am sickened of ecclesiastical work now; and I shouldn’t like to accept it, if offered me!”

“You ought to have learnt classic. Gothic is barbaric art, after all. Pugin was wrong, and Wren was right. Remember the interior of Christminster Cathedral—almost the first place in which we looked in each other’s faces. Under the picturesqueness of those Norman details one can see the grotesque childishness of uncouth people trying to imitate the vanished Roman forms, remembered by dim tradition only.”

“Yes—you have half-converted me to that view by what you have said before. But one can work, and despise what one does. I must do something, if not church-gothic.”

“I wish we could both follow an occupation in which personal circumstances don’t count,” she said, smiling up wistfully. “I am as disqualified for teaching as you are for ecclesiastical art. You must fall back upon railway stations, bridges, theatres, music-halls, hotels—everything that has no connection with conduct.”

“I am not skilled in those... I ought to take to bread-baking. I grew up in the baking business with aunt, you know. But even a baker must be conventional, to get customers.”

“Unless he keeps a cake and gingerbread stall at markets and fairs, where people are gloriously indifferent to everything except the quality of the goods.”

Their thoughts were diverted by the voice of the auctioneer: “Now this antique oak settle—a unique example of old English furniture, worthy the attention of all collectors!”

“That was my great-grandfather’s,” said Jude. “I wish we could have kept the poor old thing!”

One by one the articles went, and the afternoon passed away. Jude and the other two were getting tired and hungry, but after the conversation they had heard they were shy of going out while the purchasers were in their line of retreat. However, the later lots drew on, and it became necessary to emerge into the rain soon, to take on Sue’s things to their temporary lodging.

“Now the next lot: two pairs of pigeons, all alive and plump—a nice pie for somebody for next Sunday’s dinner!”

The impending sale of these birds had been the most trying suspense of the whole afternoon. They were Sue’s pets, and when it was found that they could not possibly be kept, more sadness was caused than by parting from all the furniture. Sue tried to think away her tears as she heard the trifling sum that her dears were deemed to be worth advanced by small stages to the price at which they were finally knocked down. The purchaser was a neighbouring poulterer, and they were unquestionably doomed to die before the next market day.

Noting her dissembled distress Jude kissed her, and said it was time to go and see if the lodgings were ready. He would go on with the boy, and fetch her soon.

When she was left alone she waited patiently, but Jude did not come back. At last she started, the coast being clear, and on passing the poulterer’s shop, not far off, she saw her pigeons in a hamper by the door. An emotion at sight of them, assisted by the growing dusk of evening, caused her to act on impulse, and first looking around her quickly, she pulled out the peg which fastened down the cover, and went on. The cover was lifted from within, and the pigeons flew away with a clatter that brought the chagrined poulterer cursing and swearing to the door.

Sue reached the lodging trembling, and found Jude and the boy making it comfortable for her. "Do the buyers pay before they bring away the things?" she asked breathlessly.

"Yes, I think. Why?"

"Because, then, I've done such a wicked thing!" And she explained, in bitter contrition.

"I shall have to pay the poulterer for them, if he doesn't catch them," said Jude. "But never mind. Don't fret about it, dear."

"It was so foolish of me! Oh why should Nature's law be mutual butchery!"

"Is it so, Mother?" asked the boy intently.

"Yes!" said Sue vehemently.

"Well, they must take their chance, now, poor things," said Jude. "As soon as the sale-account is wound up, and our bills paid, we go."

"Where do we go to?" asked Time, in suspense.

"We must sail under sealed orders, that nobody may trace us... We mustn't go to Alfredston, or to Melchester, or to Shaston, or to Christminster. Apart from those we may go anywhere."

"Why mustn't we go there, Father?"

"Because of a cloud that has gathered over us; though 'we have wronged no man, corrupted no man, defrauded no man!' Though perhaps we have 'done that which was right in our own eyes.'"

## VII

From that week Jude Fawley and Sue walked no more in the town of Aldbrickham.

Whither they had gone nobody knew, chiefly because nobody cared to know. Any one sufficiently curious to trace the steps of such an obscure pair might have discovered without great trouble that they had taken advantage of his adaptive craftsmanship to enter on a shifting, almost nomadic, life, which was not without its pleasantness for a time.

Wherever Jude heard of free-stone work to be done, thither he went, choosing by preference places remote from his old haunts and Sue's. He laboured at a job, long or briefly, till it was finished; and then moved on.

Two whole years and a half passed thus. Sometimes he might have been found shaping the mullions of a country mansion, sometimes setting the parapet of a town-hall, sometimes ashlaring an hotel at Sandbourne, sometimes a museum at Casterbridge, sometimes as far down as Exonbury, sometimes at Stoke-Barehills. Later still he was at Kennetbridge, a thriving town not more than a dozen miles south of Marygreen, this being his nearest approach to the village where he was known; for he had a sensitive dread of being questioned as to his life and fortunes by those who had been acquainted with him during his ardent young manhood of study and promise, and his brief and unhappy married life at that time.

At some of these places he would be detained for months, at others only a few weeks. His curious and sudden antipathy to ecclesiastical work, both episcopal and nonconformist, which had risen in him when suffering under a smarting sense of misconception, remained with him in cold blood, less from any fear of renewed censure than from an ultra-conscientiousness which would not allow him to seek a living out of those who would disapprove of his ways; also, too, from a sense of inconsistency between his former dogmas and his present practice, hardly



a shred of the beliefs with which he had first gone up to Christminster now remaining with him. He was mentally approaching the position which Sue had occupied when he first met her.

On a Saturday evening in May, nearly three years after Arabella's recognition of Sue and himself at the agricultural show, some of those who there encountered each other met again.

It was the spring fair at Kennetbridge, and, though this ancient trade-meeting had much dwindled from its dimensions of former times, the long straight street of the borough presented a lively scene about midday. At this hour a light trap, among other vehicles, was driven into the town by the north road, and up to the door of a temperance inn. There alighted two women, one the driver, an ordinary country person, the other a finely built figure in the deep mourning of a widow. Her sombre suit, of pronounced cut, caused her to appear a little out of place in the medley and bustle of a provincial fair.

"I will just find out where it is, Anny," said the widow-lady to her companion, when the horse and cart had been taken by a man who came forward: "and then I'll come back, and meet you here; and we'll go in and have something to eat and drink. I begin to feel quite a sinking."

"With all my heart," said the other. "Though I would sooner have put up at the Chequers or The Jack. You can't get much at these temperance houses."

"Now, don't you give way to gluttonous desires, my child," said the woman in weeds reprovingly. "This is the proper place. Very well: we'll meet in half an hour, unless you come with me to find out where the site of the new chapel is?"

"I don't care to. You can tell me."

The companions then went their several ways, the one in crape walking firmly along with a mien of disconnection from her miscellaneous surroundings. Making inquiries she came to a hoarding, within which were excavations denoting the foundations of a building; and on the boards without one or two large posters announcing that the foundation-stone of the chapel about to be erected would be laid that afternoon at three o'clock by a London preacher of great popularity among his body.

Having ascertained thus much the immensely weeded widow retraced her steps, and gave herself leisure to observe the movements of the fair. By and by her attention was arrested by a little stall of cakes and ginger-breads, standing between the more pretentious erections of trestles and canvas. It was covered with an immaculate cloth, and tended by a young woman apparently unused to the business, she being accompanied by a boy with an octogenarian face, who assisted her.

“Upon my—senses!” murmured the widow to herself. “His wife Sue—if she is so!” She drew nearer to the stall. “How do you do, Mrs. Fawley?” she said blandly.

Sue changed colour and recognized Arabella through the crape veil.

“How are you, Mrs. Cartlett?” she said stiffly. And then perceiving Arabella’s garb her voice grew sympathetic in spite of herself. “What?—you have lost—”

“My poor husband. Yes. He died suddenly, six weeks ago, leaving me none too well off, though he was a kind husband to me. But whatever profit there is in public-house keeping goes to them that brew the liquors, and not to them that retail ’em... And you, my little old man! You don’t know me, I expect?”

“Yes, I do. You be the woman I thought wer my mother for a bit, till I found you wasn’t,” replied Father Time, who had learned to use the Wessex tongue quite naturally by now.

“All right. Never mind. I am a friend.”

“Juey,” said Sue suddenly, “go down to the station platform with this tray—there’s another train coming in, I think.”

When he was gone Arabella continued: “He’ll never be a beauty, will he, poor chap! Does he know I am his mother really?”

“No. He thinks there is some mystery about his parentage—that’s all. Jude is going to tell him when he is a little older.”

“But how do you come to be doing this? I am surprised.”

“It is only a temporary occupation—a fancy of ours while we are in a difficulty.”

“Then you are living with him still?”

“Yes.”

“Married?”

“Of course.”

“Any children?”

“Two.”

“And another coming soon, I see.”

Sue writhed under the hard and direct questioning, and her tender little mouth began to quiver.

“Lord—I mean goodness gracious—what is there to cry about? Some folks would be proud enough!”

“It is not that I am ashamed—not as you think! But it seems such a terribly tragic thing to bring beings into the world—so presumptuous—that I question my right to do it sometimes!”

“Take it easy, my dear... But you don’t tell me why you do such a thing as this? Jude used to be a proud sort of chap—above any business almost, leave alone keeping a standing.”

“Perhaps my husband has altered a little since then. I am sure he is not proud now!” And Sue’s lips quivered again. “I am doing this because he caught a chill early in the year while putting up some stonework of a music-hall, at Quartershot, which he had to do in the rain, the work having to be executed by a fixed day. He is better than he was; but it has been a long, weary time! We have had an old widow friend with us to help us through it; but she’s leaving soon.”

“Well, I am respectable too, thank God, and of a serious way of thinking since my loss. Why did you choose to sell gingerbreads?”

“That’s a pure accident. He was brought up to the baking business, and it occurred to him to try his hand at these, which he can make without coming out of doors. We call them Christminster cakes. They are a great success.”

“I never saw any like ’em. Why, they are windows and towers, and pinnacles! And upon my word they are very nice.” She had helped herself, and was unceremoniously munching one of the cakes.

“Yes. They are reminiscences of the Christminster Colleges. Traceried windows, and cloisters, you see. It was a whim of his to do them in pastry.”

“Still harping on Christminster—even in his cakes!” laughed Arabella. “Just like Jude. A ruling passion. What a queer fellow he is, and always will be!”

Sue sighed, and she looked her distress at hearing him criticized.

“Don’t you think he is? Come now; you do, though you are so fond of him!”

“Of course Christminster is a sort of fixed vision with him, which I suppose he’ll never be cured of believing in. He still thinks it a great centre of high and fearless thought, instead of what it is, a nest of commonplace schoolmasters whose characteristic is timid obsequiousness to tradition.”

Arabella was quizzing Sue with more regard of how she was speaking than of what she was saying. “How odd to hear a woman selling cakes talk like that!” she said. “Why don’t you go back to school-keeping?”

She shook her head. “They won’t have me.”

“Because of the divorce, I suppose?”

“That and other things. And there is no reason to wish it. We gave up all ambition, and were never so happy in our lives till his illness came.”

“Where are you living?”

“I don’t care to say.”

“Here in Kennetbridge?”

Sue’s manner showed Arabella that her random guess was right.

“Here comes the boy back again,” continued Arabella. “My boy and Jude’s!”

Sue’s eyes darted a spark. “You needn’t throw that in my face!” she cried.

“Very well—though I half-feel as if I should like to have him with me! ... But Lord, I don’t want to take him from ’ee—ever I should sin to speak so profane—though I should think you must have enough of your own! He’s in very good hands, that I know; and I am not the woman to find fault with what the Lord has ordained. I’ve reached a more resigned frame of mind.”

“Indeed! I wish I had been able to do so.”

“You should try,” replied the widow, from the serene heights of a soul conscious not only of spiritual but of social superiority. “I make no boast of my awakening, but I’m not what I was. After Cartlett’s death I was passing the chapel in the street next ours, and went into it for shelter from a shower of rain. I felt a need of some sort of support under my loss, and, as ’twas righter than gin, I took to going there regular, and found it a great comfort. But I’ve left London now, you know, and at present I am living at Alfredston, with my friend Anny, to be near my own old country. I’m not come here to the fair to-day. There’s to be the foundation-stone of a new chapel laid this afternoon by a popular London preacher, and I drove over with Anny. Now I must go back to meet her.”

Then Arabella wished Sue good-bye, and went on.

## VIII

In the afternoon Sue and the other people bustling about Kennetbridge fair could hear singing inside the placarded hoarding farther down the street. Those who peeped through the opening saw a crowd of persons in broadcloth, with hymn-books in their hands, standing round the excavations for the new chapel-walls. Arabella Cartlett and her weeds stood among them. She had a clear, powerful voice, which could be distinctly heard with the rest, rising and falling to the tune, her inflated bosom being also seen doing likewise.

It was two hours later on the same day that Anny and Mrs. Cartlett, having had tea at the Temperance Hotel, started on their return journey across the high and open country which stretches between Kennetbridge and Alfredston. Arabella was in a thoughtful mood; but her thoughts were not of the new chapel, as Anny at first surmised.

“No—it is something else,” at last said Arabella sullenly. “I came here to-day never thinking of anybody but poor Cartlett, or of anything but spreading the Gospel by means of this new tabernacle they’ve begun this afternoon. But something has happened to turn my mind another way quite. Anny, I’ve heard of un again, and I’ve seen *her!*”

“Who?”

“I’ve heard of Jude, and I’ve seen his wife. And ever since, do what I will, and though I sung the hymns wi’ all my strength, I have not been able to help thinking about ’n; which I’ve no right to do as a chapel member.”

“Can’t ye fix your mind upon what was said by the London preacher to-day, and try to get rid of your wandering fancies that way?”

“I do. But my wicked heart will ramble off in spite of myself!”

“Well—I know what it is to have a wanton mind o’ my own, too! If you on’y knew what I do dream sometimes o’ nights quite against my wishes, you’d say I had my struggles!” (Anny, too, had grown rather serious of late, her lover having jilted her.)

“What shall I do about it?” urged Arabella morbidly.

“You could take a lock of your late-lost husband’s hair, and have it made into a mourning brooch, and look at it every hour of the day.”

“I haven’t a morsel!—and if I had ’twould be no good... After all that’s said about the comforts of this religion, I wish I had Jude back again!”

“You must fight valiant against the feeling, since he’s another’s. And I’ve heard that another good thing for it, when it afflicts volupshious widows, is to go to your husband’s grave in the dusk of evening, and stand a long while a-bowed down.”

“Pooh! I know as well as you what I should do; only I don’t do it!”

They drove in silence along the straight road till they were within the horizon of Marygreen, which lay not far to the left of their route. They came to the junction of the highway and the cross-lane leading to that village, whose church-tower could be seen athwart the hollow. When they got yet farther on, and were passing the lonely house in which Arabella and Jude had lived during the first months of their marriage, and where the pig-killing had taken place, she could control herself no longer.

“He’s more mine than hers!” she burst out. “What right has she to him, I should like to know! I’d take him from her if I could!”

“Fie, Abby! And your husband only six weeks gone! Pray against it!”

“Be damned if I do! Feelings are feelings! I won’t be a creeping hypocrite any longer—so there!”

Arabella had hastily drawn from her pocket a bundle of tracts which she had brought with her to distribute at the fair, and of which she had given away several. As she spoke she flung the whole remainder of the packet into the hedge. “I’ve tried that sort o’ physic and have failed wi’ it. I must be as I was born!”

“Hush! You be excited, dear! Now you come along home quiet, and have a cup of tea, and don’t let us talk about un no more. We won’t come out this road again, as it leads to where he is, because it inflames ’ee so. You’ll be all right again soon.”

Arabella did calm herself down by degrees; and they crossed the ridge-way. When they began to descend the long, straight hill, they saw plodding along in front of them an elderly man of spare stature and thoughtful gait. In his hand he carried a basket; and there was a touch of slovenliness in his

attire, together with that indefinable something in his whole appearance which suggested one who was his own housekeeper, purveyor, confidant, and friend, through possessing nobody else at all in the world to act in those capacities for him. The remainder of the journey was down-hill, and guessing him to be going to Alfredston they offered him a lift, which he accepted.

Arabella looked at him, and looked again, till at length she spoke. "If I don't mistake I am talking to Mr. Phillotson?"

The wayfarer faced round and regarded her in turn. "Yes; my name is Phillotson," he said. "But I don't recognize you, ma'am."

"I remember you well enough when you used to be schoolmaster out at Marygreen, and I one of your scholars. I used to walk up there from Cresscombe every day, because we had only a mistress down at our place, and you taught better. But you wouldn't remember me as I should you?—Arabella Donn."

He shook his head. "No," he said politely, "I don't recall the name. And I should hardly recognize in your present portly self the slim school child no doubt you were then."

"Well, I always had plenty of flesh on my bones. However, I am staying down here with some friends at present. You know, I suppose, who I married?"

"No."

"Jude Fawley—also a scholar of yours—at least a night scholar—for some little time, I think? And known to you afterwards, if I am not mistaken."

"Dear me, dear me," said Phillotson, starting out of his stiffness. "*You* Fawley's wife? To be sure—he had a wife! And he—I understood—"

"Divorced her—as you did yours—perhaps for better reasons."

"Indeed?"

"Well—he med have been right in doing it—right for both; for I soon married again, and all went pretty straight till my husband died lately. But you—you were decidedly wrong!"

"No," said Phillotson, with sudden testiness. "I would rather not talk of this, but—I am convinced I did only what was right, and just, and moral. I



have suffered for my act and opinions, but I hold to them; though her loss was a loss to me in more ways than one!”

“You lost your school and good income through her, did you not?”

“I don’t care to talk of it. I have recently come back here—to Marygreen. I mean.”

“You are keeping the school there again, just as formerly?”

The pressure of a sadness that would out unsealed him. “I am there,” he replied. “Just as formerly, no. Merely on sufferance. It was a last resource—a small thing to return to after my move upwards, and my long indulged hopes—a returning to zero, with all its humiliations. But it is a refuge. I like the seclusion of the place, and the vicar having known me before my so-called eccentric conduct towards my wife had ruined my reputation as a schoolmaster, he accepted my services when all other schools were closed against me. However, although I take fifty pounds a year here after taking above two hundred elsewhere, I prefer it to running the risk of having my old domestic experiences raked up against me, as I should do if I tried to make a move.”

“Right you are. A contented mind is a continual feast. She has done no better.”

“She is not doing well, you mean?”

“I met her by accident at Kennetbridge this very day, and she is anything but thriving. Her husband is ill, and she anxious. You made a fool of a mistake about her, I tell ’ee again, and the harm you did yourself by dirtying your own nest serves you right, excusing the liberty.”

“How?”

“She was innocent.”

“But nonsense! They did not even defend the case!”

“That was because they didn’t care to. She was quite innocent of what obtained you your freedom, at the time you obtained it. I saw her just afterwards, and proved it to myself completely by talking to her.”

Phillotson grasped the edge of the spring-cart, and appeared to be much stressed and worried by the information. “Still—she wanted to go,” he said.

“Yes. But you shouldn’t have let her. That’s the only way with these fanciful women that chaw high—innocent or guilty. She’d have come round in time. We all do! Custom does it! It’s all the same in the end! However, I think she’s fond of her man still—whatever he med be of her. You were too quick about her. *I* shouldn’t have let her go! I should have kept her chained on—her spirit for kicking would have been broke soon enough! There’s nothing like bondage and a stone-deaf taskmaster for taming us women. Besides, you’ve got the laws on your side. Moses knew. Don’t you call to mind what he says?”

“Not for the moment, ma’am, I regret to say.”

“Call yourself a schoolmaster! I used to think o’t when they read it in church, and I was carrying on a bit. ‘Then shall the man be guiltless; but the woman shall bear her iniquity.’ Damn rough on us women; but we must grin and put up wi’ it! Haw haw! Well; she’s got her deserts now.”

“Yes,” said Phillotson, with biting sadness. “Cruelty is the law pervading all nature and society; and we can’t get out of it if we would!”

“Well—don’t you forget to try it next time, old man.”

“I cannot answer you, madam. I have never known much of womankind.”

They had now reached the low levels bordering Alfredston, and passing through the outskirts approached a mill, to which Phillotson said his errand led him; whereupon they drew up, and he alighted, bidding them good-night in a preoccupied mood.

In the meantime Sue, though remarkably successful in her cake-selling experiment at Kennetbridge fair, had lost the temporary brightness which had begun to sit upon her sadness on account of that success. When all her “Christminster” cakes had been disposed of she took upon her arm the empty basket, and the cloth which had covered the standing she had hired, and giving the other things to the boy left the street with him. They followed a lane to a distance of half a mile, till they met an old woman carrying a child in short clothes, and leading a toddler in the other hand.

Sue kissed the children, and said, “How is he now?”

“Still better!” returned Mrs. Edlin cheerfully. “Before you are upstairs again your husband will be well enough—don’t ’ee trouble.”

They turned, and came to some old, dun-tiled cottages with gardens and fruit-trees. Into one of these they entered by lifting the latch without knocking, and were at once in the general living-room. Here they greeted Jude, who was sitting in an arm-chair, the increased delicacy of his normally delicate features, and the childishly expectant look in his eyes, being alone sufficient to show that he had been passing through a severe illness.

“What—you have sold them all?” he said, a gleam of interest lighting up his face.

“Yes. Arcades, gables, east windows and all.” She told him the pecuniary results, and then hesitated. At last, when they were left alone, she informed him of the unexpected meeting with Arabella, and the latter’s widowhood.

Jude was discomposed. “What—is she living here?” he said.

“No; at Alfredston,” said Sue.

Jude’s countenance remained clouded. “I thought I had better tell you?” she continued, kissing him anxiously.

“Yes... Dear me! Arabella not in the depths of London, but down here! It is only a little over a dozen miles across the country to Alfredston. What is she doing there?”

She told him all she knew. “She has taken to chapel-going,” Sue added; “and talks accordingly.”

“Well,” said Jude, “perhaps it is for the best that we have almost decided to move on. I feel much better to-day, and shall be well enough to leave in a week or two. Then Mrs. Edlin can go home again—dear faithful old soul—the only friend we have in the world!”

“Where do you think to go to?” Sue asked, a troublousness in her tones.

Then Jude confessed what was in his mind. He said it would surprise her, perhaps, after his having resolutely avoided all the old places for so long. But one thing and another had made him think a great deal of Christminster lately, and, if she didn’t mind, he would like to go back there. Why should they care if they were known? It was oversensitive of them to mind so much. They could go on selling cakes there, for that matter, if he couldn’t work. He had no sense of shame at mere poverty;

and perhaps he would be as strong as ever soon, and able to set up stone-cutting for himself there.

“Why should you care so much for Christminster?” she said pensively. “Christminster cares nothing for you, poor dear!”

“Well, I do, I can’t help it. I love the place—although I know how it hates all men like me—the so-called self-taught—how it scorns our laboured acquisitions, when it should be the first to respect them; how it sneers at our false quantities and mispronunciations, when it should say, I see you want help, my poor friend! ... Nevertheless, it is the centre of the universe to me, because of my early dream: and nothing can alter it. Perhaps it will soon wake up, and be generous. I pray so! ... I should like to go back to live there—perhaps to die there! In two or three weeks I might, I think. It will then be June, and I should like to be there by a particular day.”

His hope that he was recovering proved so far well grounded that in three weeks they had arrived in the city of many memories; were actually treading its pavements, receiving the reflection of the sunshine from its wasting walls.

Part Sixth  
AT CHRISTMINSTER AGAIN

*“... And she humbled her body greatly, and all the places of her joy she filled with her torn hair.”*—ESTHER (Apoc.).

*“There are two who decline, a woman and I,  
And enjoy our death in the darkness here.”*  
—R. BROWNING.

## I

On their arrival the station was lively with straw-hatted young men, welcoming young girls who bore a remarkable family likeness to their welcomers, and who were dressed up in the brightest and lightest of raiment.

“The place seems gay,” said Sue. “Why—it is Remembrance Day!—Jude—how sly of you—you came to-day on purpose!”

“Yes,” said Jude quietly, as he took charge of the small child, and told Arabella’s boy to keep close to them, Sue attending to their own eldest. “I thought we might as well come to-day as on any other.”

“But I am afraid it will depress you!” she said, looking anxiously at him up and down.

“Oh, I mustn’t let it interfere with our business; and we have a good deal to do before we shall be settled here. The first thing is lodgings.”

Having left their luggage and his tools at the station they proceeded on foot up the familiar street, the holiday people all drifting in the same direction. Reaching the Fourways they were about to turn off to where accommodation was likely to be found when, looking at the clock and the hurrying crowd, Jude said: “Let us go and see the procession, and never mind the lodgings just now. We can get them afterwards.”

“Oughtn’t we to get a house over our heads first?” she asked.

But his soul seemed full of the anniversary, and together they went down Chief Street, their smallest child in Jude’s arms, Sue leading her little girl, and Arabella’s boy walking thoughtfully and silently beside them. Crowds of pretty sisters in airy costumes, and meekly ignorant parents who had known no college in their youth, were under convoy in the same direction by brothers and sons bearing the opinion written large on them that no properly qualified human beings had lived on earth till they came to grace it here and now.

“My failure is reflected on me by every one of those young fellows,” said Jude. “A lesson on presumption is awaiting me to-day!—Humiliation Day for me! ... If you, my dear darling, hadn’t come to my rescue, I should have gone to the dogs with despair!”

She saw from his face that he was getting into one of his tempestuous, self-harrowing moods. “It would have been better if we had gone at once about our own affairs, dear,” she answered. “I am sure this sight will awaken old sorrows in you, and do no good!”

“Well—we are near; we will see it now,” said he.

They turned in on the left by the church with the Italian porch, whose helical columns were heavily draped with creepers, and pursued the lane till there arose on Jude’s sight the circular theatre with that well-known lantern above it, which stood in his mind as the sad symbol of his abandoned hopes, for it was from that outlook that he had finally surveyed the City of Colleges on the afternoon of his great meditation, which convinced him at last of the futility of his attempt to be a son of the university.

To-day, in the open space stretching between this building and the nearest college, stood a crowd of expectant people. A passage was kept clear through their midst by two barriers of timber, extending from the door of the college to the door of the large building between it and the theatre.

“Here is the place—they are just going to pass!” cried Jude in sudden excitement. And pushing his way to the front he took up a position close to the barrier, still hugging the youngest child in his arms, while Sue and the others kept immediately behind him. The crowd filled in at their back, and fell to talking, joking, and laughing as carriage after carriage drew up at the lower door of the college, and solemn stately figures in blood-red robes began to alight. The sky had grown overcast and livid, and thunder rumbled now and then.

Father Time shuddered. “It do seem like the Judgment Day!” he whispered.

“They are only learned Doctors,” said Sue.

While they waited big drops of rain fell on their heads and shoulders, and the delay grew tedious. Sue again wished not to stay.

“They won’t be long now,” said Jude, without turning his head.

But the procession did not come forth, and somebody in the crowd, to pass the time, looked at the façade of the nearest college, and said he wondered what was meant by the Latin inscription in its midst. Jude, who stood near the inquirer, explained it, and finding that the people all round him were listening with interest, went on to describe the carving of the frieze (which he had studied years before), and to criticize some details of masonry in other college fronts about the city.

The idle crowd, including the two policemen at the doors, stared like the Lycaonians at Paul, for Jude was apt to get too enthusiastic over any subject in hand, and they seemed to wonder how the stranger should know more about the buildings of their town than they themselves did; till one of them said: “Why, I know that man; he used to work here years ago—Jude Fawley, that’s his name! Don’t you mind he used to be nicknamed Tutor of St. Slums, d’ye mind?—because he aimed at that line o’ business? He’s married, I suppose, then, and that’s his child he’s carrying. Taylor would know him, as he knows everybody.”

The speaker was a man named Jack Stagg, with whom Jude had formerly worked in repairing the college masonries; Tinker Taylor was seen to be standing near. Having his attention called the latter cried across the barriers to Jude: “You’ve honoured us by coming back again, my friend!”

Jude nodded.

“An’ you don’t seem to have done any great things for yourself by going away?”

Jude assented to this also.

“Except found more mouths to fill!” This came in a new voice, and Jude recognized its owner to be Uncle Joe, another mason whom he had known.

Jude replied good-humouredly that he could not dispute it; and from remark to remark something like a general conversation arose between him and the crowd of idlers, during which Tinker Taylor asked Jude if he remembered the Apostles’ Creed in Latin still, and the night of the challenge in the public house.

“But Fortune didn’t lie that way?” threw in Joe. “Yer powers wasn’t enough to carry ’ee through?”



“Don’t answer them any more!” entreated Sue.

“I don’t think I like Christminster!” murmured little Time mournfully, as he stood submerged and invisible in the crowd.

But finding himself the centre of curiosity, quizzing, and comment, Jude was not inclined to shrink from open declarations of what he had no great reason to be ashamed of; and in a little while was stimulated to say in a loud voice to the listening throng generally:

“It is a difficult question, my friends, for any young man—that question I had to grapple with, and which thousands are weighing at the present moment in these uprising times—whether to follow uncritically the track he finds himself in, without considering his aptness for it, or to consider what his aptness or bent may be, and re-shape his course accordingly. I tried to do the latter, and I failed. But I don’t admit that my failure proved my view to be a wrong one, or that my success would have made it a right one; though that’s how we appraise such attempts nowadays—I mean, not by their essential soundness, but by their accidental outcomes. If I had ended by becoming like one of these gentlemen in red and black that we saw dropping in here by now, everybody would have said: ‘See how wise that young man was, to follow the bent of his nature!’ But having ended no better than I began they say: ‘See what a fool that fellow was in following a freak of his fancy!’

“However it was my poverty and not my will that consented to be beaten. It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one; and my impulses—affections—vices perhaps they should be called—were too strong not to hamper a man without advantages; who should be as cold-blooded as a fish and as selfish as a pig to have a really good chance of being one of his country’s worthies. You may ridicule me—I am quite willing that you should—I am a fit subject, no doubt. But I think if you knew what I have gone through these last few years you would rather pity me. And if they knew”—he nodded towards the college at which the dons were severally arriving—“it is just possible they would do the same.”

“He do look ill and worn-out, it is true!” said a woman.

Sue’s face grew more emotional; but though she stood close to Jude she was screened.

“I may do some good before I am dead—be a sort of success as a frightful example of what not to do; and so illustrate a moral story,”

continued Jude, beginning to grow bitter, though he had opened serenely enough. "I was, perhaps, after all, a paltry victim to the spirit of mental and social restlessness that makes so many unhappy in these days!"

"Don't tell them that!" whispered Sue with tears, at perceiving Jude's state of mind. "You weren't that. You struggled nobly to acquire knowledge, and only the meanest souls in the world would blame you!"

Jude shifted the child into a more easy position on his arm, and concluded: "And what I appear, a sick and poor man, is not the worst of me. I am in a chaos of principles—groping in the dark—acting by instinct and not after example. Eight or nine years ago when I came here first, I had a neat stock of fixed opinions, but they dropped away one by one; and the further I get the less sure I am. I doubt if I have anything more for my present rule of life than following inclinations which do me and nobody else any harm, and actually give pleasure to those I love best. There, gentlemen, since you wanted to know how I was getting on, I have told you. Much good may it do you! I cannot explain further here. I perceive there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas: what it is can only be discovered by men or women with greater insight than mine—if, indeed, they ever discover it—at least in our time. 'For who knoweth what is good for man in this life?—and who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?'"

"Hear, hear," said the populace.

"Well preached!" said Tinker Taylor. And privately to his neighbours: "Why, one of them jobbing pa'sons swarming about here, that takes the services when our head reverends want a holiday, wouldn't ha' discoursed such doctrine for less than a guinea down. Hey? I'll take my oath not one o' 'em would! And then he must have had it wrote down for 'n. And this only a working-man!"

As a sort of objective commentary on Jude's remarks there drove up at this moment with a belated Doctor, robed and panting, a cab whose horse failed to stop at the exact point required for setting down the hirer, who jumped out and entered the door. The driver, alighting, began to kick the animal in the belly.

"If that can be done," said Jude, "at college gates in the most religious and educational city in the world, what shall we say as to how far we've got?"

“Order!” said one of the policemen, who had been engaged with a comrade in opening the large doors opposite the college. “Keep yer tongue quiet, my man, while the procession passes.” The rain came on more heavily, and all who had umbrellas opened them. Jude was not one of these, and Sue only possessed a small one, half sunshade. She had grown pale, though Jude did not notice it then.

“Let us go on, dear,” she whispered, endeavouring to shelter him. “We haven’t any lodgings yet, remember, and all our things are at the station; and you are by no means well yet. I am afraid this wet will hurt you!”

“They are coming now. Just a moment, and I’ll go!” said he.

A peal of six bells struck out, human faces began to crowd the windows around, and the procession of heads of houses and new Doctors emerged, their red and black gowned forms passing across the field of Jude’s vision like inaccessible planets across an object-glass.

As they went their names were called by knowing informants, and when they reached the old round theatre of Wren a cheer rose high.

“Let’s go that way!” cried Jude, and though it now rained steadily he seemed not to know it, and took them round to the theatre. Here they stood upon the straw that was laid to drown the discordant noise of wheels, where the quaint and frost-eaten stone busts encircling the building looked with pallid grimness on the proceedings, and in particular at the bedraggled Jude, Sue, and their children, as at ludicrous persons who had no business there.

“I wish I could get in!” he said to her fervidly. “Listen—I may catch a few words of the Latin speech by staying here; the windows are open.”

However, beyond the peals of the organ, and the shouts and hurrahs between each piece of oratory, Jude’s standing in the wet did not bring much Latin to his intelligence more than, now and then, a sonorous word in *um* or *ibus*.

“Well—I’m an outsider to the end of my days!” he sighed after a while. “Now I’ll go, my patient Sue. How good of you to wait in the rain all this time—to gratify my infatuation! I’ll never care any more about the infernal cursed place, upon my soul I won’t! But what made you tremble so when we were at the barrier? And how pale you are, Sue!”

“I saw Richard amongst the people on the other side.”

“Ah—did you!”

“He is evidently come up to Jerusalem to see the festival like the rest of us: and on that account is probably living not so very far away. He had the same hankering for the university that you had, in a milder form. I don’t think he saw me, though he must have heard you speaking to the crowd. But he seemed not to notice.”

“Well—suppose he did. Your mind is free from worries about him now, my Sue?”

“Yes, I suppose so. But I am weak. Although I know it is all right with our plans, I felt a curious dread of him; an awe, or terror, of conventions I don’t believe in. It comes over me at times like a sort of creeping paralysis, and makes me so sad!”

“You are getting tired, Sue. Oh—I forgot, darling! Yes, we’ll go on at once.”

They started in quest of the lodging, and at last found something that seemed to promise well, in Mildew Lane—a spot which to Jude was irresistible—though to Sue it was not so fascinating—a narrow lane close to the back of a college, but having no communication with it. The little houses were darkened to gloom by the high collegiate buildings, within which life was so far removed from that of the people in the lane as if it had been on opposite sides of the globe; yet only a thickness of wall divided them. Two or three of the houses had notices of rooms to let, and the newcomers knocked at the door of one, which a woman opened.

“Ah—listen!” said Jude suddenly, instead of addressing her.

“What?”

“Why the bells—what church can that be? The tones are familiar.”

Another peal of bells had begun to sound out at some distance off.

“I don’t know!” said the landlady tartly. “Did you knock to ask that?”

“No; for lodgings,” said Jude, coming to himself.

The householder scrutinized Sue’s figure a moment. “We haven’t any to let,” said she, shutting the door.

Jude looked discomfited, and the boy distressed. “Now, Jude,” said Sue, “let me try. You don’t know the way.”

They found a second place hard by; but here the occupier, observing not only Sue, but the boy and the small children, said civilly, "I am sorry to say we don't let where there are children"; and also closed the door.

The small child squared its mouth and cried silently, with an instinct that trouble loomed. The boy sighed. "I don't like Christminster!" he said. "Are the great old houses gaols?"

"No; colleges," said Jude; "which perhaps you'll study in some day."

"I'd rather not!" the boy rejoined.

"Now we'll try again," said Sue. "I'll pull my cloak more round me... Leaving Kennetbridge for this place is like coming from Caiaphas to Pilate! ... How do I look now, dear?"

"Nobody would notice it now," said Jude.

There was one other house, and they tried a third time. The woman here was more amiable; but she had little room to spare, and could only agree to take in Sue and the children if her husband could go elsewhere. This arrangement they perforce adopted, in the stress from delaying their search till so late. They came to terms with her, though her price was rather high for their pockets. But they could not afford to be critical till Jude had time to get a more permanent abode; and in this house Sue took possession of a back room on the second floor with an inner closet-room for the children. Jude stayed and had a cup of tea; and was pleased to find that the window commanded the back of another of the colleges. Kissing all four he went to get a few necessaries and look for lodgings for himself.

When he was gone the landlady came up to talk a little with Sue, and gather something of the circumstances of the family she had taken in. Sue had not the art of prevarication, and, after admitting several facts as to their late difficulties and wanderings, she was startled by the landlady saying suddenly:

"Are you really a married woman?"

Sue hesitated; and then impulsively told the woman that her husband and herself had each been unhappy in their first marriages, after which, terrified at the thought of a second irrevocable union, and lest the conditions of the contract should kill their love, yet wishing to be together, they had literally not found the courage to repeat it, though they had

attempted it two or three times. Therefore, though in her own sense of the words she was a married woman, in the landlady's sense she was not.

The housewife looked embarrassed, and went downstairs. Sue sat by the window in a reverie, watching the rain. Her quiet was broken by the noise of someone entering the house, and then the voices of a man and woman in conversation in the passage below. The landlady's husband had arrived, and she was explaining to him the incoming of the lodgers during his absence.

His voice rose in sudden anger. "Now who wants such a woman here? and perhaps a confinement! ... Besides, didn't I say I wouldn't have children? The hall and stairs fresh painted, to be kicked about by them! You must have known all was not straight with 'em—coming like that. Taking in a family when I said a single man."

The wife expostulated, but, as it seemed, the husband insisted on his point; for presently a tap came to Sue's door, and the woman appeared.

"I am sorry to tell you, ma'am," she said, "that I can't let you have the room for the week after all. My husband objects; and therefore I must ask you to go. I don't mind your staying over to-night, as it is getting late in the afternoon; but I shall be glad if you can leave early in the morning."

Though she knew that she was entitled to the lodging for a week, Sue did not wish to create a disturbance between the wife and husband, and she said she would leave as requested. When the landlady had gone Sue looked out of the window again. Finding that the rain had ceased she proposed to the boy that, after putting the little ones to bed, they should go out and search about for another place, and bespeak it for the morrow, so as not to be so hard-driven then as they had been that day.

Therefore, instead of unpacking her boxes, which had just been sent on from the station by Jude, they sallied out into the damp though not unpleasant streets, Sue resolving not to disturb her husband with the news of her notice to quit while he was perhaps worried in obtaining a lodging for himself. In the company of the boy she wandered into this street and into that; but though she tried a dozen different houses she fared far worse alone than she had fared in Jude's company, and could get nobody to promise her a room for the following day. Every householder looked askance at such a woman and child inquiring for accommodation in the gloom.

“I ought not to be born, ought I?” said the boy with misgiving.

Thoroughly tired at last Sue returned to the place where she was not welcome, but where at least she had temporary shelter. In her absence Jude had left his address; but knowing how weak he still was she adhered to her determination not to disturb him till the next day.

## II

Sue sat looking at the bare floor of the room, the house being little more than an old intramural cottage, and then she regarded the scene outside the uncurtained window. At some distance opposite, the outer walls of Sarcophagus College—silent, black, and windowless—threw their four centuries of gloom, bigotry, and decay into the little room she occupied, shutting out the moonlight by night and the sun by day. The outlines of Rubric College also were discernible beyond the other, and the tower of a third farther off still. She thought of the strange operation of a simple-minded man's ruling passion, that it should have led Jude, who loved her and the children so tenderly, to place them here in this depressing purlieu, because he was still haunted by his dream. Even now he did not distinctly hear the freezing negative that those scholared walls had echoed to his desire.

The failure to find another lodging, and the lack of room in this house for his father, had made a deep impression on the boy—a brooding undemonstrative horror seemed to have seized him. The silence was broken by his saying: "Mother, *what* shall we do to-morrow!"

"I don't know!" said Sue despondently. "I am afraid this will trouble your father."

"I wish Father was quite well, and there had been room for him! Then it wouldn't matter so much! Poor Father!"

"It wouldn't!"

"Can I do anything?"

"No! All is trouble, adversity, and suffering!"

"Father went away to give us children room, didn't he?"

"Partly."

"It would be better to be out o' the world than in it, wouldn't it?"

"It would almost, dear."



“’Tis because of us children, too, isn’t it, that you can’t get a good lodging?”

“Well—people do object to children sometimes.”

“Then if children make so much trouble, why do people have ’em?”

“Oh—because it is a law of nature.”

“But we don’t ask to be born?”

“No indeed.”

“And what makes it worse with me is that you are not my real mother, and you needn’t have had me unless you liked. I oughtn’t to have come to ’ee—that’s the real truth! I troubled ’em in Australia, and I trouble folk here. I wish I hadn’t been born!”

“You couldn’t help it, my dear.”

“I think that whenever children be born that are not wanted they should be killed directly, before their souls come to ’em, and not allowed to grow big and walk about!”

Sue did not reply. She was doubtfully pondering how to treat this too reflective child.

She at last concluded that, so far as circumstances permitted, she would be honest and candid with one who entered into her difficulties like an aged friend.

“There is going to be another in our family soon,” she hesitatingly remarked.

“How?”

“There is going to be another baby.”

“What!” The boy jumped up wildly. “Oh God, Mother, you’ve never a-sent for another; and such trouble with what you’ve got!”

“Yes, I have, I am sorry to say!” murmured Sue, her eyes glistening with suspended tears.

The boy burst out weeping. “Oh you don’t care, you don’t care!” he cried in bitter reproach. “How *ever* could you, Mother, be so wicked and cruel as this, when you needn’t have done it till we was better off, and Father well! To bring us all into *more* trouble! No room for us, and Father a-forced to go away, and we turned out to-morrow; and yet you be going to

have another of us soon! ... 'Tis done o' purpose!—'tis—'tis!" He walked up and down sobbing.

"Y-you must forgive me, little Jude!" she pleaded, her bosom heaving now as much as the boy's. "I can't explain—I will when you are older. It does seem—as if I had done it on purpose, now we are in these difficulties! I can't explain, dear! But it—is not quite on purpose—I can't help it!"

"Yes it is—it must be! For nobody would interfere with us, like that, unless you agreed! I won't forgive you, ever, ever! I'll never believe you care for me, or Father, or any of us any more!"

He got up, and went away into the closet adjoining her room, in which a bed had been spread on the floor. There she heard him say: "If we children was gone there'd be no trouble at all!"

"Don't think that, dear," she cried, rather peremptorily. "But go to sleep!"

The following morning she awoke at a little past six, and decided to get up and run across before breakfast to the inn which Jude had informed her to be his quarters, to tell him what had happened before he went out. She arose softly, to avoid disturbing the children, who, as she knew, must be fatigued by their exertions of yesterday.

She found Jude at breakfast in the obscure tavern he had chosen as a counterpoise to the expense of her lodging: and she explained to him her homelessness. He had been so anxious about her all night, he said. Somehow, now it was morning, the request to leave the lodgings did not seem such a depressing incident as it had seemed the night before, nor did even her failure to find another place affect her so deeply as at first. Jude agreed with her that it would not be worth while to insist upon her right to stay a week, but to take immediate steps for removal.

"You must all come to this inn for a day or two," he said. "It is a rough place, and it will not be so nice for the children, but we shall have more time to look round. There are plenty of lodgings in the suburbs—in my old quarter of Beersheba. Have breakfast with me now you are here, my bird. You are sure you are well? There will be plenty of time to get back and prepare the children's meal before they wake. In fact, I'll go with you."

She joined Jude in a hasty meal, and in a quarter of an hour they started together, resolving to clear out from Sue's too respectable lodging immediately. On reaching the place and going upstairs she found that all was quiet in the children's room, and called to the landlady in timorous tones to please bring up the tea-kettle and something for their breakfast. This was perfunctorily done, and producing a couple of eggs which she had brought with her she put them into the boiling kettle, and summoned Jude to watch them for the youngsters, while she went to call them, it being now about half-past eight o'clock.

Jude stood bending over the kettle, with his watch in his hand, timing the eggs, so that his back was turned to the little inner chamber where the children lay. A shriek from Sue suddenly caused him to start round. He saw that the door of the room, or rather closet—which had seemed to go heavily upon its hinges as she pushed it back—was open, and that Sue had sunk to the floor just within it. Hastening forward to pick her up he turned his eyes to the little bed spread on the boards; no children were there. He looked in bewilderment round the room. At the back of the door were fixed two hooks for hanging garments, and from these the forms of the two youngest children were suspended, by a piece of box-cord round each of their necks, while from a nail a few yards off the body of little Jude was hanging in a similar manner. An overturned chair was near the elder boy, and his glazed eyes were slanted into the room; but those of the girl and the baby boy were closed.

Half-paralyzed by the strange and consummate horror of the scene, he let Sue lie, cut the cords with his pocket-knife and threw the three children on the bed; but the feel of their bodies in the momentary handling seemed to say that they were dead. He caught up Sue, who was in fainting fits, and put her on the bed in the other room, after which he breathlessly summoned the landlady and ran out for a doctor.

When he got back Sue had come to herself, and the two helpless women, bending over the children in wild efforts to restore them, and the triplet of little corpses, formed a sight which overthrew his self-command. The nearest surgeon came in, but, as Jude had inferred, his presence was superfluous. The children were past saving, for though their bodies were still barely cold it was conjectured that they had been hanging more than an hour. The probability held by the parents later on, when they were able

to reason on the case, was that the elder boy, on waking, looked into the outer room for Sue, and, finding her absent, was thrown into a fit of aggravated despondency that the events and information of the evening before had induced in his morbid temperament. Moreover a piece of paper was found upon the floor, on which was written, in the boy's hand, with the bit of lead pencil that he carried:

*Done because we are too menny.*

At sight of this Sue's nerves utterly gave way, an awful conviction that her discourse with the boy had been the main cause of the tragedy, throwing her into a convulsive agony which knew no abatement. They carried her away against her wish to a room on the lower floor; and there she lay, her slight figure shaken with her gasps, and her eyes staring at the ceiling, the woman of the house vainly trying to soothe her.

They could hear from this chamber the people moving about above, and she implored to be allowed to go back, and was only kept from doing so by the assurance that, if there were any hope, her presence might do harm, and the reminder that it was necessary to take care of herself lest she should endanger a coming life. Her inquiries were incessant, and at last Jude came down and told her there was no hope. As soon as she could speak she informed him what she had said to the boy, and how she thought herself the cause of this.

"No," said Jude. "It was in his nature to do it. The Doctor says there are such boys springing up amongst us—boys of a sort unknown in the last generation—the outcome of new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live. He's an advanced man, the Doctor: but he can give no consolation to—"

Jude had kept back his own grief on account of her; but he now broke down; and this stimulated Sue to efforts of sympathy which in some degree distracted her from her poignant self-reproach. When everybody was gone, she was allowed to see the children.

The boy's face expressed the whole tale of their situation. On that little shape had converged all the inauspiciousness and shadow which had darkened the first union of Jude, and all the accidents, mistakes, fears,

errors of the last. He was their nodal point, their focus, their expression in a single term. For the rashness of those parents he had groaned, for their ill assortment he had quaked, and for the misfortunes of these he had died.

When the house was silent, and they could do nothing but await the coroner's inquest, a subdued, large, low voice spread into the air of the room from behind the heavy walls at the back.

"What is it?" said Sue, her spasmodic breathing suspended.

"The organ of the college chapel. The organist practising I suppose. It's the anthem from the seventy-third Psalm; 'Truly God is loving unto Israel.'"

She sobbed again. "Oh, oh my babies! They had done no harm! Why should they have been taken away, and not I!"

There was another stillness—broken at last by two persons in conversation somewhere without.

"They are talking about us, no doubt!" moaned Sue. "'We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men!'"

Jude listened—"No—they are not talking of us," he said. "They are two clergymen of different views, arguing about the eastward position. Good God—the eastward position, and all creation groaning!"

Then another silence, till she was seized with another uncontrollable fit of grief. "There is something external to us which says, 'You shan't!' First it said, 'You shan't learn!' Then it said, 'You shan't labour!' Now it says, 'You shan't love!'"

He tried to soothe her by saying, "That's bitter of you, darling."

"But it's true!"

Thus they waited, and she went back again to her room. The baby's frock, shoes, and socks, which had been lying on a chair at the time of his death, she would not now have removed, though Jude would fain have got them out of her sight. But whenever he touched them she implored him to let them lie, and burst out almost savagely at the woman of the house when she also attempted to put them away.

Jude dreaded her dull apathetic silences almost more than her paroxysms. "Why don't you speak to me, Jude?" she cried out, after one of

these. “Don’t turn away from me! I can’t *bear* the loneliness of being out of your looks!”

“There, dear; here I am,” he said, putting his face close to hers.

“Yes... Oh, my comrade, our perfect union—our two-in-oneness—is now stained with blood!”

“Shadowed by death—that’s all.”

“Ah; but it was I who incited him really, though I didn’t know I was doing it! I talked to the child as one should only talk to people of mature age. I said the world was against us, that it was better to be out of life than in it at this price; and he took it literally. And I told him I was going to have another child. It upset him. Oh how bitterly he upbraided me!”

“Why did you do it, Sue?”

“I can’t tell. It was that I wanted to be truthful. I couldn’t bear deceiving him as to the facts of life. And yet I wasn’t truthful, for with a false delicacy I told him too obscurely.—Why was I half-wiser than my fellow-women? And not entirely wiser! Why didn’t I tell him pleasant untruths, instead of half-realities? It was my want of self-control, so that I could neither conceal things nor reveal them!”

“Your plan might have been a good one for the majority of cases; only in our peculiar case it chanced to work badly perhaps. He must have known sooner or later.”

“And I was just making my baby darling a new frock; and now I shall never see him in it, and never talk to him any more! ... My eyes are so swollen that I can scarcely see; and yet little more than a year ago I called myself happy! We went about loving each other too much—indulging ourselves to utter selfishness with each other! We said—do you remember?—that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature’s intention, Nature’s law and *raison d’être* that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us—instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. What dreadful things I said! And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word!”

She sank into a quiet contemplation, till she said, “It is best, perhaps, that they should be gone.—Yes—I see it is! Better that they should be plucked fresh than stay to wither away miserably!”

“Yes,” replied Jude. “Some say that the elders should rejoice when their children die in infancy.”

“But they don’t know! ... Oh my babies, my babies, could you be alive now! You may say the boy wished to be out of life, or he wouldn’t have done it. It was not unreasonable for him to die: it was part of his incurably sad nature, poor little fellow! But then the others—my *own* children and yours!”

Again Sue looked at the hanging little frock and at the socks and shoes; and her figure quivered like a string. “I am a pitiable creature,” she said, “good neither for earth nor heaven any more! I am driven out of my mind by things! What ought to be done?” She stared at Jude, and tightly held his hand.

“Nothing can be done,” he replied. “Things are as they are, and will be brought to their destined issue.”

She paused. “Yes! Who said that?” she asked heavily.

“It comes in the chorus of the *Agamemnon*. It has been in my mind continually since this happened.”

“My poor Jude—how you’ve missed everything!—you more than I, for I did get you! To think you should know that by your unassisted reading, and yet be in poverty and despair!”

After such momentary diversions her grief would return in a wave.

The jury duly came and viewed the bodies, the inquest was held; and next arrived the melancholy morning of the funeral. Accounts in the newspapers had brought to the spot curious idlers, who stood apparently counting the window-panes and the stones of the walls. Doubt of the real relations of the couple added zest to their curiosity. Sue had declared that she would follow the two little ones to the grave, but at the last moment she gave way, and the coffins were quietly carried out of the house while she was lying down. Jude got into the vehicle, and it drove away, much to the relief of the landlord, who now had only Sue and her luggage remaining on his hands, which he hoped to be also clear of later on in the day, and so to have freed his house from the exasperating notoriety it had acquired during the week through his wife’s unlucky admission of these strangers. In the afternoon he privately consulted with the owner of the

house, and they agreed that if any objection to it arose from the tragedy which had occurred there they would try to get its number changed.

When Jude had seen the two little boxes—one containing little Jude, and the other the two smallest—deposited in the earth he hastened back to Sue, who was still in her room, and he therefore did not disturb her just then. Feeling anxious, however, he went again about four o'clock. The woman thought she was still lying down, but returned to him to say that she was not in her bedroom after all. Her hat and jacket, too, were missing: she had gone out. Jude hurried off to the public house where he was sleeping. She had not been there. Then bethinking himself of possibilities he went along the road to the cemetery, which he entered, and crossed to where the interments had recently taken place. The idlers who had followed to the spot by reason of the tragedy were all gone now. A man with a shovel in his hands was attempting to earth in the common grave of the three children, but his arm was held back by an expostulating woman who stood in the half-filled hole. It was Sue, whose coloured clothing, which she had never thought of changing for the mourning he had bought, suggested to the eye a deeper grief than the conventional garb of bereavement could express.

“He’s filling them in, and he shan’t till I’ve seen my little ones again!” she cried wildly when she saw Jude. “I want to see them once more. Oh Jude—please Jude—I want to see them! I didn’t know you would let them be taken away while I was asleep! You said perhaps I should see them once more before they were screwed down; and then you didn’t, but took them away! Oh Jude, you are cruel to me too!”

“She’s been wanting me to dig out the grave again, and let her get to the coffins,” said the man with the spade. “She ought to be took home, by the look o’ her. She is hardly responsible, poor thing, seemingly. Can’t dig ’em up again now, ma’am. Do ye go home with your husband, and take it quiet, and thank God that there’ll be another soon to swage yer grief.”

But Sue kept asking piteously: “Can’t I see them once more—just once! Can’t I? Only just one little minute, Jude? It would not take long! And I should be so glad, Jude! I will be so good, and not disobey you ever any more, Jude, if you will let me? I would go home quietly afterwards, and not want to see them any more! Can’t I? Why can’t I?”



Thus she went on. Jude was thrown into such acute sorrow that he almost felt he would try to get the man to accede. But it could do no good, and might make her still worse; and he saw that it was imperative to get her home at once. So he coaxed her, and whispered tenderly, and put his arm round her to support her; till she helplessly gave in, and was induced to leave the cemetery.

He wished to obtain a fly to take her back in, but economy being so imperative she deprecated his doing so, and they walked along slowly, Jude in black crape, she in brown and red clothing. They were to have gone to a new lodging that afternoon, but Jude saw that it was not practicable, and in course of time they entered the now hated house. Sue was at once got to bed, and the Doctor sent for.

Jude waited all the evening downstairs. At a very late hour the intelligence was brought to him that a child had been prematurely born, and that it, like the others, was a corpse.

### III

Sue was convalescent, though she had hoped for death, and Jude had again obtained work at his old trade. They were in other lodgings now, in the direction of Beersheba, and not far from the Church of Ceremonies—Saint Silas.

They would sit silent, more bodeful of the direct antagonism of things than of their insensate and stolid obstructiveness. Vague and quaint imaginings had haunted Sue in the days when her intellect scintillated like a star, that the world resembled a stanza or melody composed in a dream; it was wonderfully excellent to the half-aroused intelligence, but hopelessly absurd at the full waking; that the First Cause worked automatically like a somnambulist, and not reflectively like a sage; that at the framing of the terrestrial conditions there seemed never to have been contemplated such a development of emotional perceptiveness among the creatures subject to those conditions as that reached by thinking and educated humanity. But affliction makes opposing forces loom anthropomorphous; and those ideas were now exchanged for a sense of Jude and herself fleeing from a persecutor.

“We must conform!” she said mournfully. “All the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been vented upon us, His poor creatures, and we must submit. There is no choice. We must. It is no use fighting against God!”

“It is only against man and senseless circumstance,” said Jude.

“True!” she murmured. “What have I been thinking of! I am getting as superstitious as a savage! ... But whoever or whatever our foe may be, I am cowed into submission. I have no more fighting strength left; no more enterprise. I am beaten, beaten! ... ‘We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men!’ I am always saying that now.”

“I feel the same!”

“What shall we do? You are in work now; but remember, it may only be because our history and relations are not absolutely known... Possibly, if

they knew our marriage had not been formalized they would turn you out of your job as they did at Aldbrickham!”

“I hardly know. Perhaps they would hardly do that. However, I think that we ought to make it legal now—as soon as you are able to go out.”

“You think we ought?”

“Certainly.”

And Jude fell into thought. “I have seemed to myself lately,” he said, “to belong to that vast band of men shunned by the virtuous—the men called seducers. It amazes me when I think of it! I have not been conscious of it, or of any wrongdoing towards you, whom I love more than myself. Yet I am one of those men! I wonder if any other of them are the same purblind, simple creatures as I? ... Yes, Sue—that’s what I am. I seduced you... You were a distinct type—a refined creature, intended by Nature to be left intact. But I couldn’t leave you alone!”

“No, no, Jude!” she said quickly. “Don’t reproach yourself with being what you are not. If anybody is to blame it is I.”

“I supported you in your resolve to leave Phillotson; and without me perhaps you wouldn’t have urged him to let you go.”

“I should have, just the same. As to ourselves, the fact of our not having entered into a legal contract is the saving feature in our union. We have thereby avoided insulting, as it were, the solemnity of our first marriages.”

“Solemnity?” Jude looked at her with some surprise, and grew conscious that she was not the Sue of their earlier time.

“Yes,” she said, with a little quiver in her words, “I have had dreadful fears, a dreadful sense of my own insolence of action. I have thought—that I am still his wife!”

“Whose?”

“Richard’s.”

“Good God, dearest!—why?”

“Oh I can’t explain! Only the thought comes to me.”

“It is your weakness—a sick fancy, without reason or meaning! Don’t let it trouble you.”

Sue sighed uneasily.

As a set-off against such discussions as these there had come an improvement in their pecuniary position, which earlier in their experience would have made them cheerful. Jude had quite unexpectedly found good employment at his old trade almost directly he arrived, the summer weather suiting his fragile constitution; and outwardly his days went on with that monotonous uniformity which is in itself so grateful after vicissitude. People seemed to have forgotten that he had ever shown any awkward aberrancies, and he daily mounted to the parapets and copings of colleges he could never enter, and renewed the crumbling freestones of mullioned windows he would never look from, as if he had known no wish to do otherwise.

There was this change in him; that he did not often go to any service at the churches now. One thing troubled him more than any other; that Sue and himself had mentally travelled in opposite directions since the tragedy: events which had enlarged his own views of life, laws, customs, and dogmas, had not operated in the same manner on Sue's. She was no longer the same as in the independent days, when her intellect played like lambent lightning over conventions and formalities which he at that time respected, though he did not now.

On a particular Sunday evening he came in rather late. She was not at home, but she soon returned, when he found her silent and meditative.

“What are you thinking of, little woman?” he asked curiously.

“Oh I can't tell clearly! I have thought that we have been selfish, careless, even impious, in our courses, you and I. Our life has been a vain attempt at self-delight. But self-abnegation is the higher road. We should mortify the flesh—the terrible flesh—the curse of Adam!”

“Sue!” he murmured. “What has come over you?”

“We ought to be continually sacrificing ourselves on the altar of duty! But I have always striven to do what has pleased me. I well deserved the scourging I have got! I wish something would take the evil right out of me, and all my monstrous errors, and all my sinful ways!”

“Sue—my own too suffering dear!—there's no evil woman in you. Your natural instincts are perfectly healthy; not quite so impassioned, perhaps, as I could wish; but good, and dear, and pure. And as I have often said, you are absolutely the most ethereal, least sensual woman I ever knew to exist without inhuman sexlessness. Why do you talk in such a changed way? We

have not been selfish, except when no one could profit by our being otherwise. You used to say that human nature was noble and long-suffering, not vile and corrupt, and at last I thought you spoke truly. And now you seem to take such a much lower view!”

“I want a humble heart; and a chastened mind; and I have never had them yet!”

“You have been fearless, both as a thinker and as a feeler, and you deserved more admiration than I gave. I was too full of narrow dogmas at that time to see it.”

“Don’t say that, Jude! I wish my every fearless word and thought could be rooted out of my history. Self-renunciation—that’s everything! I cannot humiliate myself too much. I should like to prick myself all over with pins and bleed out the badness that’s in me!”

“Hush!” he said, pressing her little face against his breast as if she were an infant. “It is bereavement that has brought you to this! Such remorse is not for you, my sensitive plant, but for the wicked ones of the earth—who never feel it!”

“I ought not to stay like this,” she murmured, when she had remained in the position a long while.

“Why not?”

“It is indulgence.”

“Still on the same tack! But is there anything better on earth than that we should love one another?”

“Yes. It depends on the sort of love; and yours—ours—is the wrong.”

“I won’t have it, Sue! Come, when do you wish our marriage to be signed in a vestry?”

She paused, and looked up uneasily. “Never,” she whispered.

Not knowing the whole of her meaning he took the objection serenely, and said nothing. Several minutes elapsed, and he thought she had fallen asleep; but he spoke softly, and found that she was wide awake all the time. She sat upright and sighed.

“There is a strange, indescribable perfume or atmosphere about you tonight, Sue,” he said. “I mean not only mentally, but about your clothes,

also. A sort of vegetable scent, which I seem to know, yet cannot remember.”

“It is incense.”

“Incense?”

“I have been to the service at St. Silas’, and I was in the fumes of it.”

“Oh—St. Silas.”

“Yes. I go there sometimes.”

“Indeed. You go there!”

“You see, Jude, it is lonely here in the weekday mornings, when you are at work, and I think and think of—of my—” She stopped till she could control the lumpiness of her throat. “And I have taken to go in there, as it is so near.”

“Oh well—of course, I say nothing against it. Only it is odd, for you. They little think what sort of chiel is amang them!”

“What do you mean, Jude?”

“Well—a sceptic, to be plain.”

“How can you pain me so, dear Jude, in my trouble! Yet I know you didn’t mean it. But you ought not to say that.”

“I won’t. But I am much surprised!”

“Well—I want to tell you something else, Jude. You won’t be angry, will you? I have thought of it a good deal since my babies died. I don’t think I ought to be your wife—or as your wife—any longer.”

“What? ... But you *are*!”

“From your point of view; but—”

“Of course we were afraid of the ceremony, and a good many others would have been in our places, with such strong reasons for fears. But experience has proved how we misjudged ourselves, and overrated our infirmities; and if you are beginning to respect rites and ceremonies, as you seem to be, I wonder you don’t say it shall be carried out instantly? You certainly *are* my wife, Sue, in all but law. What do you mean by what you said?”

“I don’t think I am!”

“Not? But suppose we *had* gone through the ceremony? Would you feel that you were then?”

“No. I should not feel even then that I was. I should feel worse than I do now.”

“Why so—in the name of all that’s perverse, my dear?”

“Because I am Richard’s.”

“Ah—you hinted that absurd fancy to me before!”

“It was only an impression with me then; I feel more and more convinced as time goes on that—I belong to him, or to nobody.”

“My good heavens—how we are changing places!”

“Yes. Perhaps so.”

Some few days later, in the dusk of the summer evening, they were sitting in the same small room downstairs, when a knock came to the front door of the carpenter’s house where they were lodging, and in a few moments there was a tap at the door of their room. Before they could open it the comer did so, and a woman’s form appeared.

“Is Mr. Fawley here?”

Jude and Sue started as he mechanically replied in the affirmative, for the voice was Arabella’s.

He formally requested her to come in, and she sat down in the window bench, where they could distinctly see her outline against the light; but no characteristic that enabled them to estimate her general aspect and air. Yet something seemed to denote that she was not quite so comfortably circumstanced, nor so bouncingly attired, as she had been during Cartlett’s lifetime.

The three attempted an awkward conversation about the tragedy, of which Jude had felt it to be his duty to inform her immediately, though she had never replied to his letter.

“I have just come from the cemetery,” she said. “I inquired and found the child’s grave. I couldn’t come to the funeral—thank you for inviting me all the same. I read all about it in the papers, and I felt I wasn’t wanted... No—I couldn’t come to the funeral,” repeated Arabella, who, seeming utterly unable to reach the ideal of a catastrophic manner,

fumbled with iterations. "But I am glad I found the grave. As 'tis your trade, Jude, you'll be able to put up a handsome stone to 'em."

"I shall put up a headstone," said Jude drearily.

"He was my child, and naturally I feel for him."

"I hope so. We all did."

"The others that weren't mine I didn't feel so much for, as was natural."

"Of course."

A sigh came from the dark corner where Sue sat.

"I had often wished I had mine with me," continued Mrs. Cartlett. "Perhaps 'twouldn't have happened then! But of course I didn't wish to take him away from your wife."

"I am not his wife," came from Sue.

The unexpectedness of her words struck Jude silent.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I'm sure," said Arabella. "I thought you were!"

Jude had known from the quality of Sue's tone that her new and transcendental views lurked in her words; but all except their obvious meaning was, naturally, missed by Arabella. The latter, after evincing that she was struck by Sue's avowal, recovered herself, and went on to talk with placid bluntness about "her" boy, for whom, though in his lifetime she had shown no care at all, she now exhibited a ceremonial mournfulness that was apparently sustaining to the conscience. She alluded to the past, and in making some remark appealed again to Sue. There was no answer: Sue had invisibly left the room.

"She said she was not your wife?" resumed Arabella in another voice. "Why should she do that?"

"I cannot inform you," said Jude shortly.

"She is, isn't she? She once told me so."

"I don't criticize what she says."

"Ah—I see! Well, my time is up. I am staying here to-night, and thought I could do no less than call, after our mutual affliction. I am sleeping at the place where I used to be barmaid, and to-morrow I go back to Alfredston. Father is come home again, and I am living with him."

"He has returned from Australia?" said Jude with languid curiosity.



“Yes. Couldn’t get on there. Had a rough time of it. Mother died of dys—what do you call it—in the hot weather, and Father and two of the young ones have just got back. He has got a cottage near the old place, and for the present I am keeping house for him.”

Jude’s former wife had maintained a stereotyped manner of strict good breeding even now that Sue was gone, and limited her stay to a number of minutes that should accord with the highest respectability. When she had departed Jude, much relieved, went to the stairs and called Sue—feeling anxious as to what had become of her.

There was no answer, and the carpenter who kept the lodgings said she had not come in. Jude was puzzled, and became quite alarmed at her absence, for the hour was growing late. The carpenter called his wife, who conjectured that Sue might have gone to St. Silas’ church, as she often went there.

“Surely not at this time o’ night?” said Jude. “It is shut.”

“She knows somebody who keeps the key, and she has it whenever she wants it.”

“How long has she been going on with this?”

“Oh, some few weeks, I think.”

Jude went vaguely in the direction of the church, which he had never once approached since he lived out that way years before, when his young opinions were more mystical than they were now. The spot was deserted, but the door was certainly unfastened; he lifted the latch without noise, and pushing to the door behind him, stood absolutely still inside. The prevalent silence seemed to contain a faint sound, explicable as a breathing, or a sobbing, which came from the other end of the building. The floor-cloth deadened his footsteps as he moved in that direction through the obscurity, which was broken only by the faintest reflected night-light from without.

High overhead, above the chancel steps, Jude could discern a huge, solidly constructed Latin cross—as large, probably, as the original it was designed to commemorate. It seemed to be suspended in the air by invisible wires; it was set with large jewels, which faintly glimmered in some weak ray caught from outside, as the cross swayed to and fro in a silent and scarcely perceptible motion. Underneath, upon the floor, lay

what appeared to be a heap of black clothes, and from this was repeated the sobbing that he had heard before. It was his Sue's form, prostrate on the paving.

"Sue!" he whispered.

Something white disclosed itself; she had turned up her face.

"What—do you want with me here, Jude?" she said almost sharply. "You shouldn't come! I wanted to be alone! Why did you intrude here?"

"How can you ask!" he retorted in quick reproach, for his full heart was wounded to its centre at this attitude of hers towards him. "Why do I come? Who has a right to come, I should like to know, if I have not! I, who love you better than my own self—better—far better—than you have loved me! What made you leave me to come here alone?"

"Don't criticize me, Jude—I can't bear it!—I have often told you so. You must take me as I am. I am a wretch—broken by my distractions! I couldn't *bear* it when Arabella came—I felt so utterly miserable I had to come away. She seems to be your wife still, and Richard to be my husband!"

"But they are nothing to us!"

"Yes, dear friend, they are. I see marriage differently now. My babies have been taken from me to show me this! Arabella's child killing mine was a judgement—the right slaying the wrong. What, shall I do! I am such a vile creature—too worthless to mix with ordinary human beings!"

"This is terrible!" said Jude, verging on tears. "It is monstrous and unnatural for you to be so remorseful when you have done no wrong!"

"Ah—you don't know my badness!"

He returned vehemently: "I do! Every atom and dreg of it! You make me hate Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism, or whatever it may be called, if it's that which has caused this deterioration in you. That a woman-poet, a woman-seer, a woman whose soul shone like a diamond—whom all the wise of the world would have been proud of, if they could have known you—should degrade herself like this! I am glad I had nothing to do with Divinity—damn glad—if it's going to ruin you in this way!"

"You are angry, Jude, and unkind to me, and don't see how things are."

“Then come along home with me, dearest, and perhaps I shall. I am overburdened—and you, too, are unhinged just now.” He put his arm round her and lifted her; but though she came, she preferred to walk without his support.

“I don’t dislike you, Jude,” she said in a sweet and imploring voice. “I love you as much as ever! Only—I ought not to love you—any more. Oh I must not any more!”

“I can’t own it.”

“But I have made up my mind that I am not your wife! I belong to him—I sacramentally joined myself to him for life. Nothing can alter it!”

“But surely we are man and wife, if ever two people were in this world? Nature’s own marriage it is, unquestionably!”

“But not Heaven’s. Another was made for me there, and ratified eternally in the church at Melchester.”

“Sue, Sue—affliction has brought you to this unreasonable state! After converting me to your views on so many things, to find you suddenly turn to the right-about like this—for no reason whatever, confounding all you have formerly said through sentiment merely! You root out of me what little affection and reverence I had left in me for the Church as an old acquaintance... What I can’t understand in you is your extraordinary blindness now to your old logic. Is it peculiar to you, or is it common to woman? Is a woman a thinking unit at all, or a fraction always wanting its integer? How you argued that marriage was only a clumsy contract—which it is—how you showed all the objections to it—all the absurdities! If two and two made four when we were happy together, surely they make four now? I can’t understand it, I repeat!”

“Ah, dear Jude; that’s because you are like a totally deaf man observing people listening to music. You say ‘What are they regarding? Nothing is there.’ But something is.”

“That is a hard saying from you; and not a true parallel! You threw off old husks of prejudices, and taught me to do it; and now you go back upon yourself. I confess I am utterly stultified in my estimate of you.”

“Dear friend, my only friend, don’t be hard with me! I can’t help being as I am, I am convinced I am right—that I see the light at last. But oh, how to profit by it!”

They walked along a few more steps till they were outside the building and she had returned the key. "Can this be the girl," said Jude when she came back, feeling a slight renewal of elasticity now that he was in the open street; "can this be the girl who brought the pagan deities into this most Christian city?—who mimicked Miss Fontover when she crushed them with her heel?—quoted Gibbon, and Shelley, and Mill? Where are dear Apollo, and dear Venus now!"

"Oh don't, don't be so cruel to me, Jude, and I so unhappy!" she sobbed. "I can't bear it! I was in error—I cannot reason with you. I was wrong—proud in my own conceit! Arabella's coming was the finish. Don't satirize me: it cuts like a knife!"

He flung his arms round her and kissed her passionately there in the silent street, before she could hinder him. They went on till they came to a little coffee-house. "Jude," she said with suppressed tears, "would you mind getting a lodging here?"

"I will—if, if you really wish? But do you? Let me go to our door and understand you."

He went and conducted her in. She said she wanted no supper, and went in the dark upstairs and struck a light. Turning she found that Jude had followed her, and was standing at the chamber door. She went to him, put her hand in his, and said "Good-night."

"But Sue! Don't we live here?"

"You said you would do as I wished!"

"Yes. Very well! ... Perhaps it was wrong of me to argue distastefully as I have done! Perhaps as we couldn't conscientiously marry at first in the old-fashioned way, we ought to have parted. Perhaps the world is not illuminated enough for such experiments as ours! Who were we, to think we could act as pioneers!"

"I am so glad you see that much, at any rate. I never deliberately meant to do as I did. I slipped into my false position through jealousy and agitation!"

"But surely through love—you loved me?"

"Yes. But I wanted to let it stop there, and go on always as mere lovers; until—"

"But people in love couldn't live for ever like that!"

“Women could: men can’t, because they—won’t. An average woman is in this superior to an average man—that she never instigates, only responds. We ought to have lived in mental communion, and no more.”

“I was the unhappy cause of the change, as I have said before! ... Well, as you will! ... But human nature can’t help being itself.”

“Oh yes—that’s just what it has to learn—self-mastery.”

“I repeat—if either were to blame it was not you but I.”

“No—it was I. Your wickedness was only the natural man’s desire to possess the woman. Mine was not the reciprocal wish till envy stimulated me to oust Arabella. I had thought I ought in charity to let you approach me—that it was damnably selfish to torture you as I did my other friend. But I shouldn’t have given way if you hadn’t broken me down by making me fear you would go back to her... But don’t let us say any more about it! Jude, will you leave me to myself now?”

“Yes... But Sue—my wife, as you are!” he burst out; “my old reproach to you was, after all, a true one. You have never loved me as I love you—never—never! Yours is not a passionate heart—your heart does not burn in a flame! You are, upon the whole, a sort of fay, or sprite—not a woman!”

“At first I did not love you, Jude; that I own. When I first knew you I merely wanted you to love me. I did not exactly flirt with you; but that inborn craving which undermines some women’s morals almost more than unbridled passion—the craving to attract and captivate, regardless of the injury it may do the man—was in me; and when I found I had caught you, I was frightened. And then—I don’t know how it was—I couldn’t bear to let you go—possibly to Arabella again—and so I got to love you, Jude. But you see, however fondly it ended, it began in the selfish and cruel wish to make your heart ache for me without letting mine ache for you.”

“And now you add to your cruelty by leaving me!”

“Ah—yes! The further I flounder, the more harm I do!”

“O Sue!” said he with a sudden sense of his own danger. “Do not do an immoral thing for moral reasons! You have been my social salvation. Stay with me for humanity’s sake! You know what a weak fellow I am. My two arch-enemies you know—my weakness for womankind and my impulse to strong liquor. Don’t abandon me to them, Sue, to save your own soul only! They have been kept entirely at a distance since you became my guardian-

angel! Since I have had you I have been able to go into any temptations of the sort, without risk. Isn't my safety worth a little sacrifice of dogmatic principle? I am in terror lest, if you leave me, it will be with me another case of the pig that was washed turning back to his wallowing in the mire!"

Sue burst out weeping. "Oh, but you must not, Jude! You won't! I'll pray for you night and day!"

"Well—never mind; don't grieve," said Jude generously. "I did suffer, God knows, about you at that time; and now I suffer again. But perhaps not so much as you. The woman mostly gets the worst of it in the long run!"

"She does."

"Unless she is absolutely worthless and contemptible. And this one is not that, anyhow!"

Sue drew a nervous breath or two. "She is—I fear! ... Now Jude—good-night,—please!"

"I mustn't stay?—Not just once more? As it has been so many times—O Sue, my wife, why not?"

"No—no—not wife! ... I am in your hands, Jude—don't tempt me back now I have advanced so far!"

"Very well. I do your bidding. I owe that to you, darling, in penance for how I overruled it at the first time. My God, how selfish I was! Perhaps—perhaps I spoilt one of the highest and purest loves that ever existed between man and woman! ... Then let the veil of our temple be rent in two from this hour!"

He went to the bed, removed one of the pair of pillows thereon, and flung it to the floor.

Sue looked at him, and bending over the bed-rail wept silently. "You don't see that it is a matter of conscience with me, and not of dislike to you!" she brokenly murmured. "Dislike to you! But I can't say any more—it breaks my heart—it will be undoing all I have begun! Jude—good-night!"

"Good-night," he said, and turned to go.

"Oh but you shall kiss me!" said she, starting up. "I can't—bear—!"

He clasped her, and kissed her weeping face as he had scarcely ever done before, and they remained in silence till she said, "Good-bye, good-bye!" And then gently pressing him away she got free, trying to mitigate the sadness by saying: "We'll be dear friends just the same, Jude, won't we? And we'll see each other sometimes—yes!—and forget all this, and try to be as we were long ago?"

Jude did not permit himself to speak, but turned and descended the stairs.

## IV

The man whom Sue, in her mental *volte-face*, was now regarding as her inseparable husband, lived still at Marygreen.

On the day before the tragedy of the children, Phillotson had seen both her and Jude as they stood in the rain at Christminster watching the procession to the theatre. But he had said nothing of it at the moment to his companion Gillingham, who, being an old friend, was staying with him at the village aforesaid, and had, indeed, suggested the day's trip to Christminster.

"What are you thinking of?" said Gillingham, as they went home. "The university degree you never obtained?"

"No, no," said Phillotson gruffly. "Of somebody I saw to-day." In a moment he added, "Susanna."

"I saw her, too."

"You said nothing."

"I didn't wish to draw your attention to her. But, as you did see her, you should have said: 'How d'ye do, my dear-that-was?'"

"Ah, well. I might have. But what do you think of this: I have good reason for supposing that she was innocent when I divorced her—that I was all wrong. Yes, indeed! Awkward, isn't it?"

"She has taken care to set you right since, anyhow, apparently."

"H'm. That's a cheap sneer. I ought to have waited, unquestionably."

At the end of the week, when Gillingham had gone back to his school near Shaston, Phillotson, as was his custom, went to Alfredston market; ruminating again on Arabella's intelligence as he walked down the long hill which he had known before Jude knew it, though his history had not beaten so intensely upon its incline. Arrived in the town he bought his usual weekly local paper; and when he had sat down in an inn to refresh himself for the five miles' walk back, he pulled the paper from his pocket



and read awhile. The account of the “strange suicide of a stone-mason’s children” met his eye.

Unimpassioned as he was, it impressed him painfully, and puzzled him not a little, for he could not understand the age of the elder child being what it was stated to be. However, there was no doubt that the newspaper report was in some way true.

“Their cup of sorrow is now full!” he said: and thought and thought of Sue, and what she had gained by leaving him.

Arabella having made her home at Alfredston, and the schoolmaster coming to market there every Saturday, it was not wonderful that in a few weeks they met again—the precise time being just after her return from Christminster, where she had stayed much longer than she had at first intended, keeping an interested eye on Jude, though Jude had seen no more of her. Phillotson was on his way homeward when he encountered Arabella, and she was approaching the town.

“You like walking out this way, Mrs. Cartlett?” he said.

“I’ve just begun to again,” she replied. “It is where I lived as maid and wife, and all the past things of my life that are interesting to my feelings are mixed up with this road. And they have been stirred up in me too, lately; for I’ve been visiting at Christminster. Yes; I’ve seen Jude.”

“Ah! How do they bear their terrible affliction?”

“In a ve-ry strange way—ve-ry strange! She don’t live with him any longer. I only heard of it as a certainty just before I left; though I had thought things were drifting that way from their manner when I called on them.”

“Not live with her husband? Why, I should have thought ’twould have united them more.”

“He’s not her husband, after all. She has never really married him although they have passed as man and wife so long. And now, instead of this sad event making ’em hurry up, and get the thing done legally, she’s took in a queer religious way, just as I was in my affliction at losing Cartlett, only hers is of a more ’sterical sort than mine. And she says, so I was told, that she’s your wife in the eye of Heaven and the Church—yours only; and can’t be anybody else’s by any act of man.”

“Ah—indeed? ... Separated, have they!”

“You see, the eldest boy was mine—”

“Oh—yours!”

“Yes, poor little fellow—born in lawful wedlock, thank God. And perhaps she feels, over and above other things, that I ought to have been in her place. I can’t say. However, as for me, I am soon off from here. I’ve got Father to look after now, and we can’t live in such a hum-drum place as this. I hope soon to be in a bar again at Christminster, or some other big town.”

They parted. When Phillotson had ascended the hill a few steps he stopped, hastened back, and called her.

“What is, or was, their address?”

Arabella gave it.

“Thank you. Good afternoon.”

Arabella smiled grimly as she resumed her way, and practised dimple-making all along the road from where the pollard willows begin to the old almshouses in the first street of the town.

Meanwhile Phillotson ascended to Marygreen, and for the first time during a lengthened period he lived with a forward eye. On crossing under the large trees of the green to the humble schoolhouse to which he had been reduced he stood a moment, and pictured Sue coming out of the door to meet him. No man had ever suffered more inconvenience from his own charity, Christian or heathen, than Phillotson had done in letting Sue go. He had been knocked about from pillar to post at the hands of the virtuous almost beyond endurance; he had been nearly starved, and was now dependent entirely upon the very small stipend from the school of this village (where the parson had got ill-spoken of for befriending him). He had often thought of Arabella’s remarks that he should have been more severe with Sue, that her recalcitrant spirit would soon have been broken. Yet such was his obstinate and illogical disregard of opinion, and of the principles in which he had been trained, that his convictions on the rightness of his course with his wife had not been disturbed.

Principles which could be subverted by feeling in one direction were liable to the same catastrophe in another. The instincts which had allowed him to give Sue her liberty now enabled him to regard her as none the worse for her life with Jude. He wished for her still, in his curious way, if

he did not love her, and, apart from policy, soon felt that he would be gratified to have her again as his, always provided that she came willingly.

But artifice was necessary, he had found, for stemming the cold and inhumane blast of the world's contempt. And here were the materials ready made. By getting Sue back and remarrying her on the respectable plea of having entertained erroneous views of her, and gained his divorce wrongfully, he might acquire some comfort, resume his old courses, perhaps return to the Shaston school, if not even to the Church as a licentiate.

He thought he would write to Gillingham to inquire his views, and what he thought of his, Phillotson's, sending a letter to her. Gillingham replied, naturally, that now she was gone it were best to let her be, and considered that if she were anybody's wife she was the wife of the man to whom she had borne three children and owed such tragical adventures. Probably, as his attachment to her seemed unusually strong, the singular pair would make their union legal in course of time, and all would be well, and decent, and in order.

"But they won't—Sue won't!" exclaimed Phillotson to himself. "Gillingham is so matter of fact. She's affected by Christminster sentiment and teaching. I can see her views on the indissolubility of marriage well enough, and I know where she got them. They are not mine; but I shall make use of them to further mine."

He wrote a brief reply to Gillingham. "I know I am entirely wrong, but I don't agree with you. As to her having lived with and had three children by him, my feeling is (though I can advance no logical or moral defence of it, on the old lines) that it has done little more than finish her education. I shall write to her, and learn whether what that woman said is true or no."

As he had made up his mind to do this before he had written to his friend, there had not been much reason for writing to the latter at all. However, it was Phillotson's way to act thus.

He accordingly addressed a carefully considered epistle to Sue, and, knowing her emotional temperament, threw a Rhadamanthine strictness into the lines here and there, carefully hiding his heterodox feelings, not to frighten her. He stated that, it having come to his knowledge that her views had considerably changed, he felt compelled to say that his own, too, were largely modified by events subsequent to their parting. He would not

conceal from her that passionate love had little to do with his communication. It arose from a wish to make their lives, if not a success, at least no such disastrous failure as they threatened to become, through his acting on what he had considered at the time a principle of justice, charity, and reason.

To indulge one's instinctive and uncontrolled sense of justice and right, was not, he had found, permitted with impunity in an old civilization like ours. It was necessary to act under an acquired and cultivated sense of the same, if you wished to enjoy an average share of comfort and honour; and to let crude loving kindness take care of itself.

He suggested that she should come to him there at Marygreen.

On second thoughts he took out the last paragraph but one; and having rewritten the letter he dispatched it immediately, and in some excitement awaited the issue.

A few days after a figure moved through the white fog which enveloped the Beersheba suburb of Christminster, towards the quarter in which Jude Fawley had taken up his lodging since his division from Sue. A timid knock sounded upon the door of his abode.

It was evening—so he was at home; and by a species of divination he jumped up and rushed to the door himself.

“Will you come out with me? I would rather not come in. I want to—to talk with you—and to go with you to the cemetery.”

It had been in the trembling accents of Sue that these words came. Jude put on his hat. “It is dreary for you to be out,” he said. “But if you prefer not to come in, I don't mind.”

“Yes—I do. I shall not keep you long.”

Jude was too much affected to go on talking at first; she, too, was now such a mere cluster of nerves that all initiatory power seemed to have left her, and they proceeded through the fog like Acherontic shades for a long while, without sound or gesture.

“I want to tell you,” she presently said, her voice now quick, now slow, “so that you may not hear of it by chance. I am going back to Richard. He has—so magnanimously—agreed to forgive all.”

“Going back? How can you go—”

“He is going to marry me again. That is for form’s sake, and to satisfy the world, which does not see things as they are. But of course I *am* his wife already. Nothing has changed that.”

He turned upon her with an anguish that was well-nigh fierce.

“But you are *my* wife! Yes, you are. You know it. I have always regretted that feint of ours in going away and pretending to come back legally married, to save appearances. I loved you, and you loved me; and we closed with each other; and that made the marriage. We still love—you as well as I—*know* it, Sue! Therefore our marriage is not cancelled.”

“Yes; I know how you see it,” she answered with despairing self-suppression. “But I am going to marry him again, as it would be called by you. Strictly speaking you, too—don’t mind my saying it, Jude!—you should take back—Arabella.”

“I should? Good God—what next! But how if you and I had married legally, as we were on the point of doing?”

“I should have felt just the same—that ours was not a marriage. And I would go back to Richard without repeating the sacrament, if he asked me. But ‘the world and its ways have a certain worth’ (I suppose), therefore I concede a repetition of the ceremony... Don’t crush all the life out of me by satire and argument, I implore you! I was strongest once, I know, and perhaps I treated you cruelly. But Jude, return good for evil! I am the weaker now. Don’t retaliate upon me, but be kind. Oh be kind to me—a poor wicked woman who is trying to mend!”

He shook his head hopelessly, his eyes wet. The blow of her bereavement seemed to have destroyed her reasoning faculty. The once keen vision was dimmed. “All wrong, all wrong!” he said huskily. “Error—perversity! It drives me out of my senses. Do you care for him? Do you love him? You know you don’t! It will be a fanatic prostitution—God forgive me, yes—that’s what it will be!”

“I don’t love him—I must, must, own it, in deepest remorse! But I shall try to learn to love him by obeying him.”

Jude argued, urged, implored; but her conviction was proof against all. It seemed to be the one thing on earth on which she was firm, and that her firmness in this had left her tottering in every other impulse and wish she possessed.

“I have been considerate enough to let you know the whole truth, and to tell it you myself,” she said in cut tones; “that you might not consider yourself slighted by hearing of it at second hand. I have even owned the extreme fact that I do not love him. I did not think you would be so rough with me for doing so! I was going to ask you...”

“To give you away?”

“No. To send—my boxes to me—if you would. But I suppose you won’t.”

“Why, of course I will. What—isn’t he coming to fetch you—to marry you from here? He won’t condescend to do that?”

“No—I won’t let him. I go to him voluntarily, just as I went away from him. We are to be married at his little church at Marygreen.”

She was so sadly sweet in what he called her wrong-headedness that Jude could not help being moved to tears more than once for pity of her. “I never knew such a woman for doing impulsive penances, as you, Sue! No sooner does one expect you to go straight on, as the one rational proceeding, than you double round the corner!”

“Ah, well; let that go! ... Jude, I must say good-bye! But I wanted you to go to the cemetery with me. Let our farewell be there—beside the graves of those who died to bring home to me the error of my views.”

They turned in the direction of the place, and the gate was opened to them on application. Sue had been there often, and she knew the way to the spot in the dark. They reached it, and stood still.

“It is here—I should like to part,” said she.

“So be it!”

“Don’t think me hard because I have acted on conviction. Your generous devotion to me is unparalleled, Jude! Your worldly failure, if you have failed, is to your credit rather than to your blame. Remember that the best and greatest among mankind are those who do themselves no worldly good. Every successful man is more or less a selfish man. The devoted fail... ‘Charity seeketh not her own.’”

“In that chapter we are at one, ever beloved darling, and on it we’ll part friends. Its verses will stand fast when all the rest that you call religion has passed away!”

“Well—don’t discuss it. Good-bye, Jude; my fellow-sinner, and kindest friend!”

“Good-bye, my mistaken wife. Good-bye!”

## V

The next afternoon the familiar Christminster fog still hung over all things. Sue's slim shape was only just discernible going towards the station.

Jude had no heart to go to his work that day. Neither could he go anywhere in the direction by which she would be likely to pass. He went in an opposite one, to a dreary, strange, flat scene, where boughs dripped, and coughs and consumption lurked, and where he had never been before.

"Sue's gone from me—gone!" he murmured miserably.

She in the meantime had left by the train, and reached Alfredston Road, where she entered the steam-tram and was conveyed into the town. It had been her request to Phillotson that he should not meet her. She wished, she said, to come to him voluntarily, to his very house and hearthstone.

It was Friday evening, which had been chosen because the schoolmaster was disengaged at four o'clock that day till the Monday morning following. The little car she hired at the Bear to drive her to Marygreen set her down at the end of the lane, half a mile from the village, by her desire, and preceded her to the schoolhouse with such portion of her luggage as she had brought. On its return she encountered it, and asked the driver if he had found the master's house open. The man informed her that he had, and that her things had been taken in by the schoolmaster himself.

She could now enter Marygreen without exciting much observation. She crossed by the well and under the trees to the pretty new school on the other side, and lifted the latch of the dwelling without knocking. Phillotson stood in the middle of the room, awaiting her, as requested.

"I've come, Richard," said she, looking pale and shaken, and sinking into a chair. "I cannot believe—you forgive your—wife!"

"Everything, darling Susanna," said Phillotson.

She started at the endearment, though it had been spoken advisedly without fervour. Then she nerved herself again.



“My children—are dead—and it is right that they should be! I am glad—almost. They were sin-begotten. They were sacrificed to teach me how to live! Their death was the first stage of my purification. That’s why they have not died in vain! ... You will take me back?”

He was so stirred by her pitiful words and tone that he did more than he had meant to do. He bent and kissed her cheek.

Sue imperceptibly shrank away, her flesh quivering under the touch of his lips.

Phillotson’s heart sank, for desire was nascent in him. “You still have an aversion to me!”

“Oh no, dear—I have been driving through the damp, and I was chilly!” she said, with a hurried smile of apprehension. “When are we going to have the marriage? Soon?”

“To-morrow morning, early, I thought—if you really wish. I am sending round to the vicar to let him know you are come. I have told him all, and he highly approves—he says it will bring our lives to a triumphant and satisfactory issue. But—are you sure of yourself? It is not too late to refuse now if—you think you can’t bring yourself to it, you know?”

“Yes, yes, I can! I want it done quick. Tell him, tell him at once! My strength is tried by the undertaking—I can’t wait long!”

“Have something to eat and drink then, and go over to your room at Mrs. Edlin’s. I’ll tell the vicar half-past eight to-morrow, before anybody is about—if that’s not too soon for you? My friend Gillingham is here to help us in the ceremony. He’s been good enough to come all the way from Shaston at great inconvenience to himself.”

Unlike a woman in ordinary, whose eye is so keen for material things, Sue seemed to see nothing of the room they were in, or any detail of her environment. But on moving across the parlour to put down her muff she uttered a little “Oh!” and grew paler than before. Her look was that of the condemned criminal who catches sight of his coffin.

“What?” said Phillotson.

The flap of the bureau chanced to be open, and in placing her muff upon it her eye had caught a document which lay there. “Oh—only a—funny surprise!” she said, trying to laugh away her cry as she came back to the table.

“Ah! Yes,” said Phillotson. “The licence... It has just come.”

Gillingham now joined them from his room above, and Sue nervously made herself agreeable to him by talking on whatever she thought likely to interest him, except herself, though that interested him most of all. She obediently ate some supper, and prepared to leave for her lodging hard by. Phillotson crossed the green with her, bidding her good-night at Mrs. Edlin’s door.

The old woman accompanied Sue to her temporary quarters, and helped her to unpack. Among other things she laid out a night-gown tastefully embroidered.

“Oh—I didn’t know *that* was put in!” said Sue quickly. “I didn’t mean it to be. Here is a different one.” She handed a new and absolutely plain garment, of coarse and unbleached calico.

“But this is the prettiest,” said Mrs. Edlin. “That one is no better than very sackcloth o’ Scripture!”

“Yes—I meant it to be. Give me the other.”

She took it, and began rending it with all her might, the tears resounding through the house like a screech-owl.

“But my dear, dear!—whatever...”

“It is adulterous! It signifies what I don’t feel—I bought it long ago—to please Jude. It must be destroyed!”

Mrs. Edlin lifted her hands, and Sue excitedly continued to tear the linen into strips, laying the pieces in the fire.

“You med ha’ give it to me!” said the widow. “It do make my heart ache to see such pretty open-work as that a-burned by the flames—not that ornamental night-rails can be much use to a’ ould ’ooman like I. My days for such be all past and gone!”

“It is an accursed thing—it reminds me of what I want to forget!” Sue repeated. “It is only fit for the fire.”

“Lord, you be too strict! What do ye use such words for, and condemn to hell your dear little innocent children that’s lost to ’ee! Upon my life I don’t call that religion!”

Sue flung her face upon the bed, sobbing. “Oh, don’t, don’t! That kills me!” She remained shaken with her grief, and slipped down upon her

knees.

“I’ll tell ’ee what—you ought not to marry this man again!” said Mrs. Edlin indignantly. “You are in love wi’ t’ other still!”

“Yes I must—I am his already!”

“Pshoo! You be t’ other man’s. If you didn’t like to commit yourselves to the binding vow again, just at first, ’twas all the more credit to your consciences, considering your reasons, and you med ha’ lived on, and made it all right at last. After all, it concerned nobody but your own two selves.”

“Richard says he’ll have me back, and I’m bound to go! If he had refused, it might not have been so much my duty to—give up Jude. But—” She remained with her face in the bed-clothes, and Mrs. Edlin left the room.

Phillotson in the interval had gone back to his friend Gillingham, who still sat over the supper-table. They soon rose, and walked out on the green to smoke awhile. A light was burning in Sue’s room, a shadow moving now and then across the blind.

Gillingham had evidently been impressed with the indefinable charm of Sue, and after a silence he said, “Well: you’ve all but got her again at last. She can’t very well go a second time. The pear has dropped into your hand.”

“Yes! ... I suppose I am right in taking her at her word. I confess there seems a touch of selfishness in it. Apart from her being what she is, of course, a luxury for a fogey like me, it will set me right in the eyes of the clergy and orthodox laity, who have never forgiven me for letting her go. So I may get back in some degree into my old track.”

“Well—if you’ve got any sound reason for marrying her again, do it now in God’s name! I was always against your opening the cage-door and letting the bird go in such an obviously suicidal way. You might have been a school inspector by this time, or a reverend, if you hadn’t been so weak about her.”

“I did myself irreparable damage—I know it.”

“Once you’ve got her housed again, stick to her.”

Phillotson was more evasive to-night. He did not care to admit clearly that his taking Sue to him again had at bottom nothing to do with

repentance of letting her go, but was, primarily, a human instinct flying in the face of custom and profession. He said, "Yes—I shall do that. I know woman better now. Whatever justice there was in releasing her, there was little logic, for one holding my views on other subjects."

Gillingham looked at him, and wondered whether it would ever happen that the reactionary spirit induced by the world's sneers and his own physical wishes would make Phillotson more orthodoxly cruel to her than he had erstwhile been informally and perversely kind.

"I perceive it won't do to give way to impulse," Phillotson resumed, feeling more and more every minute the necessity of acting up to his position. "I flew in the face of the Church's teaching; but I did it without malice prepense. Women are so strange in their influence that they tempt you to misplaced kindness. However, I know myself better now. A little judicious severity, perhaps..."

"Yes; but you must tighten the reins by degrees only. Don't be too strenuous at first. She'll come to any terms in time."

The caution was unnecessary, though Phillotson did not say so. "I remember what my vicar at Shaston said, when I left after the row that was made about my agreeing to her elopement. 'The only thing you can do to retrieve your position and hers is to admit your error in not restraining her with a wise and strong hand, and to get her back again if she'll come, and be firm in the future.' But I was so headstrong at that time that I paid no heed. And that after the divorce she should have thought of doing so I did not dream."

The gate of Mrs. Edlin's cottage clicked, and somebody began crossing in the direction of the school. Phillotson said "Good-night."

"Oh, is that Mr. Phillotson," said Mrs. Edlin. "I was going over to see 'ee. I've been upstairs with her, helping her to unpack her things; and upon my word, sir, I don't think this ought to be!"

"What—the wedding?"

"Yes. She's forcing herself to it, poor dear little thing; and you've no notion what she's suffering. I was never much for religion nor against it, but it can't be right to let her do this, and you ought to persuade her out of it. Of course everybody will say it was very good and forgiving of 'ee to take her to 'ee again. But for my part I don't."

“It’s her wish, and I am willing,” said Phillotson with grave reserve, opposition making him illogically tenacious now. “A great piece of laxity will be rectified.”

“I don’t believe it. She’s his wife if anybody’s. She’s had three children by him, and he loves her dearly; and it’s a wicked shame to egg her on to this, poor little quivering thing! She’s got nobody on her side. The one man who’d be her friend the obstinate creature won’t allow to come near her. What first put her into this mood o’ mind, I wonder!”

“I can’t tell. Not I certainly. It is all voluntary on her part. Now that’s all I have to say.” Phillotson spoke stiffly. “You’ve turned round, Mrs. Edlin. It is unseemly of you!”

“Well, I knowed you’d be affronted at what I had to say; but I don’t mind that. The truth’s the truth.”

“I’m not affronted, Mrs. Edlin. You’ve been too kind a neighbour for that. But I must be allowed to know what’s best for myself and Susanna. I suppose you won’t go to church with us, then?”

“No. Be hanged if I can... I don’t know what the times be coming to! Matrimony have growed to be that serious in these days that one really do feel afeard to move in it at all. In my time we took it more careless; and I don’t know that we was any the worse for it! When I and my poor man were jined in it we kept up the junketing all the week, and drunk the parish dry, and had to borrow half a crown to begin housekeeping!”

When Mrs. Edlin had gone back to her cottage Phillotson spoke moodily. “I don’t know whether I ought to do it—at any rate quite so rapidly.”

“Why?”

“If she is really compelling herself to this against her instincts—merely from this new sense of duty or religion—I ought perhaps to let her wait a bit.”

“Now you’ve got so far you ought not to back out of it. That’s my opinion.”

“I can’t very well put it off now; that’s true. But I had a qualm when she gave that little cry at sight of the licence.”

“Now, never you have qualms, old boy. I mean to give her away to-morrow morning, and you mean to take her. It has always been on my

conscience that I didn't urge more objections to your letting her go, and now we've got to this stage I shan't be content if I don't help you to set the matter right."

Phillotson nodded, and seeing how staunch his friend was, became more frank. "No doubt when it gets known what I've done I shall be thought a soft fool by many. But they don't know Sue as I do. Though so elusive, hers is such an honest nature at bottom that I don't think she has ever done anything against her conscience. The fact of her having lived with Fawley goes for nothing. At the time she left me for him she thought she was quite within her right. Now she thinks otherwise."

The next morning came, and the self-sacrifice of the woman on the altar of what she was pleased to call her principles was acquiesced in by these two friends, each from his own point of view. Phillotson went across to the Widow Edlin's to fetch Sue a few minutes after eight o'clock. The fog of the previous day or two on the low-lands had travelled up here by now, and the trees on the green caught armfuls, and turned them into showers of big drops. The bride was waiting, ready; bonnet and all on. She had never in her life looked so much like the lily her name connoted as she did in that pallid morning light. Chastened, world-weary, remorseful, the strain on her nerves had preyed upon her flesh and bones, and she appeared smaller in outline than she had formerly done, though Sue had not been a large woman in her days of rudest health.

"Prompt," said the schoolmaster, magnanimously taking her hand. But he checked his impulse to kiss her, remembering her start of yesterday, which unpleasantly lingered in his mind.

Gillingham joined them, and they left the house, Widow Edlin continuing steadfast in her refusal to assist in the ceremony.

"Where is the church?" said Sue. She had not lived there for any length of time since the old church was pulled down, and in her preoccupation forgot the new one.

"Up here," said Phillotson; and presently the tower loomed large and solemn in the fog. The vicar had already crossed to the building, and when they entered he said pleasantly: "We almost want candles."

"You do—wish me to be yours, Richard?" gasped Sue in a whisper.

"Certainly, dear; above all things in the world."

Sue said no more; and for the second or third time he felt he was not quite following out the humane instinct which had induced him to let her go.

There they stood, five altogether: the parson, the clerk, the couple, and Gillingham; and the holy ordinance was resolementized forthwith. In the nave of the edifice were two or three villagers, and when the clergyman came to the words, "What God hath joined," a woman's voice from among these was heard to utter audibly:

"God hath jined indeed!"

It was like a re-enactment by the ghosts of their former selves of the similar scene which had taken place at Melchester years before. When the books were signed the vicar congratulated the husband and wife on having performed a noble, and righteous, and mutually forgiving act. "All's well that ends well," he said smiling. "May you long be happy together, after thus having been 'saved as by fire.'"

They came down the nearly empty building, and crossed to the schoolhouse. Gillingham wanted to get home that night, and left early. He, too, congratulated the couple. "Now," he said in parting from Phillotson, who walked out a little way, "I shall be able to tell the people in your native place a good round tale; and they'll all say 'Well done,' depend on it."

When the schoolmaster got back Sue was making a pretence of doing some housewifery as if she lived there. But she seemed timid at his approach, and compunction wrought on him at sight of it.

"Of course, my dear, I shan't expect to intrude upon your personal privacy any more than I did before," he said gravely. "It is for our good socially to do this, and that's its justification, if it was not my reason." Sue brightened a little.

## VI

The place was the door of Jude's lodging in the out-skirts of Christminster—far from the precincts of St. Silas' where he had formerly lived, which saddened him to sickness. The rain was coming down. A woman in shabby black stood on the doorstep talking to Jude, who held the door in his hand.

"I am lonely, destitute, and houseless—that's what I am! Father has turned me out of doors after borrowing every penny I'd got, to put it into his business, and then accusing me of laziness when I was only waiting for a situation. I am at the mercy of the world! If you can't take me and help me, Jude, I must go to the workhouse, or to something worse. Only just now two undergraduates winked at me as I came along. 'Tis hard for a woman to keep virtuous where there's so many young men!"

The woman in the rain who spoke thus was Arabella, the evening being that of the day after Sue's remarriage with Phillotson.

"I am sorry for you, but I am only in lodgings," said Jude coldly.

"Then you turn me away?"

"I'll give you enough to get food and lodging for a few days."

"Oh, but can't you have the kindness to take me in? I cannot endure going to a public house to lodge; and I am so lonely. Please, Jude, for old times' sake!"

"No, no," said Jude hastily. "I don't want to be reminded of those things; and if you talk about them I shall not help you."

"Then I suppose I must go!" said Arabella. She bent her head against the doorpost and began sobbing.

"The house is full," said Jude. "And I have only a little extra room to my own—not much more than a closet—where I keep my tools, and templates, and the few books I have left!"

"That would be a palace for me!"



“There is no bedstead in it.”

“A bit of a bed could be made on the floor. It would be good enough for me.”

Unable to be harsh with her, and not knowing what to do, Jude called the man who let the lodgings, and said this was an acquaintance of his in great distress for want of temporary shelter.

“You may remember me as barmaid at the Lamb and Flag formerly?” spoke up Arabella. “My father has insulted me this afternoon, and I’ve left him, though without a penny!”

The householder said he could not recall her features. “But still, if you are a friend of Mr. Fawley’s we’ll do what we can for a day or two—if he’ll make himself answerable?”

“Yes, yes,” said Jude. “She has really taken me quite unawares; but I should wish to help her out of her difficulty.” And an arrangement was ultimately come to under which a bed was to be thrown down in Jude’s lumber-room, to make it comfortable for Arabella till she could get out of the strait she was in—not by her own fault, as she declared—and return to her father’s again.

While they were waiting for this to be done Arabella said: “You know the news, I suppose?”

“I guess what you mean; but I know nothing.”

“I had a letter from Anny at Alfredston to-day. She had just heard that the wedding was to be yesterday: but she didn’t know if it had come off.”

“I don’t wish to talk of it.”

“No, no: of course you don’t. Only it shows what kind of woman—”

“Don’t speak of her I say! She’s a fool! And she’s an angel, too, poor dear!”

“If it’s done, he’ll have a chance of getting back to his old position, by everybody’s account, so Anny says. All his well-wishers will be pleased, including the bishop himself.”

“Do spare me, Arabella.”

Arabella was duly installed in the little attic, and at first she did not come near Jude at all. She went to and fro about her own business, which, when they met for a moment on the stairs or in the passage, she informed

him was that of obtaining another place in the occupation she understood best. When Jude suggested London as affording the most likely opening in the liquor trade, she shook her head. "No—the temptations are too many," she said. "Any humble tavern in the country before that for me."

On the Sunday morning following, when he breakfasted later than on other days, she meekly asked him if she might come in to breakfast with him, as she had broken her teapot, and could not replace it immediately, the shops being shut.

"Yes, if you like," he said indifferently.

While they sat without speaking she suddenly observed: "You seem all in a brood, old man. I'm sorry for you."

"I am all in a brood."

"It is about her, I know. It's no business of mine, but I could find out all about the wedding—if it really did take place—if you wanted to know."

"How could you?"

"I wanted to go to Alfredston to get a few things I left there. And I could see Anny, who'll be sure to have heard all about it, as she has friends at Marygreen."

Jude could not bear to acquiesce in this proposal; but his suspense pitted itself against his discretion, and won in the struggle. "You can ask about it if you like," he said. "I've not heard a sound from there. It must have been very private, if—they have married."

"I am afraid I haven't enough cash to take me there and back, or I should have gone before. I must wait till I have earned some."

"Oh—I can pay the journey for you," he said impatiently. And thus his suspense as to Sue's welfare, and the possible marriage, moved him to dispatch for intelligence the last emissary he would have thought of choosing deliberately.

Arabella went, Jude requesting her to be home not later than by the seven o'clock train. When she had gone he said: "Why should I have charged her to be back by a particular time! She's nothing to me—nor the other neither!"

But having finished work he could not help going to the station to meet Arabella, dragged thither by feverish haste to get the news she might

bring, and know the worst. Arabella had made dimples most successfully all the way home, and when she stepped out of the railway carriage she smiled. He merely said "Well?" with the very reverse of a smile.

"They are married."

"Yes—of course they are!" he returned. She observed, however, the hard strain upon his lip as he spoke.

"Anny says she has heard from Belinda, her relation out at Marygreen, that it was very sad, and curious!"

"How do you mean sad? She wanted to marry him again, didn't she? And he her!"

"Yes—that was it. She wanted to in one sense, but not in the other. Mrs. Edlin was much upset by it all, and spoke out her mind at Phillotson. But Sue was that excited about it that she burnt her best embroidery that she'd worn with you, to blot you out entirely. Well—if a woman feels like it, she ought to do it. I commend her for it, though others don't." Arabella sighed. "She felt he was her only husband, and that she belonged to nobody else in the sight of God A'mighty while he lived. Perhaps another woman feels the same about herself, too!" Arabella sighed again.

"I don't want any cant!" exclaimed Jude.

"It isn't cant," said Arabella. "I feel exactly the same as she!"

He closed that issue by remarking abruptly: "Well—now I know all I wanted to know. Many thanks for your information. I am not going back to my lodgings just yet." And he left her straightway.

In his misery and depression Jude walked to well-nigh every spot in the city that he had visited with Sue; thence he did not know whither, and then thought of going home to his usual evening meal. But having all the vices of his virtues, and some to spare, he turned into a public house, for the first time during many months. Among the possible consequences of her marriage Sue had not dwelt on this.

Arabella, meanwhile, had gone back. The evening passed, and Jude did not return. At half-past nine Arabella herself went out, first proceeding to an outlying district near the river where her father lived, and had opened a small and precarious pork-shop lately.

"Well," she said to him, "for all your rowing me that night, I've called in, for I have something to tell you. I think I shall get married and settled

again. Only you must help me: and you can do no less, after what I've stood 'ee."

"I'll do anything to get thee off my hands!"

"Very well. I am now going to look for my young man. He's on the loose I'm afraid, and I must get him home. All I want you to do to-night is not to fasten the door, in case I should want to sleep here, and should be late."

"I thought you'd soon get tired of giving yourself airs and keeping away!"

"Well—don't do the door. That's all I say."

She then sallied out again, and first hastening back to Jude's to make sure that he had not returned, began her search for him. A shrewd guess as to his probable course took her straight to the tavern which Jude had formerly frequented, and where she had been barmaid for a brief term. She had no sooner opened the door of the "Private Bar" than her eyes fell upon him—sitting in the shade at the back of the compartment, with his eyes fixed on the floor in a blank stare. He was drinking nothing stronger than ale just then. He did not observe her, and she entered and sat beside him.

Jude looked up, and said without surprise: "You've come to have something, Arabella? ... I'm trying to forget her: that's all! But I can't; and I am going home." She saw that he was a little way on in liquor, but only a little as yet.

"I've come entirely to look for you, dear boy. You are not well. Now you must have something better than that." Arabella held up her finger to the barmaid. "You shall have a liqueur—that's better fit for a man of education than beer. You shall have maraschino, or curaçao dry or sweet, or cherry brandy. I'll treat you, poor chap!"

"I don't care which! Say cherry brandy... Sue has served me badly, very badly. I didn't expect it of Sue! I stuck to her, and she ought to have stuck to me. I'd have sold my soul for her sake, but she wouldn't risk hers a jot for me. To save her own soul she lets mine go damn! ... But it isn't her fault, poor little girl—I am sure it isn't!"

How Arabella had obtained money did not appear, but she ordered a liqueur each, and paid for them. When they had drunk these Arabella suggested another; and Jude had the pleasure of being, as it were, personally conducted through the varieties of spirituous delectation by one

who knew the landmarks well. Arabella kept very considerably in the rear of Jude; but though she only sipped where he drank, she took as much as she could safely take without losing her head—which was not a little, as the crimson upon her countenance showed.

Her tone towards him to-night was uniformly soothing and cajoling; and whenever he said “I don’t care what happens to me,” a thing he did continually, she replied, “But I do very much!” The closing hour came, and they were compelled to turn out; whereupon Arabella put her arm round his waist, and guided his unsteady footsteps.

When they were in the streets she said: “I don’t know what our landlord will say to my bringing you home in this state. I expect we are fastened out, so that he’ll have to come down and let us in.”

“I don’t know—I don’t know.”

“That’s the worst of not having a home of your own. I tell you, Jude, what we had best do. Come round to my father’s—I made it up with him a bit to-day. I can let you in, and nobody will see you at all; and by to-morrow morning you’ll be all right.”

“Anything—anywhere,” replied Jude. “What the devil does it matter to me?”

They went along together, like any other fuddling couple, her arm still round his waist, and his, at last, round hers; though with no amatory intent; but merely because he was weary, unstable, and in need of support.

“This—is th’ Martyrs’—burning-place,” he stammered as they dragged across a broad street. “I remember—in old Fuller’s *Holy State*—and I am reminded of it—by our passing by here—old Fuller in his *Holy State* says, that at the burning of Ridley, Doctor Smith—preached sermon, and took as his text ‘*Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*’—Often think of it as I pass here. Ridley was a—”

“Yes. Exactly. Very thoughtful of you, deary, even though it hasn’t much to do with our present business.”

“Why, yes it has! I’m giving my body to be burned! But—ah you don’t understand!—it wants Sue to understand such things! And I was her seducer—poor little girl! And she’s gone—and I don’t care about myself! Do what you like with me! ... And yet she did it for conscience’ sake, poor little Sue!”

“Hang her!—I mean, I think she was right,” hiccuped Arabella. “I’ve my feelings too, like her; and I feel I belong to you in Heaven’s eye, and to nobody else, till death us do part! It is—hic—never too late—hic to mend!”

They had reached her father’s house, and she softly unfastened the door, groping about for a light within.

The circumstances were not altogether unlike those of their entry into the cottage at Cresscombe, such a long time before. Nor were perhaps Arabella’s motives. But Jude did not think of that, though she did.

“I can’t find the matches, dear,” she said when she had fastened up the door. “But never mind—this way. As quiet as you can, please.”

“It is as dark as pitch,” said Jude.

“Give me your hand, and I’ll lead you. That’s it. Just sit down here, and I’ll pull off your boots. I don’t want to wake him.”

“Who?”

“Father. He’d make a row, perhaps.”

She pulled off his boots. “Now,” she whispered, “take hold of me—never mind your weight. Now—first stair, second stair—”

“But—are we out in our old house by Marygreen?” asked the stupefied Jude. “I haven’t been inside it for years till now! Hey? And where are my books? That’s what I want to know?”

“We are at my house, dear, where there’s nobody to spy out how ill you are. Now—third stair, fourth stair—that’s it. Now we shall get on.”

## VII

Arabella was preparing breakfast in the downstairs back room of this small, recently hired tenement of her father's. She put her head into the little pork-shop in front, and told Mr. Donn it was ready. Donn, endeavouring to look like a master pork-butcher, in a greasy blue blouse, and with a strap round his waist from which a steel dangled, came in promptly.

"You must mind the shop this morning," he said casually. "I've to go and get some inwards and half a pig from Lumsdon, and to call elsewhere. If you live here you must put your shoulder to the wheel, at least till I get the business started!"

"Well, for to-day I can't say." She looked deedly into his face. "I've got a prize upstairs."

"Oh? What's that?"

"A husband—almost."

"No!"

"Yes. It's Jude. He's come back to me."

"Your old original one? Well, I'm damned!"

"Well, I always did like him, that I will say."

"But how does he come to be up there?" said Donn, humour-struck, and nodding to the ceiling.

"Don't ask inconvenient questions, Father. What we've to do is to keep him here till he and I are—as we were."

"How was that?"

"Married."

"Ah... Well it is the rummest thing I ever heard of—marrying an old husband again, and so much new blood in the world! He's no catch, to my thinking. I'd have had a new one while I was about it."

“It isn’t rum for a woman to want her old husband back for respectability, though for a man to want his old wife back—well, perhaps it is funny, rather!” And Arabella was suddenly seized with a fit of loud laughter, in which her father joined more moderately.

“Be civil to him, and I’ll do the rest,” she said when she had recovered seriousness. “He told me this morning that his head ached fit to burst, and he hardly seemed to know where he was. And no wonder, considering how he mixed his drink last night. We must keep him jolly and cheerful here for a day or two, and not let him go back to his lodging. Whatever you advance I’ll pay back to you again. But I must go up and see how he is now, poor deary.”

Arabella ascended the stairs, softly opened the door of the first bedroom, and peeped in. Finding that her shorn Samson was asleep she entered to the bedside and stood regarding him. The fevered flush on his face from the debauch of the previous evening lessened the fragility of his ordinary appearance, and his long lashes, dark brows, and curly back hair and beard against the white pillow completed the physiognomy of one whom Arabella, as a woman of rank passions, still felt it worth while to recapture, highly important to recapture as a woman straitened both in means and in reputation. Her ardent gaze seemed to affect him; his quick breathing became suspended, and he opened his eyes.

“How are you now, dear?” said she. “It is I—Arabella.”

“Ah!—where—oh yes, I remember! You gave me shelter... I am stranded—ill—demoralized—damn bad! That’s what I am!”

“Then do stay here. There’s nobody in the house but father and me, and you can rest till you are thoroughly well. I’ll tell them at the stoneworks that you are knocked up.”

“I wonder what they are thinking at the lodgings!”

“I’ll go round and explain. Perhaps you had better let me pay up, or they’ll think we’ve run away?”

“Yes. You’ll find enough money in my pocket there.”

Quite indifferent, and shutting his eyes because he could not bear the daylight in his throbbing eye-balls, Jude seemed to doze again. Arabella took his purse, softly left the room, and putting on her outdoor things went off to the lodgings she and he had quitted the evening before.



Scarcely half an hour had elapsed ere she reappeared round the corner, walking beside a lad wheeling a truck on which were piled all Jude's household possessions, and also the few of Arabella's things which she had taken to the lodging for her short sojourn there. Jude was in such physical pain from his unfortunate break-down of the previous night, and in such mental pain from the loss of Sue and from having yielded in his half-somnolent state to Arabella, that when he saw his few chattels unpacked and standing before his eyes in this strange bedroom, intermixed with woman's apparel, he scarcely considered how they had come there, or what their coming signalized.

"Now," said Arabella to her father downstairs, "we must keep plenty of good liquor going in the house these next few days. I know his nature, and if he once gets into that fearfully low state that he does get into sometimes, he'll never do the honourable thing by me in this world, and I shall be left in the lurch. He must be kept cheerful. He has a little money in the savings bank, and he has given me his purse to pay for anything necessary. Well, that will be the licence; for I must have that ready at hand, to catch him the moment he's in the humour. You must pay for the liquor. A few friends, and a quiet convivial party would be the thing, if we could get it up. It would advertise the shop, and help me too."

"That can be got up easy enough by anybody who'll afford victuals and drink... Well yes—it would advertise the shop—that's true."

Three days later, when Jude had recovered somewhat from the fearful throbbing of his eyes and brain, but was still considerably confused in his mind by what had been supplied to him by Arabella during the interval—to keep him, jolly, as she expressed it—the quiet convivial gathering, suggested by her, to wind Jude up to the striking point, took place.

Donn had only just opened his miserable little pork and sausage shop, which had as yet scarce any customers; nevertheless that party advertised it well, and the Donns acquired a real notoriety among a certain class in Christminster who knew not the colleges, nor their works, nor their ways. Jude was asked if he could suggest any guest in addition to those named by Arabella and her father, and in a saturnine humour of perfect recklessness mentioned Uncle Joe, and Stagg, and the decayed auctioneer, and others whom he remembered as having been frequenters of the well-known tavern during his bout therein years before. He also suggested Freckles and

Bower o' Bliss. Arabella took him at his word so far as the men went, but drew the line at the ladies.

Another man they knew, Tinker Taylor, though he lived in the same street, was not invited; but as he went homeward from a late job on the evening of the party, he had occasion to call at the shop for trotters. There were none in, but he was promised some the next morning. While making his inquiry Taylor glanced into the back room, and saw the guests sitting round, card-playing, and drinking, and otherwise enjoying themselves at Donn's expense. He went home to bed, and on his way out next morning wondered how the party went off. He thought it hardly worth while to call at the shop for his provisions at that hour, Donn and his daughter being probably not up, if they caroused late the night before. However, he found in passing that the door was open, and he could hear voices within, though the shutters of the meat-stall were not down. He went and tapped at the sitting-room door, and opened it.

"Well—to be sure!" he said, astonished.

Hosts and guests were sitting card-playing, smoking, and talking, precisely as he had left them eleven hours earlier; the gas was burning and the curtains drawn, though it had been broad daylight for two hours out of doors.

"Yes!" cried Arabella, laughing. "Here we are, just the same. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves, oughtn't we? But it is a sort of housewarming, you see; and our friends are in no hurry. Come in, Mr. Taylor, and sit down."

The tinker, or rather reduced ironmonger, was nothing loath, and entered and took a seat. "I shall lose a quarter, but never mind," he said. "Well, really, I could hardly believe my eyes when I looked in! It seemed as if I was flung back again into last night, all of a sudden."

"So you are. Pour out for Mr. Taylor."

He now perceived that she was sitting beside Jude, her arm being round his waist. Jude, like the rest of the company, bore on his face the signs of how deeply he had been indulging.

"Well, we've been waiting for certain legal hours to arrive, to tell the truth," she continued bashfully, and making her spirituous crimson look as much like a maiden blush as possible. "Jude and I have decided to make

up matters between us by tying the knot again, as we find we can't do without one another after all. So, as a bright notion, we agreed to sit on till it was late enough, and go and do it off-hand."

Jude seemed to pay no great heed to what she was announcing, or indeed to anything whatever. The entrance of Taylor infused fresh spirit into the company, and they remained sitting, till Arabella whispered to her father: "Now we may as well go."

"But the parson don't know?"

"Yes, I told him last night that we might come between eight and nine, as there were reasons of decency for doing it as early and quiet as possible; on account of it being our second marriage, which might make people curious to look on if they knew. He highly approved."

"Oh very well, I'm ready," said her father, getting up and shaking himself.

"Now, old darling," she said to Jude. "Come along, as you promised."

"When did I promise anything?" asked he, whom she had made so tipsy by her special knowledge of that line of business as almost to have made him sober again—or to seem so to those who did not know him.

"Why!" said Arabella, affecting dismay. "You've promised to marry me several times as we've sat here to-night. These gentlemen have heard you."

"I don't remember it," said Jude doggedly. "There's only one woman—but I won't mention her in this Capharnaum!"

Arabella looked towards her father. "Now, Mr. Fawley be honourable," said Donn. "You and my daughter have been living here together these three or four days, quite on the understanding that you were going to marry her. Of course I shouldn't have had such goings on in my house if I hadn't understood that. As a point of honour you must do it now."

"Don't say anything against my honour!" enjoined Jude hotly, standing up. "I'd marry the W—— of Babylon rather than do anything dishonourable! No reflection on you, my dear. It is a mere rhetorical figure—what they call in the books, hyperbole."

"Keep your figures for your debts to friends who shelter you," said Donn.

“If I am bound in honour to marry her—as I suppose I am—though how I came to be here with her I know no more than a dead man—marry her I will, so help me God! I have never behaved dishonourably to a woman or to any living thing. I am not a man who wants to save himself at the expense of the weaker among us!”

“There—never mind him, deary,” said she, putting her cheek against Jude’s. “Come up and wash your face, and just put yourself tidy, and off we’ll go. Make it up with Father.”

They shook hands. Jude went upstairs with her, and soon came down looking tidy and calm. Arabella, too, had hastily arranged herself, and accompanied by Donn away they went.

“Don’t go,” she said to the guests at parting. “I’ve told the little maid to get the breakfast while we are gone; and when we come back we’ll all have some. A good strong cup of tea will set everybody right for going home.”

When Arabella, Jude, and Donn had disappeared on their matrimonial errand the assembled guests yawned themselves wider awake, and discussed the situation with great interest. Tinker Taylor, being the most sober, reasoned the most lucidly.

“I don’t wish to speak against friends,” he said. “But it do seem a rare curiosity for a couple to marry over again! If they couldn’t get on the first time when their minds were limp, they won’t the second, by my reckoning.”

“Do you think he’ll do it?”

“He’s been put upon his honour by the woman, so he med.”

“He’d hardly do it straight off like this. He’s got no licence nor anything.”

“She’s got that, bless you. Didn’t you hear her say so to her father?”

“Well,” said Tinker Taylor, relighting his pipe at the gas-jet. “Take her all together, limb by limb, she’s not such a bad-looking piece—particular by candlelight. To be sure, halfpence that have been in circulation can’t be expected to look like new ones from the mint. But for a woman that’s been knocking about the four hemispheres for some time, she’s passable enough. A little bit thick in the flitch perhaps: but I like a woman that a puff o’ wind won’t blow down.”

Their eyes followed the movements of the little girl as she spread the breakfast-cloth on the table they had been using, without wiping up the slops of the liquor. The curtains were undrawn, and the expression of the house made to look like morning. Some of the guests, however, fell asleep in their chairs. One or two went to the door, and gazed along the street more than once. Tinker Taylor was the chief of these, and after a time he came in with a leer on his face.

“By Gad, they are coming! I think the deed’s done!”

“No,” said Uncle Joe, following him in. “Take my word, he turned rusty at the last minute. They are walking in a very unusual way; and that’s the meaning of it!”

They waited in silence till the wedding-party could be heard entering the house. First into the room came Arabella boisterously; and her face was enough to show that her strategy had succeeded.

“Mrs. Fawley, I presume?” said Tinker Taylor with mock courtesy.

“Certainly. Mrs. Fawley again,” replied Arabella blandly, pulling off her glove and holding out her left hand. “There’s the padlock, see... Well, he was a very nice, gentlemanly man indeed. I mean the clergyman. He said to me as gentle as a babe when all was done: ‘Mrs. Fawley, I congratulate you heartily,’ he says. ‘For having heard your history, and that of your husband, I think you have both done the right and proper thing. And for your past errors as a wife, and his as a husband, I think you ought now to be forgiven by the world, as you have forgiven each other,’ says he. Yes; he was a very nice, gentlemanly man. ‘The Church don’t recognize divorce in her dogma, strictly speaking,’ he says: ‘and bear in mind the words of the service in your goings out and your comings in: What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.’ Yes; he was a very nice, gentlemanly man... But, Jude, my dear, you were enough to make a cat laugh! You walked that straight, and held yourself that steady, that one would have thought you were going ’prentice to a judge; though I knew you were seeing double all the time, from the way you fumbled with my finger.”

“I said I’d do anything to—save a woman’s honour,” muttered Jude. “And I’ve done it!”

“Well now, old deary, come along and have some breakfast.”

“I want—some—more whisky,” said Jude stolidly.

“Nonsense, dear. Not now! There’s no more left. The tea will take the muddle out of our heads, and we shall be as fresh as larks.”

“All right. I’ve—married you. She said I ought to marry you again, and I have straightway. It is true religion! Ha—ha—ha!”

## VIII

Michaelmas came and passed, and Jude and his wife, who had lived but a short time in her father's house after their remarriage, were in lodgings on the top floor of a dwelling nearer to the centre of the city.

He had done a few days' work during the two or three months since the event, but his health had been indifferent, and it was now precarious. He was sitting in an arm-chair before the fire, and coughed a good deal.

"I've got a bargain for my trouble in marrying thee over again!" Arabella was saying to him. "I shall have to keep 'ee entirely—that's what 'twill come to! I shall have to make black-pot and sausages, and hawk 'em about the street, all to support an invalid husband I'd no business to be saddled with at all. Why didn't you keep your health, deceiving one like this? You were well enough when the wedding was!"

"Ah, yes!" said he, laughing acridly. "I have been thinking of my foolish feeling about the pig you and I killed during our first marriage. I feel now that the greatest mercy that could be vouchsafed to me would be that something should serve me as I served that animal."

This was the sort of discourse that went on between them every day now. The landlord of the lodging, who had heard that they were a queer couple, had doubted if they were married at all, especially as he had seen Arabella kiss Jude one evening when she had taken a little cordial; and he was about to give them notice to quit, till by chance overhearing her one night haranguing Jude in rattling terms, and ultimately flinging a shoe at his head, he recognized the note of genuine wedlock; and concluding that they must be respectable, said no more.

Jude did not get any better, and one day he requested Arabella, with considerable hesitation, to execute a commission for him. She asked him indifferently what it was.

"To write to Sue."

"What in the name—do you want me to write to her for?"

“To ask how she is, and if she’ll come to see me, because I’m ill, and should like to see her—once again.”

“It is like you to insult a lawful wife by asking such a thing!”

“It is just in order not to insult you that I ask you to do it. You know I love Sue. I don’t wish to mince the matter—there stands the fact: I love her. I could find a dozen ways of sending a letter to her without your knowledge. But I wish to be quite above-board with you, and with her husband. A message through you asking her to come is at least free from any odour of intrigue. If she retains any of her old nature at all, she’ll come.”

“You’ve no respect for marriage whatever, or its rights and duties!”

“What *does* it matter what my opinions are—a wretch like me! Can it matter to anybody in the world who comes to see me for half an hour—here with one foot in the grave! ... Come, please write, Arabella!” he pleaded. “Repay my candour by a little generosity!”

“I should think *not!*”

“Not just once?—Oh do!” He felt that his physical weakness had taken away all his dignity.

“What do you want *her* to know how you are for? She don’t want to see ’ee. She’s the rat that forsook the sinking ship!”

“Don’t, don’t!”

“And I stuck to un—the more fool I! Have that strumpet in the house indeed!”

Almost as soon as the words were spoken Jude sprang from the chair, and before Arabella knew where she was he had her on her back upon a little couch which stood there, he kneeling above her.

“Say another word of that sort,” he whispered, “and I’ll kill you—here and now! I’ve everything to gain by it—my own death not being the least part. So don’t think there’s no meaning in what I say!”

“What do you want me to do?” gasped Arabella.

“Promise never to speak of her.”

“Very well. I do.”

“I take your word,” he said scornfully as he loosened her. “But what it is worth I can’t say.”



“You couldn’t kill the pig, but you could kill me!”

“Ah—there you have me! No—I couldn’t kill you—even in a passion. Taunt away!”

He then began coughing very much, and she estimated his life with an appraiser’s eye as he sank back ghastly pale. “I’ll send for her,” Arabella murmured, “if you’ll agree to my being in the room with you all the time she’s here.”

The softer side of his nature, the desire to see Sue, made him unable to resist the offer even now, provoked as he had been; and he replied breathlessly: “Yes, I agree. Only send for her!”

In the evening he inquired if she had written.

“Yes,” she said; “I wrote a note telling her you were ill, and asking her to come to-morrow or the day after. I haven’t posted it yet.”

The next day Jude wondered if she really did post it, but would not ask her; and foolish Hope, that lives on a drop and a crumb, made him restless with expectation. He knew the times of the possible trains, and listened on each occasion for sounds of her.

She did not come; but Jude would not address Arabella again thereon. He hoped and expected all the next day; but no Sue appeared; neither was there any note of reply. Then Jude decided in the privacy of his mind that Arabella had never posted hers, although she had written it. There was something in her manner which told it. His physical weakness was such that he shed tears at the disappointment when she was not there to see. His suspicions were, in fact, well founded. Arabella, like some other nurses, thought that your duty towards your invalid was to pacify him by any means short of really acting upon his fancies.

He never said another word to her about his wish or his conjecture. A silent, undiscerned resolve grew up in him, which gave him, if not strength, stability and calm. One midday when, after an absence of two hours, she came into the room, she beheld the chair empty.

Down she flopped on the bed, and sitting, meditated. “Now where the devil is my man gone to!” she said.

A driving rain from the north-east had been falling with more or less intermission all the morning, and looking from the window at the dripping spouts it seemed impossible to believe that any sick man would have

ventured out to almost certain death. Yet a conviction possessed Arabella that he had gone out, and it became a certainty when she had searched the house. "If he's such a fool, let him be!" she said. "I can do no more."

Jude was at that moment in a railway train that was drawing near to Alfredston, oddly swathed, pale as a monumental figure in alabaster, and much stared at by other passengers. An hour later his thin form, in the long great-coat and blanket he had come with, but without an umbrella, could have been seen walking along the five-mile road to Marygreen. On his face showed the determined purpose that alone sustained him, but to which his weakness afforded a sorry foundation. By the up-hill walk he was quite blown, but he pressed on; and at half-past three o'clock stood by the familiar well at Marygreen. The rain was keeping everybody indoors; Jude crossed the green to the church without observation, and found the building open. Here he stood, looking forth at the school, whence he could hear the usual sing-song tones of the little voices that had not learnt Creation's groan.

He waited till a small boy came from the school—one evidently allowed out before hours for some reason or other. Jude held up his hand, and the child came.

"Please call at the schoolhouse and ask Mrs. Phillotson if she will be kind enough to come to the church for a few minutes."

The child departed, and Jude heard him knock at the door of the dwelling. He himself went further into the church. Everything was new, except a few pieces of carving preserved from the wrecked old fabric, now fixed against the new walls. He stood by these: they seemed akin to the perished people of that place who were his ancestors and Sue's.

A light footstep, which might have been accounted no more than an added drip to the rainfall, sounded in the porch, and he looked round.

"Oh—I didn't think it was you! I didn't—Oh, Jude!" A hysterical catch in her breath ended in a succession of them. He advanced, but she quickly recovered and went back.

"Don't go—don't go!" he implored. "This is my last time! I thought it would be less intrusive than to enter your house. And I shall never come again. Don't then be unmerciful. Sue, Sue! We are acting by the letter; and 'the letter killeth'!"

“I’ll stay—I won’t be unkind!” she said, her mouth quivering and her tears flowing as she allowed him to come closer. “But why did you come, and do this wrong thing, after doing such a right thing as you have done?”

“What right thing?”

“Marrying Arabella again. It was in the Alfredston paper. She has never been other than yours, Jude—in a proper sense. And therefore you did so well—Oh so well!—in recognizing it—and taking her to you again.”

“God above—and is that all I’ve come to hear? If there is anything more degrading, immoral, unnatural, than another in my life, it is this meretricious contract with Arabella which has been called doing the right thing! And you too—you call yourself Phillotson’s wife! *His* wife! You are mine.”

“Don’t make me rush away from you—I can’t bear much! But on this point I am decided.”

“I cannot understand how you did it—how you think it—I cannot!”

“Never mind that. He is a kind husband to me—And I—I’ve wrestled and struggled, and fasted, and prayed. I have nearly brought my body into complete subjection. And you mustn’t—will you—wake—”

“Oh you darling little fool; where is your reason? You seem to have suffered the loss of your faculties! I would argue with you if I didn’t know that a woman in your state of feeling is quite beyond all appeals to her brains. Or is it that you are humbugging yourself, as so many women do about these things; and don’t actually believe what you pretend to, and only are indulging in the luxury of the emotion raised by an affected belief?”

“Luxury! How can you be so cruel!”

“You dear, sad, soft, most melancholy wreck of a promising human intellect that it has ever been my lot to behold! Where is your scorn of convention gone? I *would* have died game!”

“You crush, almost insult me, Jude! Go away from me!” She turned off quickly.

“I will. I would never come to see you again, even if I had the strength to come, which I shall not have any more. Sue, Sue, you are not worth a man’s love!”

Her bosom began to go up and down. "I can't endure you to say that!" she burst out, and her eye resting on him a moment, she turned back impulsively. "Don't, don't scorn me! Kiss me, oh kiss me lots of times, and say I am not a coward and a contemptible humbug—I can't bear it!" She rushed up to him and, with her mouth on his, continued: "I must tell you—oh I must—my darling Love! It has been—only a church marriage—an apparent marriage I mean! He suggested it at the very first!"

"How?"

"I mean it is a nominal marriage only. It hasn't been more than that at all since I came back to him!"

"Sue!" he said. Pressing her to him in his arms, he bruised her lips with kisses. "If misery can know happiness, I have a moment's happiness now! Now, in the name of all you hold holy, tell me the truth, and no lie. You do love me still?"

"I do! You know it too well! ... But I *mustn't* do this! I mustn't kiss you back as I would!"

"But do!"

"And yet you are so dear!—and you look so ill—"

"And so do you! There's one more, in memory of our dead little children—yours and mine!"

The words struck her like a blow, and she bent her head. "I *mustn't*—I *can't* go on with this!" she gasped presently. "But there, there, darling; I give you back your kisses; I do, I do! ... And now I'll *hate* myself for ever for my sin!"

"No—let me make my last appeal. Listen to this! We've both remarried out of our senses. I was made drunk to do it. You were the same. I was gin-drunk; you were creed-drunk. Either form of intoxication takes away the nobler vision... Let us then shake off our mistakes, and run away together!"

"No; again no! ... Why do you tempt me so far, Jude! It is too merciless! ... But I've got over myself now. Don't follow me—don't look at me. Leave me, for pity's sake!"

She ran up the church to the east end, and Jude did as she requested. He did not turn his head, but took up his blanket, which she had not seen, and went straight out. As he passed the end of the church she heard his coughs

mingling with the rain on the windows, and in a last instinct of human affection, even now unsubdued by her fetters, she sprang up as if to go and succour him. But she knelt down again, and stopped her ears with her hands till all possible sound of him had passed away.

He was by this time at the corner of the green, from which the path ran across the fields in which he had scared rooks as a boy. He turned and looked back, once, at the building which still contained Sue; and then went on, knowing that his eyes would light on that scene no more.

There are cold spots up and down Wessex in autumn and winter weather; but the coldest of all when a north or east wind is blowing is the crest of the down by the Brown House, where the road to Alfredston crosses the old Ridgeway. Here the first winter slets and snows fall and lie, and here the spring frost lingers last unthawed. Here in the teeth of the north-east wind and rain Jude now pursued his way, wet through, the necessary slowness of his walk from lack of his former strength being insufficient to maintain his heat. He came to the milestone, and, raining as it was, spread his blanket and lay down there to rest. Before moving on he went and felt at the back of the stone for his own carving. It was still there; but nearly obliterated by moss. He passed the spot where the gibbet of his ancestor and Sue's had stood, and descended the hill.

It was dark when he reached Alfredston, where he had a cup of tea, the deadly chill that began to creep into his bones being too much for him to endure fasting. To get home he had to travel by a steam tram-car, and two branches of railway, with much waiting at a junction. He did not reach Christminster till ten o'clock.

## IX

On the platform stood Arabella. She looked him up and down.

“You’ve been to see her?” she asked.

“I have,” said Jude, literally tottering with cold and lassitude.

“Well, now you’d best march along home.”

The water ran out of him as he went, and he was compelled to lean against the wall to support himself while coughing.

“You’ve done for yourself by this, young man,” said she. “I don’t know whether you know it.”

“Of course I do. I meant to do for myself.”

“What—to commit suicide?”

“Certainly.”

“Well, I’m blest! Kill yourself for a woman.”

“Listen to me, Arabella. You think you are the stronger; and so you are, in a physical sense, now. You could push me over like a nine-pin. You did not send that letter the other day, and I could not resent your conduct. But I am not so weak in another way as you think. I made up my mind that a man confined to his room by inflammation of the lungs, a fellow who had only two wishes left in the world, to see a particular woman, and then to die, could neatly accomplish those two wishes at one stroke by taking this journey in the rain. That I’ve done. I have seen her for the last time, and I’ve finished myself—put an end to a feverish life which ought never to have been begun!”

“Lord—you do talk lofty! Won’t you have something warm to drink?”

“No thank you. Let’s get home.”

They went along by the silent colleges, and Jude kept stopping.

“What are you looking at?”

“Stupid fancies. I see, in a way, those spirits of the dead again, on this my last walk, that I saw when I first walked here!”

“What a curious chap you are!”

“I seem to see them, and almost hear them rustling. But I don’t revere all of them as I did then. I don’t believe in half of them. The theologians, the apologists, and their kin the metaphysicians, the high-handed statesmen, and others, no longer interest me. All that has been spoilt for me by the grind of stern reality!”

The expression of Jude’s corpselike face in the watery lamplight was indeed as if he saw people where there was nobody. At moments he stood still by an archway, like one watching a figure walk out; then he would look at a window like one discerning a familiar face behind it. He seemed to hear voices, whose words he repeated as if to gather their meaning.

“They seem laughing at me!”

“Who?”

“Oh—I was talking to myself! The phantoms all about here, in the college archways, and windows. They used to look friendly in the old days, particularly Addison, and Gibbon, and Johnson, and Dr. Browne, and Bishop Ken—”

“Come along do! Phantoms! There’s neither living nor dead hereabouts except a damn policeman! I never saw the streets emptier.”

“Fancy! The Poet of Liberty used to walk here, and the great Dissector of Melancholy there!”

“I don’t want to hear about ’em! They bore me.”

“Walter Raleigh is beckoning to me from that lane—Wycliffe—Harvey—Hooker—Arnold—and a whole crowd of Tractarian Shades—”

“I *don’t want* to know their names, I tell you! What do I care about folk dead and gone? Upon my soul you are more sober when you’ve been drinking than when you have not!”

“I must rest a moment,” he said; and as he paused, holding to the railings, he measured with his eye the height of a college front. “This is old Rubric. And that Sarcophagus; and up that lane Crozier and Tudor: and all down there is Cardinal with its long front, and its windows with lifted

eyebrows, representing the polite surprise of the university at the efforts of such as I.”

“Come along, and I’ll treat you!”

“Very well. It will help me home, for I feel the chilly fog from the meadows of Cardinal as if death-claws were grabbing me through and through. As Antigone said, I am neither a dweller among men nor ghosts. But, Arabella, when I am dead, you’ll see my spirit flitting up and down here among these!”

“Pooh! You mayn’t die after all. You are tough enough yet, old man.”

It was night at Marygreen, and the rain of the afternoon showed no sign of abatement. About the time at which Jude and Arabella were walking the streets of Christminster homeward, the Widow Edlin crossed the green, and opened the back door of the schoolmaster’s dwelling, which she often did now before bedtime, to assist Sue in putting things away.

Sue was muddling helplessly in the kitchen, for she was not a good housewife, though she tried to be, and grew impatient of domestic details.

“Lord love ’ee, what do ye do that yourself for, when I’ve come o’ purpose! You knew I should come.”

“Oh—I don’t know—I forgot! No, I didn’t forget. I did it to discipline myself. I have scrubbed the stairs since eight o’clock. I *must* practise myself in my household duties. I’ve shamefully neglected them!”

“Why should ye? He’ll get a better school, perhaps be a parson, in time, and you’ll keep two servants. ’Tis a pity to spoil them pretty hands.”

“Don’t talk of my pretty hands, Mrs. Edlin. This pretty body of mine has been the ruin of me already!”

“Pshoo—you’ve got no body to speak of! You put me more in mind of a sperrit. But there seems something wrong to-night, my dear. Husband cross?”

“No. He never is. He’s gone to bed early.”

“Then what is it?”

“I cannot tell you. I have done wrong to-day. And I want to eradicate it... Well—I will tell you this—Jude has been here this afternoon, and I find I still love him—oh, grossly! I cannot tell you more.”

“Ah!” said the widow. “I told ’ee how ’twould be!”



“But it shan’t be! I have not told my husband of his visit; it is not necessary to trouble him about it, as I never mean to see Jude any more. But I am going to make my conscience right on my duty to Richard—by doing a penance—the ultimate thing. I must!”

“I wouldn’t—since he agrees to it being otherwise, and it has gone on three months very well as it is.”

“Yes—he agrees to my living as I choose; but I feel it is an indulgence I ought not to exact from him. It ought not to have been accepted by me. To reverse it will be terrible—but I must be more just to him. O why was I so unheroic!”

“What is it you don’t like in him?” asked Mrs. Edlin curiously.

“I cannot tell you. It is something... I cannot say. The mournful thing is, that nobody would admit it as a reason for feeling as I do; so that no excuse is left me.”

“Did you ever tell Jude what it was?”

“Never.”

“I’ve heard strange tales o’ husbands in my time,” observed the widow in a lowered voice. “They say that when the saints were upon the earth devils used to take husbands’ forms o’ nights, and get poor women into all sorts of trouble. But I don’t know why that should come into my head, for it is only a tale... What a wind and rain it is to-night! Well—don’t be in a hurry to alter things, my dear. Think it over.”

“No, no! I’ve screwed my weak soul up to treating him more courteously—and it must be now—at once—before I break down!”

“I don’t think you ought to force your nature. No woman ought to be expected to.”

“It is my duty. I will drink my cup to the dregs!”

Half an hour later when Mrs. Edlin put on her bonnet and shawl to leave, Sue seemed to be seized with vague terror.

“No—no—don’t go, Mrs. Edlin,” she implored, her eyes enlarged, and with a quick nervous look over her shoulder.

“But it is bedtime, child.”

“Yes, but—there’s the little spare room—my room that was. It is quite ready. Please stay, Mrs. Edlin!—I shall want you in the morning.”

“Oh well—I don’t mind, if you wish. Nothing will happen to my four old walls, whether I be there or no.”

She then fastened up the doors, and they ascended the stairs together.

“Wait here, Mrs. Edlin,” said Sue. “I’ll go into my old room a moment by myself.”

Leaving the widow on the landing Sue turned to the chamber which had been hers exclusively since her arrival at Marygreen, and pushing to the door knelt down by the bed for a minute or two. She then arose, and taking her night-gown from the pillow undressed and came out to Mrs. Edlin. A man could be heard snoring in the room opposite. She wished Mrs. Edlin good-night, and the widow entered the room that Sue had just vacated.

Sue unlatched the other chamber door, and, as if seized with faintness, sank down outside it. Getting up again she half opened the door, and said “Richard.” As the word came out of her mouth she visibly shuddered.

The snoring had quite ceased for some time, but he did not reply. Sue seemed relieved, and hurried back to Mrs. Edlin’s chamber. “Are you in bed, Mrs. Edlin?” she asked.

“No, dear,” said the widow, opening the door. “I be old and slow, and it takes me a long while to un-ray. I han’t unlaced my jumps yet.”

“I—don’t hear him! And perhaps—perhaps—”

“What, child?”

“Perhaps he’s dead!” she gasped. “And then—I should be *free*, and I could go to Jude! ... Ah—no—I forgot *her*—and God!”

“Let’s go and hearken. No—he’s snoring again. But the rain and the wind is so loud that you can hardly hear anything but between whiles.”

Sue had dragged herself back. “Mrs. Edlin, good-night again! I am sorry I called you out.” The widow retreated a second time.

The strained, resigned look returned to Sue’s face when she was alone. “I must do it—I must! I must drink to the dregs!” she whispered. “Richard!” she said again.

“Hey—what? Is that you, Susanna?”

“Yes.”

“What do you want? Anything the matter? Wait a moment.” He pulled on some articles of clothing, and came to the door. “Yes?”

“When we were at Shaston I jumped out of the window rather than that you should come near me. I have never reversed that treatment till now—when I have come to beg your pardon for it, and ask you to let me in.”

“Perhaps you only think you ought to do this? I don’t wish you to come against your impulses, as I have said.”

“But I beg to be admitted.” She waited a moment, and repeated, “I beg to be admitted! I have been in error—even to-day. I have exceeded my rights. I did not mean to tell you, but perhaps I ought. I sinned against you this afternoon.”

“How?”

“I met Jude! I didn’t know he was coming. And—”

“Well?”

“I kissed him, and let him kiss me.”

“Oh—the old story!”

“Richard, I didn’t know we were going to kiss each other till we did!”

“How many times?”

“A good many. I don’t know. I am horrified to look back on it, and the least I can do after it is to come to you like this.”

“Come—this is pretty bad, after what I’ve done! Anything else to confess?”

“No.” She had been intending to say: “I called him my darling Love.” But, as a contrite woman always keeps back a little, that portion of the scene remained untold. She went on: “I am never going to see him any more. He spoke of some things of the past, and it overcame me. He spoke of—the children. But, as I have said, I am glad—almost glad I mean—that they are dead, Richard. It blots out all that life of mine!”

“Well—about not seeing him again any more. Come—you really mean this?” There was something in Phillotson’s tone now which seemed to show that his three months of remarriage with Sue had somehow not been so satisfactory as his magnanimity or amative patience had anticipated.

“Yes, yes!”

“Perhaps you’ll swear it on the New Testament?”

“I will.”

He went back to the room and brought out a little brown Testament.  
“Now then: So help you God!”

She swore.

“Very good!”

“Now I supplicate you, Richard, to whom I belong, and whom I wish to honour and obey, as I vowed, to let me in.”

“Think it over well. You know what it means. Having you back in the house was one thing—this another. So think again.”

“I have thought—I wish this!”

“That’s a complaisant spirit—and perhaps you are right. With a lover hanging about, a half-marriage should be completed. But I repeat my reminder this third and last time.”

“It is my wish! ... O God!”

“What did you say ‘O God’ for?”

“I don’t know!”

“Yes you do! But ...” He gloomily considered her thin and fragile form a moment longer as she crouched before him in her night-clothes. “Well, I thought it might end like this,” he said presently. “I owe you nothing, after these signs; but I’ll take you in at your word, and forgive you.”

He put his arm round her to lift her up. Sue started back.

“What’s the matter?” he asked, speaking for the first time sternly. “You shrink from me again?—just as formerly!”

“No, Richard—I—I—was not thinking—”

“You wish to come in here?”

“Yes.”

“You still bear in mind what it means?”

“Yes. It is my duty!”

Placing the candlestick on the chest of drawers he led her through the doorway, and lifting her bodily, kissed her. A quick look of aversion passed over her face, but clenching her teeth she uttered no cry.

Mrs. Edlin had by this time undressed, and was about to get into bed when she said to herself: “Ah—perhaps I’d better go and see if the little thing is all right. How it do blow and rain!”

The widow went out on the landing, and saw that Sue had disappeared. “Ah! Poor soul! Weddings be funerals ’a b’lieve nowadays. Fifty-five years ago, come Fall, since my man and I married! Times have changed since then!”

## X

Despite himself Jude recovered somewhat, and worked at his trade for several weeks. After Christmas, however, he broke down again.

With the money he had earned he shifted his lodgings to a yet more central part of the town. But Arabella saw that he was not likely to do much work for a long while, and was cross enough at the turn affairs had taken since her remarriage to him. "I'm hanged if you haven't been clever in this last stroke!" she would say, "to get a nurse for nothing by marrying me!"

Jude was absolutely indifferent to what she said, and indeed, often regarded her abuse in a humorous light. Sometimes his mood was more earnest, and as he lay he often rambled on upon the defeat of his early aims.

"Every man has some little power in some one direction," he would say. "I was never really stout enough for the stone trade, particularly the fixing. Moving the blocks always used to strain me, and standing the trying draughts in buildings before the windows are in always gave me colds, and I think that began the mischief inside. But I felt I could do one thing if I had the opportunity. I could accumulate ideas, and impart them to others. I wonder if the founders had such as I in their minds—a fellow good for nothing else but that particular thing? ... I hear that soon there is going to be a better chance for such helpless students as I was. There are schemes afoot for making the university less exclusive, and extending its influence. I don't know much about it. And it is too late, too late for me! Ah—and for how many worthier ones before me!"

"How you keep a-mumbling!" said Arabella. "I should have thought you'd have got over all that craze about books by this time. And so you would, if you'd had any sense to begin with. You are as bad now as when we were first married."

On one occasion while soliloquizing thus he called her "Sue" unconsciously.

"I wish you'd mind who you are talking to!" said Arabella indignantly. "Calling a respectable married woman by the name of that—" She remembered herself and he did not catch the word.

But in the course of time, when she saw how things were going, and how very little she had to fear from Sue's rivalry, she had a fit of generosity. "I suppose you want to see your—Sue?" she said. "Well, I don't mind her coming. You can have her here if you like."

"I don't wish to see her again."

"Oh—that's a change!"

"And don't tell her anything about me—that I'm ill, or anything. She has chosen her course. Let her go!"

One day he received a surprise. Mrs. Edlin came to see him, quite on her own account. Jude's wife, whose feelings as to where his affections were centred had reached absolute indifference by this time, went out, leaving the old woman alone with Jude. He impulsively asked how Sue was, and then said bluntly, remembering what Sue had told him: "I suppose they are still only husband and wife in name?"

Mrs. Edlin hesitated. "Well, no—it's different now. She's begun it quite lately—all of her own free will."

"When did she begin?" he asked quickly.

"The night after you came. But as a punishment to her poor self. He didn't wish it, but she insisted."

"Sue, my Sue—you darling fool—this is almost more than I can endure! ... Mrs. Edlin—don't be frightened at my rambling—I've got to talk to myself lying here so many hours alone—she was once a woman whose intellect was to mine like a star to a benzoline lamp: who saw all *my* superstitions as cobwebs that she could brush away with a word. Then bitter affliction came to us, and her intellect broke, and she veered round to darkness. Strange difference of sex, that time and circumstance, which enlarge the views of most men, narrow the views of women almost invariably. And now the ultimate horror has come—her giving herself like this to what she loathes, in her enslavement to forms! She, so sensitive, so shrinking, that the very wind seemed to blow on her with a touch of

deference... As for Sue and me when we were at our own best, long ago—when our minds were clear, and our love of truth fearless—the time was not ripe for us! Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us. And so the resistance they met with brought reaction in her, and recklessness and ruin on me! ... There—this, Mrs. Edlin, is how I go on to myself continually, as I lie here. I must be boring you awfully.”

“Not at all, my dear boy. I could hearken to ’ee all day.”

As Jude reflected more and more on her news, and grew more restless, he began in his mental agony to use terribly profane language about social conventions, which started a fit of coughing. Presently there came a knock at the door downstairs. As nobody answered it Mrs. Edlin herself went down.

The visitor said blandly: “The Doctor.” The lanky form was that of Physician Vilbert, who had been called in by Arabella.

“How is my patient at present?” asked the physician.

“Oh bad—very bad! Poor chap, he got excited, and do blasphemous terribly, since I let out some gossip by accident—the more to my blame. But there—you must excuse a man in suffering for what he says, and I hope God will forgive him.”

“Ah. I’ll go up and see him. Mrs. Fawley at home?”

“She’s not in at present, but she’ll be here soon.”

Vilbert went; but though Jude had hitherto taken the medicines of that skilful practitioner with the greatest indifference whenever poured down his throat by Arabella, he was now so brought to bay by events that he vented his opinion of Vilbert in the physician’s face, and so forcibly, and with such striking epithets, that Vilbert soon scurried downstairs again. At the door he met Arabella, Mrs. Edlin having left. Arabella inquired how he thought her husband was now, and seeing that the Doctor looked ruffled, asked him to take something. He assented.

“I’ll bring it to you here in the passage,” she said. “There’s nobody but me about the house to-day.”

She brought him a bottle and a glass, and he drank.

Arabella began shaking with suppressed laughter. “What is this, my dear?” he asked, smacking his lips.



“Oh—a drop of wine—and something in it.” Laughing again she said: “I poured your own love-philtre into it, that you sold me at the agricultural show, don’t you re-member?”

“I do, I do! Clever woman! But you must be prepared for the consequences.” Putting his arm round her shoulders he kissed her there and then.

“Don’t don’t,” she whispered, laughing good-humouredly. “My man will hear.”

She let him out of the house, and as she went back she said to herself: “Well! Weak women must provide for a rainy day. And if my poor fellow upstairs do go off—as I suppose he will soon—it’s well to keep chances open. And I can’t pick and choose now as I could when I was younger. And one must take the old if one can’t get the young.”

## XI

The last pages to which the chronicler of these lives would ask the reader's attention are concerned with the scene in and out of Jude's bedroom when leafy summer came round again.

His face was now so thin that his old friends would hardly have known him. It was afternoon, and Arabella was at the looking-glass curling her hair, which operation she performed by heating an umbrella-stay in the flame of a candle she had lighted, and using it upon the flowing lock. When she had finished this, practised a dimple, and put on her things, she cast her eyes round upon Jude. He seemed to be sleeping, though his position was an elevated one, his malady preventing him lying down.

Arabella, hatted, gloved, and ready, sat down and waited, as if expecting some one to come and take her place as nurse.

Certain sounds from without revealed that the town was in festivity, though little of the festival, whatever it might have been, could be seen here. Bells began to ring, and the notes came into the room through the open window, and travelled round Jude's head in a hum. They made her restless, and at last she said to herself: "Why ever doesn't Father come?"

She looked again at Jude, critically gauged his ebbing life, as she had done so many times during the late months, and glancing at his watch, which was hung up by way of timepiece, rose impatiently. Still he slept, and coming to a resolution she slipped from the room, closed the door noiselessly, and descended the stairs. The house was empty. The attraction which moved Arabella to go abroad had evidently drawn away the other inmates long before.

It was a warm, cloudless, enticing day. She shut the front door, and hastened round into Chief Street, and when near the theatre could hear the notes of the organ, a rehearsal for a coming concert being in progress. She entered under the archway of Oldgate College, where men were putting up awnings round the quadrangle for a ball in the hall that evening. People

who had come up from the country for the day were picnicking on the grass, and Arabella walked along the gravel paths and under the aged limes. But finding this place rather dull she returned to the streets, and watched the carriages drawing up for the concert, numerous Dons and their wives, and undergraduates with gay female companions, crowding up likewise. When the doors were closed, and the concert began, she moved on.

The powerful notes of that concert rolled forth through the swinging yellow blinds of the open windows, over the housetops, and into the still air of the lanes. They reached so far as to the room in which Jude lay; and it was about this time that his cough began again and awakened him.

As soon as he could speak he murmured, his eyes still closed: "A little water, please."

Nothing but the deserted room received his appeal, and he coughed to exhaustion again—saying still more feebly: "Water—some water—Sue—Arabella!"

The room remained still as before. Presently he gasped again: "Throat—water—Sue—darling—drop of water—please—oh please!"

No water came, and the organ notes, faint as a bee's hum, rolled in as before.

While he remained, his face changing, shouts and hurrahs came from somewhere in the direction of the river.

"Ah—yes! The Remembrance games," he murmured. "And I here. And Sue defiled!"

The hurrahs were repeated, drowning the faint organ notes. Jude's face changed more: he whispered slowly, his parched lips scarcely moving:

*"Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived."*

("Hurrah!")

*"Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein."*

("Hurrah!")

*“Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? ... For now should I have lain still and been quiet. I should have slept: then had I been at rest!”*

(“Hurrah!”)

*“There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor... The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?”*

Meanwhile Arabella, in her journey to discover what was going on, took a short cut down a narrow street and through an obscure nook into the quad of Cardinal. It was full of bustle, and brilliant in the sunlight with flowers and other preparations for a ball here also. A carpenter nodded to her, one who had formerly been a fellow-workman of Jude’s. A corridor was in course of erection from the entrance to the hall staircase, of gay red and buff bunting. Waggon-loads of boxes containing bright plants in full bloom were being placed about, and the great staircase was covered with red cloth. She nodded to one workman and another, and ascended to the hall on the strength of their acquaintance, where they were putting down a new floor and decorating for the dance.

The cathedral bell close at hand was sounding for five o’clock service.

“I should not mind having a spin there with a fellow’s arm round my waist,” she said to one of the men. “But Lord, I must be getting home again—there’s a lot to do. No dancing for me!”

When she reached home she was met at the door by Stagg, and one or two other of Jude’s fellow stoneworkers. “We are just going down to the river,” said the former, “to see the boat-bumping. But we’ve called round on our way to ask how your husband is.”

“He’s sleeping nicely, thank you,” said Arabella.

“That’s right. Well now, can’t you give yourself half an hour’s relaxation, Mrs. Fawley, and come along with us? ’Twould do you good.”

“I should like to go,” said she. “I’ve never seen the boat-racing, and I hear it is good fun.”

“Come along!”

“How I *wish* I could!” She looked longingly down the street. “Wait a minute, then. I’ll just run up and see how he is now. Father is with him, I

believe; so I can most likely come.”

They waited, and she entered. Downstairs the inmates were absent as before, having, in fact, gone in a body to the river where the procession of boats was to pass. When she reached the bedroom she found that her father had not even now come.

“Why couldn’t he have been here!” she said impatiently. “He wants to see the boats himself—that’s what it is!”

However, on looking round to the bed she brightened, for she saw that Jude was apparently sleeping, though he was not in the usual half-elevated posture necessitated by his cough. He had slipped down, and lay flat. A second glance caused her to start, and she went to the bed. His face was quite white, and gradually becoming rigid. She touched his fingers; they were cold, though his body was still warm. She listened at his chest. All was still within. The bumping of near thirty years had ceased.

After her first appalled sense of what had happened, the faint notes of a military or other brass band from the river reached her ears; and in a provoked tone she exclaimed, “To think he should die just now! Why did he die just now!” Then meditating another moment or two she went to the door, softly closed it as before, and again descended the stairs.

“Here she is!” said one of the workmen. “We wondered if you were coming after all. Come along; we must be quick to get a good place... Well, how is he? Sleeping well still? Of course, we don’t want to drag ’ee away if—”

“Oh yes—sleeping quite sound. He won’t wake yet,” she said hurriedly.

They went with the crowd down Cardinal Street, where they presently reached the bridge, and the gay barges burst upon their view. Thence they passed by a narrow slit down to the riverside path—now dusty, hot, and thronged. Almost as soon as they had arrived the grand procession of boats began; the oars smacking with a loud kiss on the face of the stream, as they were lowered from the perpendicular.

“Oh, I say—how jolly! I’m glad I’ve come,” said Arabella. “And—it can’t hurt my husband—my being away.”

On the opposite side of the river, on the crowded barges, were gorgeous nosegays of feminine beauty, fashionably arrayed in green, pink, blue, and white. The blue flag of the boat club denoted the centre of interest, beneath

which a band in red uniform gave out the notes she had already heard in the death-chamber. Collegians of all sorts, in canoes with ladies, watching keenly for “our” boat, darted up and down. While she regarded the lively scene somebody touched Arabella in the ribs, and looking round she saw Vilbert.

“That philtre is operating, you know!” he said with a leer. “Shame on ’ee to wreck a heart so!”

“I shan’t talk of love to-day.”

“Why not? It is a general holiday.”

She did not reply. Vilbert’s arm stole round her waist, which act could be performed unobserved in the crowd. An arch expression overspread Arabella’s face at the feel of the arm, but she kept her eyes on the river as if she did not know of the embrace.

The crowd surged, pushing Arabella and her friends sometimes nearly into the river, and she would have laughed heartily at the horse-play that succeeded, if the imprint on her mind’s eye of a pale, statuesque countenance she had lately gazed upon had not sobered her a little.

The fun on the water reached the acme of excitement; there were immersions, there were shouts: the race was lost and won, the pink and blue and yellow ladies retired from the barges, and the people who had watched began to move.

“Well—it’s been awfully good,” cried Arabella. “But I think I must get back to my poor man. Father is there, so far as I know; but I had better get back.”

“What’s your hurry?”

“Well, I must go... Dear, dear, this is awkward!”

At the narrow gangway where the people ascended from the riverside path to the bridge the crowd was literally jammed into one hot mass—Arabella and Vilbert with the rest; and here they remained motionless, Arabella exclaiming, “Dear, dear!” more and more impatiently; for it had just occurred to her mind that if Jude were discovered to have died alone an inquest might be deemed necessary.

“What a fidget you are, my love,” said the physician, who, being pressed close against her by the throng, had no need of personal effort for contact. “Just as well have patience: there’s no getting away yet!”

It was nearly ten minutes before the wedged multitude moved sufficiently to let them pass through. As soon as she got up into the street Arabella hastened on, forbidding the physician to accompany her further that day. She did not go straight to her house; but to the abode of a woman who performed the last necessary offices for the poorer dead; where she knocked.

“My husband has just gone, poor soul,” she said. “Can you come and lay him out?”

Arabella waited a few minutes; and the two women went along, elbowing their way through the stream of fashionable people pouring out of Cardinal meadow, and being nearly knocked down by the carriages.

“I must call at the sexton’s about the bell, too,” said Arabella. “It is just round here, isn’t it? I’ll meet you at my door.”

By ten o’clock that night Jude was lying on the bedstead at his lodging covered with a sheet, and straight as an arrow. Through the partly opened window the joyous throb of a waltz entered from the ball-room at Cardinal.

Two days later, when the sky was equally cloudless, and the air equally still, two persons stood beside Jude’s open coffin in the same little bedroom. On one side was Arabella, on the other the Widow Edlin. They were both looking at Jude’s face, the worn old eyelids of Mrs. Edlin being red.

“How beautiful he is!” said she.

“Yes. He’s a ’andsome corpse,” said Arabella.

The window was still open to ventilate the room, and it being about noontide the clear air was motionless and quiet without. From a distance came voices; and an apparent noise of persons stamping.

“What’s that?” murmured the old woman.

“Oh, that’s the Doctors in the theatre, conferring Honorary degrees on the Duke of Hamptonshire and a lot more illustrious gents of that sort. It’s Remembrance Week, you know. The cheers come from the young men.”

“Aye; young and strong-lunged! Not like our poor boy here.”

An occasional word, as from some one making a speech, floated from the open windows of the theatre across to this quiet corner, at which there

seemed to be a smile of some sort upon the marble features of Jude; while the old, superseded, Delphin editions of Virgil and Horace, and the dog-eared Greek Testament on the neighbouring shelf, and the few other volumes of the sort that he had not parted with, roughened with stone-dust where he had been in the habit of catching them up for a few minutes between his labours, seemed to pale to a sickly cast at the sounds. The bells struck out joyously; and their reverberations travelled round the bedroom.

Arabella's eyes removed from Jude to Mrs. Edlin. "D'ye think she will come?" she asked.

"I could not say. She swore not to see him again."

"How is she looking?"

"Tired and miserable, poor heart. Years and years older than when you saw her last. Quite a staid, worn woman now. 'Tis the man—she can't stomach un, even now!"

"If Jude had been alive to see her, he would hardly have cared for her any more, perhaps."

"That's what we don't know... Didn't he ever ask you to send for her, since he came to see her in that strange way?"

"No. Quite the contrary. I offered to send, and he said I was not to let her know how ill he was."

"Did he forgive her?"

"Not as I know."

"Well—poor little thing, 'tis to be believed she's found forgiveness somewhere! She said she had found peace!"

"She may swear that on her knees to the holy cross upon her necklace till she's hoarse, but it won't be true!" said Arabella. "She's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!"



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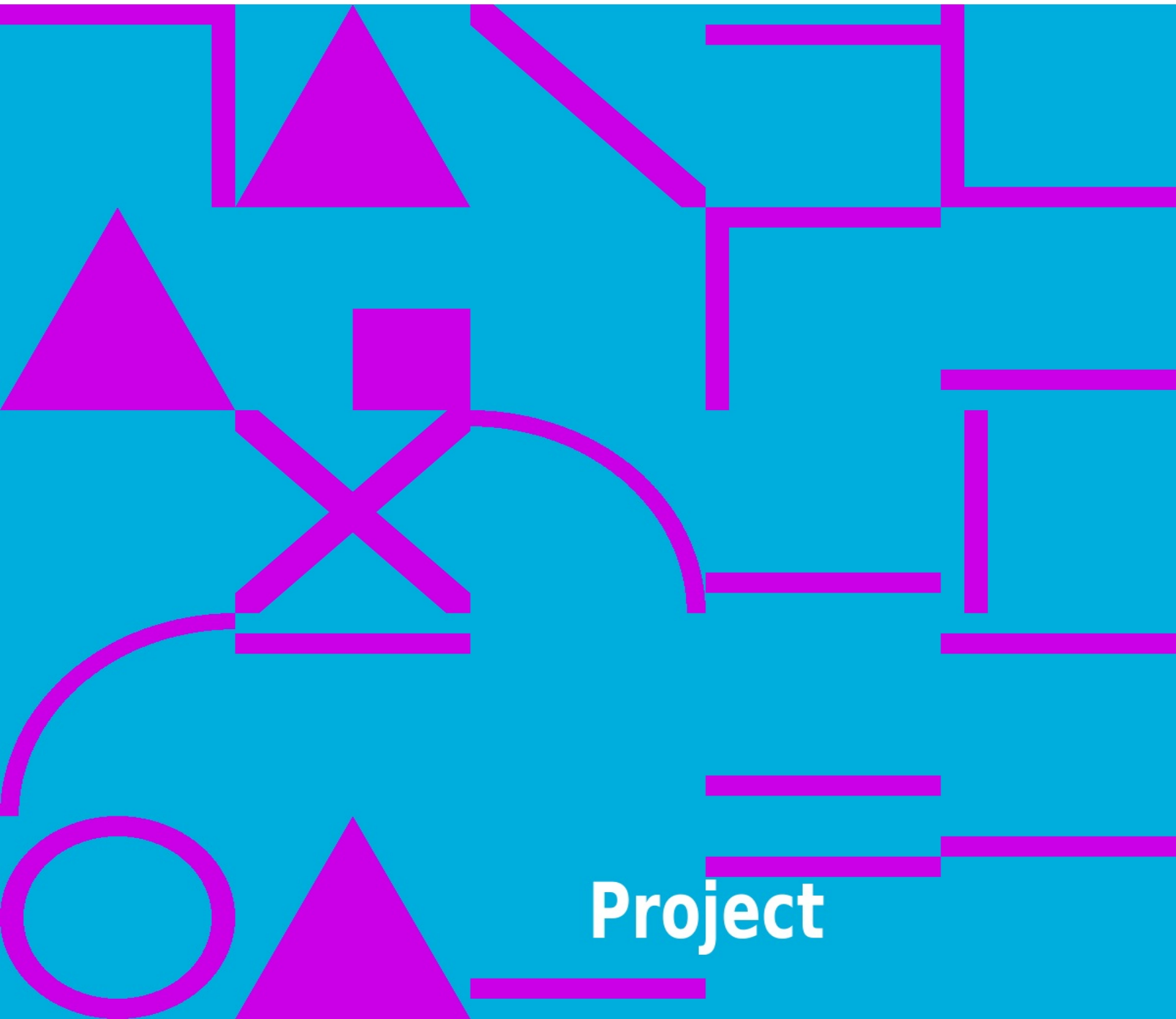
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# Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded

Samuel Richardson



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# **PAMELA**

**or**

# **VIRTUE REWARDED**

**By Samuel Richardson**

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***CONTENTS***

*PUBLISHERS' NOTE*

*PAMELA, or VIRTUE REWARDED*

*LETTER I*

*LETTER II*

*LETTER III*

*LETTER IV*

*LETTER V*

*LETTER VI*

*LETTER VII*

*LETTER VIII*

*LETTER IX*

*LETTER X*

*LETTER XI*

*LETTER XII*

*LETTER XIII*

*LETTER XIV*

*LETTER XV*

*LETTER XVI*

*LETTER XVII*

*LETTER XVIII*

*LETTER XIX*

*LETTER XX*

*LETTER XXI*

*LETTER XXII*

*LETTER XXIII*

*LETTER XXIV*

*LETTER XXV*

*LETTER XXVI*

*LETTER XXVII*

*LETTER XXVIII*

*LETTER XXIX*

*LETTER XXX*

*LETTER XXXI*

*LETTER XXXII*





## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE**

Samuel Richardson, the first, in order of time, of the great English novelists, was born in 1689 and died at London in 1761. He was a printer by trade, and rose to be master of the Stationers' Company. That he also became a novelist was due to his skill as a letter-writer, which brought him, in his fiftieth year, a commission to write a volume of model "familiar letters" as an aid to persons too illiterate to compose their own. The notion of connecting these letters by a story which had interested him suggested the plot of "Pamela" and determined its epistolary form—a form which was retained in his later works.

This novel (published 1740) created an epoch in the history of English fiction, and, with its successors, exerted a wide influence upon Continental literature. It is appropriately included in a series which is designed to form a group of studies of English life by the masters of English fiction. For it marked the transition from the novel of adventure to the novel of character—from the narration of entertaining events to the study of men and of manners, of motives and of sentiments. In it the romantic interest of the story (which is of the slightest) is subordinated to the moral interest in the conduct of its characters in the various situations in which they are placed. Upon this aspect of the "drama of human life" Richardson cast a most observant, if not always a penetrating glance. His works are an almost microscopically detailed picture of English domestic life in the early part of the eighteenth century.

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# **PAMELA, or VIRTUE REWARDED**



## LETTER I

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I have great trouble, and some comfort, to acquaint you with. The trouble is, that my good lady died of the illness I mentioned to you, and left us all much grieved for the loss of her; for she was a dear good lady, and kind to all us her servants. Much I feared, that as I was taken by her ladyship to wait upon her person, I should be quite destitute again, and forced to return to you and my poor mother, who have enough to do to maintain yourselves; and, as my lady's goodness had put me to write and cast accounts, and made me a little expert at my needle, and otherwise qualified above my degree, it was not every family that could have found a place that your poor Pamela was fit for: but God, whose graciousness to us we have so often experienced at a pinch, put it into my good lady's heart, on her death-bed, just an hour before she expired, to recommend to my young master all her servants, one by one; and when it came to my turn to be recommended, (for I was sobbing and crying at her pillow) she could only say, My dear son!—and so broke off a little; and then recovering—Remember my poor Pamela—And these were some of her last words! O how my eyes run—Don't wonder to see the paper so blotted.

Well, but God's will must be done!—And so comes the comfort, that I shall not be obliged to return back to be a clog upon my dear parents! For my master said, I will take care of you all, my good maidens; and for you, Pamela, (and took me by the hand; yes, he took my hand before them all,) for my dear mother's sake, I will be a friend to you, and you shall take care of my linen. God bless him! and pray with me, my dear father and mother, for a blessing upon him, for he has given mourning and a year's wages to all my lady's servants; and I having no wages as yet, my lady having said she should do for me as I deserved, ordered the housekeeper to give me mourning with the rest; and gave me with his own hand four golden guineas, and some silver, which were in my old lady's pocket when she died; and said, if I was a good girl, and faithful and diligent, he would be a friend to me, for his mother's sake. And so I send you these four guineas for your comfort; for Providence will not let me want: And so you may

pay some old debt with part, and keep the other part to comfort you both. If I get more, I am sure it is my duty, and it shall be my care, to love and cherish you both; for you have loved and cherished me, when I could do nothing for myself. I send them by John, our footman, who goes your way: but he does not know what he carries; because I seal them up in one of the little pill-boxes, which my lady had, wrapt close in paper, that they mayn't chink; and be sure don't open it before him.

I know, dear father and mother, I must give you both grief and pleasure; and so I will only say, Pray for your Pamela; who will ever be

Your most dutiful DAUGHTER.

I have been scared out of my senses; for just now, as I was folding up this letter in my late lady's dressing-room, in comes my young master! Good sirs! how was I frightened! I went to hide the letter in my bosom; and he, seeing me tremble, said, smiling, To whom have you been writing, Pamela?—I said, in my confusion, Pray your honour forgive me!—Only to my father and mother. He said, Well then, let me see how you are come on in your writing! O how ashamed I was!—He took it, without saying more, and read it quite through, and then gave it me again;—and I said, Pray your honour forgive me!—Yet I know not for what: for he was always dutiful to his parents; and why should he be angry that I was so to mine? And indeed he was not angry; for he took me by the hand, and said, You are a good girl, Pamela, to be kind to your aged father and mother. I am not angry with you for writing such innocent matters as these: though you ought to be wary what tales you send out of a family.—Be faithful and diligent; and do as you should do, and I like you the better for this. And then he said, Why, Pamela, you write a very pretty hand, and spell tolerably too. I see my good mother's care in your learning has not been thrown away upon you. She used to say you loved reading; you may look into any of her books, to improve yourself, so you take care of them. To be sure I did nothing but courtesy and cry, and was all in confusion, at his goodness. Indeed he is the best of gentlemen, I think! But I am making another long letter: So will only add to it, that I shall ever be Your dutiful daughter, PAMELA ANDREWS.



## LETTER II

[In answer to the preceding.]

DEAR PAMELA,

Your letter was indeed a great trouble, and some comfort, to me and your poor mother. We are troubled, to be sure, for your good lady's death, who took such care of you, and gave you learning, and, for three or four years past, has always been giving you clothes and linen, and every thing that a gentlewoman need not be ashamed to appear in. But our chief trouble is, and indeed a very great one, for fear you should be brought to anything dishonest or wicked, by being set so above yourself. Every body talks how you have come on, and what a genteel girl you are; and some say you are very pretty; and, indeed, six months since, when I saw you last, I should have thought so myself, if you was not our child. But what avails all this, if you are to be ruined and undone!—Indeed, my dear Pamela, we begin to be in great fear for you; for what signify all the riches in the world, with a bad conscience, and to be dishonest! We are, 'tis true, very poor, and find it hard enough to live; though once, as you know, it was better with us. But we would sooner live upon the water, and, if possible, the clay of the ditches I contentedly dig, than live better at the price of our child's ruin.

I hope the good 'squire has no design: but when he has given you so much money, and speaks so kindly to you, and praises your coming on; and, oh, that fatal word! that he would be kind to you, if you would do as you should do, almost kills us with fears.

I have spoken to good old widow Mumford about it, who, you know, has formerly lived in good families; and she puts us in some comfort; for she says it is not unusual, when a lady dies, to give what she has about her person to her waiting-maid, and to such as sit up with her in her illness. But, then, why should he smile so kindly upon you? Why should he take such a poor girl as you by the hand, as your letter says he has done twice? Why should he stoop to read your letter to us; and commend your writing and spelling? And why should he give you leave to read his mother's

books?—Indeed, indeed, my dearest child, our hearts ache for you; and then you seem so full of joy at his goodness, so taken with his kind expressions, (which, truly, are very great favours, if he means well) that we fear—yes, my dear child, we fear—you should be too grateful,—and reward him with that jewel, your virtue, which no riches, nor favour, nor any thing in this life, can make up to you.

I, too, have written a long letter, but will say one thing more; and that is, that, in the midst of our poverty and misfortunes, we have trusted in God's goodness, and been honest, and doubt not to be happy hereafter, if we continue to be good, though our lot is hard here; but the loss of our dear child's virtue would be a grief that we could not bear, and would bring our grey hairs to the grave at once.

If, then, you love us, if you wish for God's blessing, and your own future happiness, we both charge you to stand upon your guard: and, if you find the least attempt made upon your virtue, be sure you leave every thing behind you, and come away to us; for we had rather see you all covered with rags, and even follow you to the churchyard, than have it said, a child of ours preferred any worldly conveniences to her virtue.

We accept kindly your dutiful present; but, till we are out of pain, cannot make use of it, for fear we should partake of the price of our poor daughter's shame: so have laid it up in a rag among the thatch, over the window, for a while, lest we should be robbed. With our blessings, and our hearty prayers for you, we remain,

Your careful, but loving Father and Mother,  
JOHN AND ELIZABETH ANDREWS.

## LETTER III

DEAR FATHER,

I must needs say, your letter has filled me with trouble, for it has made my heart, which was overflowing with gratitude for my master's goodness, suspicious and fearful: and yet I hope I shall never find him to act unworthy of his character; for what could he get by ruining such a poor young creature as me? But that which gives me most trouble is, that you seem to mistrust the honesty of your child. No, my dear father and mother, be assured, that, by God's grace, I never will do any thing that shall bring your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. I will die a thousand deaths, rather than be dishonest any way. Of that be assured, and set your hearts at rest; for although I have lived above myself for some time past, yet I can be content with rags and poverty, and bread and water, and will embrace them, rather than forfeit my good name, let who will be the tempter. And of this pray rest satisfied, and think better of Your dutiful DAUGHTER till death.

My master continues to be very affable to me. As yet I see no cause to fear any thing. Mrs. Jervis, the housekeeper, too, is very civil to me, and I have the love of every body. Sure they can't all have designs against me, because they are civil! I hope I shall always behave so as to be respected by every one; and that nobody would do me more hurt than I am sure I would do them. Our John so often goes your way, that I will always get him to call, that you may hear from me, either by writing, (for it brings my hand in,) or by word of mouth.

## LETTER IV

DEAR MOTHER,

For the last was to my father, in answer to his letter; and so I will now write to you; though I have nothing to say, but what will make me look more like a vain hussy, than any thing else: However, I hope I shan't be so proud as to forget myself. Yet there is a secret pleasure one has to hear one's self praised. You must know, then, that my Lady Davers, who, I need not tell you, is my master's sister, has been a month at our house, and has taken great notice of me, and given me good advice to keep myself to myself. She told me I was a pretty wench, and that every body gave me a very good character, and loved me; and bid me take care to keep the fellows at a distance; and said, that I might do, and be more valued for it, even by themselves.

But what pleased me much was, what I am going to tell you; for at table, as Mrs. Jervis says, my master and her ladyship talking of me, she told him she thought me the prettiest wench she ever saw in her life; and that I was too pretty to live in a bachelor's house; since no lady he might marry would care to continue me with her. He said, I was vastly improved, and had a good share of prudence, and sense above my years; and that it would be pity, that what was my merit should be my misfortune.—No, says my good lady, Pamela shall come and live with me, I think. He said, with all his heart; he should be glad to have me so well provided for. Well, said she, I'll consult my lord about it. She asked how old I was; and Mrs. Jervis said, I was fifteen last February. O! says she, if the wench (for so she calls all us maiden servants) takes care of herself, she'll improve yet more and more, as well in her person as mind.

Now, my dear father and mother, though this may look too vain to be repeated by me; yet are you not rejoiced, as well as I, to see my master so willing to part with me?—This shews that he has nothing bad in his heart. But John is just going away; and so I have only to say, that I am, and will always be,

Your honest as well as dutiful DAUGHTER.

Pray make use of the money. You may now do it safely.



## LETTER V

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

John being to go your way, I am willing to write, because he is so willing to carry any thing for me. He says it does him good at his heart to see you both, and to hear you talk. He says you are both so sensible, and so honest, that he always learns something from you to the purpose. It is a thousand pities, he says, that such worthy hearts should not have better luck in the world! and wonders, that you, my father, who are so well able to teach, and write so good a hand, succeeded no better in the school you attempted to set up; but was forced to go to such hard labour. But this is more pride to me, that I am come of such honest parents, than if I had been born a lady.

I hear nothing yet of going to Lady Davers; and I am very easy at present here: for Mrs. Jervis uses me as if I were her own daughter, and is a very good woman, and makes my master's interest her own. She is always giving me good counsel, and I love her next to you two, I think, best of any body. She keeps so good rule and order, she is mightily respected by us all; and takes delight to hear me read to her; and all she loves to hear read, is good books, which we read whenever we are alone; so that I think I am at home with you. She heard one of our men, Harry, who is no better than he should be, speak freely to me; I think he called me his pretty Pamela, and took hold of me, as if he would have kissed me; for which, you may be sure, I was very angry: and she took him to task, and was as angry at him as could be; and told me she was very well pleased to see my prudence and modesty, and that I kept all the fellows at a distance. And indeed I am sure I am not proud, and carry it civilly to every body; but yet, methinks, I cannot bear to be looked upon by these men-servants, for they seem as if they would look one through; and, as I generally breakfast, dine, and sup, with Mrs. Jervis, (so good she is to me,) I am very easy that I have so little to say to them. Not but they are civil to me in the main, for Mrs. Jervis's sake, who they see loves me; and they stand in awe of her, knowing her to be a gentlewoman born, though she has had misfortunes. I am going on again with a long letter; for I love writing, and

shall tire you. But, when I began, I only intended to say, that I am quite fearless of any danger now: and, indeed, cannot but wonder at myself, (though your caution to me was your watchful love,) that I should be so foolish as to be so uneasy as I have been: for I am sure my master would not demean himself, so as to think upon such a poor girl as I, for my harm. For such a thing would ruin his credit, as well as mine, you know: who, to be sure, may expect one of the best ladies in the land. So no more at present, but that I am

Your ever dutiful DAUGHTER.

## LETTER VI

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

My master has been very kind since my last; for he has given me a suit of my late lady's clothes, and half a dozen of her shifts, and six fine handkerchiefs, and three of her cambric aprons, and four holland ones. The clothes are fine silk, and too rich and too good for me, to be sure. I wish it was no affront to him to make money of them, and send it to you: it would do me more good.

You will be full of fears, I warrant now, of some design upon me, till I tell you, that he was with Mrs. Jervis when he gave them me; and he gave her a mort of good things, at the same time, and bid her wear them in remembrance of her good friend, my lady, his mother. And when he gave me these fine things, he said, These, Pamela, are for you; have them made fit for you, when your mourning is laid by, and wear them for your good mistress's sake. Mrs. Jervis gives you a very good word; and I would have you continue to behave as prudently as you have done hitherto, and every body will be your friend.

I was so surprised at his goodness, that I could not tell what to say. I courtesied to him, and to Mrs. Jervis for her good word; and said, I wished I might be deserving of his favour, and her kindness: and nothing should be wanting in me, to the best of my knowledge.

O how amiable a thing is doing good!—It is all I envy great folks for.

I always thought my young master a fine gentleman, as every body says he is: but he gave these good things to us both with such a graciousness, as I thought he looked like an angel.

Mrs. Jervis says, he asked her, If I kept the men at a distance? for, he said, I was very pretty; and to be drawn in to have any of them, might be my ruin, and make me poor and miserable betimes. She never is wanting to give me a good word, and took occasion to launch out in my praise, she says. But I hope she has said no more than I shall try to deserve, though I mayn't at present. I am sure I will always love her, next to you and my dear mother. So I rest



Your ever dutiful DAUGHTER.

## LETTER VII

DEAR FATHER,

Since my last, my master gave me more fine things. He called me up to my late lady's closet, and, pulling out her drawers, he gave me two suits of fine Flanders laced headclothes, three pair of fine silk shoes, two hardly the worse, and just fit for me, (for my lady had a very little foot,) and the other with wrought silver buckles in them; and several ribands and top-knots of all colours; four pair of white fine cotton stockings, and three pair of fine silk ones; and two pair of rich stays. I was quite astonished, and unable to speak for a while; but yet I was inwardly ashamed to take the stockings; for Mrs. Jervis was not there: If she had, it would have been nothing. I believe I received them very awkwardly; for he smiled at my awkwardness, and said, Don't blush, Pamela: Dost think I don't know pretty maids should wear shoes and stockings?

I was so confounded at these words, you might have beat me down with a feather. For you must think, there was no answer to be made to this: So, like a fool, I was ready to cry; and went away courtesying and blushing, I am sure, up to the ears; for, though there was no harm in what he said, yet I did not know how to take it. But I went and told all to Mrs. Jervis, who said, God put it into his heart to be good to me; and I must double my diligence. It looked to her, she said, as if he would fit me in dress for a waiting-maid's place on Lady Davers's own person.

But still your kind fatherly cautions came into my head, and made all these gifts nothing near to me what they would have been. But yet, I hope, there is no reason; for what good could it do to him to harm such a simple maiden as me? Besides, to be sure no lady would look upon him, if he should so disgrace himself. So I will make myself easy; and, indeed, I should never have been otherwise, if you had not put it into my head; for my good, I know very well. But, may be, without these uneasinesses to mingle with these benefits, I might be too much puffed up: So I will conclude, all that happens is for our good; and God bless you, my dear father and mother; and I know you constantly pray for a blessing upon me; who am, and shall always be,

Your dutiful DAUGHTER.

## LETTER VIII

DEAR PAMELA,

I cannot but renew my cautions on your master's kindness, and his free expression to you about the stockings. Yet there may not be, and I hope there is not, any thing in it. But when I reflect, that there possibly may, and that if there should, no less depends upon it than my child's everlasting happiness in this world and the next; it is enough to make one fearful for you. Arm yourself, my dear child, for the worst; and resolve to lose your life sooner than your virtue. What though the doubts I filled you with, lessen the pleasure you would have had in your master's kindness; yet what signify the delights that arise from a few paltry fine clothes, in comparison with a good conscience?

These are, indeed, very great favours that he heaps upon you, but so much the more to be suspected; and when you say he looked so amiably, and like an angel, how afraid I am, that they should make too great an impression upon you! For, though you are blessed with sense and prudence above your years, yet I tremble to think, what a sad hazard a poor maiden of little more than fifteen years of age stands against the temptations of this world, and a designing young gentleman, if he should prove so, who has so much power to oblige, and has a kind of authority to command, as your master.

I charge you, my dear child, on both our blessings, poor as we are, to be on your guard; there can be no harm in that. And since Mrs. Jervis is so good a gentlewoman, and so kind to you, I am the easier a great deal, and so is your mother; and we hope you will hide nothing from her, and take her counsel in every thing. So, with our blessings, and assured prayers for you, more than for ourselves, we remain,

Your loving FATHER AND MOTHER.

Be sure don't let people's telling you, you are pretty, puff you up; for you did not make yourself, and so can have no praise due to you for it. It is virtue and goodness only, that make the true beauty. Remember that, Pamela.



## LETTER IX

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I am sorry to write you word, that the hopes I had of going to wait on Lady Davers, are quite over. My lady would have had me; but my master, as I heard by the by, would not consent to it. He said her nephew might be taken with me, and I might draw him in, or be drawn in by him; and he thought, as his mother loved me, and committed me to his care, he ought to continue me with him; and Mrs. Jervis would be a mother to me. Mrs. Jervis tells me the lady shook her head, and said, Ah! brother! and that was all. And as you have made me fearful by your cautions, my heart at times misgives me. But I say nothing yet of your caution, or my own uneasiness, to Mrs. Jervis; not that I mistrust her, but for fear she should think me presumptuous, and vain and conceited, to have any fears about the matter, from the great distance between such a gentleman, and so poor a girl. But yet Mrs. Jervis seemed to build something upon Lady Davers's shaking her head, and saying, Ah! brother! and no more. God, I hope, will give me his grace: and so I will not, if I can help it, make myself too uneasy; for I hope there is no occasion. But every little matter that happens, I will acquaint you with, that you may continue to me your good advice, and pray for

Your sad-hearted PAMELA.

## LETTER X

DEAR MOTHER,

You and my good father may wonder you have not had a letter from me in so many weeks; but a sad, sad scene, has been the occasion of it. For to be sure, now it is too plain, that all your cautions were well grounded. O my dear mother! I am miserable, truly miserable!—But yet, don't be frightened, I am honest!—God, of his goodness, keep me so!

O this angel of a master! this fine gentleman! this gracious benefactor to your poor Pamela! who was to take care of me at the prayer of his good dying mother; who was so apprehensive for me, lest I should be drawn in by Lord Davers's nephew, that he would not let me go to Lady Davers's: This very gentleman (yes, I must call him gentleman, though he has fallen from the merit of that title) has degraded himself to offer freedoms to his poor servant! He has now shewed himself in his true colours; and, to me, nothing appear so black, and so frightful.

I have not been idle; but had writ from time to time, how he, by sly mean degrees, exposed his wicked views; but somebody stole my letter, and I know not what has become of it. It was a very long one. I fear, he that was mean enough to do bad things, in one respect, did not stick at this. But be it as it will, all the use he can make of it will be, that he may be ashamed of his part; I not of mine: for he will see I was resolved to be virtuous, and gloried in the honesty of my poor parents.

I will tell you all, the next opportunity; for I am watched very narrowly; and he says to Mrs. Jervis, This girl is always scribbling; I think she may be better employed. And yet I work all hours with my needle, upon his linen, and the fine linen of the family; and am, besides, about flowering him a waistcoat.—But, oh! my heart's broke almost; for what am I likely to have for my reward, but shame and disgrace, or else ill words, and hard treatment! I'll tell you all soon, and hope I shall find my long letter.

Your most afflicted DAUGHTER.

May-be, I he and him too much: but it is his own fault if I do. For why did he lose all his dignity with me?





## LETTER XI

DEAR MOTHER,

Well, I can't find my letter, and so I'll try to recollect it all, and be as brief as I can. All went well enough in the main for some time after my letter but one. At last, I saw some reason to suspect; for he would look upon me, whenever he saw me, in such a manner, as shewed not well; and one day he came to me, as I was in the summer-house in the little garden, at work with my needle, and Mrs. Jervis was just gone from me; and I would have gone out, but he said, No don't go, Pamela; I have something to say to you; and you always fly me when I come near you, as if you were afraid of me.

I was much out of countenance, you may well think; but said, at last, It does not become your good servant to stay in your presence, sir, without your business required it; and I hope I shall always know my place.

Well, says he, my business does require it sometimes; and I have a mind you should stay to hear what I have to say to you.

I stood still confounded, and began to tremble, and the more when he took me by the hand; for now no soul was near us.

My sister Davers, said he, (and seemed, I thought, to be as much at a loss for words as I,) would have had you live with her; but she would not do for you what I am resolved to do, if you continue faithful and obliging. What say'st thou, my girl? said he, with some eagerness; had'st thou not rather stay with me, than go to my sister Davers? He looked so, as filled me with affrightment; I don't know how; wildly, I thought.

I said, when I could speak, Your honour will forgive me; but as you have no lady for me to wait upon, and my good lady has been now dead this twelvemonth, I had rather, if it would not displease you, wait upon Lady Davers, because—

I was proceeding, and he said, a little hastily—Because you are a little fool, and know not what's good for yourself. I tell you I will make a gentlewoman of you, if you be obliging, and don't stand in your own light; and so saying, he put his arm about me, and kissed me!

Now, you will say, all his wickedness appeared plainly. I struggled and trembled, and was so benumbed with terror, that I sunk down, not in a fit, and yet not myself; and I found myself in his arms, quite void of strength; and he kissed me two or three times, with frightful eagerness.—At last I burst from him, and was getting out of the summer-house; but he held me back, and shut the door.

I would have given my life for a farthing. And he said, I'll do you no harm, Pamela; don't be afraid of me. I said, I won't stay. You won't, hussy! said he: Do you know whom you speak to? I lost all fear, and all respect, and said, Yes, I do, sir, too well!—Well may I forget that I am your servant, when you forget what belongs to a master.

I sobbed and cried most sadly. What a foolish hussy you are! said he: Have I done you any harm? Yes, sir, said I, the greatest harm in the world: You have taught me to forget myself and what belongs to me, and have lessened the distance that fortune has made between us, by demeaning yourself, to be so free to a poor servant. Yet, sir, I will be bold to say, I am honest, though poor: and if you was a prince, I would not be otherwise.

He was angry, and said, Who would have you otherwise, you foolish slut! Cease your blubbing. I own I have demeaned myself; but it was only to try you. If you can keep this matter secret, you'll give me the better opinion of your prudence; and here's something, said he, putting some gold in my hand, to make you amends for the fright I put you in. Go, take a walk in the garden, and don't go in till your blubbing is over: and I charge you say nothing of what is past, and all shall be well, and I'll forgive you.

I won't take the money, indeed, sir, said I, poor as I am I won't take it. For, to say truth, I thought it looked like taking earnest, and so I put it upon the bench; and as he seemed vexed and confused at what he had done, I took the opportunity to open the door, and went out of the summer-house.

He called to me, and said, Be secret; I charge you, Pamela; and don't go in yet, as I told you.

O how poor and mean must those actions be, and how little must they make the best of gentlemen look, when they offer such things as are unworthy of themselves, and put it into the power of their inferiors to be greater than they!

I took a turn or two in the garden, but in sight of the house, for fear of the worst; and breathed upon my hand to dry my eyes, because I would not be too disobedient. My next shall tell you more.

Pray for me, my dear father and mother: and don't be angry I have not yet run away from this house, so late my comfort and delight, but now my terror and anguish. I am forced to break off hastily.

Your dutiful and honest DAUGHTER.

## LETTER XII

DEAR MOTHER,

Well, I will now proceed with my sad story. And so, after I had dried my eyes, I went in, and began to ruminate with myself what I had best to do. Sometimes I thought I would leave the house and go to the next town, and wait an opportunity to get to you; but then I was at a loss to resolve whether to take away the things he had given me or no, and how to take them away: Sometimes I thought to leave them behind me, and only go with the clothes on my back, but then I had two miles and a half, and a byway, to the town; and being pretty well dressed, I might come to some harm, almost as bad as what I would run away from; and then may-be, thought I, it will be reported, I have stolen something, and so was forced to run away; and to carry a bad name back with me to my dear parents, would be a sad thing indeed!—O how I wished for my grey russet again, and my poor honest dress, with which you fitted me out, (and hard enough too it was for you to do it!) for going to this place, when I was not twelve years old, in my good lady's days! Sometimes I thought of telling Mrs. Jervis, and taking her advice, and only feared his command to be secret; for, thought I, he may be ashamed of his actions, and never attempt the like again: And as poor Mrs. Jervis depended upon him, through misfortunes, that had attended her, I thought it would be a sad thing to bring his displeasure upon her for my sake.

In this quandary, now considering, now crying, and not knowing what to do, I passed the time in my chamber till evening; when desiring to be excused going to supper, Mrs. Jervis came up to me, and said, Why must I sup without you, Pamela? Come, I see you are troubled at something; tell me what is the matter.

I begged I might be permitted to be with her on nights; for I was afraid of spirits, and they would not hurt such a good person as she. That was a silly excuse, she said; for why was not you afraid of spirits before?—(Indeed I did not think of that.) But you shall be my bed-fellow with all my heart, added she, let your reason be what it will; only come down to supper. I begged to be excused; for, said I, I have been crying so, that it

will be taken notice of by my fellow-servants; and I will hide nothing from you, Mrs. Jervis, when we are alone.

She was so good to indulge me; but made haste to come up to bed; and told the servants, that I should be with her, because she could not rest well, and would get me to read her to sleep; for she knew I loved reading, she said.

When we were alone, I told her all that had passed; for I thought, though he had bid me not, yet if he should come to know I had told, it would be no worse; for to keep a secret of such a nature, would be, as I apprehended, to deprive myself of the good advice which I never wanted more; and might encourage him to think I did not resent it as I ought, and would keep worse secrets, and so make him do worse by me. Was I right, my dear mother?

Mrs. Jervis could not help mingling tears with my tears; for I cried all the time I was telling her the story, and begged her to advise me what to do; and I shewed her my dear father's two letters, and she praised the honesty and editing of them, and said pleasing things to me of you both. But she begged I would not think of leaving my service; for, said she, in all likelihood, you behaved so virtuously, that he will be ashamed of what he has done, and never offer the like to you again: though, my dear Pamela, said she, I fear more for your prettiness than for anything else; because the best man in the land might love you: so she was pleased to say. She wished it was in her power to live independent; then she would take a little private house, and I should live with her like her daughter.

And so, as you ordered me to take her advice, I resolved to tarry to see how things went, except he was to turn me away; although, in your first letter, you ordered me to come away the moment I had any reason to be apprehensive. So, dear father and mother, it is not disobedience, I hope, that I stay; for I could not expect a blessing, or the good fruits of your prayers for me, if I was disobedient.

All the next day I was very sad, and began my long letter. He saw me writing, and said (as I mentioned) to Mrs. Jervis, That girl is always scribbling; methinks she might find something else to do, or to that purpose. And when I had finished my letter, I put it under the toilet in my late lady's dressing-room, whither nobody comes but myself and Mrs. Jervis, besides my master; but when I came up again to seal it, to my great concern, it was gone; and Mrs. Jervis knew nothing of it; and nobody knew

of my master's having been near the place in the time; so I have been sadly troubled about it: But Mrs. Jervis, as well as I, thinks he has it, some how or other; and he appears cross and angry, and seems to shun me, as much as he said I did him. It had better be so than worse!

But he has ordered Mrs. Jervis to bid me not pass so much time in writing; which is a poor matter for such a gentleman as he to take notice of, as I am not idle other ways, if he did not resent what he thought I wrote upon. And this has no very good look.

But I am a good deal easier since I lie with Mrs. Jervis; though, after all, the fears I live in on one side, and his frowning and displeasure at what I do on the other, make me more miserable than enough.

O that I had never left my little bed in the loft, to be thus exposed to temptations on one hand, or disgusts on the other! How happy was I awhile ago! How contrary now!—Pity and pray for

Your afflicted  
PAMELA.

## LETTER XIII

My DEAREST CHILD,

Our hearts bleed for your distress, and the temptations you are exposed to. You have our hourly prayers; and we would have you flee this evil great house and man, if you find he renews his attempts. You ought to have done it at first, had you not had Mrs. Jervis to advise with. We can find no fault in your conduct hitherto: But it makes our hearts ache for fear of the worst. O my child! temptations are sore things,—but yet, without them, we know not ourselves, nor what we are able to do.

Your danger is very great; for you have riches, youth, and a fine gentleman, as the world reckons him, to withstand; but how great will be your honour to withstand them! And when we consider your past conduct, and your virtuous education, and that you have been bred to be more ashamed of dishonesty than poverty, we trust in God, that He will enable you to overcome. Yet, as we can't see but your life must be a burthen to you, through the great apprehensions always upon you; and that it may be presumptuous to trust too much to our own strength; and that you are but very young; and the devil may put it into his heart to use some stratagem, of which great men are full, to decoy you: I think you had better come home to share our poverty with safety, than live with so much discontent in a plenty, that itself may be dangerous. God direct you for the best! While you have Mrs. Jervis for an adviser and bed-fellow, (and, O my dear child! that was prudently done of you,) we are easier than we should be; and so committing you to the divine protection, remain

Your truly loving, but careful,

FATHER and MOTHER.



## LETTER XIV

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

Mrs. Jervis and I have lived very comfortably together for this fortnight past; for my master was all that time at his Lincolnshire estate, and at his sister's, the Lady Davers. But he came home yesterday. He had some talk with Mrs. Jervis soon after, and mostly about me. He said to her, it seems, Well, Mrs. Jervis, I know Pamela has your good word; but do you think her of any use in the family? She told me she was surprised at the question, but said, That I was one of the most virtuous and industrious young creatures that ever she knew. Why that word virtuous, said he, I pray you? Was there any reason to suppose her otherwise? Or has any body taken it into his head to try her?—I wonder, sir, says she, you ask such a question! Who dare offer any thing to her in such an orderly and well-governed house as yours, and under a master of so good a character for virtue and honour? Your servant, Mrs. Jervis, says he, for your good opinion: but pray, if any body did, do you think Pamela would let you know it? Why, sir, said she, she is a poor innocent young creature, and I believe has so much confidence in me, that she would take my advice as soon as she would her mother's. Innocent! again, and virtuous, I warrant! Well, Mrs. Jervis, you abound with your epithets; but I take her to be an artful young baggage; and had I a young handsome butler or steward, she'd soon make her market of one of them, if she thought it worth while to snap at him for a husband. Alack-a-day, sir, said she, it is early days with Pamela; and she does not yet think of a husband, I dare say: and your steward and butler are both men in years, and think nothing of the matter. No, said he, if they were younger, they'd have more wit than to think of such a girl; I'll tell you my mind of her, Mrs. Jervis: I don't think this same favourite of yours so very artless a girl as you imagine. I am not to dispute with your honour, said Mrs. Jervis; but I dare say, if the men will let her alone, she'll never trouble herself about them. Why, Mrs. Jervis, said he, are there any men that will not let her alone, that you know of? No, indeed, sir, said she; she keeps herself so much to herself, and yet behaves so prudently, that they

all esteem her, and shew her as great a respect as if she was a gentlewoman born.

Ay, says he, that's her art, that I was speaking of: but, let me tell you, the girl has vanity and conceit, and pride too, or I am mistaken; and, perhaps, I could give you an instance of it. Sir, said she, you can see farther than such a poor silly woman as I am; but I never saw any thing but innocence in her—And virtue too, I'll warrant ye! said he. But suppose I could give you an instance, where she has talked a little too freely of the kindnesses that have been shewn her from a certain quarter; and has had the vanity to impute a few kind words, uttered in mere compassion to her youth and circumstances, into a design upon her, and even dared to make free with names that she ought never to mention but with reverence and gratitude; what would you say to that?—Say, sir! said she, I cannot tell what to say. But I hope Pamela incapable of such ingratitude.

Well, no more of this silly girl, says he; you may only advise her, as you are her friend, not to give herself too much licence upon the favours she meets with; and if she stays here, that she will not write the affairs of my family purely for an exercise to her pen, and her invention. I tell you she is a subtle, artful gipsy, and time will shew it you.

Was ever the like heard, my dear father and mother? It is plain he did not expect to meet with such a repulse, and mistrusts that I have told Mrs. Jervis, and has my long letter too, that I intended for you; and so is vexed to the heart. But I can't help it. I had better be thought artful and subtle, than be so, in his sense; and, as light as he makes of the words virtue and innocence in me, he would have made a less angry construction, had I less deserved that he should do so; for then, may be, my crime should have been my virtue with him naughty gentleman as he is!

I will soon write again; but must now end with saying, that I am, and shall always be, Your honest DAUGHTER.

## LETTER XV

DEAR MOTHER,

I broke off abruptly my last letter; for I feared he was coming; and so it happened. I put the letter in my bosom, and took up my work, which lay by me; but I had so little of the artful, as he called it, that I looked as confused as if I had been doing some great harm.

Sit still, Pamela, said he, mind your work, for all me.—You don't tell me I am welcome home, after my journey to Lincolnshire. It would be hard, sir, said I, if you was not always welcome to your honour's own house.

I would have gone; but he said, Don't run away, I tell you. I have a word or two to say to you. Good sirs, how my heart went pit-a-pat! When I was a little kind to you, said he, in the summer-house, and you carried yourself so foolishly upon it, as if I had intended to do you great harm, did I not tell you you should take no notice of what passed to any creature? and yet you have made a common talk of the matter, not considering either my reputation, or your own.—I made a common talk of it, sir! said I: I have nobody to talk to, hardly.

He interrupted me, and said, Hardly! you little equivocator! what do you mean by hardly? Let me ask you, have not you told Mrs. Jervis for one? Pray your honour, said I, all in agitation, let me go down; for it is not for me to hold an argument with your honour. Equivocator, again! said he, and took my hand, what do you talk of an argument? Is it holding an argument with me to answer a plain question? Answer me what I asked. O, good sir, said I, let me beg you will not urge me farther, for fear I forget myself again, and be saucy.

Answer me then, I bid you, says he, Have you not told Mrs. Jervis? It will be saucy in you if you don't answer me directly to what I ask. Sir, said I, and fain would have pulled my hand away, perhaps I should be for answering you by another question, and that would not become me. What is it you would say? replies he; speak out.

Then, sir, said I, why should your honour be so angry I should tell Mrs. Jervis, or any body else, what passed, if you intended no harm?

Well said, pretty innocent and artless! as Mrs. Jervis calls you, said he; and is it thus you taunt and retort upon me, insolent as you are! But still I will be answered directly to my question. Why then, sir, said I, I will not tell a lie for the world: I did tell Mrs. Jervis; for my heart was almost broken; but I opened not my mouth to any other. Very well, boldface, said he, and equivocator again! You did not open your mouth to any other; but did not you write to some other? Why, now, and please your honour, said I, (for I was quite courageous just then,) you could not have asked me this question, if you had not taken from me my letter to my father and mother, in which I own I had broken my mind freely to them, and asked their advice, and poured forth my griefs!

And so I am to be exposed, am I, said he, in my own house, and out of my house, to the whole world, by such a sauce-box as you? No, good sir, said I, and I hope your honour won't be angry with me; it is not I that expose you, if I say nothing but the truth. So, taunting again! Assurance as you are! said he: I will not be thus talked to!

Pray, sir, said I, of whom can a poor girl take advice, if it must not be of her father and mother, and such a good woman as Mrs. Jervis, who, for her sex-sake, should give it me when asked? Insolence! said he, and stamped with his foot, am I to be questioned thus by such a one as you? I fell down on my knees, and said, For Heaven's sake, your honour, pity a poor creature, that knows nothing of her duty, but how to cherish her virtue and good name: I have nothing else to trust to: and, though poor and friendless here, yet I have always been taught to value honesty above my life. Here's ado with your honesty, said he, foolish girl! Is it not one part of honesty to be dutiful and grateful to your master, do you think? Indeed, sir, said I, it is impossible I should be ungrateful to your honour, or disobedient, or deserve the names of bold-face or insolent, which you call me, but when your commands are contrary to that first duty which shall ever be the principle of my life!

He seemed to be moved, and rose up, and walked into the great chamber two or three turns, leaving me on my knees; and I threw my apron over my face, and laid my head on a chair, and cried as if my heart would break, having no power to stir.

At last he came in again, but, alas! with mischief in his heart! and raising me up, he said, Rise, Pamela, rise; you are your own enemy. Your perverse folly will be your ruin: I tell you this, that I am very much displeas'd with the freedoms you have taken with my name to my housekeeper, as also to your father and mother; and you may as well have real cause to take these freedoms with me, as to make my name suffer for imaginary ones. And saying so, he offer'd to take me on his knee, with some force. O how I was terrified! I said, like as I had read in a book a night or two before, Angels and saints, and all the host of heaven, defend me! And may I never survive one moment that fatal one in which I shall forfeit my innocence! Pretty fool! said he, how will you forfeit your innocence, if you are oblig'd to yield to a force you cannot withstand? Be easy, said he; for let the worst happen that can, you will have the merit, and I the blame; and it will be a good subject for letters to your father and mother, and a tale into the bargain for Mrs. Jervis.

He by force kiss'd my neck and lips; and said, Whoever blamed Lucretia? All the shame lay on the ravisher only and I am content to take all the blame upon me, as I have already borne too great a share for what I have not deserv'd.

May I, said I, Lucretia like, justify myself with my death, if I am used barbarously! O my good girl! said he, tauntingly, you are well read, I see; and we shall make out between us, before we have done, a pretty story in romance, I warrant ye.

He then put his hand in my bosom, and indignation gave me double strength, and I got loose from him by a sudden spring, and ran out of the room! and the next chamber being open, I made shift to get into it, and threw to the door, and it lock'd after me; but he follow'd me so close, he got hold of my gown, and tore a piece off, which hung without the door; for the key was on the inside.

I just remember I got into the room; for I knew nothing further of the matter till afterwards; for I fell into a fit with my terror, and there I lay, till he, as I suppose, looking through the key-hole, spy'd me upon the floor, stretch'd out at length, on my face; and then he call'd Mrs. Jervis to me, who, by his assistance, burst open the door, he went away, seeing me coming to myself; and bid her say nothing of the matter, if she was wise.

Poor Mrs. Jervis thought it was worse, and cried over me like as if she was my mother; and I was two hours before I came to myself; and just as I got a little up on my feet, he coming in, I fainted away again with the terror; and so he withdrew: but he staid in the next room to let nobody come near us, that his foul proceedings might not be known.

Mrs. Jervis gave me her smelling-bottle, and had cut my laces, and set me in a great chair, and he called her to him: How is the girl? said he: I never saw such a fool in my life. I did nothing at all to her. Mrs. Jervis could not speak for crying. So he said, She has told you, it seems, that I was kind to her in the summer-house, though I'll assure you, I was quite innocent then as well as now; and I desire you to keep this matter to yourself, and let me not be named in it.

O, sir, said she, for your honour's sake, and for Christ's sake!—But he would not hear her, and said—For your own sake, I tell you, Mrs. Jervis, say not a word more. I have done her no harm. And I won't have her stay in my house; prating, perverse fool, as she is! But since she is so apt to fall into fits, or at least pretend to do so, prepare her to see me to-morrow after dinner, in my mother's closet, and do you be with her, and you shall hear what passes between us.

And so he went out in a pet, and ordered his chariot and four to be got ready, and went a visiting somewhere.

Mrs. Jervis then came to me, and I told her all that had happened, and said, I was resolved not to stay in the house: And she replying, He seemed to threaten as much; I said, I am glad of that; then I shall be easy. So she told me all he had said to her, as above.

Mrs. Jervis is very loath I should go; and yet, poor woman! she begins to be afraid for herself; but would not have me ruined for the world. She says to be sure he means no good; but may be, now he sees me so resolute, he will give over all attempts; and that I shall better know what to do after tomorrow, when I am to appear before a very bad judge, I doubt.

O how I dread this to-morrow's appearance! But be as assured, my dear parents, of the honesty of your poor child, as I am of your prayers for

Your dutiful DAUGHTER.

O this frightful to-morrow; how I dread it!



## LETTER XVI

MY DEAR PARENTS,

I know you longed to hear from me soon; and I send you as soon as I could.

Well, you may believe how uneasily I passed the time, till his appointed hour came. Every minute, as it grew nearer, my terrors increased; and sometimes I had great courage, and sometimes none at all; and I thought I should faint when it came to the time my master had dined. I could neither eat nor drink, for my part; and do what I could, my eyes were swelled with crying.

At last he went up to the closet, which was my good lady's dressing-room; a room I once loved, but then as much hated.

Don't your heart ache for me?—I am sure mine fluttered about like a new-caught bird in a cage. O Pamela, said I to myself, why art thou so foolish and fearful? Thou hast done no harm! What, if thou fearest an unjust judge, when thou art innocent, would'st thou do before a just one, if thou wert guilty? Have courage, Pamela, thou knowest the worst! And how easy a choice poverty and honesty is, rather than plenty and wickedness.

So I cheered myself; but yet my poor heart sunk, and my spirits were quite broken. Everything that stirred, I thought was to call me to my account. I dreaded it, and yet I wished it to come.

Well, at last he rung the bell: O, thought I, that it was my passing-bell! Mrs. Jervis went up, with a full heart enough, poor good woman! He said, Where's Pamela? Let her come up, and do you come with her. She came to me: I was ready to go with my feet; but my heart was with my dear father and mother, wishing to share your poverty and happiness. I went up, however.

O how can wicked men seem so steady and untouched with such black hearts, while poor innocents stand like malefactors before them!

He looked so stern, that my heart failed me, and I wished myself any where but there, though I had before been summoning up all my courage.



Good Heaven, said I to myself, give me courage to stand before this naughty master! O soften him, or harden me!

Come in, fool, said he, angrily, as soon as he saw me; (and snatched my hand with a pull;) you may well be ashamed to see me, after your noise and nonsense, and exposing me as you have done. I ashamed to see you! thought I: Very pretty indeed!—But I said nothing.

Mrs. Jervis, said he, here you are both together. Do you sit down; but let her stand, if she will. Ay, thought I, if I can; for my knees beat one against the other. Did you not think, when you saw the girl in the way you found her in, that I had given her the greatest occasion for complaint, that could possibly be given to a woman? And that I had actually ruined her, as she calls it? Tell me, could you think any thing less? Indeed, said she, I feared so at first. Has she told you what I did to her, and all I did to her, to occasion all this folly, by which my reputation might have suffered in your opinion, and in that of all the family.—Inform me, what she has told you?

She was a little too much frightened, as she owned afterwards, at his sternness, and said, Indeed she told me you only pulled her on your knee, and kissed her.

Then I plucked up my spirits a little. Only! Mrs. Jervis? said I; and was not that enough to shew me what I had to fear? When a master of his honour's degree demeans himself to be so free as that to such a poor servant as me, what is the next to be expected?—But your honour went farther, so you did; and threatened me what you would do, and talked of Lucretia, and her hard fate.—Your honour knows you went too far for a master to a servant, or even to his equal; and I cannot bear it. So I fell a crying most sadly.

Mrs. Jervis began to excuse me, and to beg he would pity a poor maiden, that had such a value for her reputation. He said, I speak it to her face, I think her very pretty, and I thought her humble, and one that would not grow upon my favours, or the notice I took of her; but I abhor the thoughts of forcing her to any thing. I know myself better, said he, and what belongs to me: And to be sure I have enough demeaned myself to take notice of such a one as she; but I was bewitched by her, I think, to be freer than became me; though I had no intention to carry the jest farther.

What poor stuff was all this, my dear mother, from a man of his sense! But see how a bad cause and bad actions confound the greatest wits!—It

gave me a little more courage then; for innocence, I find, in a low fortune, and weak mind, has many advantages over guilt, with all its riches and wisdom.

So I said, Your honour may call this jest or sport, or what you please; but indeed, sir, it is not a jest that becomes the distance between a master and a servant. Do you hear, Mrs. Jervis? said he: do you hear the pertness of the creature? I had a good deal of this sort before in the summer-house, and yesterday too, which made me rougher with her than perhaps I had otherwise been.

Says Mrs. Jervis, Pamela, don't be so pert to his honour: you should know your distance; you see his honour was only in jest.—O dear Mrs. Jervis, said I, don't you blame me too. It is very difficult to keep one's distance to the greatest of men, when they won't keep it themselves to their meanest servants.

See again! said he; could you believe this of the young baggage, if you had not heard it? Good your honour, said the well-meaning gentlewoman, pity and forgive the poor girl; she is but a girl, and her virtue is very dear to her; and I will pawn my life for her, she will never be pert to your honour, if you'll be so good as to molest her no more, nor frighten her again. You saw, sir, by her fit, she was in terror; she could not help it; and though your honour intended her no harm, yet the apprehension was almost death to her: and I had much ado to bring her to herself again. O the little hypocrite! said he; she has all the arts of her sex; they were born with her; and I told you awhile ago you did not know her. But this was not the reason principally of my calling you before me together. I find I am likely to suffer in my reputation by the perverseness and folly of this girl. She has told you all, and perhaps more than all; nay, I make no doubt of it; and she has written letters (for I find she is a mighty letter-writer!) to her father and mother, and others, as far as I know, in which representing herself as an angel of light, she makes her kind master and benefactor, a devil incarnate—(O how people will sometimes, thought I, call themselves by their right names!)—And all this, added he, I won't hear; and so I am resolved she shall return to the distresses and poverty she was taken from; and let her be careful how she uses my name with freedom, when she is gone from me.

I was brightened up at once with these welcome words, and I threw myself upon my knees at his feet, with a most sincere glad heart; and I said, May your honour be for ever blessed for your resolution! Now I shall be happy. And permit me, on my bended knees, to thank you for all the benefits and favours you have heaped upon me; for the opportunities I have had of improvement and learning, through my good lady's means, and yours. I will now forget all your honour has offered me: and I promise you, that I will never let your name pass my lips, but with reverence and gratitude: and so God Almighty bless your honour, for ever and ever! Amen.

Then rising from my knees, I went away with another-guise sort of heart than I came into his presence with: and so I fell to writing this letter. And thus all is happily over.

And now, my dearest father and mother, expect to see soon your poor daughter, with an humble and dutiful mind, returned to you: and don't fear but I know how to be as happy with you as ever: for I will be in the loft, as I used to do; and pray let my little bed be got ready; and I have a small matter of money, which will buy me a suit of clothes, fitter for my condition than what I have; and I will get Mrs. Mumford to help me to some needle-work: and fear not that I shall be a burden to you, if my health continues. I know I shall be blessed, if not for my own sake, for both your sakes, who have, in all your trials and misfortunes, preserved so much integrity as makes every body speak well of you both. But I hope he will let good Mrs. Jervis give me a character, for fear it should be thought that I was turned away for dishonesty.

And so, my dear parents, may you be blest for me, and I for you! And I will always pray for my master and Mrs. Jervis. So good night; for it is late, and I shall be soon called to bed.

I hope Mrs. Jervis is not angry with me. She has not called me to supper: though I could eat nothing if she had. But I make no doubt I shall sleep purely to-night, and dream that I am with you, in my dear, dear, happy loft once more.

So good night again, my dear father and mother, says

Your poor honest DAUGHTER.

Perhaps I mayn't come this week, because I must get up the linen, and leave in order every thing belonging to my place. So send me a line, if you

can, to let me know if I shall be welcome, by John, who will call for it as he returns. But say nothing of my coming away to him, as yet: for it will be said I blab every thing.

## LETTER XVII

MY DEAREST DAUGHTER,

Welcome, welcome, ten times welcome shall you be to us; for you come to us innocent, and happy, and honest; and you are the staff of our old age, and our comfort. And though we cannot do for you as we would, yet, fear not, we shall live happily together; and what with my diligent labour, and your poor mother's spinning, and your needle-work, I make no doubt we shall do better and better. Only your poor mother's eyes begin to fail her; though, I bless God, I am as strong and able, and willing to labour as ever; and, O my dear child! your virtue has made me, I think, stronger and better than I was before. What blessed things are trials and temptations, when we have the strength to resist and subdue them!

But I am uneasy about those same four guineas; I think you should give them back again to your master; and yet I have broken them. Alas! I have only three left; but I will borrow the fourth, if I can, part upon my wages, and part of Mrs. Mumford, and send the whole sum back to you, that you may return it, against John comes next, if he comes again before you.

I want to know how you come. I fancy honest John will be glad to bear you company part of the way, if your master is not so cross as to forbid him. And if I know time enough, your mother will go one five miles, and I will go ten on the way, or till I meet you, as far as one holiday will go; for that I can get leave to make on such an occasion.

And we shall receive you with more pleasure than we had at your birth, when all the worst was over; or than we ever had in our lives.

And so God bless you till the happy time comes! say both your mother and I, which is all at present, from

Your truly loving PARENTS.

## LETTER XVIII

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I thank you a thousand times for your goodness to me, expressed in your last letter. I now long to get my business done, and come to my new old lot again, as I may call it. I have been quite another thing since my master has turned me off: and as I shall come to you an honest daughter, what pleasure it is to what I should have had, if I could not have seen you but as a guilty one. Well, my writing-time will soon be over, and so I will make use of it now, and tell you all that has happened since my last letter.

I wondered Mrs. Jervis did not call me to sup with her, and feared she was angry; and when I had finished my letter, I longed for her coming to bed. At last she came up, but seemed shy and reserved; and I said, My dear Mrs. Jervis, I am glad to see you: you are not angry with me, I hope. She said she was sorry things had gone so far; and that she had a great deal of talk with my master, after I was gone; that he seemed moved at what I said, and at my falling on my knees to him, and my prayer for him, at my going away. He said I was a strange girl; he knew not what to make of me. And is she gone? said he: I intended to say something else to her; but she behaved so oddly, that I had not power to stop her. She asked, if she should call me again? He said, Yes; and then, No, let her go; it is best for her and me too; and she shall go, now I have given her warning. Where she had it, I can't tell; but I never met with the fellow of her in any life, at any age. She said, he had ordered her not to tell me all: but she believed he would never offer any thing to me again; and I might stay, she fancied, if I would beg it as a favour; though she was not sure neither.

I stay! dear Mrs. Jervis; said I; why it is the best news that could have come to me, that he will let me go. I do nothing but long to go back again to my poverty and distress, as he threatened I should; for though I am sure of the poverty, I shall not have half the distress I have had for some months past, I'll assure you.

Mrs. Jervis, dear good soul! wept over me, and said, Well, well, Pamela, I did not think I had shewn so little love to you, as that you should express

so much joy upon leaving me. I am sure I never had a child half so dear to me as you are.

I went to hear her so good to me, as indeed she has always been, and said, What would you have me to do, dear Mrs. Jervis? I love you next to my own father and mother, and to leave you is the chief concern I have at quitting this place; but I am sure it is certain ruin if I stay. After such offers, and such threatenings, and his comparing himself to a wicked ravisher in the very time of his last offer; and turning it into a jest, that we should make a pretty story in a romance; can I stay and be safe? Has he not demeaned himself twice? And it behoves me to beware of the third time, for fear he should lay his snares surer; for perhaps he did not expect a poor servant would resist her master so much. And must it not be looked upon as a sort of warrant for such actions, if I stay after this? For, I think, when one of our sex finds she is attempted, it is an encouragement to the attempter to proceed, if one puts one's self in the way of it, when one can help it: 'Tis neither more nor less than inviting him to think that one forgives, what, in short, ought not to be forgiven: Which is no small countenance to foul actions, I'll assure you.

She hugged me to her, and said I'll assure you! Pretty-face, where gottest thou all thy knowledge, and thy good notions, at these years? Thou art a miracle for thy age, and I shall always love thee.—But, do you resolve to leave us, Pamela?

Yes, my dear Mrs. Jervis, said I; for, as matters stand, how can I do otherwise?—But I'll finish the duties of my place first, if I may; and hope you'll give me a character, as to my honesty, that it may not be thought I was turned away for any harm. Ay, that I will, said she; I will give thee such a character as never girl at thy years deserved. And I am sure, said I, I will always love and honour you, as my third-best friend, wherever I go, or whatever becomes of me.

And so we went to bed; and I never waked till 'twas time to rise; which I did as blithe as a bird, and went about my business with great pleasure.

But I believe my master is fearfully angry with me; for he passed by me two or three times, and would not speak to me; and towards evening, he met me in the passage, going into the garden, and said such a word to me as I never heard in my life from him to man, woman, or child; for he first said, This creature's always in the way, I think. I said, standing up as close

as I could, (and the entry was wide enough for a coach too,) I hope I shan't be long in your honour's way. D—mn you! said he, (that was the hard word,) for a little witch; I have no patience with you.

I profess I trembled to hear him say so; but I saw he was vexed; and, as I am going away, I minded it the less. Well! I see, my dear parents, that when a person will do wicked things, it is no wonder he will speak wicked words. May God keep me out of the way of them both!

Your dutiful DAUGHTER.



## LETTER XIX

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

Our John having an opportunity to go your way, I write again, and send both letters at once. I can't say, yet, when I shall get away, nor how I shall come, because Mrs. Jervis shewed my master the waistcoat I am flowering for him, and he said, It looks well enough: I think the creature had best stay till she has finished it.

There is some private talk carried on betwixt him and Mrs. Jervis, that she don't tell me of; but yet she is very kind to me, and I don't mistrust her at all. I should be very base if I did. But to be sure she must oblige him, and keep all his lawful commands; and other, I dare say, she won't keep: She is too good; and loves me too well; but she must stay when I am gone, and so must get no ill will.

She has been at me again to ask to stay, and humble myself. But what have I done, Mrs. Jervis? said I: If I have been a sauce-box, and a bold-face, and a pert, and a creature, as he calls me, have I not had reason? Do you think I should ever have forgot myself, if he had not forgot to act as my master? Tell me from your own heart, dear Mrs. Jervis, said I, if you think I could stay and be safe: What would you think, or how would you act in my case?

My dear Pamela, said she, and kissed me, I don't know how I should act, or what I should think. I hope I should act as you do. But I know nobody else that would. My master is a fine gentleman; he has a great deal of wit and sense, and is admired, as I know, by half a dozen ladies, who would think themselves happy in his addresses. He has a noble estate; and yet I believe he loves my good maiden, though his servant, better than all the ladies in the land; and he has tried to overcome it, because you are so much his inferior; and 'tis my opinion he finds he can't; and that vexes his proud heart, and makes him resolve you shan't stay; and so he speaks so cross to you, when he sees you by accident.

Well, but, Mrs. Jervis, said I, let me ask you, if he can stoop to like such a poor girl as me, as perhaps he may, (for I have read of things almost as

strange, from great men to poor damsels,) What can it be for?—He may condescend, perhaps, to think I may be good enough for his harlot; and those things don't disgrace men that ruin poor women, as the world goes. And so if I was wicked enough, he would keep me till I was undone, and till his mind changed; for even wicked men, I have read, soon grow weary of wickedness with the same person, and love variety. Well, then, poor Pamela must be turned off, and looked upon as a vile abandoned creature, and every body would despise her; ay, and justly too, Mrs. Jervis; for she that can't keep her virtue, ought to live in disgrace.

But, Mrs. Jervis, I continued, let me tell you, that I hope, if I was sure he would always be kind to me, and never turn me off at all, that I shall have so much grace, as to hate and withstand his temptations, were he not only my master, but my king: and that for the sin's sake. This my poor dear parents have always taught me; and I should be a sad wicked creature indeed, if, for the sake of riches or favour, I should forfeit my good name; yea, and worse than any other young body of my sex; because I can so contentedly return to my poverty again, and think it a less disgrace to be obliged to wear rags, and live upon rye-bread and water, as I used to do, than to be a harlot to the greatest man in the world.

Mrs. Jervis lifted up her hands, and had her eyes full of tears. God bless you, my dear love! said she; you are my admiration and delight.—How shall I do to part with you!

Well, good Mrs. Jervis, said I, let me ask you now:—You and he have had some talk, and you mayn't be suffered to tell me all. But, do you think, if I was to ask to stay, that he is sorry for what he has done? Ay, and ashamed of it too? For I am sure he ought, considering his high degree, and my low degree, and how I have nothing in the world to trust to but my honesty: Do you think in your own conscience now, (pray answer me truly,) that he would never offer any thing to me again, and that I could be safe?

Alas! my dear child, said she, don't put thy home questions to me, with that pretty becoming earnestness in thy look. I know this, that he is vexed at what he has done; he was vexed the first time, more vexed the second time.

Yes, said I, and so he will be vexed, I suppose, the third, and the fourth time too, till he has quite ruined your poor maiden; and who will have

cause to be vexed then?

Nay, Pamela, said she, don't imagine that I would be accessory to your ruin for the world. I only can say, that he has, yet, done you no hurt; and it is no wonder he should love you, you are so pretty; though so much beneath him but, I dare swear for him, he never will offer you any force.

You say, said I, that he was sorry for his first offer in the summer-house. Well, and how long did his sorrow last?—Only till he found me by myself; and then he was worse than before: and so became sorry again. And if he has deigned to love me, and you say can't help it, why, he can't help it neither, if he should have an opportunity, a third time to distress me. And I have read that many a man has been ashamed of his wicked attempts, when he has been repulsed, that would never have been ashamed of them, had he succeeded. Besides, Mrs. Jervis, if he really intends to offer no force, What does that mean?—While you say he can't help liking me, for love it cannot be—Does it not imply that he hopes to ruin me by my own consent? I think, said I, (and hope I should have grace to do so,) that I should not give way to his temptations on any account; but it would be very presumptuous in me to rely upon my own strength against a gentleman of his qualifications and estate, and who is my master; and thinks himself entitled to call me bold-face, and what not? only for standing on my necessary defence: and that, too, where the good of my soul and body, and my duty to God, and my parents, are all concerned. How then, Mrs. Jervis, said I, can I ask or wish to stay?

Well, well, says she; as he seems very desirous you should not stay, I hope it is from a good motive; for fear he should be tempted to disgrace himself as well as you. No, no, Mrs. Jervis, said I; I have thought of that too; for I would be glad to consider him with that duty that becomes me: but then he would have let me go to Lady Davers, and not have hindered my preferment: and he would not have said, I should return to my poverty and distress, when, by his mother's goodness, I had been lifted out of it; but that he intended to fright me, and punish me, as he thought, for not complying with his wickedness: And this shews me well enough what I have to expect from his future goodness, except I will deserve it at his own dear price.

She was silent; and I added, Well, there's no more to be said; I must go, that's certain: All my concern will be how to part with you: and, indeed,

after you, with every body; for all my fellow-servants have loved me, and you and they will cost me a sigh, and a tear too, now and then, I am sure. And so I fell a crying: I could not help it. For it is a pleasant thing to one to be in a house among a great many fellow-servants, and be beloved by them all.

Nay, I should have told you before now, how kind and civil Mr. Longman our steward is; vastly courteous, indeed, on all occasions! And he said once to Mrs. Jervis, he wished he was a young man for my sake; I should be his wife, and he would settle all he had upon me on marriage; and, you must know, he is reckoned worth a power of money.

I take no pride in this; but bless God, and your good examples, my dear parents, that I have been enabled so to carry myself, as to have every body's good word; Not but our cook one day, who is a little snappish and cross sometimes, said once to me, Why this Pamela of ours goes as fine as a lady. See what it is to have a fine face!—I wonder what the girl will come to at last!

She was hot with her work; and I sneaked away; for I seldom go down into the kitchen; and I heard the butler say, Why, Jane, nobody has your good word: What has Mrs. Pamela done to you? I am sure she offends nobody. And what, said the peevish wench, have I said to her, foolatum; but that she was pretty? They quarrelled afterwards, I heard: I was sorry for it, but troubled myself no more about it. Forgive this silly prattle, from

Your dutiful DAUGHTER.

Oh! I forgot to say, that I would stay to finish the waistcoat, if I might with safety. Mrs. Jervis tells me I certainly may. I never did a prettier piece of work; and I am up early and late to get it over; for I long to be with you.

## LETTER XX

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I did not send my last letters so soon as I hoped, because John (whether my master mistrusts or no, I can't say) had been sent to Lady Davers's instead of Isaac, who used to go; and I could not be so free with, nor so well trust Isaac; though he is very civil to me too. So I was forced to stay till John returned.

As I may not have opportunity to send again soon, and yet, as I know you keep my letters, and read them over and over, (so John told me,) when you have done work, (so much does your kindness make you love all that comes from your poor daughter,) and as it may be some little pleasure to me, perhaps, to read them myself, when I am come to you, to remind me of what I have gone through, and how great God's goodness has been to me, (which, I hope, will further strengthen my good resolutions, that I may not hereafter, from my bad conduct, have reason to condemn myself from my own hand as it were): For all these reasons, I say, I will write as I have time, and as matters happen, and send the scribble to you as I have opportunity; and if I don't every time, in form, subscribe as I ought, I am sure you will always believe, that it is not for want of duty. So I will begin where I left off, about the talk between Mrs. Jervis and me, for me to ask to stay.

Unknown to Mrs. Jervis, I put a project, as I may call it, in practice. I thought with myself some days ago, Here I shall go home to my poor father and mother, and have nothing on my back, that will be fit for my condition; for how should your poor daughter look with a silk night-gown, silken petticoats, cambric head-clothes, fine holland linen, laced shoes that were my lady's; and fine stockings! And how in a little while must these have looked, like old cast-offs, indeed, and I looked so for wearing them! And people would have said, (for poor folks are envious as well as rich,) See there Goody Andrews's daughter, turned home from her fine place! What a tawdry figure she makes! And how well that garb becomes her poor parents' circumstances!—And how would they look upon me, thought I to myself, when they should come to be threadbare and worn out? And

how should I look, even if I could purchase homespun clothes, to dwindle into them one by one, as I got them?—May be, an old silk gown, and a linsey-woolsey petticoat, and the like. So, thought I, I had better get myself at once equipped in the dress that will become my condition; and though it may look but poor to what I have been used to wear of late days, yet it will serve me, when I am with you, for a good holiday and Sunday suit; and what, by a blessing on my industry, I may, perhaps, make shift to keep up to.

So, as I was saying, unknown to any body, I bought of farmer Nichols's wife and daughters a good sad-coloured stuff, of their own spinning, enough to make me a gown and two petticoats; and I made robings and facings of a pretty bit of printed calico I had by me.

I had a pretty good camblet quilted coat, that I thought might do tolerably well; and I bought two flannel undercoats; not so good as my swanskin and fine linen ones, but what will keep me warm, if any neighbour should get me to go out to help 'em to milk, now and then, as sometimes I used to do formerly; for I am resolved to do all your good neighbours what kindness I can; and hope to make myself as much beloved about you, as I am here.

I got some pretty good Scotch cloth, and made me, of mornings and nights, when nobody saw me, two shifts; and I have enough left for two shirts, and two shifts, for you my dear father and mother. When I come home, I'll make them for you, and desire your acceptance.

Then I bought of a pedlar, two pretty enough round-eared caps, a little straw-hat, and a pair of knit mittens, turned up with white calico; and two pair of ordinary blue worsted hose, that make a smartish appearance, with white clocks, I'll assure you; and two yards of black riband for my shift sleeves, and to serve as a necklace; and when I had 'em all come home, I went and looked upon them once in two hours, for two days together: For, you must know, though I be with Mrs. Jervis, I keep my own little apartment still for my clothes, and nobody goes thither but myself. You'll say I was no bad housewife to have saved so much money; but my dear good lady was always giving me something.

I believed myself the more obliged to do this, because, as I was turned away for what my good master thought want of duty; and as he expected other returns for his presents, than I intended to make him, so I thought it

was but just to leave his presents behind me when I went away; for, you know, if I would not earn his wages, why should I have them?

Don't trouble yourself about the four guineas, nor borrow to make them up; for they were given me, with some silver, as I told you, as a perquisite, being what my lady had about her when she died; and, as I hope for no wages, I am so vain as to think I have deserved all that money in the fourteen months, since my lady's death, for she, good soul, overpaid me before, in learning and other kindnesses. Had she lived, none of these things might have happened!—But I ought to be thankful 'tis no worse. Every thing will turn about for the best: that's my confidence.

So, as I was saying, I have provided a new and more suitable dress, and I long to appear in it, more than ever I did in any new clothes in my life: for then I shall be soon after with you, and at ease in my mind—But, mum! Here he comes, I believe.—I am, etc.





## LETTER XXI

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I was forced to break off: for I feared my master was coming: but it proved to be only Mrs. Jervis. She said, I can't endure you should be so much by yourself, Pamela. And I, said I, dread nothing so much as company; for my heart was up at my mouth now, for fear my master was coming. But I always rejoice to see dear Mrs. Jervis.

Said she, I have had a world of talk with my master about you. I am sorry for it, said I, that I am made of so much consequence as to be talked of by him. O, said she, I must not tell you all; but you are of more consequence to him than you think for——

Or wish for, said I; for the fruits of being of consequence to him, would make me of none to myself, or any body else.

Said she, Thou art as witty as any lady in the land; I wonder where thou gottest it. But they must be poor ladies, with such great opportunities, I am sure, if they have no more wit than I.—But let that pass.

I suppose, said I, that I am of so much consequence, however, as to vex him, if it be but to think he can't make a fool of such a one as I; and that is nothing at all, but a rebuke to the pride of his high condition, which he did not expect, and knows not how to put up with.

There is something in that, may be, said she: but, indeed, Pamela, he is very angry with you too; and calls you twenty perverse things; wonders at his own folly, to have shewn you so much favour, as he calls it; which he was first inclined to, he says, for his mother's sake, and would have persisted to shew you for your own, if you was not your own enemy.

Nay, now I shan't love you, Mrs. Jervis, said I; you are going to persuade me to ask to stay, though you know the hazards I run.—No, said she, he says you shall go; for he thinks it won't be for his reputation to keep you: but he wished (don't speak of it for the world, Pamela,) that he knew a lady of birth, just such another as yourself, in person and mind, and he would marry her to-morrow.

I coloured up to the ears at this word: but said, Yet, if I was the lady of birth, and he would offer to be rude first, as he has twice done to poor me, I don't know whether I would have him: For she that can bear an insult of that kind, I should think not worthy to be a gentleman's wife: any more than he would be a gentleman that would offer it.

Nay, now, Pamela, said she, thou carriest thy notions a great way. Well, dear Mrs. Jervis, said I, very seriously, for I could not help it, I am more full of fears than ever. I have only to beg of you, as one of the best friends I have in the world, to say nothing of my asking to stay. To say my master likes me, when I know what end he aims at, is abomination to my ears; and I shan't think myself safe till I am at my poor father's and mother's.

She was a little angry with me, till I assured her that I had not the least uneasiness on her account, but thought myself safe under her protection and friendship. And so we dropt the discourse for that time.

I hope to have finished this ugly waistcoat in two days; after which I have only some linen to get up, and shall then let you know how I contrive as to my passage; for the heavy rains will make it sad travelling on foot: but may be I may get a place to which is ten miles of the way, in farmer Nichols's close cart; for I can't sit a horse well at all, and may be nobody will be suffered to see me on upon the way. But I hope to let you know more. From, etc.

## LETTER XXII

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

All my fellow-servants have now some notion that I am to go away; but can't imagine for what. Mrs. Jervis tells them, that my father and mother, growing in years, cannot live without me; and so I go home to them, to help to comfort their old age; but they seem not to believe it.

What they found it out by was; the butler heard him say to me, as I passed by him, in the entry leading to the hall, Who's that? Pamela, sir, said I. Pamela! said he, How long are you to stay here?—Only, please your honour, said I, till I have done the waistcoat; and it is almost finished.—You might, says he, (very roughly indeed,) have finished that long enough ago, I should have thought. Indeed, and please your honour, said I, I have worked early and late upon it; there is a great deal of work in it.—Work in it! said he; You mind your pen more than your needle; I don't want such idle sluts to stay in my house.

He seemed startled, when he saw the butler, as he entered the hall, where Mr. Jonathan stood. What do you here? said he.—The butler was as much confounded as I; for, never having been taxed so roughly, I could not help crying sadly; and got out of both their ways to Mrs. Jervis, and told my complaint. This love, said she, is the d——! In how many strange shapes does it make people shew themselves! And in some the farthest from their hearts.

So one, and then another, has been since whispering, Pray, Mrs. Jervis, are we to lose Mrs. Pamela? as they always call me—What has she done? And she tells them, as above, about going home to you.

She said afterwards to me, Well, Pamela, you have made our master, from the sweetest tempered gentleman in the world, one of the most peevish. But you have it in your power to make him as sweet-tempered as ever; though I hope you'll never do it on his terms.

This was very good in Mrs. Jervis; but it intimated, that she thought as ill of his designs as I; and as she knew his mind more than I, it convinced me that I ought to get away as fast as I could.

My master came in, just now, to speak to Mrs. Jervis about household matters, having some company to dine with him to-morrow; and I stood up, and having been crying at his roughness in the entry, I turned away my face.

You may well, said he, turn away your cursed face; I wish I had never seen it!—Mrs. Jervis, how long is she to be about this waistcoat?

Sir, said I, if your honour had pleased, I would have taken it with me; and though it would be now finished in a few hours, I will do so still; and remove this hated poor Pamela out of your house and sight for ever.

Mrs. Jervis, said he, not speaking to me, I believe this little slut has the power of witchcraft, if ever there was a witch; for she enchants all that come near her. She makes even you, who should know better what the world is, think her an angel of light.

I offered to go away; for I believe he wanted me to ask to stay in my place, for all this his great wrath: and he said, Stay here! Stay here, when I bid you! and snatched my hand. I trembled, and said, I will! I will! for he hurt my fingers, he grasped me so hard.

He seemed to have a mind to say something to me; but broke off abruptly, and said, Begone! And away I tripped as fast as I could: and he and Mrs. Jervis had a deal of talk, as she told me; and among the rest, he expressed himself vexed to have spoken in Mr. Jonathan's hearing.

Now you must know, that Mr. Jonathan, our butler, is a very grave good sort of old man, with his hair as white as silver! and an honest worthy man he is. I was hurrying out with a flea in my ear, as the saying is, and going down stairs into the parlour, met him. He took hold of my hand (in a gentler manner, though, than my master) with both his; and he said, Ah! sweet, sweet Mrs. Pamela! what is it I heard but just now!—I am sorry at my heart; but I am sure I will sooner believe any body in fault than you. Thank you, Mr. Jonathan, said I; but as you value your place, don't be seen speaking to such a one as me. I cried too; and slipt away as fast as I could from him, for his own sake, lest he should be seen to pity me.

And now I will give you an instance how much I am in Mr. Longman's esteem also.

I had lost my pen some how; and my paper being written out, I stepped to Mr. Longman's, our steward's, office, to beg him to give me a pen or

two, and a sheet or two of paper. He said, Ay, that I will, my sweet maiden! and gave me three pens, some wafers, a stick of wax, and twelve sheets of paper; and coming from his desk, where he was writing, he said, Let me have a word or two with you, my sweet little mistress: (for so these two good old gentlemen often call me; for I believe they love me dearly:) I hear bad news; that we are going to lose you: I hope it is not true. Yes it is, sir, said I; but I was in hopes it would not be known till I went away.

What a d—l, said he, ails our master of late! I never saw such an alteration in any man in my life! He is pleased with nobody as I see; and by what Mr. Jonathan tells me just now, he was quite out of the way with you. What could you have done to him, tro'? Only Mrs. Jervis is a very good woman, or I should have feared she had been your enemy.

No, said I, nothing like it. Mrs. Jervis is a just good woman; and, next to my father and mother, the best friend I have in the world—Well, then, said he, it must be worse. Shall I guess? You are too pretty, my sweet mistress, and, may be, too virtuous. Ah! have I not hit it? No, good Mr. Longman, said I, don't think any thing amiss of my master; he is cross and angry with me indeed, that's true; but I may have given occasion for it, possibly; and because I am desirous to go to my father and mother, rather than stay here, perhaps he may think me ungrateful. But, you know, sir, said I, that a father and mother's comfort is the dearest thing to a good child that can be. Sweet excellence! said he, this becomes you; but I know the world and mankind too well; though I must hear, and see, and say nothing. And so a blessing attend my little sweeting, said he, wherever you go! And away went I with a courtesy and thanks.

Now this pleases one, my dear father and mother, to be so beloved.—How much better, by good fame and integrity, is it to get every one's good word but one, than, by pleasing that one, to make every one else one's enemy, and be an execrable creature besides! I am, etc.

## LETTER XXIII

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

We had a great many neighbouring gentlemen, and their ladies, this day, at dinner; and my master made a fine entertainment for them: and Isaac, and Mr. Jonathan, and Benjamin, waited at table: And Isaac tells Mrs. Jervis, that the ladies will by and by come to see the house, and have the curiosity to see me; for, it seems, they said to my master, when the jokes flew about, Well, Mr. B——, we understand you have a servant-maid, who is the greatest beauty in the county; and we promise ourselves to see her before we go.

The wench is well enough, said he; but no such beauty as you talk of, I'll assure ye. She was my mother's waiting-maid, who, on her death-bed, engaged me to be kind to her. She is young, and every thing is pretty that is young.

Ay, ay, said one of the ladies, that's true; but if your mother had not recommended her so strongly, there is so much merit in beauty, that I make no doubt such a fine gentleman would have wanted no inducement to be kind to it.

They all laughed at my master: And he, it seems, laughed for company; but said, I don't know how it is, but I see with different eyes from other people; for I have heard much more talk of her prettiness, than I think it deserves: She is well enough, as I said: but her greatest excellence is, that she is humble, and courteous, and faithful, and makes all her fellow-servants love her: My housekeeper, in particular, doats upon her; and you know, ladies, she is a woman of discernment: And, as for Mr. Longman, and Jonathan, here, if they thought themselves young enough, I am told, they would fight for her. Is it not true, Jonathan? Troth, sir, said he, an't please your honour, I never knew her peer, and all your honour's family are of the same mind. Do you hear now? said my master.—Well, said the ladies, we will make a visit to Mrs. Jervis by and by, and hope to see this paragon.

I believe they are coming; and will tell you the rest by and by. I wish they had come, and were gone. Why can't they make their game without me?

Well, these fine ladies have been here, and are gone back again. I would have been absent, if I could, and did step into the closet: so they saw me when they came in.

There were four of them, Lady Arthur at the great white house on the hill, Lady Brooks, Lady Towers, and the other, it seems, a countess, of some hard name, I forget what.

So Mrs. Jervis, says one of the ladies, how do you do? We are all come to inquire after your health. I am much obliged to your ladyships, said Mrs. Jervis: Will your ladyships please to sit down? But, said the countess, we are not only come to ask after Mrs. Jervis's health neither; but we are come to see a rarity besides. Ah, says Lady Arthur, I have not seen your Pamela these two years, and they tell me she is grown wondrous pretty in that time.

Then I wished I had not been in the closet; for when I came out, they must needs know I heard them; but I have often found, that bashful bodies owe themselves a spite, and frequently confound themselves more, by endeavouring to avoid confusion.

Why, yes, says Mrs. Jervis, Pamela is very pretty indeed; she's but in the closet there:—Pamela, pray step hither. I came out all covered with blushes, and they smiled at one another.

The countess took me by the hand: Why, indeed, she was pleased to say, report has not been too lavish, I'll assure you. Don't be ashamed, child; (and stared full in my face;) I wish I had just such a face to be ashamed of. O how like a fool I looked!

Lady Arthur said, Ay, my good Pamela, I say as her ladyship says: Don't be so confused; though, indeed, it becomes you too. I think your good lady departed made a sweet choice of such a pretty attendant. She would have been mighty proud of you, as she always was praising you, had she lived till now.

Ah! madam, said Lady Brooks, do you think that so dutiful a son as our neighbour, who always admired what his mother loved, does not pride himself, for all what he said at table, in such a pretty maiden?

She looked with such a malicious sneering countenance, I can't abide her.

Lady Towers said with a free air, (for it seems she is called a wit,) Well, Mrs. Pamela, I can't say I like you so well as these ladies do; for I should never care, if you were my servant, to have you and your master in the same house together. Then they all set up a great laugh.

I know what I could have said, if I durst. But they are ladies—and ladies may say any thing.

Says Lady Towers, Can the pretty image speak, Mrs. Jervis? I vow she has speaking eyes! O you little rogue, said she, and tapped me on the cheek, you seem born to undo, or to be undone!

God forbid, and please your ladyship, said I, it should be either!—I beg, said I, to withdraw; for the sense I have of my unworthiness renders me unfit for such a presence.

I then went away, with one of my best courtesies; and Lady Towers said, as I went out, Prettily said, I vow!—And Lady Brooks said, See that shape! I never saw such a face and shape in my life; why, she must be better descended than you have told me!

And so they run on for half an hour more in my praises, as I was told; and glad was I, when I got out of the hearing of them.

But, it seems, they went down with such a story to my master, and so full of me, that he had much ado to stand it; but as it was very little to my reputation, I am sure I could take no pride in it; and I feared it would make no better for me. This gives me another cause for wishing myself out of this house.

This is Thursday morning, and next Thursday I hope to set out; for I have finished my task, and my master is horrid cross! And I am vexed his crossness affects me so. If ever he had any kindness towards me, I believe he now hates me heartily.

Is it not strange, that love borders so much upon hate? But this wicked love is not like the true virtuous love, to be sure: that and hatred must be as far off, as light and darkness. And how must this hate have been increased, if he had met with such a base compliance, after his wicked will had been gratified.



Well, one may see by a little, what a great deal means. For if innocence cannot attract common civility, what must guilt expect, when novelty has ceased to have its charms, and changeableness had taken place of it? Thus we read in Holy Writ, that wicked Amnon, when he had ruined poor Tamar, hated her more than he ever loved her, and would have turned her out of door.

How happy am I, to be turned out of door, with that sweet companion my innocence!—O may that be always my companion! And while I presume not upon my own strength, and am willing to avoid the tempter, I hope the divine grace will assist me.

Forgive me, that I repeat in my letter part of my hourly prayer. I owe every thing, next to God's goodness, to your piety and good examples, my dear parents, my dear poor parents! I say that word with pleasure; for your poverty is my pride, as your integrity shall be my imitation.

As soon as I have dined, I will put on my new clothes. I long to have them on. I know I shall surprise Mrs. Jervis with them; for she shan't see me till I am full dressed.—John is come back, and I'll soon send you some of what I have written.—I find he is going early in the morning; and so I'll close here, that I am

Your most dutiful DAUGHTER.

Don't lose your time in meeting me; because I am so uncertain. It is hard if, some how or other, I can't get a passage to you. But may be my master won't refuse to let John bring me. I can ride behind him, I believe, well enough; for he is very careful, and very honest; and you know John as well as I; for he loves you both. Besides, may be, Mrs. Jervis can put me in some way.

## LETTER XXIV

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I shall write on, as long as I stay, though I should have nothing but silliness to write; for I know you divert yourselves on nights with what I write, because it is mine. John tells me how much you long for my coming; but he says, he told you he hoped something would happen to hinder it.

I am glad you did not tell him the occasion of my coming away; for if my fellow-servants should guess, it were better so, than to have it from you or me. Besides, I really am concerned, that my master should cast away a thought upon such a poor creature as me; for, besides the disgrace, it has quite turned his temper; and I begin to believe what Mrs. Jervis told me, that he likes me, and can't help it; and yet strives to conquer it; and so finds no way but to be cross to me.

Don't think me presumptuous and conceited; for it is more my concern than my pride, to see such a gentleman so demean himself, and lessen the regard he used to have in the eyes of all his servants, on my account.—But I am to tell you of my new dress to day.

And so, when I had dined, up stairs I went, and locked myself into my little room. There I tricked myself up as well as I could in my new garb, and put on my round-eared ordinary cap; but with a green knot, however, and my homespun gown and petticoat, and plain leather shoes; but yet they are what they call Spanish leather; and my ordinary hose, ordinary I mean to what I have been lately used to; though I shall think good yarn may do very well for every day, when I come home. A plain muslin tucker I put on, and my black silk necklace, instead of the French necklace my lady gave me; and put the ear-rings out of my ears; and when I was quite equipped, I took my straw hat in my hand, with its two blue strings, and looked about me in the glass, as proud as any thing—To say truth, I never liked myself so well in my life.

O the pleasure of descending with ease, innocence, and resignation!—Indeed, there is nothing like it! An humble mind, I plainly see, cannot

meet with any very shocking disappointment, let fortune's wheel turn round as it will.

So I went down to look for Mrs. Jervis, to see how she liked me.

I met, as I was upon the stairs, our Rachel, who is the house-maid; and she made me a low courtesy, and I found did not know me. So I smiled, and went to the housekeeper's parlour; and there sat good Mrs. Jervis at work, making a shift: and, would you believe it? she did not know me at first; but rose up, and pulled off her spectacles; and said, Do you want me, forsooth? I could not help laughing, and said, Hey-day! Mrs. Jervis, what! don't you know me?—She stood all in amaze, and looked at me from top to toe: Why, you surprise me, said she: What! Pamela thus metamorphosed! How came this about?

As it happened, in stept my master; and my back being to him, he thought it was a stranger speaking to Mrs. Jervis, and withdrew again: and did not hear her ask, If his honour had any commands for her?—She turned me about and about, and I shewed her all my dress, to my under-petticoat: and she said, sitting down, Why, I am all in amaze, I must sit down. What can all this mean? I told her, I had no clothes suitable to my condition when I returned to my father's; and so it was better to begin here, as I was soon to go away, that all my fellow-servants might see I knew how to suit myself to the state I was returning to.

Well, said she, I never knew the like of thee. But this sad preparation for going away (for now I see you are quite in earnest) is what I know not how to get over. O my dear Pamela, how can I part with you!

My master rung in the back-parlour, and so I withdrew, and Mrs. Jervis went to attend him. It seems, he said to her, I was coming in to let you know, that I shall go to Lincolnshire, and possibly to my sister Davers's, and be absent some weeks. But, pray, what pretty neat damsel was with you? She says, she smiled, and asked, If his honour did not know who it was? No, said he, I never saw her before. Farmer Nichols, or Farmer Brady, have neither of them such a tight prim lass for a daughter! have they?—Though I did not see her face neither, said he. If your honour won't be angry, said she, I will introduce her into your presence; for I think, says she, she outdoes our Pamela.

Now I did not thank her for this, as I told her afterwards, (for it brought a great deal of trouble upon me, as well as crossness, as you shall hear).

That can't be, he was pleased to say. But if you can find an excuse for it, let her come in.

At that she stepped to me, and told me, I must go in with her to her master; but, said she, for goodness' sake, let him find you out; for he don't know you. O fie, Mrs. Jervis, said I, how could you serve me so? Besides, it looks too free both in me, and to him. I tell you, said she, you shall come in; and pray don't reveal yourself till he finds you out.

So I went in, foolish as I was; though I must have been seen by him another time, if I had not then. And she would make me take my straw hat in my hand.

I dropt a low courtesy, but said never a word. I dare say he knew me as soon as he saw my face: but was as cunning as Lucifer. He came up to me, and took me by the hand, and said, Whose pretty maiden are you?—I dare say you are Pamela's sister, you are so like her. So neat, so clean, so pretty! Why, child, you far surpass your sister Pamela!

I was all confusion, and would have spoken: but he took me about the neck: Why, said he, you are very pretty, child: I would not be so free with your sister, you may believe; but I must kiss you.

O sir, said I, I am Pamela, indeed I am: indeed I am Pamela, her own self!

He kissed me for all I could do; and said, Impossible! you are a lovelier girl by half than Pamela; and sure I may be innocently free with you, though I would not do her so much favour.

This was a sad trick upon me, indeed, and what I could not expect; and Mrs. Jervis looked like a fool as much as I, for her officiousness.—At last I got away, and ran out of the parlour, most sadly vexed, as you may well think.

He talked a good deal to Mrs. Jervis, and at last ordered me to come in to him. Come in, said he, you little villain!—for so he called me. (Good sirs! what a name was there!)—who is it you put your tricks upon? I was resolved never to honour your unworthiness, said he, with so much notice again; and so you must disguise yourself to attract me, and yet pretend, like an hypocrite as you are——

I was out of patience then: Hold, good sir, said I; don't impute disguise and hypocrisy to me, above all things; for I hate them both, mean as I am.

I have put on no disguise.—What a plague, said he, for that was his word, do you mean then by this dress?—Why, and please your honour, said I, I mean one of the honestest things in the world.

I have been in disguise, indeed, ever since my good lady your mother took me from my poor parents. I came to her ladyship so poor and mean, that these clothes I have on, are a princely suit to those I had then: and her goodness heaped upon me rich clothes, and other bounties: and as I am now returning to my poor parents again so soon, I cannot wear those good things without being hooted at; and so have bought what will be more suitable to my degree, and be a good holiday-suit too, when I get home.

He then took me in his arms, and presently pushed me from him. Mrs. Jervis, said he, take the little witch from me; I can neither bear, nor forbear her—(Strange words these!)—But stay; you shan't go!—Yet begone!—No, come back again.

I thought he was mad, for my share; for he knew not what he would have. I was going, however; but he stept after me, and took hold of my arm, and brought me in again: I am sure he made my arm black and blue; for the marks are upon it still. Sir, sir, said I, pray have mercy; I will, I will come in!

He sat down, and looked at me, and, as I thought afterwards, as sillily as such a poor girl as I. At last he said, Well, Mrs. Jervis, as I was telling you, you may permit her to stay a little longer, till I see if my sister Davers will have her; if, mean time, she humble herself, and ask this as a favour, and is sorry for her pertness, and the liberty she has taken with my character out of the house, and in the house. Your honour indeed told me so, said Mrs. Jervis: but I never found her inclinable to think herself in a fault. Pride and perverseness, said he, with a vengeance! Yet this is your doating-piece!—Well, for once, I'll submit myself to tell you, hussy, said he to me, you may stay a fortnight longer, till I see my sister Davers: Do you hear what I say to you, statue? Can you neither speak nor be thankful?—Your honour frights me so, said I, that I can hardly speak: But I will venture to say, that I have only to beg, as a favour, that I may go to my father and mother.—Why fool, said he, won't you like to go to wait on my sister Davers? Sir, said I, I was once fond of that honour; but you were pleased to say, I might be in danger from her ladyship's nephew, or he from

me.—D——d impertinence! said he; Do you hear, Mrs. Jervis, do you hear, how she retorts upon me? Was ever such matchless assurance!——

I then fell a weeping; for Mrs. Jervis said, Fie, Pamela, fie!—And I said, My lot is very hard indeed; I am sure I would hurt nobody; and I have been, it seems, guilty of indiscretions, which have cost me my place, and my master's favour, and so have been turned away: and when the time is come, that I should return to my poor parents, I am not suffered to go quietly. Good your honour, what have I done, that I must be used worse than if I had robbed you?

Robbed me! said he, why so you have, hussy; you have robbed me. Who? I, sir? said I; have I robbed you? Why then you are a justice of peace, and may send me to gaol, if you please, and bring me to a trial for my life! If you can prove that I have robbed you, I am sure I ought to die.

Now I was quite ignorant of his meaning; though I did not like it, when it was afterwards explained, neither: And well, thought I, what will this come to at last, if poor Pamela is esteemed a thief! Then I thought in an instant, how I should shew my face to my honest poor parents, if I was but suspected. But, sir, said I, let me ask you but one question, and pray don't let me be called names for it; for I don't mean disrespectfully: Why, if I have done amiss, am I not left to be discharged by your housekeeper, as the other maids have been? And if Jane, or Rachel, or Hannah, were to offend, would your honour stoop to take notice of them? And why should you so demean yourself to take notice of me? Pray, sir, if I have not been worse than others, why should I suffer more than others? and why should I not be turned away, and there's an end of it? For indeed I am not of consequence enough for my master to concern himself, and be angry about such a creature as me.

Do you hear, Mrs. Jervis, cried he again, how pertly I am interrogated by this saucy slut? Why, sauce-box, says he, did not my good mother desire me to take care of you? And have you not been always distinguished by me, above a common servant? And does your ingratitude upbraid me for this?

I said something mutteringly, and he vowed he would hear it. I begged excuse; but he insisted upon it. Why, then, said I, if your honour must know, I said, That my good lady did not desire your care to extend to the summer-house, and her dressing-room.

Well, this was a little saucy, you'll say—And he flew into such a passion, that I was forced to run for it; and Mrs. Jervis said, It was happy I got out of the way.

Why what makes him provoke one so, then?—I'm almost sorry for it; but I would be glad to get away at any rate. For I begin to be more fearful now.

Just now Mr. Jonathan sent me these lines—(Bless me! what shall I do?)

'Dear Mrs. Pamela, Take care of yourself; for Rachel heard my master say to Mrs. Jervis, who, she believes, was pleading for you, Say no more, Mrs. Jervis; for by G—d I will have her! Burn this instantly.'

O pray for your poor daughter. I am called to go to bed by Mrs. Jervis, for it is past eleven; and I am sure she shall hear of it; for all this is owing to her, though she did not mean any harm. But I have been, and am, in a strange fluster; and I suppose too, she'll say, I have been full pert.

O my dear father and mother, power and riches never want advocates! But, poor gentlewoman, she cannot live without him: and he has been very good to her.

So good night. May be I shall send this in the morning; but may be not; so won't conclude: though I can't say too often, that I am (though with great apprehension)

Your most dutiful DAUGHTER.

## LETTER XXV

MY DEAR PARENTS,

O let me take up my complaint, and say, Never was poor creature so unhappy, and so barbarously used, as poor Pamela! Indeed, my dear father and mother, my heart's just broke! I can neither write as I should do, nor let it alone, for to whom but you can I vent my griefs, and keep my poor heart from bursting! Wicked, wicked man!—I have no patience when I think of him!—But yet, don't be frightened—for—I hope—I hope, I am honest!—But if my head and my hand will let me, you shall hear all.—Is there no constable, nor headborough, though, to take me out of his house? for I am sure I can safely swear the peace against him: But, alas! he is greater than any constable: he is a justice himself: Such a justice deliver me from!—But God Almighty, I hope, in time, will right me—For he knows the innocence of my heart!

John went your way in the morning; but I have been too much distracted to send by him; and have seen nobody but Mrs. Jervis or Rachel, and one I hate to see or be seen by and indeed I hate now to see any body. Strange things I have to tell you, that happened since last night, that good Mr. Jonathan's letter, and my master's harshness, put me into such a fluster; but I will not keep you in suspense.

I went to Mrs. Jervis's chamber; and, O dreadful! my wicked master had hid himself, base gentleman as he is! in her closet, where she has a few books, and chest of drawers, and such like. I little suspected it; though I used, till this sad night, always to look into that closet and another in the room, and under the bed, ever since the summer-house trick; but never found any thing; and so I did not do it then, being fully resolved to be angry with Mrs. Jervis for what had happened in the day, and so thought of nothing else.

I sat myself down on one side of the bed, and she on the other, and we began to undress ourselves; but she on that side next the wicked closet, that held the worst heart in the world. So, said Mrs. Jervis, you won't speak to me, Pamela! I find you are angry with me. Why, Mrs. Jervis, said I, so I



am, a little; 'tis a folly to deny it. You see what I have suffered by your forcing me in to my master: and a gentlewoman of your years and experience must needs know, that it was not fit for me to pretend to be any body else for my own sake, nor with regard to my master.

But, said she, who would have thought it would have turned out so? Ay, said I, little thinking who heard me, Lucifer always is ready to promote his own work and workmen. You see presently what use he made of it, pretending not to know me, on purpose to be free with me. And when he took upon himself to know me, to quarrel with me, and use me hardly: And you too, said I, to cry, Fie, fie, Pamela! cut me to the heart: for that encouraged him.

Do you think, my dear, said she, that I would encourage him?—I never said so to you before; but, since you have forced it from me, I must tell you, that, ever since you consulted me, I have used my utmost endeavours to divert him from his wicked purposes: and he has promised fair; but, to say all in a word, he doats upon you; and I begin to see it is not in his power to help it.

I luckily said nothing of the note from Mr. Jonathan; for I began to suspect all the world almost: but I said, to try Mrs. Jervis, Well then, what would you have me do? You see he is for having me wait on Lady Davers now.

Why, I'll tell you freely, my dear Pamela, said she, and I trust to your discretion to conceal what I say: my master has been often desiring me to put you upon asking him to let you stay——

Yes, said I, Mrs. Jervis, let me interrupt you: I will tell you why I could not think of that: It was not the pride of my heart, but the pride of my honesty: For what must have been the case? Here my master has been very rude to me, once and twice; and you say he cannot help it, though he pretends to be sorry for it: Well, he has given me warning to leave my place, and uses me very harshly; perhaps to frighten me to his purposes, as he supposes I would be fond of staying (as indeed I should, if I could be safe; for I love you and all the house, and value him, if he would act as my master). Well then, as I know his designs, and that he owns he cannot help it; must I have asked to stay, knowing he would attempt me again? for all you could assure me of, was, he would do nothing by force; so I, a poor weak girl, was to be left to my own strength! And was not this to allow

him to tempt me, as one may say? and to encourage him to go on in his wicked devices?—How then, Mrs. Jervis, could I ask or wish to stay?

You say well, my dear child, says she; and you have a justness of thought above your years; and for all these considerations, and for what I have heard this day, after you ran away, (and I am glad you went as you did,) I cannot persuade you to stay; and I shall be glad, (which is what I never thought I could have said,) that you were well at your father's; for if Lady Davers will entertain you, she may as well have you from thence as here. There's my good Mrs. Jervis! said I; God will bless you for your good counsel to a poor maiden, that is hard beset. But pray what did he say, when I was gone? Why, says she, he was very angry with you. But he would hear it! said I: I think it was a little bold; but then he provoked me to it. And had not my honesty been in the case, I would not by any means have been so saucy. Besides, Mrs. Jervis, consider it was the truth; if he does not love to hear of the summer-house, and the dressing-room, why should he not be ashamed to continue in the same mind? But, said she, when you had muttered this to yourself, you might have told him any thing else. Well, said I, I cannot tell a wilful lie, and so there's an end of it. But I find you now give him up, and think there's danger in staying.—Lord bless me! I wish I was well out of the house; so it was at the bottom of a wet ditch, on the wildest common in England.

Why, said she, it signifies nothing to tell you all he said but it was enough to make me fear you would not be so safe as I could wish; and, upon my word, Pamela, I don't wonder he loves you; for, without flattery, you are a charming girl! and I never saw you look more lovely in your life than in that same new dress of yours. And then it was such a surprise upon us all!—I believe truly, you owe some of your danger to the lovely appearance you made. Then, said I, I wish the clothes in the fire: I expected no effect from them; but, if any, a quite contrary one.

Hush! said I, Mrs. Jervis, did you not hear something stir in the closet? No, silly girl, said she, your fears are always awake.—But indeed, said I, I think I heard something rustle.—May be, says she, the cat may be got there: but I hear nothing.

I was hush; but she said, Pr'ythee, my good girl, make haste to bed. See if the door be fast. So I did, and was thinking to look into the closet; but, hearing no more noise, thought it needless, and so went again and sat

myself down on the bed-side, and went on undressing myself. And Mrs. Jervis being by this time undressed, stepped into bed, and bid me hasten, for she was sleepy.

I don't know what was the matter, but my heart sadly misgave me: Indeed, Mr. Jonathan's note was enough to make it do so, with what Mrs. Jervis had said. I pulled off my stays, and my stockings, and all my clothes to an under-petticoat; and then hearing a rustling again in the closet, I said, Heaven protect us! but before I say my prayers, I must look into this closet. And so was going to it slip-shod, when, O dreadful! out rushed my master in a rich silk and silver morning gown.

I screamed, and ran to the bed, and Mrs. Jervis screamed too; and he said, I'll do you no harm, if you forbear this noise; but otherwise take what follows.

Instantly he came to the bed (for I had crept into it, to Mrs. Jervis, with my coat on, and my shoes); and taking me in his arms, said, Mrs. Jervis, rise, and just step up stairs to keep the maids from coming down at this noise: I'll do no harm to this rebel.

O, for Heaven's sake! for pity's sake! Mrs. Jervis, said I, if I am not betrayed, don't leave me; and, I beseech you, raise all the house. No, said Mrs. Jervis, I will not stir, my dear lamb; I will not leave you. I wonder at you, sir, said she; and kindly threw herself upon my coat, clasping me round the waist: You shall not hurt this innocent, said she: for I will lose my life in her defence. Are there not, said she, enough wicked ones in the world, for your base purpose, but you must attempt such a lamb as this?

He was desperate angry, and threatened to throw her out of the window; and to turn her out of the house the next morning. You need not, sir, said she; for I will not stay in it. God defend my poor Pamela till to-morrow, and we will both go together.—Says he, let me but expostulate a word or two with you, Pamela. Pray, Pamela, said Mrs. Jervis, don't hear a word, except he leaves the bed, and goes to the other end of the room. Ay, out of the room, said I; expostulate to-morrow, if you must expostulate!

I found his hand in my bosom; and when my fright let me know it, I was ready to die; and I sighed and screamed, and fainted away. And still he had his arms about my neck; and Mrs. Jervis was about my feet, and upon my coat. And all in a cold dewy sweat was I. Pamela! Pamela! said Mrs. Jervis, as she tells me since, O—h, and gave another shriek, my poor

Pamela is dead for certain! And so, to be sure, I was for a time; for I knew nothing more of the matter, one fit following another, till about three hours after, as it proved to be, I found myself in bed, and Mrs. Jervis sitting upon one side, with her wrapper about her, and Rachel on the other; and no master, for the wicked wretch was gone. But I was so overjoyed, that I hardly could believe myself; and I said, which were my first words, Mrs. Jervis, Mrs. Rachel, can I be sure it is you? Tell me! can I?—Where have I been? Hush, my dear, said Mrs. Jervis; you have been in fit after fit. I never saw any body so frightful in my life!

By this I judged Rachel knew nothing of the matter; and it seems my wicked master had, upon Mrs. Jervis's second noise on my fainting away, slipt out, and, as if he had come from his own chamber, disturbed by the screaming, went up to the maids' room, (who, hearing the noise, lay trembling, and afraid to stir,) and bid them go down, and see what was the matter with Mrs. Jervis and me. And he charged Mrs. Jervis, and promised to forgive her for what she had said and done, if she would conceal the matter. So the maids came down, and all went up again, when I came to myself a little, except Rachel, who staid to sit up with me, and bear Mrs. Jervis company. I believe they all guess the matter to be bad enough; though they dare not say any thing.

When I think of my danger, and the freedoms he actually took, though I believe Mrs. Jervis saved me from worse, and she said she did, (though what can I think, who was in a fit, and knew nothing of the matter?) I am almost distracted.

At first I was afraid of Mrs. Jervis; but I am fully satisfied she is very good, and I should have been lost but for her; and she takes on grievously about it. What would have become of me, had she gone out of the room, to still the maids, as he bid her! He'd certainly have shut her out, and then, mercy on me! what would have become of your poor Pamela?

I must leave off a little; for my eyes and my head are sadly bad.—This was a dreadful trial! This was the worst of all! Oh, that I was out of the power of this dreadfully wicked man! Pray for

Your distressed DAUGHTER.

## LETTER XXVI

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I did not rise till ten o'clock, and I had all the concerns and wishes of the family, and multitudes of inquiries about me. My wicked master went out early to hunt; but left word he would be in to breakfast. And so he was.

He came up to our chamber about eleven, and had nothing to do to be sorry; for he was our master, and so put on sharp anger at first.

I had great emotions at his entering the room, and threw my apron over my head, and fell a crying, as if my heart would break.

Mrs. Jervis, said he, since I know you, and you me so well, I don't know how we shall live together for the future. Sir, said she, I will take the liberty to say, what I think is best for both. I have so much grief, that you should attempt to do any injury to this poor girl, and especially in my chamber, that I should think myself accessory to the mischief, if I was not to take notice of it. Though my ruin, therefore, may depend upon it, I desire not to stay; but pray let poor Pamela and me go together. With all my heart, said he; and the sooner the better. She fell a crying. I find, says he, this girl has made a party of the whole house in her favour against me. Her innocence deserves it of us all, said she very kindly: and I never could have thought that the son of my dear good lady departed, could have so forfeited his honour, as to endeavour to destroy a virtue he ought to protect. No more of this, Mrs. Jervis! said he; I will not hear it. As for Pamela, she has a lucky knack of falling into fits, when she pleases. But the cursed yellings of you both made me not myself. I intended no harm to her, as I told you both, if you'd have left your squallings: And I did no harm neither, but to myself; for I raised a hornet's nest about my ears, that, as far as I know, may have stung to death my reputation. Sir, said Mrs. Jervis, then I beg Mr. Longman may take my accounts, and I will go away as soon as I can. As for Pamela, she is at her liberty, I hope, to go away next Thursday, as she intends?

I sat still; for I could not speak nor look up, and his presence discomposed me extremely; but I was sorry to hear myself the unhappy

occasion of Mrs. Jervis's losing her place, and hope that may be still made up.

Well, said he, let Mr. Longman make up your accounts, as soon as you will; and Mrs. Jewkes (who is his housekeeper in Lincolnshire) shall come hither in your place, and won't be less obliging, I dare say, than you have been. Said she, I have never disobliged you till now; and let me tell you, sir, if you knew what belonged to your own reputation or honour—No more, no more, said he, of these antiquated topics. I have been no bad friend to you; and I shall always esteem you, though you have not been so faithful to my secrets as I could have wished, and have laid me open to this girl, which has made her more afraid of me than she had occasion. Well, sir, said she, after what passed yesterday, and last night, I think I went rather too far in favour of your injunctions than otherwise; and I should have deserved every body's censure, as the basest of creatures, had I been capable of contributing to your lawless attempts. Still, Mrs. Jervis, still reflecting upon me, and all for imaginary faults! for what harm have I done the girl?—I won't bear it, I'll assure you. But yet, in respect to my mother, I am willing to part friendly with you though you ought both of you to reflect on the freedom of your conversation, in relation to me; which I should have resented more than I do, but that I am conscious I had no business to demean myself so as to be in your closet, where I might have expected to hear a multitude of impertinence between you.

Well, sir, said she, you have no objection, I hope, to Pamela's going away on Thursday next? You are mighty solicitous, said he, about Pamela: But no, not I; let her go as soon as she will: She is a naughty girl, and has brought all this upon herself; and upon me more trouble than she can have had from me: But I have overcome it all, and will never concern myself about her.

I have a proposal made me, added he, since I have been out this morning, that I shall go near to embrace; and so wish only, that a discreet use may be made of what is past; and there's an end of every thing with me, as to Pamela, I'll assure you. I clasped my hands together through my apron, overjoyed at this, though I was soon to go away: For, naughty as he has been to me, I wish his prosperity with all my heart, for my good old lady's sake. Well, Pamela, said he, you need not now be afraid to speak to me; tell me what you lifted up your hands at? I said not a word. Says he, If

you like what I have said, give me your hand upon it. I held my hand up through my apron; for I could not speak to him; and he took hold of it, and pressed it, though less hard than he did my arm the day before. What does the little fool cover her face for? said he: Pull your apron away; and let me see how you look, after your freedom of speech of me last night. No wonder you are ashamed to see me. You know you were very free with my character.

I could not stand this barbarous insult, as I took it to be, considering his behaviour to me; and I then spoke and said, O the difference between the minds of thy creatures, good God! How shall some be cast down in their innocence, while others can triumph in their guilt!

And so saying, I went up stairs to my chamber, and wrote all this; for though he vexed me at his taunting, yet I was pleased to hear he was likely to be married, and that his wicked intentions were so happily overcome as to me; and this made me a little easier. And I hope I have passed the worst; or else it is very hard. And yet I shan't think myself at ease quite, till I am with you: For, methinks, after all, his repentance and amendment are mighty suddenly resolved upon. But the divine grace is not confined to space; and remorse may, and I hope has, smitten him to the heart at once, for his injuries to poor me! Yet I won't be too secure neither.

Having opportunity, I send now what I know will grieve you to the heart. But I hope I shall bring my next scribble myself; and so conclude, though half broken-hearted, Your ever dutiful DAUGHTER.





## LETTER XXVII

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I am glad I desired you not to meet me, and John says you won't; for he told you he is sure I shall get a passage well enough, either behind some one of my fellow-servants on horseback, or by farmer Nichols's means: but as to the chariot he talked to you of, I can't expect that favour, to be sure; and I should not care for it, because it would look so much above me. But farmer Brady, they say, has a chaise with one horse, and we hope to borrow that, or hire it, rather than fail; though money runs a little lowish, after what I have laid out; but I don't care to say so here; though I warrant I might have what I would of Mrs. Jervis, or Mr. Jonathan, or Mr. Longman; but then how shall I pay it? you'll say: And, besides, I don't love to be beholden.

But the chief reason I'm glad you don't set out to meet me, is the uncertainty; for it seems I must stay another week still, and hope certainly to go Thursday after. For poor Mrs. Jervis will go at the same time, she says, and can't be ready before.

Oh! that I was once well with you!—Though he is very civil too at present, and not so cross as he was: and yet he is as vexatious another way, as you shall hear. For yesterday he had a rich suit of clothes brought home, which they call a birth-day suit; for he intends to go to London against next birth-day, to see the court; and our folks will have it he is to be made a lord.—I wish they may make him an honest man, as he was always thought; but I have not found it so, alas for me!

And so, as I was saying, he had these clothes come home, and he tried them on. And before he pulled them off, he sent for me, when nobody else was in the parlour with him: Pamela, said he, you are so neat and so nice in your own dress, (Alack-a-day, I didn't know I was!) that you must be a judge of ours. How are these clothes made? Do they fit me?—I am no judge, said I, and please your honour; but I think they look very fine.

His waistcoat stood on end with silver lace, and he looked very grand. But what he did last, has made me very serious, and I could make him no

compliments. Said he, Why don't you wear your usual clothes? Though I think every thing looks well upon you (for I still continue in my new dress). I said, I have no clothes, sir, I ought to call my own, but these: and it is no matter what such an one as I wears. Said he, Why you look very serious, Pamela. I see you can bear malice.—Yes, so I can, sir, said I, according to the occasion! Why, said he, your eyes always look red, I think. Are you not a fool to take my last freedom so much to heart? I am sure you, and that fool Mrs. Jervis, frightened me, by your hideous squalling, as much as I could frighten you. That is all we had for it, said I; and if you could be so afraid of your own servants knowing of your attempts upon a poor unworthy creature, that is under your protection while I stay, surely your honour ought to be more afraid of God Almighty, in whose presence we all stand, in every action of our lives, and to whom the greatest, as well as the least, must be accountable, let them think what they list.

He took my hand, in a kind of good-humoured mockery, and said, Well urged, my pretty preacher! When my Lincolnshire chaplain dies, I'll put thee on a gown and cassock, and thou'lt make a good figure in his place.—I wish, said I, a little vexed at his jeer, your honour's conscience would be your preacher, and then you would need no other chaplain. Well, well, Pamela, said he, no more of this unfashionable jargon. I did not send for you so much for your opinion of my new suit, as to tell you, you are welcome to stay, since Mrs. Jervis desires it, till she goes. I welcome! said I; I am sure I shall rejoice when I am out of the house!

Well, said he, you are an ungrateful baggage; but I am thinking it would be pity, with these fair soft hands, and that lovely skin, (as he called it, and took hold of my hand,) that you should return again to hard work, as you must if you go to your father's; and so I would advise her to take a house in London, and let lodgings to us members of parliament, when we come to town; and such a pretty daughter as you may pass for, will always fill her house, and she'll get a great deal of money.

I was sadly vexed at this barbarous joke; but being ready to cry before, the tears gushed out, and (endeavouring to get my hand from him, but in vain) I said, I can expect no better: Your behaviour, sir, to me, has been just of a piece with these words: Nay, I will say it, though you were to be ever so angry.—I angry, Pamela? No, no, said he, I have overcome all that;

and as you are to go away, I look upon you now as Mrs. Jervis's guest while you both stay, and not as my servant; and so you may say what you will. But I'll tell you, Pamela, why you need not take this matter in such high disdain!—You have a very pretty romantic turn for virtue, and all that.—And I don't suppose but you'll hold it still: and nobody will be able to prevail upon you. But, my child, (sneeringly he spoke it,) do but consider what a fine opportunity you will then have for a tale every day to good mother Jervis, and what subjects for letter-writing to your father and mother, and what pretty preachments you may hold forth to the young gentlemen. Ad's my heart! I think it would be the best thing you and she could do.

You do well, sir, said I, to even your wit to such a poor maiden as me: but, permit me to say, that if you was not rich and great, and I poor and little, you would not insult me thus.—Let me ask you, sir, if you think this becomes your fine clothes, and a master's station: Why so serious, my pretty Pamela? said he: Why so grave? And would kiss me; but my heart was full, and I said, Let me alone; I will tell you, if you was a king, and insulted me as you have done, that you have forgotten to act like a gentleman; and I won't stay to be used thus: I will go to the next farmer's, and there wait for Mrs. Jervis, if she must go: and I'd have you know, sir, that I can stoop to the ordinariest work of your scullions, for all these nasty soft hands, sooner than bear such ungentlemanly imputations.

I sent for you, said he, in high good humour; but it is impossible to hold it with such an impertinent: however, I'll keep my temper. But while I see you here, pray don't put on those dismal grave looks: Why, girl, you should forbear them, if it were but for your pride-sake; for the family will think you are grieving to leave the house. Then, sir, said I, I will try to convince them of the contrary, as well as your honour; for I will endeavour to be more cheerful while I stay, for that very reason.

Well, replied he, I will set this down by itself, as the first time that ever what I had advised had any weight with you. And I will add, said I, as the first advice you have given me of late, that was fit to be followed.—I wish said he, (I am almost ashamed to write it, impudent gentleman as he is!) I wish I had thee as quick another way, as thou art in thy repartees—And he laughed, and I snatched my hand from him, and I tripped away as fast as I

could. Ah! thought I, married? I am sure it is time you were married, or, at this rate, no honest maiden ought to live with you.

Why, dear father and mother, to be sure he grows quite a rake! How easy it is to go from bad to worse, when once people give way to vice!

How would my poor lady, had she lived, have grieved to see it! but may be he would have been better then! Though it seems he told Mrs. Jervis, he had an eye upon me in his mother's life-time; and he intended to let me know as much, by the bye, he told her! Here is shamelessness for you! Sure the world must be near at an end! for all the gentlemen about are as bad as he almost, as far as I can hear!—And see the fruits of such bad examples! There is 'Squire Martin in the grove, has had three lyings-in, it seems, in his house, in three months past; one by himself; and one by his coachman; and one by his woodman; and yet he has turned none of them away. Indeed, how can he, when they but follow his own vile example? There is he, and two or three more such as he, within ten miles of us, who keep company, and hunt with our fine master, truly; and I suppose he is never the better for their examples. But, Heaven bless me, say I, and send me out of this wicked house!

But, dear father and mother, what sort of creatures must the womenkind be, do you think, to give way to such wickedness? Why, this it is that makes every one be thought of alike: And, alack-a-day! what a world we live in! for it is grown more a wonder that the men are resisted, than that the women comply. This, I suppose, makes me such a sauce-box, and bold-face, and a creature, and all because I won't be a sauce-box and bold-face indeed.

But I am sorry for these things; one don't know what arts and stratagems men may devise to gain their vile ends; and so I will think as well as I can of these poor undone creatures, and pity them. For you see, by my sad story, and narrow escapes, what hardships poor maidens go through, whose lot it is to go out to service, especially to houses where there is not the fear of God, and good rule kept by the heads of the family.

You see I am quite grown grave and serious; indeed it becomes the present condition of Your dutiful DAUGHTER.



## LETTER XXVIII

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

John says you wept when you read my last letter, that he carried. I am sorry you let him see that; for they all mistrust already how matters are, and as it is no credit that I have been attempted, though it is that I have resisted; yet I am sorry they have cause to think so evil of my master from any of us.

Mrs. Jervis has made up her accounts with Mr. Longman, and will stay in her place. I am glad of it, for her own sake, and for my master's; for she has a good master of him; so indeed all have, but poor me—and he has a good housekeeper in her.

Mr. Longman, it seems, took upon him to talk to my master, how faithful and careful of his interests she was, and how exact in her accounts; and he told him, there was no comparison between her accounts and Mrs. Jewkes's, at the Lincolnshire estate.

He said so many fine things, it seems, of Mrs. Jervis, that my master sent for her in Mr. Longman's presence, and said Pamela might come along with her; I suppose to mortify me, that I must go while she was to stay: But as, when I go away, I am not to go with her, nor was she to go with me; so I did not matter it much; only it would have been creditable to such a poor girl, that the housekeeper would bear me company, if I went.

Said he to her, Well, Mrs. Jervis, Longman says you have made up your accounts with him with your usual fidelity and exactness. I had a good mind to make you an offer of continuing with me, if you can be a little sorry for your hasty words, which, indeed, were not so respectful as I have deserved at your hands. She seemed at a sad loss what to say, because Mr. Longman was there, and she could not speak of the occasion of those words, which was me.

Indeed, said Mr. Longman, I must needs say before your face, that since I have known my master's family, I have never found such good management in it, nor so much love and harmony neither. I wish the Lincolnshire estate was as well served!—No more of that, said my master;

but Mrs. Jervis may stay, if she will: and here, Mrs. Jervis, pray accept of this, which at the close of every year's accounts I will present you with, besides your salary, as long as I find your care so useful and agreeable. And he gave her five guineas.—She made him a low courtesy, and thanking him, looked to me, as if she would have spoken to me.

He took her meaning, I believe; for he said,—Indeed I love to encourage merit and obligingness, Longman; but I can never be equally kind to those who don't deserve it at my hands, as to those who do; and then he looked full on me. Longman, continued he, I said that girl might come in with Mrs. Jervis, because they love to be always together. For Mrs. Jervis is very good to her, and loves her as well as if she was her daughter. But else—Mr. Longman, interrupting him, said, Good to Mrs. Pamela! Ay, sir, and so she is, to be sure! But every body must be good to her; for——

He was going on: but my master said, No more, no more, Mr. Longman. I see old men are taken with pretty young girls, as well as other folks; and fair looks hide many a fault, where a person has the art to behave obligingly. Why, and please your honour, said Mr. Longman, every body—and was going on, I believe, to say something more in my praise, but he interrupted him, and said, Not a word more of this Pamela. I can't let her stay, I'll assure you; not only for her own freedom of speech, but her letter-writing of all the secrets of my family. Ay, said the good old man, I am sorry for that too! But, sir,—No more, I say, said my master; for my reputation is so well known, (mighty fine, thought I!) that I care not what any body writes or says of me: But to tell you the truth, (not that it need go further,) I think of changing my condition soon; and, you know, young ladies of birth and fortune will choose their own servants, and that's my chief reason why Pamela can't stay. As for the rest, said he, the girl is a good sort of body, take her altogether; though I must needs say, a little pert, since my mother's death, in her answers, and gives me two words for one; which I can't bear; nor is there reason I should, you know, Longman. No, to be sure, sir, said he: but 'tis strange, methinks, she should be so mild and meek to every one of us in the house, and forget herself so, where she should shew most respect! Very true, Mr. Longman, said he, but so it is, I'll assure you; and it was from her pertness, that Mrs. Jervis and I had the words: And I should mind it the less, but that the girl (there she stands, I say it to her face) has wit and sense above her years, and knows better.

I was in great pain to say something, but yet I knew not what, before Mr. Longman; and Mrs. Jervis looked at me, and walked to the window to hide her concern for me. At last, I said, It is for you, sir, to say what you please; and for me only to say, God bless your honour!

Poor Mr. Longman faltered in his speech, and was ready to cry. Said my insulting master to me, Why, pr'ythee, Pamela, now, shew thyself as thou art, before Longman. Can'st not give him a specimen of that pertness which thou hast exercised upon me sometimes?

Did he not, my dear father and mother, deserve all the truth to be told? Yet I overcame myself so far, as to say, Well, your honour may play upon a poor girl, that you know can answer you, but dare not.

Why, pr'ythee now, insinuator, said he, say the worst you can before Longman and Mrs. Jervis. I challenge the utmost of thy impertinence: and as you are going away, and have the love of every body, I would be a little justified to my family, that you have no reason to complain of hardships from me, as I have pert saucy answers from you, besides exposing me by your letters.

Surely, sir, said I, I am of no consequence equal to this, in your honour's family, that such a great gentleman as you, should need to justify yourself about me. I am glad Mrs. Jervis stays with your honour; and I know I have not deserved to stay: and, more than that, I don't desire to stay.

Ads-bobbers! said Mr. Longman, and ran to me; don't say so, don't say so, dear Mrs. Pamela! We all love you dearly: and pray down of your knees, and ask his honour pardon, and we will all become pleaders in a body, and I, and Mrs. Jervis too, at the head of it, to beg his honour's pardon, and to continue you, at least, till his honour marries.—No, Mr. Longman, said I, I cannot ask; nor will I stay, if I might. All I desire is, to return to my poor father and mother: and though I love you all, I won't stay.—O well-a-day, well-a-day! said the good old man, I did not expect this!—When I had got matters thus far, and had made all up for Mrs. Jervis, I was in hopes to have got a double holiday of joy for all the family, in your pardon too. Well, said my master, this is a little specimen of what I told you, Longman. You see there's a spirit you did not expect.

Mrs. Jervis told me after, that she could stay no longer, to hear me so hardly used; and must have spoken, had she staid, what would never have been forgiven her; so she went out. I looked after her to go too; but my



master said, Come, Pamela, give another specimen, I desire you, to Longman I am sure you must, if you will but speak. Well, sir, said I, since it seems your greatness wants to be justified by my lowness, and I have no desire you should suffer in the sight of your family, I will say, on my bended knees, (and so I kneeled down,) that I have been a very faulty, and a very ungrateful creature to the best of masters: I have been very perverse and saucy; and have deserved nothing at your hands but to be turned out of your family with shame and disgrace. I, therefore, have nothing to say for myself, but that I am not worthy to stay, and so cannot wish to stay, and will not stay: And so God Almighty bless you, and you Mr. Longman, and good Mrs. Jervis, and every living soul of the family! and I will pray for you as long as I live!—And so I rose up, and was forced to lean upon my master's elbow-chair, or I should have sunk down.

The poor old man wept more than I, and said, Ads-bobbers, was ever the like heard! 'Tis too much, too much; I can't bear it. As I hope to live, I am quite melted. Dear sir, forgive her! The poor thing prays for you; she prays for us all! She owns her fault; yet won't be forgiven! I profess I know not what to make of it.

My master himself, hardened wretch as he was, seemed a little moved, and took his handkerchief out of his pocket, and walked to the window: What sort of a day is it? said he.—And then, getting a little more hard-heartedness, he said, Well, you may be gone from my presence, thou strange medley of inconsistence! but you shan't stay after your time in the house.

Nay, pray, sir, pray, sir, said the good old man, relent a little. Ads-heartikins! you young gentlemen are made of iron and steel, I think; I'm sure, said he, my heart's turned into butter, and is running away at my eyes. I never felt the like before.—Said my master, with an imperious tone, Get out of my presence, hussy! I can't bear you in my sight. Sir, said I, I'm going as fast as I can.

But, indeed, my dear father and mother, my head was so giddy, and my limbs trembled so, that I was forced to go holding by the wainscot all the way with both my hands, and thought I should not have got to the door: But when I did, as I hoped this would be my last interview with this terrible hard-hearted master, I turned about, and made a low courtesy, and said, God bless you, sir! God bless you, Mr. Longman! and I went into the

lobby leading to the great hall, and dropt into the first chair; for I could get no farther a good while.

I leave all these things to your reflection, my dear parents but I can write no more. My poor heart's almost broken! Indeed it is—O when shall I get away!—Send me, good God, in safety, once more to my poor father's peaceful cot!—and there the worst that can happen will be joy in perfection to what I now bear!—O pity

Your distressed DAUGHTER.

## LETTER XXIX

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I must write on, though I shall come so soon; for now I have hardly any thing else to do. I have finished all that lay upon me, and only wait the good time of setting out. Mrs. Jervis said, I must be low in pocket, for what I had laid out; and so would have presented me with two guineas of her five; but I could not take them of her, because, poor gentlewoman, she pays old debts for her children, that were extravagant, and wants them herself. This, though, was very good in her.

I am sorry I shall have but little to bring with me; but I know you won't, you are so good!—and I will work the harder, when I come home, if I can get a little plain-work, or any thing, to do. But all your neighbourhood is so poor, that I fear I shall want work, except, may be, dame Mumford can help me to something, from any good family she is acquainted with.

Here, what a sad thing it is! I have been brought up wrong, as matters stand. For, you know, my good lady, now in heaven, loved singing and dancing; and, as she would have it, I had a voice, she made me learn both; and often and often has she made me sing her an innocent song, and a good psalm too, and dance before her. And I must learn to flower and draw too, and to work fine work with my needle; why, all this too I have got pretty tolerably at my finger's end, as they say; and she used to praise me, and was a good judge of such matters.

Well now, what is all this to the purpose, as things have turned about?

Why, no more nor less, than that I am like the grasshopper in the fable, which I have read of in my lady's book, as follows:—[See the Aesop's Fables which have lately been selected and reformed from those of Sir R. L'Estrange, and the most eminent mythologists.]

'As the ants were airing their provisions one winter, a hungry grasshopper (as suppose it was poor I) begged a charity of them. They told him, That he should have wrought in summer, if he would not have wanted in winter. Well, says the grasshopper, but I was not idle neither; for I sung

out the whole season. Nay, then, said they, you'll e'en do well to make a merry year of it, and dance in winter to the time you sung in summer.'

So I shall make a fine figure with my singing and my dancing, when I come home to you! Nay, I shall be unfit even for a May-day holiday-time; for these minuets, rigadoons, and French dances, that I have been practising, will make me but ill company for my milk-maid companions that are to be. To be sure I had better, as things stand, have learned to wash and scour, and brew and bake, and such like. Put I hope, if I can't get work, and can meet with a place, to learn these soon, if any body will have the goodness to bear with me till I am able: For, notwithstanding what my master says, I hope I have an humble and teachable mind; and, next to God's grace, that's all my comfort: for I shall think nothing too mean that is honest. It may be a little hard at first; but woe to my proud heart, if I find it so on trial; for I will make it bend to its condition, or break it.

I have read of a good bishop that was to be burnt for his religion; and he tried how he could bear it, by putting his fingers into the lighted candle: So I, t'other day, tried, when Rachel's back was turned, if I could not scour a pewter plate she had begun. I see I could do't by degrees: It only blistered my hand in two places.

All the matter is, if I could get plain-work enough, I need not spoil my fingers. But if I can't, I hope to make my hands as red as a blood-pudding, and as hard as a beechen trencher, to accommodate them to my condition.—But I must break off; here's somebody coming.

'Tis only our Hannah with a message from Mrs. Jervis.—But, hold, here's somebody else. Well, it is only Rachel.

I am as much frightened, as were the city mouse and the country mouse, in the same book of fables, at every thing that stirs. O! I have a power of these things to entertain you with in winter evenings, when I come home. If I can but get work, with a little time for reading, I hope we shall be very happy over our peat fires.

What made me hint to you, that I should bring but little with me, is this:

You must know, I did intend to do, as I have this afternoon: and that is, I took all my clothes, and all my linen, and I divided them into three parcels, as I had before told Mrs. Jervis I intended to do; and I said, It is now Monday, Mrs. Jervis, and I am to go away on Thursday morning betimes; so, though I know you don't doubt my honesty, I beg you will

look over my poor matters, and let every one have what belongs to them; for, said I, you know I am resolved to take with me only what I can properly call my own.

Said she, (I did not know her drift then; to be sure she meant well; but I did not thank her for it, when I did know it,) Let your things be brought down in the green-room, and I will do any thing you will have me do.

With all my heart, said I, green-room or any where; but I think you might step up, and see 'em as they lie.

However, I fetched 'em down, and laid them in three parcels, as before; and, when I had done, I went down to call her up to look at them.

Now, it seems, she had prepared my master for this scene, unknown to me; and in this green-room was a closet, with a sash-door, and a curtain before it; for there she puts her sweet-meats and such things; and she did it, it seems, to turn his heart, as knowing what I intended, I suppose that he should make me take the things; for, if he had, I should have made money of them, to help us when we got together; for, to be sure, I could never have appeared in them.

Well, as I was saying, he had got, unknown to me, into this closet; I suppose while I went to call Mrs. Jervis: and she since owned to me, it was at his desire, when she told him something of what I intended, or else she would not have done it: though I have reason, I am sure, to remember the last closet-work.

So I said, when she came up, Here, Mrs. Jervis, is the first parcel; I will spread it all abroad. These are the things my good lady gave me.—In the first place, said I—and so I went on describing the clothes and linen my lady had given me, mingling blessings, as I proceeded, for her goodness to me; and when I had turned over that parcel, I said, Well, so much for the first parcel, Mrs. Jervis; that was my lady's gifts.

Now I come to the presents of my dear virtuous master: Hey, you know closet for that! Mrs. Jervis. She laughed, and said, I never saw such a comical girl in my life! But go on. I will, Mrs. Jervis, said I, as soon as I have opened the bundle; for I was as brisk and as pert as could be, little thinking who heard me.

Now here, Mrs. Jervis, said I, are my ever worthy master's presents; and then I particularised all those in the second bundle.

After which, I turned to my own, and said,

Now, Mrs. Jervis, comes poor Pamela's bundle; and a little one it is to the others. First, here is a calico nightgown, that I used to wear o' mornings. 'Twill be rather too good for me when I get home; but I must have something. Then there is a quilted calamanco coat, and a pair of stockings I bought of the pedlar, and my straw-hat with blue strings; and a remnant of Scots cloth, which will make two shirts and two shifts, the same I have on, for my poor father and mother. And here are four other shifts, one the fellow to that I have on; another pretty good one, and the other two old fine ones, that will serve me to turn and wind with at home, for they are not worth leaving behind me; and here are two pair of shoes, I have taken the lace off, which I will burn, and may be will fetch me some little matter at a pinch, with an old silver buckle or two.

What do you laugh for, Mrs. Jervis? said I.—Why you are like an April day; you cry and laugh in a breath.

Well, let me see; ay, here is a cotton handkerchief I bought of the pedlar—there should be another somewhere. O, here it is! and here too are my new-bought knit mittens; and this is my new flannel coat, the fellow to that I have on and in this parcel, pinned together, are several pieces of printed calico, remnants of silks, and such like, that, if good luck should happen, and I should get work, would serve for robins and facings, and such like uses. And here too are a pair of pockets: they are too fine for me; but I have no worse. Bless me, said I, I did not think I had so many good things!

Well, Mrs. Jervis, said I, you have seen all my store, and I will now sit down, and tell you a piece of my mind.

Be brief then, said she, my good girl: for she was afraid, she said afterwards, that I should say too much.

Why then the case is this: I am to enter upon a point of equity and conscience, Mrs. Jervis; and I must beg, if you love me, you'd let me have my own way. Those things there of my lady's, I can have no claim to, so as to take them away; for she gave them me, supposing I was to wear them in her service, and to do credit to her bountiful heart. But, since I am to be turned away, you know, I cannot wear them at my poor father's; for I should bring all the little village upon my back; and so I resolve not to have them.

Then, Mrs. Jervis, said I, I have far less right to these of my worthy master's; for you see what was his intention in giving them to me. So they were to be the price of my shame, and if I could make use of them, I should think I should never prosper with them; and, besides, you know, Mrs. Jervis, if I would not do the good gentleman's work, why should I take his wages? So, in conscience, in honour, in every thing, I have nothing to say to thee, thou second wicked bundle!

But, said I, come to my arms, my dear third parcel, the companion of my poverty, and the witness of my honesty; and may I never deserve the least rag that is contained in thee, when I forfeit a title to that innocence, that I hope will ever be the pride of my life! and then I am sure it will be my highest comfort at my death, when all the riches and pomps of the world will be worse than the vilest rags that can be worn by beggars! And so I hugged my third bundle.

But, said I, Mrs. Jervis, (and she wept to hear me,) one thing more I have to trouble you with, and that's all.

There are four guineas, you know, that came out of my good lady's pocket, when she died; that, with some silver, my master gave me: Now these same four guineas I sent to my poor father and mother, and they have broken them; but would make them up, if I would: and if you think it should be so, it shall. But pray tell me honestly your mind: As to the three years before my lady's death, do you think, as I had no wages, I may be supposed to be quits?—By quits, I cannot mean that my poor services should be equal to my lady's goodness; for that's impossible. But as all her learning and education of me, as matters have turned, will be of little service to me now; for it had been better for me to have been brought up to hard labour, to be sure; for that I must turn to at last, if I can't get a place: (and you know, in places too, one is subject to such temptations as are dreadful to think of:) so, I say, by quits I only mean, as I return all the good things she gave me, whether I may not set my little services against my keeping; because, as I said, my learning is not now in the question; and I am sure my dear good lady would have thought so, had she lived; but that too is now out of the question. Well then, if so, I would ask, Whether, in above this year that I have lived with my master, as I am resolved to leave all his gifts behind me, I may not have earned, besides my keeping, these

four guineas, and these poor clothes here upon my back, and in my third bundle? Now tell me your mind freely, without favour or affection.

Alas! my dear girl, says she, you make me unable to speak to you at all: To be sure it will be the highest affront that can be offered, for you to leave any of these things behind you; and you must take all your bundles with you, or my master will never forgive you.

Well, well, Mrs. Jervis, said I, I don't care; I have been too much used to be snubbed and hardly treated by my master, of late. I have done him no harm; and I shall always pray for him and wish him happy. But I don't deserve these things; I know I don't. Then, I can't wear them, if I should take them; so they can be of no use to me: And I trust I shall not want the poor pittance, that is all I desire to keep life and soul together. Bread and water I can live upon, Mrs. Jervis, with content. Water I shall get any where; and if I can't get me bread, I will live like a bird in winter upon hips and haws, and at other times upon pig-nuts and potatoes, or turnips, or any thing. So what occasion have I for these things?—But all I ask is about these four guineas, and if you think I need not return them, that is all I want to know.—To be sure, my dear, you need not, said she; you have well earned them by that waistcoat only. No, I think not so, in that only; but in the linen, and other things, do you think I have? Yes, yes, said she, and more. And my keeping allowed for, I mean, said I, and these poor clothes on my back, besides? Remember that, Mrs. Jervis. Yes, my dear odd-one, no doubt you have. Well then, said I, I am as happy as a princess. I am quite as rich as I wish to be: and once more, my dear third bundle, I will hug thee to my bosom. And I beg you'll say nothing of all this till I am gone, that my master mayn't be so angry, but that I may go in peace; for my heart, without other matters, will be ready to break to part with you all.

Now, Mrs. Jervis, said I, as to one matter more: and that is my master's last usage of me, before Mr. Longman.—Said she, Pr'ythee, dear Pamela, step to my chamber, and fetch me a paper I left on my table. I have something to shew you in it. I will, said I, and stepped down; but that was only a fetch, to take the orders of my master, I found. It seems he said, he thought two or three times to have burst out upon me; but he could not stand it, and wished I might not know he was there. But I tripped up again so nimbly, (for there was no paper,) that I just saw his back, as if coming out of that green-room, and going into the next to it, the first door that was



open—I whipped in, and shut the door, and bolted it. O Mrs. Jervis! said I, what have you done by me?—I see I can't confide in any body. I am beset on all hands. Wretched, wretched Pamela, where shalt thou expect a friend, if Mrs. Jervis joins to betray thee thus? She made so many protestations, (telling me all, and that he owned I had made him wipe his eyes two or three times, and said she hoped it would have a good effect, and remembered me, that I had said nothing but what would rather move compassion than resentment,) that I forgave her. But O! that I was safe from this house! for never poor creature sure was so flustered as I have been so many months together;—I am called down from this most tedious scribble. I wonder what will next befall Your dutiful DAUGHTER.

Mrs. Jervis says, she is sure I shall have the chariot to carry me home to you. Though this will look too great for me, yet it will shew as if I was not turned away quite in disgrace. The travelling chariot is come from Lincolnshire, and I fancy I shall go in that; for the other is quite grand.

## LETTER XXX

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I write again, though, may be, I shall bring it to you in my pocket: for I shall have no writing, nor writing-time, I hope, when I come to you. This is Wednesday morning, and I shall, I hope, set out to you to-morrow morning; but I have had more trials and more vexations; but of another complexion too a little, though all from the same quarter.

Yesterday my master, after he came from hunting, sent for me. I went with great terror: for I expected he would storm, and be in a fine passion with me for my freedom of speech before: so I was resolved to begin first, with submission, to disarm his anger; and I fell upon my knees as soon as I saw him; and said, Good sir, let me beseech you, as you hope to be forgiven yourself, and for the sake of my dear good lady your mother, who recommended me to you with her last words, to forgive me all my faults; and only grant me this favour, the last I shall ask you, that you will let me depart your house with peace and quietness of mind, that I may take such a leave of my dear fellow-servants as befits me; and that my heart be not quite broken.

He took me up, in a kinder manner than ever I had known; and he said, Shut the door, Pamela, and come to me in my closet: I want to have a little serious talk with you. How can I, sir, said I, how can I! and wrung my hands. O pray, sir, let me go out of your presence, I beseech you! By the God that made me, said he, I'll do you no harm. Shut the parlour door, and come to me in my library.

He then went into his closet, which is his library, and full of rich pictures besides; a noble apartment, though called a closet, and next the private garden, into which it has a door that opens. I shut the parlour door, as he bid me; but stood at it irresolute. Place some confidence in me, said he: Surely you may, when I have spoken thus solemnly. So I crept towards him with trembling feet, and my heart throbbing through my handkerchief. Come in, said he, when I bid you. I did so. Pray, sir, said I, pity and spare me. I will, said he, as I hope to be saved. He sat down upon a rich settee;

and took hold of my hand, and said, Don't doubt me, Pamela. From this moment I will no more consider you as my servant: and I desire you'll not use me with ingratitude for the kindness I am going to express towards you. This a little emboldened me; and he said, holding both my hands between his, You have too much wit and good sense not to discover, that I, in spite of my heart, and all the pride of it, cannot but love you. Yes, look up to me, my sweet-faced girl! I must say I love you; and have put on a behaviour to you, that was much against my heart, in hopes to frighten you from your reservedness. You see I own it ingenuously; and don't play your sex upon me for it.

I was unable to speak; and he, seeing me too much oppressed with confusion to go on in that strain, said, Well, Pamela, let me know in what situation of life is your father: I know he is a poor man; but is he as low and as honest as he was when my mother took you?

Then I could speak a little; and with a down look, (and I felt my face glow like fire,) I said, Yes, sir, as poor and as honest too; and that is my pride. Says he, I will do something for him, if it be not your fault, and make all your family happy. All, sir, said I, he is happier already than ever he can be, if his daughter's innocence is to be the price of your favour: and I beg you will not speak to me on the only side that can wound me. I have no design of that sort, said he. O sir, said I, tell me not so, tell me not so! —'Tis easy, said he, for me to be the making of your father, without injuring you. Well, sir, said I, if this can be done, let me know how; and all I can do with innocence shall be the study and practice of my life.—But, O! what can such a poor creature as I do, and do my duty?—Said he, I would have you stay a week or fortnight only, and behave yourself with kindness to me; I stoop to beg it of you, and you shall see all shall turn out beyond your expectation. I see, said he, you are going to answer otherwise than I would have you; and I begin to be vexed I should thus meanly sue; and so I will say, that your behaviour before honest Longman, when I used you as I did, and you could so well have vindicated yourself, has quite charmed me. And though I am not pleased with all you said yesterday, while I was in the closet, yet you have moved me more to admire you than before; and I am awakened to see more worthiness in you, than ever I saw in any lady in the world. All the servants, from the highest to the lowest, doat upon you, instead of envying you; and look upon you in so superior a light, as speaks what you ought to be. I have seen more of your letters than

you imagine, (This surprised me!) and am quite overcome with your charming manner of writing, so free, so easy, and many of your sentiments so much above your years, and your sex; and all put together, makes me, as I tell you, love you to extravagance. Now, Pamela, when I have stooped to acknowledge all this, oblige me only to stay another week or fortnight, to give me time to bring about some certain affairs, and you shall see how much you may find your account in it.

I trembled to find my poor heart giving way.—O good sir, said I, spare a poor girl that cannot look up to you, and speak. My heart is full; and why should you wish to undo me?—Only oblige me, said he, to stay a fortnight longer, and John shall carry word to your father, that I will see him in the time, either here, or at the Swan in his village. O sir, said I, my heart will burst; but, on my bended knees, I beg you to let me go to-morrow, as I designed: and don't offer to tempt a poor creature, whose whole will would be to do yours, if my virtue would permit!—I shall permit it, said he; for I intend no injury to you, God is my witness! Impossible! said I; I cannot, sir, believe you, after what has passed: How many ways are there to undo poor creatures! Good God, protect me this one time, and send me but to my dear father's cot in safety!—Strange, d——d fate! said he, that when I speak so solemnly, I can't be believed!—What should I believe, sir? said I, what can I believe? What have you said, but that I am to stay a fortnight longer? and what then is to become of me?—My pride of birth and fortune (d——n them both! said he, since they cannot obtain credit with you, but must add to your suspicions) will not let me descend all at once; and I ask you but a fortnight's stay, that, after this declaration, I may pacify those proud demands upon me.

O how my heart throbbed! and I began (for I did not know what I did) to say the Lord's prayer. None of your beads to me Pamela! said he; thou art a perfect nun, I think.

But I said aloud, with my eyes lifted up to heaven, Lead me not into temptation: but deliver me from evil, O my good God! He hugged me in his arms, and said, Well, my dear girl, then you stay this fortnight, and you shall see what I will do for you—I'll leave you a moment, and walk into the next room, to give you time to think of it, and to shew you I have no design upon you. Well, this, I thought, did not look amiss.

He went out, and I was tortured with twenty different doubts in a minute; sometimes I thought that to stay a week or fortnight longer in this house to obey him, while Mrs. Jervis was with me, could do no great harm: But then, thought I, how do I know what I may be able to do? I have withstood his anger; but may I not relent at his kindness?—How shall I stand that.—Well, I hope, thought I, by the same protecting grace in which I will always confide!—But, then, what has he promised? Why, he will make my poor father and mother's life comfortable. O! said I to myself, that is a rich thought; but let me not dwell upon it, for fear I should indulge it to my ruin.—What can he do for me, poor girl as I am!—What can his greatness stoop to! He talks, thought I, of his pride of heart, and pride of condition; O these are in his head, and in his heart too, or he would not confess them to me at such an instant. Well then, thought I, this can be only to seduce me.—He has promised nothing.—But I am to see what he will do, if I stay a fortnight; and this fortnight, thought I again, is no such great matter; and I shall see in a few days how he carries it.—But then, when I again reflected upon this distance between him and me, and his now open declaration of love, as he called it; and that after this he would talk with me on that subject more plainly than ever, and I shall be less armed, may be, to withstand him; and then I bethought myself, why, if he meant no dishonour, he should not speak before Mrs. Jervis; and the odious frightful closet came again into my head, and my narrow escape upon it; and how easy it might be for him to send Mrs. Jervis and the maids out of the way; and so that all the mischief he designed me might be brought about in less than that time; I resolved to go away and trust all to Providence, and nothing to myself. And how ought I to be thankful for this resolution!—as you shall hear.

But just as I have writ to this place, John sends me word, that he is going this minute your way; and so I will send you so far as I have written, and hope by to-morrow night, to ask your blessings, at your own poor, but happy abode, and tell you the rest by word of mouth; and so I rest, till then, and for ever, Your dutiful DAUGHTER.

## LETTER XXXI

DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I will continue my writing still, because, may be, I shall like to read it, when I am with you, to see what dangers I have been enabled to escape; and though I bring it along with me.

I told you my resolution, my happy resolution as I have reason to think it: and just then he came in again, with great kindness in his looks, and said, I make no doubt, Pamela, you will stay this fortnight to oblige me. I knew not how to frame my words so as to deny, and yet not make him storm. But, said I, Forgive, sir, your poor distressed servant. I know I cannot possibly deserve any favour at your hands, consistent with virtue; and I beg you will let me go to my poor father. Why, said he, thou art the veriest fool that I ever knew. I tell you I will see your father; I'll send for him hither to-morrow, in my travelling chariot, if you will; and I'll let him know what I intend to do for him and you. What, sir, may I ask you, can that be? Your honour's noble estate may easily make him happy, and not unuseful, perhaps to you, in some respect or other. But what price am I to pay for all this?—You shall be happy as you can wish, said he, I do assure you: And here I will now give you this purse, in which are fifty guineas, which I will allow your father yearly, and find an employ suitable to his liking, to deserve that and more: Pamela, he shall never want, depend upon it. I would have given you still more for him, but that, perhaps, you'd suspect I intended it as a design upon you.—O sir, said I, take back your guineas! I will not touch one, nor will my father, I am sure, till he knows what is to be done for them; and particularly what is to become of me. Why then, Pamela, said he, suppose I find a man of probity, and genteel calling, for a husband for you, that shall make you a gentlewoman as long as you live?—I want no husband, sir, said I: for now I began to see him in all his black colours!—Yet being so much in his power, I thought I would a little dissemble. But, said he, you are so pretty, that go where you will, you can never be free from the designs of some or other of our sex; and I shall think I don't answer the care of my dying mother for you, who

committed you to me, if I don't provide you a husband to protect your virtue, and your innocence; and a worthy one I have thought of for you.

O black, perfidious creature! thought I, what an implement art thou in the hands of Lucifer, to ruin the innocent heart!—Yet still I dissembled: for I feared much both him and the place I was in. But, whom, pray sir, have you thought of?—Why, said he, young Mr. Williams, my chaplain, in Lincolnshire, who will make you happy. Does he know, sir, said I, any thing of your honour's intentions?—No, my girl, said he, and kissed me, (much against my will; for his very breath was now poison to me,) but his dependance upon my favour, and your beauty and merit, will make him rejoice at my kindness to him. Well, sir, said I, then it is time enough to consider of this matter; and it cannot hinder me from going to my father's: for what will staying a fortnight longer signify to this? Your honour's care and goodness may extend to me there, as well as here; and Mr. Williams, and all the world, shall know that I am not ashamed of my father's poverty.

He would kiss me again, and I said, If I am to think of Mr. Williams, or any body, I beg you'll not be so free with me: that is not pretty, I'm sure. Well, said he, but you stay this next fortnight, and in that time I'll have both Williams and your father here; for I will have the match concluded in my house; and when I have brought it on, you shall settle it as you please together. Meantime take and send only these fifty pieces to your father, as an earnest of my favour, and I'll make you all happy.—Sir, said I, I beg at least two hours to consider of this. I shall, said he, be gone out in one hour; and I would have you write to your father what I propose; and John shall carry it on purpose: and he shall take the purse with him for the good old man, if you approve it. Sir, said I, I will then let you know in one hour my resolution. Do so, said he; and gave me another kiss, and let me go.

O how I rejoiced I had got out of his clutches!—So I write you this, that you may see how matters stand; for I am resolved to come away, if possible. Base, wicked, treacherous gentleman as he is!

So here was a trap laid for your poor Pamela! I tremble to think of it! O what a scene of wickedness was here laid down for all my wretched life! Black-hearted wretch! how I hate him!—For, at first, as you'll see by what I have written, he would have made me believe other things; and this of Mr. Williams, I suppose, came into his head after he walked out from his

closet, to give himself time to think how to delude me better: but the covering was now too thin, and easy to be seen through.

I went to my chamber, and the first thing I did was to write to him; for I thought it was best not to see him again, if I could help it; and I put it under his parlour door, after I had copied it, as follows:

'HONOURED SIR,

'Your last proposal to me convinces me, that I ought not to stay, but to go to my father, if it were but to ask his advice about Mr. Williams. And I am so set upon it, that I am not to be persuaded. So, honoured sir, with a thousand thanks for all favours, I will set out to-morrow early; and the honour you designed me, as Mrs. Jervis tells me, of your chariot, there will be no occasion for: because I can hire, I believe, farmer Brady's chaise. So, begging you will not take it amiss, I shall ever be 'Your dutiful Servant.'

'As to the purse, sir, my poor father, to be sure, won't forgive me, if I take it, till he can know how to deserve it which is impossible.'

So he has just now sent Mrs. Jervis to tell me, that since I am resolved to go, go I may, and the travelling chariot shall be ready; but it shall be worse for me; for that he will never trouble himself about me as long as he lives. Well, so I get out of the house, I care not; only I should have been glad I could, with innocence, have made you, my dear parents, happy.

I cannot imagine the reason of it, but John, who I thought was gone with my last, is but now going; and he sends to know if I have any thing else to carry. So I break off to send you this with the former.

I am now preparing for my journey, and about taking leave of my good fellow-servants: and if I have not time to write, I must tell you the rest, when I am so happy as to be with you.

One word more: I slip in a paper of verses, on my going: sad poor stuff! but as they come from me, you'll not dislike them, may be. I shewed them to Mrs. Jervis, and she liked them, and took a copy; and made one sing them to her, and in the green-room too; but I looked into the closet first. I will only add, that I am Your dutiful DAUGHTER.

Let me just say, That he has this moment sent me five guineas by Mrs. Jervis, as a present for my pocket: So I shall be very rich; for as she brought them, I thought I might take them. He says he won't see me: and I



may go when I will in the morning; and Lincolnshire Robin shall drive me: but he is so angry, he orders that nobody shall go out at the door with me, not so much as into the coach-yard. Well! I can't help it, not I! But does not this expose himself more than me?

But John waits, and I would have brought this and the other myself; but he says, he has put it up among other things, and so can take both as well as one.

John is very good, and very honest; I am under great obligations to him. I'd give him a guinea, now I'm so rich, if I thought he'd take it. I hear nothing of my lady's clothes, and those my master gave me: for I told Mrs. Jervis, I would not take them; but I fancy, by a word or two that was dropped, they will be sent after me. Dear sirs! what a rich Pamela you'll have if they should! But as I can't wear them if they do, I don't desire them; and if I have them, will turn them into money, as I can have opportunity. Well, no more—I'm in a fearful hurry!

VERSES ON MY GOING AWAY.

I.

My fellow-servants dear, attend  
To these few lines, which I have penn'd:  
I'm sure they're from your honest friend,  
And wisher-well, poor PAMELA.

II.

I, from a state of low degree,  
Was plac'd in this good family:  
Too high a fate for humble me,  
The helpless, hopeless PAMELA.

III.

Yet though my happy lot was so,  
Joyful, I homeward from it go,  
No less content, when poor and low,  
Than here you find your PAMELA.

IV.

For what indeed is happiness,  
But conscience innocence and peace?  
And that's a treasure I possess;  
Thank Heaven that gave it PAMELA.

V.

My future lot I cannot know  
But this I'm sure, where'er I go,  
Whate'er I am, whate'er I do,  
I'll be the grateful PAMELA.

VI.

No sad regrets my heart annoy,  
I'll pray for all your peace and joy,  
From master high, to scullion boy,  
For all your loves to PAMELA.

VII.

One thing or two I've more to say;  
God's holy will, be sure, obey;  
And for our master always pray,  
As ever shall poor PAMELA.

VIII.

For, oh! we pity should the great,  
Instead of envying their estate;  
Temptations always on 'em wait,  
Exempt from which are such as we.

IX.

Their riches, gay deceitful snares,  
Enlarge their fears, increase their cares  
Their servants' joy surpasses theirs;  
At least so judges PAMELA.

X.

Your parents and relations love  
Let them your duty ever prove;  
And you'll be bless'd by Heav'n above,  
As will, I hope, poor PAMELA.

XI.

For if asham'd I e'er could be  
Of my dear parents' low degree,  
What lot had been too mean for me,  
Unbless'd, unvirtuous PAMELA.

XII.

Thrice happy may you ever be,  
Each one in his and her degree;  
And, sirs, whene'er you think of me,  
Pray for content to PAMELA.

XIII.

Pray for her wish'd content and peace;  
And rest assur'd she'll never cease,  
To pray for all your joys increase,  
While life is lent to PAMELA.

XIV.

On God all future good depends:  
Serve him. And so my sonnet ends,  
With, thank ye, thank ye, honest friends,  
For all your loves to PAMELA,

Here it is necessary the reader should know, that the fair Pamela's trials were not yet over; but the worst were to come, at a time when she thought them at an end, and that she was returning to her father: for when her master found her virtue was not to be subdued, and he had in vain tried to conquer his passion for her, being a gentleman of pleasure and intrigue, he had ordered his Lincolnshire coachman to bring his travelling chariot from thence, not caring to trust his Bedfordshire coachman, who, with the rest of the servants, so greatly loved and honoured the fair damsel; and having given him instructions accordingly, and prohibited the other servants, on

pretence of resenting Pamela's behaviour, from accompanying her any part of the road, he drove her five miles on the way to her father's; and then turning off, crossed the country, and carried her onwards toward his Lincolnshire estate.

It is also to be observed, that the messenger of her letters to her father, who so often pretended business that way, was an implement in his master's hands, and employed by him for that purpose; and always gave her letters first to him, and his master used to open and read them, and then send them on; by which means, as he hints to her, (as she observes in her letter XXX) he was no stranger to what she wrote. Thus every way was the poor virgin beset: And the whole will shew the base arts of designing men to gain their wicked ends; and how much it behoves the fair sex to stand upon their guard against artful contrivances, especially when riches and power conspire against innocence and a low estate.

A few words more will be necessary to make the sequel better understood. The intriguing gentleman thought fit, however, to keep back from her father her three last letters; in which she mentions his concealing himself to hear her partitioning out her clothes, his last effort to induce her to stay a fortnight, his pretended proposal of the chaplain, and her hopes of speedily seeing them, as also her verses; and to send himself a letter to her father, which is as follows:

'GOODMAN ANDREWS,

'You will wonder to receive a letter from me. But I think I am obliged to let you know, that I have discovered the strange correspondence carried on between you and your daughter, so injurious to my honour and reputation, and which, I think, you should not have encouraged, till you knew there were sufficient grounds for those aspersions, which she so plentifully casts upon me. Something possibly there might be in what she has written from time to time; but, believe me, with all her pretended simplicity and innocence, I never knew so much romantic invention as she is mistress of. In short, the girl's head's turned by romances, and such idle stuff, to which she has given herself up, ever since her kind lady's death. And she assumes airs, as if she was a mirror of perfection, and every body had a design upon her.

'Don't mistake me, however; I believe her very honest, and very virtuous; but I have found out also, that she is carrying on a sort of

correspondence, or love affair, with a young clergyman, that I hope in time to provide for; but who, at present, is destitute of any subsistence but my favour: And what would be the consequence, can you think, of two young folks, who have nothing in the world to trust to of their own to come together with a family multiplying upon them before they have bread to eat.

'For my part, I have too much kindness to them both, not to endeavour to prevent it, if I can; and for this reason I have sent her out of his way for a little while, till I can bring them both to better consideration; and I would not, therefore, have you be surprised you don't see your daughter so soon as you might possibly expect.

'Yet I do assure you, upon my honour, that she shall be safe and inviolate; and I hope you don't doubt me, notwithstanding any airs she may have given herself, upon my jocular pleasantry to her, and perhaps a little innocent romping with her, so usual with young folks of the two sexes, when they have been long acquainted, and grown up together; for pride is not my talent.

'As she is a mighty letter-writer, I hope she has had the duty to apprise you of her intrigue with the young clergyman; and I know not whether it meets with your countenance: But now she is absent for a little while, (for I know he would have followed her to your village, if she had gone home; and there, perhaps, they would have ruined one another, by marrying,) I doubt not I shall bring him to see his interest, and that he engages not before he knows how to provide for a wife: And when that can be done, let them come together in God's name, for me.

'I expect not to be answered on this head, but by your good opinion, and the confidence you may repose in my honour: being

*'Your hearty friend to serve you.'*

'P. S. I find my man John has been the manager of the correspondence, in which such liberties have been taken with me. I shall soon, in a manner that becomes me, let the saucy fellow know how much I resent his part of the affair. It is hard thing, that a man of my character in the world should be used thus freely by his own servants.'

It is easy to guess at the poor old man's concern, upon reading this letter from a gentleman of so much consideration. He knew not what course to take, and had no manner of doubt of his poor daughter's innocence, and

that foul play was designed her. Yet he sometimes hoped the best, and was ready to believe the surmised correspondence between the clergyman and her, having not received the letters she wrote, which would have cleared up that affair.

But, after all, he resolved, as well to quiet his own as her mother's uneasiness, to undertake a journey to the 'squire's; and leaving his poor wife to excuse him to the farmer who employed him, he set out that very evening, late as it was; and travelling all night, found himself, soon after day-light, at the gate of the gentleman, before the family was up: and there he sat down to rest himself till he should see somebody stirring.

The grooms were the first he saw, coming out to water their horses; and he asked, in so distressful a manner, what was become of Pamela, that they thought him crazy: and said, Why, what have you to do with Pamela, old fellow? Get out of the horses' way.—Where is your master? said the poor man: Pray, gentlemen, don't be angry: my heart's almost broken.—He never gives any thing at the door, I assure you, says one of the grooms; so you lose your labour. I am not a beggar yet, said the poor old man; I want nothing of him, but my Pamela:—O my child! my child!

I'll be hanged, says one of them, if this is not Mrs. Pamela's father.—Indeed, indeed, said he, wringing his hands, I am; and weeping, Where is my child? Where is my Pamela?—Why, father, said one of them, we beg your pardon; but she is gone home to you: How long have you been come from home?—O! but last night, said he; I have travelled all night: Is the 'squire at home, or is he not?—Yes, but he is not stirring though, said the groom, as yet. Thank God for that! said he; thank God for that! Then I hope I may be permitted to speak to him anon. They asked him to go in, and he stepped into the stable, and sat down on the stairs there, wiping his eyes, and sighing so sadly, that it grieved the servants to hear him.

The family was soon raised with a report of Pamela's father coming to inquire after his daughter; and the maids would fain have had him go into the kitchen. But Mrs. Jervis, having been told of his coming, arose, and hastened down to her parlour, and took him in with her, and there heard all his sad story, and read the letter. She wept bitterly, but yet endeavoured, before him, to hide her concern; and said, Well, Goodman Andrews, I cannot help weeping at your grief; but I hope there is no occasion. Let nobody see this letter, whatever you do. I dare say your daughter is safe.

Well, but, said he, I see you, madam, know nothing about her:—If all was right, so good a gentlewoman as you are, would not have been a stranger to this. To be sure you thought she was with me!

Said she, My master does not always inform his servants of his proceedings; but you need not doubt his honour. You have his hand for it: And you may see he can have no design upon her, because he is not from hence, and does not talk of going hence. O that is all I have to hope for! said he; that is all, indeed!—But, said he—and was going on, when the report of his coming had reached the 'squire, who came down, in his morning-gown and slippers, into the parlour, where he and Mrs. Jervis were talking.

What's the matter, Goodman Andrews? said he, what's the matter? Oh my child! said the good old man, give me my child! I beseech you.—Why, I thought, says the 'squire, that I had satisfied you about her: Sure you have not the letter I sent you, written with my own hand. Yes, yes, but I have, sir, said he; and that brought me hither; and I have walked all night. Poor man, returned he, with great seeming compassion, I am sorry for it truly! Why, your daughter has made a strange racket in my family; and if I thought it would have disturbed you so much, I would have e'en let her go home; but what I did was to serve her, and you too. She is very safe, I do assure you, Goodman Andrews; and you may take my honour for it, I would not injure her for the world. Do you think I would, Mrs. Jervis? No, I hope not, sir, said she.—Hope not! said the poor man; so do I; but pray, sir, give me my child, that is all I desire; and I'll take care no clergyman shall come near her.

Why, London is a great way off, said the 'squire, and I can't send for her back presently. What, then, said he, have you sent my poor Pamela to London? I would not have said it so, replied the 'squire; but I assure you, upon my honour, she is quite safe and satisfied, and will quickly inform you of it by letter. She is in a reputable family, no less than a bishop's, and is to wait on his lady, till I get the matter over that I mentioned to you.

O how shall I know this? replied he.—What, said the 'squire, pretending anger, am I to be doubted?—Do you believe I can have any view upon your daughter? And if I had, do you think I would take such methods as these to effect it? Why, surely, man, thou forgettest whom thou talkest to. O, sir, said he, I beg your pardon! but consider my dear child is in the

case; let me but know what bishop, and where; and I will travel to London on foot, to see my daughter, and then be satisfied.

Why, Goodman Andrews, I think thou hast read romances as well as thy daughter, and thy head's turned with them. May I have not my word taken? Do you think, once more, I would offer any thing dishonourable to your daughter? Is there any thing looks like it?—Pr'ythee, man, recollect a little who I am; and if I am not to be believed, what signifies talking? Why, sir, said he, pray forgive me; but there is no harm to say, What bishop's, or whereabouts? What, and so you'd go troubling his lordship with your impertinent fears and stories! Will you be satisfied, if you have a letter from her within a week, it may be less, if she be not negligent, to assure you all is well with her! Why that, said the poor man, will be some comfort. Well then, said the gentleman, I can't answer for her negligence, if she don't write: And if she should send a letter to you, Mrs. Jervis, (for I desire not to see it; I have had trouble enough about her already,) be sure you send it by a man and horse the moment you receive it. To be sure I will, answered she. Thank your honour, said the good man: And then I must wait with as much patience as I can for a week, which will be a year to me.

I tell you, said the gentleman, it must be her own fault if she don't write; for 'tis what I insisted upon, for my own reputation; and I shan't stir from this house, I assure you, till she is heard from, and that to your satisfaction. God bless your honour, said the poor man, as you say and mean truth! Amen, Amen, Goodman Andrews, said he: you see I am not afraid to say Amen. So, Mrs. Jervis, make the good man as welcome as you can; and let me have no uproar about the matter.

He then, whispering her, bid her give him a couple of guineas to bear his charges home; telling him, he should be welcome to stay there till the letter came, if he would, and be a witness, that he intended honourably, and not to stir from his house for one while.

The poor old man staid and dined with Mrs. Jervis, with some tolerable ease of mind, in hopes to hear from his beloved daughter in a few days; and then accepting the present, returned for his own house, and resolved to be as patient as possible.

Meantime Mrs. Jervis, and all the family, were in the utmost grief for the trick put upon the poor Pamela; and she and the steward represented it



to their master in as moving terms as they durst; but were forced to rest satisfied with his general assurances of intending her no harm; which, however, Mrs. Jervis little believed, from the pretence he had made in his letter, of the correspondence between Pamela and the young parson; which she knew to be all mere invention, though she durst not say so.

But the week after, they were made a little more easy by the following letter brought by an unknown hand, and left for Mrs. Jervis, which, how procured, will be shewn in the sequel.

'DEAR MRS. JERVIS,

'I have been vilely tricked, and, instead of being driven by Robin to my dear father's, I am carried off, to where, I have no liberty to tell. However, I am at present not used hardly, in the main; and write to beg of you to let my dear father and mother (whose hearts must be well nigh broken) know that I am well, and that I am, and, by the grace of God, ever will be, their honest, as well as dutiful daughter, and

'Your obliged friend,  
'PAMELA ANDREWS.'

'I must neither send date nor place; but have most solemn assurances of honourable usage. This is the only time my low estate has been troublesome to me, since it has subjected me to the frights I have undergone. Love to your good self, and all my dear fellow-servants. Adieu! adieu! but pray for poor PAMELA.'

This, though it quieted not entirely their apprehensions, was shewn to the whole family, and to the gentleman himself, who pretended not to know how it came; and Mrs. Jervis sent it away to the good old folks; who at first suspected it was forged, and not their daughter's hand; but, finding the contrary, they were a little easier to hear she was alive and honest: and having inquired of all their acquaintance what could be done, and no one being able to put them in a way how to proceed, with effect, on so extraordinary an occasion, against so rich and so resolute a gentleman; and being afraid to make matters worse, (though they saw plainly enough, that she was in no bishop's family, and so mistrusted all the rest of his story,) they applied themselves to prayers for their poor daughter, and for an happy issue to an affair that almost distracted them.

We shall now leave the honest old pair praying for their dear Pamela, and return to the account she herself gives of all this; having written it

journal-wise, to amuse and employ her time, in hopes some opportunity might offer to send it to her friends; and, as was her constant view, that she might afterwards thankfully look back upon the dangers she had escaped, when they should be happily overblown, as in time she hoped they would be; and that then she might examine, and either approve or repent of her own conduct in them.

## LETTER XXXII

O MY DEAREST FATHER AND MOTHER!

Let me write, and bewail my miserable hard fate, though I have no hope how what I write can be conveyed to your hands!—I have now nothing to do, but write and weep, and fear and pray! But yet what can I hope for, when I seem to be devoted, as a victim to the will of a wicked violator of all the laws of God and man!—But, gracious Heaven, forgive me my rashness and despondency! O let me not sin against thee; for thou best knowest what is fittest for thy poor handmaid!—And as thou sufferest not thy poor creatures to be tempted above what they can bear, I will resign myself to thy good pleasure: And still, I hope, desperate as my condition seems, that as these trials are not of my own seeking, nor the effects of my presumption and vanity, I shall be enabled to overcome them, and, in God's own good time, be delivered from them.

Thus do I pray imperfectly, as I am forced by my distracting fears and apprehensions; and O join with me, my dear parents!—But, alas! how can you know, how can I reveal to you, the dreadful situation of your poor daughter! The unhappy Pamela may be undone (which God forbid, and sooner deprive me of life!) before you can know her hard lot!

O the unparalleled wickedness, stratagems, and devices, of those who call themselves gentlemen, yet pervert the design of Providence, in giving them ample means to do good, to their own everlasting perdition, and the ruin of poor oppressed innocence!

But now I will tell you what has befallen me; and yet, how shall you receive it? Here is no honest John to carry my letters to you! And, besides, I am watched in all my steps; and no doubt shall be, till my hard fate may ripen his wicked projects for my ruin. I will every day, however, write my sad state; and some way, perhaps, may be opened to send the melancholy scribble to you. But, alas! when you know it, what will it do but aggravate your troubles? For, O! what can the abject poor do against the mighty rich, when they are determined to oppress?

Well, but I must proceed to write what I had hoped to tell you in a few hours, when I believed I should receive your grateful blessings, on my return to you from so many hardships.

I will begin with my account from the last letter I wrote you, in which I enclosed my poor stuff of verses; and continue it at times, as I have opportunity; though, as I said, I know not how it can reach you.

The long-hoped for Thursday morning came, when I was to set out. I had taken my leave of my fellow-servants overnight; and a mournful leave it was to us all: for men, as well as women servants, wept much to part with me; and, for my part, I was overwhelmed with tears, and the affecting instances of their esteem. They all would have made me little presents, as tokens of their love; but I would not take any thing from the lower servants, to be sure. But Mr. Longman would have me accept of several yards of Holland, and a silver snuff-box, and a gold ring, which he desired me to keep for his sake; and he wept over me; but said, I am sure so good a maiden God will bless; and though you return to your poor father again, and his low estate, yet Providence will find you out: Remember I tell you so; and one day, though I mayn't live to see it, you will be rewarded.

I said, O, dear Mr. Longman! you make me too rich, and too mody; and yet I must be a beggar before my time for I shall want often to be scribbling, (little thinking it would be my only employment so soon,) and I will beg you, sir, to favour me with some paper; and, as soon as I get home, I will write you a letter, to thank you for all your kindness to me; and a letter to good Mrs. Jervis too.

This was lucky; for I should have had none else, but at the pleasure of my rough-natured governess, as I may call her; but now I can write to ease my mind, though I can't send it to you; and write what I please, for she knows not how well I am provided: for good Mr. Longman gave me above forty sheets of paper, and a dozen pens, and a little phial of ink; which last I wrapped in paper, and put in my pocket; and some wax and wafers.

O dear sir, said I, you have set me up. How shall I requite you? He said, By a kiss, my fair mistress: And I gave it very willingly; for he is a good old man.

Rachel and Hannah cried sadly, when I took my leave; and Jane, who sometimes used to be a little crossish, and Cicely too, wept sadly, and said,

they would pray for me; but poor Jane, I doubt, will forget that; for she seldom says her prayers for herself: More's the pity!

Then Arthur the gardener, our Robin the coachman, and Lincolnshire Robin too, who was to carry me, were very civil; and both had tears in their eyes; which I thought then very good-natured in Lincolnshire Robin, because he knew but little of me.—But since, I find he might well be concerned; for he had then his instructions, it seems, and knew how he was to be a means to entrap me.

Then our other three footmen, Harry, Isaac, and Benjamin, and grooms, and helpers, were very much affected likewise; and the poor little scullion-boy, Tommy, was ready to run over for grief.

They had got all together over-night, expecting to be differently employed in the morning; and they all begged to shake hands with me, and I kissed the maidens, and prayed to God to bless them all; and thanked them for all their love and kindness to me: and, indeed, I was forced to leave them sooner than I would, because I could not stand it: Indeed I could not. Harry (I could not have thought it; for he is a little wildish, they say) cried till he sobbed again. John, poor honest John, was not then come back from you. But as for the butler, Mr. Jonathan, he could not stay in company.

I thought to have told you a deal about this; but I have worse things to employ my thoughts.

Mrs. Jervis, good Mrs. Jervis, cried all night long; and I comforted her all I could: And she made me promise, that if my master went to London to attend parliament, or to Lincolnshire, I would come and stay a week with her: and she would have given me money; but I would not take it.

Well, next morning came, and I wondered I saw nothing of poor honest John; for I waited to take leave of him, and thank him for all his civilities to me and to you. But I suppose he was sent farther by my master, and so could not return; and I desired to be remembered to him.

And when Mrs. Jervis told me, with a sad heart, the chariot was ready with four horses to it, I was just upon sinking into the ground, though I wanted to be with you.

My master was above stairs, and never asked to see me. I was glad of it in the main; but he knew, false heart as he is, that I was not to be out of his

reach.—O preserve me, Heaven, from his power, and from his wickedness!

Well, they were not suffered to go with me one step, as I writ to you before; for he stood at the window to see me go. And in the passage to the gate, out of his sight, there they stood all of them, in two rows; and we could say nothing on both sides, but God bless you! and God bless you! But Harry carried my own bundle, my third bundle, as I was used to call it, to the coach, with some plumb-cake, and diet-bread, made for me overnight, and some sweet-meats, and six bottles of Canary wine, which Mrs. Jervis would make me take in a basket, to cheer our hearts now and then, when we got together, as she said. And I kissed all the maids again, and shook hands with the men again: but Mr. Jonathan and Mr. Longman were not there; and then I tripped down the steps to the chariot, Mrs. Jervis crying most sadly.

I looked up when I got to the chariot, and I saw my master at the window, in his gown; and I courtesied three times to him very low, and prayed for him with my hands lifted up; for I could not speak; indeed I was not able: And he bowed his head to me, which made me then very glad he would take such notice of me; and in I stepped, and was ready to burst with grief; and could only, till Robin began to drive, wave my white handkerchief to them, wet with my tears: and, at last, away he drove, Jehu-like, as they say, out of the court-yard. And I too soon found I had cause for greater and deeper grief.

Well, said I to myself, at this rate I shall soon be with my dear father and mother; and till I had got, as I supposed, half-way, I thought of the good friends I had left: And when, on stopping for a little bait to the horses, Robin told me I was near half-way, I thought it was high time to wipe my eyes, and think to whom I was going; as then, alack for me! I thought. So I began to ponder what a meeting I should have with you; how glad you'd both be to see me come safe and innocent to you, after all my dangers: and so I began to comfort myself, and to banish the other gloomy side from my mind; though, too, it returned now and then; for I should be ungrateful not to love them for their love.

Well, I believe I set out about eight o'clock in the morning; and I wondered and wondered, when it was about two, as I saw by a church dial, in a little village as we passed through, that I was still more and more out of my knowledge. Hey-day, thought I, to drive this strange pace, and to be

so long a going a little more than twenty miles, is very odd! But to be sure, thought I, Robin knows the way.

At last he stopped, and looked about him, as if he was at a loss for the road; and I said, Mr. Robert, sure you are out of the way!—I'm afraid I am, said he. But it can't be much; I'll ask the first person I see. Pray do, said I; and he gave his horses a mouthful of bay: and I gave him some cake, and two glasses of Canary wine; and stopt about half an hour in all. Then he drove on very fast again.

I had so much to think of, of the dangers I now doubted not I had escaped, of the loving friends I had left, and my best friends I was going to; and the many things I had to relate to you; that I the less thought of the way, till I was startled out of my meditations by the sun beginning to set, and still the man driving on, and his horses sweating and foaming; and then I began to be alarmed all at once, and called to him; and he said he had horrid ill luck, for he had come several miles out of the way, but was now right, and should get in still before it was quite dark. My heart began then to misgive me a little, and I was very much fatigued; for I had no sleep for several nights before, to signify; and at last I said, Pray Mr. Robert, there is a town before us, what do you call it?—If we are so much out of the way, we had better put up there, for the night comes on apace: And, Lord protect me! thought I, I shall have new dangers, mayhap, to encounter with the man, who have escaped the master—little thinking of the base contrivance of the latter.—Says he, I am just there: 'Tis but a mile on one side of the town before us.—Nay, said I, I may be mistaken; for it is a good while since I was this way; but I am sure the face of the country here is nothing like what I remember it.

He pretended to be much out of humour with himself for mistaking the way, and at last stopped at a farmhouse, about two miles beyond the village I had seen; and it was then almost dark, and he alighted, and said, We must make shift here; for I am quite out.

Lord, thought I, be good to the poor Pamela! More trials still!—What will befall me next?

The farmer's wife, and maid, and daughter, came out; and the wife said, What brings you this way at this time of night, Mr. Robert? And with a lady too?—Then I began to be frightened out of my wits; and laying middle and both ends together, I fell a crying, and said, God give me

patience! I am undone for certain!—Pray, mistress, said I, do you know 'Squire B——, of Bedfordshire?

The wicked coachman would have prevented the answering me; but the simple daughter said, Know his worship! yes, surely! why he is my father's landlord.—Well, said I, then I am undone; undone for ever!—O, wicked wretch! what have I done to you, said I to the coachman, to serve me thus?—Vile tool of a wicked master!—Faith, said the fellow, I am sorry this task was put upon me; but I could not help it. But make the best of it now; here are very civil reputable folks; and you'll be safe here, I'll assure you.—Let me get out, said I, and I'll walk back to the town we came through, late as it is:—For I will not enter here.

Said the farmer's wife, You'll be very well used here, I'll assure you, young gentlewoman, and have better conveniences than any where in the village. I matter not conveniences, said I: I am betrayed and undone! As you have a daughter of your own, pity me, and let me know if your landlord, as you call him, be here!—No, I'll assure you he is not, said she.

And then came the farmer, a good-like sort of man, grave, and well-behaved; and spoke to me in such sort, as made me a little pacified; and seeing no help for it, I went in; and the wife immediately conducted me up stairs to the best apartment, and told me, that was mine as long as I staid: and nobody should come near me but when I called. I threw myself on the bed in the room, tired and frightened to death almost; and gave way to the most excessive fit of grief that I ever had.

The daughter came up, and said, Mr. Robert had given her a letter to give me; and there it was. I raised myself, and saw it was the hand and seal of the wicked wretch, my master, directed to Mrs. Pamela Andrews.—This was a little better than to have him here; though, if he had, he must have been brought through the air; for I thought I was.

The good woman (for I began to see things about a little reputable, and no guile appearing in them, but rather a face of grief for my grief) offered me a glass of some cordial water, which I accepted, for I was ready to sink; and then I sat up in a chair a little, though very faintish: and they brought me two candles, and lighted a brushwood fire; and said, if I called, I should be waited on instantly; and so left me to ruminate on my sad condition, and to read my letter, which I was not able to do presently. After I had a little come to myself, I found it to contain these words:



'DEAR PAMELA,

'The passion I have for you, and your obstinacy, have constrained me to act by you in a manner that I know will occasion you great trouble and fatigue, both of mind and body. Yet, forgive me, my dear girl; for, although I have taken this step, I will, by all that's good and holy! use you honourably. Suffer not your fears to transport you to a behaviour that will be disreputable to us both: for the place where you'll receive this, is a farm that belongs to me; and the people civil, honest, and obliging.

'You will, by this time, be far on your way to the place I have allotted for your abode for a few weeks, till I have managed some affairs, that will make me shew myself to you in a much different light, than you may possibly apprehend from this rash action: And to convince you, that I mean no harm, I do assure you, that the house you are going to, shall be so much at your command, that even I myself will not approach it without leave from you. So make yourself easy; be discreet and prudent; and a happier turn shall reward these your troubles, than you may at present apprehend.

'Meantime I pity the fatigue you will have, if this come to your hand in the place I have directed: and will write to your father to satisfy him, that nothing but what is honourable shall be offered to you, by

Your passionate admirer, (so I must style myself,)

'—————'

Don't think hardly of poor Robin: You have so possessed all my servants in your favour, that I find they had rather serve you than me; and 'tis reluctantly the poor fellow undertook this task; and I was forced to submit to assure him of my honourable intentions to you, which I am fully resolved to make good, if you compel me not to a contrary conduct.'

I but too well apprehended that the letter was only to pacify me for the present; but as my danger was not so immediate as I had reason to dread, and he had promised to forbear coming to me, and to write to you, my dear parents, to quiet your concern, I was a little more easy than before and I made shift to eat a little bit of boiled chicken they had got for me, and drank a glass of my sack, and made each of them do so too.

But after I had so done, I was again a little flustered; for in came the coachman with the look of a hangman, I thought, and madamed me up strangely; telling me, he would beg me to get ready to pursue my journey

by five in the morning, or else he should be late in. I was quite grieved at this; for I began not to dislike my company, considering how things stood; and was in hopes to get a party among them, and so to put myself into any worthy protection in the neighbourhood, rather than go forward.

When he withdrew, I began to tamper with the farmer and his wife. But, alas! they had had a letter delivered them at the same time I had; so securely had Lucifer put it into his head to do his work; and they only shook their heads, and seemed to pity me; and so I was forced to give over that hope.

However, the good farmer shewed me his letter; which I copied as follows: for it discovers the deep arts of this wicked master; and how resolved he seems to be on my ruin, by the pains he took to deprive me of all hopes of freeing myself from his power.

'FARMER NORTON,

'I send to your house, for one night only, a young gentlewoman, much against her will, who has deeply embarked in a love affair, which will be her ruin, as well as the person's to whom she wants to betroth herself. I have, to oblige her father, ordered her to be carried to one of my houses, where she will be well used, to try, if by absence, and expostulation with both, they can be brought to know their own interest and I am sure you will use her kindly for my sake: for, excepting this matter, which she will not own, she does not want prudence and discretion. I will acknowledge any trouble you shall be at in this matter the first opportunity; and am

'Your Friend and Servant.'

He had said, too cunningly for me, that I would not own this pretended love affair; so that he had provided them not to believe me, say what I would; and as they were his tenants, who all love him, (for he has some amiable qualities, and so he had need!) I saw all my plot cut out, and so was forced to say the less.

I wept bitterly, however; for I found he was too hard for me, as well in his contrivances as riches; and so had recourse again to my only refuge, comforting myself, that God never fails to take the innocent heart into his protection, and is alone able to baffle and confound the devices of the mighty. Nay, the farmer was so prepossessed with the contents of his letter, that he began to praise his care and concern for me, and to advise me against entertaining addresses without my friends' advice and consent; and

made me the subject of a lesson for his daughter's improvement. So I was glad to shut up this discourse; for I saw I was not likely to be believed.

I sent, however, to tell my driver, that I was so fatigued, I could not get out so soon the next morning. But he insisted upon it, and said, It would make my day's journey the lighter; and I found he was a more faithful servant to his master, notwithstanding what he wrote of his reluctance, than I could have wished: I saw still more and more, that all was deep dissimulation, and contrivance worse and worse.

Indeed I might have shewn them his letter to me, as a full confutation of his to them; but I saw no probability of engaging them in my behalf: and so thought it signified little, as I was to go away so soon, to enter more particularly into the matter with them; and besides, I saw they were not inclinable to let me stay longer, for fear of disobliging him so I went to bed, but had very little rest: and they would make their servant-maid bear me company in the chariot five miles, early in the morning, and she was to walk hack.

I had contrived in my thoughts, when I was on my way in the chariot, on Friday morning, that when we came into some town to bait, as he must do for the horses' sake, I would, at the inn, apply myself, if I saw I any way could, to the mistress of the inn, and tell her the case, and to refuse to go farther, having nobody but this wicked coachman to contend with.

Well, I was very full of this project, and in great hopes, some how or other, to extricate myself in this way. But, oh! the artful wretch had provided for even this last refuge of mine; for when we came to put up at a large town on the way, to eat a morsel for dinner, and I was fully resolved to execute my project, who should be at the inn that he put up at, but the wicked Mrs. Jewkes, expecting me! And her sister-in-law was the mistress of it; and she had provided a little entertainment for me.

And this I found, when I desired, as soon as I came in, to speak with the mistress of the house. She came to me: and I said, I am a poor unhappy young body, that want your advice and assistance; and you seem to be a good sort of a gentlewoman, that would assist an oppressed innocent person. Yes, madam, said she, I hope you guess right; and I have the happiness to know something of the matter before you speak. Pray call my sister Jewkes.—Jewkes! Jewkes! thought I; I have heard of that name; I don't like it.

Then the wicked creature appeared, whom I had never seen but once before, and I was terrified out of my wits. No stratagem, thought I, not one! for a poor innocent girl; but every thing to turn out against me; that is hard indeed!

So I began to pull in my horns, as they say, for I saw I was now worse off than at the farmer's.

The naughty woman came up to me with an air of confidence, and kissed me: See, sister, said she, here's a charming creature! Would she not tempt the best lord in the land to run away with her? O frightful! thought I; here's an avowal of the matter at once: I am now gone, that's certain. And so was quite silent and confounded; and seeing no help for it, (for she would not part with me out of her sight) I was forced to set out with her in the chariot for she came thither on horseback, with a man-servant, who rode by us the rest of the way, leading her horse: and now I gave over all thoughts of redemption, and was in a desponding condition indeed.

Well, thought I, here are strange pains taken to ruin a poor innocent, helpless, and even worthless young body. This plot is laid too deep, and has been too long hatching, to be baffled, I fear. But then I put my trust in God, who I knew was able to do every thing for me, when all other possible means should fail: and in him I was resolved to confide.

You may see—(Yet, oh! that kills me; for I know not whether ever you can see what I now write or no—Else you will see)—what sort of woman that Mrs. Jewkes is, compared to good Mrs. Jervis, by this:—

Every now and then she would be staring in my face, in the chariot, and squeezing my hand, and saying, Why, you are very pretty, my silent dear! And once she offered to kiss me. But I said, I don't like this sort of carriage, Mrs. Jewkes; it is not like two persons of one sex. She fell a laughing very confidently, and said, That's prettily said, I vow! Then thou hadst rather be kissed by the other sex? 'I fackins, I commend thee for that!

I was sadly teased with her impertinence, and bold way; but no wonder; she was innkeeper's housekeeper, before she came to my master; and those sort of creatures don't want confidence, you know: and indeed she made nothing to talk boldly on twenty occasions; and said two or three times, when she saw the tears every now and then, as we rid, trickle down my

cheeks, I was sorely hurt, truly, to have the handsomest and finest young gentleman in five counties in love with me!

So I find I am got into the hands of a wicked procuress; and if I was not safe with good Mrs. Jervis, and where every body loved me, what a dreadful prospect have I now before me, in the hands of a woman that seems to delight in filthiness!

O dear sirs! what shall I do! What shall I do!—Surely, I shall never be equal to all these things!

About eight at night, we entered the court-yard of this handsome, large, old, and lonely mansion, that looks made for solitude and mischief, as I thought, by its appearance, with all its brown nodding horrors of lofty elms and pines about it: and here, said I to myself, I fear, is to be the scene of my ruin, unless God protect me, who is all-sufficient!

I was very sick at entering it, partly from fatigue, and partly from dejection of spirits: and Mrs. Jewkes got me some mulled wine, and seemed mighty officious to welcome me thither; and while she was absent, ordering the wine, the wicked Robin came in to me, and said, I beg a thousand pardons for my part in this affair, since I see your grief and your distress; and I do assure you, that I am sorry it fell to my task.

Mighty well, Mr. Robert! said I; I never saw an execution but once, and then the hangman asked the poor creature's pardon, and wiped his mouth, as you do, and pleaded his duty, and then calmly tucked up the criminal. But I am no criminal, as you all know: And if I could have thought it my duty to obey a wicked master in his unlawful command, I had saved you all the merit of this vile service.

I am sorry, said he, you take it so: but every body don't think alike. Well, said I, you have done your part, Mr. Robert, towards my ruin, very faithfully; and will have cause to be sorry, may be, at the long run, when you shall see the mischief that comes of it.—Your eyes were open, and you knew I was to be carried to my father's, and that I was barbarously tricked and betrayed; and I can only, once more, thank you for your part of it. God forgive you!

So he went away a little sad. What have you said to Robin, madam? said Mrs. Jewkes: (who came in as he went out:) the poor fellow's ready to cry. I need not be afraid of your following his example, Mrs. Jewkes, said I: I have been telling him, that he has done his part to my ruin: and he now

can't help it! So his repentance does me no good; I wish it may him. I'll assure you, madam, said she, I should be as ready to cry as he, if I should do you any harm. It is not in his power to help it now, said I; but your part is to come, and you may choose whether you'll contribute to my ruin or not.—Why, look ye, madam, said she, I have a great notion of doing my duty to my master; and therefore you may depend upon it, if I can do that, and serve you, I will: but you must think, if your desire, and his will, come to clash once, I shall do as he bids me, let it be what it will.

Pray, Mrs. Jewkes, said I, don't madam me so: I am but a silly poor girl, set up by the gambol of fortune, for a May-game; and now am to be something, and now nothing, just as that thinks fit to sport with me: And let you and me talk upon a foot together; for I am a servant inferior to you, and so much the more, as I am turned out of place.

Ay, ay, says she, I understand something of the matter; you have so great power over my master, that you may soon be mistress of us all; and so I would oblige you, if I could. And I must and will call you madam; for I am instructed to shew you all respect, I'll assure you.

Who instructed you so to do? said I. Who! my master, to be sure, said she. Why, said I, how can that be? You have not seen him lately. No, that's true, said she; but I have been expecting you here some time; (O the deep laid wickedness! thought I:) and, besides, I have a letter of instructions by Robin; but, may be, I should not have said so much. If you would shew them to me, said I, I should be able to judge how far I could, or could not, expect favour from you, consistent with your duty to our master. I beg your pardon, fair mistress, for that, said she, I am sufficiently instructed; and you may depend upon it, I will observe my orders; and, so far as they will let me, so far will I oblige you; and there's an end of it.

Well, said I, you will not, I hope, do an unlawful or wicked thing, for any master in the world. Look ye, said she, he is my master; and if he bids me do any thing that I can do, I think I ought to do it; and let him, who has his power to command me, look to the lawfulness of it. Why, said I, suppose he should bid you cut my throat, Would you do it? There's no danger of that, said she; but to be sure I would not; for then I should be hanged! for that would be murder. Well, said I, and suppose he should resolve to ensnare a poor young creature, and ruin her, would you assist

him in that? For to rob a person of her virtue is worse than cutting her throat.

Why now, says she, how strangely you talk! Are not the two sexes made for one another? And is it not natural for a gentleman to love a pretty woman? And suppose he can obtain his desires, is that so bad as cutting her throat? And then the wretch fell a laughing, and talked most impertinently, and shewed me, that I had nothing to expect from her virtue or conscience: and this gave me great mortification; for I was in hopes of working upon her by degrees.

So we ended our discourse here, and I bid her shew me where I must lie. —Why, said she, lie where you list, madam; I can tell you, I must lie with you for the present. For the present! said I, and torture then wrung my heart!—But is it in your instructions, that you must lie with me? Yes, indeed, said she.—I am sorry for it, said I. Why, said she, I am wholesome, and cleanly too, I'll assure you. Yes, said I, I don't doubt that; but I love to lie by myself. How so? said she; Was not Mrs. Jervis your bed-fellow at t'other house?

Well, said I, quite sick of her, and my condition; you must do as you are instructed, I think. I can't help myself, and am a most miserable creature. She repeated her insufferable nonsense. Mighty miserable, indeed, to be so well beloved by one of the finest gentlemen in England!

I am now come down in my writing to this present SATURDAY, and a deal I have written.

My wicked bed-fellow has very punctual orders, it seems; for she locks me and herself in, and ties the two keys (for there is a double door to the room) about her wrist, when she goes to bed. She talks of the house having been attempted to be broken open two or three times; whether to fright me, I can't tell; but it makes me fearful; though not so much as I should be, if I had not other and greater fears.

I slept but little last night, and got up, and pretended to sit by the window, which looks into the spacious gardens; but I was writing all the time, from break of day, to her getting up, and after, when she was absent.

At breakfast she presented the two maids to me, the cook and housemaid, poor awkward souls, that I can see no hopes of, they seem so devoted to her and ignorance. Yet I am resolved, if possible, to find some way to escape, before this wicked master comes.

There are, besides, of servants, the coachman, Robert, a groom, a helper, a footman; all but Robert, (and he is necessary to my ruin,) strange creatures, that promise nothing; and all likewise devoted to this woman. The gardener looks like a good honest man; but he is kept at a distance, and seems reserved.

I wondered I saw not Mr. Williams the clergyman, but would not ask after him, apprehending it might give some jealousy; but when I had beheld the rest, he was the only one I had hopes of; for I thought his cloth would set him above assisting in my ruin.—But in the afternoon he came; for it seems he has a little Latin school in the neighbouring village, which he attends; and this brings him in a little matter, additional to my master's favour, till something better falls, of which he has hopes.

He is a sensible sober young gentleman; and when I saw him I confirmed myself in my hopes of him; for he seemed to take great notice of my distress and grief; (for I could not hide it;) though he appeared fearful of Mrs. Jewkes, who watched all our motions and words.

He has an apartment in the house; but is mostly at a lodging in the town, for a conveniency of his little school; only on Saturday afternoon and Sundays: and he preaches sometimes for the minister of the village, which is about three miles off.

I hope to go to church with him to-morrow: Sure it is not in her instructions to deny me! He can't have thought of every thing! And something may strike out for me there.

I have asked her, for a feint, (because she shan't think I am so well provided,) to indulge me with pen and ink, though I have been using my own so freely when her absence would let me; for I begged to be left to myself as much as possible. She says she will let me have it; but then I must promise not to send any writing out of the house, without her seeing it. I said, it was only to divert my grief when I was by myself, as I desired to be; for I loved writing as well as reading; but I had nobody to send to, she knew well enough.

No, not at present, may be, said she; but I am told you are a great writer; and it is in my instructions to see all you write: So, look you here, said she, I will let you have a pen and ink, and two sheets of paper: for this employment will keep you out of worse thoughts: but I must see them always when I ask, written or not written. That's very hard, said I; but may



I not have to myself the closet in the room where we lie, with the key to lock up my things? I believe I may consent to that, said she; and I will set it in order for you, and leave the key in the door. And there is a spinnet too, said she; if it be in tune, you may play to divert you now and then; for I know my old lady learnt you: And below is my master's library: you may take out what books you will.

And, indeed, these and my writing will be all my amusement: for I have no work given me to do; and the spinnet, if in tune, will not find my mind, I am sure, in tune to play upon it. But I went directly and picked out some books from the library, with which I filled a shelf in the closet she gave me possession of; and from these I hope to receive improvement, as well as amusement. But no sooner was her back turned, than I set about hiding a pen of my own here, and another there, for fear I should come to be denied, and a little of my ink in a broken China cup, and a little in another cup; and a sheet of paper here and there among my linen, with a little of the wax, and a few wafers, in several places, lest I should be searched; and something, I thought, might happen to open a way for my deliverance, by these or some other means. O the pride, thought I, I shall have, if I can secure my innocence, and escape the artful wiles of this wicked master! For, if he comes hither, I am undone, to be sure! For this naughty woman will assist him, rather than fail, in the worst of his attempts; and he'll have no occasion to send her out of the way, as he would have done Mrs. Jervis once. So I must set all my little wits at work.

It is a grief to me to write, and not to be able to send to you what I write: but now it is all the diversion I have, and if God will favour my escape with my innocence, as I trust he graciously will, for all these black prospects, with what pleasure shall I read them afterwards!

I was going to say, Pray for your dutiful daughter, as I used; but, alas! you cannot know my distress, though I am sure I have your prayers: And I will write on as things happen, that if a way should open, my scribble may be ready to be sent: For what I do, must be at a jerk, to be sure.

O how I want such an obliging honest-hearted man as John!

I am now come to SUNDAY.

Well, here is a sad thing! I am denied by this barbarous woman to go to church, as I had built upon I might: and she has huffed poor Mr. Williams all to pieces, for pleading for me. I find he is to be forbid the house, if she

pleases. Poor gentleman! all his dependance is upon my master, who has a very good living for him, if the incumbent die; and he has kept his bed these four months, of old age and dropsy.

He pays me great respect, and I see pities me; and would, perhaps, assist my escape from these dangers: But I have nobody to plead for me; and why should I wish to ruin a poor gentleman, by engaging him against his interest? Yet one would do any thing to preserve one's innocence; and Providence would, perhaps, make it up to him!

O judge (but how shall you see what I write!) of my distracted condition, to be reduced to such a pass as to a desire to lay traps for mankind! But he wants sadly to say something to me, as he whisperingly hinted.

The wretch (I think I will always call her the wretch henceforth) abuses me more and more. I was but talking to one of the maids just now, indeed a little to tamper with her by degrees: and she popt upon us, and said—Nay, madam, don't offer to tempt poor innocent country maidens from doing their duty. You wanted, I hear, she should take a walk with you. But I charge you, Nan, never stir with her, nor obey her, without letting me know it, in the smallest trifles.—I say, walk with you! and where would you go, I tro'? Why, barbarous Mrs. Jewkes, said I, only to look a little up the elm-walk, since you would not let me go to church.

Nan, said she, to shew me how much they were all in her power, pull off madam's shoes, and bring them to me. I have taken care of her others.—Indeed she shan't, said I.—Nay, said Nan, but I must if my mistress bids me: so pray, madam, don't hinder me. And so indeed (would you believe it?) she took my shoes off, and left me barefoot: and, for my share, I have been so frightened at this, that I have not power even to relieve my mind by my tears. I am quite stupefied to be sure!—Here I was forced to leave off.

Now I will give you a picture of this wretch: She is a broad, squat, pursy, fat thing, quite ugly, if any thing human can be so called; about forty years old. She has a huge hand, and an arm as thick as my waist, I believe. Her nose is flat and crooked, and her brows grow down over her eyes; a dead spiteful, grey, goggling eye, to be sure she has. And her face is flat and broad; and as to colour, looks like as if it had been pickled a month in saltpetre: I dare say she drinks:—She has a hoarse, man-like voice, and is as thick as she is long; and yet looks so deadly strong, that I

am afraid she would dash me at her foot in an instant, if I was to vex her.—So that with a heart more ugly than her face, she frightens me sadly: and I am undone to be sure, if God does not protect me; for she is very, very wicked—indeed she is.

This is poor helpless spite in me:—But the picture is too near the truth notwithstanding. She sends me a message just now, that I shall have my shoes again, if I will accept of her company to walk with me in the garden.—To waddle with me, rather, thought I.

Well, 'tis not my business to quarrel with her downright. I shall be watched the narrower, if I do; and so I will go with the hated wretch.—O for my dear Mrs. Jervis! or, rather, to be safe with my dear father and mother.

Oh! I am out of my wits for joy! Just as I have got my shoes on, I am told John, honest John, is come on horseback!—A blessing on his faithful heart! What joy is this! But I'll tell you more by and by. I must not let her know I am so glad to see this dear blessed John, to be sure!—Alas! but he looks sad, as I see him out of the window! What can be the matter!—I hope my dear parents are well, and Mrs. Jervis, and Mr. Longman, and every body, my naughty master not excepted;—for I wish him to live and repent of all his wickedness to poor me.

O dear heart! what a world do we live in!—I am now come to take up my pen again: But I am in a sad taking truly! Another puzzling trial, to be sure.

Here was John, as I said, and the poor man came to me, with Mrs. Jewkes, who whispered, that I would say nothing about the shoes, for my own sake, as she said. The poor man saw my distress, by my red eyes, and my hagged looks, I suppose; for I have had a sad time of it, you must needs think; and though he would have hid it, if he could, yet his own eyes ran over. Oh, Mrs. Pamela; said he; Oh, Mrs. Pamela! Well, honest fellow-servant, said I, I cannot help it at present: I am obliged to your honesty and kindness, to be sure; and then he wept more. Said I, (for my heart was ready to break to see his grief; for it is a touching thing to see a man cry), Tell me the worst! Is my master coming? No, no, said he, and sobbed.—Well, said I, is there any news of my poor father and mother? How do they do?—I hope well, said he, I know nothing to the contrary. There is no mishap, I hope, to Mrs. Jervis or to Mr. Longman, or my fellow-servants!

—No—said he, poor man! with a long N—o, as if his heart would burst. Well, thank God then! said I.

The man's a fool, said Mrs. Jewkes, I think: What ado is here! Why, sure thou'rt in love, John. Dost thou not see young madam is well? What ails thee, man? Nothing at all, said he; but I am such a fool as to cry for joy to see good Mrs. Pamela: But I have a letter for you.

I took it, and saw it was from my master; so I put it in my pocket. Mrs. Jewkes, said I, you need not, I hope, see this. No, no, said she, I see whose it is, well enough; or else, may be, I must have insisted on reading it.

And here is one for you, Mrs. Jewkes, said he; but yours, said he to me, requires an answer, which I must carry back early in the morning, or to-night, if I can.

You have no more, John, said Mrs. Jewkes, for Mrs. Pamela, have you? No, said he, I have not, but every body's kind love and service. Ay, to us both, to be sure, said she. John, said I, I will read the letter, and pray take care of yourself; for you are a good man, God bless you! and I rejoice to see you, and hear from you all. But I longed to say more; only that nasty Mrs. Jewkes.

So I went up, and locked myself in my closet, and opened the letter; and this is a copy of it:

'My DEAREST PAMELA,

'I send purposely to you on an affair that concerns you very much, and me somewhat, but chiefly for your sake. I am conscious that I have proceeded by you in such a manner as may justly alarm your fears, and give concern to your honest friends: and all my pleasure is, that I can and will make you amends for the disturbance I have given you. As I promised, I sent to your father the day after your departure, that he might not be too much concerned for you, and assured him of my honour to you; and made an excuse, such an one as ought to have satisfied him, for your not coming to him. But this was not sufficient, it seems; for he, poor man! came to me next morning, and set my family almost in an uproar about you.

'O my dear girl! what trouble has not your obstinacy given me, and yourself too! I had no way to pacify him, but to promise that he should see a letter written from you to Mrs. Jervis, to satisfy him you are well.

'Now all my care in this case is for your aged parents, lest they should be touched with too fatal a grief; and for you, whose duty and affection for them I know to be so strong and laudable; for this reason I beg you will write a few lines to them, and let me prescribe the form; which I have done, putting myself as near as I can in your place, and expressing your sense, with a warmth that I doubt will have too much possessed you.

'After what is done, and which cannot now be helped, but which, I assure you, shall turn out honourably for you, I expect not to be refused; because I cannot possibly have any view in it, but to satisfy your parents; which is more your concern than mine; and so I must beg you will not alter one tittle of the underneath. If you do, it will be impossible for me to send it, or that it should answer the good end I propose by it.

'I have promised, that I will not approach you without your leave. If I find you easy, and not attempting to dispute or avoid your present lot, I will keep to my word, although it is a difficulty upon me. Nor shall your restraint last long: for I will assure you, that I am resolved very soon to convince you of my good intentions, and with what ardour I am

'Yours, etc.'

The letter he prescribed for me was as this:

'DEAR Mrs. JERVIS,

'I have, instead of being driven by Robin to my dear father's, been carried off, where I have no liberty to tell. However, at present, I am not used hardly; and I write to beg you to let my dear father and mother, whose hearts must be well nigh broken, know that I am well; and that I am, and, by the grace of God, ever will be, their honest, as well as dutiful daughter, and 'Your obliged friend.'

'I must neither send date nor place; but have most solemn assurances of honourable usage.'

I knew not what to do on this most strange request and occasion. But my heart bled so much for you, my dear father, who had taken the pains to go yourself, and inquire after your poor daughter, as well as for my dear mother, that I resolved to write, and pretty much in the above form, that it might be sent to pacify you, till I could let you, somehow or other, know the true state of the matter. And I wrote thus to my strange wicked master himself:

'SIR,

'If you knew but the anguish of my mind, and how much I suffer by your dreadful usage of me, you would surely pity me, and consent to my deliverance. What have I done, that I should be the only mark of your cruelty? I can have no hope, no desire of living left me, because I cannot have the least dependence, after what has passed, upon your solemn assurances.—It is impossible they should be consistent with the dishonourable methods you take.

'Nothing but your promise of not seeing me here in my deplorable bondage, can give me the least ray of hope.

'Don't, I beseech you, drive the poor distressed Pamela upon a rock, that may be the destruction both of her soul and body! You don't know, sir, how dreadfully I dare, weak as I am of mind and intellect, when my virtue is in danger. And, O! hasten my deliverance, that a poor unworthy creature, below the notice of such a gentleman as you, may not be made the sport of a high condition, for no reason in the world, but because she is not able to defend herself, nor has a friend that can right her.

'I have, sir, in part to shew my obedience to you, but indeed, I own, more to give ease to the minds of my poor distressed parents, whose poverty, one would think, should screen them from violences of this sort, as well as their poor daughter, followed pretty much the form you have prescribed for me, in the letter to Mrs. Jervis; and the alterations I have made (for I could not help a few) are of such a nature, as, though they shew my concern a little, yet must answer the end you are pleased to say you propose by this letter.

'For God's sake, good sir, pity my lowly condition, and my present great misery; and let me join with all the rest of your servants to bless that goodness, which you have extended to every one but the poor afflicted, heart-broken 'PAMELA.'

I thought, when I had written this letter, and that which he had prescribed, it would look like placing a confidence in Mrs. Jewkes, to shew them to her; and I shewed her, at the same time, my master's letter to me; for I believed the value he expressed for me, would give me credit with one who professed in every thing to serve him, right or wrong; though I had so little reason, I fear, to pride myself in it: and I was not mistaken; for it has seemed to influence her not a little, and she is at present mighty obliging, and runs over in my praises; but is the less to be minded, because she praises as much the author of my miseries, and his honourable intentions, as she calls them; for I see, that she is capable of thinking, as I fear he does, that every thing that makes for his wicked will is honourable, though to the ruin of the innocent. Pray God I may find it otherwise! Though, I hope, whatever the wicked gentleman may intend, that I shall be at last rid of her impertinent bold way of talk, when she seems to think, from his letter, that he means honourably.

I am now come to MONDAY, the 5th Day of my Bondage and Misery.

I was in hope to have an opportunity to see John, and have a little private talk with him, before he went away; but it could not be. The poor man's excessive sorrow made Mrs. Jewkes take it into her head, to think he loved me; and so she brought up a message to me from him this morning that he was going. I desired he might come up to my closet, as I called it, and she came with him. The honest man, as I thought him, was as full of concern as before, at taking leave and I gave him two letters, the one for Mrs. Jervis, enclosed in another for my master: but Mrs. Jewkes would see

me seal them up, lest I should enclose any thing else.—I was surprised, at the man's going away, to see him drop a bit of paper, just at the head of the stairs, which I took up without being observed by Mrs. Jewkes: but I was a thousand times more surprised, when I returned to my closet, and opening it read as follows:

'GOOD MRS. PAMELA,

'I am grieved to tell you how much you have been deceived and betrayed, and that by such a vile dog as I. Little did I think it would come to this. But I must say, if ever there was a rogue in the world, it is me. I have all along shewed your letters to my master: He employed me for that purpose; and he saw every one, before I carried them to your father and mother; and then sealed them up, and sent me with them. I had some business that way, but not half so often as I pretended: and as soon as I heard how it was, I was ready to hang myself. You may well think I could not stand in your presence. O vile, vile wretch, to bring you to this! If you are ruined, I am the rogue that caused it. All the justice I can do you, is to tell you, you are in vile hands; and I am afraid will be undone in spite of all your sweet innocence; and I believe I shall never live, after I know it. If you can forgive me, you are exceeding good; but I shall never forgive myself, that's certain. Howsomever, it will do you no good to make this known; and may-hap I may live to do you service. If I can, I will: I am sure I ought.—Master kept your last two or three letters, and did not send them at all. I am the most abandoned wretch of wretches. 'J. ARNOLD.'

'You see your undoing has been long hatching. Pray take care of your sweet self. Mrs. Jewkes is a devil: but in my master's t'other house you have not one false heart, but myself. Out upon me for a villain!'

My dear father and mother, when you come to this place, I make no doubt your hair will stand on end as mine does!—O the deceitfulness of the heart of man!—This John, that I took to be the honestest of men; that you took for the same; that was always praising you to me, and me to you, and for nothing so much as for our honest hearts; this very fellow was all the while a vile hypocrite, and a perfidious wretch, and helping to carry on my ruin.

But he says so much of himself, that I will only sit down with this sad reflection, That power and riches never want tools to promote their vilest ends, and there is nothing so hard to be known as the heart of man:—I can



but pity the poor wretch, since he seems to have great remorse, and I believe it best to keep his wickedness secret. If it lies in my way, I will encourage his penitence; for I may possibly make some discoveries by it.

One thing I should mention in this place; he brought down, in a portmanteau, all the clothes and things my lady and master had given me, and moreover two velvet hoods, and a velvet scarf, that used to be worn by my lady; but I have no comfort in them, or any thing else.

Mrs. Jewkes had the portmanteau brought into my closet, and she shewed me what was in it; but then locked it up, and said, she would let me have what I would out of it, when I asked; but if I had the key, it might make me want to go abroad, may be; and so the confident woman put it in her pocket.

I gave myself over to sad reflections upon this strange and surprising discovery of John's, and wept much for him, and for myself too; for now I see, as he says, my ruin has been long hatching, that I can make no doubt what my master's honourable professions will end in. What a heap of hard names does the poor fellow call himself! But what must they deserve, then, who set him to work? O what has this wicked master to answer for, to be so corrupt himself, and to corrupt others, who would have been all innocent; and to carry on a poor plot, I am sure for a gentleman, to ruin a poor creature, who never did him harm, nor wished him any; and who can still pray for his happiness, and his repentance?

I can't but wonder what these gentlemen, as they are called, can think of themselves for these vile doings! John had some inducement; for he hoped to please his master, who rewarded him and was bountiful to him; and the same may be said, bad as she is, for this same odious Mrs. Jewkes. But what inducement has my master for taking so much pains to do the devil's work for him?—If he loves me, as 'tis falsely called, must he therefore lay traps for me, to ruin me and make me as bad as himself? I cannot imagine what good the undoing of such a poor creature as I can procure him.—To be sure, I am a very worthless body. People, indeed, say I am handsome; but if I was so, should not a gentleman prefer an honest servant to a guilty harlot? And must he be more earnest to seduce me, because I dread of all things to be seduced, and would rather lose my life than my honesty?

Well, these are strange things to me! I cannot account for them, for my share; but sure nobody will say, that these fine gentlemen have any

tempter but their own wicked wills!—his naughty master could run away from me, when he apprehended his servants might discover his vile attempts upon me in that sad closet affair; but is it not strange that he should not be afraid of the all-seeing eye, from which even that base plotting heart of his, in its most secret motions, could not be hid?—But what avail me these sorrowful reflections? He is and will be wicked, and designs me a victim to his lawless attempts, if the God in whom I trust, and to whom I hourly pray, prevent it not.

Tuesday and Wednesday.

I have been hindered by this wicked woman's watching me so close, from writing on Tuesday; and so I will put both these days together. I have been a little turn with her for an airing, in the chariot, and walked several times in the garden; but have always her at my heels.

Mr. Williams came to see us, and took a walk with us once; and while her back was just turned, (encouraged by the hint he had before given me,) I said, Sir, I see two tiles upon that parsley-bed; might not one cover them with mould, with a note between them, on occasion?—A good hint, said he; let that sunflower by the back-door of the garden be the place; I have a key to the door; for it is my nearest way to the town.

So I was forced to begin. O what inventions will necessity push us upon! I hugged myself at the thought; and she coming to us, he said, as if he was continuing a discourse we were in: No, not extraordinary pleasant. What's that? what's that? said Mrs. Jewkes.—Only, said he, the town, I'm saying, is not very pleasant. No, indeed, said she, it is not; it is a poor town, to my thinking. Are there any gentry in it? said I. And so we chatted on about the town, to deceive her. But my deceit intended no hurt to any body.

We then talked of the garden, how large and pleasant, and the like; and sat down on the tufted slope of the fine fish-pond, to see the fishes play upon the surface of the water; and she said, I should angle if I would.

I wish, said I, you'd be so kind to fetch me a rod and baits. Pretty mistress! said she—I know better than that, I'll assure you, at this time.—I mean no harm, said I, indeed. Let me tell you, said she. I know none who have their thoughts more about them than you. A body ought to look to it where you are. But we'll angle a little to-morrow. Mr. Williams, who is much afraid of her, turned the discourse to a general subject. I sauntered

in, and left them to talk by themselves; but he went away to town, and she was soon after me.

I had got to my pen and ink; and I said, I want some paper, Mrs. Jewkes, (putting what I was about in my bosom:) You know I have written two letters, and sent them by John. (O how his name, poor guilty fellow, grieves me!) Well, said she, you have some left; one sheet did for those two letters. Yes, said I; but I used half another for a cover, you know; and see how I have scribbled the other half; and so I shewed her a parcel of broken scraps of verses, which I had tried to recollect, and had written purposely that she might see, and think me usually employed to such idle purposes. Ay, said she, so you have; well, I'll give you two sheets more; but let me see how you dispose of them, either written or blank. Well, thought I, I hope still, Argus, to be too hard for thee. Now Argus, the poets say, had a hundred eyes, and was set to watch with them all, as she does.

She brought me the paper, and said, Now, madam, let me see you write something. I will, said I; and took the pen and wrote, 'I wish Mrs. Jewkes would be so good to me, as I would be to her, if I had it in my power.'—That's pretty now, said she; well, I hope I am; but what then? 'Why then (wrote I) she would do me the favour to let me know, what I have done to be made her prisoner; and what she thinks is to become of me.' Well, and what then? said she. 'Why then, of consequence, (scribbled I,) she would let me see her instructions, that I may know how far to blame, or to acquit her.'

Thus I fooled on, to shew her my fondness for scribbling; for I had no expectation of any good from her; that so she might suppose I employed myself, as I said, to no better purpose at other times: for she will have it, that I am upon some plot, I am so silent, and love so much to be by myself.—She would have made me write on a little further. No, said I; you have not answered me. Why, said she, what can you doubt, when my master himself assures you of his honour? Ay, said I; but lay your hand to your heart, Mrs. Jewkes, and tell me, if you yourself believe him. Yes, said she, to be sure I do. But, said I, what do you call honour? Why, said she, what does he call honour, think you?—Ruin! shame! disgrace! said I, I fear.—Pho! pho! said she; if you have any doubt about it, he can best explain his own meaning:—I'll send him word to come and satisfy you, if you will.—Horrid creature! said I, all in a fright—Can'st thou not stab me

to the heart? I'd rather thou would'st, than say such another word!—But I hope there is no such thought of his coming.

She had the wickedness to say, No, no; he don't intend to come, as I know of—But if I was he, I would not be long away. What means the woman? said I.—Mean! said she, (turning it off;) why I mean, I would come, if I was he, and put an end to all your fears—by making you as happy as you wish. It is out of his power, said I, to make me happy, great and rich as he is! but by leaving me innocent, and giving me liberty to go to my dear father and mother.

She went away soon after, and I ended my letter, in hopes to have an opportunity to lay it in the appointed place. So I went to her, and said; I suppose, as it is not dark, I may take another turn in the garden. It is too late, said she; but if you will go, don't stay; and, Nan, see and attend madam, as she called me.

So I went towards the pond, the maid following me, and dropt purposely my hussy: and when I came near the tiles, I said, Mrs. Anne, I have dropt my hussy; be so kind as to look for it; I had it by the pond side. She went back to look, and I slipt the note between the tiles, and covered them as quick as I could with the light mould, quite unperceived; and the maid finding the hussy, I took it, and sauntered in again, and met Mrs. Jewkes coming to see after me. What I wrote was this:

'REVEREND SIR,

'The want of an opportunity to speak my mind to you, I am sure will excuse this boldness in a poor creature that is betrayed hither, I have reason to think, for the worst of purposes. You know something, to be sure, of my story, my native poverty, which I am not ashamed of, my late lady's goodness, and my master's designs upon me. It is true he promises honour, and all that; but the honour of the wicked is disgrace and shame to the virtuous: And he may think he keeps his promises, according to the notions he may allow himself to hold; and yet, according to mine and every good body's, basely ruin me.

'I am so wretched, and ill-treated by this Mrs. Jewkes, and she is so ill-principled a woman, that, as I may soon want the opportunity which the happy hint of this day affords to my hopes, I throw myself at once upon your goodness, without the least reserve; for I cannot be worse than I am, should that fail me; which, I dare say, to your power, it will not: For I see

it, sir, in your looks, I hope it from your cloth, and I doubt it not from your inclination, in a case circumstanced as my unhappy one is. For, sir, in helping me out of my present distress, you perform all the acts of religion in one; and the highest mercy and charity, both to the body and soul of a poor wretch, that, believe me, sir, has, at present, not so much as in thought swerved from her innocence.

'Is there not some way to be found out for my escape, without danger to yourself? Is there no gentleman or lady of virtue in this neighbourhood, to whom I may fly, only till I can find a way to get to my poor father and mother? Cannot Lady Davers be made acquainted with my sad story, by your conveying a letter to her? My poor parents are so low in the world, they can do nothing but break their hearts for me; and that, I fear, will be the end of it.

'My master promises, if I will be easy, as he calls it, in my present lot, he will not come down without my consent. Alas! sir, this is nothing: For what's the promise of a person who thinks himself at liberty to act as he has done by me? If he comes, it must be to ruin me; and come to be sure he will, when he thinks he has silenced the clamours of my friends, and lulled me, as no doubt he hopes, into a fatal security.

'Now, therefore, sir, is all the time I have to work and struggle for the preservation of my honesty. If I stay till he comes, I am undone. You have a key to the back garden door; I have great hopes from that. Study, good sir, and contrive for me. I will faithfully keep your secret.—Yet I should be loath to have you suffer for me! I say no more, but commit this to the happy tiles, in the bosom of that earth, where, I hope, my deliverance will take root, and bring forth such fruit, as may turn to my inexpressible joy, and your eternal reward, both here and hereafter: As shall ever pray, 'Your oppressed humble servant.'

Thursday.

This completes a terrible week since my setting out, as I hoped to see you, my dear father and mother. O how different were my hopes then, from what they are now! Yet who knows what these happy tiles may produce!

But I must tell you, first, how I have been beaten by Mrs. Jewkes! It is very true!—And thus it came about:

My impatience was great to walk in the garden, to see if any thing had offered, answerable to my hopes. But this wicked Mrs. Jewkes would not

let me go without her; and said, she was not at leisure. We had a great many words about it; for I told her, it was very hard I could not be trusted to walk by myself in the garden for a little air, but must be dogged and watched worse than a thief.

She still pleaded her instructions, and said she was not to trust me out of her sight: And you had better, said she, be easy and contented, I assure you; for I have worse orders than you have yet found. I remember, added she, your asking Mr. Williams, If there were any gentry in the neighbourhood? This makes me suspect you want to get away to them, to tell your sad dismal story, as you call it.

My heart was at my mouth; for I feared, by that hint, she had seen my letter under the tiles: O how uneasy I was! At last she said, Well, since you take on so, you may take a turn, and I will be with you in a minute.

When I was out of sight of her window, I speeded towards the hopeful place; but was soon forced to slacken my pace, by her odious voice: Hey-day, why so nimble, and whither so fast? said she: What! are you upon a wager? I stopt for her, till her pousy sides were waddled up to me; and she held by my arm, half out of breath: So I was forced to pass by the dear place, without daring to look at it.

The gardener was at work a little farther, and so we looked upon him, and I began to talk about his art; but she said, softly, My instructions are, not to let you be so familiar with the servants. Why, said I, are you afraid I should confederate with them to commit a robbery upon my master? May be I am, said the odious wretch; for to rob him of yourself, would be the worst that could happen to him, in his opinion.

And pray, said I, walking on, how came I to be his property? What right has he in me, but such as a thief may plead to stolen goods?—Why, was ever the like heard? says she.—This is downright rebellion, I protest!—Well, well, lambkin, (which the foolish often calls me,) if I was in his place, he should not have his property in you long questionable. Why, what would you do, said I, if you were he?—Not stand shill-I-shall-I, as he does; but put you and himself both out of your pain.—Why, Jezebel, said I, (I could not help it,) would you ruin me by force?—Upon this she gave me a deadly slap upon my shoulder: Take that, said she; whom do you call Jezebel?

I was so surprised, (for you never beat me, my dear father and mother, in your lives,) that I was like one thunder-struck; and looked round, as if I wanted somebody to help me; but, alas! I had nobody; and said, at last, rubbing my shoulder, Is this also in your instructions?—Alas! for me! am I to be beaten too? And so fell a crying, and threw myself upon the grass-walk we were upon.—Said she, in a great pet, I won't be called such names, I'll assure you. Marry come up! I see you have a spirit: You must and shall be kept under. I'll manage such little provoking things as you, I warrant ye! Come, come, we'll go in a'doors, and I'll lock you up, and you shall have no shoes, nor any thing else, if this be the case.

I did not know what to do. This was a cruel thing to me, and I blamed myself for my free speech; for now I have given her some pretence: and O! thought I, here I have, by my malapertness, ruined the only project I had left.

The gardener saw this scene: but she called to him, Well, Jacob, what do you stare at? Pray mind what you're upon. And away he walked, to another quarter, out of sight.

Well, thought I, I must put on the dissembler a little, I see. She took my hand roughly; Come, get up, said she, and come in a'doors!—I'll Jezebel you, I will so!—Why, dear Mrs. Jewkes, said I.—None of your dears, and your coaxing! said she; why not Jezebel again?—She was in a fearful passion, I saw, and I was out of my wits. Thought I, I have often heard women blamed for their tongues; I wish mine had been shorter. But I can't go in, said I, indeed I can't!—Why, said she, can't you? I'll warrant I can take such a thin body as you under my arm, and carry you in, if you won't walk. You don't know my strength.—Yes, but I do, said I, too well; and will you not use me worse when I come in?—So I arose, and she muttered to herself all the way, She to be a Jezebel with me, that had used me so well! and such like.

When I came near the house, I said, sitting down upon a settle-bench, Well, I will not go in, till you say you forgive me, Mrs. Jewkes.—If you will forgive my calling you that name, I will forgive your beating me.—She sat down by me, and seemed in a great pucker, and said, Well, come, I will forgive you for this time: and so kissed me, as a mark of reconciliation.—But pray, said I, tell me where I am to walk and go, and give me what liberty you can; and when I know the most you can favour

me with, you shall see I will be as content as I can, and not ask you for more.

Ay, said she, this is something like: I wish I could give you all the liberty you desire; for you must think it is no pleasure to me to tie you to my petticoat, as it were, and not let you stir without me.—But people that will do their duties, must have some trouble: and what I do, is to serve as good a master, to be sure, as lives.—Yes, said I, to every body but me! He loves you too well, to be sure, returned she; and that's the reason: so you ought to bear it. I say, love! replied I. Come, said she, don't let the wench see you have been crying, nor tell her any tales: for you won't tell them fairly, I am sure: and I'll send her, and you shall take another walk in the garden, if you will: May be it will get you a stomach to your dinner: for you don't eat enough to keep life and soul together. You are beauty to the bone, added the strange wretch, or you could not look so well as you do, with so little stomach, so little rest, and so much pining and whining for nothing at all. Well, thought I, say what thou wilt, so I can be rid of thy bad tongue and company: and I hope to find some opportunity now to come at my sunflower. But I walked the other way, to take that in my return, to avoid suspicion.

I forced my discourse to the maid; but it was all upon general things; for I find she is asked after every thing I say and do. When I came near the place, as I had been devising, I said, Pray step to the gardener, and ask him to gather a sallad for me to dinner. She called out, Jacob! said I, He can't hear you so far off; and pray tell him, I should like a cucumber too, if he has one. When she had stept about a bow-shot from me, I popt down, and whipt my fingers under the upper tile, and pulled out a letter without direction, and thrust it in my bosom, trembling for joy. She was with me, before I could well secure it; and I was in such a taking that I feared I should discover myself. You seem frightened, madam, said she; Why, said I, with a lucky thought, (alas! your poor daughter will make an intriguer by and by; but I hope an innocent one!) I stooped to smell at the sunflower, and a great nasty worm ran into the ground, that startled me; for I can't abide worms. Said she, Sunflowers don't smell. So I find, replied I. And then we walked in; and Mrs. Jewkes said; Well, you have made haste now.—You shall go another time.



I went up to my closet, locked myself in, and opening my letter, found in it these words:

'I am infinitely concerned for your distress. I most heartily wish it may be in my power to serve and save so much innocence, beauty, and merit. My whole dependance is upon Mr. B——, and I have a near view of being provided for by his favour to me. But yet I would sooner forfeit all my hopes in him, (trusting in God for the rest,) than not assist you, if possible. I never looked upon Mr. B—— in the light he now appears in to me, in your case. To be sure, he is no professed debauchee. But I am entirely of opinion, you should, if possible, get out of his hands; and especially as you are in very bad ones in Mrs. Jewkes's.

'We have here the widow Lady Jones, mistress of a good fortune; and a woman of virtue, I believe. We have also old Sir Simon Darnford, and his lady, who is a good woman; and they have two daughters, virtuous young ladies. All the rest are but middling people, and traders, at best. I will try, if you please, either Lady Jones, or Lady Darnford, if they'll permit you to take refuge with them. I see no probability of keeping myself concealed in this matter; but will, as I said, risk all things to serve you; for I never saw a sweetness and innocence like yours; and your hard case has attached me entirely to you; for I know, as you so happily express, if I can serve you in this case, I shall thereby perform all the acts of religion in one.

'As to Lady Davers, I will convey a letter, if you please, to her; but it must not be from our post-house, I give you caution; for the man owes all his bread to Mr. B——, and his place too; and I believe, by something that dropt from him, over a can of ale, has his instructions. You don't know how you are surrounded; all which confirms me in your opinion, that no honour is meant you, let what will be professed; and I am glad you want no caution on that head.

'Give me leave to say, that I had heard much in your praise; but, I think, greatly short of what you deserve, both as to person and mind: My eyes convince me of the one, your letter of the other. For fear of losing the present lucky opportunity, I am longer than otherwise I should be. But I will not enlarge, any further than to assure you that I am, to the best of my power,

'Your faithful friend and servant,

'ARTHUR WILLIAMS.'

'I will come once every morning, and once every evening, after school-time, to look for your letters. I'll come in, and return without going into the house, if I see the coast clear: Otherwise, to avoid suspicion, I'll come in.'

I instantly, in answer to this pleasing letter, wrote as follows:

'REVEREND SIR,

'O how suited to your function, and your character, is your kind letter! God bless you for it! I now think I am beginning to be happy. I should be sorry to have you suffer on my account: but I hope it will be made up to you an hundred-fold, by that God whom you so faithfully serve. I should be too happy, could I ever have it in my power to contribute in the least to it. But, alas! to serve me, must be for God's sake only; for I am poor and lowly in fortune; though in mind, I hope, too high to do a mean or unworthy deed to gain a kingdom. But I lose time.—

'Any way you think best, I should be pleased with; for I know not the persons, nor in what manner it is best to apply to them. I am glad of the hint you so kindly give me of the man at the post-house. I was thinking of opening a way for myself by letter, when I could have opportunity; but I see more and more that I am, indeed, strangely surrounded with dangers; and that there is no dependance to be made on my master's honour.

'I should think, sir, if either of those ladies would give leave, I might some way get out by favour of your key: and as it is impossible, watched as I am, to know when it can be, suppose, sir, you get one made by it, and put it, the next opportunity, under the sunflower?—I am sure no time is to be lost, because it is rather my wonder, that she is not thoughtful about this key, than otherwise; for she forgets not the minutest thing. But, sir, if I had this key, I could, if these ladies would not shelter me, run away any where: and if I was once out of the house, they could have no pretence to force me again; for I have done no harm, and hope to make my story good to any compassionate body; and by this way you need not to be known. Torture should not wring it from me, I assure you.

'One thing more, good sir. Have you no correspondence with my master's Bedfordshire family? By that means, may be, I could be informed of his intention of coming hither, and when I enclose you a letter of a deceitful wretch; for I can trust you with any thing; poor John Arnold. Its contents will tell why I enclose it. Perhaps by his means, something may

be discovered; for he seems willing to atone for his treachery to me, by the intimation of future service. I leave the hint to you to improve upon, and am,

'Reverend Sir,

'Your for ever obliged, and thankful servant.'

'I hope, sir, by your favour, I could send a little packet, now and then, some how, to my poor father and mother. I have a little stock of money, about five or six guineas: Shall I put half in your hands, to defray the charge of a man and horse, or any other incidents?'

I had but just time to transcribe this, before I was called to dinner; and I put that for Mr. Williams, with a wafer in it, in my bosom, to get an opportunity to lay it in the dear place.

O good sirs, of all the flowers in the garden, the sunflower, sure, is the loveliest!—It is a propitious one to me! How nobly my plot succeeds! But I begin to be afraid my writings may be discovered; for they grow large: I stitch them hitherto in my under-coat, next my linen. But if this brute should search me—I must try to please her, and then she won't.

Well, I am but just come off from a walk in the garden, and have deposited my letter by a simple wile. I got some horse-beans; and we took a turn in the garden, to angle, as Mrs. Jewkes had promised me. She baited the hook, and I held it, and soon hooked a lovely carp. Play it, play it, said she: I did, and brought it to the bank. A sad thought just then came into my head; and I took it, and threw it in again; and O the pleasure it seemed to have, to flounce in, when at liberty!—Why this? says she. O Mrs. Jewkes! said I, I was thinking this poor carp was the unhappy Pamela. I was likening you and myself to my naughty master. As we hooked and deceived the poor carp, so was I betrayed by false baits; and when you said, Play it, play it, it went to my heart, to think I should sport with the destruction of the poor fish I had betrayed; and I could not but fling it in again: and did you not see the joy with which the happy carp flounced from us? O! said I, may some good merciful body procure me my liberty in the same manner; for to be sure, I think my danger equal!

Lord bless thee! said she, what a thought is there!—Well, I can angle no more, added I. I'll try my fortune, said she, and took the rod. Do, answered I; and I will plant life, if I can, while you are destroying it. I have some

horse-beans here, and will go and stick them in one of the borders, to see how long they will be coming up; and I will call them my garden.

So you see, dear father and mother, (I hope now you will soon see; for, may be, if I can't get away so soon myself, I may send my papers some how; I say you will see,) that this furnishes me with a good excuse to look after my garden another time; and if the mould should look a little freshish, it won't be so much suspected. She mistrusted nothing of this; and I went and stuck in here and there my beans, for about the length of five ells, of each side of the sunflower; and easily deposited my letter. And not a little proud am I of this contrivance. Sure something will do at last!

Friday, Saturday.

I have just now told you a trick of mine; now I'll tell you a trick of this wicked woman's. She comes up to me: Says she, I have a bill I cannot change till to-morrow; and a tradesman wants his money most sadly: and I don't love to turn poor trades-folks away without their money: Have you any about you? I have a little, replied I: How much will do? Oh! said she, I want eight pounds. Alack! said I, I have but between five and six. Lend me that, said she, till to-morrow. I did so; and she went down stairs: and when she came up, she laughed, and said, Well, I have paid the tradesman. Said I, I hope you'll give it me again to-morrow. At that, the assurance, laughing loud, said, Why, what occasion have you for money? To tell you the truth, lambkin, I didn't want it. I only feared you might make a bad use of it; and now I can trust Nan with you a little oftener, especially as I have got the key of your portmanteau; so that you can neither corrupt her with money, nor fine things. Never did any body look more silly than I.—O how I fretted, to be so foolishly outwitted!—And the more, as I had hinted to Mr. Williams, that I would put some in his hands to defray the charges of my sending to you. I cried for vexation.—And now I have not five shillings left to support me, if I can get away.—Was ever such a fool as I! I must be priding myself in my contrivances, indeed! said I. Was this your instructions, wolfkin? (for she called me lambkin). Jezebel, you mean, child! said she.—Well, I now forgive you heartily; let's buss and be friends.—Out upon you said I; I cannot bear you!—But I durst not call her names again; for I dread her huge paw most sadly. The more I think of this thing, the more do I regret it, and blame myself.

This night the man from the post-house brought a letter for Mrs. Jewkes, in which was one enclosed for me: She brought it me up. Said she, Well, my good master don't forget us. He has sent you a letter: and see what he writes to me. So she read, That he hoped her fair charge was well, happy, and contented. Ay, to be sure, said I, I can't choose—That he did not doubt her care and kindness to me: that I was very dear to him, and she could not use me too well; and the like. There's a master for you! said she: sure you will love and pray for him. I desired her to read the rest. No, no, said she, but I won't. Said I, Are there any orders for taking my shoes away, and for beating me? No, said she, nor about Jezebel neither. Well, returned I, I cry truce; for I have no mind to be beat again. I thought, said she, we had forgiven one another.

My letter is as follows:

'MY DEAR PAMELA,

'I begin to repent already, that I have bound myself, by promise, not to see you till you give me leave; for I think the time very tedious. Can you place so much confidence in me, as to invite me down? Assure yourself, that your generosity shall not be thrown away upon me. I the rather would press this, as I am uneasy for your uneasiness; for Mrs. Jewkes acquaints me, that you take your restraint very heavily; and neither eat, drink, nor rest well; and I have too great interest in your health, not to wish to shorten the time of this trial; which will be the consequence of my coming down to you. John, too, has intimated to me your concern, with a grief that hardly gave him leave for utterance; a grief that a little alarmed my tenderness for you. Not that I fear any thing, but that your disregard to me, which yet my proud heart will hardly permit me to own, may throw you upon some rashness, that might encourage a daring hope: But how poorly do I descend, to be anxious about such a menial as he!—I will only say one thing, that if you will give me leave to attend you at the Hall, (consider who it is that requests this from you as a favour,) I solemnly declare, that you shall have cause to be pleased with this obliging mark of your confidence in me, and consideration for me; and if I find Mrs. Jewkes has not behaved to you with the respect due to one I so dearly love, I will put it entirely into your power to discharge her the house, if you think proper; and Mrs. Jervis, or who else you please, shall attend you in her place. This I say on a hint John gave me, as if you resented something

from that quarter. Dearest Pamela, answer favourably this earnest request of one that cannot live without you, and on whose honour to you, you may absolutely depend; and so much the more, as you place a confidence in it. I am, and assuredly ever will be,

*'Your faithful and affectionate, etc.'*

'You will be glad, I know, to hear your father and mother are well, and easy upon your last letter. That gave me a pleasure that I am resolved you shall not repent. Mrs. Jewkes will convey to me your answer.'

I but slightly read this letter for the present, to give way to one I had hopes of finding by this time from Mr. Williams. I took an evening turn, as I called it, in Mrs. Jewkes's company: and walking by the place, I said, Do you think, Mrs. Jewkes, any of my beans can have struck since yesterday? She laughed, and said, You are a poor gardener: but I love to see you divert yourself. She passing on, I found my good friend had provided for me; and, slipping it in my bosom, (for her back was towards me,) Here, said I, (having a bean in my hand,) is one of them; but it has not stirred. No, to be sure, said she, and turned upon me a most wicked jest, unbecoming the mouth of a woman, about planting, etc. When I came in, I hied to my closet, and read as follows:

'I am sorry to tell you that I have had a repulse from Lady Jones. She is concerned at your case, she says, but don't care to make herself enemies. I applied to Lady Darnford, and told her in the most pathetic manner I could, your sad story, and shewed her your more pathetic letter. I found her well disposed, but she would advise with Sir Simon, who by the by is not a man of an extraordinary character for virtue; but he said to his lady in my presence, 'Why, what is all this, my dear, but that our neighbour has a mind to his mother's waiting-maid! And if he takes care she wants for nothing, I don't see any great injury will be done her. He hurts no family by this:' (So, my dear father and mother, it seems that poor people's honesty is to go for nothing) 'And I think, Mr. Williams, you, of all men, should not engage in this affair, against your friend and patron.' He spoke this in so determined a manner, that the lady had done; and I had only to beg no notice should be taken of the matter as from me.

'I have hinted your case to Mr. Peters, the minister of this parish; but I am concerned to say, that he imputed selfish views to me, as if I would make an interest in your affections by my zeal. And when I represented the

duties of our function, and the like, and protested my disinterestedness, he coldly said, I was very good; but was a young man, and knew little of the world. And though it was a thing to be lamented, yet when he and I should set about to reform mankind in this respect, we should have enough upon our hands; for, he said, it was too common and fashionable a case to be withstood by a private clergyman or two: and then he uttered some reflections upon the conduct of the present fathers of the church, in regard to the first personages of the realm, as a justification of his coldness on this score.

'I represented the different circumstances of your affair; that other women lived evilly by their own consent, but to serve you, was to save an innocence that had but few examples; and then I shewed him your letter.

'He said it was prettily written: and he was sorry for you; and that your good intentions ought to be encouraged: But what, said he, would you have me do, Mr. Williams? Why suppose, sir, said I, you give her shelter in your house, with your spouse and niece, till she can get to her friends.—What! and embroil myself with a man of Mr. B——'s power and fortune! No, not I, I'll assure you!—And I would have you consider what you are about. Besides, she owns, continued he, that he promises to do honourably by her; and her shyness will procure her good terns enough; for he is no covetous nor wicked gentleman, except in this case; and 'tis what all young gentlemen will do.

'I am greatly concerned for him, I assure you: but I am not discouraged by this ill success, let what will come of it, if I can serve you.

'I don't hear, as yet, that Mr. B—— is coming. I am glad of your hint as to that unhappy fellow John Arnold. Something, perhaps, will strike out from that, which may be useful. As to your packets, if you seal them up, and lay them in the usual place, if you find it not suspected, I will watch an opportunity to convey them; but if they are large, you had best be very cautious. This evil woman, I find, mistrusts me much.

'I just hear, that the gentleman is dying, whose living Mr. B—— has promised me. I have almost a scruple to take it, as I am acting so contrary to his desires: but I hope he will one day thank me for it. As to money, don't think of it at present. Be assured you may command all in my power to do for you without reserve.

'I believe, when we hear he is coming, it will be best to make use of the key, which I shall soon procure you; and I can borrow a horse for you, I believe, to wait within half a mile of the back-door, over the pasture; and will contrive, by myself, or somebody, to have you conducted some miles distant, to one of the villages thereabouts; so don't be discomforted, I beseech you. I am, excellent Mrs. Pamela,

'Your faithful friend, etc.'

I made a thousand sad reflections upon the former part of this honest gentleman's kind letter; and but for the hope he gave me at last, should have given up my case as quite desperate. I then wrote to thank him most gratefully for his kind endeavours; to lament the little concern the gentry had for my deplorable case; the wickedness of the world, first to give way to such iniquitous fashions, and then plead the frequency of them, against the attempt to amend them; and how unaffected people were with the distresses of others. I recalled my former hint as to writing to Lady Davers, which I feared, I said, would only serve to apprise her brother, that she knew his wicked scheme, and more harden him in it, and make him come down the sooner, and to be the more determined on my ruin; besides that it might make Mr. Williams guessed at, as a means of conveying my letter: And being very fearful, that if that good lady would interest herself in my behalf, (which was a doubt, because she both loved and feared her brother,) it would have no effect upon him; and that therefore I would wait the happy event I might hope for from his kind assistance in the key, and the horse. I intimated my master's letter, begging to be permitted to come down: was fearful it might be sudden; and that I was of opinion no time was to be lost; for we might let slip all our opportunities; telling him the money trick of this vile woman, etc.

I had not time to take a copy of this letter, I was so watched. And when I had it ready in my bosom, I was easy. And so I went to seek out Mrs. Jewkes, and told her, I would have her advice upon the letter I had received from my master; which point of confidence in her pleased her not a little. Ay, said she, now this is something like: and we'll take a turn in the garden, or where you please. I pretended it was indifferent to me; and so we walked into the garden. I began to talk to her of the letter; but was far from acquainting her with all the contents; only that he wanted my consent to come down, and hoped she used me kindly, and the like. And I said, Now, Mrs. Jewkes, let me have your advice as to this. Why then, said she, I



will give it you freely; E'en send to him to come down. It will highly oblige him, and I dare say you'll fare the better for it. How the better? said I.—I dare say, you think yourself, that he intends my ruin. I hate, said she, that foolish word, your ruin!—Why, ne'er a lady in the land may live happier than you if you will, or be more honourably used.

Well, Mrs. Jewkes, said I, I shall not, at this time, dispute with you about the words ruin and honourable: for I find we have quite different notions of both: But now I will speak plainer than ever I did. Do you think he intends to make proposals to me as to a kept mistress, or kept slave rather, or do you not?—Why, lambkin, said she, what dost thou think thyself?—I fear, said I, he does. Well, said she, but if he does, (for I know nothing of the matter, I assure you,) you may have your own terms—I see that; for you may do any thing with him.

I could not bear this to be spoken, though it was all I feared of a long time; and began to exclaim most sadly. Nay, said she, he may marry you, as far as I know.—No, no, said I, that cannot be.—I neither desire nor expect it. His condition don't permit me to have such a thought; and that, and the whole series of his conduct, convinces me of the contrary; and you would have me invite him to come down, would you? Is not this to invite my ruin?

'Tis what I would do, said she, in your place; and if it was to be as you think, I should rather be out of my pain, than live in continual frights and apprehensions, as you do. No, replied I, an hour of innocence is worth an age of guilt; and were my life to be made ever so miserable by it, I should never forgive myself, if I were not to lengthen out to the longest minute my happy time of honesty. Who knows what Providence may do for me!

Why, may be, said she, as he loves you so well, you may prevail upon him by your prayers and tears; and for that reason, I should think, you'd better let him come down. Well, said I, I will write him a letter, because he expects an answer, or may be he will make a pretence to come down. How can it go?

I'll take care of that, said she; it is in my instructions.—Ay, thought I, so I doubt, by the hint Mr. Williams gave me about the post-house.

The gardener coming by, I said, Mr. Jacob, I have planted a few beans, and I call the place my garden. It is just by the door out yonder: I'll shew it you; pray don't dig them up. So I went on with him; and when we had

turned the alley, out of her sight and were near the place said I, Pray step to Mrs. Jewkes, and ask her if she has any more beans for me to plant? He smiled, I suppose at my foolishness; and I popped the letter under the mould, and stepped back, as if waiting for his return; which, being near, was immediate; and she followed him. What should I do with beans? said she,—and sadly scared me; for she whispered me, I am afraid of some fetch! You don't use to send on such simple errands.—What fetch? said I: It is hard I can neither stir, nor speak, but I must be suspected.—Why, said she, my master writes, that I must have all my eyes about me; for though you are as innocent as a dove, yet you are as cunning as a serpent. But I'll forgive you, if you cheat me.

Then I thought of my money, and could have called her names, had I dared: And I said, Pray Mrs. Jewkes, now you talk of forgiving me, if I cheat you, be so kind as to pay me my money; for though I have no occasion for it, yet I know you was but in jest, and intended to give it me again. You shall have it in a proper time, said she; but, indeed, I was in earnest to get it out of your hands, for fear you should make an ill use of it. And so we cavilled upon this subject as we walked in, and I went up to write my letter to my master; and, as I intended to shew it her, I resolved to write accordingly as to her part of it; for I made little account of his offer of Mrs. Jervis to me, instead of this wicked woman, (though the most agreeable thing that could have befallen me, except my escape from hence,) nor indeed any thing he said. For to be honourable, in the just sense of the word, he need not have caused me to be run away with, and confined as I am. I wrote as follows:

'HONOURED SIR,

'When I consider how easily you might make me happy, since all I desire is to be permitted to go to my poor father and mother; when I reflect upon your former proposal to me in relation to a certain person, not one word of which is now mentioned; and upon my being in that strange manner run away with, and still kept here a miserable prisoner; do you think, sir, (pardon your poor servant's freedom; my fears make me bold; do you think, I say,) that your general assurances of honour to me, can have the effect upon me, that, were it not for these things, all your words ought to have?—O, good sir! I too much apprehend that your notions of honour and mine are very different from one another: and I have no other

hopes but in your continued absence. If you have any proposals to make me, that are consistent with your honourable professions, in my humble sense of the word, a few lines will communicate them to me, and I will return such an answer as befits me. But, oh! What proposals can one in your high station have to make to one in my low one! I know what belongs to your degree too well, to imagine, that any thing can be expected but sad temptations, and utter distress, if you come down; and you know not, sir, when I am made desperate, what the wretched Pamela dares to do!

'Whatever rashness you may impute to me, I cannot help it; but I wish I may not be forced upon any, that otherwise would never enter into my thoughts. Forgive me, sir, my plainness; I should be loath to behave to my master unbecomingly; but I must needs say, sir, my innocence is so dear to me, that all other considerations are, and, I hope, shall ever be, treated by me as niceties, that ought, for that, to be dispensed with. If you mean honourably, why, sir, should you not let me know it plainly? Why is it necessary to imprison me, to convince me of it? And why must I be close watched, and attended, hindered from stirring out, from speaking to any body, from going so much as to church to pray for you, who have been, till of late, so generous a benefactor to me? Why, sir, I humbly ask, why all this, if you mean honourably?—It is not for me to expostulate so freely, but in a case so near to me, with you, sir, so greatly my superior. Pardon me, I hope you will; but as to seeing you, I cannot bear the dreadful apprehension. Whatever you have to propose, whatever you intend by me, let my assent be that of a free person, mean as I am, and not of a sordid slave, who is to be threatened and frightened into a compliance with measures, which your conduct to her seems to imply would be otherwise abhorred by her.—My restraint is indeed hard upon me: I am very uneasy under it. Shorten it, I beseech you, or—but I will not dare to say more, than that I am

'Your greatly oppressed unhappy servant.'

After I had taken a copy of this, I folded it up; and Mrs. Jewkes, coming just as I had done, sat down by me; and said, when she saw me direct it, I wish you would tell me if you have taken my advice, and consented to my master's coming down. If it will oblige you, said I, I will read it to you. That's good, said she; then I'll love you dearly.—Said I, Then you must not offer to alter one word. I won't, replied she. So I read it to her, and she praised me much for my wording it; but said she thought I pushed the matter very close; and it would better bear talking of, than writing about. She wanted an explanation or two, as about the proposal to a certain person; but I said, she must take it as she heard it. Well, well, said she, I make no doubt you understand one another, and will do so more and more. I sealed up the letter, and she undertook to convey it.

Sunday.

For my part, I knew it in vain to expect to have leave to go to church now, and so I did not ask; and I was the more indifferent, because, if I might have had permission, the sight of the neighbouring gentry, who had despised my sufferings, would have given me great regret and sorrow; and it was impossible I should have edified under any doctrine preached by Mr. Peters: So I applied myself to my private devotions.

Mr. Williams came yesterday, and this day, as usual, and took my letter; but, having no good opportunity, we avoided one another's conversation, and kept at a distance: But I was concerned I had not the key; for I would not have lost a moment in that case, had I been he, and he I. When I was at my devotion, Mrs. Jewkes came up, and wanted me sadly to sing her a psalm, as she had often on common days importuned me for a song upon the spinnet: but I declined it, because my spirits were so low I could hardly speak, nor cared to be spoken to; but when she was gone, I remembering the cxxxviith psalm to be a little touching, turned to it, and took the liberty to alter it, somewhat nearer to my case. I hope I did not sin in it; but thus I turned it:

I.

When sad I sat in B—n Hall,  
All guarded round about,  
And thought of ev'ry absent friend,  
The tears for grief burst out.

II.

My joys and hopes all overthrown,  
My heart-strings almost broke,  
Unfit my mind for melody,  
Much more to bear a joke.

III.

Then she to whom I pris'ner was,  
Said to me, tauntingly,  
Now cheer your heart, and sing a song  
And tune your mind to joy.

IV.

Alas! said I, how can I frame  
My heavy heart to sing,  
Or tune my mind, while thus enthrall'd  
By such a wicked thing!

V.

But yet, if from my innocence  
I, ev'n in thought, should slide,  
Then let my fingers quite forget  
The sweet spinnet to guide.

VI.

And let my tongue within my mouth  
Be lock'd for ever fast,  
If I rejoice, before I see  
My full deliv'rance past.

VII.

And thou, Almighty, recompense  
The evils I endure,  
From those who seek my sad disgrace,  
So causeless, to procure.

VIII.

Remember, Lord, this Mrs. Jewkes,  
When, with a mighty sound,  
She cries, Down with her chastity,  
Down to the very ground!

IX.

Ev'n so shalt thou, O wicked one!  
At length to shame be brought,  
And happy shall all those be call'd  
That my deliv'rance wrought.

X.

Yea, blessed shall the man be called  
That shames thee of thy evil,  
And saves me from thy vile attempts,  
And thee, too, from the D--l.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday.

I write now with a little more liking, though less opportunity, because Mr. Williams has got a large parcel of my papers, safe in his hands, to send them to you, as he has opportunity; so I am not quite uselessly employed: and I am delivered besides, from the fear of their being found, if I should be searched, or discovered. I have been permitted to take an airing, five or six miles, with Mrs. Jewkes: But, though I know not the reason, she watches me more closely than ever; so that we have discontinued, by consent, for these three days, the sunflower correspondence.

The poor cook-maid has had a bad mischance; for she has been hurt much by a bull in the pasture, by the side of the garden, not far from the back-door. Now this pasture I am to cross, which is about half a mile, and then is a common, and near that a private horse-road, where I hope to find an opportunity for escaping, as soon as Mr. Williams can get me a horse, and has made all ready for me: for he has got me the key, which he put under the mould, just by the door, as he found an opportunity to hint to me.

He just now has signified, that the gentleman is dead, whose living he has had hope of; and he came pretendedly to tell Mrs. Jewkes of it; and so could speak this to her before me. She wished him joy. See what the world is! One man's death is another man's joy. Thus we thrust out one another!—My hard case makes me serious. He found means to slide a letter into my hands, and is gone away: He looked at me with such respect and solemnness at parting, that Mrs. Jewkes said, Why, madam, I believe our young parson is half in love with you.—Ah! Mrs. Jewkes, said I, he knows better. Said she, (I believe to sound me,) Why, I can't see you can either of you do better; and I have lately been so touched for you, seeing how heavily you apprehend dishonour from my master, that I think it is pity you should not have Mr. Williams.

I knew this must be a fetch of hers; because, instead of being troubled for me, as she pretended, she watched me closer, and him too: and so I said, There is not the man living that I desire to marry. If I can but keep

myself honest, it is all my desire: And to be a comfort and assistance to my poor parents, if it should be my happy lot to be so, is the very top of my ambition. Well, but, said she, I have been thinking very seriously, that Mr. Williams would make you a good husband; and as he will owe all his fortune to my master, he will be very glad, to be sure, to be obliged to him for a wife of his choosing: especially, said she, such a pretty one, and one so ingenious, and genteelly educated.

This gave me a doubt, whether she knew of my master's intimation of that sort formerly; and I asked her, if she had reason to surmise that that was in view? No, she said; it was only her own thought; but it was very likely that my master had either that in view, or something better for me. But, if I approved of it, she would propose such a thing to her master directly; and gave a detestable hint, that I might take resolutions upon it, of bringing such an affair to effect. I told her I abhorred her vile insinuation; and as to Mr. Williams, I thought him a civil good sort of man; but, as on one side, he was above me; so, on the other, I said of all things I did not love a parson. So, finding she could make nothing of me, she quitted the subject. I will open his letter by and by, and give you the contents of it; for she is up and down so much, that I am afraid of her surprising me.

Well, I see Providence has not abandoned me: I shall be under no necessity to make advances to Mr. Williams, if I was (as I am sure I am not) disposed to it. This is his letter:

'I know not how to express myself, lest I should appear to you to have a selfish view in the service I would do you. But I really know but one effectual and honourable way to disengage yourself from the dangerous situation you are in. It is that of marriage with some person that you could make happy in your approbation. As for my own part, it would be, as things stand, my apparent ruin; and, worse still, I should involve you in misery too. But, yet, so great is my veneration for you, and so entire my reliance on Providence, upon so just an occasion, that I should think myself but too happy, if I might be accepted. I would, in this case, forego all my expectations, and be your conductor to some safe distance. But why do I say, in this case? That I will do, whether you think fit to reward me so eminently or not: And I will, the moment I hear of Mr. B——'s setting out, (and I think now I have settled a very good method of intelligence of all

his motions,) get a horse ready, and myself to conduct you. I refer myself wholly to your goodness and direction; and am, with the highest respect,

'Your most faithful humble servant.'

'Don't think this a sudden resolution. I always admired your hear-say character; and the moment I saw you, wished to serve so much excellence.'

What shall I say, my dear father and mother, to this unexpected declaration? I want, now, more than ever, your blessing and direction. But, after all, I have no mind to marry; I had rather live with you. But yet, I would marry a man who begs from door to door, and has no home nor being, rather than endanger my honesty. Yet I cannot, methinks, hear of being a wife.—After a thousand different thoughts, I wrote as follows:

'REVEREND SIR,

'I am greatly confused at the contents of your last. You are much too generous, and I can't bear you should risk all your future prospects for so unworthy a creature. I cannot think of your offer without equal concern and gratitude: for nothing, but to avoid my utter ruin, can make me think of a change of condition; and so, sir, you ought not to accept of such an involuntary compliance, as mine would be, were I, upon the last necessity, to yield to your very generous proposal. I will rely wholly upon your goodness to me, in assisting my escape; but shall not, on your account principally, think of the honour you propose for me at present; and never, but at the pleasure of my parents; who, poor as they are, in such a weighty point, are as much entitled to my obedience and duty, as if they were ever so rich. I beg you, therefore, sir, not to think of any thing from me, but everlasting gratitude, which shall always bind me to be 'Your most obliged servant.'

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, the 14th, 15th, and 16th, of my bondage.

Mrs. Jewkes has received a letter, and is much civiller to me, and Mr. Williams too, than she used to be. I wonder I have not one in answer to mine to my master. I suppose I put the matter too home to him: and he is angry. I am not the more pleased with her civility; for she is horrid cunning, and is not a whit less watchful. I laid a trap to get at her instructions, which she carries in the bosom of her stays; but it has not succeeded.

My last letter is come safe to Mr. Williams by the old conveyance, so that he is not suspected. He has intimated, that though I have not come so



readily as he hoped into his scheme, yet his diligence shall not be slackened, and he will leave it to Providence and himself to dispose of him as he shall be found to deserve. He has signified to me, that he shall soon send a special messenger with the packet to you, and I have added to it what has occurred since.

Sunday.

I am just now quite astonished!—I hope all is right!—but I have a strange turn to acquaint you with. Mr. Williams and Mrs. Jewkes came to me both together; he in ecstasies, she with a strange fluttering sort of air. Well, said she, Mrs. Pamela, I give you joy! I give you joy!—Let nobody speak but me! Then she sat down, as out of breath, puffing and blowing. Why, every thing turns as I said it would! said she: Why, there is to be a match between you and Mr. Williams! Well, I always thought it. Never was so good a master!—Go to, go to, naughty, mistrustful Mrs. Pamela; nay, Mrs. Williams, said the forward creature, I may as good call you: you ought on your knees to beg his pardon a thousand times for mistrusting him.

She was going on; but I said, Don't torture me thus, I beseech you, Mrs. Jewkes. Let me know all!—Ah! Mr. Williams, said I, take care, take care!—Mistrustful again! said she: Why, Mr. Williams, shew her your letter, and I will shew her mine: they were brought by the same hand.

I trembled at the thoughts of what this might mean; and said, You have so surprised me, that I cannot stand, nor hear, nor read! Why did you come up in such a manner to attack such weak spirits? said he, to Mrs. Jewkes, Shall we leave our letters with Mrs. Pamela, and let her recover from her surprise? Ay, said she, with all my heart; here is nothing but flaming honour and good will! And so saying, they left me their letters and withdrew.

My heart was quite sick with the surprise, so that I could not presently read them, notwithstanding my impatience; but, after a while, recovering, I found the contents thus strange and unexpected:

'MR. WILLIAMS,

'The death of Mr. Fownes has now given me the opportunity I have long wanted, to make you happy, and that in a double respect: For I shall soon put you in possession of his living; and, if you have the art of making yourself well received, of one of the loveliest wives in England. She has

not been used (as she has reason to think) according to her merit; but when she finds herself under the protection of a man of virtue and probity, and a happy competency to support life in the manner to which she has been of late years accustomed, I am persuaded she will forgive those seeming hardships which have paved the way to so happy a lot, as I hope it will be to you both. I have only to account for and excuse the odd conduct I have been guilty of, which I shall do when I see you: but as I shall soon set out for London, I believe it will not be yet this month. Mean time, if you can prevail with Pamela, you need not suspend for that your mutual happiness; only let me have notice of it first, and that she approves of it; which ought to be, in so material a point, entirely at her option; as I assure you, on the other hand, I would have it at yours, that nothing may be wanting to complete your happiness. 'I am your humble servant.'

Was ever the like heard?—Lie still, my throbbing heart, divided as thou art, between thy hopes and thy fears!—But this is the letter Mrs. Jewkes left with me:

'MRS. JEWKES,

'You have been very careful and diligent in the task, which, for reasons I shall hereafter explain, I had imposed upon you. Your trouble is now almost at an end; for I have written my intentions to Mr. Williams so particularly, that I need say the less here, because he will not scruple, I believe, to let you know the contents of my letter. I have only one thing to mention, that if you find what I have hinted to him in the least measure disagreeable to either, you assure them both, that they are at entire liberty to pursue their own inclinations. I hope you continue your civilities to the mistrustful, uneasy Pamela, who now will begin to think better of hers and 'Your friend, etc.'

I had hardly time to transcribe these letters, though, writing so much, I write pretty fast, before they both came up again in high spirits; and Mr. Williams said, I am glad at my heart, madam, that I was beforehand in my declarations to you: this generous letter has made me the happiest man on earth; and, Mrs. Jewkes, you may be sure, that if I can procure this fair one's consent, I shall think myself—I interrupted the good man, and said, Ah! Mr. Williams, take care, take care; don't let—There I stopt; and Mrs. Jewkes said, Still mistrustful!—I never saw the like in my life!—But I see, said she, I was not wrong, while my old orders lasted, to be wary of

you both—I should have had a hard task to prevent you, I find; for, as the saying is, Nought can restrain consent of twain.

I doubted not her taking hold of his joyful indiscretion.—I took her letter, and said, Here, Mrs. Jewkes, is yours; I thank you for it; but I have been so long in a maze, that I can say nothing of this for the present. Time will bring all to light.—Sir, said I, here is yours: May every thing turn to your happiness! I give you joy of my master's goodness in the living.—It will be dying, said he, not a living, without you.—Forbear, sir, said I; while I have a father and mother, I am not my own mistress, poor as they are; and I'll see myself quite at liberty, before I shall think myself fit to make a choice.

Mrs. Jewkes held up her eyes and hands, and said, Such art, such caution, such cunning, for thy years!—Well!—Why, said I, (that he might be more on his guard, though I hope there cannot be deceit in this; 'twould be strange villany, and that is a hard word, if there should!) I have been so used to be made a fool of by fortune, that I hardly can tell how to govern myself; and am almost an infidel as to mankind. But I hope I may be wrong; henceforth, Mrs. Jewkes, you shall regulate my opinions as you please, and I will consult you in every thing—(that I think proper, said I to myself)—for, to be sure, though I may forgive her, I can never love her.

She left Mr. Williams and me, a few minutes, together; and I said, Consider, sir, consider what you have done. 'Tis impossible, said he, there can be deceit. I hope so, said I; but what necessity was there for you to talk of your former declaration? Let this be as it will, that could do no good, especially before this woman. Forgive me, sir; they talk of women's promptness of speech; but, indeed, I see an honest heart is not always to be trusted with itself in bad company.

He was going to reply, but though her task is said to be ALMOST (I took notice of that word) at an end, she came up to us again, and said; Well, I had a good mind to show you the way to church to-morrow. I was glad of this, because, though in my present doubtful situation I should not have chosen it, yet I would have encouraged her proposal, to be able to judge by her being in earnest or otherwise, whether one might depend upon the rest. But Mr. Williams again indiscreetly helped her to an excuse, by saying, that it was now best to defer it one Sunday, and till matters were riper for my appearance: and she readily took hold of it, and confirmed his opinion.

After all, I hope the best: but if this should turn out to be a plot, I fear nothing but a miracle can save me. But, sure the heart of man is not capable of such black deceit. Besides, Mr. Williams has it under his own hand, and he dare not but be in earnest: and then again, though to be sure he has been very wrong to me, yet his education, and parents' example, have neither of them taught him such very black contrivances. So I will hope for the best.

Mr. Williams, Mrs. Jewkes, and I, have been all three walking together in the garden; and she pulled out her key, and we walked a little in the pasture to look at the bull, an ugly, grim, surly creature, that hurt the poor cook-maid; who is got pretty well again. Mr. Williams pointed at the sunflower, but I was forced to be very reserved to him; for the poor gentleman has no guard, no caution at all.

We have just supped together, all three: and I cannot yet think that all must be right.—Only I am resolved not to marry, if I can help it; and I will give no encouragement, I am resolved, at least, till I am with you.

Mr. Williams said, before Mrs. Jewkes, he would send a messenger with a letter to my father and mother.—I think the man has no discretion in the world: but I desire you will send no answer, till I have the pleasure and happiness which now I hope for soon, of seeing you. He will, in sending my packet, send a most tedious parcel of stuff, of my oppressions, my distresses, my fears; and so I will send this with it; (for Mrs. Jewkes gives me leave to send a letter to my father, which looks well;) and I am glad I can conclude, after all my sufferings, with my hopes, to be soon with you, which I know will give you comfort; and so I rest, begging the continuance of your prayers and blessings,

Your ever dutiful DAUGHTER.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

I have so much time upon my hands that I must write on, to employ myself. The Sunday evening, where I left off, Mrs. Jewkes asked me, If I chose to be by myself; I said, Yes, with all my heart, if she pleased. Well, said she, after to-night you shall. I asked her for more paper; and she gave me a bottle of ink, eight sheets of paper, which she said was all her store, (for now she would get me to write for her to our master, if she had occasion,) and six pens, with a piece of sealing wax. This looks mighty well.

She pressed me, when she came to bed, very much, to give encouragement to Mr. Williams, and said many things in his behalf; and blamed my shyness to him. I told her, I was resolved to give no encouragement, till I had talked to my father and mother. She said, he fancied I thought of somebody else, or I could never be so insensible. I assured her, as I could do very safely, that there was not a man on earth I wished to have: and as to Mr. Williams, he might do better by far: and I had proposed so much happiness in living with my poor father and mother, that I could not think of any scheme of life with pleasure, till I had tried that. I asked her for my money; and she said, it was above in her strong box, but that I should have it to-morrow. All these things look well, as I said.

Mr. Williams would go home this night, though late, because he would despatch a messenger to you with a letter he had proposed from himself, and my packet. But pray don't encourage him, as I said; for he is much too heady and precipitate as to this matter, in my way of thinking; though, to be sure, he is a very good man, and I am much obliged to him.

Monday morning.

Alas-a-day! we have bad news from poor Mr. Williams. He has had a sad mischance; fallen among rogues in his way home last night: but by good chance has saved my papers. This is the account he gives of it to Mrs. Jewkes:

'GOOD MRS. JEWKES,

'I have had a sore misfortune in going from you. When I had got as near the town as the dam, and was going to cross the wooden bridge, two fellows got hold of me, and swore bitterly they would kill me, if I did not give them what I had. They rummaged my pockets, and took from me my snuff-box, my seal-ring, and half a guinea, and some silver, and halfpence; also my handkerchief, and two or three letters I had in my pockets. By good fortune, the letter Mrs. Pamela gave me was in my bosom, and so that escaped but they bruised my head and face, and cursing me for having no more money, tipped me into the dam, crying, be there, parson, till to-morrow! My shins and knees were bruised much in the fall against one of the stumps; and I had like to have been suffocated in water and mud. To be sure, I shan't be able to stir out this day or two: for I am a frightful spectacle! My hat and wig I was forced to leave behind me, and go home,

a mile and a half, without; but they were found next morning, and brought me, with my snuff-box, which the rogues must have dropped. My cassock is sadly torn, as is my band. To be sure, I was much frightened, for a robbery in these parts has not been known many years. Diligent search is making after the rogues. My humble respects to good Mrs. Pamela: if she pities my misfortunes, I shall be the sooner well, and fit to wait on her and you. This did not hinder me in writing a letter, though with great pain, as I do this, (To be sure this good man can keep no secret!) and sending it away by a man and horse, this morning. I am, good Mrs. Jewkes,

'Your most obliged humble servant.'

'God be praised it is no worse! And I find I have got no cold, though miserably wet from top to toe. My fright, I believe, prevented me from catching cold: for I was not rightly myself for some hours, and know not how I got home. I will write a letter of thanks this night, if I am able, to my kind patron, for his inestimable goodness to me. I wish I was enabled to say all I hope, with regard to the better part of his bounty to me, incomparable Mrs. Pamela.'

The wicked brute fell a laughing, when she had read this letter, till her fat sides shook. Said she, I can but think how the poor parson looked, after parting with his pretty mistress in such high spirits, when he found himself at the bottom of the dam! And what a figure he must cut in his tattered band and cassock, and without a hat and wig, when he got home. I warrant, added she, he was in a sweet pickle!—I said, I thought it was very barbarous to laugh at such a misfortune; but she replied, As he was safe, she laughed; otherwise she would have been sorry: and she was glad to see me so concerned for him—It looked promising, she said.

I heeded not her reflections; but as I have been used to causes for mistrusts, I cannot help saying, that I don't like this thing: And their taking his letters most alarms me.—How happy it was they missed my packet! I knew not what to think of it!—But why should I let every accident break my peace? Yet it will do so, while I stay here.

Mrs. Jewkes is mightily at me, to go with her in the chariot, to visit Mr. Williams. She is so officious to bring on the affair between us, that, being a cunning, artful woman, I know not what to make of it: I have refused her absolutely; urging, that except I intended to encourage his suit, I ought not to do it. And she is gone without me.

I have strange temptations to get away in her absence, for all these fine appearances. 'Tis sad to have nobody to advise with!—I know not what to do. But, alas for me! I have no money, if I should, to buy any body's civilities, or to pay for necessaries or lodgings. But I'll go into the garden, and resolve afterwards——

I have been in the garden, and to the back-door: and there I stood, my heart up at my mouth. I could not see I was watched; so this looks well. But if any thing should go bad afterwards, I should never forgive myself, for not taking this opportunity. Well, I will go down again, and see if all is clear, and how it looks out at the back-door in the pasture.

To be sure, there is witchcraft in this house; and I believe Lucifer is bribed, as well as all about me, and is got into the shape of that nasty grim bull to watch me!—For I have been again, and ventured to open the door, and went out about a bow-shot into the pasture; but there stood that horrid bull, staring me full in the face, with fiery saucer eyes, as I thought. So I got in again, for fear he should come at me. Nobody saw me, however.—Do you think there are such things as witches and spirits? If there be, I believe, in my heart, Mrs. Jewkes has got this bull of her side. But yet, what could I do without money, or a friend'—O this wicked woman! to trick me so! Every thing, man, woman, and beast, is in a plot against your poor Pamela, I think!—Then I know not one step of the way, nor how far to any house or cottage; and whether I could gain protection, if I got to a house: And now the robbers are abroad too, I may run into as great danger as I want to escape; nay, greater much, if these promising appearances hold: And sure my master cannot be so black as that they should not!—What can I do?—I have a good mind to try for it once more; but then I may be pursued and taken: and it will be worse for me; and this wicked woman will beat me, and take my shoes away, and lock me up.

But, after all, if my master should mean well, he can't be angry at my fears, if I should escape; and nobody can blame me; and I can more easily be induced, with you, when all my apprehensions are over, to consider his proposal of Mr. Williams, than I could here; and he pretends, as you have read in his letter, he will leave me to my choice: Why then should I be afraid? I will go down again, I think! But yet my heart misgives me, because of the difficulties before me, in escaping; and being so poor and

so friendless!—O good God! the preserver of the innocent! direct me what to do!

Well, I have just now a sort of strange persuasion upon me, that I ought to try to get way, and leave the issue to Providence. So, once more—I'll see, at least, if this bull be still there.

Alack-a-day! what a fate is this! I have not the courage to go, neither can I think to stay. But I must resolve. The gardener was in sight last time; so made me come up again. But I'll contrive to send him out of the way, if I can:—For if I never should have such another opportunity, I could not forgive myself. Once more I'll venture. God direct my footsteps, and make smooth my path and my way to safety!

Well, here I am, come back again! frightened, like a fool, out of all my purposes! O how terrible every thing appears to me! I had got twice as far again, as I was before, out of the back-door: and I looked and saw the bull, as I thought, between me and the door; and another bull coming towards me the other way: Well, thought I, here is double witchcraft, to be sure! Here is the spirit of my master in one bull, and Mrs. Jewkes's in the other. And now I am gone, to be sure! O help! cried I, like a fool, and ran back to the door, as swift as if I flew. When I had got the door in my hand, I ventured to look back, to see if these supposed bulls were coming; and I saw they were only two poor cows, a grazing in distant places, that my fears had made all this rout about. But as every thing is so frightful to me, I find I am not fit to think of my escape: for I shall be as much frightened at the first strange man that I meet with: and I am persuaded that fear brings one into more dangers, than the caution, that goes along with it, delivers one from.

I then locked the door, and put the key in my pocket, and was in a sad quandary; but I was soon determined; for the maid Nan came in sight, and asked, if any thing was the matter, that I was so often up and down stairs? God forgive me, (but I had a sad lie at my tongue's end,) said I; Though Mrs. Jewkes is sometimes a little hard upon me, yet I know not where I am without her: I go up, and I come down to walk about in the garden; and, not having her, know scarcely what to do with myself. Ay, said the ideot, she is main good company, madam, no wonder you miss her.

So here I am again, and here likely to be; for I have no courage to help myself any where else. O why are poor foolish maidens tried with such



dangers, when they have such weak minds to grapple with them!—I will, since it is so, hope the best: but yet I cannot but observe how grievously every thing makes against me: for here are the robbers; though I fell not into their hands myself, yet they gave me as much terror, and had as great an effect upon my fears, as if I had: And here is the bull; it has as effectually frightened me, as if I had been hurt by it instead of the cook-maid; and so these joined together, as I may say, to make a very dastard of me. But my folly was the worst of all, because that deprived me of my money: for had I had that, I believe I should have ventured both the bull and the robbers.

Monday afternoon.

So, Mrs. Jewkes is returned from her visit: Well, said she, I would have you set your heart at rest; for Mr. Williams will do very well again. He is not half so bad as he fancied. O these scholars, said she, they have not the hearts of mice! He has only a few scratches on his face; which, said she, I suppose he got by grappling among the gravel at the bottom of the dam, to try to find a hole in the ground, to hide himself from the robbers. His shin and his knee are hardly to be seen to ail any thing. He says in his letter, he was a frightful spectacle: He might be so, indeed, when he first came in a doors; but he looks well enough now: and, only for a few groans now and then, when he thinks of his danger, I see nothing is the matter with him. So, Mrs. Pamela, said she, I would have you be very easy about it. I am glad of it, said I, for all your jokes, to Mrs. Jewkes.

Well, said she, he talks of nothing but you: and when I told him I would fain have persuaded you to come with me, the man was out of his wits with his gratitude to me: and so has laid open all his heart to me, and told me all that has passed, and was contriving between you two. This alarmed me prodigiously; and the rather, as I saw, by two or three instances, that his honest heart could keep nothing, believing every one as undesigning as himself. I said, but yet with a heavy heart, Ah! Mrs. Jewkes, Mrs. Jewkes, this might have done with me, had he had any thing that he could have told you of. But you know well enough, that had we been disposed, we had no opportunity for it, from your watchful care and circumspection. No, said she, that's very true, Mrs. Pamela; not so much as for that declaration that he owned before me, he had found opportunity, for all my watchfulness, to make you. Come, come, said she, no more of these shams with me! You

have an excellent head-piece for your years; but may be I am as cunning as you.—However, said she, all is well now; because my watchments are now over, by my master's direction. How have you employed yourself in my absence?

I was so troubled at what might have passed between Mr. Williams and her, that I could not hide it; and she said, Well, Mrs. Pamela, since all matters are likely to be so soon and so happily ended, let me advise you to be a little less concerned at his discoveries; and make me your confidant, as he has done, and I shall think you have some favour for me, and reliance upon me; and perhaps you might not repent it.

She was so earnest, that I mistrusted she did this to pump me; and I knew how, now, to account for her kindness to Mr. Williams in her visit to him; which was only to get out of him what she could. Why, Mrs. Jewkes, said I, is all this fishing about for something, where there is nothing, if there be an end of your watchments, as you call them? Nothing, said she, but womanish curiosity, I'll assure you; for one is naturally led to find out matters, where there is such privacy intended. Well, said I, pray let me know what he has said; and then I'll give you an answer to your curiosity. I don't care, said she, whether you do or not for I have as much as I wanted from him; and I despair of getting out of you any thing you ha'n't a mind I should know, my little cunning dear.—Well, said I, let him have said what he would, I care not: for I am sure he can say no harm of me; and so let us change the talk.

I was the easier, indeed, because, for all her pumps, she gave no hints of the key and the door, etc. which, had he communicated to her, she would not have forborne giving me a touch of.—And so we gave up one another, as despairing to gain our ends of each other. But I am sure he must have said more than he should.—And I am the more apprehensive all is not right, because she has now been actually, these two hours, shut up a writing; though she pretended she had given me up all her stores of papers, etc. and that I should write for her. I begin to wish I had ventured every thing and gone off, when I might. O when will this state of doubt and uneasiness end!

She has just been with me, and says she shall send a messenger to Bedfordshire; and he shall carry a letter of thanks for me, if I will write it for my master's favour to me. Indeed, said I, I have no thanks to give, till I

am with my father and mother: and besides, I sent a letter, as you know; but have had no answer to it. She said, she thought that his letter to Mr. Williams was sufficient; and the least I could do was to thank him, if but in two lines. No need of it, said I; for I don't intend to have Mr. Williams: What then is that letter to me? Well, said she, I see thou art quite unfathomable!

I don't like all this. O my foolish fears of bulls and robbers!—For now all my uneasiness begins to double upon me. O what has this incautious man said! That, no doubt, is the subject of her long letter.

I will close this day's writing, with just saying, that she is mighty silent and reserved, to what she was: and says nothing but No, or Yes, to what I ask. Something must be hatching, I doubt!—I the rather think so, because I find she does not keep her word with me, about lying by myself, and my money; to both which points she returned suspicious answers, saying, as to the one, Why, you are mighty earnest for your money; I shan't run away with it. And to the other, Good-lack! you need not be so willing, as I know of, to part with me for a bed-fellow, till you are sure of one you like better. This cut me to the heart; and, at the same time, stopped my mouth.

Tuesday, Wednesday.

Mr. Williams has been here; but we have had no opportunity to talk together: He seemed confounded at Mrs. Jewkes's change of temper, and reservedness, after her kind visit, and their freedom with one another, and much more at what I am going to tell you. He asked, If I would take a turn in the garden with Mrs. Jewkes and him. No, said she, I can't go. Said he, May not Mrs. Pamela take a walk?—No, said she; I desire she won't. Why, Mrs. Jewkes? said he: I am afraid I have somehow disobliged you. Not at all, replied she; but I suppose you will soon be at liberty to walk together as much as you please: and I have sent a messenger for my last instructions, about this and more weighty matters; and when they come I shall leave you to do as you both will; but, till then, it is no matter how little you are together. This alarmed us both; and he seemed quite struck of a heap, and put on, as I thought, a self-accusing countenance. So I went behind her back, and held my two hands together, flat, with a bit of paper, I had, between them, and looked at him: and he seemed to take me as I intended; intimating the renewing of the correspondence by the tiles.

I left them both together, and retired to my closet to write a letter for the tiles; but having no time for a copy, I will give you the substance only.

I expostulated with him on his too great openness and easiness to fall into Mrs. Jewkes's snares: told him my apprehensions of foul play; and gave briefly the reasons which moved me: begged to know what he had said; and intimated, that I thought there was the highest reason to resume our prospect of the escape by the back-door. I put this in the usual place in the evening; and now wait with impatience for an answer.

Thursday.

I have the following answer:

'DEAREST MADAM,

'I am utterly confounded, and must plead guilty to all your just reproaches. I wish I were master of all but half your caution and discretion! I hope, after all, this is only a touch of this ill woman's temper, to shew her power and importance: For I think Mr. B—— neither can nor dare deceive me in so black a manner. I would expose him all the world over if he did. But it is not, cannot be in him. I have received a letter from John Arnold, in which he tells me, that his master is preparing for his London journey; and believes, afterwards, he will come into these parts: But he says, Lady Davers is at their house, and is to accompany her brother to London, or meet him there, he knows not which. He professes great zeal and affection to your service: and I find he refers to a letter he sent me before, but which is not come to my hand. I think there can be no treachery; for it is a particular friend at Gainsborough, that I have ordered him to direct to; and this is come safe to my hands by this means; for well I know, I durst trust nothing to Brett, at the post-house here. This gives me a little pain; but I hope all will end well, and we shall soon hear, if it be necessary to pursue our former intentions. If it be, I will lose no time to provide a horse for you, and another for myself; for I can never do either God or myself better service, though I were to forego all my expectations for it here, I am 'Your most faithful humble servant.'

'I was too free indeed with Mrs. Jewkes, led to it by her dissimulation, and by her pretended concern to make me happy with you. I hinted, that I would not have scrupled to have procured your deliverance by any means; and that I had proposed to you, as the only honourable one, marriage with me. But I assured her, though she would hardly believe me, that you

discouraged my application: which is too true! But not a word of the back-door key, etc.'

Mrs. Jewkes continues still sullen and ill-natured, and I am almost afraid to speak to her. She watches me as close as ever, and pretends to wonder why I shun her company as I do.

I have just put under the tiles these lines inspired by my fears, which are indeed very strong; and, I doubt, not without reason.

'SIR,

'Every thing gives me additional disturbance. The missed letter of John Arnold's makes me suspect a plot. Yet am I loath to think myself of so much importance, as to suppose every one in a plot against me. Are you sure, however, the London journey is not to be a Lincolnshire one? May not John, who has been once a traitor, be so again?—Why need I be thus in doubt?—If I could have this horse, I would turn the reins on his neck, and trust to Providence to guide him for my safeguard! For I would not endanger you, now just upon the edge of your preferment. Yet, sir, I fear your fatal openness will make you suspected as accessory, let us be ever so cautious.

'Were my life in question, instead of my honesty, I would not wish to involve you, or any body, in the least difficulty, for so worthless a poor creature. But, O sir! my soul is of equal importance with the soul of a princess; though my quality is inferior to that of the meanest slave.

'Save then my innocence, good Heaven! and preserve my mind spotless; and happy shall I be to lay down my worthless life; and see an end to all my troubles and anxieties.

'Forgive my impatience: But my presaging mind bodes horrid mischiefs! Every thing looks dark around me; and this woman's impenetrable sullenness and silence, without any apparent reason, from a conduct so very contrary, bid me fear the worst.—blame me, sir, if you think me wrong; and let me have your advice what to do; which will oblige

'Your most afflicted servant.'

Friday.

I have this half-angry answer; but, what is more to me than all the letters in the world could be, yours, my dear father, enclosed.

'MADAM,

'I think you are too apprehensive by much; I am sorry for your uneasiness. You may depend upon me, and all I can do. But I make no doubt of the London journey, nor of John's contrition and fidelity. I have just received, from my Gainsborough friend, this letter, as I suppose, from your good father, in a cover, directed for me, as I had desired. I hope it contains nothing to add to your uneasiness. Pray, dearest madam, lay aside your fears, and wait a few days for the issue of Mrs. Jewkes's letter, and mine of thanks to Mr. B——. Things, I hope, must be better than you expect. Providence will not desert such piety and innocence: and be this your comfort and reliance: Which is the best advice that can at present be given, by

'Your most faithful humble servant.'

N. B. The father's letter was as follows:

'My DEAREST DAUGHTER,

'Our prayers are at length heard, and we are overwhelmed with joy. O what sufferings, what trials, hast thou gone through! Blessed be the Divine goodness, which has enabled thee to withstand so many temptations! We have not yet had leisure to read through your long accounts of all your hardships. I say long, because I wonder how you could find time and opportunity for them: but otherwise they are the delight of our spare hours; and we shall read them over and over, as long as we live, with thankfulness to God, who has given us so virtuous and so discreet a daughter. How happy is our lot in the midst of our poverty! O let none ever think children a burden to them; when the poorest circumstances can produce so much riches in a Pamela! Persist, my dear daughter, in the same excellent course; and we shall not envy the highest estate, but defy them to produce such a daughter as ours.

'I said, we had not read through all yours in course. We were too impatient, and so turned to the end; where we find your virtue within view of its reward, and your master's heart turned to see the folly of his ways, and the injury he had intended to our dear child: For, to be sure, my dear, he would have ruined you, if he could. But seeing your virtue, his heart is touched; and he has, no doubt, been awakened by your good example.

'We don't see that you can do any way so well, as to come into the present proposal, and make Mr. Williams, the worthy Mr. Williams! God bless him!—happy. And though we are poor, and can add no merit, no

reputation, no fortune, to our dear child, but rather must be a disgrace to her, as the world will think; yet I hope I do not sin in my pride, to say, that there is no good man, of a common degree, (especially as your late lady's kindness gave you such good opportunities, which you have had the grace to improve,) but may think himself happy in you. But, as you say, you had rather not marry at present, far be it from us to offer violence to your inclination! So much prudence as you have shewn in all your conduct, would make it very wrong in us to mistrust it in this, or to offer to direct you in your choice. But, alas! my child, what can we do for you?—To partake our hard lot, and involve yourself into as hard a life, would not help us, but add to your afflictions. But it will be time enough to talk of these things, when we have the pleasure you now put us in hope of, of seeing you with us; which God grant. Amen, amen, say 'Your most indulgent parents. Amen!'

'Our humblest service and thanks to the worthy Mr. Williams. Again we say, God bless him for ever!

'O what a deal we have to say to you! God give us a happy meeting! We understand the 'squire is setting out for London. He is a fine gentleman, and has wit at will. I wish he was as good. But I hope he will now reform.'

O what inexpressible comfort, my dear father, has your letter given me!—You ask, What can you do for me?—What is it you cannot do for your child!—You can give her the advice she has so much wanted, and still wants, and will always want: You can confirm her in the paths of virtue, into which you first initiated her; and you can pray for her, with hearts so sincere and pure, that are not to be met with in palaces!—Oh! how I long to throw myself at your feet, and receive from your own lips the blessings of such good parents! But, alas! how are my prospects again overclouded, to what they were when I closed my last parcel!—More trials, more dangers, I fear, must your poor Pamela be engaged in: But through the Divine goodness, and your prayers, I hope, at last, to get well out of all my difficulties; and the rather, as they are not the effect of my own vanity or presumption!

But I will proceed with my hopeless story. I saw Mr. Williams was a little nettled at my impatience; and so I wrote to assure him I would be as easy as I could, and wholly directed by him; especially as my father, whose respects I mentioned, had assured me my master was setting out for

London, which he must have somehow from his own family or he would not have written me word of it.

Saturday, Sunday.

Mr. Williams has been here both these days, as usual; but is very indifferently received still by Mrs. Jewkes; and, to avoid suspicion, I left them together, and went up to my closet, most of the time he was here. He and she, I found by her, had a quarrel: and she seems quite out of humour with him: but I thought it best not to say any thing: and he said, he would very little trouble the house till he had an answer to his letter from Mr. B ——. And she returned, The less, the better. Poor man! he has got but little by his openness, making Mrs. Jewkes his confidant, as she bragged, and would have had me to do likewise.

I am more and more satisfied there is mischief brewing; and shall begin to hide my papers, and be circumspect. She seems mighty impatient for an answer to her letter to my master.

Monday, Tuesday, the 25th and 26th days of my heavy restraint.

Still more and more strange things to write! A messenger is returned, and now all is out! O wretched, wretched Pamela! What, at last, will become of me!—Such strange turns and trials sure never poor creature, of my years, experienced. He brought two letters, one to Mrs. Jewkes, and one to me: but, as the greatest wits may be sometimes mistaken, they being folded and sealed alike, that for me was directed to Mrs. Jewkes; and that for her was directed to me. But both are stark naught, abominably bad! She brought me up that directed for me, and said, Here's a letter for you: Long-looked-for is come at last. I will ask the messenger a few questions, and then I will read mine. So she went down, and I broke it open in my closet, and found it directed To MRS. PAMELA ANDREWS. But when I opened it, it began, Mrs. Jewkes. I was quite confounded; but, thought I, this may be a lucky mistake; I may discover something: And so I read on these horrid contents:

'MRS. JEWKES,

'What you write me, has given me no small disturbance. This wretched fool's play-thing, no doubt, is ready to leap at any thing that offers, rather than express the least sense of gratitude for all the benefits she has received from my family, and which I was determined more and more to heap upon her. I reserve her for my future resentment; and I charge you



double your diligence in watching her, to prevent her escape. I send this by an honest Swiss, who attended me in my travels; a man I can trust; and so let him be your assistant: for the artful creature is enough to corrupt a nation by her seeming innocence and simplicity; and she may have got a party, perhaps, among my servants with you, as she has here. Even John Arnold, whom I confided in, and favoured more than any, has proved an execrable villain; and shall meet his reward for it.

'As to that college novice, Williams, I need not bid you take care he sees not this painted bauble: for I have ordered Mr. Shorter, my attorney, to throw him instantly into gaol, on an action of debt, for money he has had of me, which I had intended never to carry to account against him; for I know all his rascally practices, besides what you write me of his perfidious intrigue with that girl, and his acknowledged contrivances for her escape; when he knew not, for certain, that I designed her any mischief; and when, if he had been guided by a sense of piety, or compassion for injured innocence, as he pretends, he would have expostulated with me, as his function, and my friendship for him, might have allowed him. But to enter into a vile intrigue with the amiable gewgaw, to favour her escape in so base a manner, (to say nothing of his disgraceful practices against me, in Sir Simon Darnford's family, of which Sir Simon himself has informed me), is a conduct that, instead of preferring the ungrateful wretch, as I had intended, shall pull down upon him utter ruin.

'Monsieur Colbrand, my trusty Swiss, will obey you without reserve, if my other servants refuse.

'As for her denying that she encouraged his declaration, I believe it not. It is certain the speaking picture, with all that pretended innocence and bashfulness, would have run away with him. Yes, she would run away with a fellow that she had been acquainted with (and that not intimately, if you were as careful as you ought to be) but a few days; at a time when she had the strongest assurances of my honour to her.

'Well, I think, I now hate her perfectly: and though I will do nothing to her myself, yet I can bear, for the sake of my revenge, and my injured honour and slighted love, to see any thing, even what she most fears, be done to her; and then she may be turned loose to her evil destiny, and echo to the woods and groves her piteous lamentations for the loss of her

fantastical innocence, which the romantic ideot makes such a work about. I shall go to London, with my sister Davers; and the moment I can disengage myself, which, perhaps, may be in three weeks from this time, I will be with you, and decide her fate, and put an end to your trouble. Mean time be doubly careful; for this innocent, as I have warned you, is full of contrivances. I am 'Your friend.'

I had but just read this dreadful letter through, when Mrs. Jewkes came up in a great fright, guessing at the mistake, and that I had her letter, and she found me with it open in my hand, just sinking away. What business, said she, had you to read my letter? and snatched it from me. You see, said she, looking upon it, it says Mrs. Jewkes, at top: You ought, in manners, to have read no further. O add not, said I, to my afflictions! I shall be soon out of all your ways! This is too much! too much! I never can support this—and threw myself upon the couch, in my closet, and wept most bitterly. She read it in the next room, and came in again afterwards. Why, this, said she, is a sad letter indeed: I am sorry for it: But I feared you would carry your niceties too far!—Leave me, leave me, Mrs. Jewkes, said I, for a while: I cannot speak nor talk.—Poor heart! said she; Well, I'll come up again presently, and hope to find you better. But here, take your own letter; I wish you well; but this is a sad mistake! And so she put down by me that which was intended for me: But I have no spirit to read it at present. O man! man! hard-hearted, cruel man! what mischiefs art thou not capable of, unrelenting persecutor as thou art!

I sat ruminating, when I had a little come to myself, upon the terms of this wicked letter; and had no inclination to look into my own. The bad names, fool's play-thing, artful creature, painted bauble, gewgaw, speaking picture, are hard words for your poor Pamela! and I began to think whether I was not indeed a very naughty body, and had not done vile things: But when I thought of his having discovered poor John, and of Sir Simon's base officiousness, in telling him of Mr. Williams, with what he had resolved against him in revenge for his goodness to me, I was quite dispirited; and yet still more about that fearful Colbrand, and what he could see done to me: for then I was ready to gasp for breath, and my heart quite failed me. Then how dreadful are the words, that he will decide my fate in three weeks! Gracious Heaven, said I, strike me dead, before that time, with a thunderbolt, or provide some way for my escaping these threatened mischiefs! God forgive me, if I sinned!

At last, I took up the letter directed for Mrs. Jewkes, but designed for me; and I find that little better than the other. These are the hard terms it contains:

'Well have you done, perverse, forward, artful, yet foolish Pamela, to convince me, before it was too late, how ill I had done to place my affections on so unworthy an object: I had vowed honour and love to your unworthiness, believing you a mirror of bashful modesty and unspotted innocence; and that no perfidious designs lurked in so fair a bosom. But now I have found you out, you specious hypocrite! and I see, that though you could not repose the least confidence in one you had known for years, and who, under my good mother's misplaced favour for you, had grown up in a manner with you; when my passion, in spite of my pride, and the difference of our condition, made me stoop to a meanness that now I despise myself for; yet you could enter into an intrigue with a man you never knew till within these few days past, and resolve to run away with a stranger, whom your fair face, and insinuating arts, had bewitched to break through all the ties of honour and gratitude to me, even at a time when the happiness of his future life depended upon my favour.

'Henceforth, for Pamela's sake, whenever I see a lovely face, will I mistrust a deceitful heart; and whenever I hear of the greatest pretences to innocence, will I suspect some deep-laid mischief. You were determined to place no confidence in me, though I have solemnly, over and over, engaged my honour to you. What, though I had alarmed your fears in sending you one way, when you hoped to go another; yet, had I not, to convince you of my resolution to do justly by you, (although with great reluctance, such then was my love for you,) engaged not to come near you without your own consent? Was not this a voluntary demonstration of the generosity of my intention to you? Yet how have you requited me? The very first fellow that your charming face, and insinuating address, could influence, you have practised upon, corrupted too, I may say, (and even ruined, as the ungrateful wretch shall find,) and thrown your forward self upon him. As, therefore, you would place no confidence in me, my honour owes you nothing; and, in a little time, you shall find how much you have erred, in treating, as you have done, a man who was once

'Your affectionate and kind friend.'

'Mrs. Jewkes has directions concerning you: and if your lot is now harder than you might wish, you will bear it the easier, because your own rash folly has brought it upon you.'

Alas! for me, what a fate is mine, to be thus thought artful, and forward, and ungrateful; when all I intended was to preserve my innocence; and when all the poor little shifts, which his superior wicked wit and cunning have rendered ineffectual, were forced upon me in my own necessary defence!

When Mrs. Jewkes came up to me again, she found me bathed in tears. She seemed, as I thought, to be moved to some compassion; and finding myself now entirely in her power, and that it is not for me to provoke her, I said, It is now, I see, in vain for me to contend against my evil destiny, and the superior arts of my barbarous master. I will resign myself to the Divine will, and prepare to expect the worst. But you see how this poor Mr. Williams is drawn in and undone: I am sorry I am made the cause of his ruin. Poor, poor man!—to be thus involved, and for my sake too!—But if you'll believe me, said I, I gave no encouragement to what he proposed, as to marriage; nor would he have proposed it, I believe, but as the only honourable way he thought was left to save me: And his principal motive to it at all, was virtue and compassion to one in distress. What other view could he have? You know I am poor and friendless. All I beg of you is, to let the poor gentleman have notice of my master's resentment; and let him fly the country, and not be thrown into gaol. This will answer my master's end as well; for it will as effectually hinder him from assisting me, as if he was in a prison.

Ask me, said she, to do any thing that is in my power, consistent with my duty and trust, and I will do it: for I am sorry for you both. But, to be sure, I shall keep no correspondence with him, nor let you. I offered to talk of a duty superior to that she mentioned, which would oblige her to help distressed innocence, and not permit her to go the lengths enjoined by lawless tyranny; but she plainly bid me be silent on that head: for it was in vain to attempt to persuade her to betray her trust:—All I have to advise you, said she, is to be easy; lay aside all your contrivances and arts to get away, and make me your friend, by giving me no reason to suspect you; for I glory in my fidelity to my master: And you have both practised some strange sly arts, to make such a progress as he has owned there was

between you, so seldom as I thought you saw one another; and I must be more circumspect than I have been.

This doubled my concern; for I now apprehended I should be much closer watched than before.

Well, said I, since I have, by this strange accident, discovered my hard destiny; let me read over again that fearful letter of yours, that I may get it by heart, and with it feed my distress, and make calamity familiar to me. Then, said she, let me read yours again. I gave her mine, and she lent me hers: and so I took a copy of it, with her leave; because, as I said I would, by it, prepare myself for the worst. And when I had done, I pinned it on the head of the couch: This, said I, is the use I shall make of this wretched copy of your letter; and here you shall always find it wet with my tears.

She said she would go down to order supper; and insisted upon my company to it. I would have excused myself; but she began to put on a commanding air, that I durst not oppose. And when I went down, she took me by the hand, and presented me to the most hideous monster I ever saw in my life. Here, Monsieur Colbrand, said she, here is your pretty ward and mine; let us try to make her time with us easy. He bowed, and put on his foreign grimaces, and seemed to bless himself; and, in broken English, told me, I was happy in de affections of de finest gentleman in de varld!—I was quite frightened, and ready to drop down; and I will describe him to you, my dear father and mother, if now you will ever see this: and you shall judge if I had not reason, especially not knowing he was to be there, and being apprised, as I was, of his hated employment, to watch me closer.

He is a giant of a man for stature; taller by a good deal than Harry Mowlidge, in your neighbourhood, and large boned, and scraggy; and has a hand!—I never saw such an one in my life. He has great staring eyes, like the bull's that frightened me so; vast jaw-bones sticking out: eyebrows hanging over his eyes; two great scars upon his forehead, and one on his left cheek; and two large whiskers, and a monstrous wide mouth; blubber lips; long yellow teeth, and a hideous grin. He wears his own frightful long hair, tied up in a great black bag; a black crape neckcloth about a long ugly neck: and his throat sticking out like a wen. As to the rest, he was dressed well enough, and had a sword on, with a nasty red knot to it; leather garters, buckled below his knees; and a foot—near as long as my arm, I verily think.

He said, he fright de lady; and offered to withdraw; but she bid him not; and I told Mrs. Jewkes, That as she knew I had been crying, she should not have called me to the gentleman without letting me know he was there. I soon went up to my closet; for my heart ached all the time I was at table, not being able to look upon him without horror; and this brute of a woman, though she saw my distress, before this addition to it, no doubt did it on purpose to strike more terror into me. And indeed it had its effect: for when I went to bed, I could think of nothing but his hideous person, and my master's more hideous actions: and thought them too well paired; and when I dropt asleep, I dreamed they were both coming to my bedside, with the worst designs; and I jumped out of my bed in my sleep, and frightened Mrs. Jewkes; till, waking with the terror, I told her my dream; and the wicked creature only laughed, and said, All I feared was but a dream, as well as that; and when it was over, and I was well awake, I should laugh at it as such!

And now I am come to the close of Wednesday, the 27th day of my distress.

Poor Mr. Williams is actually arrested, and carried away to Stamford. So there is an end of all my hopes from him, poor gentleman! His over-security and openness have ruined us both! I was but too well convinced, that we ought not to have lost a moment's time; but he was half angry, and thought me too impatient; and then his fatal confessions, and the detestable artifice of my master!—But one might well think, that he who had so cunningly, and so wickedly, contrived all his stratagems hitherto, that it was impossible to avoid them, would stick at nothing to complete them. I fear I shall soon find it so!

But one stratagem I have just invented, though a very discouraging one to think of; because I have neither friends nor money, nor know one step of the way, if I was out of the house. But let bulls, and bears, and lions, and tigers, and, what is worse, false, treacherous, deceitful men, stand in my way, I cannot be in more danger than I am; and I depend nothing upon his three weeks: for how do I know, now he is in such a passion, and has already begun his vengeance on poor Mr. Williams, that he will not change his mind, and come down to Lincolnshire before he goes to London?

My stratagem is this: I will endeavour to get Mrs. Jewkes to go to bed without me, as she often does, while I sit locked up in my closet: and as

she sleeps very sound in her first sleep, of which she never fails to give notice by snoring, if I can but then get out between the two bars of the window, (for you know I am very slender, and I find I can get my head through,) then I can drop upon the leads underneath, which are little more than my height, and which leads are over a little summer-parlour, that juts out towards the garden; and as I am light, I can easily drop from them; for they are not high from the ground: then I shall be in the garden; and then, as I have the key of the back-door, I will get out. But I have another piece of cunning still: Good Heaven, succeed to me my dangerous, but innocent devices!—I have read of a great captain, who, being in danger, leaped overboard into the sea, and his enemies, as he swam, shooting at him with bows and arrows, he unloosed his upper garment, and took another course, while they stuck that full of their darts and arrows; and so he escaped, and lived to triumph over them all. So what will I do, but strip off my upper petticoat, and throw it into the pond, with my neckhandkerchief! For to be sure, when they miss me, they will go to the pond first, thinking I have drowned myself: and so, when they see some of my clothes floating there, they will be all employed in dragging the pond, which is a very large one; and as I shall not, perhaps, be missed till the morning, this will give me opportunity to get a great way off; and I am sure I will run for it when I am out. And so I trust, that Providence will direct my steps to some good place of safety, and make some worthy body my friend; for sure, if I suffer ever so, I cannot be in more danger, nor in worse hands, than where I am; and with such avowed bad designs.

O my dear parents! don't be frightened when you come to read this!—But all will be over before you can see it; and so God direct me for the best! My writings, for fear I should not escape, I will bury in the garden; for, to be sure, I shall be searched and used dreadfully if I can't get off. And so I will close here, for the present, to prepare for my plot. Prosper thou, O gracious Protector of oppressed innocence! this last effort of thy poor handmaid! that I may escape the crafty devices and snares that have begun to entangle my virtue; and from which, but by this one trial, I see no way of escaping. And oh! whatever becomes of me, bless my dear parents, and protect poor Mr. Williams from ruin! for he was happy before he knew me.

Just now, just now! I heard Mrs. Jewkes, who is in her cups, own to the horrid Colbrand, that the robbing of poor Mr. Williams was a contrivance

of hers, and executed by the groom and a helper, in order to seize my letters upon him, which they missed. They are now both laughing at the dismal story, which they little think I overheard—O how my heart aches! for what are not such wretches capable of! Can you blame me for endeavouring, through any danger, to get out of such clutches?

Past eleven o'clock.

Mrs. Jewkes is come up, and gone to bed; and bids me not stay long in my closet, but come to bed. O for a dead sleep for the treacherous brute! I never saw her so tipsy, and that gives me hopes. I have tried again, and find I can get my head through the iron bars. I am now all prepared, as soon as I hear her fast; and now I'll seal up these, and my other papers, my last work: and to thy providence, O my gracious God! commit the rest.—Once more, God bless you both! and send us a happy meeting; if not here, in his heavenly kingdom. Amen.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, the 28th, 29th, 30th, and 31st days of my distress.

And distress indeed! For here I am still; and every thing has been worse and worse! Oh! the poor unhappy Pamela!—Without any hope left, and ruined in all my contrivances. But, oh! my dear parents, rejoice with me, even in this low plunge of my distress; for your poor Pamela has escaped from an enemy worse than any she ever met with; an enemy she never thought of before, and was hardly able to stand against: I mean, the weakness and presumption, both in one, of her own mind; which had well nigh, had not the divine grace interposed, sunk her into the lowest, last abyss of misery and perdition!

I will proceed, as I have opportunity, with my sad relation: for my pen and ink (in my now doubly-secured closet) are all I have to employ myself with: and indeed I have been so weak, that, till yesterday evening, I have not been able to hold a pen.

I took with me but one shift, besides what I had on, and two handkerchiefs, and two caps, which my pocket held, (for it was not for me to encumber myself,) and all my stock of money, which was but five or six shillings, to set out for I knew not where; and got out of the window, not without some difficulty, sticking a little at my shoulders and hips; but I was resolved to get out, if possible. And it was farther from the leads than I thought, and I was afraid I had sprained my ankle; and when I had dropt



from the leads to the ground, it was still farther off; but I did pretty well there, at least. I got no hurt to hinder me from pursuing my intentions. So being now on the ground, I hid my papers under a rose-bush, and covered them with mould, and there they still lie, as I hope. Then I hied away to the pond: The clock struck twelve, just as I got out; and it was a dark misty night, and very cold; but I felt it not then.

When I came to the pond-side, I flung in my upper-coat, as I had designed, and my neckhandkerchief, and a round-eared cap, with a knot; and then with great speed ran to the door, and took the key out of my pocket, my poor heart beating all the time against my bosom, as if it would have forced its way through it: and beat it well might! for I then, too late, found, that I was most miserably disappointed; for the wicked woman had taken off that lock, and put another on; so that my key would not open it. I tried, and tried, and feeling about, I found a padlock besides, on another part of the door. O then how my heart sunk!—I dropt down with grief and confusion, unable to stir or support myself, for a while. But my fears awakening my resolution, and knowing that my attempt would be as terrible for me as any other danger I could then encounter, I clambered up upon the ledges of the door, and upon the lock, which was a great wooden one; and reached the top of the door with my hands; then, little thinking I could climb so well, I made shift to lay hold on the top of the wall with my hands; but, alas for me! nothing but ill luck!—no escape for poor Pamela! The wall being old, the bricks I held by gave way, just as I was taking a spring to get up; and down came I, and received such a blow upon my head, with one of the bricks, that it quite stunned me; and I broke my shins and my ancle besides, and beat off the heel of one of my shoes.

In this dreadful way, flat upon the ground, lay poor I, for I believe five or six minutes; and then trying to get up, I sunk down again two or three times; and my left hip and shoulder were very stiff, and full of pain, with bruises; and, besides, my head bled, and ached grievously with the blow I had with the brick. Yet these hurts I valued not; but crept a good way upon my feet and hands, in search of a ladder, I just recollected to have seen against the wall two days before, on which the gardener was nailing a nectarine branch that was loosened from the wall: but no ladder could I find, and the wall was very high. What now, thought I, must become of the miserable Pamela!—Then I began to wish myself most heartily again in

my closet, and to repent of my attempt, which I now censured as rash, because it did not succeed.

God forgive me! but a sad thought came just then into my head!—I tremble to think of it! Indeed my apprehensions of the usage I should meet with, had like to have made me miserable for ever! O my dear, dear parents, forgive your poor child; but being then quite desperate, I crept along, till I could raise myself on my staggering feet; and away limped I!—What to do, but to throw myself into the pond, and so put a period to all my griefs in this world!—But, O! to find them infinitely aggravated (had I not, by the divine grace, been withheld) in a miserable eternity! As I have escaped this temptation, (blessed be God for it!) I will tell you my conflicts on this dreadful occasion, that the divine mercies may be magnified in my deliverance, that I am yet on this side the dreadful gulf, from which there could have been no return.

It was well for me, as I have since thought, that I was so maimed, as made me the longer before I got to the water; for this gave me time to consider, and abated the impetuosity of my passions, which possibly might otherwise have hurried me, in my first transport of grief, (on my seeing no way to escape, and the hard usage I had reason to expect from my dreadful keepers,) to throw myself in. But my weakness of body made me move so slowly, that it gave time, as I said, for a little reflection, a ray of grace, to dart in upon my benighted mind; and so, when I came to the pond-side, I sat myself down on the sloping bank, and began to ponder my wretched condition; and thus I reasoned with myself.

Pause here a little, Pamela, on what thou art about, before thou takest the dreadful leap; and consider whether there be no way yet left, no hope, if not to escape from this wicked house, yet from the mischiefs threatened thee in it.

I then considered; and, after I had cast about in my mind every thing that could make me hope, and saw no probability; a wicked woman, devoid of all compassion! a horrid helper, just arrived, in this dreadful Colbrand! an angry and resenting master, who now hated me, and threatened the most afflicting evils! and that I should, in all probability, be deprived even of the opportunity, I now had before me, to free myself from all their persecutions!—What hast thou to do, distressed creature, said I to myself, but throw thyself upon a merciful God, (who knows how

innocently I suffer,) to avoid the merciless wickedness of those who are determined on my ruin?

And then, thought I, (and oh! that thought was surely of the devil's instigation; for it was very soothing, and powerful with me,) these wicked wretches, who now have no remorse, no pity on me, will then be moved to lament their misdoings; and when they see the dead corpse of the unhappy Pamela dragged out to these dewy banks, and lying breathless at their feet, they will find that remorse to soften their obdurate heart, which, now, has no place there!—And my master, my angry master, will then forget his resentments, and say, O, this is the unhappy Pamela! that I have so causelessly persecuted and destroyed! Now do I see she preferred her honesty to her life, will he say, and is no hypocrite, nor deceiver; but really was the innocent creature she pretended to be! Then, thought I, will he, perhaps, shed a few tears over the poor corpse of his persecuted servant; and though he may give out, it was love and disappointment; and that, perhaps, (in order to hide his own guilt,) for the unfortunate Mr. Williams, yet will he be inwardly grieved, and order me a decent funeral, and save me, or rather this part of me, from the dreadful stake, and the highway interment; and the young men and maidens all around my dear father's will pity poor Pamela! But, O! I hope I shall not be the subject of their ballads and elegies; but that my memory, for the sake of my dear father and mother, may quickly slide into oblivion.

I was once rising, so indulgent was I to this sad way of thinking, to throw myself in: But, again, my bruises made me slow; and I thought, What art thou about to do, wretched Pamela? How knowest thou, though the prospect be all dark to thy short-sighted eye, what God may do for thee, even when all human means fail? God Almighty would not lay me under these sore afflictions, if he had not given me strength to grapple with them, if I will exert it as I ought: And who knows, but that the very presence I so much dread of my angry and designing master, (for he has had me in his power before, and yet I have escaped;) may be better for me, than these persecuting emissaries of his, who, for his money, are true to their wicked trust, and are hardened by that, and a long habit of wickedness, against compunction of heart? God can touch his heart in an instant; and if this should not be done, I can then but put an end to my life by some other means, if I am so resolved.

But how do I know, thought I, that even these bruises and maims that I have gotten, while I pursued only the laudable escape I had meditated, may not kindly have furnished me with the opportunity I am now tempted with to precipitate myself, and of surrendering up my life, spotless and unguilty, to that merciful Being who gave it!

Then, thought I, who gave thee, presumptuous as thou art, a power over thy life? Who authorised thee to put an end to it, when the weakness of thy mind suggests not to thee a way to preserve it with honour? How knowest thou what purposes God may have to serve, by the trials with which thou art now exercised? Art thou to put a bound to the divine will, and to say, Thus much will I bear, and no more? And wilt thou dare to say, That if the trial be augmented and continued, thou wilt sooner die than bear it?

This act of despondency, thought I, is a sin, that, if I pursue it, admits of no repentance, and can therefore hope no forgiveness.—And wilt thou, to shorten thy transitory griefs, heavy as they are, and weak as thou fanciest thyself, plunge both body and soul into everlasting misery! Hitherto, Pamela, thought I, thou art the innocent, the suffering Pamela; and wilt thou, to avoid thy sufferings, be the guilty aggressor? And, because wicked men persecute thee, wilt thou fly in the face of the Almighty, and distrust his grace and goodness, who can still turn all these sufferings to benefits? And how do I know, but that God, who sees all the lurking vileness of my heart, may have permitted these sufferings on that very score, and to make me rely solely on his grace and assistance, who, perhaps, have too much prided myself in a vain dependence on my own foolish contrivances?

Then, again, thought I, wilt thou suffer in one moment all the good lessons of thy poor honest parents, and the benefit of their example, (who have persisted in doing their duty with resignation to the divine will, amidst the extreme degrees of disappointment, poverty, and distress, and the persecutions of an ungrateful world, and merciless creditors,) to be thrown away upon thee: and bring down, as in all probability this thy rashness will, their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, when they shall understand, that their beloved daughter, slighting the tenders of divine grace, despairing of the mercies of a protecting God, has blemished, in this last act, a whole life, which they had hitherto approved and delighted in?

What then, presumptuous Pamela, dost thou here? thought I: Quit with speed these perilous banks, and fly from these curling waters, that seem, in

their meaning murmurs, this still night, to reproach thy rashness! Tempt not God's goodness on the mossy banks, that have been witnesses of thy guilty purpose: and while thou hast power left thee, avoid the tempting evil, lest thy grand enemy, now repulsed by divine grace, and due reflection, return to the assault with a force that thy weakness may not be able to resist! and let one rash moment destroy all the convictions, which now have awed thy rebellious mind into duty and resignation to the divine will!

And so saying, I arose; but was so stiff with my hurts, so cold with the moist dew of the night, and the wet grass on which I had sat, as also with the damps arising from so large a piece of water, that with great pain I got from this pond, which now I think of with terror; and bending my limping steps towards the house, took refuge in the corner of an outhouse, where wood and coals are laid up for family use, till I should be found by my cruel keepers, and consigned to a more wretched confinement, and worse usage than I had hitherto experienced; and there behind a pile of firewood I crept, and lay down, as you may imagine, with a mind just broken, and a heart sensible to nothing but the extremest woe and dejection.

This, my dear father and mother, is the issue of your poor Pamela's fruitless enterprise; and who knows, if I had got out at the back-door, whether I had been at all in a better case, moneyless, friendless, as I am, and in a strange place!—But blame not your poor daughter too much: Nay, if ever you see this miserable scribble, all bathed and blotted with my tears, let your pity get the better of your reprehension! But I know it will—And I must leave off for the present.—For, oh! my strength and my will are at this time very far unequal to one another.—But yet I will add, that though I should have praised God for my deliverance, had I been freed from my wicked keepers, and my designing master; yet I have more abundant reason to praise him, that I have been delivered from a worse enemy,—myself!

I will conclude my sad relation.

It seems Mrs. Jewkes awaked not till day-break; and not finding me in bed, she called me; and, no answer being returned, she relates, that she got out of bed, and ran to my closet; and, missing me, searched under the bed, and in another closet, finding the chamber-door as she had left it, quite fast, and the key, as usual, about her wrist. For if I could have got out of

the chamber-door, there were two or three passages, and doors to them all, double-locked and barred, to go through into the great garden; so that, to escape, there was no way, but out of the window; and of that window, because of the summer-parlour under it: for the other windows are a great way from the ground.

She says she was excessively frightened; and instantly raised the Swiss, and the two maids, who lay not far off; and finding every door fast, she said, I must be carried away, as St. Peter was out of prison, by some angel. It is a wonder she had not a worse thought!

She says, she wept, and wrung her hands, and took on sadly, running about like a mad woman, little thinking I could have got out of the closet window, between the iron bars; and, indeed, I don't know whether I could do so again. But at last finding that casement open, they concluded it must be so; and ran out into the garden, and found my footsteps in the mould of the bed which I dropt down upon from the leads: And so speeded away all of them; that is to say, Mrs. Jewkes, Colbrand, and Nan, towards the back-door, to see if that was fast; while the cook was sent to the out-offices to raise the men, and make them get horses ready, to take each a several way to pursue me.

But, it seems, finding that door double-locked and padlocked, and the heel of my shoe, and the broken bricks, they verily concluded I was got away by some means over the wall; and then, they say, Mrs. Jewkes seemed like a distracted woman: Till, at last, Nan had the thought to go towards the pond: and there seeing my coat, and cap, and handkerchief, in the water, cast almost to the banks by the agitation of the waves, she thought it was me; and, screaming out, ran to Mrs. Jewkes, and said, O, madam, madam! here's a piteous thing!—Mrs. Pamela lies drowned in the pond. Thither they all ran; and finding my clothes, doubted not I was at the bottom; and they all, Swiss among the rest, beat their breasts, and made most dismal lamentations; and Mrs. Jewkes sent Nan to the men, to bid them get the drag-net ready, and leave the horses, and come to try to find the poor innocent! as she, it seems, then called me, beating her breast, and lamenting my hard hap; but most what would become of them, and what account they should give to my master.

While every one was thus differently employed, some weeping and wailing, some running here and there, Nan came into the wood-house; and

there lay poor I; so weak, so low, and dejected, and withal so stiff with my bruises, that I could not stir, nor help myself to get upon my feet. And I said, with a low voice, (for I could hardly speak,) Mrs. Ann! Mrs. Ann!—The creature was sadly frightened, but was taking up a billet to knock me on the head, believing I was some thief, as she said; but I cried out, O Mrs. Ann, Mrs. Ann, help me, for pity's sake, to Mrs. Jewkes! for I cannot get up!—Bless me, said she, what! you, madam!—Why, our hearts are almost broken, and we were going to drag the pond for you, believing you had drowned yourself. Now, said she, you'll make us all alive again!

And, without helping me, she ran away to the pond, and brought all the crew to the wood-house.—The wicked woman, as she entered, said, Where is she?—Plague of her spells, and her witchcrafts! She shall dearly repent of this trick, if my name be Jewkes; and, coming to me, took hold of my arm so roughly, and gave me such a pull, as made me squeal out, (my shoulder being bruised on that side,) and drew me on my face. O cruel creature! said I, if you knew what I have suffered, it would move you to pity me!

Even Colbrand seemed to be concerned, and said, Fie, madam, fie! you see she is almost dead! You must not be so rough with her. The coachman Robin seemed to be sorry for me too, and said, with sobs, What a scene is here! Don't you see she is all bloody in her head, and cannot stir?—Curse of her contrivance! said the horrid creature; she has frightened me out of my wits, I'm sure. How the d—l came you here?—Oh! said I, ask me now no questions, but let the maids carry me up to my prison; and there let me die decently, and in peace! For, indeed, I thought I could not live two hours.

The still more inhuman tigress said, I suppose you want Mr. Williams to pray by you, don't you? Well, I'll send for my master this minute: let him come and watch you himself, for me; for there's no such thing as holding you, I'm sure.

So the maids took me up between them, and carried me to my chamber; and when the wretch saw how bad I was, she began a little to relent—while every one wondered (at which I had neither strength nor inclination to tell them) how all this came to pass, which they imputed to sorcery and witchcraft.

I was so weak, when I had got up stairs, that I fainted away, with dejection, pain, and fatigue; and they undressed me, and got me to bed; and Mrs. Jewkes ordered Nan to bathe my shoulder, and arm, and ankle, with some old rum warmed; and they cut the hair a little from the back part of my head, and washed that; for it was clotted with blood, from a pretty long, but not a deep gash; and put a family plaister upon it; for, if this woman has any good quality, it is, it seems, in a readiness and skill to manage in cases, where sudden misfortunes happen in a family.

After this, I fell into a pretty sound and refreshing sleep, and lay till twelve o'clock, tolerably easy, considering I was very feverish, and aguishly inclined; and she took a deal of care to fit me to undergo more trials, which I had hoped would have been happily ended: but Providence did not see fit.

She would make me rise about twelve: but I was so weak, I could only sit up till the bed was made, and went into it again; and was, as they said, delirious some part of the afternoon. But having a tolerable night on Thursday, I was a good deal better on Friday, and on Saturday got up, and ate a little spoon-meat, and my feverishness seemed to be gone; and I was so mended by evening, that I begged her indulgence in my closet, to be left to myself; which she consented to, it being double-barred the day before, and I assuring her, that all my contrivances, as she called them, were at an end. But first she made me tell the whole story of my enterprise; which I did very faithfully, knowing now that nothing could stand me in any stead, or contribute to my safety and escape: And she seemed full of wonder at my resolution; but told me frankly, that I should have found it a hard matter to get quite off; for that she was provided with a warrant from my master (who is a justice of peace in this county as well as in the other) to get me apprehended, if I had got away, on suspicion of wronging him, let me have been where I would.

O how deep-laid are the mischiefs designed to fall on my devoted head!—Surely, surely, I cannot be worthy of all this contrivance! This too well shews me the truth of what was hinted to me formerly at the other house, that my master swore he would have me! O preserve me, Heaven! from being his, in his own wicked sense of the adjuration!

I must add, that now the woman sees me pick up so fast, she uses me worse, and has abridged me of paper, all but one sheet, which I am to shew



her, written or unwritten, on demand: and has reduced me to one pen: yet my hidden stores stand me in stead. But she is more and more snappish and cross; and tauntingly calls me Mrs. Williams, and any thing she thinks will vex me.

Sunday afternoon.

Mrs. Jewkes has thought fit to give me an airing, for three or four hours, this afternoon; and I am a good deal better and should be much more so, if I knew for what I am reserved. But health is a blessing hardly to be coveted in my circumstances, since that but exposes me to the calamity I am in continual apprehensions of; whereas a weak and sickly state might possibly move compassion for me. O how I dread the coming of this angry and incensed master; though I am sure I have done him no harm!

Just now we heard, that he had like to have been drowned in crossing the stream, a few days ago, in pursuing his game. What is the matter, that with all his ill usage of me, I cannot hate him? To be sure, I am not like other people! He has certainly done enough to make me hate him; but yet, when I heard his danger, which was very great, I could not in my heart forbear rejoicing for his safety; though his death would have ended my afflictions. Ungenerous master! if you knew this, you surely would not be so much my persecutor! But, for my late good lady's sake, I must wish him well; and O what an angel would he be in my eyes yet, if he would cease his attempts, and reform!

Well, I hear by Mrs. Jewkes, that John Arnold is turned away, being detected in writing to Mr. Williams; and that Mr. Longman, and Mr. Jonathan the butler, have incurred his displeasure, for offering to speak in my behalf. Mrs. Jervis too is in danger; for all these three, probably, went together to beg in my favour; for now it is known where I am.

Mrs. Jewkes has, with the news about my master, received a letter: but she says the contents are too bad for me to know. They must be bad indeed, if they be worse than what I have already known.

Just now the horrid creature tells me, as a secret, that she has reason to think he has found out a way to satisfy my scruples: It is, by marrying me to this dreadful Colbrand, and buying me of him on the wedding day, for a sum of money!—Was ever the like heard?—She says it will be my duty to obey my husband; and that Mr. Williams will be forced, as a punishment, to marry us; and that, when my master has paid for me, and I am

surrendered up, the Swiss is to go home again, with the money, to his former wife and children; for, she says, it is the custom of those people to have a wife in every nation.

But this, to be sure, is horrid romancing! Yet, abominable as it is, it may possibly serve to introduce some plot now hatching!—With what strange perplexities is my poor mind agitated! Perchance, some sham-marriage may be designed, on purpose to ruin me; But can a husband sell his wife against her own consent?—And will such a bargain stand good in law?

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, the 32d, 33d, and 34th days of my imprisonment.

Nothing offers these days but squabblings between Mrs. Jewkes and me. She grows worse and worse to me. I vexed her yesterday, because she talked nastily; and told her she talked more like a vile London prostitute, than a gentleman's housekeeper; and she thinks she cannot use me bad enough for it. Bless me! she curses and storms at me like a trooper, and can hardly keep her hands off me. You may believe she must talk sadly, to make me say such harsh words: indeed it cannot be repeated; as she is a disgrace to her sex. And then she ridicules me, and laughs at my notions of honesty; and tells me, impudent creature as she is! what a fine bed-fellow I shall make for my master (and such-like), with such whimsical notions about me!—Do you think this is to be borne? And yet she talks worse than this, if possible! quite filthily! O what vile hands am I put into!

Thursday.

I have now all the reason that can be, to apprehend my master will be here soon; for the servants are busy in setting the house to rights; and a stable and coach-house are cleaning out, that have not been used some time. I asked Mrs. Jewkes; but she tells me nothing, nor will hardly answer me when I ask her a question. Sometimes I think she puts on these strange wicked airs to me, purposely to make me wish for, what I dread most of all things, my master's coming down. He talk of love!—If he had any the least notion of regard for me, to be sure he would not give this naughty body such power over me:—And if he does come, where is his promise of not seeing me without I consent to it? But, it seems, his honour owes me nothing! So he tells me in his letter. And why? Because I am willing to keep mine. But, indeed, he says, he hates me perfectly: But it is plain he

does, or I should not be left to the mercy of this woman: and, what is worse, to my woful apprehensions.

Friday, the 36th day of my imprisonment.

I took the liberty yesterday afternoon, finding the gates open, to walk out before the house; and, ere I was aware, had got to the bottom of the long row of elms; and there I sat myself down upon the steps of a sort of broad stile, which leads into the road, and goes towards the town. And as I sat musing upon what always busies my mind, I saw a whole body of folks running towards me from the house, men and women, as in a fright. At first I wondered what was the matter, till they came nearer; and I found they were all alarmed, thinking I had attempted to get off. There was first the horrible Colbrand, running with his long legs, well nigh two yards at a stride; then there was one of the grooms, poor Mr. Williams's robber; then I spied Nan, half out of breath, and the cook-maid after her! and lastly, came waddling, as fast as she could, Mrs. Jewkes, exclaiming most bitterly, as I found, against me. Colbrand said, O how have you frightened us all!—And went behind me, lest I should run away, as I suppose.

I sat still, to let them see I had no view to get away; for, besides the improbability of succeeding, my last sad attempt has cured me of enterprising again. And when Mrs. Jewkes came within hearing, I found her terribly incensed, and raving about my contrivances. Why, said I, should you be so concerned? Here I have sat a few minutes, and had not the least thought of getting away, or going farther; but to return as soon as it was duskish. She would not believe me; and the barbarous creature struck at me with her horrid fist, and, I believe, would have felled me, had not Colbrand interposed, and said, He saw me sitting still, looking about me, and not seeming to have the least inclination to stir. But this would not serve: She ordered the two maids to take me each by an arm, and lead me back into the house, and up stairs; and there have I been locked up ever since, without shoes. In vain have I pleaded, that I had no design, as indeed I had not the least; and last night I was forced to be between her and Nan; and I find she is resolved to make a handle of this against me, and in her own behalf.—Indeed, what with her usage, and my own apprehensions of still worse, I am quite weary of my life.

Just now she has been with me, and given me my shoes, and has laid her imperious commands upon me, to dress myself in a suit of clothes out of

the portmanteau, which I have not seen lately, against three or four o'clock; for she says, she is to have a visit from Lady Darnford's two daughters, who come purposely to see me; and so she gave me the key of the portmanteau. But I will not obey her; and I told her, I would not be made a show of, nor see the ladies. She left me, saying, it would be worse for me, if I did not. But how can that be?

Five o'clock is come,

And no young ladies!—So that I fancy—But hold! I hear their coach, I believe. I'll step to the window.—I won't go down to them, I am resolved —

Good sirs! good sirs! What will become of me! Here is my master come in his fine chariot!—Indeed he is! What shall I do? Where shall I hide myself?—O! What shall I do? Pray for me! But oh! you'll not see this!—Now, good God of heaven, preserve me; if it be thy blessed will!

Seven o'clock.

Though I dread to see him, yet do I wonder I have not. To be sure something is resolved against me, and he stays to hear all her stories. I can hardly write; yet, as I can do nothing else, I know not how to forbear!—Yet I cannot hold my pen—How crooked and trembling the lines!—I must leave off, till I can get quieter fingers!—Why should the guiltless tremble so, when the guilty can possess their minds in peace?

Saturday morning.

Now let me give you an account of what passed last night: for I had no power to write, nor yet opportunity till now.

This vile woman held my master till half an hour after seven; and he came hither about five in the afternoon. And then I heard his voice on the stairs, as he was coming up to me. It was about his supper; for he said, I shall choose a boiled chicken with butter and parsley.—And up he came!

He put on a stern and majestic air; and he can look very majestic when he pleases. Well, perverse Pamela, ungrateful runaway, said he, for my first salutation!—You do well, don't you, to give me all this trouble and vexation! I could not speak; but throwing myself on the floor, hid my face, and was ready to die with grief and apprehension.—He said, Well may you hide your face! well may you be ashamed to see me, vile forward one, as you are!—I sobbed and wept, but could not speak. And he let me lie, and

went to the door, and called Mrs. Jewkes.—There, said he, take up that fallen angel!—Once I thought her as innocent as an angel of light but I have now no patience with her. The little hypocrite prostrates herself thus, in hopes to move my weakness in her favour, and that I'll raise her from the floor myself. But I shall not touch her: No, said he, cruel gentleman as he was! let such fellows as Williams be taken in by her artful wiles! I know her now, and see she is for any fool's turn, that will be caught by her.

I sighed, as if my heart would break!—And Mrs. Jewkes lifted me up upon my knees; for I trembled so, I could not stand. Come, said she, Mrs. Pamela, learn to know your best friend; confess your unworthy behaviour, and beg his honour's forgiveness of all your faults. I was ready to faint: And he said, She is mistress of arts, I'll assure you; and will mimic a fit, ten to one, in a minute.

I was struck to the heart at this; but could not speak presently; only lifted up my eyes to heaven!—And at last made shift to say—God forgive you, sir!—He seemed in a great passion, and walked up and down the room, casting sometimes an eye upon me, and seeming as if he would have spoken, but checked himself—And at last he said, When she has acted this her first part over, perhaps I will see her again, and she shall soon know what she has to trust to.

And so he went out of the room: And I was quite sick at heart!—Surely, said I, I am the wickedest creature that ever breathed! Well, said the impertinent, not so wicked as that neither; but I am glad you begin to see your faults. Nothing like being humble!—Come, I'll stand your friend, and plead for you, if you'll promise to be more dutiful for the future: Come, come, added the wretch, this may be all made up by to-morrow morning, if you are not a fool.—Begone, hideous woman! said I, and let not my affliction be added to by thy inexorable cruelty, and unwomanly wickedness.

She gave me a push, and went away in a violent passion: And it seems, she made a story of this; and said, I had such a spirit, there was no bearing it.

I laid me down on the floor, and had no power to stir, till the clock struck nine: and then the wicked woman came up again. You must come down stairs, said she, to my master; that is, if you please, spirit!—Said I, I

believe I cannot stand. Then, said she, I'll send Mons. Colbrand to carry you down.

I got up as well as I could, and trembled all the way down stairs: And she went before me into the parlour; and a new servant that he had waiting on him, instead of John, withdrew as soon as I came in: And, by the way, he had a new coachman too, which looked as if Bedfordshire Robin was turned away.

I thought, said he, when I came down, you should have sat at table with me, when I had not company; but when I find you cannot forget your original, but must prefer my menials to me, I call you down to wait on me while I sup, that I may have some talk with you, and throw away as little time as possible upon you.

Sir, said I, you do me honour to wait upon you:—And I never shall, I hope, forget my original. But I was forced to stand behind his chair, that I might hold by it. Fill me, said he, a glass of that Burgundy. I went to do it, but my hand shook so, that I could not hold the plate with the glass in it, and spilt some of the wine. So Mrs. Jewkes poured it for me, and I carried it as well as I could; and made a low courtesy. He took it, and said, Stand behind me, out of my sight!

Why, Mrs. Jewkes, said he, you tell me she remains very sullen still, and eats nothing. No, said she, not so much as will keep life and soul together.—And is always crying, you say, too? Yes, sir, answered she, I think she is, for one thing or another. Ay, said he, your young wenches will feed upon their tears; and their obstinacy will serve them for meat and drink. I think I never saw her look better though, in my life!—But, I suppose, she lives upon love. This sweet Mr. Williams, and her little villanous plots together, have kept her alive and well, to be sure: For mischief, love, and contradiction, are the natural aliments of a woman.

Poor I was forced to hear all this, and be silent; and indeed my heart was too full to speak.

And so you say, said he, that she had another project, but yesterday, to get away? She denies it herself, said she; but it had all the appearance of one. I'm sure she made me in a fearful pucker about it: And I am glad your honour is come, with all my heart; and I hope, whatever be your honour's intention concerning her, you will not be long about it; for you'll find her as slippery as an eel, I'll assure you.

Sir, said I, and clasped his knees with my arms, not knowing what I did, and falling on my knees, Have mercy on me, and hear me, concerning that wicked woman's usage of me—

He cruelly interrupted me, and said, I am satisfied she has done her duty: it signifies nothing what you say against Mrs. Jewkes. That you are here, little hypocrite as you are, pleading your cause before me, is owing to her care of you; else you had been with the parson.—Wicked girl! said he, to tempt a man to undo himself, as you have done him, at a time I was on the point of making him happy for his life!

I arose; but said with a deep sigh, I have done, sir!—I have done!—I have a strange tribunal to plead before. The poor sheep in the fable had such an one; when it was tried before the vulture, on the accusation of the wolf!

So, Mrs. Jewkes, said he, you are the wolf, I the vulture, and this the poor innocent lamb on her trial before us.—Oh! you don't know how well this innocent is read in reflection. She has wit at will, when she has a mind to display her own romantic innocence, at the price of other people's characters.

Well, said the aggravated creature, this is nothing to what she has called me: I have been a Jezebel, a London prostitute, and what not?—But I am contented with her ill names, now I see it is her fashion, and she can call your honour a vulture.

Said I, I had no thought of comparing my master—and was going to say on: but he said, Don't prate, girl!—No, said she, it don't become you, I am sure.

Well, said I, since I must not speak, I will hold my peace; but there is a righteous Judge, who knows the secrets of all hearts; and to him I appeal.

See there! said he: now this meek, good creature is praying for fire from heaven upon us! O she can curse most heartily, in the spirit of Christian meekness, I'll assure you!—Come, saucy-face, give me another glass of wine.

So I did, as well as I could; but wept so, that he said, I suppose I shall have some of your tears in my wine!

When he had supped, he stood up, and said, O how happy for you it is, that you can, at will, thus make your speaking eyes overflow in this

manner, without losing any of their brilliancy! You have been told, I suppose, that you are most beautiful in your tears!—Did you ever, said he to her, (who all this while was standing in one corner of the parlour,) see a more charming creature than this? Is it to be wondered at, that I demean myself thus to take notice of her?—See, said he, and took the glass with one hand, and turned me round with the other, what a shape! what a neck! what a hand! and what a bloom on that lovely face!—But who can describe the tricks and artifices, that lie lurking in her little, plotting, guileful heart! 'Tis no wonder the poor parson was infatuated with her.—I blame him less than I do her; for who could expect such artifice in so young a sorceress?

I went to the farther part of the room, and held my face against the wainscot; and in spite of all I could do to refrain crying, sobbed as if my heart would break. He said, I am surprised, Mrs. Jewkes, at the mistake of the letters you tell me of! But, you see, I am not afraid any body should read what I write. I don't carry on private correspondences, and reveal every secret that comes to my knowledge, and then corrupt people to carry my letters against their duty, and all good conscience.

Come hither, hussy! said he: You and I have a dreadful reckoning to make. Why don't you come, when I bid you?—Fie upon it, Mrs. Pamela, said she. What! not stir, when his honour commands you to come to him!—Who knows but his goodness will forgive you?

He came to me, (for I had no power to stir,) and put his arms about my neck, and would kiss me; and said, Well, Mrs. Jewkes, if it were not for the thought of this cursed parson, I believe in my heart, so great is my weakness, that I could not forgive this intriguing little slut, and take her to my bosom.

O, said the sycophant, you are very good, sir, very forgiving, indeed!—But come, added the profligate wretch, I hope you will be so good, as to take her to your bosom; and that, by to-morrow morning, you'll bring her to a better sense of her duty!

Could any thing in womanhood be so vile? I had no patience: but yet grief and indignation choked up the passage of my words; and I could only stammer out a passionate exclamation to Heaven, to protect my innocence. But the word was the subject of their ridicule. Was ever poor creature worse beset!



He said, as if he had been considering whether he could forgive me or not, No, I cannot yet forgive her neither.—She has given me great disturbance, has brought great discredit upon me, both abroad and at home: has corrupted all my servants at the other house; has despised my honourable views and intentions to her, and sought to run away with this ungrateful parson.—And surely I ought not to forgive all this!—Yet, with all this wretched grimace, he kissed me again, and would have put his hand into my bosom; but I struggled, and said, I would die before I would be used thus.—Consider, Pamela, said he, in a threatening tone, consider where you are! and don't play the fool: If you do, a more dreadful fate awaits you than you expect. But take her up stairs, Mrs. Jewkes, and I'll send a few lines to her to consider of; and let me have your answer, Pamela, in the morning. 'Till then you have to resolve: and after that your doom is fixed.—So I went up stairs, and gave myself up to grief, and expectation of what he would send: but yet I was glad of this night's reprieve!

He sent me, however, nothing at all. And about twelve o'clock, Mrs. Jewkes and Nan came up, as the night before, to be my bed-fellows: and I would go to bed with some of my clothes on: which they muttered at sadly; and Mrs. Jewkes railed at me particularly. Indeed I would have sat up all night, for fear, if she would have let me. For I had but very little rest that night, apprehending this woman would let my master in. She did nothing but praise him, and blame me: but I answered her as little as I could.

He has Sir Simon Tell-tale, alias Darnford, to dine with him to-day, whose family sent to welcome him into the country; and it seems the old knight wants to see me; so I suppose I shall be sent for, as Samson was, to make sport for him.—Here I am, and must bear it all!

Twelve o'clock, Saturday noon.

Just now he has sent me up, by Mrs. Jewkes, the following proposals. So here are the honourable intentions all at once laid open. They are, my dear parents, to make me a vile kept mistress: which, I hope, I shall always detest the thoughts of. But you'll see how they are accommodated to what I should have most desired, could I have honestly promoted it, your welfare and happiness. I have answered them, as I am sure you'll approve; and I am prepared for the worst: For though I fear there will be nothing omitted

to ruin me, and though my poor strength will not be able to defend me, yet I will be innocent of crime in my intention, and in the sight of God; and to him leave the avenging of all my wrongs, time and manner. I shall write to you my answer against his articles; and hope the best, though I fear the worst. But if I should come home to you ruined and undone, and may not be able to look you in the face; yet pity and inspirit the poor Pamela, to make her little remnant of life easy; for long I shall not survive my disgrace: and you may be assured it shall not be my fault, if it be my misfortune.

'To MRS. PAMELA ANDREWS.

'The following ARTICLES are proposed to your serious consideration; and let me have an answer, in writing, to them, that I may take my resolutions accordingly. Only remember, that I will not be trifled with; and what you give for answer will absolutely decide your fate, without expostulation, or farther trouble.

This is my ANSWER.

Forgive, sir, the spirit your poor servant is about to show in her answer to your ARTICLES. Not to be warm, and in earnest, on such an occasion as the present, would shew a degree of guilt, that, I hope, my soul abhors. I will not trifle with you, nor act like a person doubtful of her own mind; for it wants not one moment's consideration with me; and I therefore return the ANSWER following, let what will be the consequence.

**'I. If you can convince me that the hated parson has had no encouragement from you in his addresses; and that you have no inclination for him in preference to me; then I will offer the following proposals to you, which I will punctually make good.**

I. As to the first article, sir, it may behove me (that I may not deserve, in your opinion, the opprobrious terms of forward and artful, and such like) to declare solemnly, that Mr. Williams never had the least encouragement from me, as to what you hint; and I believe his principal motive was the apprehended duty of his function, quite contrary to his apparent interest, to assist a person he thought in distress. You may, sir, the rather believe me, when I declare, that I know not the man breathing I would wish to marry; and that the only one I could honour more than another, is the gentleman, who, of all others, seeks my everlasting dishonour.

**'II. I will directly make you a present of 500 guineas, for your own use, which you may dispose of to any purpose you please: and will give it absolutely into the hands of any person you shall appoint to receive it; and expect no favour in return, till you are satisfied in the possession of it.**

II. As to your second proposal, let the consequence be what it will, I reject it with all my soul. Money, sir, is not my chief good: May God Almighty desert me, whenever it is! and whenever, for the sake of that, I can give up my title to that blessed hope which will stand me in stead, at a time when millions of gold will not purchase one happy moment of reflection on a past misspent life!

**'III. I will likewise directly make over to you a purchase I lately made in Kent, which brings in 250l. per annum, clear of all deductions. This shall be made over to you in full property for your life, and for the lives of any children to perpetuity, that you may happen to have: And your father shall be immediately put into possession of it in trust for these purposes: and the management of it will yield a comfortable subsistence to him, and your mother, for life; and I will make up any deficiencies, if such should happen, to that clear sum, and allow him 50l. per annum, besides, for his life, and that of your mother, for his care and management of this your estate.**

III. Your third proposal, sir, I reject for the same reason; and am sorry you could think my poor honest parents would enter into their part of it, and be concerned for the management of

an estate, which would be owing to the prostitution of their poor daughter. Forgive, sir, my warmth on this occasion; but you know not the poor man, and the poor woman, my ever-dear father and mother, if you think, that they would not much rather choose to starve in a ditch, or rot in a noisome dungeon, than accept of the fortune of a monarch, upon such wicked terms. I dare not say all that my full mind suggests to me on this grievous occasion—But, indeed, sir, you know them not; nor shall the terrors of death, in its most frightful form, I hope, through God's assisting grace, ever make me act unworthy of such poor honest parents!

'IV. I will, moreover, extend my favour to any other of your relations, that you may think worthy of it, or that are valued by you.

IV. Your fourth proposal, I take upon me, sir, to answer as the third. If I have any friends that want the favour of the great, may they ever want it, if they are capable of desiring it on unworthy terms!

'V. I will, besides, order patterns to be sent you for choosing four complete suits of rich clothes, that you may appear with reputation, as if you were my wife. And will give you the two diamond rings, and two pair of ear-rings, and diamond necklace, that were bought by my mother, to present to Miss Tomlins, if the match that was proposed between her and me had been brought to effect: and I will confer upon you still other gratuities, as I shall find myself obliged, by your good behaviour and affection.

V. Fine clothes, sir, become not me; nor have I any ambition to wear them. I have greater pride in my poverty and meanness, than I should have in dress and finery. Believe me, sir, I think such things less become the humble-born Pamela, than the rags your good mother raised me from. Your rings, sir, your necklace, and your ear-rings, will better befit ladies of degree, than me: and to lose the best jewel, my virtue, would be poorly recompensed by those you propose to give me. What should I think, when I looked upon my finger, or saw in the glass those diamonds on my neck, and in my ears, but that they were the price of my honesty; and that I wore those jewels outwardly, because I had none inwardly.

'VI. Now, Pamela, will you see by this, what a value I set upon the free-will of a person already in my power; and who, if these proposals are not accepted, shall find, that I have not taken all these pains, and risked my reputation, as I have done, without resolving to gratify my passion for you, at all adventures; and if you refuse, without making any terms at all.

VI. I know, sir, by woful experience, that I am in your power: I know all the resistance I can make will be poor and weak, and, perhaps, stand me in little stead: I dread your will to ruin me is as great as your power: yet, sir, will I dare to tell you, that I will make no free-will offering of my virtue. All that I can do, poor as it is, I will do, to convince you, that your

offers shall have no part in my choice; and if I cannot escape the violence of man, I hope, by God's grace, I shall have nothing to reproach myself, for not doing all in my power to avoid my disgrace; and then I can safely appeal to the great God, my only refuge and protector, with this consolation, That my will bore no part in my violation.

'VII. You shall be mistress of my person and fortune, as much as if the foolish ceremony had passed. All my servants shall be yours; and you shall choose any two persons to attend yourself, either male or female, without any control of mine: and if your conduct be such, that I have reason to be satisfied with it, I know not (but will not engage for this) that I may, after a twelvemonth's cohabitation, marry you; for, if my love increases for you, as it has done for many months past, it will be impossible for me to deny you any thing.

'And now, Pamela, consider well, it is in your power to oblige me on such terms, as will make yourself, and all your friends, happy: but this will be over this very day, irrevocably over; and you shall find all you would be thought to fear, without the least benefit arising from it to yourself.

'And I beg you'll well weigh the matter, and comply with my proposals; and I will instantly set about securing to you the full effect of them: And let me, if you value yourself, experience a grateful return on this occasion, and I'll forgive all that's past.'

VII. I have not once dared to look so high, as to such a proposal as your seventh article contains. Hence have proceeded all my little abortive artifices to escape from the confinement you have put me in; although you promised to be honourable to me. Your honour, well I know, would not let you stoop to so mean and so unworthy a slave, as the poor Pamela: All I desire is, to be permitted to return to my native meanness unviolated. What have I done, sir, to deserve it should be otherwise? For the obtaining of this, though I would not have married your chaplain, yet would I have run away with your meanest servant, if I had thought I could have got safe to my beloved poverty. I heard you once say, sir, That a certain great commander, who could live upon lentils, might well refuse the bribes of the greatest monarch: And I hope, as I can contentedly live at the meanest rate, and think not myself above the lowest condition, that I am also above making an exchange of my honesty for all the riches of the Indies. When I come to be proud and vain of gaudy apparel, and outside finery, then (which I hope will never be) may I rest my principal good in such vain trinkets, and despise for them the more solid ornaments of a good fame, and a chastity inviolate!

Give me leave to say, sir, in answer to what you hint, That you may in a twelvemonth's time marry me, on the continuance of my good behaviour; that this weighs less with me, if possible, than any thing else you have

said: for, in the first place, there is an end of all merit, and all good behaviour, on my side, if I have now any, the moment I consent to your proposals: And I should be so far from expecting such an honour, that I will pronounce, that I should be most unworthy of it. What, sir, would the world say, were you to marry your harlot? That a gentleman of your rank in life should stoop, not only to the base-born Pamela, but to a base-born prostitute?—Little, sir, as I know of the world, I am not to be caught by a bait so poorly covered as this!

Yet, after all, dreadful is the thought, that I, a poor, weak, friendless, unhappy creature, am too full in your power! But permit me, sir, to pray, as I now write on my bended knees, That before you resolve upon my ruin, you will weigh well the matter. Hitherto, sir, though you have taken large strides to this crying sin, yet are you on this side the commission of it.—When once it is done, nothing can recall it! And where will be your triumph?—What glory will the spoils of such a weak enemy yield you? Let me but enjoy my poverty with honesty, is all my prayer, and I will bless you, and pray for you, every moment of my life! Think, O think! before it is yet too late! what stings, what remorse will attend your dying hour, when you come to reflect, that you have ruined, perhaps soul and body, a wretched creature, whose only pride was her virtue! And how pleased you will be, on the contrary, if in that tremendous moment you shall be able to acquit yourself of this foul crime, and to plead in your own behalf, that you suffered the earnest supplications of an unhappy wretch to prevail with you to be innocent yourself, and let her remain so!—May God Almighty, whose mercy so lately saved you from the peril of perishing in deep waters, (on which, I hope, you will give me cause to congratulate you!) touch your heart in my favour, and save you from this sin, and me from this ruin!—And to him do I commit my cause; and to him will I give the glory, and night and day pray for you, if I may be permitted to escape this great evil!—

Your poor oppressed, broken spirited servant.

I took a copy of this for your perusal, my dear parents, if I shall ever be so happy to see you again; (for I hope my conduct will be approved of by you;) and at night, when Sir Simon was gone, he sent for me down. Well, said he, have you considered my proposals? Yes, sir, said I, I have: and there is my answer: But pray let me not see you read it. Is it your

bashfulness, said he, or your obstinacy, that makes you not choose I should read it before you?

I offered to go away; and he said, Don't run from me; I won't read it till you are gone. But, said he, tell me, Pamela, whether you comply with my proposals, or not? Sir, said I, you will see presently; pray don't hold me; for he took my hand. Said he, Did you well consider before you answered?—I did, sir, said I. If it be not what you think will please me, said he, dear girl, take it back again, and reconsider it; for if I have this as your absolute answer, and I don't like it, you are undone; for I will not sue meanly, where I can command. I fear, said he, it is not what I like, by your manner: and let me tell you, that I cannot bear denial. If the terms I have offered are not sufficient, I will augment them to two-thirds of my estate; for, said he, and swore a dreadful oath, I cannot live without you: and, since the thing is gone so far, I will not! And so he clasped me in his arms in such a manner as quite frightened me; and kissed me two or three times.

I got from him, and run up stairs, and went to the closet, and was quite uneasy and fearful.

In an hour's time he called Mrs. Jewkes down to him! And I heard him very high in passion: and all about me! And I heard her say, It was his own fault; there would be an end of all my complaining and perverseness, if he was once resolved; and other most impudent aggravations. I am resolved not to go to bed this night, if I can help it!—Lie still, lie still, my poor fluttering heart!—What will become of me!

Almost twelve o'clock, Saturday night.

He sent Mrs. Jewkes, about ten o'clock, to tell me to come to him. Where? said I. I'll shew you, said she. I went down three or four steps, and saw her making to his chamber, the door of which was open: So I said, I cannot go there!—Don't be foolish, said she; but come; no harm will be done to you!—Well, said I, if I die, I cannot go there. I heard him say, Let her come, or it shall be worse for her. I can't bear, said he, to speak to her myself!—Well, said I, I cannot come, indeed I cannot; and so I went up again into my closet, expecting to be fetched by force.

But she came up soon after, and bid me make haste to bed: Said I, I will not go to bed this night, that's certain!—Then, said she, you shall be made to come to bed; and Nan and I will undress you. I knew neither prayers nor tears would move this wicked woman: So I said, I am sure you will let

master in, and I shall be undone! Mighty piece of undone! she said: but he was too much exasperated against me, to be so familiar with me, she would assure me!—Ay, said she, you'll be disposed of another way soon, I can tell you for your comfort: and I hope your husband will have your obedience, though nobody else can have it. No husband in the world, said I, shall make me do an unjust or base thing.—She said, That would be soon tried; and Nan coming in, What! said I, am I to have two bed-fellows again, these warm nights? Yes, said she, slippery-one, you are, till you can have one good one instead of us. Said I, Mrs. Jewkes, don't talk nastily to me: I see you are beginning again; and I shall affront you, may be; for next to bad actions, are bad words; for they could not be spoken, if they were not in the heart.—Come to bed, purity! said she. You are a nonsuch, I suppose. Indeed, said I, I can't come to bed; and it will do you no harm to let me stay all night in the great chair. Nan, said she, undress my young lady. If she won't let you, I'll help you; and, if neither of us can do it quietly, we'll call my master to do it for us; though, said she, I think it an office worthier of Monsieur Colbrand!—You are very wicked, said I. I know it, said she; I am a Jezebel, and a London prostitute, you know. You did great feats, said I, to tell my master all this poor stuff; but you did not tell him how you beat me. No, lambkin, said she, (a word I had not heard a good while,) that I left for you to tell and you was going to do it if the vulture had not taken the wolf's part, and bid the poor innocent lamb be silent!—Ay, said I, no matter for your fleers, Mrs. Jewkes; though I can have neither justice nor mercy here, and cannot be heard in my defence, yet a time will come, may be, when I shall be heard, and when your own guilt will strike you dumb.—Ay! spirit, said she; and the vulture too! Must we both be dumb? Why that, lambkin, will be pretty!—Then, said the wicked one, you'll have all the talk to yourself!—Then how will the tongue of the pretty lambkin bleat out innocence, and virtue, and honesty, till the whole trial be at an end!—You're a wicked woman, that's certain, said I; and if you thought any thing of another world, could not talk thus. But no wonder!—It shews what hands I'm got into!—Ay, so it does, said she; but I beg you'll undress, and come to bed, or I believe your innocence won't keep you from still worse hands. I will come to bed, said I, if you will let me have the keys in my own hand; not else, if I can help it. Yes, said she, and then, hey for another contrivance, another escape!—No, no, said I, all my contrivances are over, I'll assure you! Pray let me have the keys, and I



will come to bed. She came to me, and took me in her huge arms, as if I was a feather: Said she, I do this to shew you what a poor resistance you can make against me, if I please to exert myself; and so, lambkin, don't say to your wolf, I won't come to bed!—And set me down, and tapped me on the neck: Ah! said she, thou art a pretty creature, 'tis true; but so obstinate! so full of spirit! if thy strength was but answerable to that, thou would'st run away with us all, and this great house too on thy back!—But, undress, undress, I tell you.

Well, said I, I see my misfortunes make you very merry, and very witty too: but I will love you, if you will humour me with the keys of the chamber-doors.—Are you sure you will love me? said she: Now speak your conscience!—Why, said I, you must not put it so close; neither would you, if you thought you had not given reason to doubt it!—But I will love you as well as I can!—I would not tell a wilful lie: and if I did, you would not believe me, after your hard usage of me. Well, said she, that's all fair, I own!—But Nan, pray pull off my young lady's shoes and stockings.—No, pray don't, said I; I will come to bed presently, since I must.

And so I went to the closet, and scribbled a little about this idle chit-chat. And she being importunate, I was forced to go to bed; but with some of my clothes on, as the former night; and she let me hold the two keys; for there are two locks, there being a double door; and so I got a little sleep that night, having had none for two or three nights before.

I can't imagine what she means; but Nan offered to talk a little once or twice; and she snubbed her, and said, I charge you, wench, don't open your lips before me; and if you are asked any questions by Mrs. Pamela, don't answer her one word, while I am here!—But she is a lordly woman to the maid-servants; and that has always been her character: O how unlike good Mrs. Jervis in every thing.

Sunday morning.

A thought came into my head; I meant no harm; but it was a little bold. For, seeing my master dressing to go to church; and his chariot getting ready, I went to my closet, and I writ,

The prayers of this congregation are earnestly desired for a gentleman of great worth and honour, who labours under a temptation to exert his great power to ruin a poor, distressed, worthless maiden:

And also,

The prayers of this congregation are earnestly desired by a poor distressed creature, for the preservation of her virtue and innocence.

Mrs. Jewkes came up: Always writing! said she; and would see it: And strait, all that ever I could say, carried it down to my master.—He looked upon it, and said, Tell her, she shall soon see how her prayers are answered; she is very bold: but as she has rejected all my favours, her reckoning for all is not far off. I looked after him out of the window; and he was charmingly dressed: To be sure he is a handsome fine gentleman!—What pity his heart is not as good as his appearance! Why can't I hate him?—But don't be uneasy, if you should see this; for it is impossible I should love him; for his vices all ugly him over, as I may say.

My master sends word, that he shall not come home to dinner: I suppose he dines with this Sir Simon Darnford. I am much concerned for poor Mr. Williams. Mrs. Jewkes says, he is confined still, and takes on much. All his trouble is brought upon him for my sake: This grieves me much. My master, it seems, will have his money from him. This is very hard; for it is three fifty pounds, he gave him, as he thought, as a salary for three years that he has been with him: but there was no agreement between them; and he absolutely depended on my master's favour. To be sure, it was the more generous of him to run these risks for the sake of oppressed innocence: and I hope he will meet with his reward in due time. Alas for me! I dare not plead for him; that would raise my oppressor's jealousy more. And I have not interest to save myself!

Sunday evening.

Mrs. Jewkes has received a line from my master: I wonder what it is, for his chariot is come home without him. But she will tell me nothing; so it is in vain to ask her. I am so fearful of plots and tricks, I know not what to do!—Every thing I suspect; for, now my disgrace is avowed, what can I think!—To be sure, the worst will be attempted! I can only pour out my soul in prayer to God, for his blessed protection. But, if I must suffer, let me not be long a mournful survivor!—Only let me not shorten my own time sinfully!—

This woman left upon the table, in the chamber, this letter of my master's to her; and I bolted myself in, till I had transcribed it. You'll see how tremblingly, by the lines. I wish poor Mr. Williams's release at any

rate; but this letter makes my heart ache. Yet I have another day's reprieve, thank God!

'MRS. JEWKES,

'I have been so pressed on Williams's affair, that I shall set out this afternoon, in Sir Simon's chariot, and with Parson Peters, who is his intercessor, for Stamford; and shall not be back till to-morrow evening, if then. As to your ward, I am thoroughly incensed against her: She has withstood her time; and now, would she sign and seal to my articles, it is too late. I shall discover something, perhaps, by him; and will, on my return, let her know, that all her ensnaring loveliness shall not save her from the fate that awaits her. But let her know nothing of this, lest it put her fruitful mind upon plots and artifices. Be sure trust her not without another with you at night, lest she venture the window in her foolish rashness: for I shall require her at your hands.

'Yours, etc.'

I had but just finished taking a copy of this, and laid the letter where I had it, and unbolted the door, when she came up in a great fright, for fear I should have seen it; but I being in my closet, and that lying as she left it, she did not mistrust. O, said she, I was afraid you had seen my master's letter here, which I carelessly left on the table. I wish, said I, I had known that. Why sure, said she, if you had, you would not have offered to read my letters! Indeed, said I, I should, at this time, if it had been in my way:—Do let me see it.—Well, said she, I wish poor Mr. Williams well off: I understand my master is gone to make up matters with him; which is very good. To be sure, added she, he is a very good gentleman, and very forgiving!—Why, said I, as if I had known nothing of the matter, how can he make up matters with him? Is not Mr. Williams at Stamford? Yes, said she, I believe so; but Parson Peters pleads for him, and he is gone with him to Stamford, and will not be back to-night: so we have nothing to do, but to eat our suppers betimes, and go to bed. Ay, that's pure, said I; and I shall have good rest this night, I hope. So, said she, you might every night, but for your own idle fears. You are afraid of your friends, when none are near you. Ay, that's true, said I; for I have not one near me.

So I have one more good honest night before me: What the next may be I know not, and so I'll try to take in a good deal of sleep, while I can be a little easy. Therefore, here I say, Good night, my dear parents; for I have

no more to write about this night: and though his letter shocks me, yet I will be as brisk as I can, that she mayn't suspect I have seen it.

Tuesday night.

For the future, I will always mistrust most when appearances look fairest. O your poor daughter! what has she not suffered since what I wrote on Sunday night!—My worst trial, and my fearfulest danger! O how I shudder to write you an account of this wicked interval of time! For, my dear parents, will you not be too much frightened and affected with my distress, when I tell you, that his journey to Stamford was all abominable pretence! for he came home privately, and had well nigh effected all his vile purposes, and the ruin of your poor daughter! and that by such a plot as I was not in the least apprehensive of: And, oh! you'll hear what a vile and unwomanly part that wicked wretch, Mrs. Jewkes, acted in it!

I left off with letting you know how much I was pleased that I had one night's reprieve added to my honesty. But I had less occasion to rejoice than ever, as you will judge by what I have said already. Take, then, the dreadful story, as well as I can relate it.

The maid Nan is a little apt to drink, if she can get at liquor; and Mrs. Jewkes happened, or designed, as is too probable, to leave a bottle of cherry-brandy in her way, and the wench drank some of it more than she should; and when she came in to lay the cloth, Mrs. Jewkes perceived it, and fell a rating at her most sadly; for she has too many faults of her own, to suffer any of the like sort in any body else, if she can help it; and she bid her get out of her sight, when we had supped, and go to bed, to sleep off her liquor, before we came to bed. And so the poor maid went muttering up stairs.

About two hours after, which was near eleven o'clock, Mrs. Jewkes and I went up to go to bed; I pleasing myself with what a charming night I should have. We locked both doors, and saw poor Nan, as I thought, (but, oh! 'twas my abominable master, as you shall hear by and by,) sitting fast asleep, in an elbow-chair, in a dark corner of the room, with her apron thrown over her head and neck. And Mrs. Jewkes said, There is that beast of a wench fast asleep, instead of being a-bed! I knew, said she, she had taken a fine dose. I'll wake her, said I. No, don't, said she; let her sleep on; we shall be better without her. Ay, said I, so we shall; but won't she get cold?

Said she, I hope you have no writing to-night. No, replied I, I will go to bed with you, Mrs. Jewkes. Said she, I wonder what you can find to write about so much! and am sure you have better conveniences of that kind, and more paper than I am aware of; and I had intended to rummage you, if my master had not come down; for I spied a broken tea-cup with ink, which gave me suspicion: but as he is come, let him look after you, if he will; and if you deceive him, it will be his own fault.

All this time we were undressing ourselves: And I fetched a deep sigh! What do you sigh for? said she. I am thinking, Mrs. Jewkes, answered I, what a sad life I live, and how hard is my lot. I am sure, the thief that has robbed is much better off than I, 'bating the guilt; and I should, I think, take it for a mercy, to be hanged out of the way, rather than live in these cruel apprehensions. So, being not sleepy, and in a prattling vein, I began to give a little history of myself, as I did, once before, to Mrs. Jervis; in this manner:

Here, said I, were my poor honest parents; they took care to instill good principles into my mind, till I was almost twelve years of age; and taught me to prefer goodness and poverty to the highest condition of life; and they confirmed their lessons by their own practice; for they were, of late years, remarkably poor, and always as remarkably honest, even to a proverb: for, As honest as goodman ANDREWS, was a byeword.

Well then, said I, comes my late dear good lady, and takes a fancy to me, and said, she would be the making of me, if I was a good girl; and she put me to sing, to dance, to play on the spinnet, in order to divert her melancholy hours; and also taught me all manner of fine needle-work; but still this was her lesson, My good Pamela, be virtuous, and keep the men at a distance. Well, so I was, I hope, and so I did; and yet, though I say it, they all loved me and respected me; and would do any thing for me, as if I was a gentlewoman.

But, then, what comes next?—Why, it pleased God to take my good lady: and then comes my master: And what says he?—Why, in effect, it is, Be not virtuous, Pamela.

So here I have lived about sixteen years in virtue and reputation; and all at once, when I come to know what is good, and what is evil, I must renounce all the good, all the whole sixteen years' innocence, which, next to God's grace, I owed chiefly to my parents, and my lady's good lessons

and examples, and choose the evil; and so, in a moment's time, become the vilest of creatures! And all this, for what, I pray? Why, truly, for a pair of diamond ear-rings, a necklace, and a diamond ring for my finger; which would not become me: For a few paltry fine clothes, which, when I wore them, would make but my former poverty more ridiculous to every body that saw me; especially when they knew the base terms I wore them upon. But, indeed, I was to have a great parcel of guineas beside; I forget how many; for, had there been ten times more, they would have been not so much to me, as the honest six guineas you tricked me out of, Mrs. Jewkes.

Well, forsooth! but then I was to have I know not how many pounds a year for my life; and my poor father (there was the jest of it!) was to be the manager for the abandoned prostitute his daughter: And then, (there was the jest again!) my kind, forgiving, virtuous master, would pardon me all my misdeeds!

Yes, thank him for nothing, truly. And what, pray, are all these violent misdeeds?—Why, they are for daring to adhere to the good lessons that were taught me; and not learning a new one, that would have reversed all my former: For not being contented when I was run away with, in order to be ruined; but contriving, if my poor wits had been able, to get out of danger, and preserve myself honest.

Then was he once jealous of poor John, though he knew John was his own creature, and helped to deceive me.

Then was he outrageous against poor Parson Williams! and him has this good, merciful master, thrown into gaol; and for what? Why, truly, for that, being a divine, and a good man, he had the fear of God before his eyes, and was willing to forego all his expectations of interest, and assist an oppressed poor creature.

But, to be sure, I must be forward, bold, saucy, and what not! to dare to run away from certain ruin, and to strive to escape from an unjust confinement; and I must be married to the parson, nothing so sure!

He would have had but a poor catch of me, had I consented: But he, and you too, know I did not want to marry any body. I only wanted to go to my poor parents, and to have my own liberty, and not to be confined by such an unlawful restraint; and which would not have been inflicted upon me, but only that I am a poor, destitute, young body, and have no friend that is able to right me.

So, Mrs. Jewkes, said I, here is my history in brief. And I am a very unhappy young creature, to be sure!—And why am I so?—Why, because my master sees something in my person that takes his present fancy; and because I would not be undone.—Why, therefore to choose, I must, and I shall be undone!—And this is all the reason that can be given!

She heard me run on all this time, while I was undressing, without any interruption; and I said, Well, I must go to the two closets, ever since an affair of the closet at the other house, though he is so far off. And I have a good mind to wake this poor maid. No, don't, said she, I charge you. I am very angry with her, and she'll get no harm there; and if she wakes, she may come to bed well enough, as long as there is a candle in the chimney.

So I looked into the closet, and kneeled down in my own, as I used to do, to say my prayers, and this with my underclothes in my hand, all undressed; and passed by the poor sleeping wench, as I thought, in my return. But, oh! little did I think it was my wicked, wicked master, in a gown and petticoat of hers, and her apron over his face and shoulders. What meanness will not Lucifer make his votaries stoop to, to gain their abominable ends!

Mrs. Jewkes, by this time, was got to bed, on the farther side, as she used to be; and, to make room for the maid, when she should awake, I got into bed, and lay close to her. And I said, Where are the keys? though, said I, I am not so much afraid to-night. Here, said the wicked woman, put your arm under mine, and you shall find them about my wrist, as they used to be. So I did, and the abominable designer held my hand with her right-hand, as my right-arm was under her left.

In less than a quarter of an hour, I said, There's poor Nan awake; I hear her stir. Let us go to sleep, said she, and not mind her: she'll come to bed, when she's quite awake. Poor soul! said I, I'll warrant she will have the head-ache finely to-morrow for this! Be silent, said she, and go to sleep; you keep me awake; and I never found you in so talkative a humour in my life. Don't chide me, said I; I will but say one thing more: Do you think Nan could hear me talk of my master's offers? No, no, said she; she was dead asleep. I'm glad of that, said I; because I would not expose my master to his common servants; and I knew you were no stranger to his fine articles. Said she, I think they were fine articles, and you were bewitched you did not close with them: But let us go to sleep. So I was silent; and the

pretended Nan (O wicked, base, villanous designer! what a plot, what an unexpected plot was this!) seemed to be awaking; and Mrs. Jewkes, abhorrent creature! said, Come, Nan!—what, are you awake at last?—Pr'ythee come to bed; for Mrs. Pamela is in a talking fit, and won't go to sleep one while.

At that, the pretended she came to the bed side; and, sitting down in a chair, where the curtain hid her, began to undress. Said I, Poor Mrs. Anne, I warrant your head aches most sadly! How do you do?

—She answered not a word. Said the superlatively wicked woman, You know I have ordered her not to answer you. And this plot, to be sure, was laid when she gave her these orders the night before.

I heard her, as I thought, breathe all quick and short : Indeed, said I, Mrs. Jewkes, the poor maid is not well. What ails you, Mrs. Anne? And still no answer was made.

But, I tremble to relate it! the pretended she came into bed, but trembled like an aspen-leaf; and I, poor fool that I was! pitied her much—but well might the barbarous deceiver tremble at his vile dissimulation, and base designs.

What words shall I find, my dear mother (for my father should not see this shocking part), to describe the rest, and my confusion, when the guilty wretch took my left arm, and laid it under his neck, and the vile procuress held my right ; and then he clasped me round the waist!

Said I, is the wench mad ? Why, how now, confidence! thinking still it had been Nan. But he kissed me with frightful vehemence; and then his voice broke upon me like a clap of thunder. Now, Pamela, said he, is the dreadful time of reckoning come, that I have threatened—I screamed out in such a manner, as never anybody heard the like. But there was nobody to help me : and both my hands were secured, as I said. Sure never poor soul was in such agonies as I. Wicked man! said I ; wicked abominable woman! O God! my God! this time! this one time! deliver me from this distress! or strike me dead this moment! And then I screamed again and again.

Says he, One word with you, Pamela; one word hear me but; I must say one word to you, it is this: You see now you are in my power!—You cannot get from me, nor help yourself: Yet have I not offered any thing amiss to



you. But if you resolve not to comply with my proposals, I will not lose this opportunity: If you do, I will yet leave you.

O sir, said I, leave me, leave me but, and I will do any thing I ought to do.—Swear then to me, said he, that you will accept my proposals! With struggling, fright, terror, I fainted away quite, and did not come to myself soon, so that they both, from the cold sweats that I was in, thought me dying.—And I remember no more, than that, when with great difficulty they brought me to myself, she was sitting on one side of the bed, with her clothes on; and he on the other with his, and in his gown and slippers.

Your poor Pamela cannot answer for the liberties taken with her in her deplorable state of death. And when I saw them there, I sat up in my bed, without any regard to what appearance I made, and nothing about my neck; and he soothing me, with an aspect of pity and concern, I put my hand to his mouth, and said, O tell me, yet tell me not, what have I suffered in this distress? And I talked quite wild, and knew not what: for, to be sure, I was on the point of distraction.

He most solemnly, and with a bitter imprecation, vowed, that he had not offered the least indecency; that he was frightened at the terrible manner I was taken with the fit: that he should desist from his attempt; and begged but to see me easy and quiet, and he would leave me directly, and go to his own bed. O then, said I, take with you this most wicked woman, this vile Mrs. Jewkes, as an earnest, that I may believe you!

And will you, sir, said the wicked wretch, for a fit or two, give up such an opportunity as this?—I thought you had known the sex better. She is now, you see, quite well again!

This I heard; more she might say; but I fainted away once more, at these words, and at his clasping his arms about me again. And, when I came a little to myself, I saw him sit there, and the maid Nan, holding a smelling-bottle to my nose, and no Mrs. Jewkes.

He said, taking my hand, Now will I vow to you, my dear Pamela, that I will leave you the moment I see you better, and pacified. Here's Nan knows, and will tell you, my concern for you. I vow to God, I have not offered any indecency to you: and, since I found Mrs. Jewkes so offensive to you, I have sent her to the maid's bed, and the maid shall be with you to-night. And but promise me, that you will compose yourself, and I will leave you. But, said I, will not Nan also hold my hand? And will not she

let you come in again to me?—He said, By heaven! I will not come in again to-night. Nan, undress yourself, go to bed, and do all you can to comfort the dear creature: And now, Pamela, said he, give me but your hand, and say you forgive me, and I will leave you to your repose. I held out my trembling hand, which he vouchsafed to kiss; and I said, God forgive you, sir, as you have been just in my distress; and as you will be just to what you promise! And he withdrew, with a countenance of remorse, as I hoped; and she shut the doors, and, at my request, brought the keys to bed.

This, O my dear parents! was a most dreadful trial. I tremble still to think of it; and dare not recall all the horrid circumstances of it. I hope, as he assures me, he was not guilty of indecency; but have reason to bless God, who, by disabling me in my faculties, empowered me to preserve my innocence; and, when all my strength would have signified nothing, magnified himself in my weakness.

I was so weak all day on Monday, that I could not get out of my bed. My master shewed great tenderness for me; and I hope he is really sorry, and that this will be his last attempt; but he does not say so neither.

He came in the morning, as soon as he heard the door open and I began to be fearful. He stopped short of the bed, and said, Rather than give you apprehensions, I will come no farther. I said, Your honour, sir, and your mercy, is all I have to beg. He sat himself on the side of the bed, and asked kindly, how I did?—begged me to be composed; said, I still looked a little wildly. And I said, Pray, good sir, let me not see this infamous Mrs. Jewkes; I doubt I cannot bear her sight. She shan't come near you all this day, if you'll promise to compose yourself. Then, sir, I will try. He pressed my hand very tenderly, and went out. What a change does this shew!—O may it be lasting!—But, alas! he seems only to have altered his method of proceeding; and retains, I doubt, his wicked purpose.

On Tuesday, about ten o'clock, when my master heard I was up, he sent for me down into the parlour. As soon as he saw me, he said, Come nearer to me, Pamela. I did so, and he took my hand, and said, You begin to look well again: I am glad of it. You little slut, how did you frighten me on Sunday night.

Sir, said I, pray name not that night; and my eyes overflowed at the remembrance, and I turned my head aside.

Said he, Place some little confidence in me: I know what those charming eyes mean, and you shall not need to explain yourself: for I do assure you, that as soon as I saw you change, and a cold sweat bedew your pretty face, and you fainted away, I quitted the bed, and Mrs. Jewkes did so too. And I put on my gown, and she fetched her smelling-bottle, and we both did all we could to restore you; and my passion for you was all swallowed up in the concern I had for your recovery; for I thought I never saw a fit so strong and violent in my life: and feared we should not bring you to life again; for what I saw you in once before was nothing to it. This, said he, might be my folly, and my unacquaintedness with what passion your sex can shew when they are in earnest. But this I repeat to you, that your mind may be entirely comforted—Whatever I offered to you, was before you fainted away, and that, I am sure, was innocent.

Sir, said I, that was very bad: and it was too plain you had the worst designs. When, said he, I tell you the truth in one instance, you may believe me in the other. I know not, I declare, beyond this lovely bosom, your sex: but that I did intend what you call the worst is most certain: and though I would not too much alarm you now, I could curse my weakness, and my folly, which makes me own, that I love you beyond all your sex, and cannot live without you. But if I am master of myself, and my own resolution, I will not attempt to force you to any thing again.

Sir, said I, you may easily keep your resolution, if you'll send me out of your way, to my poor parents; that is all I beg.

'Tis a folly to talk of it, said he. You must not, shall not go! And if I could be assured you would not attempt it, you should have better usage, and your confinement should be made easier to you.

But to what end, sir, am I to stay? said I: You yourself seem not sure you can keep your own present good resolutions; and do you think, if I was to stay, when I could get away, and be safe, it would not look, as if either I confided too much in my own strength, or would tempt my ruin? And as if I was not in earnest to wish myself safe, and out of danger?—And then, how long am I to stay? And to what purpose? And in what light must I appear to the world? Would not that censure me, although I might be innocent? And you will allow, sir, that, if there be any thing valuable or exemplary in a good name, or fair reputation, one must not despise the world's censure, if one can avoid it.

Well, said he, I sent not for you on this account, just now; but for two reasons. The first is, That you promise me, that for a fortnight to come you will not offer to go away without my express consent; and this I expect for your own sake, that I may give you a little more liberty. And the second is, That you will see and forgive Mrs. Jewkes: she takes on much, and thinks that, as all her fault was her obedience to me, it would be very hard to sacrifice her, as she calls it, to your resentment.

As to the first, sir, said I, it is a hard injunction, for the reasons I have mentioned. And as to the second, considering her vile, unwomanly wickedness, and her endeavours to instigate you more to ruin me, when your returning goodness seemed to have some compassion upon me, it is still harder. But, to shew my obedience to your commands, (for you know, my dear parents, I might as well make a merit of my compliance, when my refusal would stand me in no stead,) I will consent to both; and to every thing else, that you shall be pleased to enjoin, which I can do, with innocence.

That's my good girl! said he, and kissed me: This is quite prudent, and shews me, that you don't take insolent advantage of my favour for you; and will, perhaps, stand you in more stead than you are aware of.

So he rung the bell, and said, Call down Mrs. Jewkes. She came down, and he took my hand, and put it into hers; and said, Mrs. Jewkes, I am obliged to you for all your diligence and fidelity to me; but Pamela, I must own, is not; because the service I employed you in was not so very obliging to her, as I could have wished she would have thought it: and you were not to favour her, but obey me. But yet I'll assure you, at the very first word, she has once obliged me, by consenting to be friends with you; and if she gives me no great cause, I shall not, perhaps, put you on such disagreeable service again.—Now, therefore, be you once more bed-fellows and board-fellows, as I may say, for some days longer; and see that Pamela sends no letters nor messages out of the house, nor keeps a correspondence unknown to me, especially with that Williams; and, as for the rest, shew the dear girl all the respect that is due to one I must love, if she will deserve it, as I hope she will yet; and let her be under no unnecessary or harsh restraints. But your watchful care is not, however, to cease: and remember that you are not to disoblige me, to oblige her; and that I will not, cannot, yet part with her.

Mrs. Jewkes looked very sullen, and as if she would be glad still to do me a good turn, if it lay in her power.

I took courage then to drop a word or two for poor Mr. Williams; but he was angry with me for it, and said he could not endure to hear his name in my mouth; so I was forced to have done for that time.

All this time, my papers, that I buried under the rose-bush, lay there still; and I begged for leave to send a letter to you. So I should, he said, if he might read it first. But this did not answer my design; and yet I would have sent you such a letter as he might see, if I had been sure my danger was over. But that I cannot; for he now seems to take another method, and what I am more afraid of, because, may be, he may watch an opportunity, and join force with it, on occasion, when I am least prepared: for now he seems to abound with kindness, and talks of love without reserve, and makes nothing of allowing himself in the liberty of kissing me, which he calls innocent; but which I do not like, and especially in the manner he does it: but for a master to do it at all to a servant, has meaning too much in it, not to alarm an honest body.

Wednesday morning.

I find I am watched and suspected still very close; and I wish I was with you; but that must not be, it seems, this fortnight. I don't like this fortnight; and it will be a tedious and a dangerous one to me, I doubt.

My master just now sent for me down to take a walk with him in the garden: but I like him not at all, nor his ways; for he would have, all the way, his arm about my waist, and said abundance of fond things to me, enough to make me proud, if his design had not been apparent. After walking about, he led me into a little alcove, on the farther part of the garden; and really made me afraid of myself, for he began to be very teasing, and made me sit on his knee; and was so often kissing me, that I said, Sir, I don't like to be here at all, I assure you. Indeed you make me afraid!—And what made me the more so, was what he once said to Mrs. Jewkes, and did not think I heard him, and which, though always uppermost with me, I did not mention before, because I did not know how to bring it in, in my writing.

She, I suppose, had been encouraging him in his wickedness; for it was before the last dreadful trial: and I only heard what he answered.

Said he, I will try once more; but I have begun wrong for I see terror does but add to her frost; but she is a charming girl, and may be thawed by kindness; and I should have melted her by love, instead of freezing her by fear.

Is he not a wicked, sad man for this?—To be sure, I blush while I write it. But I trust, that that God, who has delivered me from the paw of the lion and the bear; that is, his and Mrs. Jewkes's violences, will soon deliver me from this Philistine, that I may not defy the commands of the living God!

But, as I was saying, this expression coming into my thoughts, I was of opinion, I could not be too much on my guard, at all times: more especially when he took such liberties: for he professed honour all the time with his mouth, while his actions did not correspond. I begged and prayed he would let me go: and had I not appeared quite regardless of all he said, and resolved not to stay, if I could help it, I know not how far he would have proceeded; for I was forced to fall down upon my knees.

At last he walked out with me, still bragging of his honour and his love. Yes, yes, sir, said I, your honour is to destroy mine: and your love is to ruin me; I see it too plainly. But, indeed, I will not talk with you, sir, said I, any more. Do you know, said he, whom you talk to, and where you are?

You may believe I had reason to think him not so decent as he should be; for I said, As to where I am, sir, I know it too well; and that I have no creature to befriend me: and, as to whom I talk to, sir, let me ask you, What you would have me answer?

Why, tell me, said he, what answer you would make? It will only make you angry, said I; and so I shall fare worse, if possible. I won't be angry, said he. Why, then, sir, said I, you cannot be my late good lady's son; for she loved me, and taught me virtue. You cannot then be my master; for no master demeans himself so to his poor servant.

He put his arm round me, and his other hand on my neck, which made me more angry and bold: and he said, What then am I? Why, said I, (struggling from him, and in a great passion,) to be sure you are Lucifer himself, in the shape of my master, or you could not use me thus. These are too great liberties, said he, in anger; and I desire that you will not repeat them, for your own sake: For if you have no decency towards me, I'll have none towards you.

I was running from him, and he said, Come back, when I bid you.—So, knowing every place was alike dangerous to me, and I had nobody to run to, I came back, at his call; and seeing him look displeas'd, I held my hands together, and wept, and said, Pray, sir, forgive me. No, said he, rather say, Pray, Lucifer, forgive me! And, now, since you take me for the devil, how can you expect any good from me?—How, rather, can you expect any thing but the worst treatment from me?—You have given me a character, Pamela; and blame me not that I act up to it. Sir, said I, let me beg you to forgive me: I am really sorry for my boldness; but indeed you don't use me like a gentleman: and how can I express my resentment, if I mince the matter, while you are so indecent? Precise fool! said he, what indecencies have I offer'd you?—I was bewitch'd I had not gone through my purpose last Sunday night; and then your licentious tongue had not given the worst name to little puny freedoms, that shew my love and my folly at the same time. But, begone! said he, taking my hand, and tossing it from him, and learn another conduct and more wit; and I will lay aside my foolish regard for you, and assert myself. Begone! said he, again, with a haughty air.

Indeed, sir, said I, I cannot go, till you pardon me, which I beg on my bended knees. I am truly sorry for my boldness.—But I see how you go on: you creep by little and little upon me; and now soothe me, and now threaten me; and if I should forbear to shew my resentment, when you offer incivilities to me, would not that be to be lost by degrees? Would it not shew, that I could bear any thing from you, if I did not express all the indignation I could express, at the first approaches you make to what I dread? And have you not as good as avow'd my ruin?—And have you once made me hope you will quit your purposes against me? How then, sir, can I act, but by shewing my abhorrence of every step that makes towards my undoing? And what is left me but words?—And can these words be other than such strong ones, as shall shew the detestation which, from the bottom of my heart, I have for every attempt upon my virtue? Judge for me, sir, and pardon me.

Pardon you! said he, What! when you don't repent?—When you have the boldness to justify yourself in your fault? Why don't you say, you never will again offend me? I will endeavour, sir, said I, always to preserve that decency towards you which becomes me. But really, sir, I must beg your excuse for saying, That when you forget what belongs to

decency in your actions, and when words are all that are left me, to shew my resentment of such actions, I will not promise to forbear the strongest expressions that my distressed mind shall suggest to me: nor shall your angriest frowns deter me, when my honesty is in question.

What, then, said he, do you beg pardon for? Where is the promise of amendment, for which I should forgive you? Indeed, sir, said I, I own that must absolutely depend on your usage of me: for I will bear any thing you can inflict upon me with patience, even to the laying down of my life, to shew my obedience to you in other cases; but I cannot be patient, I cannot be passive, when my virtue is at stake! It would be criminal in me, if I was.

He said, he never saw such a fool in his life. And he walked by the side of me some yards, without saying a word, and seemed vexed; and at last walked in, bidding me attend him in the garden, after dinner. So having a little time, I went up, and wrote thus far.

Wednesday night.

If, my dear parents, I am not destined more surely than ever for ruin, I have now more comfort before me than ever I yet knew: and am either nearer my happiness, or my misery, than ever I was. God protect me from the latter, if it be his blessed will! I have now such a scene to open to you, that, I know, will alarm both your hopes and your fears, as it does mine. And this it is:

After my master had dined, he took a turn into the stables, to look at his stud of horses; and, when he came in, he opened the parlour-door, where Mrs. Jewkes and I sat at dinner; and, at his entrance, we both rose up; but he said, Sit still, sit still, and let me see how you eat your victuals, Pamela. O, said Mrs. Jewkes, very poorly, indeed, sir! No, said I, pretty well, sir, considering. None of your considerings, said he, pretty face; and tapped me on the cheek. I blushed, but was glad he was so good-humoured; but I could not tell how to sit before him, nor to behave myself. So he said, I know, Pamela, you are a nice carver: my mother used to say so. My lady, sir, said I, was very good to me in every thing, and would always make me do the honours of her table for her, when she was with her few select friends that she loved. Cut up, said he, that chicken. I did so. Now, said he, and took a knife and fork, and put a wing upon my plate, let me see you eat that. O sir, said I, I have eaten a whole breast of a chicken already, and



cannot eat so much. But he said, I must eat it for his sake, and he would teach me to eat heartily: So I did eat it; but was much confused at his so kind and unusual freedom and condescension. And, good lack! you can't imagine how Mrs. Jewkes looked and stared, and how respectful she seemed to me, and called me good madam, I'll assure you, urging me to take a little bit of tart.

My master took two or three turns about the room, musing and thoughtful, as I had never before seen him; and at last he went out, saying, I am going into the garden: You know, Pamela, what I said to you before dinner. I rose, and courtesied, saying, I would attend his honour; and he said, Do, good girl!

Well, said Mrs. Jewkes, I see how things will go. O, madam, as she called me again, I am sure you are to be our mistress! And then I know what will become of me. Ah Mrs. Jewkes, said I, if I can but keep myself virtuous, 'tis the most of my ambition; and I hope, no temptation shall make me otherwise.

Notwithstanding I had no reason to be pleased with his treatment of me before dinner, yet I made haste to attend him; and I found him walking by the side of that pond, which, for want of grace, and through a sinful despondence, had like to have been so fatal to me, and the sight of which, ever since, has been a trouble and reproach to me. And it was by the side of this pond, and not far from the place where I had that dreaded conflict, that my present hopes, if I am not to be deceived again, began to dawn: which I presume to flatter myself with being a happy omen for me, as if God Almighty would shew your poor sinful daughter, how well I did to put my affiance in his goodness, and not to throw away myself, because my ruin seemed inevitable, to my short-sighted apprehension.

So he was pleased to say, Well, Pamela, I am glad you are come of your own accord, as I may say: give me your hand. I did so; and he looked at me very steadily, and pressing my hand all the time, at last said, I will now talk to you in a serious manner.

You have a good deal of wit, a great deal of penetration, much beyond your years, and, as I thought, your opportunities. You are possessed of an open, frank, and generous mind; and a person so lovely, that you excel all your sex, in my eyes. All these accomplishments have engaged my affection so deeply, that, as I have often said, I cannot live without you;

and I would divide, with all my soul, my estate with you, to make you mine upon my own terms. These you have absolutely rejected; and that, though in saucy terms enough, yet in such a manner as makes me admire you the more. Your pretty chit-chat to Mrs. Jewkes, the last Sunday night, so innocent, and so full of beautiful simplicity, half disarmed my resolution before I approached your bed: And I see you so watchful over your virtue, that though I hoped to find it otherwise, I cannot but confess my passion for you is increased by it. But now, what shall I say farther, Pamela?—I will make you, though a party, my adviser in this matter, though not, perhaps, my definitive judge.

You know I am not a very abandoned profligate; I have hitherto been guilty of no very enormous or vile actions. This of seizing you, and confining you thus, may perhaps be one of the worst, at least to persons of real innocence. Had I been utterly given up to my passions, I should before now have gratified them, and not have shewn that remorse and compassion for you, which have reprieved you, more than once, when absolutely in my power; and you are as inviolate a virgin as you were when you came into my house.

But what can I do? Consider the pride of my condition. I cannot endure the thought of marriage, even with a person of equal or superior degree to myself; and have declined several proposals of that kind: How then, with the distance between us in the world's judgment, can I think of making you my wife?—Yet I must have you; I cannot bear the thoughts of any other man supplanting me in your affections: and the very apprehension of that has made me hate the name of Williams, and use him in a manner unworthy of my temper.

Now, Pamela, judge for me; and, since I have told you, thus candidly, my mind, and I see yours is big with some important meaning, by your eyes, your blushes, and that sweet confusion which I behold struggling in your bosom, tell me, with like openness and candour, what you think I ought to do, and what you would have me do.

It is impossible for me to express the agitations of my mind, on this unexpected declaration, so contrary to his former behaviour. His manner too had something so noble, and so sincere, as I thought, that, alas for me! I found I had need of all my poor discretion, to ward off the blow which this treatment gave to my most guarded thoughts. I threw myself at his

feet; for I trembled, and could hardly stand: O sir, said I, spare your poor servant's confusion! O spare the poor Pamela!—Speak out, said he, and tell me, when I bid you, What you think I ought to do? I cannot say what you ought to do, answered I: but I only beg you will not ruin me; and, if you think me virtuous, if you think me sincerely honest, let me go to my poor parents. I will vow to you, that I will never suffer myself to be engaged without your approbation.

Still he insisted upon a more explicit answer to his question, of what I thought he ought to do. And I did, As to my poor thoughts of what you ought to do, I must needs say, that indeed I think you ought to regard the world's opinion, and avoid doing any thing disgraceful to your birth and fortune; and, therefore, if you really honour the poor Pamela with your respect, a little time, absence, and the conversation of worthier persons of my sex, will effectually enable you to overcome a regard so unworthy your condition: And this, good sir, is the best advice I can offer.

Charming creature! lovely Pamela! said he, (with an ardour that was never before so agreeable to me,) this generous manner is of a piece with all the rest of your conduct. But tell me, still more explicitly, what you would advise me to, in the case.

O, sir! said I, take not advantage of my credulity, and these my weak moments: but were I the first lady in the land, instead of the poor abject Pamela, I would, I could tell you. But I can say no more—

O my dear father and mother! now I know you will indeed be concerned for me;—for now I am for myself.—And now I begin to be afraid I know too well the reason why all his hard trials of me, and my black apprehensions, would not let me hate him.

But be assured still, by God's grace, that I shall do nothing unworthy of your Pamela; and if I find that he is still capable of deceiving me, and that this conduct is only put on to delude me more, I shall think nothing in this world so vile, and so odious; and nothing, if he be not the worst of his kind, (as he says, and, I hope, he is not,) so desperately guileful, as the heart of man.

He generously said, I will spare your confusion, Pamela. But I hope I may promise myself, that you can love me preferably to any other man; and that no one in the world has had any share in your affections; for I am very jealous of what I love; and if I thought you had a secret whispering in

your soul, that had not yet come up to a wish, for any other man breathing, I should not forgive myself to persist in my affection for you; nor you, if you did not frankly acquaint me with it.

As I still continued on my knees, on the grass border by the pond-side, he sat himself down on the grass by me, and took me in his arms: Why hesitates my Pamela? said he.—Can you not answer me with truth, as I wish? If you cannot, speak, and I will forgive you.

O good sir, said I, it is not that; indeed it is not: but a frightful word or two that you said to Mrs. Jewkes, when you thought I was not in hearing, comes cross my mind; and makes me dread that I am in more danger than ever I was in my life.

You have never found me a common liar, said he, (too fearful and foolish Pamela!) nor will I answer how long I may hold in my present mind; for my pride struggles hard within me, I'll assure you; and if you doubt me, I have no obligation to your confidence or opinion. But, at present, I am really sincere in what I say: And I expect you will be so too; and answer directly my question.

I find, sir, said I, I know not myself; and your question is of such a nature, that I only want to tell you what I heard, and to have your kind answer to it; or else, what I have to say to your question, may pave the way to my ruin, and shew a weakness that I did not believe was in me.

Well, said he, you may say what you have overheard; for, in not answering me directly, you put my soul upon the rack; and half the trouble I have had with you would have brought to my arms one of the finest ladies in England.

O sir, said I, my virtue is as dear to me, as if I was of the highest quality; and my doubts (for which you know I have had too much reason) have made me troublesome. But now, sir, I will tell you what I heard, which has given me great uneasiness.

You talked to Mrs. Jewkes of having begun wrong with me, in trying to subdue me with terror, and of frost, and such like—You remember it well:—And that you would, for the future, change your conduct, and try to melt me, that was your word, by kindness.

I fear not, sir, the grace of God supporting me, that any acts of kindness would make me forget what I owe to my virtue: but, sir, I may, I find, be

made more miserable by such acts, than by terror; because my nature is too frank and open to make me wish to be ungrateful: and if I should be taught a lesson I never yet learnt, with what regret should I descend to the grave, to think that I could not hate my undoer: and that, at the last great day, I must stand up as an accuser of the poor unhappy soul, that I could wish it in my power to save!

Exalted girl! said he, what a thought is that!—Why, now, Pamela, you excel yourself! You have given me a hint that will hold me long. But, sweet creature, said he, tell me what is this lesson, which you never yet learnt, and which you are so afraid of learning?

If, sir, said I, you will again generously spare my confusion, I need not speak it: But this I will say, in answer to the question you seem most solicitous about, that I know not the man breathing that I would wish to be married to, or that ever I thought of with such an idea. I had brought my mind so to love poverty, that I hoped for nothing but to return to the best, though the poorest of parents; and to employ myself in serving God, and comforting them; and you know not, sir, how you disappointed those hopes, and my proposed honest pleasures, when you sent me hither.

Well then, said he, I may promise myself, that neither the parson, nor any other man, is any the least secret motive to your steadfast refusal of my offers? Indeed, sir, said I, you may; and, as you was pleased to ask, I answer, that I have not the least shadow of a wish, or thought, for any man living.

But, said he, (for I am foolishly jealous, and yet it shews my fondness for you,) have you not encouraged Williams to think you will have him? Indeed, sir, said I, I have not; but the very contrary. And would you not have had him, said he, if you had got away by his means? I had resolved, sir, said I, in my mind, otherwise; and he knew it; and the poor man—I charge you, said he, say not a word in his favour! You will excite a whirlwind in my soul, if you name him with kindness; and then you'll be borne away with the tempest.

Sir, said I, I have done!—Nay, said he, but do not have done; let me know the whole. If you have any regard for him, speak out; for it would end fearfully for you, for me, and for him, if I found that you disguised any secret of your soul from me, in this nice particular.

Sir, said I, if I have ever given you cause to think me sincere—Say then, said he, interrupting me with great vehemence, and taking both my hands between his, Say, that you now, in the presence of God, declare that you have not any the most hidden regard for Williams, or any other man.

Sir, said I, I do. As God shall bless me, and preserve my innocence, I have not. Well, said he, I will believe you, Pamela; and in time, perhaps, I may better bear that man's name. And, if I am convinced that you are not prepossessed, my vanity makes me assured, that I need not to fear a place in your esteem, equal, if not preferable, to any man in England. But yet it stings my pride to the quick, that you was so easily brought, and at such a short acquaintance, to run away with that college novice!

O good sir, said I, may I be heard one thing? And though I bring upon me your highest indignation, I will tell you, perhaps, the unnecessary and imprudent, but yet the whole truth.

My honesty (I am poor and lowly, and am not entitled to call it honour) was in danger. I saw no means of securing myself from your avowed attempts. You had shewed you would not stick at little matters; and what, sir, could any body have thought of my sincerity, in preferring that to all other considerations, if I had not escaped from these dangers, if I could have found any way for it?—I am not going to say any thing for him; but, indeed, indeed, sir, I was the cause of putting him upon assisting me in my escape. I got him to acquaint me what gentry there were in the neighbourhood that I might fly to; and prevailed upon him—Don't frown at me, good sir; for I must tell you the whole truth—to apply to one Lady Jones; to Lady Darnford; and he was so good to apply to Mr. Peters, the minister: But they all refused me; and then it was he let me know, that there was no honourable way but marriage. That I declined; and he agreed to assist me for God's sake.

Now, said he, you are going—I boldly put my hand before his mouth, hardly knowing the liberty I took: Pray, sir, said I, don't be angry; I have just done—I would only say, that rather than have staid to be ruined, I would have thrown myself upon the poorest beggar that ever the world saw, if I thought him honest.—And I hope, when you duly weigh all matters, you will forgive me, and not think me so bold, and so forward, as you have been pleased to call me.

Well, said he, even in this your last speech, which, let me tell you, shews more your honesty of heart than your prudence, you have not over-much pleased me. But I must love you; and that vexes me not a little. But tell me, Pamela, for now the former question recurs: Since you so much prize your honour, and your virtue; since all attempts against that are so odious to you; and since I have avowedly made several of these attempts, do you think it is possible for you to love me preferably to any other of my sex?

Ah, sir! said I, and here my doubt recurs, that you may thus graciously use me, to take advantage of my credulity.

Still perverse and doubting! said he—Cannot you take me as I am at present? And that, I have told you, is sincere and undesigning, whatever I may be hereafter.

Ah, sir! replied I, what can I say? I have already said too much, if this dreadful hereafter should take place. Don't bid me say how well I can—And then, my face glowing as the fire, I, all abashed, leaned upon his shoulder, to hide my confusion.

He clasped me to him with great ardour, and said, Hide your dear face in my bosom, my beloved Pamela! your innocent freedoms charm me!—But then say, How well—what?

If you will be good, said I, to your poor servant, and spare her, I cannot say too much! But if not, I am doubly undone!—Undone indeed!

Said he, I hope my present temper will hold; for I tell you frankly, that I have known, in this agreeable hour, more sincere pleasure than I have experienced in all the guilty tumults that my desiring soul compelled me into, in the hopes of possessing you on my own terms. And, Pamela, you must pray for the continuance of this temper; and I hope your prayers will get the better of my temptations.

This sweet goodness overpowered all my reserves. I threw myself at his feet, and embraced his knees: What pleasure, sir, you give me at these gracious words, is not lent your poor servant to express!—I shall be too much rewarded for all my sufferings, if this goodness hold! God grant it may, for your own soul's sake as well as mine. And oh! how happy should I be, if——

He stopt me, and said, But, my dear girl, what must we do about the world, and the world's censure? Indeed, I cannot marry!

Now was I again struck all of a heap. However, soon recollecting myself, Sir, said I, I have not the presumption to hope such an honour. If I may be permitted to return in peace and safety to my poor parents, to pray for you there, it is all I at present request! This, sir, after all my apprehensions and dangers, will be a great pleasure to me. And, if I know my own poor heart, I shall wish you happy in a lady of suitable degree; and rejoice most sincerely in every circumstance that shall make for the happiness of my late good lady's most beloved son.

Well, said he, this conversation, Pamela, is gone farther than I intended it. You need not be afraid, at this rate, of trusting yourself with me: but it is I that ought to be doubtful of myself, when I am with you.—But before I say any thing farther on this subject, I will take my proud heart to task; and, till then, let every thing be as if this conversation had never passed. Only, let me tell you, that the more confidence you place in me, the more you'll oblige me: but your doubts will only beget cause of doubts. And with this ambiguous saying, he saluted me with a more formal manner, if I may so say, than before, and lent me his hand; and so we walked toward the house, side by side, he seeming very thoughtful and pensive, as if he had already repented him of his goodness.



What shall I do, what steps take, if all this be designing—O the perplexities of these cruel doubtings!—To be sure, if he be false, as I may call it, I have gone too far, much too far!—I am ready, on the apprehension of this, to bite my forward tongue (or rather to beat my more forward heart, that dictated to that poor machine) for what I have said. But sure, at least, he must be sincere for the time!—He could not be such a practised dissembler!—If he could, O how desperately wicked is the heart of man!—And where could he learn all these barbarous arts?—If so, it must be native surely to the sex!—But, silent be my rash censurings; be hushed, ye stormy tumults of my disturbed mind! for have I not a father who is a man?—A man who knows no guile! who would do no wrong!—who would not deceive or oppress, to gain a kingdom!—How then can I think it is native to the sex? And I must also hope my good lady's son cannot be the worst of men!—If he is, hard the lot of the excellent woman that bore him!—But much harder the hap of your poor Pamela, who has fallen into such hands!—But yet I will trust in God, and hope the best: and so lay down my tired pen for this time.

Thursday morning.

Somebody rapped at our chamber-door this morning, soon after it was light: Mrs. Jewkes asked, who it was? My master said, Open the door, Mrs. Jewkes! O, said I, for God's sake, Mrs. Jewkes, don't! Indeed, said she, but I must. Then, said I, and clung about her, let me slip on my clothes first. But he rapped again, and she broke from me; and I was frightened out of my wits, and folded myself in the bed-clothes. He entered, and said, What, Pamela, so fearful, after what passed yesterday between us! O, sir, sir, said I, I fear my prayers have wanted their wished effect! Pray, good sir, consider—He sat down on the bed-side, and interrupted me; No need of your foolish fears; I shall say but a word or two, and go away.

After you went up stairs, said he, I had an invitation to a ball, which is to be this night at Stamford, on occasion of a wedding; and I am going to call on Sir Simon, and his lady and daughters; for the bride is a relation of theirs: so I shall not be at home till Saturday. I come, therefore, to caution you, Mrs. Jewkes, before Pamela, (that she may not wonder at being closer confined, than for these three or four days past,) that nobody sees her, nor delivers any letter to her, in that space; for a person has been seen lurking

about, and inquiring after her, and I have been well informed, that either Mrs. Jervis, or Mr. Longman, has written a letter, with a design of having it conveyed to her: And, said he, you must know, Pamela, that I have ordered Mr. Longman to give up his accounts, and have dismissed Jonathan and Mrs. Jervis, since I have been here; for their behaviour has been intolerable; and they have made such a breach between my sister Davers and me, as we shall never, perhaps, make up. Now, Pamela, I shall take it kindly in you, if you will confine yourself to your chamber pretty much, for the time I am absent, and not give Mrs. Jewkes cause of trouble or uneasiness; and the rather, as you know she acts by my orders.

Alas! sir, said I, I fear all these good people have suffered for my sake!—Why, said he, I believe so too; and there was never a girl of your innocence, that set a large family in such an uproar, surely.—But let that pass. You know both of you my mind, and, in part, the reason of it. I shall only say, that I have had such a letter from my sister, as I could not have expected; and, Pamela, said he, neither you nor I have reason to thank her, as you shall know, perhaps at my return.—I go in my coach, Mrs. Jewkes, because I take Lady Darnford, and Mrs. Peters's niece, and one of Lady Darnford's daughters, along with me; and Sir Simon and his other daughter go in his chariot: so let all the gates be fastened; and don't take any airing in either of the chariots, nor let any body go to the gate, without you, Mrs. Jewkes. I'll be sure, said she, to obey your honour.

I will give Mrs. Jewkes no trouble, sir, said I; and will keep pretty much in my chamber, and not stir so much as into the garden without her; to shew you I will obey in every thing I can. But I begin to fear—Ay, said he, more plots and contrivances, don't you?—But I'll assure you, you never had less reason; and I tell you the truth; for I am really going to Stamford this time; and upon the occasion I tell you. And so, Pamela, give me your hand, and one kiss; and then I am gone.

I durst not refuse, and said, God bless you, sir, wherever you go!—But I am sorry for what you tell me about your servants!

He and Mrs. Jewkes had a little talk without the door; and I heard her say, You may depend, sir, upon my care and vigilance.

He went in his coach, as he said he should, and very richly dressed, which looks as if what he said was likely: but really I have been used to so many tricks, and plots, and surprises, that I know not what to think. But I

mourn for poor Mrs. Jervis.—So here is Parson Williams; here's poor naughty John; here is good Mrs. Jervis, and Mr. Longman, and Mr. Jonathan, turned away for me!—Mr. Longman is rich, indeed, and so need the less matter it; but I know it will grieve him: and for poor Mr. Jonathan, I am sure it will cut that good old servant to the heart. Alas for me! what mischiefs am I the occasion of!—Or, rather, my master, whose actions towards me have made so many of my kind friends forfeit his favour, for my sake!

I am very sad about these things: If he really loved me, methinks he should not be so angry, that his servants loved me too.—I know not what to think!

Friday night.

I have removed my papers from under the rose-bush; for I saw the gardener begin to dig near that spot; and I was afraid he would find them.

Mrs. Jewkes and I were looking yesterday through the iron gate that fronts the elms; and a gipsy-like body made up to us, and said; If, madam, you will give me some broken victuals, I will tell you both your fortunes. I said, Let us hear our fortunes, Mrs. Jewkes. She said, I don't like these sort of people; but we will hear what she'll say to us, however. I shan't fetch you any victuals, woman; but I will give you some pence, said she.

But Nan coming out, she said, Fetch some bread, and some of the cold meat, and you shall have your fortune told, Nan.

This, you'll think, like some of my other matters, a very trifling thing to write about. But mark the discovery of a dreadful plot, which I have made by it. O, bless me! What can I think of this naughty, this very naughty gentleman!—Now will I hate him most heartily. Thus it was:—

Mrs. Jewkes had no suspicion of the woman, the iron gate being locked, and she on the outside, and we on the inside; and so put her hand through. She said, muttering over a parcel of cramp words; Why, madam, you will marry soon, I can tell you. At that she seemed pleased, and said, I am glad to hear that; and shook her fat sides with laughing. The woman looked most earnestly at me, all the time, and as if she had meaning. Then it came into my head, from my master's caution, that possibly this woman might be employed to try to get a letter into my hands; and I was resolved to watch all her motions. So Mrs. Jewkes said, What sort of a man shall I have, pray?—Why, said she, a man younger than yourself; and a very good

husband he'll prove.—I am glad of that, said she; and laughed again. Come, madam, let us hear your fortune.

The woman came to me, and took my hand. O! said she, I cannot tell your fortune: your hand is so white and fine, I cannot see the lines: but, said she, and, stooping, pulled up a little tuft of grass, I have a way for that; and so rubbed my hand with the mould part of the tuft: Now, said she, I can see the lines.

Mrs. Jewkes was very watchful of all her ways, and took the tuft, and looked upon it, lest any thing should be in that. And then the woman said, Here is the line of Jupiter crossing the line of life; and Mars—Odd! my pretty mistress, said she, you had best take care of yourself; for you are hard beset, I'll assure you. You will never be married, I can see; and will die of your first child. Out upon thee, woman! said I, better thou hadst never come here.

Said Mrs. Jewkes, whispering, I don't like this: it looks like a cheat: Pray, Mrs. Pamela, go in, this moment. So I will, said I; for I have enough of fortune-telling. And in I went.

The woman wanted sadly to tell me more, which made Mrs. Jewkes threaten her, suspecting still the more; and away the woman went, having told Nan her fortune, and she would be drowned.

This thing ran strongly in all our heads; and we went, an hour after, to see if the woman was lurking about, and took Mr. Colbrand for our guard. Looking through the iron gate, he spied a man sauntering about the middle of the walk; which filled Mrs. Jewkes with still more suspicions; and she said, Mr. Colbrand, you and I will walk towards this fellow, and see what he saunters there for: And, Nan, do you and madam stay at the gate.

So they opened the iron gate and walked down towards the man; and guessing the woman, if employed, must mean something by the tuft of grass, I cast my eye that way, whence she pulled it, and saw more grass seemingly pulled up: then I doubted not something was there for me; and I walked to it, and standing over it, said to Nan, That's a pretty sort of wild flower, that grows yonder, near the elm, the fifth from us on the left; pray pull it for me. Said she, It is a common weed. Well, said I, but pull it for me; there are sometimes beautiful colours in a weed.

While she went on, I stooped, and pulled up a good handful of the grass, and in it a bit of paper, which I put instantly in my bosom, and dropt the

grass: and my heart went pit-a-pat at the odd adventure. Said I, Let's go in, Mrs. Anne. No, said she, we must stay till Mrs. Jewkes comes.

I was all impatience to read this paper: and when Colbrand and she returned, I went in. Said she, Certainly there is some reason for my master's caution: I can make nothing of this sauntering fellow; but, to be sure, there was some roguery in the gipsy. Well, said I, if there was, she lost her aim, you see! Ay, very true, said she; but that was owing to my watchfulness; and you was very good to go away, when I spoke to you.

I hastened up stairs to my closet, and found the billet to contain, in a hand that seemed disguised, and bad spelling, the following words:

'Twenty contrivances have been thought of to let you know your danger: but all have proved in vain. Your friends hope it is not yet too late to give you this caution, if it reaches your hands. The 'squire is absolutely determined to ruin you; and, because he despairs of any other way, he will pretend great love and kindness to you, and that he will marry you. You may expect a parson, for this purpose, in a few days; but it is a sly artful fellow, of a broken attorney, that he has hired to personate a minister. The man has a broad face, pitted much with the small-pox, and is a very great companion. So take care of yourself. Doubt not this advice. Perhaps you'll have had but too much reason already to confirm you in the truth of it. From your zealous well-wisher, 'SOMEBODY.'

Now, my dear father and mother, what shall we say of this truly diabolical master! O, how shall I find words to paint my griefs, and his deceit! I have as good as confessed I love him; but, indeed, it was on supposing him good.—This, however, has given him too much advantage. But now I will break this wicked forward heart of mine, if it will not be taught to hate him! O, what a black dismal heart must he have! So here is a plot to ruin me, and by my own consent to!—No wonder he did not improve his wicked opportunities, (which I thought owing to remorse for his sin, and compassion for me,) when he had such a project as this in reserve!—Here should I have been deluded with the hopes of a happiness that my highest ambition could have had aspired to!—But how dreadful must have been my lot, when I had found myself an undone creature, and a guilty harlot, instead of a lawful wife! Oh! this is indeed too much, too much, for your poor Pamela to support! This is the worse, as I hoped all the worst was over; and that I had the pleasure of beholding a reclaimed

man, and not an abandoned libertine. What now must your poor daughter do? Now all her hopes are dashed! And if this fails him, then comes, to be sure, my forced disgrace! for this shews he will never leave till he has ruined me—O, the wretched, wretched Pamela!

Saturday noon, one o'clock.

My master is come home; and, to be sure, has been where he said. So once he has told truth; and this matter seems to be gone off without a plot: No doubt he depends upon his sham wicked marriage! He has brought a gentleman with him to dinner; and so I have not seen him yet.

Two o'clock.

I am very sorrowful, and still have greater reason; for, just now, as I was in my closet, opening the parcel I had hid under the rose-bush, to see if it was damaged by lying so long, Mrs. Jewkes came upon me by surprise, and laid her hands upon it; for she had been looking through the key-hole, it seems.

I know not what I shall do! For now he will see all my private thoughts of him, and all my secrets, as I may say. What a careless creature I am!—To be sure I deserve to be punished.

You know I had the good luck, by Mr. Williams's means, to send you all my papers down to Sunday night, the 17th day of my imprisonment. But now these papers contain all my matters from that time, to Wednesday the 27th day of my distress: And which, as you may now, perhaps, never see, I will briefly mention the contents to you.

In these papers, then, are included, 'An account of Mrs. Jewkes's arts to draw me in to approve of Mr. Williams's proposal for marriage; and my refusing to do so; and desiring you not to encourage his suit to me. Mr. Williams's being wickedly robbed, and a visit of hers to him; whereby she discovered all his secrets. How I was inclined to get off, while she was gone; but was ridiculously prevented by my foolish fears, etc. My having the key of the back-door. Mrs. Jewkes's writing to my master all the secrets she had discovered of Mr. Williams, and her behaviour to me and him upon it. Continuance of my correspondence with Mr. Williams by the tiles; begun in the parcel you had. My reproaches to him for his revealing himself to Mrs. Jewkes; and his letter to me in answer, threatening to expose my master, if he deceived him; mentioning in it John Arnold's correspondence with him; and a letter which John sent, and was

intercepted, as it seems. Of the correspondence being carried on by a friend of his at Gainsborough. Of the horse he was to provide for me, and one for himself. Of what Mr. Williams had owed to Mrs. Jewkes; and of my discouraging his proposals. Then it contained a pressing letter of mine to him, urging my escape before my master came; with his half-angry answer to me. Your good letter to me, my dear father, sent to me by Mr. Williams's conveyance; in which you would have me encourage Mr. Williams, but leave it to me; and in which, fortunately enough, you take notice of my being uninclined to marry.—My earnest desire to be with you. The substance of my answer to Mr. Williams, expressing more patience, etc. A dreadful letter of my master to Mrs. Jewkes; which, by mistake, was directed to me; and one to me, directed by like mistake to her; and very free reflections of mine upon both. The concern I expressed for Mr. Williams's being taken in, deceived, and ruined. An account of Mrs. Jewkes's glorying in her wicked fidelity. A sad description I gave of Monsieur Colbrand, a person he sent down to assist Mrs. Jewkes in watching me. How Mr. Williams was arrested, and thrown into gaol; and the concern I expressed upon it; and my free reflections on my master for it. A projected contrivance of mine, to get away out of the window, and by the back-door; and throwing by petticoat and handkerchief into the pond to amuse them, while I got off: An attempt that had like to have ended very dreadfully for me! My further concern for Mr. Williams's ruin, on my account: And, lastly, my over-hearing Mrs. Jewkes brag of her contrivance to rob Mr. Williams, in order to get at my papers; which, however, he preserved, and sent safe to you.'

These, down to the execution of my unfortunate plot to escape, are, to the best of my remembrance, the contents of the papers, which this merciless woman seized: For, how badly I came off, and what followed, I still have safe, as I hope, sewed in my under-coat, about my hips.

In vain were all my prayers and tears to her, to get her not to shew them to my master. For she said, It had now come out, why I affected to be so much alone; and why I was always writing. And she thought herself happy, she said, she had found these; for often and often had she searched every place she could think of, for writings, to no purpose before. And she hoped, she said, there was nothing in them by what any body might see; for, said she, you know you are all innocence!—Insolent creature! said I, I

am sure you are all guilt!—And so you must do your worst; for now I can't help myself, and I see there is no mercy to be expected from you.

Just now, my master being come up, she went to him upon the stairs, and gave him my papers. There, sir, said she; you always said Mrs. Pamela was a great writer; but I never could get at any thing of hers before. He took them; and, without coming to me, went down to the parlour again. And what with the gipsy affair, and what with this, I could not think of going down to dinner; and she told him that too; and so I suppose I shall have him up stairs, as soon as his company is gone.

Saturday, six o'clock.

My master came up, and, in a pleasanter manner than I expected, said, So, Pamela, we have seized, it seems, your treasonable papers? Treasonable! said I, very sullenly. Ay, said he, I suppose so; for you are a great plotter: but I have not read them yet.

Then, sir, said I, very gravely, it will be truly honourable in you not to read them; but to give them to me again. To whom, says he, are they written?—To my father, sir; but I suppose you see to whom.—Indeed, returned he, I have not read three lines yet. Then, pray, sir, don't read them; but give them to me again. That I will not, said he, till I have read them. Sir, said I, you served me not well in the letters I used to write formerly: I think it was not worthy your character to contrive to get them in your hands, by that false John Arnold! for should such a gentleman as you mind what your poor servant writes?—Yes, said he, by all means, mind what such a servant as my Pamela writes.

Your Pamela! thought I. Then the sham marriage came into my head; and indeed it has not been out of it, since the gipsy affair.—But, said he, have you any thing in these papers you would not have me see? To be sure, sir, said I, there is; for what one writes to one's father and mother, is not for every body to see. Nor, said he, am I every body.

Those letters, added he, that I did see by John's means, were not to your disadvantage, I'll assure you; for they gave me a very high opinion of your wit and innocence: And if I had not loved you, do you think I would have troubled myself about your letters?

Alas! sir, said I, great pride to me that! For they gave you such an opinion of my innocence, that you was resolved to ruin me. And what



advantage have they brought me!—Who have been made a prisoner, and used as I have been between you and your housekeeper.

Why, Pamela, said he, a little seriously, why this behaviour, for my goodness to you in the garden?—This is not of a piece with your conduct and softness there, that quite charmed me in your favour: And you must not give me cause to think that you will be the more insolent, as you find me kinder. Ah! sir, said I, you know best your own heart and designs! But I fear I was too open-hearted then; and that you still keep your resolution to undo me, and have only changed the form of your proceedings.

When I tell you once again, said he, a little sternly, that you cannot oblige me more, than by placing some confidence in me, I will let you know, that these foolish and perverse doubts are the worst things you can be guilty of. But, said he, I shall possibly account for the cause of them, in these papers of yours; for I doubt not you have been sincere to your father and mother, though you begin to make me suspect you: For I tell you, perverse girl, that it is impossible you should be thus cold and insensible, after what has passed in the garden, if you were not prepossessed in some other person's favour: And let me add, that if I find it so, it shall be attended with such effects, as will make every vein in your heart bleed.

He was going away in wrath; and I said, One word, good sir, one word before you read them, since you will read them: Pray make allowances—for all the harsh reflections that you will find in them, on your own conduct to me: And remember only, that they were not written for your sight; and were penned by a poor creature hardly used, and who was in constant apprehension of receiving from you the worst treatment that you could inflict upon her.

If that be all, said he, and there be nothing of another nature, that I cannot forgive, you have no cause for uneasiness; for I had as many instances of your saucy reflections upon me in your former letters, as there were lines; and yet, you see, I have never upbraided you on that score; though, perhaps, I wished you had been more sparing of your epithets, and your freedoms of that sort.

Well, sir, said I, since you will, you must read them; and I think I have no reason to be afraid of being found insincere, or having, in any respect, told you a falsehood; because, though I don't remember all I wrote, yet I know I wrote my heart; and that is not deceitful. And remember, sir,

another thing, that I always declared I thought myself right to endeavour to make my escape from this forced and illegal restraint; and so you must not be angry that I would have done so, if I could.

I'll judge you, never fear, said he, as favourably as you deserve; for you have too powerful a pleader within me. And so went down stairs.

About nine o'clock he sent for me down into the parlour. I went a little fearfully; and he held the paper in his hand, and said, Now, Pamela, you come upon your trial. Said I, I hope I have a just judge to hear my cause. Ay, said he, and you may hope for a merciful one too, or else I know not what will become of you.

I expect, continued he, that you will answer me directly, and plainly, to every question I shall ask you.—In the first place, here are several love-letters between you and Williams. Love-letters! sir, said I.—Well, call them what you will, said he, I don't entirely like them, I'll assure you, with all the allowances you desired me to make for you. Do you find, sir, said I, that I encouraged his proposal, or do you not? Why, said he, you discourage his address in appearance; but no otherwise than all your cunning sex do to ours, to make us more eager in pursuing you.

Well, sir, said I, that is your comment; but it does not appear so in the text. Smartly said! says he: Where a d—I gottest thou, at these years, all this knowledge? And then thou hast a memory, as I see by your papers, that nothing escapes. Alas! sir, said I, what poor abilities I have, serve only to make me more miserable!—I have no pleasure in my memory, which impresses things upon me, that I could be glad never were, or everlastingly to forget.

Well, said he, so much for that—But where are the accounts (since you have kept so exact a journal of all that has befallen you) previous to these here in my hand? My father has them, sir, said I.—By whose means? said he—By Mr. Williams's, said I. Well answered, said he. But cannot you contrive to get me a sight of them? That would be pretty! said I. I wish I could have contrived to have kept those you have from your sight. Said he, I must see them, Pamela, or I shall never be easy; for I must know how this correspondence between you and Williams began: and if I can see them, it shall be better for you, if they answer what these give me hope they will.

I can tell you, sir, very faithfully, said I, what the beginning was; for I was bold enough to be the beginner. That won't do, said he; for though this may appear a punctilio to you, to me it is of high importance. Sir, said I, if you please to let me go to my father, I will send them to you by any messenger you shall send for them. Will you so? But I dare say, if you will write for them, they will send them to you, without the trouble of such a journey to yourself: and I beg you will.

I think, sir, said I, as you have seen all my former letters through John's baseness, and now these, through your faithful housekeeper's officious watchfulness, you might see all the rest: But I hope you will not desire it, till I can see how much my pleasing you in this particular will be of use to myself.

You must trust to my honour for that. But tell me, Pamela, said the sly gentleman, since I have seen these, would you have voluntarily shewn me those, had they been in your possession?

I was not aware of this inference, and said, Yes, truly, sir, I think I should, if you commanded it. Well then, Pamela, said he, as I am sure you have found means to continue your journal, I desire, till the former part can come, that you will shew me the succeeding.—O sir, sir, said I, have you caught me so?—But indeed you must excuse me there.

Why, said he, tell me truly, have you not continued your account till now? Don't ask me, sir, said I. But I insist upon your answer, replied he. Why then, sir, I will not tell an untruth; I have.—That's my good girl! said he, I love sincerity at my heart.—In another, sir, said I, I presume you mean!—Well, said he, I'll allow you to be a little witty upon me; because it is in you, and you cannot help it: but you will greatly oblige me, to shew me voluntarily what you have written. I long to see the particulars of your plot, and your disappointment, where your papers leave off: for you have so beautiful a manner, that it is partly that, and partly my love for you, that has made me desirous of reading all you write; though a great deal of it is against myself; for which you must expect to suffer a little: and as I have furnished you with the subject, I have a title to see the fruits of your pen.—Besides, said he, there is such a pretty air of romance, as you relate them, in your plots, and my plots, that I shall be better directed in what manner to wind up the catastrophe of the pretty novel.

If I was your equal, sir, said I, I should say this is a very provoking way of jeering at the misfortunes you have brought upon me.

O, said he, the liberties you have taken with my character in your letters, sets us upon a par, at least in that respect. Sir, I could not have taken those liberties, if you had not given me the cause: and the cause, sir, you know, is before the effect.

True, Pamela, said he; you chop logic very prettily. What the deuse do we men go to school for? If our wits were equal to women's, we might spare much time and pains in our education: for nature teaches your sex, what, in a long course of labour and study, ours can hardly attain to.—But, indeed, every lady is not a Pamela.

You delight to banter your poor servant, said I.

Nay, continued he, I believe I must assume to myself half the merit of your wit, too; for the innocent exercises you have had for it, from me, have certainly sharpened your invention.

Sir, said I, could I have been without those innocent exercises, as you are pleased to call them, I should have been glad to have been as dull as a beetle. But then, Pamela, said he, I should not have loved you so well. But then, sir, I should have been safe, easy, and happy.—Ay, may be so, and may be not; and the wife, too, of some clouterly plough-boy.

But then, sir, I should have been content and innocent; and that's better than being a princess, and not so. And may be not, said he; for if you had had that pretty face, some of us keen fox-hunters should have found you out; and, in spite of your romantic notions, (which then, too, perhaps, would not have had so strong a place in your mind,) might have been more happy with the ploughman's wife, than I have been with my mother's Pamela. I hope, sir, said I, God would have given me more grace.

Well, but, resumed he, as to these writings of yours, that follow your fine plot, I must see them. Indeed, sir, you must not, if I can help it. Nothing, said he, pleases me better, than that, in all your arts, shifts, and stratagems, you have had a great regard to truth; and have, in all your little pieces of deceit, told very few wilful fibs. Now I expect you'll continue this laudable rule in your conversation with me.—Let me know then, where you have found supplies of pen, ink, and paper, when Mrs. Jewkes was so vigilant, and gave you but two sheets at a time?—Tell me truth.

Why, sir, little did I think I should have such occasion for them; but, when I went away from your house, I begged some of each of good Mr. Longman, who gave me plenty. Yes, yes, said he, it must be good Mr. Longman! All your confederates are good, every one of them: but such of my servants as have done their duty, and obeyed my orders, are painted out by you as black as devils! nay, so am I too, for that matter.

Sir, said I, I hope you won't be angry, but, saving yourself, do you think they are painted worse than they deserve? or worse than the parts they acted require?

You say, saving myself, Pamela; but is not that saying a mere compliment to me, because I am present, and you are in my hands? Tell me truly.—Good sir, excuse me; but I fancy I might ask you, Why you should think so, if there was not a little bit of conscience that told you, there was but too much reason for it?

He kissed me, and said, I must either do thus, or be angry with you; for you are very saucy, Pamela.—But, with your bewitching chit-chat, and pretty impertinence, I will not lose my question. Where did you hide your paper, pens, and ink?

Some, sir, in one place, some in another; that I might have some left, if others should be found.—That's a good girl! said he; I love you for your sweet veracity. Now tell me where it is you hide your written papers, your saucy journal?—I must beg your excuse for that, sir, said I. But indeed, answered he, you will not have it: for I will know, and I will see them.—This is very hard, sir, said I; but I must say, you shall not, if I can help it.

We were standing most of this time; but he then sat down, and took me by both my hands, and said, Well said, my pretty Pamela, if you can help it! But I will not let you help it. Tell me, are they in your pocket? No, sir, said I; my heart up at my mouth. Said he, I know you won't tell a downright fib for the world: but for equivocation! no jesuit ever went beyond you. Answer me then, Are they in neither of your pockets? No, sir, said I. Are they not, said he, about your stays? No, sir, replied I: But pray no more questions: for ask me ever so much, I will not tell you.

O, said he, I have a way for that. I can do as they do abroad, when the criminals won't confess; torture them till they do.—But pray, sir, said I, is this fair, just, or honest? I am no criminal; and I won't confess.

O, my girl! said he, many an innocent person has been put to the torture. But let me know where they are, and you shall escape the question, as they call it abroad.

Sir, said I, the torture is not used in England, and I hope you won't bring it up. Admirably said! said the naughty gentleman.—But I can tell you of as good a punishment. If a criminal won't plead with us, here in England, we press him to death, or till he does plead. And so now, Pamela, that is a punishment shall certainly be yours, if you won't tell without.

Tears stood in my eyes, and I said, This, sir, is very cruel and barbarous.—No matter, said he; it is but like your Lucifer, you know, in my shape! And, after I have done so many heinous things by you as you think, you have no great reason to judge so hardly of this; or, at least, it is but of a piece with the rest.

But, sir, said I, (dreadfully afraid he had some notion they were about me,) if you will be obeyed in this unreasonable manner, though it is sad tyranny, to be sure!—let me go up to them, and read them over again, and you shall see so far as to the end of the sad story that follows those you have.

I'll see them all, said he, down to this time, if you have written so far:—Or, at least, till within this week.—Then let me go up to them, said I, and see what I have written, and to what day, to shew them to you; for you won't desire to see every thing. But I will, replied he.—But say, Pamela, tell me truth: Are they above? I was much affrighted. He saw my confusion. Tell me truth, said he. Why, sir, answered I, I have sometimes hid them under the dry mould in the garden; sometimes in one place, sometimes in another; and those you have in your hand, were several days under a rose-bush, in the garden. Artful slut! said he, What's this to my question?—Are they not about you?—If, said I, I must pluck them out of my hiding-place behind the wainscot, won't you see me?—Still more and more artful! said he—Is this an answer to my question?—I have searched every place above, and in your closet, for them, and cannot find them; so I will know where they are. Now, said he, it is my opinion they are about you; and I never undressed a girl in my life; but I will now begin to strip my pretty Pamela; and I hope I shall not go far before I find them.

I fell a crying, and said, I will not be used in this manner. Pray, sir, said I, (for he began to unpin my handkerchief,) consider! Pray sir, do!—And

pray, said he, do you consider. For I will see these papers. But may be, said he, they are tied about your knees, with your garters, and stooped. Was ever any thing so vile and so wicked?—I fell on my knees, and said, What can I do? What can I do? If you'll let me go up I'll fetch them to you. Will you, said he, on your honour, let me see them uncurtailed, and not offer to make them away; no not a single paper?—I will, sir.—On your honour? Yes, sir. And so he let me go up stairs, crying sadly for vexation to be so used. Sure nobody was ever so served as I am!

I went to my closet, and there I sat me down, and could not bear the thoughts of giving up my papers. Besides, I must all undress me, in a manner, to untack them. So I writ thus:

'SIR,

'To expostulate with such an arbitrary gentleman, I know will signify nothing; and most hardly do you use the power you so wickedly have got over me. I have heart enough, sir, to do a deed that would make you regret using me thus; and I can hardly bear it, and what I am further to undergo. But a superior consideration withholds me; thank God, it does!—I will, however, keep my word, if you insist upon it when you have read this; but, sir, let me beg of you to give me time till to-morrow morning, that I may just run them over, and see what I put into your hands against me: and I will then give my papers to you, without the least alteration, or adding or diminishing: But I should beg still to be excused, if you please: But if not, spare them to me but till to-morrow morning: and this, so hardly am I used, shall be thought a favour, which I shall be very thankful for.'

I guessed it would not be long before I heard from him and he accordingly sent up Mrs. Jewkes for what I had promised. So I gave her this note to carry to him. And he sent word, that I must keep my promise, and he would give me till morning; but that I must bring them to him, without his asking again.

So I took off my under-coat, and with great trouble of mind, unsewed them from it. And there is a vast quantity of it. I will just slightly touch upon the subjects; because I may not, perhaps, get them again for you to see.

They begin with an account of 'my attempting to get away out of the window first, and then throwing my petticoat and handkerchief into the pond. How sadly I was disappointed, the lock of the back-door being

changed. How, in trying to climb over the door, I tumbled down, and was piteously bruised; the bricks giving way, and tumbling upon me. How, finding I could not get off, and dreading the hard usage I should receive, I was so wicked as to think of throwing myself into the water. My sad reflections upon this matter. How Mrs. Jewkes used me upon this occasion, when she found me. How my master had like to have been drowned in hunting; and my concern for his danger, notwithstanding his usage of me. Mrs. Jewkes's wicked reports, to frighten me, that I was to be married to the ugly Swiss; who was to sell me on the wedding-day to my master. Her vile way of talking to me, like a London prostitute. My apprehensions of seeing preparations made for my master's coming. Her causeless fears that I was trying to get away again, when I had no thoughts of it; and my bad usage upon it. My master's dreadful arrival; and his hard, very hard treatment of me; and Mrs. Jewkes's insulting of me. His jealousy of Mr. Williams and me. How Mrs. Jewkes vilely instigated him to wickedness.' And down to here, I put into one parcel, hoping that would content him. But for fear it should not, I put into another parcel the following; viz.

'A copy of his proposals to me, of a great parcel of gold, and fine clothes and rings, and an estate of I can't tell what a year; and 50l. a year for the life of both you, my dear parents, to be his mistress; with an insinuation, that, may be, he would marry me at the year's end: All sadly vile: With threatenings, if I did not comply, that he would ruin me, without allowing me any thing. A copy of my answer, refusing all, with just abhorrence: But begging at last his goodness towards me, and mercy on me, in the most moving manner I could think of. An account of his angry behaviour, and Mrs. Jewkes's wicked advice hereupon. His trying to get me to his chamber; and my refusal to go. A deal of stuff and chit-chat between me and the odious Mrs. Jewkes; in which she was very wicked and very insulting. Two notes I wrote, as if to be carried to church, to pray for his reclaiming, and my safety; which Mrs. Jewkes seized, and officiously shewed him. A confession of mine, that, notwithstanding his bad usage, I could not hate him. My concern for Mr. Williams. A horrid contrivance of my master's to ruin me; being in my room, disguised in clothes of the maid's, who lay with me and Mrs. Jewkes. How narrowly I escaped, (it makes my heart ache to think of it still!) by falling into fits. Mrs. Jewkes's detestable part in this sad affair. How he seemed moved at my danger, and forbore his abominable designs; and assured me he had



offered no indecency. How ill I was for a day or two after; and how kind he seemed. How he made me forgive Mrs. Jewkes. How, after this, and great kindness pretended, he made rude offers to me in the garden, which I escaped. How I resented them.' Then I had written, 'How kindly he behaved himself to me; and how he praised me, and gave me great hopes of his being good at last. Of the too tender impression this made upon me; and how I began to be afraid of my own weakness and consideration for him, though he had used me so ill. How sadly jealous he was of Mr. Williams; and how I, as justly could, cleared myself as to his doubts on that score. How, just when he had raised me up to the highest hope of his goodness, he dashed me sadly again, and went off more coldly. My free reflections upon this trying occasion.'

This brought down matters from Thursday, the 20th day of my imprisonment, to Wednesday the 41st, and here I was resolved to end, let what would come; for only Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, remain to give an account of; and Thursday he set out to a ball at Stamford; and Friday was the gipsy story; and this is Saturday, his return from Stamford. And truly, I shall have but little heart to write, if he is to see all.

So these two parcels of papers I have got ready for him against tomorrow morning. To be sure I have always used him very freely in my writings, and shewed him no mercy; but yet he must thank himself for it; for I have only writ truth; and I wish he had deserved a better character at my hands, as well for his own sake as mine.—So, though I don't know whether ever you'll see what I write, I must say, that I will go to bed, with remembering you in my prayers, as I always do, and as I know you do me: And so, my dear parents, good night.

Sunday morning.

I remembered what he said, of not being obliged to ask again for my papers; and what I should be forced to do, and could not help, I thought I might as well do in such a manner as might shew I would not disoblige on purpose: though I stomached this matter very heavily too. I had therefore got in readiness my two parcels; and he, not going to church in the morning, bid Mrs. Jewkes tell me he was gone into the garden.

I knew that was for me to go to him; and so I went: for how can I help being at his beck? which grieves me not a little, though he is my master, as I may say; for I am so wholly in his power, that it would do me no good to

incense him; and if I refused to obey him in little matters, my refusal in greater would have the less weight. So I went down to the garden; but as he walked in one walk, I took another, that I might not seem too forward neither.

He soon 'spied me, and said, Do you expect to be courted to come to me? Sir, said I, and crossed the walk to attend him, I did not know but I should interrupt you in your meditations this good day.

Was that the case, said he, truly, and from your heart? Why, sir, said I, I don't doubt but you have very good thoughts sometimes, though not towards me. I wish, said he, I could avoid thinking so well of you as I do. But where are the papers?—I dare say you had them about you yesterday; for you say in those I have, that you will bury your writings in the garden, for fear you should be searched, if you did not escape. This, added he, gave me a glorious pretence to search you; and I have been vexing myself all night, that I did not strip you garment by garment, till I had found them. O fie, sir, said I; let me not be scared, with hearing that you had such a thought in earnest.

Well, said he, I hope you have not now the papers to give me; for I had rather find them myself, I'll assure you.

I did not like this way of talk at all; and thinking it best not to dwell upon it, said, Well, but, sir, you will excuse me, I hope, giving up my papers.

Don't trifle with me, said he; Where are they?—I think I was very good to you last night, to humour you as I did. If you have either added or diminished, and have not strictly kept your promise, woe be to you! Indeed, sir, said I, I have neither added nor diminished. But there is the parcel that goes on with my sad attempt to escape, and the terrible consequences it had like to have been followed with. And it goes down to the naughty articles you sent me. And as you know all that has happened since, I hope these will satisfy you.

He was going to speak; but I said, to drive him from thinking of any more, And I must beg you, sir, to read the matter favourably, if I have exceeded in any liberties of my pen.

I think, said he, half-smiling, you may wonder at my patience, that I can be so easy to read myself abused as I am by such a saucy slut.—Sir, said I, I have wondered you should be so desirous to see my bold stuff; and, for

that very reason, I have thought it a very good, or a very bad sign. What, said he, is your good sign?—That it may have an effect upon your temper, at last, in my favour, when you see me so sincere. Your bad sign? Why, that if you can read my reflections and observations upon your treatment of me, with tranquillity, and not be moved, it is a sign of a very cruel and determined heart. Now, pray, sir, don't be angry at my boldness in telling you so freely my thoughts. You may, perhaps, said he, be least mistaken, when you think of your bad sign. God forbid! said I.

So I took out my papers; and said, Here, sir, they are. But if you please to return them, without breaking the seal, it will be very generous: and I will take it for a great favour, and a good omen.

He broke the seal instantly, and opened them: So much for your omen! replied he. I am sorry for it, said I, very seriously; and was walking away. Whither now? said he. I was going in, sir, that you might have time to read them, if you thought fit. He put them into his pocket, and said, You have more than these. Yes, sir: but all they contain, you know as well as I.—But I don't know, said he, the light you put things in; and so give them me, if you have not a mind to be searched.

Sir, said I, I can't stay, if you won't forbear that ugly word.—Give me then no reason for it. Where are the other papers? Why, then, unkind sir, if it must be so, here they are. And so I gave him, out of my pocket, the second parcel, sealed up, as the former, with this superscription; From the naughty articles, down, through sad attempts, to Thursday the 42d day of my imprisonment. This is last Thursday, is it? Yes, sir; but now you will see what I write, I will find some other way to employ my time: for how can I write with any face, what must be for your perusal, and not for those I intended to read my melancholy stories?

Yes, said he, I would have you continue your penmanship by all means; and, I assure you, in the mind I am in, I will not ask you for any after these; except any thing very extraordinary occurs. And I have another thing to tell you, added he, that if you send for those from your father, and let me read them, I may, very probably, give them all back again to you. And so I desire you will do it.

This a little encourages me to continue my scribbling; but, for fear of the worst, I will, when they come to any bulk, contrive some way to hide them, if I can, that I may protest I have them not about me, which, before,

I could not say of a truth; and that made him so resolutely bent to try to find them upon me; for which I might have suffered frightful indecencies.

He led me, then, to the side of the pond; and sitting down on the slope, made me sit by him. Come, said he, this being the scene of part of your project, and where you so artfully threw in some of your clothes, I will just look upon that part of your relation. Sir, said I, let me then walk about, at a little distance; for I cannot bear the thought of it. Don't go far, said he.

When he came, as I suppose, to the place where I mentioned the bricks falling upon me, he got up, and walked to the door, and looked upon the broken part of the wall; for it had not been mended; and came back, reading on to himself, towards me; and took my hand, and put it under his arm.

Why, this, said he, my girl, is a very moving tale. It was a very desperate attempt, and, had you got out, you might have been in great danger; for you had a very bad and lonely way; and I had taken such measures, that, let you have been where you would, I should have had you.

You may see, sir, said I, what I ventured, rather than be ruined; and you will be so good as hence to judge of the sincerity of my profession, that my honesty is dearer to me than my life. Romantic girl! said he, and read on.

He was very serious at my reflections, on what God had enabled me to escape. And when he came to my reasonings about throwing myself into the water, he said, Walk gently before; and seemed so moved, that he turned away his face from me; and I blessed this good sign, and began not so much to repent at his seeing this mournful part of my story.

He put the papers in his pocket, when he had read my reflections, and thanks for escaping from myself; and said, taking me about the waist, O my dear girl! you have touched me sensibly with your mournful relation, and your sweet reflections upon it. I should truly have been very miserable had it taken effect. I see you have been used too roughly; and it is a mercy you stood proof in that fatal moment.

Then he most kindly folded me in his arms: Let us, say I too, my Pamela, walk from this accursed piece of water; for I shall not, with pleasure, look upon it again, to think how near it was to have been fatal to my fair one. I thought, added he, of terrifying you to my will, since I could not move you by love; and Mrs. Jewkes too well obeyed me, when the

terrors of your return, after your disappointment, were so great, that you had hardly courage to withstand them; but had like to have made so fatal a choice, to escape the treatment you apprehended.

O sir, said I, I have reason, I am sure, to bless my dear parents, and my good lady, your mother, for giving me something of a religious education; for, but for that, and God's grace, I should, more than upon one occasion, have attempted, at least, a desperate act: and I the less wonder how poor creatures, who have not the fear of God before their eyes, and give way to despondency, cast themselves into perdition.

Come, kiss me, said he, and tell me you forgive me for pushing you into so much danger and distress. If my mind hold, and I can see those former papers of yours, and that these in my pocket give me no cause to alter my opinion, I will endeavour to defy the world and the world's censures, and make my Pamela amends, if it be in the power of my whole life, for all the hardships I have made her undergo.

All this looked well; but you shall see how strangely it was all turned. For this sham-marriage then came into my mind again; and I said, Your poor servant is far unworthy of this great honour; for what will it be but to create envy to herself, and discredit to you? Therefore, sir, permit me to return to my poor parents, and that is all I have to ask.

He was in a fearful passion then. And is it thus, said he, in my fond conceding moments, that I am to be despised and answered?—Precise, perverse, unseasonable Pamela! begone from my sight! and know as well how to behave in a hopeful prospect, as in a distressful state; and then, and not till then, shalt thou attract the shadow of my notice.

I was startled, and going to speak: but he stamped with his foot, and said, Begone! I tell you: I cannot bear this stupid romantic folly.

One word, said I; but one word, I beseech you, sir.

He turned from me in great wrath, and took down another alley, and so I went, with a very heavy heart; and fear I was too unseasonable, just at a time when he was so condescending: but if it was a piece of art of his side, as I apprehended, to introduce the sham-wedding, (and, to be sure, he is very full of stratagem and art,) I think I was not so much to blame.

So I went up to my closet; and wrote thus far, while he walked about till dinner was ready; and he is now sat down to it, as I hear by Mrs. Jewkes,

very sullen, thoughtful, and out of humour; and she asks, What I have done to him?—Now, again, I dread to see him!—When will my fears be over?

Three o'clock.

Well, he continues exceeding wrath. He has ordered his travelling chariot to be got ready with all speed. What is to come next, I wonder!

Sure I did not say so much!—But see the lordliness of a high condition!—A poor body must not put in a word, when they take it into their heads to be angry! What a fine time a person of an equal condition would have of it, if she were even to marry such a one!—His poor dear mother spoiled him at first. Nobody must speak to him or contradict him, as I have heard, when he was a child; and so he has not been used to be controlled, and cannot bear the least thing that crosses his violent will. This is one of the blessings attending men of high condition! Much good may do them with their pride of birth, and pride of fortune! say I:—All that it serves for, as far as I can see, is, to multiply their disquiets, and every body's else that has to do with them.

So, so! where will this end?—Mrs. Jewkes has been with me from him, and she says, I must get out of the house this moment. Well, said I, but whither am I to be carried next? Why, home, said she, to your father and mother. And can it be? said I; No, no, I doubt I shall not be so happy as that!—To be sure some bad design is on foot again! To be sure it is!—Sure, sure, said I, Mrs. Jewkes, he has not found out some other housekeeper worse than you! She was very angry, you may well think. But I know she can't be made worse than she is.

She came up again. Are you ready? said she. Bless me, said I, you are very hasty! I have heard of this not a quarter of an hour ago. But I shall be soon ready; for I have but little to take with me, and no kind friends in this house to take leave of, to delay me. Yet, like a fool, I can't help crying.—Pray, said I, just step down, and ask, if I may not have my papers.

So, I am quite ready now, against she comes up with an answer; and so I will put up these few writings in my bosom, that I have left.

I don't know what to think—nor how to judge; but I shall never believe I am with you, till I am on my knees before you, begging both your blessings. Yet I am sorry he is so angry with me! I thought I did not say so much!

There is, I see, the chariot drawn out, the horses too, the grim Colbrand going to get on horseback. What will be the end of all this?

Monday.

Well, where this will end, I cannot say. But here I am, at a little poor village, almost such a one as yours! I shall learn the name of it by and by: and Robin assures me, he has orders to carry me to you, my dear father and mother. O that he may say truth, and not deceive me again! But having nothing else to do, and I am sure I shall not sleep a wink to-night, if I was to go to bed, I will write my time away, and take up my story where I left off, on Sunday afternoon.

Mrs. Jewkes came up to me, with this answer about my papers: My master says, he will not read them yet, lest he should be moved by any thing in them to alter his resolution. But if he should think it worth while to read them, he will send them to you, afterwards, to your father's. But, said she, here are your guineas that I borrowed: for all is over now with you, I find.

She saw me cry, and said, Do you repent?—Of what? said I.—Nay, I can't tell, replied she; but, to be sure, he has had a taste of your satirical flings, or he would not be so angry. O! continued she, and held up her hand, thou hast a spirit!—But I hope it will now be brought down.—I hope so too, said I.

Well, added I, I am ready. She lifted up the window, and said, I'll call Robin to take your portmanteau: Bag and baggage! proceeded she, I'm glad you're going. I have no words, said I, to throw away upon you, Mrs. Jewkes; but, making her a very low courtesy, I most heartily thank you for all your virtuous civilities to me. And so adieu; for I'll have no portmanteau, I'll assure you, nor any thing but these few things that I brought with me in my handkerchief, besides what I have on. For I had all this time worn my own bought clothes, though my master would have had it otherwise often: but I had put up paper, ink, and pens, however.

So down I went, and as I passed by the parlour, she stepped in, and said, Sir, you have nothing to say to the girl before she goes? I heard him reply, though I did not see him, Who bid you say, the girl, Mrs. Jewkes, in that manner? She has offended only me.

I beg your honour's pardon, said the wretch; but if I was your honour, she should not, for all the trouble she has cost you, go away scot-free. No

more of this, as I told you before, said he: What! when I have such proof, that her virtue is all her pride, shall I rob her of that?—No, added he, let her go, perverse and foolish as she is; but she deserves to go honest, and she shall go so!

I was so transported with this unexpected goodness, that I opened the door before I knew what I did; and said, falling on my knees at the door, with my hands folded, and lifted up, O thank you, thank your honour, a million of times!—May God bless you for this instance of your goodness to me! I will pray for you as long as I live, and so shall my dear father and mother. And, Mrs. Jewkes, said I, I will pray for you too, poor wicked wretch that you are!

He turned from me, and went into his closet, and shut the door. He need not have done so; for I would not have gone nearer to him!

Surely I did not say so much, to incur all this displeasure.

I think I was loath to leave the house. Can you believe it?—What could be the matter with me, I wonder?—I felt something so strange, and my heart was so lumpish!—I wonder what ailed me!—But this was so unexpected!—I believe that was all!—Yet I am very strange still. Surely, surely, I cannot be like the old murmuring Israelites, to long after the onions and garlick of Egypt, when they had suffered there such heavy bondage?—I'll take thee, O lumpish, contradictory, ungovernable heart! to severe task, for this thy strange impulse, when I get to my dear father's and mother's; and if I find any thing in thee that should not be, depend upon it thou shalt be humbled, if strict abstinence, prayer, and mortification, will do it!

But yet, after all, this last goodness of his has touched me too sensibly. I wish I had not heard it, almost; and yet, methinks, I am glad I did; for I should rejoice to think the best of him, for his own sake.

Well, and so I went out to the chariot, the same that brought me down. So, Mr. Robert, said I, here I am again! a poor sporting-piece for the great! a mere tennis-ball of fortune! You have your orders, I hope. Yes, madam, said he. Pray, now, said I, don't madam me, nor stand with your hat off to such a one as I. Had not my master, said he, ordered me not to be wanting in respect to you, I would have shewn you all I could. Well, said I, with my heart full, that's very kind, Mr. Robert.



Mr. Colbrand, mounted on horseback, with pistols before him, came up to me, as soon as I got in, with his hat off too. What, monsieur! said I, are you to go with me?—Part of the way, he said, to see you safe. I hope that's kind too, in you, Mr. Colbrand, said I.

I had nobody to wave my handkerchief to now, nor to take leave of; and so I resigned myself to my contemplations, with this strange wayward heart of mine, that I never found so ungovernable and awkward before.

So away drove the chariot!—And when I had got out of the elm-walk, and into the great road, I could hardly think but I was in a dream all the time. A few hours before, in my master's arms almost, with twenty kind things said to me, and a generous concern for the misfortunes he had brought upon me; and only by one rash half-word exasperated against me, and turned out of doors, at an hour's warning; and all his kindness changed to hate! And I now, from three o'clock to five, several miles off! But if I am going to you, all will be well again, I hope.

Lack-a-day, what strange creatures are men! gentlemen, I should say, rather! For, my dear deserving good mother, though poverty be both your lots, has had better hap, and you are, and have always been, blest in one another!—Yet this pleases me too; he was so good, he would not let Mrs. Jewkes speak ill of me, and scorned to take her odious unwomanly advice. O, what a black heart has this poor wretch! So I need not rail against men so much; for my master, bad as I have thought him, is not half so bad as this woman.—To be sure she must be an atheist!—Do you think she is not?

We could not reach further than this little poor place and sad alehouse, rather than inn; for it began to be dark, and Robin did not make so much haste as he might have done; and he was forced to make hard shift for his horses.

Mr. Colbrand, and Robert too, are very civil. I see he has got my portmanteau lashed behind the coach. I did not desire it; but I shall not come quite empty.

A thorough riddance of me, I see!—Bag and baggage! as Mrs. Jewkes says. Well, my story surely would furnish out a surprising kind of novel, if it was to be well told.

Mr. Robert came up to me, just now, and begged me to eat something: I thanked him; but said, I could not eat. I bid him ask Mr. Colbrand to walk up; and he came; but neither of them would sit; nor put their hats on. What

mockado is this, to such a poor soul as I! I asked them, if they were at liberty to tell me the truth of what they were to do with me? If not, I would not desire it.—They both said, Robin was ordered to carry me to my father's; and Mr. Colbrand was to leave me within ten miles, and then strike off for the other house, and wait till my master arrived there. They both spoke so solemnly, that I could not but believe them.

But when Robin went down, the other said, he had a letter to give me next day at noon, when we baited, as we were to do, at Mrs. Jewkes's relation's.—May I not, said I, beg the favour to see it to-night? He seemed so loath to deny me, that I have hopes I shall prevail on him by and by.

Well, my dear father and mother, I have got the letter, on great promises of secrecy, and making no use of it. I will try if I can open it without breaking the seal, and will take a copy of it by and by; for Robin is in and out: there being hardly any room in this little house for one to be long alone. Well, this is the letter:

'When these lines are delivered to you, you will be far on your way to your father and mother, where you have so long desired to be: and, I hope, I shall forbear thinking of you with the least shadow of that fondness my foolish heart had entertained for you: I bear you, however, no ill will; but the end of my detaining you being over, I would not that you should tarry with me an hour more than needed, after the ungenerous preference you gave, at a time that I was inclined to pass over all other considerations, for an honourable address to you; for well I found the tables entirely turned upon me, and that I was in far more danger from you, than you were from me; for I was just upon resolving to defy all the censures of the world, and to make you my wife.

'I will acknowledge another truth: That, had I not parted with you as I did, but permitted you to stay till I had read your journal, reflecting, as I doubt not I shall find it, and till I had heard your bewitching pleas in your own behalf, I feared I could not trust myself with my own resolution. And this is the reason, I frankly own, that I have determined not to see you, nor hear you speak; for well I know my weakness in your favour.

'But I will get the better of this fond folly: Nay, I hope I have already done it, since it was likely to cost me so dear. And I write this to tell you, that I wish you well with all my heart, though you have spread such mischief through my family.—And yet I cannot but say that I could wish

you would not think of marrying in haste; and, particularly, that you would not have this cursed Williams.—But what is all this to me now?—Only, my weakness makes me say, That as I had already looked upon you as mine, and you have so soon got rid of your first husband; so you will not refuse, to my memory, the decency that every common person observes, to pay a twelvemonth's compliment, though but a mere compliment, to my ashes.

'Your papers shall be faithfully returned you; and I have paid so dear for my curiosity in the affection they have rivetted upon me for you, that you would look upon yourself amply revenged if you knew what they have cost me.

'I thought of writing only a few lines; but I have run into length. I will now try to recollect my scattered thoughts, and resume my reason; and shall find trouble enough to replace my affairs, and my own family, and to supply the chasms you have made in it: For, let me tell you, though I can forgive you, I never can my sister, nor my domestics; for my vengeance must be wreaked somewhere.

'I doubt not your prudence in forbearing to expose me any more than is necessary for your own justification; and for that I will suffer myself to be accused by you, and will also accuse myself, if it be needful. For I am, and will ever be, 'Your affectionate well-wisher.'

This letter, when I expected some new plot, has affected me more than any thing of that sort could have done. For here is plainly his great value for me confessed, and his rigorous behaviour accounted for in such a manner, as tortures me much. And all this wicked gipsy story is, as it seems, a forgery upon us both, and has quite ruined me: For, O my dear parents, forgive me! but I found, to my grief, before, that my heart was too partial in his favour; but now with so much openness, so much affection; nay, so much honour too, (which was all I had before doubted, and kept me on the reserve,) I am quite overcome. This was a happiness, however, I had no reason to expect. But, to be sure, I must own to you, that I shall never be able to think of any body in the world but him.—Presumption! you will say; and so it is: But love is not a voluntary thing: Love, did I say?—But come, I hope not:—At least it is not, I hope, gone so far as to make me very uneasy: For I know not how it came, nor when it began; but crept,

crept it has, like a thief, upon me; and before I knew what was the matter, it looked like love.

I wish, since it is too late, and my lot determined, that I had not had this letter, nor heard him take my part to that vile woman; for then I should have blessed myself in having escaped so happily his designing arts upon my virtue: but now my poor mind is all topsy-turvied, and I have made an escape to be more a prisoner.

But I hope, since thus it is, that all will be for the best; and I shall, with your prudent advice, and pious prayers, be able to overcome this weakness.—But, to be sure, my dear sir, I will keep a longer time than a twelvemonth, as a true widow, for a compliment, and more than a compliment, to your ashes! O the dear word!—How kind, how moving, how affectionate is the word! O why was I not a duchess, to shew my gratitude for it! But must labour under the weight of an obligation, even had this happiness befallen me, that would have pressed me to death, and which I never could return by a whole life of faithful love, and cheerful obedience.

O forgive your poor daughter!—I am sorry to find this trial so sore upon me; and that all the weakness of my weak sex, and tender years, who never before knew what it was to be so touched, is come upon me, and too mighty to be withstood by me.—But time, prayer, and resignation to God's will, and the benefits of your good lessons, and examples, I hope, will enable me to get over this so heavy a trial.

O my treacherous, treacherous heart! to serve me thus! and give no notice to me of the mischiefs thou wast about to bring upon me!—But thus foolishly to give thyself up to the proud invader, without ever consulting thy poor mistress in the least! But thy punishment will be the first and the greatest; and well deservest thou to smart, O perfidious traitor! for giving up so weakly thy whole self, before a summons came; and to one, too, who had used me so hardly; and when, likewise, thou hadst so well maintained thy post against the most violent and avowed, and, therefore, as I thought, more dangerous attacks!

After all, I must either not shew you this my weakness, or tear it out of my writing. Memorandum: to consider of this, when I get home.

Monday morning, eleven o'clock.

We are just come in here, to the inn kept by Mrs. Jewkes's relation. The first compliment I had, was in a very impudent manner, How I liked the 'squire?—I could not help saying, Bold, forward woman! Is it for you, who keep an inn, to treat passengers at this rate? She was but in jest, she said, and asked pardon: And she came, and begged excuse again, very submissively, after Robin and Mr. Colbrand had talked to her a little.

The latter here, in great form, gave me, before Robin, the letter which I had given him back for that purpose. And I retired, as if to read it; and so I did; for I think I can't read it too often; though, for my peace of mind's sake, I might better try to forget it. I am sorry, methinks, I cannot bring you back a sound heart; but, indeed, it is an honest one, as to any body but me; for it has deceived nobody else: Wicked thing that it is!

More and more surprising things still——

Just as I had sat down, to try to eat a bit of victuals, to get ready to pursue my journey, came in Mr. Colbrand in a mighty hurry. O madam! madam! said he, here be de groom from de 'Squire B——, all over in a lather, man and horse! O how my heart went pit-a-pat! What now, thought I, is to come next! He went out, and presently returned with a letter for me, and another, enclosed, for Mr. Colbrand. This seemed odd, and put me all in a trembling. So I shut the door; and never, sure, was the like known! found the following agreeable contents:—

'In vain, my Pamela, do I find it to struggle against my affection for you. I must needs, after you were gone, venture to entertain myself with your Journal, when I found Mrs. Jewkes's bad usage of you, after your dreadful temptations and hurts; and particularly your generous concern for me, on hearing how narrowly I escaped drowning; (though my death would have been your freedom, and I had made it your interest to wish it); and your most agreeable confession in another place, that, notwithstanding all my hard usage of you, you could not hate me; and that expressed in so sweet, so soft, and so innocent a manner, that I flatter myself you may be brought to love me: (together with the other parts of your admirable Journal:) I began to repent my parting with you; but, God is my witness! for no unlawful end, as you would call it; but the very contrary: and the rather, as all this was improved in your favour, by your behaviour at leaving my house: For, oh! that melodious voice praying for me at your departure, and thanking me for my rebuke to Mrs. Jewkes, still hangs upon

my ears, and delights my memory. And though I went to bed, I could not rest; but about two got up, and made Thomas get one of the best horses ready, in order to set out to overtake you, while I sat down to write this to you.

'Now, my dear Pamela, let me beg of you, on the receipt of this, to order Robin to drive you back again to my house. I would have set out myself, for the pleasure of bearing you company back in the chariot; but am really indisposed; I believe, with vexation that I should part thus with my soul's delight, as I now find you are, and must be, in spite of the pride of my own heart.

'You cannot imagine the obligation your return will lay me under to your goodness; and yet, if you will not so far favour me, you shall be under no restraint, as you will see by my letter enclosed to Colbrand; which I have not sealed, that you may read it. But spare me, my dearest girl! the confusion of following you to your father's; which I must do, if you persist to go on; for I find I cannot live a day without you.

'If you are the generous Pamela I imagine you to be, (for hitherto you have been all goodness, where it has not been merited,) let me see, by this new instance, the further excellence of your disposition; let me see you can forgive the man who loves you more than himself; let me see, by it, that you are not prepossessed in any other person's favour: And one instance more I would beg, and then I am all gratitude; and that is, that you would despatch Monsieur Colbrand with a letter to your father, assuring him that all will end happily; and to desire, that he will send to you, at my house, the letters you found means, by Williams's conveyance, to send him. And when I have all my proud, and, perhaps, punctilious doubts answered, I shall have nothing to do, but to make you happy, and be so myself. For I must be 'Yours, and only yours.'

'Monday morn, near three o'clock.'

O my exulting heart! how it throbs in my bosom, as if it would reproach me for so lately upbraiding it for giving way to the love of so dear a gentleman!—But take care thou art not too credulous neither, O fond believer! Things that we wish, are apt to gain a too ready credence with us. This sham-marriage is not yet cleared up: Mrs. Jewkes, the vile Mrs. Jewkes! may yet instigate the mind of this master: His pride of heart, and pride of condition, may again take place: And a man that could in so little

a space, first love me, then hate, then banish me his house, and send me away disgracefully; and now send for me again, in such affectionate terms, may still waver, may still deceive thee. Therefore will I not acquit thee yet, O credulous, fluttering, throbbing mischief! that art so ready to believe what thou wishest! And I charge thee to keep better guard than thou hast lately done, and lead me not to follow too implicitly thy flattering and desirable impulses. Thus foolishly dialogued I with my heart; and yet, all the time, this heart is Pamela.

I opened the letter to Monsieur Colbrand; which was in these words:—

'MONSIEUR,

'I am sure you'll excuse the trouble I give you. I have, for good reasons, changed my mind; and I have besought it, as a favour, that Mrs. Andrews will return to me the moment Tom reaches you. I hope, for the reasons I have given her, she will have the goodness to oblige me. But, if not, you are to order Robin to pursue his directions, and set her down at her father's door. If she will oblige me in her return, perhaps she'll give you a letter to her father, for some papers to be delivered to you for her; which you'll be so good, in that case, to bring to her here: But if she will not give you such a letter, you'll return with her to me, if she please to favour me so far; and that with all expedition, that her health and safety will permit; for I am pretty much indisposed; but hope it will be but slight, and soon go off. I am 'Yours, etc.'

'On second thoughts, let Tom go forward with Mrs. Andrews's letter, if she pleases to give one; and you return with her, for her safety.'

Now this is a dear generous manner of treating me. O how I love to be generously used!—Now, my dear parents, I wish I could consult you for your opinions, how I should act. Should I go back, or should I not?—I doubt he has got too great hold in my heart, for me to be easy presently, if I should refuse: And yet this gipsy information makes me fearful.

Well, I will, I think, trust in his generosity! Yet is it not too great a trust?—especially considering how I have been used!—But then that was while he avowed his bad designs; and now he gives great hope of his good ones. And I may be the means of making many happy, as well as myself, by placing a generous confidence in him.

And then, I think, he might have sent to Colbrand, or to Robin, to carry me back, whether I would or not. And how different is his behaviour to that! And would it not look as if I was prepossessed, as he calls it, if I don't oblige him; and as if it was a silly female piece of pride, to make him follow me to my father's; and as if I would use him hardly in my turn, for his having used me ill in his? Upon the whole, I resolved to obey him; and if he uses me ill afterwards, double will be his ungenerous guilt!—Though hard will be my lot, to have my credulity so justly blamable, as it will then seem. For, to be sure, the world, the wise world, that never is wrong itself, judges always by events. And if he should use me ill, then I shall be blamed for trusting him: If well, O then I did right, to be sure!—But how would my censurers act in my case, before the event justifies or condemns the action, is the question?

Then I have no notion of obliging by halves; but of doing things with a grace, as one may say, where they are to be done; and so I wrote the desired letter to you, assuring you, that I had before me happier prospects than ever I had; and hoped all would end well: And that I begged you would send me, by the bearer, Mr. Thomas, my master's groom, those papers, which I had sent you by Mr. Williams's conveyance: For that they imported me much, for clearing up a point in my conduct, that my master was desirous to know, before he resolved to favour me, as he had intended.—But you will have that letter, before you can have this; for I would not send you this without the preceding; which now is in my master's hands.



And so, having given the letter to Mr. Thomas for him to carry to you, when he had baited and rested after his great fatigue, I sent for Monsieur Colbrand, and Robin, and gave to the former his letter; and when he had read it, I said, You see how things stand. I am resolved to return to our master; and as he is not so well as were to be wished, the more haste you make the better: and don't mind my fatigue, but consider only yourselves, and the horses. Robin, who guessed the matter, by his conversation with Thomas, (as I suppose,) said, God bless you, madam, and reward you, as your obligingness to my good master deserves; and may we all live to see you triumph over Mrs. Jewkes!

I wondered to hear him say so; for I was always careful of exposing my master, or even that naughty woman, before the common servants. But yet I question whether Robin would have said this, if he had not guessed, by Thomas's message, and my resolving to return, that I might stand well with his master. So selfish are the hearts of poor mortals, that they are ready to change as favour goes!

So they were not long getting ready; and I am just setting out, back again: and I hope I shall have no reason to repent it.

Robin put on very vehemently; and when we came to the little town, where we lay on Sunday night, he gave his horses a bait, and said, he would push for his master's that night, as it would be moon-light, if I should not be too much fatigued because there was no place between that and the town adjacent to his master's, fit to put up at, for the night. But Monsieur Colbrand's horse beginning to give way, made a doubt between them: wherefore I said, (hating to be on the road,) if it could be done, I should bear it well enough, I hoped; and that Monsieur Colbrand might leave his horse, when it failed, at some house, and come into the chariot. This pleased them both; and, about twelve miles short, he left the horse, and took off his spurs and holsters, etc. and, with abundance of ceremonial excuses, came into the chariot; and I sat the easier for it; for my bones ached sadly with the jolting, and so many miles travelling in so few hours, as I have done, from Sunday night, five o'clock. But, for all this, it was eleven o'clock at night, when we came to the village adjacent to my master's; and the horses began to be very much tired, and Robin too: but I said, It would be pity to put up only three miles short of the house.

So about one we reached the gate; but every body was a-bed. But one of the helpers got the keys from Mrs. Jewkes, and opened the gates; and the horses could hardly crawl into the stable. And I, when I went to get out of the chariot, fell down, and thought I had lost the use of my limbs.

Mrs. Jewkes came down with her clothes huddled on, and lifted up her hands and eyes, at my return; but shewed more care of the horses than of me. By that time the two maids came; and I made shift to creep in, as well as I could.

It seems my poor master was very ill indeed, and had been upon the bed most part of the day; and Abraham (who succeeded John) sat up with him. And he was got into a fine sleep, and heard not the coach come in, nor the noise we made; for his chamber lies towards the garden,—on the other side of the house. Mrs. Jewkes said, He had a feverish complaint, and had been blooded; and, very prudently, ordered Abraham, when he awaked, not to tell him I was come, for fear of surprising him, and augmenting his fever; nor, indeed, to say any thing of me, till she herself broke it to him in the morning, as she should see how he was.

So I went to bed with Mrs. Jewkes, after she had caused me to drink almost half a pint of burnt wine, made very rich and cordial, with spices; which I found very refreshing, and set me into a sleep I little hoped for.

Tuesday morning.

Getting up pretty early, I have written thus far, while Mrs. Jewkes lies snoring in bed, fetching up her last night's disturbance. I long for her rising, to know how my poor master does. 'Tis well for her she can sleep so purely. No love, but for herself, will ever break her rest, I am sure. I am deadly sore all over, as if I had been soundly beaten. I did not think I could have lived under such fatigue.

Mrs. Jewkes, as soon as she got up, went to know how my master did, and he had had a good night; and, having drank plentifully of sack whey, had sweated much; so that his fever had abated considerably. She said to him, that he must not be surprised, and she would tell him news. He asked, What? And she said, I was come. He raised himself up in his bed; Can it be? said he—What, already!—She told him I came last night. Monsieur Colbrand coming to inquire of his health, he ordered him to draw near him, and was highly pleased with the account he gave him of the journey, my readiness to come back, and my willingness to reach home that night.

And he said, Why, these tender fair ones, I think, bear fatigue better than us men. But she is very good, to give me such an instance of her readiness to oblige me. Pray, Mrs. Jewkes, said he, take great care of her health! and let her be a-bed all day. She told him I had been up these two hours. Ask her, said he, if she will be so good as to make me a visit: If she won't, I'll rise, and go to her. Indeed, sir, said she, you must be still; and I'll go to her. But don't urge her too much, said he, if she be unwilling.

She came to me, and told me all the above; and I said, I would most willingly wait upon him; for, indeed, I longed to see him, and was much grieved he was so ill.—So I went down with her. Will she come? said he, as I entered the room. Yes, sir, said we; and she said, at the first word, Most willingly.—Sweet excellence! said he.

As soon as he saw me, he said, O my beloved Pamela! you have made me quite well. I'm concerned to return my acknowledgments to you in so unfit a place and manner; but will you give me your hand? I did, and he kissed it with great eagerness. Sir, said I, you do me too much honour!—I am sorry you are so ill.—I can't be ill, said he, while you are with me. I am very well already.

Well, said he, and kissed my hand again, you shall not repent this goodness. My heart is too full of it to express myself as I ought. But I am sorry you have had such a fatiguing time of it.—Life is no life without you! If you had refused me, and yet I had hardly hopes you would oblige me, I should have had a severe fit of it, I believe; for I was taken very oddly, and knew not what to make of myself: but now I shall be well instantly. You need not, Mrs. Jewkes, added he, send for the doctor from Stamford, as we talked yesterday; for this lovely creature is my doctor, as her absence was my disease.

He begged me to sit down by his bed-side, and asked me, if I had obliged him with sending for my former packet? I said I had, and hoped it would be brought. He said it was doubly kind.

I would not stay long because of disturbing him. And he got up in the afternoon, and desired my company; and seemed quite pleased, easy, and much better. He said, Mrs. Jewkes, after this instance of my good Pamela's obligingness in her return, I am sure we ought to leave her entirely at her own liberty; and pray, if she pleases to take a turn in our chariot, or in the garden, or to the town, or wherever she will, let her be left at liberty, and

asked no questions; and do you do all in your power to oblige her. She said she would, to be sure.

He took my hand, and said, One thing I will tell you, Pamela, because I know you will be glad to hear it, and yet not care to ask me: I had, before you went, taken Williams's bond for the money; for how the poor man had behaved I can't tell, but he could get no bail; and if I have no fresh reason given me, perhaps I shall not exact the payment; and he has been some time at liberty, and now follows his school; but, methinks, I could wish you would not see him at present.

Sir, said I, I will not do any thing to disoblige you wilfully; and I am glad he is at liberty, because I was the occasion of his misfortunes. I durst say no more, though I wanted to plead for the poor gentleman; which, in gratitude, I thought I ought, when I could do him service. I said, I am sorry, sir, Lady Davers, who loves you so well, should have incurred your displeasure, and that there should be any variance between your honour and her; I hope it was not on my account. He took out of his waistcoat pocket, as he sat in his gown, his letter-case, and said, Here, Pamela, read that when you go up stairs, and let me have your thoughts upon it; and that will let you into the affair.

He said he was very heavy of a sudden, and would lie down, and indulge for that day; and if he was better in the morning, would take an airing in the chariot. And so I took my leave for the present, and went up to my closet, and read the letter he was pleased to put into my hands; which is as follows:—

'BROTHER,

'I am very uneasy at what I hear of you; and must write, whether it please you or not, my full mind. I have had some people with me, desiring me to interpose with you; and they have a greater regard for your honour, than, I am sorry to say it, you have yourself. Could I think, that a brother of mine would so meanly run away with my late dear mother's waiting-maid, and keep her a prisoner from all her friends, and to the disgrace of your own? But I thought, when you would not let the wench come to me on my mother's death, that you meant no good.—I blush for you, I'll assure you. The girl was an innocent, good girl; but I suppose that's over with her now, or soon will. What can you mean by this, let me ask you? Either you will have her for a kept mistress, or for a wife. If the former, there are

enough to be had without ruining a poor wench that my mother loved, and who really was a very good girl: and of this you may be ashamed. As to the other, I dare say you don't think of it; but if you should, you would be utterly inexcusable. Consider, brother, that ours is no upstart family; but is as ancient as the best in the kingdom! and, for several hundreds of years, it has never been known, that the heirs of it have disgraced themselves by unequal matches: And you know you have been sought to by some of the best families in the nation, for your alliance. It might be well enough, if you were descended of a family of yesterday, or but a remove or two from the dirt you seem so fond of. But, let me tell you, that I, and all mine, will renounce you for ever, if you can descend so meanly; and I shall be ashamed to be called your sister. A handsome man, as you are, in your person; so happy in the gifts of your mind, that every body courts your company; and possessed of such a noble and clear estate; and very rich in money besides, left you by the best of fathers and mothers, with such ancient blood in your veins, untainted! for you to throw away yourself thus, is intolerable; and it would be very wicked in you to ruin the wench too. So that I beg you will restore her to her parents, and give her 100L. or so, to make her happy in some honest fellow of her own degree; and that will be doing something, and will also oblige and pacify

'Your much grieved sister.'

'If I have written too sharply, consider it is my love to you, and the shame you are bringing upon yourself; and I wish this may have the effect upon you, intended by your very loving sister.'

This is a sad letter, my dear father and mother; and one may see how poor people are despised by the proud and the rich! and yet we were all on a foot originally: And many of these gentry, that brag of their ancient blood, would be glad to have it as wholesome, and as really untainted, as ours!—Surely these proud people never think what a short stage life is; and that, with all their vanity; a time is coming, when they shall be obliged to submit to be on a level with us: And true said the philosopher, when he looked upon the skull of a king, and that of a poor man, that he saw no difference between them. Besides, do they not know, that the richest of princes, and the poorest of beggars, are to have one great and tremendous judge, at the last day; who will not distinguish between them, according to their circumstances in life?—But, on the contrary, may make their condemnations the greater, as their neglected opportunities were the

greater? Poor souls! how do I pity their pride!—O keep me, Heaven! from their high condition, if my mind shall ever be tainted with their vice! or polluted with so cruel and inconsiderate a contempt of the humble estate which they behold with so much scorn!

But, besides, how do these gentry know, that, supposing they could trace back their ancestry for one, two, three, or even five hundred years, that then the original stems of these poor families, though they have not kept such elaborate records of their good-for nothingness, as it often proves, were not still deeper rooted?—And how can they be assured, that one hundred years hence, or two, some of those now despised upstart families may not revel in their estates, while their descendants may be reduced to the others' dunghills!—And, perhaps, such is the vanity, as well as changeableness, of human estates, in their turns set up for pride of family, and despise the others!

These reflections occurred to my thoughts, made serious by my master's indisposition, and this proud letter of the lowly Lady Davers, against the high-minded Pamela. Lowly, I say, because she could stoop to such vain pride; and high-minded I, because I hope I am too proud ever to do the like!—But, after all, poor wretches that we be! we scarce know what we are, much less what we shall be!—But, once more pray I to be kept from the sinful pride of a high estate.

On this occasion I recall the following lines, which I have read; where the poet argues in a much better manner:—

“———Wise Providence  
Does various parts for various minds dispense:  
The meanest slaves, or those who hedge and ditch,  
Are useful, by their sweat, to feed the rich.  
The rich, in due return, impart their store;  
Which comfortably feeds the lab'ring poor.  
Nor let the rich the lowest slave disdain:  
He's equally a link of Nature's chain:  
Labours to the same end, joins in one view;  
And both alike the will divine pursue;  
And, at the last, are levell'd, king and slave,  
Without distinction, in the silent grave.”

Wednesday morning.

My master sent me a message just now, that he was so much better, that he would take a turn, after breakfast, in the chariot, and would have me give him my company. I hope I shall know how to be humble, and comport myself as I should do, under all these favours.

Mrs. Jewkes is one of the most obliging creatures in the world; and I have such respects shewn me by every one, as if I was as great as Lady Davers—But now, if this should all end in the sham-marriage!—It cannot be, I hope. Yet the pride of greatness and ancestry, and such-like, is so strongly set out in Lady Davers's letter, that I cannot flatter myself to be so happy as all these desirable appearances make for me. Should I be now deceived, I should be worse off than ever. But I shall see what light this new honour will procure me!—So I'll get ready. But I won't, I think, change my garb. Should I do it, it would look as if I would be nearer on a level with him: and yet, should I not, it might be thought a disgrace to him: but I will, I think, open the portmanteau, and, for the first time since I came hither, put on my best silk nightgown. But then that will be making myself a sort of right to the clothes I had renounced; and I am not yet quite sure I shall have no other crosses to encounter. So I will go as I am; for, though ordinary, I am as clean as a penny, though I say it. So I'll e'en go as I am, except he orders otherwise. Yet Mrs. Jewkes says, I ought to dress as fine as I can.—But I say, I think not. As my master is up, and at breakfast, I will venture down to ask him how he will have me be.

Well, he is kinder and kinder, and, thank God, purely recovered!—How charmingly he looks, to what he did yesterday! Blessed be God for it!

He arose, and came to me, and took me by the hand, and would set me down by him; and he said, My charming girl seemed going to speak. What would you say?—Sir, said I, (a little ashamed,) I think it is too great an honour to go into the chariot with you. No, my dear Pamela, said he; the pleasure of your company will be greater than the honour of mine; and so say no more on that head.

But, sir, said I, I shall disgrace you to go thus. You would grace a prince, my fair-one, said the good, kind, kind gentleman! in that dress, or any you shall choose: And you look so pretty, that, if you shall not catch cold in that round-eared cap, you shall go just as you are. But, sir, said I, then you'll be pleased to go a bye-way, that it mayn't be seen you do so much honor to your servant. O my good girl! said he, I doubt you are afraid of yourself being talked of, more than me: for I hope by degrees to take off the world's wonder, and teach them to expect what is to follow, as a due to my Pamela.

O the dear good man! There's for you, my dear father and mother!—Did I not do well now to come back?—O could I get rid of my fears of this sham-marriage, (for all this is not yet inconsistent with that frightful scheme,) I should be too happy!

So I came up, with great pleasure, for my gloves: and now wait his kind commands. Dear, dear sir! said I to myself, as if I was speaking to him, for God's sake let me have no more trials and reverses; for I could not bear it now, I verily think!

At last the welcome message came, that my master was ready; and so I went down as fast as I could; and he, before all the servants, handed me in, as if I was a lady; and then came in himself. Mrs. Jewkes begged he would take care he did not catch cold, as he had been ill. And I had the pride to hear his new coachman say, to one of his fellow-servants, They are a charming pair, I am sure! 'tis pity they should be parted!—O my dear father and mother! I fear your girl will grow as proud as any thing! And, especially, you will think I have reason to guard against it, when you read the kind particulars I am going to relate.

He ordered dinner to be ready by two; and Abraham, who succeeds John, went behind the coach. He bid Robin drive gently, and told me, he wanted to talk to me about his sister Davers, and other matters. Indeed, at first setting out he kissed me a little too often, that he did; and I was afraid of Robin's looking back, through the fore-glass, and people seeing us, as they passed; but he was exceedingly kind to me, in his words, as well. At last, he said,

You have, I doubt not, read, over and over, my sister's saucy letter; and find, as I told you, that you are no more obliged to her than I am. You see she intimates, that some people had been with her; and who should they be, but the officious Mrs. Jervis, and Mr. Longman, and Jonathan! and so that has made me take the measures I did in dismissing them my service.—I see, said he, you are going to speak on their behalfs; but your time is not come to do that, if ever I shall permit it.

My sister, says he, I have been beforehand with; for I have renounced her. I am sure I have been a kind brother to her; and gave her to the value of 3000L. more than her share came to by my father's will, when I entered upon my estate. And the woman, surely, was beside herself with passion and insolence, when she wrote me such a letter; for well she knew I would



not bear it. But you must know, Pamela, that she is much incensed, that I will give no ear to a proposal of hers, of a daughter of my Lord ——, who, said he, neither in person, or mind, or acquirements, even with all her opportunities, is to be named in a day with my Pamela. But yet you see the plea, my girl, which I made to you before, of the pride of condition, and the world's censure, which, I own, sticks a little too close with me still: for a woman shines not forth to the public as man; and the world sees not your excellencies and perfections: If it did, I should entirely stand acquitted by the severest censures. But it will be taken in the lump; that here is Mr. B ——, with such and such an estate, has married his mother's waiting-maid: not considering there is not a lady in the kingdom that can out-do her, or better support the condition to which she will be raised, if I should marry her. And, said he, putting his arm round me, and again kissing me, I pity my dear girl too, for her part in this censure; for, here will she have to combat the pride and slights of the neighbouring gentry all around us. Sister Davers, you see, will never be reconciled to you. The other ladies will not visit you; and you will, with a merit superior to them all, be treated as if unworthy their notice. Should I now marry my Pamela, how will my girl relish all this? Won't these be cutting things to my fair-one? For, as to me, I shall have nothing to do, but, with a good estate in possession, to brazen out the matter of my former pleasantry on this subject, with my companions of the chase, the green, and the assemblée; stand their rude jests for once or twice, and my fortune will create me always respect enough, I warrant you. But, I say, what will my poor girl do, as to her part, with her own sex? For some company you must keep. My station will not admit it to be with my servants; and the ladies will fly your acquaintance; and still, though my wife, will treat you as my mother's waiting-maid.—What says my girl to this?

You may well guess, my dear father and mother, how transporting these kind, these generous and condescending sentiments were to me!—I thought I had the harmony of the spheres all around me; and every word that dropped from his lips was as sweet as the honey of Hybla to me.—Oh! sir, said I, how inexpressibly kind and good is all this! Your poor servant has a much greater struggle than this to go through, a more knotty difficulty to overcome.

What is that? said he, a little impatiently: I will not forgive your doubts now.—No, sir, said I, I cannot doubt; but it is, how I shall support, how I

shall deserve your goodness to me.—Dear girl! said he, and hugged me to his breast, I was afraid you would have made me angry again; but that I would not be, because I see you have a grateful heart; and this your kind and cheerful return, after such cruel usage as you had experienced in my house, enough to make you detest the place, has made me resolve to bear any thing in you, but doubts of my honour, at a time when I am pouring out my soul, with a true and affectionate ardour, before you.

But, good sir, said I, my greatest concern will be for the rude jests you will have yourself to encounter with, for thus stooping beneath yourself. For, as to me, considering my lowly estate, and little merit, even the slights and reflections of the ladies will be an honour to me: and I shall have the pride to place more than half their ill will to their envy at my happiness. And if I can, by the most cheerful duty, and resigned obedience, have the pleasure to be agreeable to you, I shall think myself but too happy, let the world say what it will.

He said, You are very good, my dearest girl! But how will you bestow your time, when you will have no visits to receive or pay? No parties of pleasure to join in? No card-tables to employ your winter evenings; and even, as the taste is, half the day, summer and winter? And you have often played with my mother, too, and so know how to perform a part there, as well as in the other diversions: and I'll assure you, my girl, I shall not desire you to live without such amusements, as my wife might expect, were I to marry a lady of the first quality.

O, sir, said I, you are all goodness! How shall I bear it?—But do you think, sir, in such a family as yours, a person whom you shall honour with the name of mistress of it, will not find useful employments for her time, without looking abroad for any others?

In the first place, sir, if you will give me leave, I will myself look into such parts of the family economy, as may not be beneath the rank to which I shall have the honour of being exalted, if any such there can be; and this, I hope, without incurring the ill will of any honest servant.

Then, sir, I will ease you of as much of your family accounts, as I possibly can, when I have convinced you that I am to be trusted with them; and you know, sir, my late good lady made me her treasurer, her almoner, and every thing.

Then, sir, if I must needs be visiting or visited, and the ladies won't honour me so much, or even if they would now and then, I will visit, if your goodness will allow me so to do, the sick poor in the neighbourhood around you; and administer to their wants and necessities, in such matters as may not be hurtful to your estate, but comfortable to them; and entail upon you their blessings, and their prayers for your dear health and welfare.

Then I will assist your housekeeper, as I used to do, in the making jellies, comfits, sweetmeats, marmalades, cordials; and to pot, and candy, and preserve for the uses of the family; and to make, myself, all the fine linen of it for yourself and me.

Then, sir, if you will sometimes indulge me with your company, I will take an airing in your chariot now and then: and when you shall return home from your diversions on the green, or from the chase, or where you shall please to go, I shall have the pleasure of receiving you with duty, and a cheerful delight; and, in your absence, count the moments till you return; and you will, may be, fill up some part of my time, the sweetest by far! with your agreeable conversation, for an hour or two now and then; and be indulgent to the impertinent overflowings of my grateful heart, for all your goodness to me.

The breakfasting-time, the preparations for dinner, and sometimes to entertain your chosen friends, and the company you shall bring home with you, gentlemen, if not ladies, and the supperings, will fill up a great part of the day in a very necessary manner.

And, may be, sir, now and then a good-humoured lady will drop in; and, I hope, if they do, I shall so behave myself, as not to add to the disgrace you will have brought upon yourself: for, indeed, I will be very circumspect, and try to be as discreet as I can; and as humble too, as shall be consistent with your honour.

Cards, 'tis true, I can play at, in all the usual games that our sex delight in; but this I am not fond of, nor shall ever desire to play, unless to induce such ladies, as you may wish to see, not to abandon your house for want of an amusement they are accustomed to.

Music, which our good lady taught me, will fill up some intervals, if I should have any.

And then, sir, you know, I love reading and scribbling; and though all the latter will be employed in the family accounts, between the servants and me, and me and your good self: yet reading, at proper times, will be a pleasure to me, which I shall be unwilling to give up, for the best company in the world, except yours. And, O sir! that will help to polish my mind, and make me worthier of your company and conversation; and, with the explanations you will give me, of what I shall not understand, will be a sweet employment, and improvement too.

But one thing, sir, I ought not to forget, because it is the chief: My duty to God will, I hope, always employ some good portion of my time, with thanks for his superlative goodness to me; and to pray for you and myself: for you, sir, for a blessing on you, for your great goodness to such an unworthy creature: for myself, that I may be enabled to discharge my duty to you, and be found grateful for all the blessings I shall receive at the hands of Providence, by means of your generosity and condescension.

With all this, sir, said I, can you think I shall be at a loss to pass my time? But, as I know, that every slight to me, if I come to be so happy, will be, in some measure, a slight to you, I will beg of you, sir, not to let me go very fine in dress; but appear only so, as that you may not be ashamed of it after the honour I shall have of being called by your worthy name: for well I know, sir, that nothing so much excites the envy of my own sex, as seeing a person above them in appearance, and in dress. And that would bring down upon me an hundred saucy things, and low-born brats, and I can't tell what!

There I stopped; for I had prattled a great deal too much so early: and he said, clasping me to him, Why stops my dear Pamela?—Why does she not proceed? I could dwell upon your words all the day long; and you shall be the directress of your own pleasures, and your own time, so sweetly do you choose to employ it: and thus shall I find some of my own bad actions atoned for by your exemplary goodness, and God will bless me for your sake.

O, said he, what pleasure you give me in this sweet foretaste of my happiness! I will now defy the saucy, busy censurers of the world; and bid them know your excellence, and my happiness, before they, with unhallowed lips, presume to judge of my actions, and your merit!—And let me tell you, my Pamela, that I can add my hopes of a still more

pleasing amusement, and what your bashful modesty would not permit you to hint; and which I will no otherwise touch upon, lest it should seem, to your nicety, to detract from the present purity of my good intentions, than to say, I hope to have superadded to all these, such an employment, as will give me a view of perpetuating my happy prospects, and my family at the same time; of which I am almost the only male.

I blushed, I believe; yet could not be displeas'd at the decent and charming manner with which he insinuated this distant hope: And oh! judge for me, how my heart was affected with all these things!

He was pleas'd to add another charming reflection, which shew'd me the noble sincerity of his kind professions. I do own to you, my Pamela, said he, that I love you with a purer flame than ever I knew in my whole life; a flame to which I was a stranger; and which commenced for you in the garden; though you, unkindly, by your unseasonable doubts, nipp'd the opening bud, while it was too tender to bear the cold blasts of slight or negligence. And I know more sincere joy and satisfaction in this sweet hour's conversation with you, than all the guilty tumults of my former passion ever did, or (had even my attempts succeeded) ever could have afforded me.

O, sir, said I, expect not words from your poor servant, equal to these most generous professions. Both the means, and the will, I now see, are given to you, to lay me under an everlasting obligation. How happy shall I be, if, though I cannot be worthy of all this goodness and condescension, I can prove myself not entirely unworthy of it! But I can only answer for a grateful heart; and if ever I give you cause, wilfully, (and you will generously allow for involuntary imperfections,) to be disgust'd with me, may I be an outcast from your house and favour, and as much repudiat'd, as if the law had divorc'd me from you!

But sir, continued I, though I was so unseasonable as I was in the garden, you would, I flatter myself, had you then heard me, have pardon'd my imprudence, and own'd I had some cause to fear, and to wish to be with my poor father and mother: and this I the rather say, that you should not think me capable of returning insolence for your goodness; or appearing foolishly ungrateful to you, when you was so kind to me.

Indeed, Pamela, said he, you gave me great uneasiness; for I love you too well not to be jealous of the least appearance of your indifference to

me, or preference to any other person, not excepting your parents themselves. This made me resolve not to hear you; for I had not got over my reluctance to marriage; and a little weight, you know, turns the scale, when it hangs in an equal balance. But yet, you see, that though I could part with you, while my anger held, yet the regard I had then newly professed for your virtue, made me resolve not to offer to violate it; and you have seen likewise, that the painful struggle I underwent when I began to reflect, and to read your moving journal, between my desire to recall you, and my doubt whether you would return, (though yet I resolved not to force you to it,) had like to have cost me a severe illness: but your kind and cheerful return has dispelled all my fears, and given me hope, that I am not indifferent to you; and you see how your presence has chased away my illness.

I bless God for it, said I; but since you are so good as to encourage me, and will not despise my weakness, I will acknowledge, that I suffered more than I could have imagined, till I experienced it, in being banished your presence in so much anger; and the more still was I affected, when you answered the wicked Mrs. Jewkes so generously in my favour, at my leaving your house. For this, sir, awakened all my reverence for you; and you saw I could not forbear, not knowing what I did, to break boldly in upon you, and acknowledge your goodness on my knees. 'Tis true, my dear Pamela, said he, we have sufficiently tortured one another; and the only comfort that can result from it, will be, reflecting upon the matter coolly and with pleasure, when all these storms are overblown, (as I hope they now are,) and we sit together secured in each other's good opinion, recounting the uncommon gradations by which we have ascended to the summit of that felicity, which I hope we shall shortly arrive at.

Meantime, said the good gentleman, let me hear what my dear girl would have said in her justification, could I have trusted myself with her, as to her fears, and the reason of her wishing herself from me, at a time that I had begun to shew my fondness for her, in a manner that I thought would have been agreeable to her and virtue.

I pulled out of my pocket the gipsy letter; but I said, before I shewed it to him, I have this letter, sir, to shew you, as what, I believe, you will allow must have given me the greatest disturbance: but, first, as I know not who is the writer, and it seems to be in a disguised hand, I would beg it

as a favour, that, if you guess who it is, which I cannot, it may not turn to their prejudice, because it was written, very probably, with no other view, than to serve me.

He took it, and read it. And it being signed Somebody, he said, Yes, this is indeed from Somebody; and, disguised as the hand is, I know the writer: Don't you see, by the setness of some of these letters, and a little secretary cut here and there, especially in that c, and that r, that it is the hand of a person bred in the law-way? Why, Pamela, said he, 'tis old Longman's hand: an officious rascal as he is!—But I have done with him. O sir, said I, it would be too insolent in me to offer (so much am I myself overwhelmed with your goodness,) to defend any body that you are angry with: Yet, sir, so far as they have incurred your displeasure for my sake, and for no other want of duty or respect, I could wish—But I dare not say more.

But, said he, as to the letter and the information it contains: Let me know, Pamela, when you received this? On the Friday, sir, said I, that you were gone to the wedding at Stamford.—How could it be conveyed to you, said he, unknown to Mrs. Jewkes, when I gave her such a strict charge to attend you, and you had promised me, that you would not throw yourself in the way of such intelligence? For, said he, when I went to Stamford, I knew, from a private intimation given me, that there would be an attempt made to see you, or give you a letter, by somebody, if not to get you away; but was not certain from what quarter, whether from my sister Davers, Mrs. Jervis, Mr. Longman, or John Arnold, or your father; and as I was then but struggling with myself, whether to give way to my honourable inclinations, or to free you, and let you go to your father, that I might avoid the danger I found myself in of the former; (for I had absolutely resolved never to wound again even your ears with any proposals of a contrary nature;) that was the reason I desired you to permit Mrs. Jewkes to be so much on her guard till I came back, when I thought I should have decided this disputed point within myself, between my pride and my inclinations.

This, good sir, said I, accounts well to me for your conduct in that case, and for what you said to me and Mrs. Jewkes on that occasion: And I see more and more how much I may depend upon your honour and goodness to me.—But I will tell you all the truth. And then I recounted to him the whole affair of the gipsy, and how the letter was put among the loose

grass, etc. And he said, The man who thinks a thousand dragons sufficient to watch a woman, when her inclination takes a contrary bent, will find all too little; and she will engage the stones in the street, or the grass in the field, to act for her, and help on her correspondence. If the mind, said he, be not engaged, I see there is hardly any confinement sufficient for the body; and you have told me a very pretty story; and, as you never gave me any reason to question your veracity, even in your severest trials, I make no doubt of the truth of what you have now mentioned: and I will, in my turn, give you such a proof of mine, that you shall find it carry a conviction with it.

You must know, then, my Pamela, that I had actually formed such a project, so well informed was this old rascally Somebody! and the time was fixed for the very person described in this letter to be here; and I had thought he should have read some part of the ceremony (as little as was possible, to deceive you) in my chamber; and so I hoped to have you mine upon terms that then would have been much more agreeable to me than real matrimony. And I did not in haste intend you the mortification of being undeceived; so that we might have lived for years, perhaps, very lovingly together; and I had, at the same time, been at liberty to confirm or abrogate it as I pleased.

O sir, said I, I am out of breath with the thoughts of my danger! But what good angel prevented the execution of this deep-laid design?

Why, your good angel, Pamela, said he; for when I began to consider, that it would have made you miserable, and me not happy; that if you should have a dear little one, it would be out of my own power to legitimate it, if I should wish it to inherit my estate; and that, as I am almost the last of my family, and most of what I possess must descend to a strange line, and disagreeable and unworthy persons; notwithstanding that I might, in this case, have issue of my own body; when I further considered your untainted virtue, what dangers and trials you had undergone by my means, and what a world of troubles I had involved you in, only because you were beautiful and virtuous, which had excited all my passion for you; and reflected also upon your tried prudence and truth! I, though I doubted not effecting this my last plot, resolved to overcome myself; and, however I might suffer in struggling with my affection for you, to part with you, rather than to betray you under so black a veil.



Besides, said he, I remember how much I had exclaimed against and censured an action of this kind, that had been attributed to one of the first men of the law, and of the kingdom, as he afterwards became; and that it was but treading in a path that another had marked out for me; and, as I was assured, with no great satisfaction to himself, when he came to reflect; my foolish pride was a little piqued with this, because I loved to be, if I went out of the way, my own original, as I may call it. On all these considerations it was, that I rejected this project, and sent word to the person, that I had better considered of the matter, and would not have him come, till he heard further from me: And, in this suspense I suppose, some of your confederates, Pamela, (for we have been a couple of plotters, though your virtue and merit have procured you faithful friends and partisans, which my money and promises could hardly do,) one way or other got knowledge of it, and gave you this notice; but, perhaps, it would have come too late, had not your white angel got the better of my black one, and inspired me with resolutions to abandon the project, just as it was to have been put into execution. But yet I own, that, from these appearances, you were but too well justified in your fears, on this odd way of coming at this intelligence; and I have only one thing to blame you for, that though I was resolved not to hear you in your own defence, yet, as you have so ready a talent at your pen, you might have cleared your part of this matter up to me by a line or two; and when I had known what seeming good grounds you had for pouring cold water on a young flame, that was just then rising to an honourable expansion, should not have imputed it, as I was apt to do, to unseasonable insult for my tenderness to you, on one hand; to perverse nicety, on the other; or to (what I was most alarmed by, and concerned for) prepossession for some other person: And this would have saved us both much fatigue, I of mind, you of body.

And, indeed, sir, said I, of mind too; and I could not better manifest this, than by the cheerfulness with which I obeyed your recalling me to your presence.

Ay, that, my dear Pamela, said he, and clasped me in his arms, was the kind, the inexpressibly kind action, that has rivetted my affections to you, and obliges me, in this free and unreserved manner, to pour my whole soul into your bosom.

I said, I had the less merit in this my return, because I was driven, by an irresistible impulse to it; and could not help it, if I would.

This, said he, (and honoured me by kissing my hand,) is engaging, indeed; if I may hope, that my Pamela's gentle inclination for her persecutor was the strongest motive to her return; and I so much value a voluntary love in the person I would wish for my wife, that I would have even prudence and interest hardly named in comparison with it: And can you return me sincerely the honest compliment I now make you?—In the choice I have made, it is impossible I should have any view to my interest. Love, true love, is the only motive by which I am induced. And were I not what I am, could you give me the preference to any other you know in the world, notwithstanding what has passed between us? Why, said I, should your so much obliged Pamela refuse to answer this kind question? Cruel as I have thought you, and dangerous as your views to my honesty have been; you, sir, are the only person living that ever was more than indifferent to me: and before I knew this to be what I blush now to call it, I could not hate you, or wish you ill, though, from my soul, the attempts you made were shocking, and most distasteful to me.

I am satisfied, my Pamela, said he; nor shall I want to see those papers that you have kindly written for to your father; though I still wish to see them too, for the sake of the sweet manner in which you relate what has passed, and to have before me the whole series of your sufferings, that I may learn what degree of kindness may be sufficient to recompense you for them.

In this manner, my dear father and mother, did your happy daughter find herself blessed by her generous master! An ample recompense for all her sufferings did I think this sweet conversation only. A hundred tender things he expressed besides, that though they never can escape my memory, yet would be too tedious to write down. Oh, how I blessed God, and, I hope, ever shall, for all his gracious favours to his unworthy handmaid! What a happy change is this! And who knows but my kind, my generous master, may put it in my power, when he shall see me not quite unworthy of it, to be a means, without injuring him, to dispense around me, to many persons, the happy influences of the condition to which I shall be, by his kind favour, exalted? Doubly blest shall I be, in particular, if I can return the hundredth part of the obligations I owe to such honest

good parents, to whose pious instructions and examples, under God, I owe all my present happiness, and future prospects.—O the joy that fills my mind on these proud hopes! on these delightful prospects!—It is too mighty for me, and I must sit down to ponder all these things, and to admire and bless the goodness of that Providence, which has, through so many intricate mazes, made me tread the paths of innocence, and so amply rewarded me for what it has itself enabled me to do! All glory to God alone be ever given for it, by your poor enraptured daughter!—

I will now continue my most pleasing relation.

As the chariot was returning home from this sweet airing, he said, From all that has passed between us in this pleasing turn, my Pamela will see, and will believe, that the trials of her virtue are all over from me: But, perhaps, there will be some few yet to come of her patience and humility. For I have, at the earnest importunity of Lady Darnford, and her daughters, promised them a sight of my beloved girl: And so I intend to have their whole family, and Lady Jones, and Mrs. Peters's family, to dine with me once in a few days. And, since I believe you would hardly choose, at present, to grace the table on the occasion, till you can do it in your own right, I should be glad you would not refuse coming down to us if I should desire it; for I would preface our nuptials, said the dear gentleman! O what a sweet word was that!—with their good opinion of your merits: and to see you, and your sweet manner, will be enough for that purpose; and so, by degrees, prepare my neighbours for what is to follow: And they already have your character from me, and are disposed to admire you.

Sir, said I, after all that has passed, I should be unworthy, if I could not say, that I can have no will but yours: And however awkwardly I shall behave in such company, weighed down with a sense of your obligations on one side, and my own unworthiness, with their observations on the other, I will not scruple to obey you.

I am obliged to you, Pamela, said he, and pray be only dressed as you are; for since they know your condition, and I have told them the story of your present dress, and how you came by it, one of the young ladies begs it as a favour, that they may see you just as you are: and I am the rather pleased it should be so, because they will perceive you owe nothing to dress, but make a much better figure with your own native stock of

loveliness, than the greatest ladies arrayed in the most splendid attire, and adorned with the most glittering jewels.

O sir, said I, your goodness beholds your poor servant in a light greatly beyond her merit! But it must not be expected, that others, ladies especially, will look upon me with your favourable eyes: but, nevertheless, I should be best pleased to wear always this humble garb, till you, for your own sake, shall order it otherwise: for, oh, sir, said I, I hope it will be always my pride to glory most in your goodness! and it will be a pleasure to me to shew every one, that, with respect to my happiness in this life, I am entirely the work of your bounty; and to let the world see from what a lowly original you have raised me to honours, that the greatest ladies would rejoice in.

Admirable Pamela! said he; excellent girl!—Surely thy sentiments are superior to those of all thy sex!—I might have addressed a hundred fine ladies; but never, surely, could have had reason to admire one as I do you.

As, my dear father and mother, I repeat these generous sayings, only because they are the effect of my master's goodness, being far from presuming to think I deserve one of them; so I hope you will not attribute it to my vanity; for I do assure you, I think I ought rather to be more humble, as I am more obliged: for it must be always a sign of a poor condition, to receive obligations one cannot repay; as it is of a rich mind, when it can confer them without expecting or needing a return. It is, on one side, the state of the human creature, compared, on the other, to the Creator; and so, with due deference, may his beneficence be said to be Godlike, and that is the highest that can be said.

The chariot brought us home at near the hour of two; and, blessed be God, my master is pure well, and cheerful; and that makes me hope he does not repent him of his late generous treatment of me. He handed me out of the chariot, and to the parlour, with the same goodness, that he shewed when he put me into it, before several of the servants. Mrs. Jewkes came to inquire how he did. Quite well, Mrs. Jewkes, said he; quite well: I thank God, and this good girl, for it!—I am glad of it, said she; but I hope you are not the worse for my care, and my doctoring of you!—No, but the better, Mrs. Jewkes, said he; you have much obliged me by both.

Then he said, Mrs. Jewkes, you and I have used this good girl very hardly.—I was afraid, sir, said she, I should be the subject of her

complaints.—I assure you, said he, she has not opened her lips about you. We have had a quite different subject to talk of; and I hope she will forgive us both: You especially she must; because you have done nothing but by my orders. But I only mean, that the necessary consequence of those orders has been very grievous to my Pamela: And now comes our part to make her amends, if we can.

Sir, said she, I always said to madam (as she called me), that you was very good, and very forgiving. No, said he, I have been stark naught; and it is she, I hope, will be very forgiving. But all this preamble is to tell you, Mrs. Jewkes, that now I desire you'll study to oblige her, as much as (to obey me) you was forced to disoblige her before. And you'll remember, that in every thing she is to be her own mistress.

Yes, said she, and mine too, I suppose, sir? Ay, said the generous gentleman, I believe it will be so in a little time.—Then, said she, I know how it will go with me! And so put her handkerchief to her eyes.—Pamela, said my master, comfort poor Mrs. Jewkes.

This was very generous, already to seem to put her in my power: and I took her by the hand, and said, I shall never take upon me, Mrs. Jewkes, to make a bad use of any opportunities that may be put into my hands by my generous master; nor shall I ever wish to do you any disservice, if I might: for I shall consider, that what you have done, was in obedience to a will which it will become me also to submit to and so, if the effects of our obedience may be different, yet as they proceed from one cause, that must be always revered by me.

See there, Mrs. Jewkes, said my master, we are both in generous hands; and indeed, if Pamela did not pardon you, I should think she but half forgave me, because you acted by my instructions.—Well, said she, God bless you both together, since it must be so; and I will double my diligence to oblige my lady, as I find she will soon be.

O my dear father and mother! now pray for me on another score; for fear I should grow too proud, and be giddy and foolish with all these promising things, so soothing to the vanity of my years and sex. But even to this hour can I pray, that God would remove from me all these delightful prospects, if they were likely so to corrupt my mind, as to make me proud and vain, and not acknowledge, with thankful humility, the

blessed Providence which has so visibly conducted me through the dangerous paths I have trod, to this happy moment.

My master was pleased to say, that he thought I might as well dine with him, since he was alone: But I begged he would excuse me, for fear, as I said, such excess of goodness and condescension, all at once, should turn my head;—and that he would, by slower degrees, bring on my happiness, lest I should not know how to bear it.

Persons that doubt themselves, said he, seldom do amiss: And if there was any fear of what you say, you could not have it in your thoughts: for none but the presumptuous, the conceited, and the thoughtless, err capitally. But, nevertheless, said he, I have such an opinion of your prudence, that I shall generally think what you do right, because it is you that do it.

Sir, said I, your kind expressions shall not be thrown away upon me, if I can help it; for they will task me with the care of endeavouring to deserve your good opinion, and your approbation, as the best rule of my conduct.

Being then about to go up stairs, Permit me, sir, said I, (looking about me with some confusion, to see that nobody was there,) thus on my knees to thank you, as I often wanted to do in the chariot, for all your goodness to me, which shall never, I hope, be cast away upon me. And so I had the boldness to kiss his hand.

I wonder, since, how I came to be so forward. But what could I do?—My poor grateful heart was like a too full river, which overflows its banks: and it carried away my fear and my shamefacedness, as that does all before it on the surface of its waters!

He clasped me in his arms with transport, and condescendingly kneeled by me, and kissing me, said, O my dear obliging good girl, on my knees, as you on yours, I vow to you everlasting truth and fidelity! and may God but bless us both with half the pleasures that seem to be before us, and we shall have no reason to envy the felicity of the greatest princes!—O sir, said I, how shall I support so much goodness! I am poor, indeed, in every thing, compared to you! and how far, very far, do you, in every generous way, leave me behind you!

He raised me, and, as I bent towards the door, led me to the stairs foot, and, saluting me there again, left me to go up to my closet, where I threw myself on my knees in raptures of joy, and blessed that gracious God, who

had thus changed my distress to happiness, and so abundantly rewarded me for all the sufferings I had passed through.—And oh, how light, how very light, do all those sufferings now appear, which then my repining mind made so grievous to me!—Hence, in every state of life, and in all the changes and chances of it, for the future, will I trust in Providence, who knows what is best for us, and frequently turns the very evils we most dread, to be the causes of our happiness, and of our deliverance from greater.—My experiences, young as I am, as to this great point of reliance on God, are strong, though my judgment in general may be weak and uninformed: but you'll excuse these reflections, because they are your beloved daughter's; and, so far as they are not amiss, derive themselves from the benefit of yours and my late good lady's examples and instructions.

I have written a vast deal in a little time; and shall only say, to conclude this delightful Wednesday, That in the afternoon my good master was so well, that he rode out on horseback, and came home about nine at night; and then stepped up to me, and, seeing me with pen and ink before me in my closet, said, I come only to tell you I am very well, my Pamela: and since I have a letter or two to write, I will leave you to proceed in yours, as I suppose that was your employment, (for I had put by my papers at his coming up,) and so he saluted me, bid me good night, and went down; and I finished up to this place before I went to bed. Mrs. Jewkes told me, if it was more agreeable to me, she would be in another room; but I said, No thank you, Mrs. Jewkes; pray let me have your company. And she made me a fine courtesy, and thanked me.—How times are altered!

Thursday.

This morning my master came up to me, and talked with me on various subjects, for a good while together, in the most kind manner. Among other things, he asked me, if I chose to order any new clothes against my marriage. (O how my heart flutters when he mentions this subject so freely!) I said, I left every thing to his good pleasure, only repeated my request, for the reasons aforegiven, that I might not be too fine.

He said, I think, my dear, it shall be very private: I hope you are not afraid of a sham-marriage; and pray get the service by heart, that you may see nothing is omitted. I glowed between shame and delight. O how I felt my cheeks burn!

I said, I feared nothing, I apprehended nothing, but my own unworthiness. Said he, I think it shall be done within these fourteen days, from this day, at this house. O how I trembled! but not with grief, you may believe—What says my girl? Have you to object against any day of the next fourteen: because my affairs require me to go to my other house, and I think not to stir from this till I am happy with you?

I have no will but yours, said I (all glowing like the fire, as I could feel:) But, sir, did you say in the house? Ay, said he; for I care not how privately it be done; and it must be very public if we go to church. It is a holy rite, sir, said I; and would be better, methinks, in a holy place.

I see (said he, most kindly) my lovely maid's confusion; and your trembling tenderness shews I ought to oblige you all I may. Therefore I will order my own little chapel, which has not been used for two generations, for any thing but a lumber-room, because our family seldom resided here long together, to be cleared and cleaned, and got ready for the ceremony, if you dislike your own chamber or mine.

Sir, said I, that will be better than the chamber, and I hope it will never be lumbered again, but kept to the use for which, as I presume, it has been consecrated. O yes, said he, it has been consecrated, and that several ages ago, in my great great grandfather's time, who built that and the good old house together.

But now, my good girl, if I do not too much add to your sweet confusion, shall it be in the first seven days, or the second of this fortnight? I looked down, quite out of countenance. Tell me, said he.

In the second, if you please, sir, said I.—As you please, said he most kindly; but I should thank you, Pamela, if you would choose the first. I'd rather, sir, if you please, said I, have the second. Well, said he, be it so; but don't defer it till the last day of the fourteen.

Pray sir, said I, since you embolden me to talk on this important subject, may I not send my dear father and mother word of my happiness?—You may, said he; but charge them to keep it secret, till you or I direct the contrary. And I told you, I would see no more of your papers; but I meant, I would not without your consent: but if you will shew them to me (and now I have no other motive for my curiosity, but the pleasure I take in reading what you write,) I shall acknowledge it as a favour.



If, sir, said I, you will be pleased to let me write over again one sheet, I will; though I had relied upon your word, and not written them for your perusal. What is that? said he: though I cannot consent to it beforehand: for I more desire to see them, because they are your true sentiments at the time, and because they were not written for my perusal. Sir, said I, what I am loath you should see, are very severe reflections on the letter I received by the gipsy, when I apprehended your design of the sham-marriage; though there are other things I would not have you see; but that is the worst. It can't be worse, said he, my dear sauce-box, than I have seen already; and I will allow your treating me in ever so black a manner, on that occasion, because it must have a very black appearance to you.—Well, sir, said I, I think I will obey you before night. But don't alter a word, said he. I won't, sir, replied I, since you order it.

While we were talking, Mrs. Jewkes came up, and said Thomas was returned. O, said my master, let him bring up the papers: for he hoped, and so did I, that you had sent them by him. But it was a great balk, when he came up and said, Sir, Mr. Andrews did not care to deliver them; and would have it, that his daughter was forced to write that letter to him: and, indeed, sir, said he, the old gentleman took on sadly, and would have it that his daughter was undone, or else, he said, she would not have turned back, when on her way, (as I told him she did, said Thomas,) instead of coming to them. I began to be afraid now that all would be bad for me again.

Well, Tom, said he, don't mince the matter; tell me, before Mrs. Andrews, what they said. Why, sir, both he and Goody Andrews, after they had conferred together upon your letter, madam, came out, weeping bitterly, that grieved my very heart; and they said, Now all was over with their poor daughter; and either she had written that letter by compulsion, or had yielded to your honour; so they said; and was, or would be ruined!

My master seemed vexed, as I feared. And I said, Pray, sir, be so good as to excuse the fears of my honest parents. They cannot know your goodness to me.

And so (said he, without answering me,) they refused to deliver the papers? Yes, and please your honour, said Thomas, though I told them, that you, madam, of your own accord, on a letter I had brought you, very cheerfully wrote what I carried: But the old gentleman said, Why, wife, there are in these papers twenty things nobody should see but ourselves,

and especially not the 'squire. O the poor girl has had so many stratagems to struggle with! and now, at last, she has met with one that has been too hard for her. And can it be possible for us to account for her setting out to come to us, and in such post haste, and, when she had got above half-way, to send us this letter, and to go back again of her own accord, as you say; when we know that all her delight would have been to come to us and to escape from the perils she had been so long contending with? And then, and please your honour, he said, he could not bear this; for his daughter was ruined, to be sure, before now. And so, said Thomas, the good old couple sat themselves down, and, hand-in-hand, leaning upon each other's shoulder, did nothing but lament.—I was piteously grieved, said he; but all I could say could not comfort them; nor would they give me the papers; though I told them I should deliver them only to Mrs. Andrews herself. And so, and please your honour, I was forced to come away without them.

My good master saw me all bathed in tears at this description of your distress and fears for me; and he said, I would not have you take on so. I am not angry with your father in the main; he is a good man; and I would have you write out of hand, and it shall be sent by the post to Mr. Atkins, who lives within two miles of your father, and I'll enclose it in a cover of mine, in which I'll desire Mr. Atkins, the moment it comes to his hand, to convey it safely to your father or mother; and say nothing of their sending their papers, that it may not make them uneasy; for I want not now to see them on any other score than that of mere curiosity; and that will do at any time. And so saying, he saluted me before Thomas, and with his own handkerchief wiped my eyes; and said to Thomas, The good old folks are not to be blamed in the main. They don't know my honourable intentions by their dear daughter; who, Tom, will, in a little time, be your mistress; though I shall keep the matter private some days, and would not have it spoken of by my servants out of my house.

Thomas said, God bless your honour! You know best. And I said, O, sir, you are all goodness!—How kind is this, to forgive the disappointment, instead of being angry, as I feared you would! Thomas then withdrew. And my master said, I need not remind you of writing out of hand, to make the good folks easy: and I will leave you to yourself for that purpose; only send me down such of your papers, as you are willing I should see, with which I shall entertain myself for an hour or two. But, one thing, added he, I forgot to tell you: The neighbouring gentry I mentioned will be here

tomorrow to dine with me, and I have ordered Mrs. Jewkes to prepare for them. And must I, sir, said I, be shewn to them? O yes, said he; that's the chief reason of their coming. And you'll see nobody equal to yourself: don't be concerned.

I opened my papers, as soon as my master had left me; and laid out those beginning on the Thursday morning he set out for Stamford, 'with the morning visit he made me before I was up, and the injunctions of watchfulness, etc. to Mrs. Jewkes; the next day's gipsy affair, and my reflections, in which I called him truly diabolical, and was otherwise very severe, on the strong appearances the matter had then against him. His return on Saturday, with the dread he put me in, on the offering to search me for my papers which followed those he had got by Mrs. Jewkes's means. My being forced to give them up. His carriage to me after he had read them, and questions to me. His great kindness to me on seeing the dangers I had escaped and the troubles I had undergone. And how I unseasonably, in the midst of his goodness, expressed my desire of being sent to you, having the intelligence of a sham-marriage, from the gipsy, in my thoughts. How this enraged him, and made him turn me that very Sunday out of his house, and send me on my way to you. The particulars of my journey, and my grief at parting with him; and my free acknowledgment to you, that I found, unknown to myself, I had begun to love him, and could not help it. His sending after me, to beg my return; but yet generously leaving me at my liberty, when he might have forced me to return whether I was willing or not. My resolution to oblige him, and fatiguing journey back. My concern for his illness on my return. His kind reception of me, and shewing me his sister Davers's angry letter, against his behaviour to me, desiring him to set me free, and threatening to renounce him as a brother, if he should degrade himself by marrying me. My serious reflections on this letter, etc.' (all which, I hope, with the others, you will shortly see.) And this carried matters down to Tuesday night last.

All that followed was so kind on his side, being our chariot conference, as above, on Wednesday morning, and how good he has been ever since, that I thought I would go no further; for I was a little ashamed to be so very open on that tender and most grateful subject; though his great goodness to me deserves all the acknowledgments I can possibly make.

And when I had looked these out, I carried them down myself into the parlour to him; and said, putting them into his hands, Your allowances, good sir, as heretofore; and if I have been too open and free in my reflections or declarations, let my fears on one side, and my sincerity on the other, be my excuse. You are very obliging, my good girl, said he. You have nothing to apprehend from my thoughts, any more than from my actions.

So I went up, and wrote the letter to you, briefly acquainting you with my present happiness, and my master's goodness, and expressing the gratitude of heart, which I owe to the kindest gentleman in the world, and assuring you, that I should soon have the pleasure of sending back to you, not only those papers, but all that succeeded them to this time, as I know you delight to amuse yourself in your leisure hours with my scribble: And I said, carrying it down to my master, before I sealed it, Will you please, sir, to take the trouble of reading what I write to my dear parents? Thank you, Pamela, said he, and set me on his knee, while he read it; and seemed much pleased with it; and giving it me again, You are very happy, said he, my beloved girl, in your style and expressions: and the affectionate things you say of me are inexpressibly obliging; and again, with this kiss, said he, do I confirm for truth all that you have promised for my intentions in this letter.—O what halcyon days are these! God continue them!—A change would kill me quite.

He went out in his chariot in the afternoon; and in the evening returned, and sent me word, he would be glad of my company for a little walk in the garden; and down I went that very moment.

He came to meet me. So, says he, how does my dear girl do now?—Whom do you think I have seen since I have been out?—I don't know, sir, said I. Why, said he, there is a turning in the road, about five miles off, that goes round a meadow, that has a pleasant foot-way, by the side of a little brook, and a double row of limes on each side, where now and then the gentry in the neighbourhood walk, and angle, and divert themselves.—I'll shew it you next opportunity.—And I stept out of my chariot, to walk across this meadow, and bid Robin meet me with it on the further part of it: And whom should I 'spy there, walking, with a book in his hand, reading, but your humble servant Mr. Williams! Don't blush, Pamela, said he. As his back was towards me, I thought I would speak to the man: and,

before he saw me, I said, How do you, old acquaintance? (for, said he, you know we were of one college for a twelvemonth.) I thought the man would have jumped into the brook, he gave such a start at hearing my voice, and seeing me.

Poor man! said I. Ay, said he, but not too much of your poor man, in that soft accent, neither, Pamela.—Said I, I am sorry my voice is so startling to you, Mr. Williams. What are you reading? Sir, said he, and stammered with the surprise, it is the French Telemachus; for I am about perfecting myself, if I can, in the French tongue.—Thought I, I had rather so, than perfecting my Pamela in it.—You do well, replied I.—Don't you think that yonder cloud may give us a small shower? and it did a little begin to wet.—He said, he believed not much.

If, said I, you are for the village, I'll give you a cast; for I shall call at Sir Simon's in my return from the little round I am taking. He asked me if it was not too great a favour?—No, said I, don't talk of that; let us walk to the further opening there, and we shall meet my chariot.

So, Pamela, continued my master, we fell into conversation as we walked. He said he was very sorry he had incurred my displeasure; and the more, as he had been told, by Lady Jones, who had it from Sir Simon's family, that I had a more honourable view than at first was apprehended. I said, We fellows of fortune, Mr. Williams, take sometimes a little more liberty with the world than we ought to do; wantoning, very probably, as you contemplative folks would say, in the sunbeams of a dangerous affluence; and cannot think of confining ourselves to the common paths, though the safest and most eligible, after all. And you may believe I could not very well like to be supplanted in a view that lay next my heart; and that by an old acquaintance, whose good, before this affair, I was studious to promote.

I would only say, sir, said he, that my first motive was entirely such as became my function: And, very politely, said my master, he added, And I am very sure, that however inexcusable I might seem in the progress of the matter, yourself, sir, would have been sorry to have it said, you had cast your thoughts on a person, that nobody could have wished for but yourself.

Well, Mr. Williams, said I, I see you are a man of gallantry, as well as religion: But what I took most amiss was, that, if you thought me doing a wrong thing, you did not expostulate with me upon it, as your function

might have allowed you to do; but immediately determined to counterplot me, and attempt to secure to yourself a prize you would have robbed me of, and that from my own house. But the matter is at an end, and I retain not any malice upon it; though you did not know but I might, at last, do honourably by her, as I actually intend.

I am sorry for myself, sir, said he, that I should so unhappily incur your displeasure; but I rejoice for her sake in your honourable intentions: give me leave only to say, that if you make Miss Andrews your lady, she will do credit to your choice with every body that sees her, or comes to know her; and, for person and mind both, you may challenge the county.

In this manner, said my master, did the parson and I confabulate; and I set him down at his lodgings in the village. But he kept your secret, Pamela; and would not own, that you gave any encouragement to his addresses.

Indeed, sir, said I, he could not say that I did; and I hope you believe me. I do, I do, said he: but 'tis still my opinion, that if, when I saw plots set up against my plots, I had not discovered the parson as I did, the correspondence between you might have gone to a length that would have put our present situation out of both our powers.

Sir, said I, when you consider, that my utmost presumption could not make me hope for the honour you now seem to design me; that I was so hardly used, and had no prospect before me but dishonour, you will allow that I should have seemed very little in earnest in my professions of honesty, if I had not endeavoured to get away: but yet I resolved not to think of marriage; for I never saw the man I could love, till your goodness emboldened me to look up to you.

I should, my dear Pamela, said he, make a very ill compliment to my vanity, if I did not believe you; though, at the same time, justice calls upon me to say, that it is, some things considered, beyond my merit.

There was a sweet, noble expression for your poor daughter, my dear father and mother!—And from my master too!

I was glad to hear this account of the interview between Mr. Williams and himself; but I dared not to say so. I hope in time he will be reinstated in his good graces.

He was so good as to tell me, he had given orders for the chapel to be cleared. O how I look forward with inward joy, yet with fear and trembling!

Friday.

About twelve o'clock came Sir Simon, and his lady and two daughters; and Lady Jones, and a sister-in-law of hers; and Mr. Peters, and his spouse and niece. Mrs. Jewkes, who is more and more obliging, was much concerned I was not dressed in some of my best clothes, and made me many compliments.

They all went into the garden for a walk, before dinner; and, I understood, were so impatient to see me, that my master took them into the largest alcove, after they had walked two or three turns, and stept himself to me. Come, my Pamela, said he, the ladies can't be satisfied without seeing you, and I desire you'll come. I said, I was ashamed; but I would obey him. Said he, The two young ladies are dressed out in their best attire; but they make not such an appearance as my charming girl in this ordinary garb.—Sir, said I, shan't I follow you thither? For I can't bear you should do me so much honour. Well, said he, I'll go before you. And he bid Mrs. Jewkes bring a bottle of sack, and some cake. So he went down to them.

This alcove fronts the longest gravel-walk in the garden, so that they saw me all the way I came, for a good way: and my master told me afterwards, with pleasure, all they said of me.

Will you forgive the little vain slut, your daughter, if I tell you all, as he was pleased to tell me? He said, 'spying me first, Look, there, ladies, comes my pretty rustic!—They all, I saw, which dashed me, stood at the windows, and in the door-way, looking full at me.

My master told me, that Lady Jones said, She is a charming creature, I see that, at this distance. And Sir Simon, it seems, who has been a sad rake in his younger days, swore he never saw so easy an air, so fine a shape, and so graceful a presence.—The Lady Darnford said, I was a sweet girl. And Mrs. Peters said very handsome things. Even the parson said, I should be the pride of the county. O, dear sirs! all this was owing to the light my good master's favour placed me in, which made me shine out in their eyes beyond my deserts. He said the young ladies blushed, and envied me.

When I came near, he saw me in a little confusion, and was so kind as to meet me: Give me your hand, said he, my poor girl; you walk too fast, (for, indeed, I wanted to be out of their gazing). I did so, with a courtesy, and he led me up the steps of the alcove, and, in a most gentleman-like manner, presented me to the ladies, and they all saluted me, and said, They hoped to be better acquainted with me: and Lady Darnford was pleased to say, I should be the flower of their neighbourhood. Sir Simon said, Good neighbour, by your leave; and saluting me, added, Now will I say, that I have kissed the loveliest maiden in England. But, for all this, methought I owed him a grudge for a tell-tale, though all had turned out so happily. Mr. Peters very gravely followed his example, and said, like a bishop, God bless you, fair excellence! said Lady Jones, Pray, dear madam, sit down by me: and they all sat down: But I said, I would stand, if they pleased. No, Pamela, said my master: pray sit down with these good ladies, my neighbours:—They will indulge it to you, for my sake, till they know you better; and for your own, when they are acquainted with you. Sir, said I, I shall be proud to deserve their indulgence.

They all so gazed at me, that I could not look up; for I think it is one of the distinctions of persons of condition, and well-bred people, to put bashful bodies out of countenance. Well, Sir Simon, said my master, what say you now to my pretty rustic?—He swore a great oath, that he should



better know what to say to me if he was as young as himself. Lady Darnford said, You will never leave, Sir Simon.

Said my master, You are a little confused, my good girl, and out of breath; but I have told all my kind neighbours here a good deal of your story, and your excellence. Yes, said Lady Darnford, my dear neighbour, as I will call you; we that are here present have all heard of your uncommon story. Madam, said I, you have then heard what must make your kind allowance for me very necessary. No, said Mrs. Peters, we have heard what will always make you valued as an honour to our sex, and as a worthy pattern for all the young ladies in the county. You are very good, madam, said I, to make me able to look up, and to be thankful for the honour you are pleased to do me.

Mrs. Jewkes came in with the canary, brought by Nan, to the alcove, and some cakes on a silver salver; and I said, Mrs. Jewkes, let me be your assistant; I will serve the ladies with the cake. And so I took the salver, and went round to the good company with it, ending with my master. The Lady Jones said, She never was served with such a grace, and it was giving me too much trouble. O, madam, said I, I hope my good master's favour will never make me forget, that it is my duty to wait upon his friends. Master, sweet one! said Sir Simon, I hope you won't always call Mr. B — by that name, for fear it should become a fashion for all our ladies to do the like through the county. I, sir, said I, shall have many reasons to continue this style, which cannot affect your good ladies.

Sir Simon, said Lady Jones, you are very arch upon us but I see very well, that it will be the interest of all the gentlemen, to bring their ladies into an intimacy with one that can give them such a good example. I am sure then, madam, said I, it must be after I have been polished and improved by the honour of such an example as yours.

They all were very good and affable; and the young Lady Darnford, who had wished to see me in this dress, said, I beg your pardon, dear miss, as she called me; but I had heard how sweetly this garb became you, and was told the history of it; and I begged it, as a favour, that you might oblige us with your appearance in it. I am much obliged to your ladyship, said I, that your kind prescription was so agreeable to my choice. Why, said she, was it your choice then?—I am glad of that: though I am sure your person must give, and not take, ornament from any dress.

You are very kind, madam, said I: but there will be the less reason to fear I should forget the high obligations I should have to the kindest of gentlemen, when I can delight to shew the humble degree from which his goodness had raised me.—My dear Pamela, said my master, if you proceed at this rate, I must insist upon your first seven days. You know what I mean. Sir, said I, you are all goodness!

They drank a glass of sack each, and Sir Simon would make me do so too, saying, It will be a reflection, madam, upon all the ladies, if you don't do as they. No, Sir Simon, said I, that can't be, because the ladies' journey hither makes a glass of canary a proper cordial for them: but I won't refuse; because I will do myself the honour of drinking good health to you, and to all this worthy company.

Said good Lady Darnford, to my master, I hope, sir, we shall have Mrs. Andrews's company at table. He said, very obligingly, Madam, it is her time now; and I will leave it to her choice. If the good ladies, then, will forgive me, sir, said I, I had rather be excused. They all said, I must not be excused. I begged I might. Your reason for it, my dear Pamela? said my master: since the ladies request it, I wish you would oblige them. Sir, replied I, your goodness will make me, every day, worthier of the honour the ladies do me; and when I can persuade myself that I am more worthy of it than at present, I shall with great joy embrace all the opportunities they will be pleased to give me.

Mrs. Peters whispered Lady Jones, as my master told me afterwards; Did you ever see such excellence, such prudence, and discretion? Never in my life, said the other good lady. She will adorn, she was pleased to say, her distinction. Ay, says Mrs. Peters, she would adorn any station in life.

My good master was highly delighted, generous gentleman as he is! with the favourable opinion of the ladies; and I took the more pleasure in it, because their favour seemed to lessen the disgrace of his stooping so much beneath himself.

Lady Darnford said, We will not oppress you; though we could almost blame your too punctilious exactness: but if we excuse Miss Andrews from dinner, we must insist upon her company at the card-table, and at a dish of tea; for we intend to pass the whole day with you, sir, as we told you. What say you to that, Pamela, said my master. Sir, replied I, whatever you and the ladies please, I will cheerfully do. They said, I was very

obliging. But Sir Simon rapt out an oath, and said, That they might dine together, if they would; but he would dine with me, and nobody else: for, said he, I say, sir, as Parson Williams said, (by which I found my master had told them the story,) You must not think you have chosen one that nobody can like but yourself.

The young ladies said, If I pleased they would take a turn about the garden with me. I answered, I would very gladly attend them; and so we three, and Lady Jones's sister-in-law, and Mr. Peters's niece, walked together. They were very affable, kind, and obliging; and we soon entered into a good deal of familiarity; and I found Miss Darnford a very agreeable person. Her sister was a little more on the reserve; and I afterwards heard, that, about a year before, she would fain have had my master make his addresses to her: but though Sir Simon is reckoned rich, she was not thought sufficient fortune for him. And now, to have him look down so low as me, must be a sort of mortification to a poor young lady!—And I pitied her.—Indeed I did!—I wish all young persons of my sex could be as happy as I am like to be.

My master told me afterwards, that I left the other ladies, and Sir Simon and Mr. Peters, full of my praises: so that they could hardly talk of any thing else; one launching out upon my complexion, another upon my eyes, my hand, and, in short, for you'll think me sadly proud, upon my whole person and behaviour; and they all magnified my readiness and obligingness in my answers, and the like: And I was glad of it, as I said, for my good master's sake, who seemed quite pleased and rejoiced. God bless him for his goodness to me!

Dinner not being ready, the young ladies proposed a tune upon the spinnet. I said, I believed it was not in tune. They said, they knew it was but a few months ago. If it is, said I, I wish I had known it; though indeed, ladies, added I, since you know my story, I must own, that my mind has not been long in tune, to make use of it. So they would make me play upon it, and sing to it; which I did, a song my dear good lady made me learn, and used to be pleased with, and which she brought with her from Bath: and the ladies were much taken with the song, and were so kind as to approve my performance: And Miss Darnford was pleased to compliment me, that I had all the accomplishments of my sex. I said, I had had a good lady, in my master's mother, who had spared no pains nor cost to improve

me. She said, she wished Mr. B—— could be prevailed upon to give a ball on an approaching happy occasion, that we might have a dancing-match, etc.—But I can't say I do; though I did not say so: for these occasions, I think, are too solemn for the principals, at least of our sex, to take part in, especially if they have the same thoughts of that solemnity that I have: For, indeed, though I have before me a prospect of happiness, that may be envied by ladies of high rank, yet I must own to you, my dear parents, that I have something very awful upon my mind, when I think of the matter; and shall, more and more, as it draws nearer and nearer. This is the song:

I.

Go, happy paper, gently steal,  
And underneath her pillow lie;  
There, in soft dreams, my love reveal,  
That love which I must still conceal,  
And, wrapt in awful silence, die.

II.

Should flames be doom'd thy hapless fate,  
To atoms thou wouldst quickly turn:  
My pains may bear a longer date;  
For should I live, and should she hate,  
In endless torments I should burn.

III.

Tell fair AURELIA, she has charms,  
Might in a hermit stir desire.  
T' attain the heav'n that's in her arms,  
I'd quit the world's alluring harms,  
And to a cell content, retire.

IV.

Of all that pleas'd my ravish'd eye,  
Her beauty should supply the place;  
Bold Raphael's strokes, and Titian's dye,  
Should but in vain presume to vie  
With her inimitable face.

V.

No more I'd wish for Phoebus' rays,  
To gild the object of my sight;  
Much less the taper's fainter blaze:  
Her eyes should measure out my days;

And when she slept, it should be night.

About four o'clock.

My master just came up to me, and said, If you should see Mr. Williams below, do you think, Pamela, you should not be surprised?—No, sir, said I, I hope not. Why should I? Expect, said he, a stranger then, when you come down to us in the parlour; for the ladies are preparing themselves for the card-table, and they insist upon your company.—You have a mind, sir, said I, I believe, to try all my courage. Why, said he, does it want courage to see him? No, sir, said I, not at all. But I was grievously dashed to see all those strange ladies and gentlemen; and now to see Mr. Williams before them, as some of them refused his application for me, when I wanted to get away, it will a little shock me, to see them smile, in recollecting what has passed of that kind. Well, said he, guard your heart against surprises, though you shall see, when you come down, a man that I can allow you to love dearly; though hardly preferably to me.

This surprises me much. I am afraid he begins to be jealous of me. What will become of me, (for he looked very seriously,) if any turn should happen now!—My heart aches! I know not what's the matter. But I will go down as brisk as I can, that nothing may be imputed to me. Yet I wish this Mr. Williams had not been there now, when they are all there; because of their fleers at him and me. Otherwise I should be glad to see the poor gentleman; for, indeed, I think him a good man, and he has suffered for my sake.

So, I am sent for down to cards. I'll go; but wish I may continue their good opinions of me: for I shall be very awkward. My master, by his serious question, and bidding me guard my heart against surprises, though I should see, when I came down, a man he can allow me to love dearly, though hardly better than himself, has quite alarmed me, and made me sad!—I hope he loves me!—But whether he does or not, I am in for it now, over head and ears, I doubt, and can't help loving him; 'tis a folly to deny it. But to be sure I can't love any man preferably to him. I shall soon know what he means.

Now, my dear mother, must I write to you. Well might my good master say so mysteriously as he did, about guarding my heart against surprises. I never was so surprised in my life; and never could see a man I loved so dearly!—O my dear mother, it was my dear, dear father, and not Mr. Williams, that was below ready to receive and to bless your daughter! and

both my master and he enjoined me to write how the whole matter was, and what my thoughts were on this joyful occasion.

I will take the matter from the beginning, that Providence directed his feet to this house, to this time, as I have had it from Mrs. Jewkes, from my master, my father, the ladies, and my own heart and conduct, as far as I know of both; because they command it, and you will be pleased with my relation and so, as you know how I came by the connexion, will make one uniform relation of it.

It seems, then, my dear father and you were so uneasy to know the truth of the story which Thomas had told you, that fearing I was betrayed, and quite undone, he got leave of absence, and set out the day after Thomas was there; and so, on Friday morning, he got to the neighbouring town; and there he heard, that the gentry in the neighbourhood were at my master's, at a great entertainment. He put on a clean shirt and neckcloth (which he brought in his pocket) at an alehouse there, and got shaved; and so, after he had eaten some bread and cheese, and drank a can of ale, he set out for my master's house, with a heavy heart, dreading for me, and in much fear of being brow-beaten. He had, it seems, asked, at the alehouse, what family the 'squire had down here, in hopes to hear something of me: And they said, A housekeeper, two maids, and, at present, two coachmen, and two grooms, a footman, and a helper. Was that all? he said. They told him, there was a young creature there, belike who was, or was to be, his mistress, or somewhat of that nature; but had been his mother's waiting-maid. This, he said, grieved his heart, and confirmed his fears.

So he went on, and about three o'clock in the afternoon came to the gate; and, ringing there, Sir Simon's coachman went to the iron gate; and he asked for the housekeeper; though, from what I had written, in his heart he could not abide her. She sent for him in, little thinking who he was, and asked him, in the little hall, what his business with her was?—Only, madam, said he, whether I cannot speak one word with the 'squire? No, friend, said she; he is engaged with several gentlemen and ladies. Said he, I have business with his honour of greater consequence to me than either life or death; and tears stood in his eyes.

At that she went into the great parlour, where my master was talking very pleasantly with the ladies; and she said, Sir, here is a good tight old man, that wants to see you on business of life and death, he says, and is

very earnest. Ay, said he, Who can that be?—Let him stay in the little hall, and I'll come to him presently. They all seemed to stare; and Sir Simon said, No more nor less, I dare say, my good friend, but a bastard-child. If it is, said Lady Jones, bring it in to us. I will, said he.

Mrs. Jewkes tells me, my master was much surprised, when he saw who it was; and she much more, when my dear father said,—Good God! give me patience! but, as great as you are, sir, I must ask for my child! and burst out into tears. (O what trouble have I given you both!) My master said, taking him by the hand, Don't be uneasy, Goodman Andrews; your daughter is in the way to be happy.

This alarmed my dear father, and he said, What! then, is she dying? And trembled, he could scarce stand. My master made him sit down, and sat down by him, and said, No; God be praised! she is very well: And pray be comforted; I cannot bear to see you thus apprehensive; but she has written you a letter to assure you, that she has reason to be well satisfied, and happy.

Ah, sir I said he, you told me once she was in London, waiting on a bishop's lady, when all the time she was a severe prisoner here.—Well, that's all over now, Goodman Andrews, said my master: but the times are altered; for now the sweet girl has taken me prisoner; and in a few days I shall put on the most agreeable fetters that ever man wore.

O, sir! said, he, you are too pleasant for my griefs. My heart's almost broke. But may I not see my poor child? You shall presently, said he; for she is coming down to us; and since you won't believe me, I hope you will her.

I will ask you, good sir, said he, but one question till then, that I may know how to look upon her when I see her. Is she honest? Is she virtuous?—As the new-born babe, Mr. Andrews, said my good master; and in twelve days time, I hope, will be my wife.

O flatter me not, good your honour, said he: It cannot be! it cannot be!—I fear you have deluded her with strange hopes; and would make me believe impossibilities!—Mrs. Jewkes, said he, do you tell my dear Pamela's good father, when I go out, all you know concerning me, and your mistress that is to be. Meantime, make much of him, and set out what you have; and make him drink a glass of what he likes best. If this be wine, added he, fill me a bumper.

She did so; and he took my father by the hand, and said, Believe me, good man, and be easy; for I can't bear to see you tortured in this cruel suspense: Your dear daughter is the beloved of my soul. I am glad you are come: for you'll see us all in the same story. And here's your dame's health; and God bless you both, for being the happy means of procuring for me so great a blessing! And so he drank a bumper to this most obliging health.

What do I hear? It cannot surely be! said my father. And your honour is too good, I hope, to mock a poor old man—This ugly story, sir, of the bishop, runs in my head—But you say I shall see my dear child—And I shall see her honest.—If not, poor as I am, I would not own her.

My master bid Mrs. Jewkes not to let me know yet, that my father was come; and went to the company, and said, I have been agreeably surprised: Here is honest old Goodman Andrews come full of grief to see his daughter; for he fears she is seduced; and tells me, good honest man, that, poor as he is, he will not own her, if she be not virtuous. O, said they all, with one voice almost, Dear sir! shall we not see the good old man you have so praised for his plain good sense, and honest heart? If, said he, I thought Pamela would not be too much affected with the surprise, I would make you all witness to their first interview; for never did daughter love a father, or a father a daughter, as they two do one another. Miss Darnford, and all the ladies, and the gentlemen too, begged it might be so. But was not this very cruel, my dear mother? For well might they think I should not support myself in such an agreeable surprise.

He said, kindly, I have but one fear, that the dear girl may be too much affected. O, said Lady Darnford, we'll all help to keep up her spirits. Says he, I'll go up, and prepare her; but won't tell her of it. So he came up to me, as I have said, and amused me about Mr. Williams, to half prepare me for some surprise; though that could not have been any thing to this: and he left me, as I said, in that suspense, at his mystical words, saying, He would send to me, when they were going to cards.

My master went from me to my father, and asked if he had eaten any thing. No, said Mrs. Jewkes; the good man's heart is so full, he cannot eat, nor do any thing, till he has seen his dear daughter. That shall soon be, said my master. I will have you come in with me; for she is going to sit down with my guests, to a game at quadrille; and I will send for her down. O, sir,



said my father, don't, don't let me; I am not fit to appear before your guests; let me see my daughter by myself, I beseech you. Said he, They all know your honest character, Goodman Andrews, and long to see you, for Pamela's sake.

So he took my father by the hand, and led him in, against his will, to the company. They were all very good. My master kindly said, Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you one of the honestest men in England, my good Pamela's father. Mr. Peters went to him, and took him by the hand, and said, We are all glad to see you, sir; you are the happiest man in the world in a daughter; whom we never saw before to-day, but cannot enough admire.

Said my master, This gentleman, Goodman Andrews, is the minister of the parish; but is not young enough for Mr. Williams. This airy expression, my poor father said, made him fear, for a moment, that all was a jest.—Sir Simon also took him by the hand, and said, Ay, you have a sweet daughter, Honesty; we are all in love with her. And the ladies came, and said very fine things: Lady Darnford particularly, That he might think himself the happiest man in England, in such a daughter. If, and please you, madam, said he, she be but virtuous, 'tis all in all: For all the rest is accident. But I doubt his honour has been too much upon the jest with me. No, said Mrs. Peters, we are all witnesses, that he intends very honourably by her.—It is some comfort, said he, and wiped his eyes, that such good ladies say so—But I wish I could see her.

They would have had him sit down by them; but he would only sit behind the door, in the corner of the room, so that one could not soon see him as one came in; because the door opened against him, and hid him almost. The ladies all sat down; and my master said, Desire Mrs. Jewkes to step up, and tell Mrs. Andrews the ladies wait for her. So down I came.

Miss Darnford rose, and met me at the door, and said, Well, Miss Andrews, we longed for your company. I did not see my dear father; and it seems his heart was too full to speak; and he got up, and sat down three or four times successively, unable to come to me, or to say any thing. The ladies looked that way: but I would not, supposing it was Mr. Williams. And they made me sit down between Lady Darnford and Lady Jones; and asked me, what we should play at? I said, At what your ladyships please. I wondered to see them smile, and look upon me, and to that corner of the

room; but I was afraid of looking that way, for fear of seeing Mr. Williams; though my face was that way too, and the table before me.

Said my master, Did you send your letter away to the posthouse, my good girl, for your father? To be sure, sir, said I, I did not forget that: I took the liberty to desire Mr. Thomas to carry it. What, said he, I wonder, will the good old couple say to it? O sir, said I, your goodness will be a cordial to their dear honest hearts! At that, my dear father, not able to contain himself, nor yet to stir from the place, gushed out into a flood of tears, which he, good soul! had been struggling with, it seems; and cried out, O my dear child!

I knew the voice, and, lifting up my eyes, and seeing my father, gave a spring, overturned the table, without regard to the company, and threw myself at his feet: O my father! my father! said I, can it be?—Is it you? Yes, it is! it is!—O bless your happy daughter! I would have said, and down I sunk.

My master seemed concerned—I feared, said he, that the surprise would be too much for her spirits; and all the ladies ran to me, and made me drink a glass of water; and I found myself encircled in the arms of my dearest father.—O tell me, said I, every thing! How long have you been here? When did you come? How does my honoured mother? And half a dozen questions more, before he could answer one.

They permitted me to retire with my father; and then I poured forth all my vows and thanksgivings to God for this additional blessing; and confirmed all my master's goodness to his scarce-believing amazement. And we kneeled together, blessing God, and one another, for several ecstatic minutes and my master coming in soon after, my dear father said, O sir, what a change is this! May, God reward and bless you, both in this world and the next!

May God bless us all! said he. But how does my sweet girl? I have been in pain for you—I am sorry I did not apprise you beforehand.

O sir, said I, it was you; and all you do must be good—But this was a blessing so unexpected!——

Well, said he, you have given pain to all the company. They will be glad to see you, when you can: for you have spoiled all their diversion; and yet painfully delighted them at the same time. Mr. Andrews, added he, do you make this house your own; and the longer you stay, the more welcome

you'll be. After you have a little composed yourself, my dear girl, step in to us again. I am glad to see you so well already. And so he left us.

See you, my dear father, said I, what goodness there is in this once naughty master! O pray for him! and pray for me, that I may deserve it!

How long has this happy change been wrought, my dear child?—O, said I, several happy days!—I have written down every thing; and you'll see, from the depth of misery, what God has done for your happy daughter!

Blessed be his name! said he. But do you say he will marry you? Can it be, that such a brave gentleman will make a lady of the child of such a poor man as I? O the divine goodness! How will your poor dear mother be able to support these happy tidings? I will set out to-morrow, to acquaint her with them: for I am but half happy, till the dear good woman shares them with me!—To be sure, my dear child, we ought to go into some far country to hide ourselves, that we may not disgrace you by our poverty!

O, my dear father, said I, now you are unkind for the first time! Your poverty has been my glory, and my riches; and I have nothing to brag of, but that I ever thought it an honour, rather than a disgrace; because you were always so honest, that your child might well boast of such a parentage!

In this manner, my dear mother, did we pass the happy moments, till Miss Darnford came to me, and said, How do you do, dear madam? I rejoice to see you so well! Pray let us have your company. And yours too, good Mr. Andrews, taking his hand.

This was very obliging, I told her; and we went to the great parlour; and my master took my father by the hand, and made him sit down by him, and drink a glass of wine with him. Mean-time, I made my excuses to the ladies, as well as I could, which they readily granted me. But Sir Simon, after his comical manner, put his hands on my shoulders: Let me see, let me see, said he, where your wings grow; for I never saw any body fly like you.—Why, said he, you have broken Lady Jones's shins with the table. Shew her else, madam.

His pleasantry made them laugh. And I said, I was very sorry for my extravagancy: and if it had not been my master's doings, I should have said, it was a fault to permit me to be surprised, and put out of myself, before such good company. They said, All was very excusable; and they were glad I suffered no more by it.

They were so kind as to excuse me at cards, and played by themselves; and I went by my master's commands and sat on the other side, in the happiest place I ever was blest with, between two of the dearest men in the world to me, and each holding one of my hands:—my father, every now and then, with tears, lifting up his eyes, and saying, Could I ever have hoped this!

I asked him, If he had been so kind as to bring the papers with him? He said, He had; and looked at me, as who should say, Must I give them to you now?—I said, Be pleased to let me have them. He pulled them from his pocket; and I stood up, and, with my best duty, gave them into my master's hands. He said, Thank you, Pamela. Your father shall take all with him, so see what a sad fellow I have been, as well as the present happier alteration. But I must have them all again, for the writer's sake.

The ladies and gentlemen would make me govern the tea-table, whatever I could do; and Abraham attended me, to serve the company. My master and my father sat together, and drank a glass or two of wine instead of tea, and Sir Simon joked with my master, saying, I warrant you would not be such a woman's man, as to drink tea, for ever so much, with the ladies. But your time's coming, and I doubt not you'll be made as comfortable as I.

My master was very urgent with them to stay supper; and at last they complied, on condition that I would grace the table, as they were pleased to call it. I begged to be excused. My master said, Don't be excused, Pamela, since the ladies desire it: And besides, said he, we won't part with your father; and so you may as well stay with us.

I was in hopes my father and I might sup by ourselves, or only with Mrs. Jewkes. And Miss Darnford, who is a most obliging young lady, said, We will not part with you, indeed we won't.

When supper was brought in, Lady Darnford took me by the hand, and said to my master, Sir, by your leave; and would have placed me at the upper end of the table. Pray, pray, madam, said I, excuse me; I cannot do it, indeed I cannot. Pamela, said my master, to the great delight of my good father, as I could see by his looks, oblige Lady Darnford, since she desires it. It is but a little before your time, you know.

Dear, good sir, said I, pray don't command it! Let me sit by my father, pray! Why, said Sir Simon, here's ado indeed! Sit down at the upper end,

as you should do; and your father shall sit by you, there. This put my dear father upon difficulties. And my master said, Come, I'll place you all: and so put Lady Darnford at the upper end, Lady Jones at her right hand, and Mrs. Peters on the other; and he placed me between the two young ladies; but very genteelly put Miss Darnford below her younger sister; saying, Come, miss, I put you here, because you shall hedge in this little cuckow; for I take notice, with pleasure, of your goodness to her; and, besides, all you very young ladies should sit together. This seemed to please both sisters; for had the youngest miss been put there, it might have piqued her, as matters have been formerly, to be placed below me; whereas Miss Darnford giving place to her youngest sister, made it less odd she should to me; especially with that handsome turn of the dear man, as if I was a cuckow, and to be hedged in.

My master kindly said, Come, Mr. Andrews, you and I will sit together. And so took his place at the bottom of the table, and set my father on his right hand; and Sir Simon would sit on his left. For, said he, parson, I think the petticoats should sit together; and so do you sit down by that lady (his sister). A boiled turkey standing by me, my master said, Cut up that turkey, Pamela, if it be not too strong work for you, that Lady Darnford may not have too much trouble. So I carved it in a trice, and helped the ladies. Miss Darnford said, I would give something to be so dexterous a carver. O madam, said I, my late good lady would always make me do these things, when she entertained her female friends, as she used to do on particular days.

Ay, said my master, I remember my poor mother would often say, if I, or any body at table, happened to be a little out in carving, I'll send up for my Pamela, to shew you how to carve. Said Lady Jones, Mrs. Andrews has every accomplishment of her sex. She is quite wonderful for her years. Miss Darnford said, And I can tell you, madam, that she plays sweetly upon the spinnet, and sings as sweetly to it; for she has a fine voice. Foolish! said Sir Simon; who, that hears her speak, knows not that? And who that sees her fingers, believes not that they were made to touch any key? O, parson! said he, 'tis well you're by, or I should have had a blush from the ladies. I hope not, Sir Simon, said Lady Jones; for a gentleman of your politeness would not say any thing that would make ladies blush.—No, no, said he, for the world: but if I had, it would have been, as the poet says,

'They blush, because they understand.'

When the company went away, Lady Darnford, Lady Jones, and Mrs. Peters, severally invited my master, and me with him, to their houses; and begged he would permit me, at least, to come before we left those parts. And they said, We hope, when the happy knot is tied, you will induce Mr. B—— to reside more among us. We were always glad, said Lady Darnford, when he was here; but now shall have double reason. O what grateful things were these to the ears of my good father!

When the company was gone, my master asked my father, if he smoked? He answered, No. He made us both sit down by him, and said, I have been telling this sweet girl, that in fourteen days, and two of them are gone, she must fix on one to make me happy. And have left it to her to choose either one of the first or last seven. My father held up his hands, and eyes; God bless your honour! said he, is all I can say. Now, Pamela, said my master, taking my hand, don't let a little wrong-timed bashfulness take place, without any other reason, because I should be glad to go to Bedfordshire as soon as I could; and I would not return till I carry my servants there a mistress, who should assist me to repair the mischiefs she has made in it.

I could not look up for confusion. And my father said, My dear child, I need not, I am sure, prompt your obedience in whatever will most oblige so good a gentleman. What says my Pamela? said my master: She does not use to be at a loss for expressions. Sir, said I, were I too sudden, it would look as if I doubted whether you would hold in your mind, and was not willing to give you time for reflection: but otherwise, to be sure I ought to resign myself implicitly to your will. Said he, I want not time for reflection: for I have often told you, and that long ago, I could not live without you: and my pride of condition made me both tempt and terrify you to other terms; but your virtue was proof against all temptations, and was not to be awed by terrors: Wherefore, as I could not conquer my passion for you, I corrected myself, and resolved, since you would not be mine upon my terms, you should upon your own: and now I desire you not on any other, I assure you: and I think the sooner it is done, the better. What say you, Mr. Andrews? Sir, said he, there is so much goodness on your side, and, blessed be God! so much prudence on my daughter's, that I must be quite silent. But when it is done, I and my poor wife shall have

nothing to do, but to pray for you both, and to look back, with wonder and joy, on the ways of Providence.

This, said my master, is Friday night; and suppose, my girl, it be next Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday morning?—Say, my Pamela.

Will you, sir, said I, excuse me till to-morrow for an answer? I will, said he; and touched the bell, and called for Mrs. Jewkes. Where, said he, does Mr. Andrews lie tonight? You'll take care of him. He's a very good man; and will bring a blessing upon every house he sets his foot in.

My dear father wept for joy; and I could not refrain keeping him company. And my master, saluting me, bid us good night, and retired. And I waited upon my dear father, and was so full of prattle, of my master's goodness, and my future prospects, that I believed afterwards I was turned all into tongue: but he indulged me, and was transported with joy; and went to bed, and dreamed of nothing but Jacob's ladder, and angels ascending and descending, to bless him and his daughter.

Saturday.

I arose early in the morning; but found my father was up before me, and was gone to walk in the garden. I went to him: and with what delight, with what thankfulness, did we go over every scene of it, that had before been so dreadful to me! The fish-pond, the back-door, and every place. O what reason had we for thankfulness and gratitude!

About seven o'clock my good master joined us, in his morning gown and slippers; and looking a little heavy, I said, Sir, I fear you had not good rest last night. That is your fault, Pamela, said he. After I went from you, I must needs look into your papers, and could not leave them till I had read them through; and so 'twas three o'clock before I went to sleep. I wish, sir, said I, you had had better entertainment. The worst part of it, said he, was what I had brought upon myself; and you have not spared me. Sir, said I—He interrupting me, said, Well, I forgive you. You had too much reason for it. But I find, plainly enough, that if you had got away, you would soon have been Williams's wife: and I can't see how it could well have been otherwise. Indeed, sir, said I, I had no notion of it, or of being any body's. I believe so, said he; but it must have come as a thing of course; and I see your father was for it. Sir, said he, I little thought of the honour your goodness would confer upon her; and I thought that would be a match

above what we could do for her, a great deal. But when I found she was not for it, I resolved not to urge her; but leave all to her own prudence.

I see, said he, all was sincere, honest, and open; and I speak of it, if it had been done, as a thing that could hardly well be avoided; and I am quite satisfied. But, said he, I must observe, as I have a hundred times, with admiration, what a prodigious memory, and easy and happy manner of narration, this excellent girl has! And though she is full of her pretty tricks and artifices, to escape the snares I had laid for her, yet all is innocent, lovely, and uniformly beautiful. You are exceedingly happy in a daughter; and I hope I shall be so in a wife—Or, said my father, may she not have that honour! I fear it not, said he; and I hope I shall deserve it of her.

But, Pamela, said my master, I am sorry to find in some parts of your journal, that Mrs. Jewkes carried her orders a little too far: and I the more take notice of it, because you have not complained to me of her behaviour, as she might have expected for some parts of it; though a good deal was occasioned by my strict orders.—But she had the insolence to strike my girl, I find. Sir, said I, I was a little provoking, I believe; but as we forgave one another, I was the less entitled to complain of her.

Well, said he, you are very good; but if you have any particular resentment, I will indulge it so far, as that she shall hereafter have nothing to do where you are. Sir, said I, you are so kind, that I ought to forgive every body; and when I see that my happiness is brought about by the very means that I thought then my greatest grievance, I ought to bless those means, and forgive all that was disagreeable to me at the same time, for the great good that hath issued from it.—That, said he, and kissed me, is sweetly considered! and it shall be my part to make you amends for what you have suffered, that you may still think lighter of the one, and have cause to rejoice in the other.

My dear father's heart was full; and he said, with his hands folded, and lifted up, Pray, sir, let me go—let me go—to my dear wife, and tell her all these blessed things, while my heart holds; for it is ready to burst with joy! Good man! said my master—I hope to hear this honest heart of yours speaking at your lips. I enjoin you, Pamela, to continue your relation, as you have opportunity; and though your father be here, write to your mother, that this wondrous story be perfect, and we, your friends, may read and admire you more and more. Ay, pray, pray do, my child, said my



father; and this is the reason that I write on, my dear mother, when I thought not to do it, because my father could tell you all that passed while he was here.

My master took notice of my psalm, and was pleased to commend it; and said, That I had very charitably turned the last verses, which, in the original, were full of heavy curses, to a wish that shewed I was not of an implacable disposition though my then usage might have excused it, if I had. But, said he, I think you shall sing it to me to-morrow.

After we have breakfasted, added he, if you have no objection, Pamela, we'll take an airing together; and it shall be in the coach, because we'll have your father's company. He would have excused himself; but my master would have it so: but he was much ashamed, because of the meanness of his appearance.

My master would make us both breakfast with him on chocolate; and he said, I would have you, Pamela, begin to dress as you used to do; for now, at least, you may call your two other bundles your own; and if you want any thing against the approaching occasion, private as I design it, I'll send to Lincoln for it, by a special messenger. I said, My good lady's bounty, and his own, had set me much above my degree, and I had very good things of all sorts; and I did not desire any other, because I would not excite the censure of the ladies. That would be a different thing, he was pleased to say, when he publicly owned his nuptials, after we came to the other house. But, at present, if I was satisfied, he would not make words with me.

I hope, Mr. Andrews, said he, to my father, you'll not leave us till you see the affair over, and then you'll be sure I mean honourably: and, besides, Pamela will be induced to set the day sooner. O, sir, said he, I bless God I have no reason to doubt your meaning honourably: and I hope you'll excuse me, if I set out on Monday morning, very early, to my dear wife, and make her as happy as I am.

Why, Pamela, says my good master, may it not be performed on Tuesday? And then your father, maybe, will stay.—I should have been glad to have had it to-morrow, added he; but I have sent Monsieur Colbrand for a license, that, you may have no scruple unanswered; and he can't very well be back before to-morrow night, or Monday morning.

This was most agreeable news. I said, Sir, I know my dear father will want to be at home: and as you was so good to give me a fortnight from last Thursday, I should be glad you would be pleased to indulge me still to some day in the second seven.

Well, said he, I will not be too urgent; but the sooner you fix, the better. Mr. Andrews, we must leave something to these Jephthah's daughters, in these cases, he was pleased to say: I suppose the little bashful folly, which, in the happiest circumstances, may give a kind of regret to quit the maiden state, and an awkwardness at the entrance into a new one, is a reason with Pamela; and so she shall name her day. Sir, said he, you are all goodness.

I went up soon after, and new dressed myself, taking possession, in a happy moment, I hope, of my two bundles, as my good master was pleased to call them; (alluding to my former division of those good things my lady and himself bestowed upon me;) and so put on fine linen, silk shoes, and fine white cotton stockings, a fine quilted coat, a delicate green Mantea silk gown and coat, a French necklace, and a laced cambric handkerchief, and clean gloves; and, taking my fan in my hand, I, like a little proud hussy, looked in the glass, and thought myself a gentlewoman once more; but I forgot not to return due thanks, for being able to put on this dress with so much comfort.

Mrs. Jewkes would help to dress me, and complimented me highly, saying, among other things, That now I looked like a lady indeed: and as, she said, the little chapel was ready, and divine service would be read in it to-morrow, she wished the happy knot might then be tied. Said she, Have you not seen the chapel, madam, since it has been cleaned out? No, said I; but are we to have service in it to-morrow, do you say?—I am glad of that; for I have been a sad heathen lately, sore against my will!—But who is to officiate?—Somebody, replied she, Mr. Peters will send. You tell me very good news, said I, Mrs. Jewkes: I hope it will never be a lumber-room again.—Ay, said she, I can tell you more good news; for the two Misses Darnford, and Lady Jones, are to be here at the opening of it; and will stay and dine with you. My master, said I, has not told me that. You must alter your style, madam, said she: It must not be master now, sure!—O, returned I, this is a language I shall never forget: he shall always be my master; and I shall think myself more and more his servant.

My poor father did not know I went up to dress myself; and he said his heart misgave him when he saw me first, for fear I was made a fool of, and that here was some fine lady that was to be my master's true wife. And he stood in admiration, and said, O, my dear child, how well will you become your happy condition! Why you look like a lady already! I hope, my dear father, said I, and boldly kissed him, I shall always be your dutiful daughter, whatever my condition be.

My master sent me word he was ready; and when he saw me, said, Dress as you will, Pamela, you're a charming girl! and so handed me to the coach, and would make my father and me sit both on the foreshide, and sat backwards, over against me; and bid the coachman drive to the meadow; that is, where he once met Mr. Williams.

The conversation was most agreeable to me, and to my dear father, as we went; and he more and more exceeded in goodness and generosity; and, while I was gone up to dress, he had presented my father with twenty guineas; desiring him to buy himself and my mother such apparel as they should think proper; and lay it all out: but I knew not this till after we came home; my father having had no opportunity to tell me of it.

He was pleased to inform me of the chapel being got in tolerable order; and said, it looked very well; and against he came down next, it should be all new white-washed, and painted and lined; and a new pulpit-cloth, cushion, desk, etc. and that it should always be kept in order for the future. He told me the two Misses Darnford, and Lady Jones, would dine with him on Sunday: And, with their servants and mine, said he, we shall make a tolerable congregation. And, added he, have I not well contrived to shew you that the chapel is really a little house of God, and has been consecrated, before we solemnize our nuptials in it?—O, sir, replied I, your goodness to me is inexpressible! Mr. Peters, said he, offered to come and officiate in it; but would not stay to dine with me, because he has company at his own house: and so I intend that divine service shall be performed in it by one to whom I shall make some yearly allowance, as a sort of chaplain.—You look serious, Pamela, added he: I know you think of your friend Williams. Indeed, sir, said I, if you won't be angry, I did. Poor man! I am sorry I have been the cause of his disobliging you.

When we came to the meadow, where the gentry have their walk sometimes, the coach stopt, and my master alighted, and led me to the

brook-side, and it is a very pretty summer walk. He asked my father, If he chose to walk out, or go on in the coach to the farther end? He, poor man, chose to go on in the coach, for fear, he said, any gentry should be walking there; and he told me, he was most of the way upon his knees in the coach, thanking God for his gracious mercies and goodness; and begging a blessing upon my good master and me.

I was quite astonished, when we came into the shady walk, to see Mr. Williams there. See there, said my master, there's poor Williams, taking his solitary walk again, with his book. And, it seems, it was so contrived; for Mr. Peters had been, as I since find, desired to tell him to be in that walk at such an hour in the morning.

So, old acquaintance, said my master, again have I met you in this place? What book are you now reading? He said, it was Boileau's *Lutrin*. Said my master, You see I have brought with me my little fugitive, that would have been: While you are perfecting yourself in French, I am trying to learn English; and hope soon to be master of it.

Mine, sir, said he, is a very beautiful piece of French: but your English has no equal.

You are very polite, Mr. Williams, said my master: And he that does not think as you do, deserves no share in her. Why, Pamela, added he, very generously, why so strange, where you have once been so familiar? I do assure you both, that I mean not, by this interview, to insult Mr. Williams, or confound you. Then I said, Mr. Williams, I am very glad to see you well; and though the generous favour of my good master has happily changed the scene, since you and I last saw one another, I am nevertheless very glad of an opportunity to acknowledge, with gratitude, your good intentions, not so much to serve me, as me, but as a person—that then had great reason to believe herself in distress. And I hope, sir, added I, to my master, your goodness will permit me to say this.

You, Pamela, said he, may make what acknowledgments you please to Mr. Williams's good intentions; and I would have you speak as you think; but I do not apprehend myself to be quite so much obliged to those intentions.

Sir, said Mr. Williams, I beg leave to say, I knew well, that, by education, you was no libertine; nor had I reason to think you so by inclination; and, when you came to reflect, I hoped you would not be

displeased with me. And this was no small motive to me, at first, to do as I did.

Ay, but Mr. Williams, said my master, could you think I should have had reason to thank you, if, loving one person above all her sex, you had robbed me of her, and married her yourself?—And then, said he, you are to consider, that she was an old acquaintance of mine, and a quite new one to you; that I had sent her down to my own house, for better securing her; and that you, who had access to my house, could not effect your purpose, without being guilty, in some sort, of a breach of the laws of hospitality and friendship. As to my designs upon her, I own they had not the best appearance; but still I was not answerable to Mr. Williams for those; much less could you be excused to invade a property so very dear to me, and to endeavour to gain an interest in her affections, when you could not be certain that matters would not turn out as they have actually done.

I own, said he, that some parts of my conduct seem exceptionable, as you state it. But, sir, I am but a young man. I meant no harm. I had no interest, I am sure, to incur your displeasure; and when you think of every thing, and the inimitable graces of person, and perfections of mind, that adorn this excellent lady, (so he called me,) you will, perhaps, find your generosity allow something as an extenuation of a fault, which your anger would not permit as an excuse.

I have done, said my master; nor did I meet you here to be angry with you. Pamela knew not that she should see you: and now you are both present, I would ask you, Mr. Williams, If, now you know my honourable designs towards this good girl, you can really be almost, I will not say quite, as well pleased with the friendship of my wife, as you could be with the favour of Mrs. Andrews?

Sir, said he, I will answer you truly. I think I could have preferred, with her, any condition that could have befallen me, had I considered only myself. But, sir, I was very far from having any encouragement to expect her favour; and I had much more reason to believe, that, if she could have hoped for your goodness, her heart would have been too much pre-engaged to think of any body else. And give me leave further to say, sir, that, though I tell you sincerely my thoughts, were I only to consider myself; yet, when I consider her good, and her merit, I should be highly ungenerous, were it put to my choice, if I could not wish her in a condition

so much superior to what I could raise her to, and so very answerable to her merit.

Pamela, said my master, you are obliged to Mr. Williams, and ought to thank him: He has distinguished well. But, as for me, who had like to have lost you by his means, I am glad the matter was not left to his choice. Mr. Williams, added he, I give you Pamela's hand, because I know it will be pleasing to her, in token of her friendship and esteem for you; and I give you mine, that I will not be your enemy: but yet I must say, that I think I owe this proper manner of your thinking more to your disappointment, than to the generosity you talk of.

Mr. Williams kissed my hand, as my master gave it him; and my master said, Sir, you will go home and dine with me, and I'll shew you my little chapel; and do you, Pamela, look upon yourself at liberty to number Mr. Williams in the list of your friends.

How generous, how noble, was this! Mr. Williams (and so had I) had tears of pleasure in his eyes. I was silent: But Mr. Williams said, Sir, I shall be taught, by your generosity, to think myself inexcusably wrong, in every step I took, that could give you offence; and my future life shall shew my respectful gratitude.

We walked on till we came to the coach, where was my dear father. Pamela, said my master, tell Mr. Williams who that good man is. O, Mr. Williams! said I, it is my dear father! and my master was pleased to say, One of the honestest men in England: Pamela owes every thing that she is to be, as well as her being, to him; for, I think, she would not have brought me to this, nor made so great resistance, but for the good lessons, and religious education, she had imbibed from him.

Mr. Williams said, taking father's hand, You see, good Mr. Andrews, with inexpressible pleasure, no doubt, the fruits of your pious care; and now are in a way, with your beloved daughter, to reap the happy effects of it.—I am overcome, said my dear father, with his honour's goodness: But I can only say, I bless God, and bless him.

Mr. Williams and I being nearer the coach than my master, and he offering to draw back, to give way to him, he kindly said, Pray, Mr. Williams, oblige Pamela with your hand; and step in yourself. He bowed, and took my hand; and my master made him step in, and sit next me, all

that ever he could do; and sat himself over against him, next my father, who sat against me.

And he said, Mr. Andrews, I told you yesterday that the divine you saw was not Mr. Williams; I now tell you, this gentleman is: and though I have been telling him, I think not myself obliged to his intentions; yet I will own that Pamela and you are; and though I won't promise to love him, I would have you.

Sir, said Mr. Williams, you have a way of overcoming, that hardly all my reading affords an instance of; and it is the more noble, as it is on this side, as I presume, the happy ceremony, which, great as your fortune is, will lay you under an obligation to so much virtue and beauty, when the lady becomes yours; for you will then have a treasure that princes might envy you.

Said my generous master, (God bless him!) Mr. Williams, it is impossible that you and I should long live at variance, when our sentiments agree so well together, on subjects the most material.

I was quite confounded; and my master, seeing it, took my hand, and said, Look up, my good girl; and collect yourself.—Don't injure Mr. Williams and me so much, as to think we are capping compliments, as we used to do verses at school. I dare answer for us both, that we say not a syllable we don't think.

O sir, said I, how unequal am I to all this goodness! Every moment that passes adds to the weight of the obligations you oppress me with.

Think not too much of that, said he most generously. Mr. Williams's compliments to you have great advantage of mine: For, though equally sincere, I have a great deal to say, and to do, to compensate the sufferings I have made you undergo; and, at last, must sit down dissatisfied, because those will never be balanced by all I can do for you.

He saw my dear father quite unable to support these affecting instances of his goodness;—and he let go my hand, and took his; and said, seeing his tears, I wonder not, my dear Pamela's father, that your honest heart springs thus to your eyes, to see all her trials at an end. I will not pretend to say, that I had formerly either power or will to act thus: But since I began to resolve on the change you see, I have reaped so much pleasure in it, that my own interest will keep me steady: For, till within these few days, I knew not what it was to be happy.

Poor Mr. Williams, with tears of joy in his eyes, said, How happily, sir, have you been touched by the divine grace, before you have been hurried into the commission of sins, that the deepest penitence could hardly have atoned for!—God has enabled you to stop short of the evil; and you have nothing to do, but to rejoice in the good, which now will be doubly so, because you can receive it without the least inward reproach.

You do well, said he, to remind me, that I owe all this to the grace of God. I bless Him for it; and I thank this good man for his excellent lessons to his daughter; I thank her for following them: and I hope, from her good example, and your friendship, Mr. Williams, in time, to be half as good as my tutoress: and that, said he, I believe you'll own, will make me, without disparagement to any man, the best fox-hunter in England.—Mr. Williams was going to speak: and he said, You put on so grave a look, Mr. Williams, that, I believe, what I have said, with you practical good folks, is liable to exception: but I see we are become quite grave; and we must not be too serious neither.

What a happy creature, my dear mother, is your Pamela!—O may my thankful heart, and the good use I may be enabled to make of the blessings before me, be a means to continue this delightful prospect to a long date, for the sake of the dear good gentleman, who thus becomes the happy instrument, in the hand of Providence, to bless all he smiles upon! To be sure, I shall never enough acknowledge the value he is pleased to express for my unworthiness, in that he has prevented my wishes, and, unasked, sought the occasion of being reconciled to a good man, who, for my sake, had incurred his displeasure; and whose name he could not, a few days before, permit to pass through my lips! But see the wonderful ways of Providence! The very things that I most dreaded his seeing or knowing, the contents of my papers, have, as I hope, satisfied all his scruples, and been a means to promote my happiness.

Henceforth let not us poor short-sighted mortals pretend to rely on our own wisdom; or vainly think, that we are absolutely to direct for ourselves. I have abundant reason, I am sure, to say, that, when I was most disappointed, I was nearer my happiness: for had I made my escape, which was so often my chief point in view, and what I had placed my heart upon, I had escaped the blessings now before me, and fallen, perhaps headlong, into the miseries I would have avoided. And yet, after all, it was necessary



I should take the steps I did, to bring on this wonderful turn: O the unsearchable wisdom of God!—And how much ought I to adore the divine goodness, and humble myself, who am made a poor instrument, as I hope, not only to magnify his graciousness to this fine gentleman and myself, but also to dispense benefits to others! Which God of his mercy grant!

In the agreeable manner I have mentioned, did we pass the time in our second happy tour; and I thought Mrs. Jewkes would have sunk into the ground, when she saw Mr. Williams brought in the coach with us, and treated so kindly. We dined together in a most pleasant, easy, and frank manner; and I found I need not, from my master's generosity, to be under any restraint, as to my conduct to this good clergyman: For he, so often as he fancied I was reserved, moved me to be free with him, and to him; and several times called upon me to help my father and Mr. Williams; and seemed to take great delight in seeing me carve, as, indeed, he does in every thing I do.

After dinner we went and looked into the chapel, which is a very pretty one, and very decent; and, when finished as he designs it, against his next coming down, will be a very pretty place.

My heart, my dear mother, when I first set my foot in it, throbb'd a good deal, with awful joy, at the thoughts of the solemnity, which, I hope, will in a few days be performed here. And when I came up towards the little pretty altar-piece, while they were looking at a communion-picture, and saying it was prettily done, I gently stept into a corner, out of sight, and poured out my soul to God on my knees, in supplication and thankfulness, that, after having been so long absent from divine service, the first time I entered into a house dedicated to his honour, should be with such blessed prospects before me; and begging of God to continue me humble, and to make me not unworthy of his mercies; and that he would be pleas'd to bless the next author of my happiness, my good master.

I heard my master say, Where's Pamela? And so I broke off sooner than I would, and went up to him.

He said, Mr. Williams, I hope I have not so offended you by my conduct past, (for really it is what I ought to be ashamed of,) as that you will refuse to officiate, and to give us your instructions here to-morrow. Mr. Peters was so kind, for the first time, to offer it; but I knew it would be

inconvenient for him; and, besides, I was willing to make this request to you an introduction to our reconciliation.

Sir, said he, most willingly, and most gratefully, will I obey you: Though, if you expect a discourse, I am wholly unprepared for the occasion. I would not have it, replied he, pointed to any particular occasion; but if you have one upon the text—There is more joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-nine just persons that need no repentance; and if it makes me not such a sad fellow as to be pointed at by mine and the ladies' servants we shall have here, I shall be well content. 'Tis a general subject, added he, makes me speak of that; but any one you please will do; for you cannot make a bad choice, I am sure.

Sir, said he, I have one upon that text; but I am ready to think, that a thanksgiving one, which I made on a great mercy to myself, if I may be permitted to make my own acknowledgments of your favour the subject of a discourse, will be suitable to my grateful sentiments. It is on the text;—Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

That text, said I, will be a very suitable one for me. Not so, Pamela, said my master; because I don't let you depart in peace; but I hope you will stay here with content.

O but, sir, said I, I have seen God's salvation!—I am sure, added I, if any body ever had reason, I have to say, with the blessed virgin, My soul doth magnify the Lord; for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden—and exalted one of low degree.

Said my good father, I am sure, if there were time for it, the book of Ruth would afford a fine subject for the honour done my dear child.

Why, good Mr. Andrews, said my master, should you say so?—I know that story, and Mr. Williams will confirm what I say, that my good girl here will confer at least as much honour as she will receive.

Sir, said I, you are inexpressibly generous; but I shall never think so. Why, my Pamela, said he, that's another thing: It will be best for me to think you will; and it will be kind in you to think you shan't; and then we shall always have an excellent rule to regulate our conduct by to one another.

Was not this finely, nobly, wisely said, my dear mother?—O what a blessed thing it is to be matched to a man of sense and generosity!—How edifying! How!—But what shall I say?—I am at loss for words.

Mr. Williams said, when we came out of the little chapel, He would go home, and look over his discourses, for one for the next day. My master said, I have one thing to say before you go—When my jealousy, on account of this good girl, put me upon such a vindictive conduct to you, you know I took a bond for the money I had caused you to be troubled for: I really am ashamed of the matter; because I never intended, when I presented it to you, to have it again, you may be sure: But I knew not what might happen between you and her, nor how far matters might have gone between you; and so I was willing to have that in awe over you. And I think it is no extraordinary present, therefore, to give you up your bond again cancelled. And so he took it from his pocket, and gave it him. I think, added he, all the charges attending it, and the trouble you had, were defrayed by my attorney; I ordered that they should. They were, sir, said he; and ten thousand thanks to you for this goodness, and the kind manner in which you do it.—If you will go, Mr. Williams, said he, shall my chariot carry you home? No, sir, answered he, I thank you. My time will be so well employed all the way, in thinking of your favours, that I choose to meditate upon them, as I walk home.

My dear father was a little uneasy about his habit, for appearing at chapel next day, because of Misses Darnford and the servants, for fear, poor man, he should disgrace my master; and he told me, when he was mentioning this, of my master's kind present of twenty guineas for clothes, for you both; which made my heart truly joyful. But oh! to be sure, I can never deserve the hundredth part of his goodness!—It is almost a hard thing to be under the weight of such deep obligations on one side, and such a sense of one's own unworthiness on the other.—O! what a Godlike power is that of doing good!—I envy the rich and the great for nothing else.

My master coming to us just then, I said, Oh! sir, will your bounty know no limits? My dear father has told me what you have given him.—A trifle, Pamela, said he, a little earnest only of my kindness.—Say no more of it. But did I not hear the good man expressing some sort of concern for somewhat? Hide nothing from me, Pamela. Only, sir, said I, he knew not

how to absent himself from divine service, and yet is afraid of disgracing you by appearing.

Fie, Mr. Andrews! said he, I thought you knew that the outward appearance was nothing. I wish I had as good a habit inwardly as you have. But I'll tell you, Pamela, your father is not so much thinner than I am, nor much shorter; he and I will walk up together to my wardrobe; though it is not so well stored here, as in Bedfordshire.

And so, said he, pleasantly, don't you pretend to come near us, till I call for you; for you must not yet see how men dress and undress themselves. O sir, said my father, I beg to be excused. I am sorry you were told. So am not I, said my master: Pray come along with me.

He carried him up stairs, and shewed him several suits, and would have had him take his choice. My poor father was quite confounded: for my master saw not any he thought too good, and my father none that he thought bad enough. And my good master, at last, (he fixed his eye upon a fine drab, which he thought looked the plainest,) would help him to try the coat and waistcoat on himself; and, indeed, one would not have thought it, because my master is taller, and rather plumper, as I thought but, as I saw afterwards, they fitted him very well. And being plain, and lined with the same colour, and made for travelling in a coach, pleased my poor father much. He gave him the whole suit, and, calling up Mrs. Jewkes, said, Let these clothes be well aired against tomorrow morning. Mr. Andrews brought only with him his common apparel, not thinking to stay Sunday with us. And pray see for some of my stockings, and whether any of my shoes will fit him: And see also for some of my linen; for we have put the good man quite out of his course, by keeping him Sunday over. He was then pleased to give him the silver buckles out of his own shoes. So, my good mother, you must expect to see my dear father a great beau. Wig, said my master, he wants none; for his own venerable white locks are better than all the perukes in England.—But I am sure I have hats enough somewhere.—I'll take care of every thing, sir, said Mrs. Jewkes.—And my poor father, when he came to me, could not refrain tears. I know not how, said he, to comport myself under these great favours. O my child, it is all owing to the divine goodness, and your virtue.

Sunday.

This blessed day all the family seemed to take delight to equip themselves for the celebration of the Sabbath in the little chapel; and Lady Jones and Mr. Williams came in her chariot, and the two Misses Darnford in their own. And we breakfasted together in a most agreeable manner. My dear father appeared quite spruce and neat, and was quite caressed by the three ladies. As we were at breakfast, my master told Mr. Williams, We must let the Psalms alone, he doubted, for want of a clerk: but Mr. Williams said, No, nothing should be wanting that he could supply. My father said, If it might be permitted him, he would, as well as he was able, perform that office; for it was always what he had taken delight in. And as I knew he had learnt psalmody formerly, in his youth, and had constantly practised it in private, at home, on Sunday evenings, (as well as endeavoured to teach it in the little school he so unsuccessfully set up, at the beginning of his misfortunes, before he took to hard labour,) I was in no pain for his undertaking it in this little congregation. They seemed much pleased with this; and so we went to chapel, and made a pretty tolerable appearance; Mrs. Jewkes, and all the servants, attending, but the cook: And I never saw divine service performed with more solemnity, nor assisted at with greater devotion and decency; my master, Lady Jones, and the two misses, setting a lovely example.

My good father performed his part with great applause, making the responses, as if he had been a practised parish-clerk; and giving the xxxiiiid psalm,

[The Lord is only my support,  
And he that doth me feed:  
How can I then lack any thing  
Whereof I stand in need?  
In pastures green he feedeth me,  
Where I do safely lie;  
And after leads me to the streams,  
Which run most pleasantly.

And when I find myself near lost,  
Then home he doth me take;  
Conducting me in his right paths,  
E'en for his own name's sake.  
And tho' I were e'en at death's door,  
Yet would I fear no ill:  
For both thy rod and shepherd's crook  
Afford me comfort still.

Thou hast my table richly spread  
In presence of my foe:  
Thou hast my head with balm refresh'd,  
My cup doth overflow.  
And finally, while breath doth last,  
Thy grace shall me defend:  
And in the house of God will I  
My life for ever spend.]

which consisted of but three staves, we had it all; and he read the line, and began the tune with a heart so entirely affected with the duty, that he went through it distinctly, calmly, and fervently at the same time; so that Lady Jones whispered me, That good man were fit for all companies, and present to every laudable occasion: And Miss Darnford said, God bless the dear good man!—You must think how I rejoiced in my mind.

I know, my dear mother, you can say most of the shortest psalms by heart; so I need not transcribe it, especially as your chief treasure is a bible; and a worthy treasure it is. I know nobody makes more or better use of it.

Mr. Williams gave us an excellent discourse on liberality and generosity, and the blessings attending the right use of riches, from the xith chapter of Proverbs, ver. 24, 25. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: And he that watereth, shall be watered also himself. And he treated the subject in so handsome a manner, that my master's delicacy, who, at first, was afraid of some personal compliments, was not offended. Mr. Williams judiciously

keeping to generals; and it was an elegant and sensible discourse, as my master said.

My father was in the clerk's place, just under the desk; and Lady Jones, by her footman, whispered him to favour us with another psalm, when the sermon was ended. He thinking, as he said afterwards, that the former was rather of the longest, chose the shortest in the book, which you know is the cxviith.

[O all ye nations of the world,  
Praise ye the Lord always:  
And all ye people every where  
Set forth his noble praise.

For great his kindness is to us;  
His truth doth not decay:  
Wherefore praise ye the Lord our God;  
Praise ye the Lord alway.]

My master thanked Mr. Williams for his excellent discourse, and so did the ladies; as also did I most heartily: and he was pleased to take my dear father by the hand, as did also Mr. Williams, and thanked him. The ladies, likewise, made him their compliments; and the servants all looked upon him with countenances of respect and pleasure.

At dinner, do what I could, I was forced to take the upper end of the table; and my master sat at the lower end, between Mr. Williams and my father. And he said, Pamela, you are so dexterous, that I think you may help the ladies yourself; and I will help my two good friends. I should have told you, though, that I dressed myself in a flowered satin, that was my lady's, and looked quite fresh and good, and which was given me, at first, by my master; and the ladies, who had not seen me out of my homespun before, made me abundance of fine compliments, as soon as they saw me first.

Talking of the Psalms just after dinner, my master was very naughty, if I may so say: For he said to my father, Mr. Andrews, I think in the afternoon, as we shall have only prayers, we may have one longer psalm; and what think you of the cxxxviiith? O, good sir! said I, pray, pray, not a word more! Say what you will, Pamela, said he, you shall sing it to us, according to your own version, before these good ladies go away. My father smiled, but was half concerned for me; and said, Will it bear, and please your honour?—O ay, said he, never fear it; so long as Mrs. Jewkes is not in the hearing.

This excited all the ladies' curiosity; and Lady Jones said, She would be loath to desire to hear any thing that would give me concern; but should be glad I would give leave for it. Indeed, madam, said I, I must beg you won't insist upon it. I cannot bear it.—You shall see it, indeed, ladies, said my master; and pray, Pamela, not always as you please, neither.—Then, pray sir, said I, not in my hearing, I hope.—Sure, Pamela, returned he, you would not write what is not fit to be heard!—But, sir, said I, there are particular cases, times, and occasions, that may make a thing passable at one time, that would not be tolerable at another. O, said he, let me judge of that, as well as you, Pamela. These ladies know a good part of your story; and, let me tell you, what they know is more to your credit than mine; so that if I have no averseness to reviving the occasion, you may very well bear it. Said he, I will put you out of your pain, Pamela: here it is: and took it out of his pocket.

I stood up, and said, Indeed, sir, I can't bear it; I hope you'll allow me to leave the room a minute, if you will read it. Indeed but I won't, answered he. Lady Jones said, Pray, good sir, don't let us hear it, if Mrs. Andrews be so unwilling. Well, Pamela, said my master, I will put it to your choice, whether I shall read it now, or you will sing it by and by. That's very hard, sir, said I. It must be one, I assure you, said he. Why then, sir, replied I, you must do as you please; for I cannot sing it.

Well, then, said my master, I find I must read it; and yet, added he, after all, I had as well let it alone, for it is no great reputation to myself. O then, said Miss Darnford, pray let us hear it, to choose.

Why then, proceeded he, the case was this: Pamela, I find, when she was in the time of her confinement, (that is, added he, when she was taken prisoner, in order to make me one; for that is the upshot of the matter,) in the journal she kept, which was intended for nobody's perusal but her parents, tells them, that she was importuned, one Sunday, by Mrs. Jewkes, to sing a psalm; but her spirits not permitting, she declined it: But after Mrs. Jewkes was gone down, she says, she recollected, that the cxxxviii<sup>th</sup> psalm was applicable to her own case; Mrs. Jewkes having often, on other days, in vain, besought her to sing a song: That thereupon she turned it more to her own supposed case; and believing Mrs. Jewkes had a design against her honour, and looking upon her as her gaoler, she thus gives her version of this psalm. But pray, Mr. Williams, do you read one verse of the



common translation, and I will read one of Pamela's. Then Mr. Williams, pulling out his little pocket Common-Prayer-Book, read the first two stanzas:

I.

When we did sit in Babylon,  
The rivers round about;  
Then in remembrance of Sion,  
The tears for grief burst out.

II.

We hang'd our harps and instruments  
The willow trees upon:  
For in that place, men, for that use,  
Had planted many a one.

**My master then read:**

I.

When sad I sat in B—n-hall,  
All guarded round about,  
And thought of ev'ry absent friend,  
The tears for grief burst out.

II.

My joys and hopes all overthrown,  
My heart-strings almost broke,  
Unfit my mind for melody,  
Much more to bear a joke.

The ladies said, It was very pretty; and Miss Darnford, That somebody else had more need to be concerned than the versifier.

I knew, said my master, I should get no credit by shewing this. But let us read on, Mr. Williams. So Mr. Williams read:

III.

Then they, to whom we pris'ners were,  
Said to us, tauntingly,  
Now let us hear your Hebrew songs,  
And pleasant melody.

**Now this, said my master, is very near; and read:**

III.

Then she, to whom I prisoner was,  
Said to me tauntingly,  
Now cheer your heart, and sing a song,  
And tune your mind to joy.

Mighty sweet, said Mr. Williams. But let us see how the next verse is turned. It is this:

IV.

Alas! said we; who can once frame  
His heavy heart to sing  
The praises of our living God,  
Thus under a strange king?

Why, said my master, it is turned with beautiful simplicity, thus:

IV.

Alas! said I, how can I frame  
My heavy heart to sing,  
Or tune my mind, while thus enthrall'd  
By such a wicked thing?

Very pretty, said Mr. Williams. Lady Jones said, O, dear madam! could you wish that we should be deprived of this new instance of your genius and accomplishments?

O! said my dear father, you will make my good child proud. No, said my master very generously, Pamela can't be proud. For no one is proud to hear themselves praised, but those who are not used to it.—But proceed, Mr. Williams. He read:

V.

But yet, if I Jerusalem  
Out of my heart let slide;  
Then let my fingers quite forget  
The warbling harp to guide.

Well, now, said my master, for Pamela's version:

V.

But yet, if from my innocence  
I ev'n in thought should slide,  
Then let my fingers quite forget  
The sweet spinnet to guide.

Mr. Williams read:

VI.

And let my tongue, within my mouth,  
Be ty'd for ever fast,  
If I rejoice, before I see  
Thy full deliv'rance past.

This, also, said my master, is very near:

VI.

And let my tongue, within my mouth,

Be lock'd for ever fast,  
If I rejoice, before I see  
My full deliv'rance past.

Now, good sir, said I, oblige me; don't read any further: pray don't! O pray, madam, said Mr. Williams, let me beg to have the rest read; for I long to know whom you make the Sons of Edom, and how you turn the Psalmist's execrations against the insulting Babylonians.

Well, Mr. Williams, replied I, you should not have said so. O, said my master, that is one of the best things of all. Poor Mrs. Jewkes stands for Edom's Sons; and we must not lose this, because I think it one of my Pamela's excellencies, that, though thus oppressed, she prays for no harm upon the oppressor. Read, Mr. Williams, the next stanza. So he read:

VII.

Therefore, O Lord! remember now  
The cursed noise and cry,  
That Edom's sons against us made,  
When they ras'd our city.

VIII.

Remember, Lord, their cruel words,  
When, with a mighty sound,  
They cried, Down, yea down with it,  
Unto the very ground!

Well, said my master, here seems, in what I am going to read, a little bit of a curse indeed, but I think it makes no ill figure in the comparison.

VII.

And thou, Almighty! recompense  
The evils I endure  
From those who seek my sad disgrace,  
So causeless, to procure.

And now, said he, for Edom's Sons. Though a little severe in the imputation.

VIII.

Remember, Lord, this Mrs. Jewkes,  
When with a mighty sound,  
She cries, Down with her chastity,  
Down to the very ground!

Sure, sir, said I, this might have been spared! But the ladies and Mr. Williams said, No, by no means! And I see the poor wicked woman has no favourers among them.

Now, said my master, read the Psalmist's heavy curses: and Mr. Williams read:

IX.

Ev'n so shalt thou, O Babylon!  
At length to dust be brought:  
And happy shall that man be call'd,  
That our revenge hath wrought.

X.

Yea, blessed shall the man be call'd  
That takes thy little ones,  
And dasheth them in pieces small  
Against the very stones.

Thus he said, very kindly, has my Pamela turned these lines:

IX.

Ev'n so shalt thou, O wicked one!  
At length to shame be brought;  
And happy shall all those be call'd,  
That my deliv'rance wrought.

X.

Yea, blessed shall the man be call'd  
That shames thee of thy evil,  
And saves me from thy vile attempts,  
And thee, too, from the d--l.

I fancy this blessed man, said my master smiling, was, at that time, hoped to be you, Mr. Williams, if the truth was known. Sir, said he, whoever it was intended for then, it can be nobody but your good self now.

I could hardly hold up my head for the praises the kind ladies were pleased to heap upon me. I am sure, by this, they are very partial in my favour; all because my master is so good to me, and loves to hear me praised; for I see no such excellence in these lines, as they would make me believe, besides what is borrowed from the Psalmist.

We all, as before, and the cook-maid too, attended the prayers of the church in the afternoon; and my dear father concluded with the following stanzas of the cxlvth psalm; suitably magnifying the holy name of God for all mercies; but did not observe, altogether, the method in which they stand; which was the less necessary, he thought, as he gave out the lines.

The Lord is just in all his ways:  
His works are holy all:  
And he is near all those that do  
In truth upon him call.

He the desires of all them  
That fear him, will fulfil;  
And he will hear them when they cry,  
And save them all he will.

The eyes of all do wait on thee;  
Thou dost them all relieve:  
And thou to each sufficient food,  
In season due, dost give.

Thou openest thy plenteous hand,  
And bounteously dost fill  
All things whatever, that do live,  
With gifts of thy good will.

My thankful mouth shall gladly speak  
The praises of the Lord:  
All flesh, to praise his holy name,  
For ever shall accord.

We walked in the garden till tea was ready; and as he went by the back-door, my master said to me, Of all the flowers in the garden, the sunflower is the fairest!—O, sir, said I, let that be now forgot! Mr. Williams heard him say so, and seemed a little out of countenance: Whereupon my master said, I mean not to make you serious, Mr. Williams; but we see how strangely things are brought about. I see other scenes hereabouts, that, in my Pamela's dangers, give me more cause of concern, than any thing you ever did should give you. Sir, said he, you are very generous.

My master and Mr. Williams afterwards walked together for a quarter of an hour; and talked about general things, and some scholastic subjects; and joined us, very well pleased with one another's conversation.

Lady Jones said, putting herself on one side of me, as my master was on the other, But pray, sir, when is the happy time to be? We want it over, that we may have you with us as long afterwards as you can. Said my master, I would have it to-morrow, or next day at farthest, if Pamela will: for I have sent for a license, and the messenger will be here to-night, or early in the morning, I hope. But, added he, pray, Pamela, do not take beyond Thursday. She was pleased to say, Sure it will not be delayed by you, madam, more than needs!—Well, said he, now you are on my side, I will leave you with her to settle it: and, I hope, she will not let little bashful niceties be important with her; and so he joined the two misses.

Lady Jones told me, I was to blame, she would take upon her to say, if I delayed it a moment; because she understood Lady Davers was very

uneasy at the prospect, that it would be so; and if any thing should happen, it would be a sad thing!—Madam, said I, when he was pleased to mention it to me first, he said it should be in fourteen days; and afterwards, asked me if I would have it in the first or the second seven? I answered—for how could I do otherwise?—In the second. He desired it might not be the last day of the second seven. Now, madam, said I, as he was then pleased to speak his mind, no doubt, I would not, for any thing, seem too forward.

Well, but, said she, as he now urges you in so genteel and gentlemanly a manner for a shorter day, I think, if I was in your place, I would agree to it. She saw me hesitate and blush, and said, Well, you know best; but I say only what I would do. I said, I would consider of it; and if I saw he was very earnest, to be sure I should think I ought to oblige him.

Misses Darnford were begging to be at the wedding, and to have a ball: and they said, Pray, Mrs. Andrews, second our requests, and we shall be greatly obliged to you. Indeed, ladies, said I, I cannot promise that, if I might.—Why so? said they.—Because, answered I—I know not what! But I think one may, with pleasure, celebrate an anniversary of one's nuptials; but the day itself—Indeed, ladies, I think it is too solemn a business, for the parties of our sex to be very gay upon: it is a quite serious and awful affair: and I am sure, in your own cases, you would be of my mind. Why, then, said Miss Darnford, the more need one has to be as light-hearted and merry as one can.

I told you, said my master, what sort of an answer you'd have from Pamela. The younger miss said, She never heard of such grave folks in her life, on such an occasion: Why, sir, said she, I hope you'll sing psalms all day, and miss will fast and pray! Such sackcloth and ashes doings, for a wedding, did I never hear of!—She spoke a little spitefully, I thought; and I returned no answer. I shall have enough to do, I reckon, in a while, if I am to answer every one that will envy me!

We went in to tea; and all that the ladies could prevail upon my master for, was a dancing match before he left this county: But Miss Darnford said, It should then be at their house; for, truly, if she might not be at the wedding, she would be affronted, and come no more hither, till we had been there.

When they were gone, my master would have had my father stay till the affair was over; but he begged he might set out as soon as it was light in

the morning; for, he said, my mother would be doubly uneasy at his stay; and he burned with impatience to let her know all the happy things that had befallen her daughter. When my master found him so desirous to go, he called Mr. Thomas, and ordered him to get a particular bay horse ready betimes in the morning, for my father, and a portmanteau, to put his things in; and to attend him a day's journey: And if, said he, Mr. Andrews chooses it, see him safe to his own home: And, added he, since that horse will serve you, Mr. Andrews, to ride backwards and forwards, to see us, when we go into Bedfordshire, I make you a present of it, with the accoutrements. And, seeing my father going to speak, he added, I won't be said nay. O how good was this!

He also said a great many kind things at supper-time, and gave him all the papers he had of mine; but desired, when he and my mother had read them, that he would return them to him again. And then he said, So affectionate a father and daughter may, perhaps, be glad to be alone together; therefore remember me to your good wife, and tell her, it will not be long, I hope, before I see you together; on a visit to your daughter, at my other house: and so I wish you good night, and a good journey, if you go before I see you. And then he shook hands, and left my dear father almost unable to speak, through the sense of his favours and goodness.

You may believe, my dear mother, how loath I was to part with my good father; and he was also unwilling to part with me; but he was so impatient to see you, and tell you the blessed tidings, with which his heart overflowed, that I could hardly wish to detain him.

Mrs. Jewkes brought two bottles of cherry-brandy, and two of cinnamon-water, and some cake; and they were put up in the portmanteau, with my father's newly presented clothes; for he said, He would not, for any thing, be seen in them in his neighbourhood, till I was actually known, by every body, to be married; nor would he lay out any part of the twenty guineas till then neither, for fear of reflections; and then he would consult me as to what he would buy. Well, said I, as you please, my dear father; and I hope now we shall often have the pleasure of hearing from one another, without needing any art or contrivances.

He said, He would go to bed betimes, that he might be up as soon as it was light; and so he took leave of me, and said, He would not love me, if I

got up in the morning to see him go; which would but make us both loath to part, and grieve us both all day.

Mr. Thomas brought him a pair of boots, and told him, He would call him up at peep of day, and put up every thing over night; and so I received his blessing, and his prayers, and his kind promises of procuring the same from you, my dear mother; and went up to my closet with a heavy heart, and yet a half-pleased one, if I may so say; for that, as he must go, he was going to the best of wives, and with the best of tidings. But I begged he would not work so hard as he had done; for I was sure my master would not have given him twenty guineas for clothes, if he had not designed to do something else for him; and that he should be the less concerned at receiving benefits, from my good master, because he, who had so many persons to employ in his large possessions, could make him serviceable, to a degree equivalent, without hurting any body else.

He promised me fair; and, pray, dear mother, see he performs. I hope my master will not see this: for I will not send it you, at present, till I can send you the best of news; and the rather, as my dear father can supply the greatest part of what I have written, since the papers he carries you, by his own observation. So good night, my dear mother: And God send my father a safe journey, and a happy meeting to you both!

Monday.

Mr. Colbrand being returned, my master came up to me to my closet, and brought me the license. O how my heart fluttered at the sight of it! Now, Pamela, said he, tell me, if you can oblige me with the day. Your word is all that's wanting. I made bold to kiss his dear hand; and, though unable to look up, said—I know not what to say, sir, to all your goodness: I would not, for any consideration, that you should believe me capable of receiving negligently an honour, that all the duty of a long life, were it to be lent me, will not be sufficient to enable me to be grateful for. I ought to resign myself, in every thing I may or can, implicitly to your will. But—But what? said he, with a kind impatience.—Why, sir, said I, when from last Thursday you mentioned four days, I had reason to think that term your choice; and my heart is so wholly yours, that I am afraid of nothing, but that I may be forwarder than you wish. Impossible, my dear creature! said he, and folded me in his arms: Impossible! If this be all, it shall be set



about this moment, and this happy day shall make you mine!—I'll send away instantly, said the dear gentleman; and was going.

I said, No, pray, sir, pray, sir, hear me!—Indeed it cannot be to-day!—Cannot! said he.—No, indeed, sir! said I—And was ready to sink to see his generous impatience. Why flattered you then my fond heart, replied he, with the hope that it might?—Sir, said I, I will tell you what I had thought, if you'll vouchsafe me your attention. Do then, said he.

I have, sir, proceeded I, a great desire, that, whenever the day is, it may be on a Thursday: On a Thursday my dear father and mother were married; and, though poor, they are a very happy pair.—On a Thursday your poor Pamela was born. On a Thursday my dear good lady took me from my parents into her protection. On a Thursday, sir, you caused me to be carried away to this place, to which I now, by God's goodness, and your favour, owe so amazingly all my present prospects; and on a Thursday it was, you named to me, that fourteen days from that you would confirm my happiness. Now, sir, if you please to indulge my superstitious folly, you will greatly oblige me. I was sorry, sir, for this reason, when you bid me not defer till the last day of the fourteen, that Thursday in next week was that last day.

This, Pamela, is a little superstitious, I must needs say; and I think you should begin now to make another day in the week a happy one; as for example; on a Monday, may you say, my father and mother concluded to be married on the Thursday following. On a Monday, so many years ago, my mother was preparing all her matters to be brought to bed on the Thursday following. On a Monday, several weeks ago, it was that you had but two days more to stay, till you was carried away on Thursday. On a Monday, I myself, said he, well remember, it was that I wrote you the letter, that prevailed on you so kindly to return to me; and on the same day you did return to my house here; which I hope, my girl, will be as propitious an era as any you have named: And now, lastly, will you say, which will crown the work; And, on a Monday I was married.—Come, come, my dear, added he, Thursday has reigned long enough o'conscience; let us now set Monday in its place, or at least on an equality with it, since you see it has a very good title, and as we now stand in the week before us, claims priority: And then, I hope, we shall make Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, as happy days as Monday and Thursday; and

so, by God's blessing, move round, as the days move, in a delightful circle, till we are at a loss what day to prefer to the rest.

O how charmingly was this said!—And how sweetly kind!

Indeed, sir, said I, you rally my folly very agreeably; but don't let a little matter stand in the way, when you are so generously obliging in a greater: Indeed I like Thursday best, if I may choose.

Well, then, said he, if you can say you have a better reason than this, I will oblige you; else I'll send away for the parson this moment.

And so, I protest, he was going!—Dear sirs, how I trembled! Stay, stay, sir, said I: we have a great deal to say first; I have a deal of silly prate to trouble you with!—Well, say then, in a minute, replied he, the most material: for all we have to say may be talked of while the parson is coming.—O, but indeed, and indeed, said I, it cannot be to-day!—Well, then, shall it be to-morrow? said he.—Why, sir, if it must not be on a Thursday, you have given so many pleasant distinctions for a Monday, that let it then be next Monday.—What! a week still? said he. Sir, answered I, if you please; for that will be, as you enjoined, within the second seven days. Why, girl, said he, 'twill be seven months till next Monday. Let it, said he, if not to-morrow, be on Wednesday; I protest I will stay no longer.

Then, sir, returned I, please to defer it, however, for one day more, and it will be my beloved Thursday! If I consent to defer it till then, may I hope, my Pamela, said he, that next Thursday shall certainly be the happy day?—Yes, sir, said I and I am sure I looked very foolishly!

And yet, my dear father and mother, why should I, with such a fine gentleman? And whom I so dearly love? And so much to my honour too? But there is something greatly awful upon my mind, in the solemn circumstance, and a change of condition never to be recalled, though all the prospects are so desirable. And I can but wonder at the thoughtless precipitancy with which most young folks run into this important change of life!

So now, my dear parents, have I been brought to fix so near a day as next Thursday; and this is Monday. O dear, it makes one out of breath almost to think of it! This, though, was a great cut off; a whole week out of ten days. I hope I am not too forward! I'm sure, if it obliges my dear master, I am justified; for he deserves of me all things in my poor power.

After this, he rode out on horseback, attended by Abraham, and did not return till night. How by degrees things steal upon one! I thought even this small absence tedious; and the more, as we expected him home to dinner.—I wish I may not be too fond, and make him indifferent: But yet, my dear father and mother, you were always fond of one another, and never indifferent, let the world run as it would.

When he returned, he said, He had had a pleasant ride, and was led out to a greater distance than he intended. At supper he told me, that he had a great mind Mr. Williams should marry us; because, he said, it would shew a thorough reconciliation on his part. But, said he, most generously, I am apprehensive, from what passed between you, that the poor man will take it hardly, and as a sort of insult, which I am not capable of. What says my girl?—Do you think he would? I hope not, sir, said I: As to what he may think, I can't answer; but as to any reason for his thoughts, I can: For indeed, sir, said I, you have been already so generous, that he cannot, I think, mistake your goodness.

He then spoke with some resentment of Lady Davers's behaviour, and I asked, if any thing new had occurred? Yes, said he; I have had a letter delivered me from her impertinent husband, professedly at her instigation, that amounted to little less than a piece of insolent bravery, on supposing I was about to marry you. I was so provoked, added he, that after I had read it, I tore it in a hundred pieces, and scattered them in the air, and bid the man who brought it let his master know what I had done with his letter; and so would not permit him to speak to me, as he would fain have done,—I think the fellow talked somewhat of his lady coming hither; but she shall not set her foot within my doors; and I suppose this treatment will hinder her.

I was much concerned at this: And he said, Had I a hundred sisters, Pamela, their opposition should have no weight with me: and I did not intend you should know it; but you can't but expect a little difficulty from the pride of my sister, who have suffered so much from that of her brother; and we are too nearly allied in mind, as well as blood, I find.—But this is not her business: And if she would have made it so, she should have done it with more decency. Little occasion had she to boast of her birth, that knows not what belongs to good manners.

I said, I am very sorry, sir, to be the unhappy occasion of a misunderstanding between so good a brother and so worthy a sister. Don't say so, Pamela, because this is an unavoidable consequence of the happy prospect before us. Only bear it well yourself, because she is my sister; and leave it to me to make her sensible of her own rashness.

If, sir, said I, the most lowly behaviour, and humble deportment, and in every thing shewing a dutiful regard to good Lady Davers, will have any weight with her ladyship, assure yourself of all in my power to mollify her. No, Pamela, returned he; don't imagine, when you are my wife, I will suffer you to do any thing unworthy of that character. I know the duty of a husband, and will protect your gentleness to the utmost, as much as if you were a princess by descent.

You are inexpressibly good, sir, said I; but I am far from taking a gentle disposition to shew a meanness of spirit: And this is a trial I ought to expect; and well I may bear it, that have so many benefits to set against it, which all spring from the same cause.

Well, said he, all the matter shall be this: We will talk of our marriage as a thing to be done next week. I find I have spies upon me wherever I go, and whatever I do: But now, I am on so laudable a pursuit, that I value them not, nor those who employ them. I have already ordered my servants to have no conference with any body for ten or twelve days to come. And Mrs. Jewkes tells me every one names Thursday come se'nnight for our nuptials. So I will get Mr. Peters, who wants to see my little chapel, to assist Mr. Williams, under the notion of breakfasting with me next Thursday morning, since you won't have it sooner; and there will nobody else be wanting; and I will beg of Mr. Peters to keep it private, even from his own family, for a few days. Has my girl any objection?

O, sir, answered I, you are so generous in all your ways, I can have no objections!—But I hope Lady Davers and you will not proceed to irreconcilable lengths; and when her ladyship comes to see you, and to tarry with you, two or three weeks, as she used to do, I will keep close up, so as not to disgust her with the sight of me.

Well, Pamela, said he, we will talk of that afterwards. You must do then as I shall think fit: And I shall be able to judge what both you and I ought to do. But what still aggravates the matter is, that she should instigate the titled ape her husband to write to me, after she had so little succeeded

herself. I wish I had kept his letter, that I might have shewn you how a man, that generally acts like a fool, can take upon him to write like a lord. But I suppose it is of my sister's penning, and he, poor man! is the humble copier.

Tuesday.

Mr. Thomas is returned from you, my dear father, with the good news of your health, and your proceeding in your journey to my dear mother, where I hope to hear soon you are arrived. My master has just now been making me play upon the spinnet, and sing to it; and was pleased to commend me for both. But he does so for every thing I do, so partial does his goodness make him to me.

One o'clock.

We are just returned from an airing in the chariot; and I have been delighted with his conversation upon English authors, poets particularly. He entertained me also with a description of some of the curiosities he had seen in Italy and France, when he made what the polite world call the grand tour. He said he wanted to be at his other seat, for he knew not well how to employ himself here, having not proposed to stay half the time: And when I get there, Pamela, said he, you will hardly be troubled with so much of my company, after we have settled; for I have a great many things to adjust: And I must go to London; for I have accounts that have run on longer than ordinary with my banker there. And I don't know, added he, but the ensuing winter I may give you a little taste of the diversions of the town for a month or so. I said, His will and pleasure should determine mine; and I never would, as near as I could, have a desire after those, or any other entertainments that were not in his own choice.

He was pleased to say, I make no doubt but that I shall be very happy in you; and hope you will be so in me: For, said he, I have no very enormous vices to gratify; though I pretend not to the greatest purity, neither, my girl. Sir, said I, if you can account to your own mind, I shall always be easy in whatever you do. But our greatest happiness here, sir, continued I, is of very short duration; and this life, at the longest, is a poor transitory one; and I hope we shall be so happy as to be enabled to look forward, with comfort, to another, where our pleasures will be everlasting.

You say well, Pamela; and I shall, by degrees, be more habituated to this way of thinking, as I more and more converse with you; but, at present,

you must not be over serious with me all at once: though I charge you never forbear to mingle your sweet divinity in our conversation, whenever it can be brought in a propos, and with such a cheerfulness of temper, as shall not throw a gloomy cloud over our innocent enjoyments.

I was abashed at this, and silent, fearing I had offended: But he said, If you attend rightly to what I said, I need not tell you again, Pamela, not to be discouraged from suggesting to me, on every proper occasion, the pious impulses of your own amiable mind. Sir, said I, you will be always indulgent, I make no doubt, to my imperfections, so long as I mean well.

My master made me dine with him, and would eat nothing but what I helped him to; and my heart is, every hour, more and more enlarged with his goodness and condescension. But still, what ails me, I wonder! A strange sort of weight hangs upon my mind, as Thursday draws on, which makes me often sigh involuntarily, and damps, at times, the pleasures of my delightful prospects!—I hope this is not ominous; but only the foolish weakness of an over-thoughtful mind, on an occasion the most solemn and important of one's life, next to the last scene, which shuts up all.

I could be very serious: But I will commit all my ways to that blessed Providence, which hitherto has so wonderfully conducted me through real evils to this hopeful situation.

I only fear, and surely I have great reason, that I shall be too unworthy to hold the affections of so dear a gentleman!—God teach me humility, and to know my own demerit! And this will be, next to his grace, my surest guard, in the state of life to which, though most unworthy, I am going to be exalted. And don't cease your prayers for me, my dear parents; for, perhaps, this new condition may be subject to still worse hazards than those I have escaped; as would be the case, were conceitedness, vanity, and pride, to take hold of my frail heart; and if I was, for my sins, to be left to my own conduct, a frail bark in a tempestuous ocean, without ballast, or other pilot than my own inconsiderate will. But my master said, on another occasion, That those who doubted most, always erred least; and I hope I shall always doubt my own strength, my own worthiness.

I will not trouble you with twenty sweet agreeable things that passed in conversation with my excellent benefactor; nor with the civilities of M. Colbrand, Mrs. Jewkes, and all the servants, who seem to be highly pleased with me, and with my conduct to them: And as my master,

hitherto, finds no fault that I go too low, nor they that I carry it too high, I hope I shall continue to have every body's good-will: But yet will I not seek to gain any one's by little meannesses or debasements! but aim at an uniform and regular conduct, willing to conceal involuntary errors, as I would have my own forgiven; and not too industrious to discover real ones, or to hide such, if any such should appear, as might encourage bad hearts, or unclean hands, in material cases, where my master should receive damage, or where the morals of the transgressors should appear wilfully and habitually corrupt. In short, I will endeavour, as much as I can, that good servants shall find in me a kind encourager; indifferent ones be made better, by inspiring them with a laudable emulation; and bad ones, if not too bad in nature, and quite irreclaimable, reformed by kindness, expostulation, and even proper menaces, if necessary; but most by a good example: All this if God pleases.

Wednesday.

Now, my dear parents, I have but this one day between me and the most solemn rite that can be performed. My heart cannot yet shake off this heavy weight. Sure I am ungrateful to the divine goodness, and the favour of the best of benefactors!—Yet I hope I am not!—For, at times, my mind is all exultation, with the prospect of what good to-morrow's happy solemnity may possibly, by the leave of my generous master, put it in my power to do. O how shall I find words to express, as I ought, my thankfulness, for all the mercies before me!

Wednesday evening.

My dear master is all love and tenderness. He sees my weakness, and generously pities and comforts me! I begged to be excused supper; but he brought me down himself from my closet, and placed me by him, bidding Abraham not wait. I could not eat, and yet I tried, for fear he should be angry. He kindly forbore to hint any thing of the dreadful, yet delightful to-morrow! and put, now and then, a little bit on my plate, and guided it to my mouth. I was concerned to receive his goodness with so ill a grace. Well, said he, if you won't eat with me, drink at least with me: I drank two glasses by his over-persuasions, and said, I am really ashamed of myself. Why, indeed, said he, my dear girl, I am not a very dreadful enemy, I hope! I cannot bear any thing that is the least concerning to you. Oh, sir! said I,

all is owing to the sense I have of my own unworthiness!—To be sure, it cannot be any thing else.

He rung for the things to be taken away; and then reached a chair, and sat down by me, and put his kind arms about me, and said the most generous and affecting things that ever dropt from the honey-flowing mouth of love. All I have not time to repeat: some I will. And oh! indulge your foolish daughter, who troubles you with her weak nonsense; because what she has to say, is so affecting to her; and because, if she went to bed, instead of scribbling, she could not sleep.

This sweet confusion and thoughtfulness in my beloved Pamela, said the kind man, on the near approach of our happy union, when I hope all doubts are cleared up, and nothing of dishonour is apprehended, shew me most abundantly, what a wretch I was to attempt such purity with a worse intention—No wonder, that one so virtuous should find herself deserted of life itself on a violence so dreadful to her honour, and seek a refuge in the shadow of death.—But now, my dearest Pamela, that you have seen a purity on my side, as nearly imitating your own, as our sex can shew to yours; and since I have, all the day long, suppressed even the least intimation of the coming days, that I might not alarm your tender mind; why all this concern, why all this affecting, yet sweet confusion? You have a generous friend, my dear girl, in me; a protector now, not a violator of your innocence: Why then, once more I ask, this strange perplexity, this sweet confusion?

O sir, said I, and hid my face on his arm; expect not reason from a foolish creature: You should have still indulged me in my closet: I am ready to beat myself for this ungrateful return to your goodness. But I know not what!—I am, to be sure, a silly creature! O had you but suffered me to stay by myself above, I should have made myself ashamed of so culpable a behaviour!—But goodness added to goodness every moment, and the sense of my own unworthiness, quite overcome my spirits.

Now, said the generous man, will I, though reluctantly, make a proposal to my sweet girl.—If I have been too pressing for the day: If another day will still be more obliging: If you have fears you will not then have; you shall say but the word, and I'll submit. Yes, my Pamela; for though I have, these three days past, thought every tedious hour a day, till Thursday comes, if you earnestly desire it, I will postpone it. Say, my dear girl,



freely say; but accept not my proposal, without great reason, which yet I will not ask for.

Sir, said I, I can expect nothing but superlative goodness, I have been so long used to it from you. This is a most generous instance of it; but I fear—yes, I fear it will be too much the same thing, some days hence, when the happy, yet, fool that I am! dreaded time, shall be equally near!

Kind, lovely charmer! said he, now do I see you are to be trusted with power, from the generous use you make of it!—Not one offensive word or look, from me, shall wound your nicest thoughts; but pray try to subdue this over-scrupulousness, and unseasonable timidity. I persuade myself you will if you can.

Indeed, sir, I will, said I; for I am quite ashamed of myself, with all these lovely views before me!—The honours you do me, the kindness you shew me!—I cannot forgive myself! For, oh! if I know the least of this idle foolish heart of mine, it has not a misgiving thought of your goodness; and I should abhor it, if it were capable of the least affectation.—But, dear good sir, leave me a little to myself, and I will take myself to a severer task than your goodness will let you do and I will present my heart before you, a worthier offering to you, than at present its wayward follies will let it seem to be.—But one thing is, one has no kind friend of one's own sex, to communicate one's foolish thoughts to, and to be strengthened by their comfortings! But I am left to myself; and, oh! what a weak silly thing I am!

He kindly withdrew, to give me time to recollect myself; and in about half an hour returned: and then, that he might not begin at once upon the subject, and say, at the same time, something agreeable to me, said, Your father and mother have had a great deal of talk by this time about you, Pamela. O, sir, returned I, your goodness has made them quite happy! But I can't help being concerned about Lady Davers.

He said, I am vexed I did not hear the footman out; because it runs in my head he talked somewhat about her coming hither. She will meet with but an indifferent reception from me, unless she comes resolved to behave better than she writes.

Pray, sir, said I, be pleased to bear with my good lady, for two reasons. What are they? said he. Why, first, sir, answered I, because she is your sister; and, to be sure, may very well think, what all the world will, that

you have much undervalued yourself in making me happy. And next, because, if her ladyship finds you out of temper with her, it will still aggravate her more against me; and every time that any warm words you may have between you, come into her mind, she will disdain me more.

Don't concern yourself about it, said he; for we have more proud ladies than she in our other neighbourhood, who, perhaps, have still less reason to be punctilious about their descent, and yet will form themselves upon her example, and say, Why, his own sister will not forgive him, nor visit him! And so, if I can subdue her spirit, which is more than her husband ever could, or indeed any body else, it is a great point gained: And, if she gives me reason, I'll try for it, I assure you.

Well, but, my dear girl, continued he, since the subject is so important, may I not say one word about to-morrow?—Sir, said I, I hope I shall be less a fool: I have talked as harshly to my heart, as Lady Davers can do; and the naughty thing suggests to me a better, and more grateful behaviour.

He smiled, and, kissing me, said, I took notice, Pamela, of what you observed, that you have none of your own sex with you; I think it is a little hard upon you; and I should have liked you should have had Miss Darnford; but then her sister must have been asked; and I might as well make a public wedding: which, you know, would have required clothes and other preparations. Besides, added he, a foolish proposal was once made me of that second sister, who has two or three thousand pounds more than the other, left her by a godmother, and she can't help being a little piqued; though, said he, it was a proposal they could not expect should succeed; for there is nothing in her person nor mind; and her fortune, as that must have been the only inducement, would not do by any means; and so I discouraged it at once.

I am thinking, sir, said I, of another mortifying thing too; that were you to marry a lady of birth and fortune answerable to your own, all the eve to the day would be taken up in reading, signing, and sealing of settlements, and portion, and such like: But now the poor Pamela brings you nothing at all: And the very clothes she wears, so very low is she, are entirely the effects of your bounty, and that of your good mother: This makes me a little sad: For, alas! sir, I am so much oppressed by your favours, and the

sense of the obligations I lie under, that I cannot look up with the confidence that I otherwise should, on this awful occasion.

There is, my dear Pamela, said he, where the power is wanting, as much generosity in the will as in the action. To all that know your story, and your merit, it will appear that I cannot recompense you for what I have made you suffer. You have had too many hard struggles and exercises; and have nobly overcome: and who shall grudge you the reward of the hard-bought victory?—This affair is so much the act of my own will, that I glory in being capable of distinguishing so much excellence; and my fortune is the more pleasurable to me, as it gives me hope, that I may make you some part of satisfaction for what you have undergone.

This, sir, said I, is all goodness, unmerited on my side; and makes my obligations the greater. I can only wish for more worthiness.—But how poor is it to offer nothing but words for such generous deeds!—And to say, I wish!—For what is a wish, but the acknowledged want of power to oblige, and a demonstration of one's poverty in every thing but will?

And that, my dear girl, said he, is every thing: 'Tis all I want: 'Tis all that Heaven itself requires of us: But no more of these little doubts, though they are the natural impulses of a generous and grateful heart: I want not to be employed in settlements. Those are for such to regard, who make convenience and fortune the prime considerations. I have possessions ample enough for us both; and you deserve to share them with me; and you shall do it, with as little reserve, as if you had brought me what the world reckons an equivalent: for, as to my own opinion, you bring me what is infinitely more valuable, an experienced truth, a well-tried virtue, and a wit and behaviour more than equal to the station you will be placed in: To say nothing of this sweet person, that itself might captivate a monarch; and of the meekness of temper, and sweetness of disposition, which make you superior to all the women I ever saw.

Thus kind and soothing, and honourably affectionate, was the dear gentleman, to the unworthy, doubting, yet assured Pamela; and thus patiently did he indulge, and generously pardon, my impertinent weakness. He offered to go himself to Lady Jones, in the morning, and reveal the matter to her, and desire her secrecy and presence; but I said, That would disoblige the young Ladies Darnford. No, sir, said I, I will cast myself

upon your generous kindness; for why should I fear the kind protector of my weakness, and the guide and director of my future steps?

You cannot, said he, forgive Mrs. Jewkes; for she must know it; and suffer her to be with you? Yes, sir, said I, I can. She is very civil to me now: and her former wickedness I will forgive, for the sake of the happy fruits that have attended it; and because you mention her.

Well, said he, I will call her in, if you please.—As you please, sir, said I. And he rung for her; and when she came in, he said, Mrs. Jewkes, I am going to entrust you with a secret. Sir, answered she, I will be sure to keep it as such. Why, said he, we intend to-morrow, privately as possible, for our wedding-day; and Mr. Peters and Mr. Williams are to be here, as to breakfast with me, and to shew Mr. Peters my little chapel. As soon as the ceremony is over, we will take a little airing in the chariot, as we have done at other times; and so it will not be wondered that we are dressed. And the two parsons have promised secrecy, and will go home. I believe you can't well avoid letting one of the maids into the secret; but that I'll leave to you.

Sir, replied she, we all concluded it would be in a few days! and I doubt it won't be long a secret. No, said he, I don't desire it should; but you know we are not provided for a public wedding, and I shall declare it when we go to Bedfordshire, which won't be long. But the men, who lie in the outhouses, need not know it; for, by some means or other, my sister Davers knows all that passes.

Do you know, sir, said she, that her ladyship intends to be down here with you in a few days? Her servant told me so, who brought you the letter you were angry at.

I hope, said he, we shall be set out for t'other house first; and shall be pleased she loses her labour. Sir, continued she, her ladyship, proposes to be here time enough to hinder your nuptials, which she takes, as we did, will be the latter end of next week. Well, said he, let her come: but yet I desire not to see her.

Mrs. Jewkes said to me, Give me leave, madam, to wish you all manner of happiness: But I am afraid I have too well obeyed his honour, to be forgiven by you. Indeed, Mrs. Jewkes, returned I, you will be more your own enemy than I will be. I will look all forward: and shall not presume, so much as by a whisper, to set my good master against any one he pleases

to approve of: And as to his old servants, I shall always value them, and never offer to dictate to his choice, or influence it by my own caprices.

Mrs. Jewkes, said my master, you find you have no cause to apprehend any thing. My Pamela is very placable; and as we have both been sinners together, we must both be included in one act of grace.

Such an example of condescension, as I have before me, Mrs. Jewkes, said I, may make you very easy; for I must be highly unworthy, if I did not forego all my little resentments, if I had any, for the sake of so much goodness to myself.

You are very kind, madam, said she; and you may depend upon it, I will atone for all my faults, by my future duty and respect to you, as well as to my master.

That's well said on both sides, said he: but, Mrs. Jewkes, to assure you, that my good girl here has no malice, she chooses you to attend her in the morning at the ceremony, and you must keep up her spirits.—I shall, replied she, be very proud of the honour: But I cannot, madam, but wonder to see you so very low-spirited, as you have been these two or three days past, with so much happiness before you.

Why, Mrs. Jewkes, answered I, there can be but one reason given; and that is, that I am a sad fool!—But, indeed, I am not ungrateful neither; nor would I put on a foolish affectation: But my heart, at times, sinks within me; I know not why, except at my own unworthiness, and because the honour done me is too high for me to support myself under, as I should do. It is an honour, Mrs. Jewkes, added I, I was not born to; and no wonder, then, I behave so awkwardly. She made me a fine compliment upon it, and withdrew, repeating her promises of care, secrecy, etc.

He parted from me with very great tenderness; and I came up and set to writing, to amuse my thoughts, and wrote thus far. And Mrs. Jewkes being come up, and it being past twelve, I will go to bed; but not one wink, I fear, shall I get this night.—I could beat myself for anger. Sure there is nothing ominous in this strange folly!—But I suppose all young maidens are the same, so near so great a change of condition, though they carry it off more discreetly than I.

Thursday, six o'clock in the morning.

I might as well have not gone to bed last night, for what sleep I had. Mrs. Jewkes often was talking to me, and said several things that would have been well enough from any body else of our sex; but the poor woman has so little purity of heart, that it is all say from her, and goes no farther than the ear.

I fancy my master has not slept much neither; for I heard him up, and walking about his chamber, ever since break of day. To be sure, good gentleman! he must have some concern, as well as I; for here he is going to marry a poor foolish unworthy girl, brought up on the charity, as one may say, (at least bounty,) of his worthy family! And this foolish girl must be, to all intents and purposes, after twelve o'clock this day, as much his wife, as if he were to marry a duchess!—And here he must stand the shocks of common reflection! The great Mr. B—— has done finely! he has married his poor servant wench! will some say. The ridicule and rude jests of his equals, and companions too, he must stand: And the disdain of his relations, and indignation of Lady Davers, his lofty sister! Dear good gentleman! he will have enough to do, to be sure! O how shall I merit all these things at his hand! I can only do the best I can; and pray to God to reward him; and resolve to love him with a pure heart, and serve him with a sincere obedience. I hope the dear gentleman will continue to love me for this; for, alas! I have nothing else to offer! But, as I can hardly expect so great a blessing, if I can be secure from his contempt, I shall not be unfortunate; and must bear his indifference, if his rich friends should inspire him with it, and proceed with doing my duty with cheerfulness.

Half an hour past eight o'clock.

My good dear master, my kind friend, my generous benefactor, my worthy protector, and, oh! all the good words in one, my affectionate husband, that is soon to be—(be curbed in, my proud heart, know thy self, and be conscious of thy unworthiness!)—has just left me, with the kindest, tenderest expressions, and gentlest behaviour, that ever blest a happy maiden. He approached me with a sort of reined-in rapture. My Pamela! said he, May I just ask after your employment? Don't let me chide my dear girl this day, however. The two parsons will be here to breakfast with us at nine; and yet you are not a bit dressed! Why this absence of mind, and sweet irresolution?

Why, indeed, sir, said I, I will set about a reformation this instant. He saw the common-prayer book lying in the window. I hope, said he, my lovely maiden has been conning the lesson she is by-and-by to repeat. Have you not, Pamela? and clasped his arms about me, and kissed me. Indeed, sir, said I, I have been reading over the solemn service.—And what thinks my fairest (for so he called me) of it?—O sir, 'tis very awful, and makes one shudder, to reflect upon it!—No wonder, said he, it should affect my sweet Pamela: I have been looking into it this morning, and I can't say but I think it a solemn, but very suitable service. But this I tell my dear love, continued he, and again clasped me to him, there is not a tittle in it that I cannot joyfully subscribe to: And that, my dear Pamela, should make you easy, and join cheerfully in it with me. I kissed his dear hand: O my generous, kind protector, said I, how gracious is it to confirm thus the doubting mind of your poor servant! which apprehends nothing so much as her own unworthiness of the honour and blessing that await her!—He was pleased to say, I know well, my dearest creature, that, according to the liberties we people of fortune generally give ourselves, I have promised a great deal, when I say so. But I would not have said it, if, deliberately, I could not with all my heart. So banish from your mind all doubt and uneasiness; let a generous confidence in me take place; and let me see it does, by your cheerfulness in this day's solemn business; and then I will love you for ever!

May God Almighty, sir, said I, reward all your goodness to me!—That is all I can say. But, oh! how kind it is in you, to supply the want of the presence and comfortings of a dear mother, of a loving sister, or of the kind companions of my own sex, which most maidens have, to soothe their anxieties on the so near approach of so awful a solemnity!—You, sir, are all these tender relations in one to me! Your condescensions and kindness shall, if possible, embolden me to look up to you without that sweet terror, that must confound poor bashful maidens, on such an occasion, when they are surrendered up to a more doubtful happiness, and to half-strange men, whose good faith, and good usage of them, must be less experienced, and is all involved in the dark bosom of futurity, and only to be proved by the event.

This, my dear Pamela, said he, is most kindly said! It shews me that you enter gratefully into my intention. For I would, by my conduct, supply all these dear relations to you; and I voluntarily promise, from my heart, to

you, what I think I could not, with such assured resolutions of performance, to the highest-born lady in the kingdom. For let me tell my sweet girl, that, after having been long tossed by the boisterous winds of a more culpable passion, I have now conquered it, and am not so much the victim of your beauty, all charming as you are, as of your virtue; and therefore may more boldly promise for myself, having so stable a foundation for my affection; which, should this outward beauty fail, will increase with your virtue, and shine forth the brighter, as that is more illustriously displayed by the augmented opportunities which the condition you are now entering into will afford you.—O the dear charming man! how nobly, how encouragingly kind, was all this!

I could not suitably express myself: And he said, I see my girl is at a loss for words! I doubt not your kind acceptance of my declarations. And when I have acted too much the part of a libertine formerly, for you to look back without some anxiety, I ought not, being now happily convicted, to say less.—But why loses my girl her time? I will now only add, that I hope for many happy years to make good, by my conduct, what so willingly flows from my lips.

He kissed me again, and said, But, whatever you do, Pamela, be cheerful; for else, may be, of the small company we shall have, some one, not knowing how to account for your too nice modesty, will think there is some other person in the world, whose addresses would be still more agreeable to you.

This he said with an air of sweetness and pleasantry; but it alarmed me exceedingly, and made me resolve to appear as calm and cheerful as possible. For this was, indeed, a most affecting expression, and enough to make me, if any thing can, behave as I ought, and to force my idle fears to give way to hopes so much better grounded.—And I began almost, on this occasion, to wish Mr. Williams were not to marry me, lest I should behave like a fool; and so be liable to an imputation, which I should be most unworthy, if I deserved.

So I set about dressing me instantly; and he sent Mrs. Jewkes to assist me. But I am never long a dressing, when I set about it; and my master has now given me a hint, that will, for half an hour more, at least, keep my spirits in a brisk circulation. Yet it concerns me a little too, lest he should



have any the least shadow of a doubt, that I am not, mind and person, entirely his.

And so being now ready, and not called to breakfast, I sat down and wrote thus far.

I might have mentioned, that I dressed myself in a rich white satin night-gown, that had been my good lady's, and my best head-clothes, etc. I have got such a knack of writing, that when I am by myself, I cannot sit without a pen in my hand.—But I am now called to breakfast. I suppose the gentlemen are come.—Now, courage, Pamela! Remember thou art upon thy good behaviour!—Fie upon it! my heart begins to flutter again!—Foolish heart! be still! Never, sure, was any maiden's perverse heart under so little command as mine!—It gave itself away, at first, without my leave; it has been, for weeks, pressing me with its wishes; and yet now, when it should be happy itself, and make me so, it is throb, throb, throb, like a little fool! and filling me with such unseasonable misgivings, as abate the rising comforts of all my better prospects.

Thursday, near three o'clock.

I thought I should have found no time nor heart to write again this day. But here are three gentlemen come, unexpectedly, to dine with my master; and so I shall not appear. He has done all he could, civilly, to send them away; but they will stay, though I believe he had rather they would not. And so I have nothing to do but to write till I go to dinner myself with Mrs. Jewkes: for my master was not prepared for this company; and it will be a little latish to-day. So I will begin with my happy story where I left off.

When I came down to breakfast, Mr. Peters and Mr. Williams were both there. And as soon as my master heard me coming down, he met me at the door, and led me in with great tenderness. He had kindly spoken to them, as he told me afterwards, to mention no more of the matter to me, than needs must. I paid my respects to them, I believe a little awkwardly, and was almost out of breath: but said, I had come down a little too fast.

When Abraham came in to wait, my master said, (that the servants should not mistrust,) 'Tis well, gentlemen, you came as you did; for my good girl and I were going to take an airing till dinner-time. I hope you'll stay and dine with me. Sir, said Mr. Peters, we won't hinder your airing. I only came, having a little time upon my hands, to see your chapel; but

must be at home at dinner; and Mr. Williams will dine with me. Well then, said my master, we will pursue our intention, and ride out for an hour or two, as soon as I have shewn Mr. Peters my little chapel. Will you, Pamela, after breakfast, walk with us to it? If, if, said I, and had like to have stammered, foolish that I was! if you please, sir. I could look none of them in the face. Abraham looking at me; Why, child, said my master, you have hardly recovered your fright yet: how came your foot to slip? 'Tis well you did not hurt yourself. Said Mr. Peters, improving the hint, You ha'n't sprained your ankle, madam, I hope. No, sir, said I, I believe not; but 'tis a little painful to me. And so it was; for I meant my foolishness! Abraham, said my master, bid Robin put the horses to the coach, instead of the chariot; and if these gentlemen will go, we can set them down. No matter, sir, said Mr. Peters: I had as lieve walk, if Mr. Williams chooses it. Well then, said my master, let it be the chariot, as I told him.

I could eat nothing, though I attempted it; and my hand shook so, I spilled some of my chocolate, and so put it down again; and they were all very good, and looked another way. My master said, when Abraham was out, I have a quite plain ring here, Mr. Peters: And I hope the ceremony will dignify the ring; and that I shall give my girl reason to think it, for that cause, the most valuable one that can be presented her. Mr. Peters said, He was sure I should value it more than the richest diamond in the world.

I had bid Mrs. Jewkes not to dress herself, lest she should give cause of mistrust; and she took my advice.

When breakfast was over, my master said, before Abraham, Well, gentlemen, we will step into the chapel; and you must give me your advice, as to the alterations I design. I am in the more haste, because the survey you are going to take of it, for the alterations, will take up a little time; and we shall have but a small space between that and dinner, for the little tour I design to make.—Pamela, you'll give us your opinion, won't you? Yes, sir, said I; I'll come after you.

So they went out, and I sat down in the chair again, and fanned myself: I am sick at heart, said I, I think, Mrs. Jewkes. Said she, Shall I fetch you a little cordial?—No, said I, I am a sad fool! I want spirits, that's all. She took her smelling-bottle, and would have given it me: but I said, Keep it in your hand; may be I shall want it: but I hope not.

She gave me very good words, and begged me to go: And I got up; but my knees beat so against one another, I was forced to sit down again. But, at last, I held by her arm, and passing by Abraham, I said, This ugly slip, coming down stairs, has made me limp, though; so I must hold by you, Mrs. Jewkes. Do you know what alterations there are to be in the chapel, that we must all give our opinions of them?

Nan, she told me, was let into the secret; and she had ordered her to stay at the chapel door, to see that nobody came in. My dear master came to me, at entering the chapel, and took my hand, and led me up to the altar. Remember, my dear girl, whispered he, and be cheerful. I am, I will, sir, said I; but I hardly knew what I said; and so you may believe, when I said to Mrs. Jewkes, Don't leave me; pray, Mrs. Jewkes, don't leave me; as if I had all confidence in her, and none where it was most due. So she kept close to me. God forgive me! but I never was so absent in my life, as at first; even till Mr. Williams had gone on in the service, so far as to the awful words about requiring us, as we should answer at the dreadful day of judgment; and then the solemn words, and my master's whispering, Mind this, my dear, made me start. Said he, still whispering, Know you any impediment? I blushed, and said softly, None, sir, but my great unworthiness.

Then followed the sweet words, Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife? etc. and I began to take heart a little, when my dearest master answered, audibly, to this question, I will. But I could only make a courtesy, when they asked me; though, I am sure, my heart was readier than my speech, and answered to every article of obey, serve, love, and honour.

Mr. Peters gave me away; and I said, after Mr. Williams, as well as I could, as my dear master did with a much better grace, the words of betrothment; and the ceremony of the ring passing next, I received the dear favour at his worthy hands with a most grateful heart; and he was pleased to say afterwards in the chariot, that when he had done saying, With this ring I thee wed, etc. I made a courtesy, and said, Thank you, sir. May be I did; for I am sure it was a most grateful part of the service, and my heart was overwhelmed with his goodness, and the tender grace wherewith he performed it. I was very glad, that the next part was the

prayer, and kneeling; for I trembled so, I could hardly stand, betwixt fear and joy.

The joining of our hands afterwards, the declaration of our being married to the few witnesses present; for, reckoning Nan, whose curiosity would not let her stay at the door, there were but Mr. Peters, Mrs. Jewkes, and she; the blessing, the psalm, and the subsequent prayers, and the concluding exhortation; were so many beautiful, welcome, and lovely parts of this divine office, that my heart began to be delighted with them; and my spirits to be a little freer.

And thus, my dearest, dear parents, is your happy, happy, thrice happy Pamela, at last married; and to whom?—Why, to her beloved, gracious master! the lord of her wishes! And thus the dear, once naughty assailer of her innocence, by a blessed turn of Providence, is become the kind, the generous protector and rewarder of it. God be evermore blessed and praised! and make me not wholly unworthy of such a transcendent honour!—And bless and reward the dear, dear, good gentleman, who has thus exalted his unworthy servant, and given her a place, which the greatest ladies would think themselves happy in!

My master saluted me most ardently, and said, God give you, my dear love, as much joy on this occasion, as I have! And he presented me to Mr. Peters, who saluted me; and said, You may excuse me, dear madam, for I gave you away, and you are my daughter. And Mr. Williams modestly withdrawing a little way; Mr. Williams, said my master, pray accept my thanks, and wish your sister joy. So he saluted me too; and said, Most heartily, madam, I do. And I will say, that to see so much innocence and virtue so eminently rewarded, is one of the greatest pleasures I have ever known. This my master took very kindly.

Mrs. Jewkes would have kissed my hand at the chapel-door; but I put my arms about her neck, for I had got a new recruit of spirits just then; and kissed her, and said, Thank you, Mrs. Jewkes, for accompanying me. I have behaved sadly. No, madam, said she, pretty well, pretty well!

Mr. Peters walked out with me; and Mr. Williams and my master came out after us, talking together.

Mr. Peters, when we came into the parlour, said, I once more, madam, must wish you joy on this happy occasion. I wish every day may add to your comforts; and may you very long rejoice in one another! for you are

the loveliest couple I ever saw joined. I told him, I was highly obliged to his kind opinion, and good wishes; and hoped my future conduct would not make me unworthy of them.

My good benefactor came in with Mr. Williams: So, my dear life, said he, how do you do? A little more composed, I hope. Well, you see this is not so dreadful an affair as you apprehended.

Sir, said Mr. Peters, very kindly, it is a very solemn circumstance; and I love to see it so reverently and awfully entered upon. It is a most excellent sign; for the most thoughtful beginnings make the most prudent proceedings.

Mrs. Jewkes, of her own accord, came in with a large silver tumbler, filled with sack, and a toast, and nutmeg, and sugar; and my master said, That's well thought of, Mrs. Jewkes; for we have made but sorry breakfasting. And he would make me, take some of the toast; as they all did, and drank pretty heartily: and I drank a little, and it cheered my heart, I thought, for an hour after.

My master took a fine diamond ring from his finger, and presented it to Mr. Peters, who received it very kindly. And to Mr. Williams he said, My old acquaintance, I have reserved for you, against a variety of solicitations, the living I always designed for you; and I beg you'll prepare to take possession of it; and as the doing it may be attended with some expense, pray accept of this towards it; and so he gave him (as he told me afterwards it was) a bank note of 50l.

So did this generous good gentleman bless us all, and me in particular; for whose sake he was as bounteous as if he had married one of the noblest fortunes.

So he took his leave of the gentlemen, recommending secrecy again, for a few days, and they left him; and none of the servants suspected any thing, as Mrs. Jewkes believes. And then I threw myself at his feet, blessed God, and blessed him for his goodness; and he overwhelmed me with kindness, calling me his sweet bride, and twenty lovely epithets, that swell my grateful heart beyond the power of utterance.

He afterwards led me to the chariot; and we took a delightful tour round the neighbouring villages; and he did all he could to dissipate those still perverse anxieties that dwell upon my mind, and, do what I can, spread too thoughtful an air, as he tells me, over my countenance.

We came home again by half an hour after one; and he was pleasing himself with thinking, not to be an hour out of my company this blessed day, that (as he was so good as to say) he might inspire me with a familiarity that should improve my confidence in him, when he was told, that a footman of Sir Charles Hargrave had been here, to let him know, that

his master, and two other gentlemen, were on the road to take a dinner with him, in their way to Nottingham.

He was heartily vexed at this, and said to me, He should have been glad of their companies at any other time; but that it was a barbarous intrusion now; and he wished they had been told he would not be at home at dinner: And besides, said he, they are horrid drinkers; and I shan't be able to get them away to-night, perhaps; for they have nothing to do, but to travel round the country, and beat up their friends' quarters all the way; and it is all one to them, whether they stay a night or a month at a place. But, added he, I'll find some way, if I can, to turn them off, after dinner.—Confound them, said he, in a violent pet, that they should come this day, of all the days in the year!

We had hardly alighted, and got in, before they came: Three mad rakes they seemed to be, as I looked through the window, setting up a hunting note, as soon as they came to the gate, that made the court-yard echo again; and smacking their whips in concert.

So I went up to my chamber, and saw (what made my heart throb) Mrs. Jewkes's officious pains to put the room in order for a guest, that, however welcome, as now my duty teaches me to say, is yet dreadful to me to think of. So I took refuge in my closet, and had recourse to pen and ink, for my amusement, and to divert my anxiety of mind.—If one's heart is so sad, and one's apprehension so great, where one so extremely loves, and is so extremely obliged; what must be the case of those poor maidens, who are forced, for sordid views, by their tyrannical parents or guardians, to marry the man they almost hate, and, perhaps, to the loss of the man they most love! O that is a sad thing, indeed!—And what have not such cruel parents to answer for! And what do not such poor innocent victims suffer!—But, blessed be God, this lot is far from being mine!

My good master (for I cannot yet have the presumption to call him by a more tender name) came up to me, and said, Well, I just come to ask my dear bride (O the charming, charming word!) how she does? I see you are writing, my dear, said he. These confounded rakes are half mad, I think, and will make me so! However, said he, I have ordered my chariot to be got ready, as if I was under an engagement five miles off, and will set them out of the house, if possible; and then ride round, and come back, as soon as I can get rid of them. I find, said he, Lady Davers is full of our

affairs. She has taken great freedoms with me before Sir Charles; and they have all been at me, without mercy; and I was forced to be very serious with them, or else they would have come up to have seen you, since I would not call you down.—He kissed me, and said, I shall quarrel with them, if I can't get them away; for I have lost two or three precious hours with my soul's delight: And so he went down.

Mrs. Jewkes asked me to walk down to dinner in the little parlour. I went down, and she was so complaisant as to offer to wait upon me at table; and would not be persuaded, without difficulty, to sit down with me. But I insisted she should: For, said I, it would be very extraordinary, if one should so soon go into such distance, Mrs. Jewkes.—Whatever my new station may require of me, added I, I hope I shall always conduct myself in such a manner, that pride and insolence shall bear no part in my character.

You are very good, madam, said she; but I will always know my duty to my master's lady.—Why then, replied I, if I must take state upon me so early, Mrs. Jewkes, let me exact from you what you call your duty; and sit down with me when I desire you.

This prevailed upon her; and I made shift to get down a bit of apple-pye, and a little custard; but that was all.

My good master came in again, and said, Well, thank my stars! these rakes are going now; but I must set out with them, and I choose my chariot; for if I took horse, I should have difficulty to part with them; for they are like a snowball, and intend to gather company as they go, to make a merry tour of it for some days together.

We both got up, when he came in: Fie, Pamela! said he; why this ceremony now?—Sit still, Mrs. Jewkes.—Nay, sir, said she, I was loath to sit down; but my lady would have me.—She is very right, Mrs. Jewkes, said my master, and tapped me on the cheek; for we are but yet half married; and so she is not above half your lady yet!—Don't look so down, don't be so silent, my dearest, said he; why, you hardly spoke twenty words to me all the time we were out together. Something I will allow for your bashful sweetness; but not too much.—Mrs. Jewkes, have you no pleasant tales to tell my Pamela, to make her smile, till I return?—Yes, sir, said she, I could tell twenty pleasant stories; but my lady is too nice to hear them; and yet, I hope, I should not be shocking neither. Ah! poor woman!



thought I; thy chastest stories will make a modest person blush, if I know thee! and I desire to hear none of them.

My master said, Tell her one of the shortest you have, in my hearing. Why, sir, said she, I knew a bashful young lady, as madam may be, married to—Dear Mrs. Jewkes, interrupted I, no more of your story, I beseech you; I don't like the beginning of it. Go on, Mrs. Jewkes, said my master. No, pray, sir, don't require it, said I, pray don't. Well, said he, then we'll have it another time, Mrs. Jewkes.

Abraham coming in to tell him the gentlemen were going, and that his chariot was ready; I am glad of that, said he; and went to them, and set out with them.

I took a turn in the garden with Mrs. Jewkes, after they were gone: And having walked a while, I said, I should be glad of her company down the elm-walk, to meet the chariot: For, O! I know not how to look up at him, when he is with me; nor how to bear his absence, when I have reason to expect him: What a strange contradiction there is in this unaccountable passion.

What a different aspect every thing in and about this house bears now, to my thinking, to what it once had! The garden, the pond, the alcove, the elm-walk. But, oh! my prison is become my palace; and no wonder every thing wears another face!

We sat down upon the broad stile, leading towards the road; and Mrs. Jewkes was quite another person to me, to what she was the last time I sat there.

At last my best beloved returned, and alighted there. What, my Pamela! (and Mrs. Jewkes then left me,) What (said he, and kissed me) brings you this way? I hope to meet me.—Yes, sir, said I. That's kind, indeed, said he; but why that averted eye?—that downcast countenance, as if you was afraid of me? You must not think so, sir, said I. Revive my heart then, said he, with a more cheerful aspect; and let that over-anxious solicitude, which appears in the most charming face in the world, be chased from it.—Have you, my dear girl any fears that I can dissipate; any doubts that I can obviate; any hopes that I can encourage; any request that I can gratify?—Speak, my dear Pamela; and if I have power, but speak, and to purchase one smile, it shall be done!

I cannot, sir, said I, have any fears, any doubts, but that I shall never be able to deserve all your goodness. I have no hopes, but that my future conduct may be agreeable to you, and my determined duty well accepted. Nor have I any request to make, but that you will forgive all my imperfections and, among the rest, this foolish weakness, that makes me seem to you, after all the generous things that have passed, to want this further condescension, and these kind assurances. But indeed, sir, I am oppressed by your bounty; my spirits sink under the weight of it; and the oppression is still the greater, as I see not how, possibly, in my whole future life, by all I can do, to merit the least of your favours.

I know your grateful heart, said he; but remember, my dear, what the lawyers tell us, That marriage is the highest consideration which the law knows. And this, my sweet bride, has made you mine, and me yours; and you have the best claim in the world to share my fortune with me. But, set that consideration aside, what is the obligation you have to me? Your mind is pure as that of an angel, and as much transcends mine. Your wit, and your judgment, to make you no compliment, are more than equal to mine: You have all the graces that education can give a woman, improved by a genius which makes those graces natural to you. You have a sweetness of temper, and a noble sincerity, beyond all comparison; and in the beauty of your person, you excel all the ladies I ever saw. Where then, my dearest, is the obligation, if not on my side to you?—But, to avoid these comparisons, let us talk of nothing henceforth but equality; although, if the riches of your mind, and your unblemished virtue, be set against my fortune, (which is but an accidental good, as I may call it, and all I have to boast of,) the condescension will be yours; and I shall not think I can possibly deserve you, till, after your sweet example, my future life shall become nearly as blameless as yours.

O, sir, said I, what comfort do you give me, that, instead of my being in danger of being ensnared by the high condition to which your goodness has exalted me, you make me hope, that I shall be confirmed and approved by you; and that we may have a prospect of perpetuating each other's happiness, till time shall be no more!—But, sir, I will not, as you once cautioned me, be too serious. I will resolve, with these sweet encouragements, to be, in every thing, what you would have me be: And I hope I shall, more and more, shew you that I have no will but yours. He

kissed me very tenderly, and thanked me for this kind assurance, as he called it.

And so we entered the house together.

Eight o'clock at night.

Now these sweet assurances, my dear father and mother, you will say, must be very consolatory to me; and being voluntary on his side, were all that could be wished for on mine; and I was resolved, if possible, to subdue my idle fears and apprehensions.

Ten o'clock at night.

As we sat at supper, he was generously kind to me, as well in his actions, as expressions. He took notice, in the most delicate manner, of my endeavour to conquer my foibles; and said, I see, with pleasure, my dear girl strives to comport herself in a manner suitable to my wishes: I see, even through the sweet tender struggles of your over-nice modesty, how much I owe to your intentions of obliging me. As I have once told you, that I am the conquest more of your virtue than your beauty; so not one alarming word or look shall my beloved Pamela hear or see, to give her reason to suspect the truth of what I aver. You may the rather believe me, continued he, as you may see the pain I have to behold any thing that concerns you, even though your concern be causeless. And yet I will indulge my dear girl's bashful weakness so far, as to own, that so pure a mind may suffer from apprehension, on so important a change as this; and I can therefore be only displeas'd with such part of your conduct, as may make your sufferings greater than my own; when I am resolved, through every stage of my future life, in all events, to study to make them less.

After supper, of which, with all his sweet persuasions, I could hardly taste, he made me drink two glasses of champaign, and, afterwards, a glass of sack; which he kindly forced upon me, by naming your healths: and as the time of retiring drew on, he took notice, but in a very delicate manner, how my colour went and came, and how foolishly I trembled. Nobody, surely, in such delightful circumstances, ever behaved so silly!—And he said, My dearest girl, I fear you have had too much of my company for so many hours together; and would better recollect yourself, if you retired for half an hour to your closet.

I wished for this, but durst not say so much, lest he should be angry; for, as the hours grew on, I found my apprehensions increase, and my silly

heart was the unquieter, every time I could lift up my eyes to his dear face; so sweetly terrible did he appear to my apprehensions. I said, You are all goodness, dear sir; and I boldly kissed his dear hand, and pressed it to my lips with both mine. And saluting me very fervently, he gave me his hand, seeing me hardly able to stand, and led me to my chamber-door, and then most generously withdrew.

I went to my closet; and the first thing I did, on my knees, again thanked God for the blessing of the day; and besought his divine goodness to conduct my future life in such a manner, as should make me a happy instrument of his glory. After this, being now left to my own recollection, I grew a little more assured and lightsome; and the pen and paper being before me, I amused myself with writing thus far.

Eleven o'clock Thursday night.

Mrs. Jewkes being come up with a message, desiring to know, whether her master may attend upon me in my closet; and hinting to me, that, however, she believed he did not expect to find me there; I have sent word, that I beg he would indulge me one quarter of an hour.—So, committing myself to the mercies of the Almighty, who has led me through so many strange scenes of terror and affrightment, to this happy, yet awful moment, I will wish you, my dear parents, a good night; and though you will not see this in time, yet I know I have your hourly prayers, and therefore cannot fail of them now. So, good night, good night! God bless you, and God bless me! Amen, amen, if it be his blessed will, subscribes

Your ever-dutiful DAUGHTER!

Friday evening.

O how this dear excellent man indulges me in every thing! Every hour he makes me happier, by his sweet condescension, than the former. He pities my weakness of mind, allows for all my little foibles, endeavours to dissipate my fears; his words are so pure, his ideas so chaste, and his whole behaviour so sweetly decent, that never, surely, was so happy a creature as your Pamela! I never could have hoped such a husband could have fallen to my lot: and much less, that a gentleman, who had allowed himself in attempts, that now I will endeavour to forget for ever, should have behaved with so very delicate and unexceptionable a demeanour. No light frothy jests drop from his lips; no alarming railleries; no offensive expressions, nor insulting airs, reproach or wound the ears of your happy,

thrice happy daughter. In short, he says every thing that may embolden me to look up, with pleasure, upon the generous author of my happiness.

At breakfast, when I knew not how to see him, he emboldened me by talking of you, my dear parents; a subject, he generously knew, I could talk of: and gave me assurances, that he would make you both happy. He said, He would have me send you a letter to acquaint you with my nuptials; and, as he could make business that way, Thomas should carry it purposely, as to-morrow. Nor will I, said he, my dear Pamela, desire to see your writings, because I told you I would not; for now I will, in every thing, religiously keep my word with my dear spouse: (O the dear delightful word!) and you may send all your papers to them, from those they have, down to this happy moment; only let me beg they will preserve them, and let me have them when they have read them; as also those I have not seen; which, however, I desire not to see till then; but then shall take it for a favour, if you will grant it.

It will be my pleasure, as well as my duty, sir, said I, to obey you in every thing: and I will write up to the conclusion of this day, that they may see how happy you have made me.

I know you will both join with me to bless God for his wonderful mercies and goodness to you, as well as to me: For he was pleased to ask me particularly after your circumstances, and said, He had taken notice, that I had hinted, in some of my first letters, that you owed money in the world; and he gave me fifty guineas, and bid me send them to you in my packet, to pay your debts, as far as they would go; and that you would quit your present business, and put yourself, and my dear mother, into a creditable appearance; and he would find a better place of abode for you than that you had, when he returned to Bedfordshire. O how shall I bear all these exceeding great and generous favours!—I send them wrapt up, five guineas in a parcel, in double papers.

To me he gave no less than one hundred guineas more; and said, I would have you, my dear, give Mrs. Jewkes, when you go away from hence, what you think fit out of these, as from yourself.—Nay, good dear sir, said I, let that be what you please. Give her, then, said he, twenty guineas, as a compliment on your nuptials. Give Colbrand ten guineas give: the two coachmen five guineas each; to the two maids at this house five guineas each; give Abraham five guineas; give Thomas five guineas; and give the

gardeners, grooms, and helpers, twenty guineas among them. And when, said he, I return with you to the other house, I will make you a suitable present, to buy you such ornaments as are fit for my beloved wife to appear in. For now, my Pamela, continued he, you are not to mind, as you once proposed, what other ladies will say; but to appear as my wife ought to do. Else it would look as if what you thought of, as a means to avoid the envy of others of your sex, was a wilful slight in me, which, I hope, I never shall be guilty of; and I will shew the world, that I value you as I ought, and as if I had married the first fortune in the kingdom: And why should it not be so, when I know none of the first quality that matches you in excellence?

He saw I was at a loss for words, and said, I see, my dearest bride! my spouse! my wife! my Pamela! your grateful confusion. And kissing me, as I was going to speak, I will stop your dear mouth, said he: You shall not so much as thank me; for when I have done ten times more than this, I shall but poorly express my love for so much beauty of mind, and loveliness of person; which thus, said he, and clasped me to his generous bosom, I can proudly now call my own!—O how, my dear parents, can I think of any thing, but redoubled love, joy, and gratitude!

And thus generously did he banish from my mind those painful reflections, and bashful apprehensions, that made me dread to see him for the first time this day, when I was called to attend him at breakfast; and made me all ease, composure, and tranquillity.

He then, thinking I seemed somewhat thoughtful, proposed a little turn in the chariot till dinner-time: And this was another sweet relief to me; and he diverted me with twenty agreeable relations, of what observations he had made in his travels; and gave me the characters of the ladies and gentlemen in his other neighbourhood; telling me whose acquaintance he would have me most cultivate. And when I mentioned Lady Davers with apprehension, he said, To be sure I love my sister dearly, notwithstanding her violent spirit; and I know she loves me; and I can allow a little for her pride, because I know what my own so lately was; and because she knows not my Pamela, and her excellencies, as I do. But you must not, my dear, forget what belongs to your character, as my wife, nor meanly stoop to her; though I know you will choose, by softness, to try to move her to a

proper behaviour. But it shall be my part to see, that you do not yield too much.

However, continued he, as I would not publicly declare my marriage here, I hope she won't come near us till we are in Bedfordshire; and then, when she knows we are married, she will keep away, if she is not willing to be reconciled; for she dares not, surely, come to quarrel with me, when she knows it is done; for that would have a hateful and wicked appearance, as if she would try to make differences between man and wife.—But we will have no more of this subject, nor talk of any thing, added he, that shall give concern to my dearest. And so he changed the talk to a more pleasing subject, and said the kindest and most soothing things in the world.

When we came home, which was about dinner-time, he was the same obliging, kind gentleman; and, in short, is studious to shew, on every occasion, his generous affection to me. And, after dinner, he told me, he had already written to his draper, in town, to provide him new liveries; and to his late mother's mercer, to send him down patterns of the most fashionable silks, for my choice. I told him, I was unable to express my gratitude for his favours and generosity: And as he knew best what befitted his own rank and condition, I would wholly remit myself to his good pleasure. But, by all his repeated bounties to me, of so extraordinary a nature, I could not but look forward with awe upon the condition to which he had exalted me; and now I feared I should hardly be able to act up to it in such a manner as should justify the choice he had condescended to make: But that, I hoped, I should have not only his generous allowance for my imperfections, which I could only assure him should not be wilful ones, but his kind instructions; and that as often as he observed any part of my conduct such as he could not entirely approve, he would let me know it; and I would think his reproofs of beginning faults the kindest and most affectionate things in the world because they would keep me from committing greater; and be a means to continue to me the blessing of his good opinion.

He answered me in the kindest manner; and assured me, That nothing should ever lie upon his mind which he would not reveal, and give me an opportunity either of convincing him, or being convinced myself.

He then asked me, When I should be willing to go to the Bedfordshire house? I said, whenever he pleased. We will come down hither again

before the winter, said he, if you please, in order to cultivate the acquaintance you have begun with Lady Jones, and Sir Simon's family; and, if it please God to spare us to one another, in the winter I will give you, as I promised for two or three months, the diversions of London. And I think, added he, if my dear pleases, we will set out next week, about Tuesday, for t'other house. I can have no objection, sir, said I, to any thing you propose; but how will you avoid Miss Darnford's solicitation for an evening to dance? Why, said he, we can make Monday evening do for that purpose, if they won't excuse us. But, if you please, said he, I will invite Lady Jones, Mr. Peters and his family, and Sir Simon and his family, to my little chapel, on Sunday morning, and to stay dinner with me; and then I will declare my marriage to them, because my dear life shall not leave this country with the least reason for a possibility of any body's doubting that it is so. O! how good was this! But, indeed, his conduct is all of a piece, noble, kind, and considerate! What a happy creature am I!—And then, may be, said he, they will excuse us till we return into this country again, as to the ball. Is there any thing, added he, that my beloved Pamela has still to wish? If you have, freely speak.

Hitherto, my dearest sir, replied I, you have not only prevented my wishes, but my hopes, and even my thoughts. And yet I must own, since your kind command of speaking my mind seems to shew, that you expect from me I should say something; that I have only one or two things to wish more, and then I shall be too happy. Say, said he, what they are. Sir, proceeded I, I am, indeed, ashamed to ask any thing, lest it should not be agreeable to you; and lest it should look as if I was taking advantage of your kind condescensions to me, and knew not when to be satisfied!

I will only tell you, Pamela, said he, that you are not to imagine, that these things, which I have done, in hopes of obliging you, are the sudden impulses of a new passion for you. But, if I can answer for my own mind, they proceed from a regular and uniform desire of obliging you: which, I hope, will last as long as your merit lasts; and that, I make no doubt, will be as long as I live. And I can the rather answer for this, because I really find so much delight in myself in my present way of thinking and acting, as infinitely overpays me; and which, for that reason, I am likely to continue, for both our sakes. My beloved wife, therefore, said he, for methinks I am grown fond of a name I once despised, may venture to speak her mind; and I will promise, that, so far as it is agreeable to me,



and I cheerfully can, I will comply; and you will not insist upon it, if that should not be the case.

To be sure, sir, said I, I ought not, neither will I. And now you embolden me to become an humble petitioner, and that, as I ought, upon my knees, for the reinstating such of your servants, as I have been the unhappy occasion of their disobliging you. He raised me up, and said, My beloved Pamela has too often been in this suppliant posture to me, to permit it any more. Rise, my fairest, and let me know whom, in particular, you would reinstate; and he kindly held me in his arms, and pressed me to his beloved bosom. Mrs. Jervis, sir, said I, in the first place; for she is a good woman; and the misfortunes she has had in the world, must make your displeasure most heavy to her.

Well, said he, who next? Mr. Longman, sir, said I; and I am sure, kind as they have been to me, yet would I not ask it, if I could not vouch for their integrity, and if I did not think it was my dear master's interest to have such good servants.

Have you any thing further? said he.—Sir, said I, your good old butler, who has so long been in your family before the day of your happy birth, I would, if I might, become an advocate for!

Well, said he, I have only to say, That had not Mr. Longman and Mrs. Jervis, and Jonathan too, joined in a body, in a bold appeal to Lady Davers, which has given her the insolent handle she has taken to intermeddle in my affairs, I could easily have forgiven all the rest of their conduct; though they have given their tongues no little license about me: But I could have forgiven them, because I desire every body should admire you; and it is with pride that I observe not only their opinion and love, but that of every body else that knows you, justify my own.—But yet, I will forgive even this, because my Pamela desires it; and I will send a letter myself, to tell Longman what he owes to your interposition, if the estate he has made in my family does not set him above the acceptance of it. And, as to Mrs. Jervis, do you, my dear, write a letter to her, and give her your commands, instantly, on, the receipt of it, to go and take possession of her former charge; for now, my dearest girl, she will be more immediately your servant; and I know you love her so well, that you'll go thither with the more pleasure to find her there.—But don't think, added he, that all this compliance is to be for nothing. Ah, sir! said I, tell me but what I can do,

poor as I am in power, but rich in will; and I will not hesitate one moment. Why then, said he, of your own accord, reward me for my cheerful compliance, with one sweet kiss—I instantly said, Thus, then, dear sir, will I obey; and, oh! you have the sweetest and most generous way in the world, to make that a condition, which gives me double honour, and adds to my obligations. And so I clasped my arms about his neck, and was not ashamed to kiss him once and twice, and three times; once for every forgiven person.

Now, my dearest Pamela, said he, what other things have you to ask? Mr. Williams is already taken care of; and, I hope, will be happy.—Have you nothing to say for John Arnold?

Why, dear sir, said I, you have seen the poor fellow's penitence in my letters.—Yes, my dear, so I have; but that is his penitence for his having served me against you; and, I think, when he would have betrayed me afterwards, he deserves nothing to be said or done for him by either.

But, dear sir, said I, this is a day of jubilee; and the less he deserves, poor fellow, the more will be your goodness. And let me add one word; That as he was divided in his inclinations between his duty to you and good wishes to me, and knew not how to distinguish between the one and the other, when he finds us so happily united by your great goodness to me, he will have no more puzzles in his duty; for he has not failed in any other part of it; but, I hope, will serve you faithfully for the future.

Well, then, suppose I put Mrs. Jewkes in a good way of business, in some inn, and give her John for a husband? And then your gipsy story will be made out, that she will have a husband younger than herself.

You are all goodness, sir, said I. I can freely forgive poor Mrs. Jewkes, and wish her happy. But permit me, sir, to ask, Would not this look like a very heavy punishment to poor John? and as if you could not forgive him, when you are so generous to every body else?

He smiled and said, O my Pamela, this, for a forgiving spirit, is very severe upon poor Jewkes: But I shall never, by the grace of God, have any more such trying services, to put him or the rest upon; and if you can forgive him, I think I may: and so John shall be at your disposal. And now let me know what my Pamela has further to wish?

O, my dearest sir, said I, not a single wish more has your grateful Pamela! My heart is overwhelmed with your goodness! Forgive these tears

of joy, added I: You have left me nothing to pray for, but that God will bless you with life, and health, and honour, and continue to me the blessing of your esteem; and I shall then be the happiest creature in the world.

He clasped me in his arms, and said, You cannot, my dear life, be so happy in me, as I am in you. O how heartily I despise all my former pursuits, and headstrong appetites! What joys, what true joys, flow from virtuous love! joys which the narrow soul of the libertine cannot take in, nor his thoughts conceive! And which I myself, whilst a libertine, had not the least notion of!

But, said he, I expected my dear spouse, my Pamela, had something to ask for herself. But since all her own good is absorbed in the delight her generous heart takes in promoting that of others, it shall be my study to prevent her wishes, and to make her care for herself unnecessary, by my anticipating kindness.

In this manner, my dear parents, is your happy daughter blessed in a husband! O how my exulting heart leaps at the dear, dear word!—And I have nothing to do, but to be humble, and to look up with gratitude to the all-gracious dispenser of these blessings.

So, with a thousand thanks, I afterwards retired to my closet, to write you thus far. And having completed what I purpose for this packet, and put up the kind obliging present, I have nothing more to say, but that I hope soon to see you both, and receive your blessings on this happy, thrice happy occasion. And so, hoping for your prayers, that I may preserve an humble and upright mind to my gracious God, a dutiful gratitude to my dear master and husband—that I may long rejoice in the continuance of these blessings and favours, and that I may preserve, at the same time, an obliging deportment to every one else, I conclude myself, Your ever-dutiful and most happy daughter,

PAMELA B—

O think it not my pride, my dear parents, that sets me on glorying in my change of name! Yours will be always dear to me, and what I shall never be ashamed of, I'm sure: But yet—for such a husband!—What shall I say, since words are too faint to express my gratitude and my joy!

I have taken copies of my master's letter to Mr. Longman, and mine to Mrs. Jervis, which I will send with the further occurrences, when I go to

the other dear house, or give you when I see you, as I now hope soon to do.

Saturday morning, the third of my happy nuptials.

I must still write on, till I come to be settled in the duty of the station to which I am so generously exalted, and to let you participate with me the transporting pleasures that rise from my new condition, and the favours that are hourly heaped upon me by the best of husbands. When I had got my packet for you finished, I then set about writing, as he had kindly directed me, to Mrs. Jervis; and had no difficulty till I came to sign my name; and so I brought it down with me, when I was called to supper, unsigned.

My good master (for I delight, and always shall, to call him by that name) had been writing to Mr. Longman; and he said, pleasantly, See, here, my dearest, what I have written to your Somebody. I read as follows:

'Mr. LONGMAN,

'I have the pleasure to acquaint you, that last Thursday I was married to my beloved Pamela. I have had reason to be disobliged with you, and Mrs. Jervis and Jonathan, not for your kindness to, and regard for, my dear spouse, that now is, but for the manner, in which you appealed to my sister Davers; which has made a very wide breach between her and me. But as it was one of her first requests, that I would overlook what had passed, and reinstate you in all your former charges, I think myself obliged, without the least hesitation, to comply with it. So, if you please, you may enter again upon an office which you have always executed with unquestionable integrity, and to the satisfaction of 'Yours etc.'

'Friday afternoon.'

'I shall set out next Tuesday or Wednesday for Bedfordshire; and desire to find Jonathan, as well as you, in your former offices; in which, I dare say, you'll have the more pleasure, as you have such an early instance of the sentiments of my dear wife, from whose goodness you may expect every agreeable thing. She writes herself to Mrs. Jervis.'

I thanked him most gratefully for his goodness; and afterwards took the above copy of it; and shewed him my letter to Mrs. Jervis, as follows:

'My DEAR MRS. JERVIS,

'I have joyful tidings to communicate to you. For yesterday I was happily married to the best of gentlemen, yours and my beloved master. I

have only now to tell you, that I am inexpressibly happy: that my generous benefactor denies me nothing, and even anticipates my wishes. You may be sure I could not forget my dear Mrs. Jervis; and I made it my request, and had it granted, as soon as asked, that you might return to the kind charge, which you executed with so much advantage to our master's interest, and so much pleasure to all under your direction. All the power that is put into my hands, by the most generous of men, shall be exerted to make every thing easy and agreeable to you: And as I shall soon have the honour of attending my beloved to Bedfordshire, it will be a very considerable addition to my delight, and to my unspeakable obligations to the best of men, to see my dear Mrs. Jervis, and to be received by her with that pleasure, which I promise myself from her affection. For I am, my dear good friend, and always will be,

'Yours, very affectionately, and gratefully,  
PAMELA —.'

He read this letter, and said, 'Tis yours, my dear, and must be good: But don't you put your name to it? Sir, said I, your goodness has given me a right to a very honourable one but as this is the first occasion of the kind, except that to my dear father and mother, I think I ought to shew it you unsigned, that I may not seem over-forward to take advantage of the honour you have done me.

However sweetly humble and requisite, said he, this may appear to my dear Pamela's niceness, it befits me to tell you, that I am every moment more and more pleased with the right you have to my name: and, my dear life, added he, I have only to wish I may be half as worthy as you are of the happy knot so lately knit. He then took a pen himself, and wrote, after Pamela, his most worthy surname; and I under-wrote thus: 'O rejoice with me, my dear Mrs. Jervis, that I am enabled, by God's graciousness, and my dear master's goodness, thus to write myself!'

These letters, and the packet to you, were sent away by Mr. Thomas early this morning.

My dearest master is just gone to take a ride out, and intends to call upon Lady Jones, Mr. Peters, and Sir Simon Darnford, to invite them to chapel and dinner to-morrow; and says, he chooses to do it himself, because the time is so short, they will, perhaps, deny a servant.

I forgot to mention, that Mr. Williams was here yesterday, to ask leave to go to see his new living, and to provide for taking possession of it; and seemed so pleased with my master's kindness and fondness for me, as well as his generous deportment to himself, that he left us in such a disposition, as shewed he was quite happy. I am very glad of it; for it would rejoice me to be an humble means of making all mankind so: And oh! what returns ought I not to make to the divine goodness! and how ought I to strive to diffuse the blessings I experience, to all in my knowledge!—For else, what is it for such a worm as I to be exalted! What is my single happiness, if I suffer it, niggard-like, to extend no farther than to myself?—But then, indeed, do God Almighty's creatures act worthy of the blessings they receive, when they make, or endeavour to make, the whole creation, so far as is in the circle of their power, happy!

Great and good God! as thou hast enlarged my opportunities, enlarge also my will, and make me delight in dispensing to others a portion of that happiness, which I have myself so plentifully received at the hand of thy gracious Providence! Then shall I not be useless in my generation!—Then shall I not stand a single mark of thy goodness to a poor worthless creature, that in herself is of so small account in the scale of beings, a mere cipher on the wrong side of a figure; but shall be placed on the right side; and, though nothing worth in myself, shall give signification by my place, and multiply the blessings I owe to thy goodness, which has distinguished me by so fair a lot!

This, as I conceive, is the indispensable duty of a high condition; and how great must be the condemnation of poor creatures, at the great day of account, when they shall be asked, What uses they have made of the opportunities put into their hands? and are able only to say, We have lived but to ourselves: We have circumscribed all the power thou hast given us into one narrow, selfish, compass: We have heaped up treasures for those who came after us, though we knew not whether they would not make a still worse use of them than we ourselves did! And how can such poor selfish pleaders expect any other sentence, than the dreadful, Depart, ye cursed!

But sure, my dear father and mother, such persons can have no notion of the exalted pleasures that flow from doing good, were there to be no after-account at all!

There is something so satisfactory and pleasing to reflect on the being able to administer comfort and relief to those who stand in need of it, as infinitely, of itself, rewards the beneficent mind. And how often have I experienced this in my good lady's time, though but the second-hand dispenser of her benefits to the poor and sickly, when she made me her almoner!—How have I been affected with the blessings which the miserable have heaped upon her for her goodness, and upon me for being but the humble conveyer of her bounty to them!—And how delighted have I been, when the moving report I have made of a particular distress, has augmented my good lady's first intentions in relief of it!

This I recall with pleasure, because it is now, by the divine goodness, become my part to do those good things she was wont to do: And oh! let me watch myself, that my prosperous state do not make me forget to look up, with due thankfulness, to the Providence which has entrusted me with the power, that so I may not incur a terrible woe by the abuse or neglect of it!

Forgive me these reflections, my dear parents; and let me have your prayers, that I may not find my present happiness a snare to me; but that I may consider, that more and more will be expected from me, in proportion to the power given me; and that I may not so unworthily act, as if I believed I ought to set up my rest in my mean self, and think nothing further to be done, with the opportunities put into my hand, by the divine favour, and the best of men!

Saturday, seven o'clock in the evening.

My master returned home to dinner, in compliment to me, though much pressed to dine with Lady Jones, as he was, also, by Sir Simon, to dine with him. But Mr. Peters could not conveniently provide a preacher for his own church tomorrow morning, at so short a notice; Mr. Williams being gone, as I said, to his new living; but believed he could for the afternoon; and so he promised to give us his company to dinner, and to read afternoon service: and this made my master invite all the rest, as well as him, to dinner, and not to church; and he made them promise to come; and told Mr. Peters, he would send his coach for him and his family.

Miss Darnford told him pleasantly, She would not come, unless he would promise to let her be at his wedding; by which I find Mr. Peters has kept the secret, as my master desired.

He was pleased to give me an airing after dinner in the chariot, and renewed his kind assurances to me, and, if possible, is kinder than ever. This is sweetly comfortable to me, because it shews me he does not repent of his condescensions to me; and it encourages me to look up to him with more satisfaction of mind, and less doubtfulness.

I begged leave to send a guinea to a poor body in the town, that I heard, by Mrs. Jewkes, lay very ill, and was very destitute. He said, Send two, my dear, if you please. Said I, Sir, I will never do any thing of this kind without letting you know what I do. He most generously answered, I shall then, perhaps, have you do less good than you would otherwise do, from a doubt of me; though, I hope, your discretion, and my own temper, which is not avaricious, will make such doubt causeless.

Now, my dear, continued he, I'll tell you how we will order this point, to avoid even the shadow of uneasiness on one side, or doubt on the other.

As to your father and mother, in the first place, they shall be quite out of the question; for I have already determined in my mind about them; and it is thus: They shall go down, if they and you think well of it, to my little Kentish estate; which I once mentioned to you in such a manner, as made you reject it with a nobleness of mind, that gave me pain then, but pleasure since. There is a pretty little farm, and house, untenanted, upon that estate, and tolerably well stocked, and I will further stock it for them; for such industrious folks won't know how to live without some employment; And it shall be theirs for both their lives, without paying any rent; and I will allow them 50l. per annum besides, that they may keep up the stock, and be kind to any other of their relations, without being beholden to you or me for small matters; and for greater, where needful, you shall always have it in your power to accommodate them; for I shall never question your prudence. And we will, so long as God spares our lives, go down, once a year, to see them; and they shall come up, as often as they please, it cannot be too often, to see us: for I mean not this, my dear, to send them from us.—Before I proceed, does my Pamela like this?

O, sir, said I, the English tongue affords not words, or, at least, I have them not, to express sufficiently my gratitude! Teach me, dear sir, continued I, and pressed his dear hand to my lips, teach me some other language, if there be any, that abounds with more grateful terms; that I may not thus be choked with meanings, for which I can find no utterance.



My charmer! says he, your language is all wonderful, as your sentiments; and you most abound, when you seem most to want!—All that I wish, is to find my proposals agreeable to you; and if my first are not, my second shall be, if I can but know what you wish.

Did I say too much, my dearest parents, when I said, He was, if possible, kinder and kinder?—O the blessed man! how my heart is overwhelmed with his goodness!

Well, said he, my dearest, let me desire you to mention this to them, to see if they approve it. But, if it be your choice, and theirs, to have them nearer to you, or even under the same roof with you, I will freely consent to it.

O no, sir, said I, (and I fear almost sinned in my grateful flight,) I am sure they would not choose that; they could not, perhaps, serve God so well if they were to live with you: For, so constantly seeing the hand that blesses them, they would, it may be, as must be my care to avoid, be tempted to look no further in their gratitude, than to the dear dispenser of such innumerable benefits.

Excellent creature! said he: My beloved wants no language, nor sentiments neither; and her charming thoughts, so sweetly expressed, would grace any language; and this is a blessing almost peculiar to my fairest.—Your so kind acceptance, my Pamela, added he, repays the benefit with interest, and leaves me under obligation to your goodness.

But now, my dearest, I will tell you what we will do, with regard to points of your own private charity; for far be it from me, to put under that name the subject we have been mentioning; because that, and more than that, is duty to persons so worthy, and so nearly related to my Pamela, and, as such, to myself.—O how the sweet man outdoes me, in thoughts, words, power, and every thing!

And this, said he, lies in very small compass; for I will allow you two hundred pounds a year, which Longman shall constantly pay you, at fifty pounds a quarter, for your own use, and of which I expect no account; to commence from the day you enter into my other house: I mean, said he, that the first fifty pounds shall then be due; because you shall have something to begin with. And, added the dear generous man, if this be pleasing to you, let it, since you say you want words, be signified by such a sweet kiss as you gave me yesterday. I hesitated not a moment to comply

with these obliging terms, and threw my arms about his dear neck, though in the chariot, and blessed his goodness to me. But, indeed, sir, said I, I cannot bear this generous treatment! He was pleased to say, Don't be uneasy, my dear, about these trifles: God has blessed me with a very good estate, and all of it in a prosperous condition, and generally well tenanted. I lay up money every year, and have, besides, large sums in government and other securities; so that you will find, what I have hitherto promised, is very short of that proportion of my substance, which, as my dearest wife, you have a right to.

In this sweet manner did we pass our time till evening, when the chariot brought us home; and then our supper succeeded in the same agreeable manner. And thus, in a rapturous circle, the time moves on; every hour bringing with it something more delightful than the past!—Sure nobody was ever so blest as I!

Sunday, the fourth day of my happiness.

Not going to chapel this morning, the reason of which I told you, I bestowed the time, from the hour of my beloved's rising, to breakfast, in prayer and thanksgiving, in my closet; and now I begin to be quite easy, cheerful, and free in my spirits; and the rather, as I find myself encouraged by the tranquillity, and pleasing vivacity, in the temper and behaviour of my beloved, who thereby shews he does not repent of his goodness to me.

I attended him to breakfast with great pleasure and freedom, and he seemed quite pleased with me, and said, Now does my dearest begin to look upon me with an air of serenity and satisfaction: it shall be always, added he, my delight to give you occasion for this sweet becoming aspect of confidence and pleasure in me.—My heart, dear sir, said I, is quite easy, and has lost all its foolish tumults, which, combating with my gratitude, might give an unacceptable appearance to my behaviour: but now your goodness, sir, has enabled it to get the better of its uneasy apprehensions, and my heart is all of one piece, and devoted to you, and grateful tranquillity. And could I be so happy as to see you and my good Lady Davers reconciled, I have nothing in this world to wish for more, but the continuance of your favour. He said, I wish this reconciliation, my dearest, as well as you: and I do assure you, more for your sake than my own; and if she would behave tolerably, I would make the terms easier to her, for that reason.

He said, I will lay down one rule for you, my Pamela, to observe in your dress; and I will tell you every thing I like or dislike, as it occurs to me: and I would have you do the same, on your part; that nothing may be upon either of our minds that may occasion the least reservedness.

I have often observed, in married folks, that, in a little while, the lady grows careless in her dress; which, to me, looks as if she would take no pains to secure the affection she had gained; and shews a slight to her husband, that she had not to her lover. Now, you must know, this has always given me great offence; and I should not forgive it, even in my Pamela: though she would have this excuse for herself, that thousands could not make, That she looks lovely in every thing. So, my dear, I shall expect of you always to be dressed by dinner-time, except something extraordinary happens; and this, whether you are to go abroad, or stay at home. For this, my love, will continue to you that sweet ease in your dress and behaviour, which you are so happy a mistress of; and whomsoever I bring home with me to my table, you'll be in readiness to receive them; and will not want to make those foolish apologies to unexpected visitors, that carry with them a reflection on the conduct of those who make them; and, besides, will convince me, that you think yourself obliged to appear as graceful to your husband, as you would to persons less familiar to your sight.

This, dear sir, said I, is a most obliging injunction; and I most heartily thank you for it, and will always take care to obey it.—Why, my dear, said he, you may better do this than half your sex; because they too generally act in such a manner, as if they seemed to think it the privilege of birth and fortune, to turn day into night, and night into day, and are seldom stirring till it is time to sit down to dinner; and so all the good old family rules are reversed: For they breakfast, when they should dine; dine, when they should sup; and sup, when they should go to bed; and, by the help of dear quadrille, sometimes go to bed when they should rise.—In all things but these, my dear, continued he, I expect you to be a lady. And my good mother was one of this oldfashioned cut, and, in all other respects, as worthy a lady as any in the kingdom. And so you have not been used to the new way, and may the easier practise the other.

Dear sir, said I, pray give me more of your sweet injunctions. Why then, continued he, I shall, in the usual course, and generally, if not hindered by

company, like to go to bed with my dearest by eleven; and, if I don't, shan't hinder you. I ordinarily now rise by six in summer. I will allow you to be half an hour after me, or so.

Then you'll have some time you may call your own, till you give me your company to breakfast; which may be always so, as that we may have done at a little after nine.

Then will you have several hours again at your disposal, till two o'clock, when I shall like to sit down at table.

You will then have several useful hours more to employ yourself in, as you shall best like; and I would generally go to supper by eight; and when we are resolved to stick to these oldfashioned rules, as near as we can, we shall have our visitors conform to them too, and expect them from us, and suit themselves accordingly: For I have always observed, that it is in every one's power to prescribe rules to himself. It is only standing a few ridiculous jests at first, and that too from such, generally, as are not the most worthy to be minded; and, after a while, they will say, It signifies nothing to ask him: he will have his own way. There is no putting him out of his bias. He is a regular piece of clock-work, they will joke, and all that: And why, my dear, should we not be so? For man is as frail a piece of machinery as any clock-work whatever; and, by irregularity, is as subject to be disordered.

Then, my dear, continued the charming man, when they see they are received, at my own times, with an open countenance and cheerful heart; when they see plenty and variety at my board, and meet a kind and hearty welcome from us both; they will not offer to break in upon my conditions, nor grudge me my regular hours: And as most of these people have nothing to do, except to rise in a morning, they may as well come to breakfast with us at half an hour after eight, in summer, as at ten or eleven; to dinner at two, as at four, five, or six; and to supper at eight, as at ten or eleven. And then our servants, too, will know, generally, the times of their business, and the hours of their leisure or recess; and we, as well as they, shall reap the benefits of this regularity. And who knows, my dear, but we may revive the good oldfashion in our neighbourhood, by this means?—At least it will be doing our parts towards it; and answering the good lesson I learned at school, Every one mend one. And the worst that will happen will be, that when some of my brother rakes, such as those

who broke in upon us, so unwelcomely, last Thursday, are got out of the way, if that can ever be, and begin to consider who they shall go to dine with in their rambles, they will only say, We must not go to him, for his dinner-time is over; and so they'll reserve me for another time, when they happen to suit it better; or, perhaps, they will take a supper and a bed with me instead of it.

Now, my dearest, continued the kind man, you see here are more of my injunctions, as you call them; and though I will not be so set, as to quarrel, if they are not always exactly complied with; yet, as I know you won't think them unreasonable, I shall be glad they may, as often as they can; and you will give your orders accordingly to your Mrs. Jervis, who is a good woman, and will take pleasure in obeying you.

O dearest, dear sir, said I, have you nothing more to honour me with? You oblige and improve me at the same time.—What a happy lot is mine!

Why, let me see, my dearest, said he—But I think of no more at present: For it would be needless to say how much I value you for your natural sweetness of temper, and that open cheerfulness of countenance, which adorns you, when nothing has given my fairest apprehensions for her virtue: A sweetness, and a cheerfulness, that prepossesses in your favour, at first sight, the mind of every one that beholds you.—I need not, I hope, say, that I would have you diligently preserve this sweet appearance: Let no thwarting accident, no cross fortune, (for we must not expect to be exempt from such, happy as we now are in each other!) deprive this sweet face of this its principal grace: And when any thing displeasing happens, in a quarter of an hour, at farthest, begin to mistrust yourself, and apply to your glass; and if you see a gloom arising, or arisen, banish it instantly; smooth your dear countenance; resume your former composure; and then, my dearest, whose heart must always be seen in her face, and cannot be a hypocrite, will find this a means to smooth her passions also: And if the occasion be too strong for so sudden a conquest, she will know how to do it more effectually, by repairing to her closet, and begging that gracious assistance, which has never yet failed her: And so shall I, my dear, who, as you once but too justly observed, have been too much indulged by my good mother, have an example from you, as well as a pleasure in you, which will never be palled.

One thing, continued he, I have frequently observed at the house of many a gentleman, That when we have unexpectedly visited, or broken in upon the family order laid down by the lady; and especially if any of us have lain under the suspicion of having occasionally seduced our married companion into bad hours, or given indifferent examples, the poor gentleman has been oddly affected at our coming; though the good breeding of the lady has made her just keep up appearances. He has looked so conscious; has been so afraid, as it were, to disoblige; has made so many excuses for some of us, before we had been accused, as have always shewn me how unwelcome we have been; and how much he is obliged to compound with his lady for a tolerable reception of us; and, perhaps, she too, in proportion to the honest man's concern to court her smiles, has been more reserved, stiff, and formal; and has behaved with an indifference and slight that has often made me wish myself out of her house; for too plainly have I seen that it was not his.

This, my dear, you will judge, by my description, has afforded me subject for animadversion upon the married life; for a man may not (though, in the main, he is willing to flatter himself that he is master of his house, and will assert his prerogative upon great occasions, when it is strongly invaded) be always willing to contend; and such women as those I have described, are always ready to take the field, and are worse enemies than the old Parthians, who annoy most when they seem to retreat; and never fail to return to the charge again, and carry on the offensive war, till they have tired out resistance, and made the husband willing, like a vanquished enemy, to compound for small matters, in order to preserve something. At least the poor man does not care to let his friends see his case; and so will not provoke a fire to break out, that he sees (and so do his friends too) the meek lady has much ado to smother; and which, very possibly, burns with a most comfortable ardour, after we are gone.

You smile, my Pamela, said he, at this whimsical picture; and, I am sure, I never shall have reason to include you in these disagreeable outlines; but yet I will say, that I expect from you, whoever comes to my house, that you accustom yourself to one even, uniform complaisance: That no frown take place on your brow: That however ill or well provided we may be for their reception, you shew no flutter or discomposure: That whoever you may have in your company at the time, you signify not, by the least reserved look, that the stranger is come upon you unseasonably,

or at a time you wished he had not. But be facetious, kind, obliging to all; and, if to one more than another, to such as have the least reason to expect it from you, or who are most inferior at the table; for thus will you, my Pamela, cheer the doubting mind, quiet the uneasy heart, and diffuse ease, pleasure, and tranquillity, around my board.

And be sure, my dear, continued he, let no little accidents ruffle your temper. I shall never forget once that I was at Lady Arthur's; and a footman happened to stumble, and let fall a fine china dish, and broke it all to pieces: It was grievous to see the uneasiness it gave the poor lady: And she was so sincere in it, that she suffered it to spread all over the company; and it was a pretty large one too; and not a person in it but turned either her consoler, or fell into stories of the like misfortunes; and so we all became, for the rest of the evening, nothing but blundering footmen, and careless servants, or were turned into broken jars, plates, glasses, tea-cups, and such like brittle substances. And it affected me so much, that, when I came home, I went to bed, and dreamt, that Robin, with the handle of his whip, broke the fore glass of my chariot; and I was so solicitous, methought, to keep the good lady in countenance for her anger, that I broke his head in revenge, and stabbed one of my coach-horses. And all the comfort I had when it was done, methought, was, that I had not exposed myself before company; and there were no sufferers, but guilty Robin, and one innocent coach-horse.

I was exceedingly diverted with the facetious hints, and the pleasant manner in which he gave them; and I promised to improve by the excellent lessons contained in them.

I then went up and dressed myself, as like a bride as I could, in my best clothes; and, on inquiry, hearing my dearest master was gone to walk in the garden, I went to find him out. He was reading in the little alcove; and I said, Sir, am I licensed to intrude upon you?—No, my dear, said he, because you cannot intrude. I am so wholly yours, that, wherever I am, you have not only a right to join me, but you do me a very acceptable favour at the same time.

I have, sir, said I, obeyed your first kind injunction, as to dressing myself before dinner; but may be you are busy, sir. He put up the papers he was reading, and said, I can have no business or pleasure of equal value to your company, my dear. What were you going to say?—Only, sir, to know

if you have any more kind injunctions to give me?—I could hear you talk a whole day together.—You are very obliging, Pamela, said he; but you are so perfectly what I wish, that I might have spared those I gave you; but I was willing you should have a taste of my freedom with you, to put you upon the like with me: For I am confident there can be no friendship lasting, without freedom, and without communicating to one another even the little caprices, if my Pamela can have any such, which may occasion uneasiness to either.

Now, my dear, said he, be so kind as to find some fault with me, and tell me what you would wish me to do, to appear more agreeable to you. O sir, said I, and I could have kissed him, but for shame, (To be sure I shall grow a sad fond hussy,) I have not one single thing to wish for; no, not one!—He saluted me very kindly, and said, He should be sorry if I had, and forbore to speak it. Do you think, my dear sir, said I, that your Pamela has no conscience? Do you think, that because you so kindly oblige her, and delight in obliging her, that she must rack her invention for trials of your goodness, and knows not when she's happy?—O my dearest sir, added I, less than one half of the favours you have so generously conferred upon me, would have exceeded my utmost wishes!

My dear angel, said he, and kissed me again, I shall be troublesome to you with my kisses, if you continue thus sweetly obliging in your actions and expressions. O sir, said I, I have been thinking, as I was dressing myself, what excellent lessons you teach me!

When you commanded me, at your table to cheer the doubting mind and comfort the uneasy heart, and to behave most kindly to those who have least reason to expect it, and are most inferior; how sweetly, in every instance that could possibly occur, have you done this yourself by your poor, unworthy Pamela, till you have diffused, in your own dear words, ease, pleasure, and tranquillity, around my glad heart!

Then again, sir, when you bid me not be disturbed by little accidents, or by strangers coming in upon me unexpectedly, how noble an instance did you give me of this, when, on our happy wedding-day, the coming of Sir Charles Hargrave, and the other two gentlemen, (for which you were quite unprovided, and which hindered our happiness of dining together on that chosen day,) did not so disturb you, but that you entertained the gentlemen pleasantly, and parted with them civilly and kindly! What charming



instances are these, I have been recollecting with pleasure, of your pursuing the doctrine you deliver.

My dear, said he, these observations are very kind in you, and much to my advantage: But if I do not always (for I fear these were too much accidents) so well pursue the doctrines I lay down, my Pamela must not expect that my imperfections will be a plea for her nonobservance of my lessons, as you call them; for, I doubt I shall never be half so perfect as you; and so I cannot permit you to recede in your goodness, though I may find myself unable to advance as I ought in my duty.

I hope, sir, said I, by God's grace, I never shall. I believe it, said he; but I only mention this, knowing my own defects, lest my future lessons should not be so well warranted by my practice, as in the instances you have kindly recollected.

He was pleased to take notice of my dress; and spanning my waist with his hands, said, What a sweet shape is here! It would make one regret to lose it; and yet, my beloved Pamela, I shall think nothing but that loss wanting, to complete my happiness.—I put my bold hand before his mouth, and said, Hush, hush! O fie, sir!—The freest thing you have ever yet said, since I have been yours!—He kissed my hand, and said, Such an innocent wish, my dearest, may be permitted me, because it is the end of the institution.—But say, Would such a case be unwelcome to my Pamela?—I will say, sir, said I, and hid my blushing face on his bosom, that your wishes, in every thing, shall be mine; but, pray, sir, say no more. He kindly saluted me, and thanked me, and changed the subject.—I was not too free, I hope.

Thus we talked, till we heard the coaches; and then he said, Stay here, in the garden, my dear, and I'll bring the company to you. And when he was gone, I passed by the back-door, kneeled down against it, and blessed God for not permitting my then so much desired escape. I went to the pond, and kneeled down on the mossy bank, and again blessed God there, for his mercy in my escape from myself, my then worst enemy, though I thought I had none but enemies, and no friend near me. And so I ought to do in almost every step of this garden, and every room in this house!—And I was bending my steps to the dear little chapel, to make my acknowledgment there; but I saw the company coming towards me.

Miss Darnford said, So, Miss Andrews, how do you do now? O, you look so easy, so sweetly, so pleased, that I know you'll let me dance at your wedding, for I shall long to be there! Lady Jones was pleased to say I looked like an angel: And Mrs. Peters said, I improved upon them every time they saw me. Lady Darnford was also pleased to make me a fine compliment, and said, I looked freer and easier every time she saw me. Dear heart! I wish, thought I, you would spare these compliments; for I shall have some joke, I doubt, passed on me by-and-by, that will make me suffer for all these fine things.

Mr. Peters said, softly, God bless you, dear daughter!—But not so much as my wife knows it.—Sir Simon came in last, and took me by the hand, and said, Mr. B——, by your leave; and kissed my hand five or six times, as if he was mad; and held it with both his, and made a very free jest, by way of compliment, in his way. Well, I think a young rake is hardly tolerable; but an old rake, and an old beau, are two very sad things!—And all this before daughters, women-grown!—I whispered my dearest, a little after, and said, I fear I shall suffer much from Sir Simon's rude jokes, by-and-by, when you reveal the matter.—'Tis his way, my dear, said he; you must now grow above these things.—Miss Nanny Darnford said to me, with a sort of half grave, ironical air,—Well, Miss Andrews, if I may judge by your easy deportment now, to what it was when I saw you last, I hope you will let my sister, if you won't me, see the happy knot tied! For she is quite wild about it.—I courtesied, and only said, You are all very good to me, ladies.—Mr. Peters's niece said, Well, Miss Andrews, I hope, before we part, we shall be told the happy day. My good master heard her, and said, You shall, you shall, madam.—That's pure, said Miss Darnford.

He took me aside, and said softly, Shall I lead them to the alcove, and tell them there, or stay till we go in to dinner?—Neither, sir, I think, said I, I fear I shan't stand it.—Nay, said he, they must know it; I would not have invited them else.—Why then, sir, said I, let it alone till they are going away.—Then, replied he, you must pull off your ring. No, no, sir, said I, that I must not.—Well, said he, do you tell Miss Darnford of it yourself.—Indeed, sir, answered I, I cannot.

Mrs. Jewkes came officiously to ask my master, just then, if she should bring a glass of rhenish and sugar before dinner, for the gentlemen and ladies: And he said, That's well thought of; bring it, Mrs. Jewkes.

And she came, with Nan attending her, with two bottles and glasses, and a salver; and must needs, making a low courtesy, offered first to me; saying, Will your ladyship begin? I coloured like scarlet, and said, No;—my master, to be sure!

But they all took the hint; and Miss Darnford said, I'll be hanged if they have not stolen a wedding! said Mrs. Peters, It must certainly be so! Ah! Mr. Peters.

I'll assure you, said he, I have not married them. Where were you, said she, and Mr. Williams, last Thursday morning? said Sir Simon, Let me alone, let me alone; if any thing has been stolen, I'll find it out! I'm a justice of the peace, you know. And so he took me by the hand, and said, Come, madam, answer me, by the oath you have taken: Are you married or not?

My master smiled, to see me look so like a fool; and I said, Pray, Sir Simon!—Ay, ay, said he; I thought you did not look so smirking upon us for nothing.—Well, then, Pamela, said my master, since your blushes discover you, don't be ashamed, but confess the truth!

Now, said Miss Darnford, I am quite angry; and, said Lady Darnford, I am quite pleased; let me give you joy, dear madam, if it be so. And so they all said, and saluted me all round.—I was vexed it was before Mrs. Jewkes; for she shook her fat sides, and seemed highly pleased to be a means of discovering it.

Nobody, said my master, wishes me joy. No, said Lady Jones, very obligingly, nobody need; for, with such a peerless spouse, you want no good wishes:—And he saluted them; and when he came last to me, said, before them all, Now, my sweet bride, my Pamela, let me conclude with you; for here I began to love, and here I desire to end loving, but not till my life ends.

This was sweetly said, and taken great notice of; and it was doing credit to his own generous choice, and vastly more than I merited.

But I was forced to stand many more jokes afterwards: For Sir Simon said, several times, Come, come, madam, now you are become one of us, I shall be a little less scrupulous than I have been, I'll assure you.

When we came in to dinner, I made no difficulty of what all offered me, the upper end of the table; and performed the honours of it with pretty

tolerable presence of mind, considering. And, with much ado, my good benefactor promising to be down again before winter, we got off the ball; but appointed Tuesday evening, at Lady Darnford's, to take leave of all this good company, who promised to be there, my master designing to set out on Wednesday morning for Bedfordshire.

We had prayers in the little chapel, in the afternoon; but they all wished for the good clerk again, with great encomiums upon you, my dear father; and the company staid supper also, and departed exceeding well satisfied, and with abundance of wishes for the continuance of our mutual happiness; and my master desired Mr. Peters to answer for him to the ringers at the town, if they should hear of it; till our return into this country; and that then he would be bountiful to them, because he would not publicly declare it till he had first done so in Bedfordshire.

Monday, the fifth day.

I have had very little of my dear friend's company this day; for he only staid breakfast with me, and rode out to see a sick gentleman about eighteen miles off, who begged (by a man and horse on purpose) to speak with him, believing he should not recover, and upon part of whose estate my master has a mortgage. He said, My dearest, I shall be very uneasy, if I am obliged to tarry all night from you; but, lest you should be alarmed, if I don't come home by ten, don't expect me: For poor Mr. Carlton and I have pretty large concerns together; and if he should be very ill, and would be comforted by my presence, (as I know he loves me, and his family will be more in my power, if he dies, than I wish for,) charity will not let me refuse.

It is now ten o'clock at night, and I fear he will not return. I fear, for the sake of his poor sick friend, who, I doubt, is worse. Though I know not the gentleman, I am sorry for his own sake, for his family's sake, and for my dear master's sake, who, by his kind expressions, I find, loves him: And, methinks, I should be sorry any grief should touch his generous heart; though yet there is no living in this world, without too many occasions for concern, even in the most prosperous state. And it is fit it should be so; or else, poor wretches, as we are! we should look no farther, but be like sensual travellers on a journey homeward, who, meeting with good entertainment at some inn on the way, put up their rest there, and never think of pursuing their journey to their proper home.—This, I remember, was often a reflection of my good lady's, to whom I owe it.

Eleven o'clock.

Mrs. Jewkes has been with me, and asked if I will have her for a bed-fellow, in want of a better? I thanked her; but I said, I would see how it was to be by myself one night.

I might have mentioned, that I made Mrs. Jewkes dine and sup with me; and she was much pleased with it, and my behaviour to her. And I could see, by her manner, that she was a little struck inwardly at some of her former conduct to me. But, poor wretch! it is much, I fear, because I am what I am; for she has otherwise very little remorse I doubt. Her talk and actions are entirely different from what they used to be, quite circumspect and decent; and I should have thought her virtuous, and even pious, had I never known her in another light.

By this we may see, my dear father and mother, of what force example is, and what is in the power of the heads of families to do: And this shews, that evil examples, in superiors, are doubly pernicious, and doubly culpable, because such persons are bad themselves, and not only do no good, but much harm to others; and the condemnation of such must, to be sure, be so much the greater!—And how much the greater still must my condemnation be, who have had such a religious education under you, and been so well nurtured by my good lady, if I should forget, with all these mercies heaped upon me, what belongs to the station I am preferred to!—O how I long to be doing some good! For all that is past yet, is my dear, dear master's, God bless him! and return him safe to my wishes! for methinks, already, 'tis a week since I saw him. If my love would not be

troublesome and impertinent, I should be nothing else; for I have a true grateful spirit; and I had need to have such a one, for I am poor in every thing but will.

Tuesday morning, eleven o'clock.

My dear, dear—master (I'm sure I should still say; but I will learn to rise to a softer epithet, now-and-then) is not yet come. I hope he is safe and well!—So Mrs. Jewkes and I went to breakfast. But I can do nothing but talk and think of him, and all his kindness to me, and to you, which is still me, more intimately!—I have just received a letter from him, which he wrote overnight, as I find by it, and sent early this morning. This is a copy of it.

TO MRS. ANDREWS

'MY DEAREST PAMELA, Monday night.

'I hope my not coming home this night will not frighten you. You may believe I can't help it. My poor friend is so very ill, that I doubt he can't recover. His desires to have me stay with him are so strong, that I shall sit up all night with him, as it is now near one o'clock in the morning; for he can't bear me out of his sight: And I have made him and his distressed wife and children so easy, in the kindest assurances I could give him of my consideration for him and them, that I am looked upon (as the poor disconsolate widow, as she, I doubt, will soon be, tells me,) as their good angel. I could have wished we had not engaged to the good neighbourhood at Sir Simon's for to-morrow night; but I am so desirous to set out on Wednesday for the other house, that, as well as in return for the civilities of so many good friends, who will be there on purpose, I would not put it off. What I beg of you, therefore, my dear, is, that you would go in the chariot to Sir Simon's, the sooner in the day the better, because you will be diverted with the company, who all so much admire you; and I hope to join you there by your tea-time in the afternoon, which will be better than going home, and returning with you, as it will be six miles difference to me; and I know the good company will excuse my dress, on the occasion. I count every hour of this little absence for a day: for I am, with the utmost sincerity,

*'My dearest love, for ever yours, etc.'*

'If you could go to dine with them, it will be a freedom that would be very pleasing to them; and the more, as they don't expect it.'

I begin to have a little concern, lest his fatigue should be too great, and for the poor sick gentleman and family; but told Mrs. Jewkes, that the least intimation of his choice should be a command to me, and so I would go to dinner there; and ordered the chariot to be got ready to carry me: when a messenger came up, just as I was dressed, to tell her she must come down immediately. I see at the window, that visitors are come; for there is a chariot and six horses, the company gone out of it, and three footmen on horseback; and I think the chariot has coronets. Who can it be, I wonder?—But here I will stop, for I suppose I shall soon know.

Good sirs! how unlucky this is! What shall I do!—Here is Lady Davers come, her own self! and my kind protector a great, great many miles off!—Mrs. Jewkes, out of breath, comes and tells me this, and says, she is inquiring for my master and me. She asked her, it seemed, naughty lady as she is, if I was whored yet! There's a word for a lady's mouth! Mrs. Jewkes says, she knew not what to answer. And my lady said, She is not married, I hope? And said she, I said, No: because you have not owned it yet publicly. My lady said, That was well enough. Said I, I will run away, Mrs. Jewkes; and let the chariot go to the bottom of the elm-walk, and I will steal out of the door unperceived: But she is inquiring for you, madam, replied she, and I said you was within, but going out; and she said, she would see you presently, as soon as she could have patience. What did she call me? said I. The creature, madam; I will see the creature, said she, as soon as I can have patience. Ay, but, said I, the creature won't let her, if she can help it.

Pray, Mrs. Jewkes, favour my escape, for this once; for I am sadly frightened.—Said she, I'll bid the chariot go down, as you order, and wait till you come; and I'll step down and shut the hall door, that you may pass unobserved; for she sits cooling herself in the parlour, over against the staircase. That's a good Mrs. Jewkes! said I: But who has she with her? Her woman, answered she, and her nephew; but he came on horseback, and is going into the stables; and they have three footmen.—And I wish, said I, they were all three hundred miles off!—What shall I do?—So I wrote thus far, and wait impatiently to hear the coast is clear.

Mrs. Jewkes tells me I must come down, or she will come up. What does she call me now? said I. Wench, madam, Bid the wench come down to me. And her nephew and her woman are with her.

Said I, I can't go, and that's enough!—You might contrive it that I might get out, if you would.—Indeed, madam, said she, I cannot; for I went to shut the door, and she bid me let it stand open; and there she sits over against the staircase. Then, said I, I'll get out of the window, I think!—(And fanned myself;) for I am sadly frightened. Laud, madam, said she, I wonder you so much disturb yourself!—You're on the right side the hedge, I'm sure; and I would not be so discomposed for any body. Ay, said I, but who can help constitution? I dare say you would no more be so discomposed, that I can help it.—Said she, Indeed, madam, if it was to me, I would put on an air as mistress of the house, as you are, and go and salute her ladyship, and bid her welcome. Ay, ay, replied I, fine talking!—But how unlucky this is, your good master is not at home!

What answer shall I give her, said she, to her desiring to see you?—Tell her, said I, I am sick a-bed; I'm dying, and must not be disturbed; I'm gone out—or any thing.

But her woman came up to me just as I had uttered this, and said, How do you do, Mrs. Pamela? My lady desires to speak to you. So I must go.—Sure she won't beat me!—Oh that my dear protector was at home!

Well, now I will tell you all that happened in this frightful interview.—And very bad it was.

I went down, dressed as I was, and my gloves on, and my fan in my hand, to be just ready to step into the chariot, when I could get away; and I thought all my trembling fits had been over now; but I was mistaken; for I trembled sadly. Yet resolved to put on as good an air as I could.

So I went to the parlour, and said, making a very low courtesy, Your servant, my good lady! And your servant again, said she, my lady, for I think you are dressed out like one.

A charming girl, though! said her rakish nephew, and swore a great oath: Dear aunt, forgive me, but I must kiss her; and was coming to me. And I said, Forbear, uncivil gentleman! I won't be used freely. Jackey, said my lady, sit down, and don't touch the creature—She's proud enough already. There's a great difference in her air, I'll assure you, since I saw her last.

Well, child, said she, sneeringly, how dost find thyself? Thou'rt mightily come on, of late!—I hear strange reports about thee!—Thou'rt almost got into fool's paradise, I doubt!—And wilt find thyself terribly mistaken in a



little while, if thou thinkest my brother will disgrace his family, to humour thy baby-face!

I see, said I, sadly vexed, (her woman and nephew smiling by,) your ladyship has no very important commands for me; and I beg leave to withdraw. Beck, said she to her woman, shut the door, my young lady and I must not have done so soon.

Where's your well-mannered deceiver gone, child?—says she.—Said I, When your ladyship is pleased to speak intelligibly, I shall know how to answer.

Well, but my dear child, said she, in drollery, don't be too pert neither, I beseech thee. Thou wilt not find thy master's sister half so ready to take thy freedoms, as thy mannerly master is!—So, a little of that modesty and humility that my mother's waiting-maid used to shew, will become thee better than the airs thou givest thyself, since my mother's son has taught thee to forget thyself.

I would beg, said I, one favour of your ladyship, That if you would have me keep my distance, you will not forget your own degree.—Why, suppose, Miss Pert, I should forget my degree, wouldst thou not keep thy distance then?

If you, madam, said I, lessen the distance yourself, you will descend to my level, and make an equality, which I don't presume to think of; for I can't descend lower than I am—at least in your ladyship's esteem!

Did I not tell you, Jackey, said she, that I should have a wit to talk to?—He, who swears like a fine gentleman at every word, rapped out an oath, and said, drolling, I think, Mrs. Pamela, if I may be so bold as to say so, you should know you are speaking to Lady Davers!—Sir, said I, I hope there was no need of your information, and so I can't thank you for it; and am sorry you seem to think it wants an oath to convince me of the truth of it.

He looked more foolish than I, at this, if possible, not expecting such a reprimand.—And said, at last, Why, Mrs. Pamela, you put me half out of countenance with your witty reproof!—Sir, said I, you seem quite a fine gentleman; and it will not be easily done, I dare say.

How now, pert one, said my lady, do you know whom you talk to?—I think I do not, madam, replied I: and for fear I should forget myself more,

I'll withdraw. Your ladyship's servant, said I; and was going: but she rose, and gave me a push, and pulled a chair, and, setting the back against the door, sat down in it.

Well, said I, I can bear anything at your ladyship's hands; but I was ready to cry though. And I went, and sat down, and fanned myself, at the other end of the room.

Her woman, who stood all the time, said softly, Mrs. Pamela, you should not sit in my lady's presence. And my lady, though she did not hear her, said, You shall sit down, child, in the room where I am, when I give you leave.

So I stood up, and said, When your ladyship will hardly permit me to stand, one might be indulged to sit down. But I ask you, said she, Whither your master is gone? To one Mr. Carlton, madam, about eighteen miles off, who is very sick. And when does he come home?—This evening, madam. And where are you going? To a gentleman's house in the town, madam.—And how was you to go? In the chariot, madam.—Why, you must be a lady in time, to be sure!—I believe you'd become a chariot mighty well, child!—Was you ever out in it with your master?

Pray, your ladyship, said I, a little too pertly, perhaps, be pleased to ask half a dozen such questions together; because one answer may do for all!—Why, bold-face, said she, you'll forget your distance, and bring me to your level before my time.

I could no longer refrain tears, but said, Pray your ladyship, let me ask what I have done, to be thus severely treated? I never did your ladyship any harm. And if you think I am deceived, as you was pleased to hint, I should be more entitled to your pity, than your anger.

She rose, and took me by the hand, and led me to her chair; and then sat down; and still holding my hand, said, Why Pamela, I did indeed pity you while I thought you innocent; and when my brother seized you, and brought you down hither, without your consent, I was concerned for you; and I was still more concerned for you, and loved you, when I heard of your virtue and resistance, and your laudable efforts to get away from him. But when, as I fear, you have suffered yourself to be prevailed upon, and have lost your innocence, and added another to the number of the fools he has ruined, (This shocked me a little,) I cannot help shewing my displeasure to you.

Madam, replied I, I must beg no hasty judgment; I have not lost my innocence.—Take care, take care, Pamela! said she: don't lose your veracity, as well as your honour!—Why are you here, when you are at full liberty to go whither you please?—I will make one proposal to you, and if you are innocent, I am sure you'll accept it. Will you go and live with me?—I will instantly set out with you in my chariot, and not stay half an hour longer in this house, if you'll go with me.—Now, if you are innocent, and willing to keep so, deny me, if you can.

I am innocent, madam, replied I, and willing to keep so; and yet I cannot consent to this. Then, said she, very mannerly, Thou liest, child, that's all: and I give thee up!

And so she arose, and walked about the room in great wrath. Her nephew and her woman said, Your ladyship's very good; 'tis a plain case; a very plain case!

I would have removed the chair, to have gone out; but her nephew came and sat in it. This provoked me; for I thought I should be unworthy of the honour I was raised to, though I was afraid to own it, if I did not shew some spirit; and I said, What, sir, is your pretence in this house, to keep me a prisoner here? Because, said he—I like it.—Do you so, sir? replied I: if that is the answer of a gentleman to such an one as I, it would not, I dare say, be the answer of a gentleman to a gentleman.—My lady! my lady! said he, a challenge, a challenge, by gad! No, sir, said I, I am of a sex that gives no challenges; and you think so too, or you would not give this occasion for the word.

Said my lady, Don't be surprised, nephew; the wench could not talk thus, if she had not been her master's bed-fellow.—Pamela, Pamela, said she, and tapped me upon the shoulder two or three times, in anger, thou hast lost thy innocence, girl; and thou hast got some of thy bold master's assurance, and art fit to go any where.—Then, and please your ladyship, said I, I am unworthy of your presence, and desire I may quit it.

No, replied she, I will know first what reason you can give for not accepting my proposal, if you are innocent? I can give, said I, a very good one: but I beg to be excused. I will hear it, said she. Why, then, answered I, I should perhaps have less reason to like this gentleman, than where I am.

Well then, said she, I'll put you to another trial. I'll set out this moment with you to your father and mother, and give you up safe to them. What do

you say to that?—Ay, Mrs. Pamela, said her nephew, now what does your innocence say to that?—'Fore gad, madam, you have puzzled her now.

Be pleased, madam, said I, to call off this fine gentleman. Your kindness in these proposals makes me think you would not have me baited. I'll be d——d, said he, if she does not make me a bull-dog! Why she'll toss us all by and by! Sir, said I, you indeed behave as if you were in a bear-garden.

Jackey, be quiet, said my lady. You only give her a pretence to evade my questions. Come, answer me, Pamela. I will, madam, said I, and it is thus: I have no occasion to be beholden to your ladyship for this honour; for I am to set out to-morrow morning on the way to my parents.—Now again thou liest, wench!—I am not of quality, said I, to answer such language.—Once again, said she, provoke me not, by these reflections, and this pertness; if thou dost, I shall do something by thee unworthy of myself. That, thought I, you have done already; but I ventured not to say so. But who is to carry you, said she, to your father and mother? Who my master pleases, madam, said I. Ay, said she, I doubt not thou wilt do every thing he pleases, if thou hast not already. Why now tell me, Pamela, from thy heart, hast thou not been in bed with thy master? Ha, wench!—I was quite shocked at this, and said, I wonder how your ladyship can use me thus!—I am sure you can expect no answer; and my sex, and my tender years, might exempt me from such treatment, from a person of your ladyship's birth and quality, and who, be the distance ever so great, is of the same sex with me.

Thou art a confident wench, said she, I see!—Pray, madam, said I, let me beg you to permit me to go. I am waited for in the town, to dinner. No, replied she, I can't spare you; and whomsoever you are to go to, will excuse you, when they are told 'tis I that command you not to go;—and you may excuse it too, young Lady Would-be, if you consider, that it is the unexpected coming of your late lady's daughter, and your master's sister, that commands your stay.

But a pre-engagement, your ladyship will consider, is something.—Ay, so it is; but I know not what reason waiting-maids have to assume these airs of pre-engagements! Oh, Pamela, Pamela, I am sorry for thy thus aping thy betters, and giving thyself such airs: I see thou'rt quite spoiled! Of a modest, innocent girl, that thou wast, and humble too, thou art now fit for nothing in the world, but what I fear thou art.

Why, please your ladyship, said her kinsman, what signifies all you say? The matter's over with her, no doubt; and she likes it; and she is in a fairy-dream, and 'tis pity to awaken her before her dream's out.—Bad as you take me to be, madam, said I, I am not used to such language or reflections as this gentleman bestows upon me; and I won't bear it.

Well, Jackey, said she, be silent; and, shaking her head, Poor girl!—said she—what a sweet innocence is here destroyed!—A thousand pities!—I could cry over her, if that would do her good! But she is quite lost, quite undone; and then has assumed a carriage upon it, that all those creatures are distinguished by!

I cried sadly for vexation; and said, Say what you please, madam; if I can help it, I will not answer another word.

Mrs. Jewkes came in, and asked if her ladyship was ready for dinner? She said, Yes. I would have gone out with her but my lady said, taking my hand, she could not spare me. And, miss, said she, you may pull off your gloves, and lay your fan by, for you shan't go; and, if you behave well, you shall wait upon me at dinner, and then I shall have a little further talk with you.

Mrs. Jewkes said to me, Madam, may I speak one word with you?—I can't tell, Mrs. Jewkes, said I; for my lady holds my hand, and you see I am a kind of prisoner.

What you have to say, Mrs. Jewkes, said she, you may speak before me. But she went out, and seemed vexed for me; and she says, I looked like the very scarlet.

The cloth was laid in another parlour, and for three persons, and she led me in: Come, my little dear, said she, with a sneer, I'll hand you in; and I would have you think it as well as if it was my brother.

What a sad case, thought I, should I be in, if I were as naughty as she thinks me! It was bad enough as it was.

Jackey, said my lady, come, let us go to dinner. She said to her woman, Do you, Beck, help Pamela to 'tend us; we will have no men-fellows.—Come, my young lady, shall I help you off with your white gloves? I have not, madam, said I, deserved this at your ladyship's hands.

Mrs. Jewkes, coming in with the first dish, she said, Do you expect any body else, Mrs. Jewkes, that you lay the cloth for three? said she, I hoped

your ladyship and madam would have been so well reconciled, that she would have sat down too.—What means the clownish woman? said my lady, in great disdain: Could you think the creature should sit down with me? She does, madam, and please your ladyship, with my master.—I doubt it not, good woman, said she, and lies with him too, does she not? Answer me, fat-face!—How these ladies are privileged.

If she does, madam, said she, there may be a reason for it, perhaps! and went out.—So! said she, has the wench got thee over too? Come, my little dear, pull off thy gloves, I say; and off she pulled my left glove herself, and spied my ring. O my dear God! said she, if the wench has not got a ring!—Well, this is a pretty piece of foolery, indeed! Dost know, my friend, that thou art miserably tricked? And so, poor innocent, thou hast made a fine exchange, hast thou not? Thy honesty for this bauble? And, I'll warrant, my little dear has topped her part, and paraded it like any real wife; and so mimics still the condition!—Why, said she, and turned me round, thou art as mincing as any bride! No wonder thou art thus tricked out, and talkest of thy pre-engagements! Pr'ythee, child, walk before me to that glass; survey thyself, and come back to me, that I may see how finely thou can'st act the theatrical part given thee!

I was then resolved to try to be silent, although most sadly vexed.—So I went and sat me down in the window, and she took her place at the upper end of the table; and her saucy Jackey, fleering at me most provokingly, sat down by her. Said he, Shall not the bride sit down by us, madam? Ay, well thought of! said my lady: Pray, Mrs. Bride, your pardon for sitting down in your place!—I said nothing.

Said she, with a poor pun, Thou hast some modesty, however, child! for thou can'st not stand it, so must sit down, though in my presence!—I still kept my seat, and said nothing.—Thought I, this is a sad thing, that I am hindered too from shewing my duty where it is most due, and shall have anger there too, may be, if my dear master should be there before me!—So she ate some soup, as did her kinsman; and then, as she was cutting up a fowl, said, If thou longest, my little dear, I will help thee to a pinion, or breast, or any thing. But may be, child, said he, thou likest the rump; shall I bring it thee? And then laughed like an idiot, for all he is a lord's son, and may be a lord himself.—For he is the son of Lord ——; and his mother, who was Lord Davers's sister, being dead, he has received what education

he has, from Lord Davers's direction. Poor wretch! for all his greatness! he'll ne'er die for a plot—at least of his own hatching. If I could then have gone up, I would have given you his picture. But, for one of 25 or 26 years of age, much about the age of my dear master, he is a most odd mortal.

Pamela, said my lady, help me to a glass of wine. No, Beck, said she, you shan't; for she was offering to do it. I will have my lady bride confer that honour upon me; and then I shall see if she can stand up. I was silent, and never stirred.

Dost hear, chastity? said she, help me to a glass of wine, when I bid thee.—What! not stir? Then I'll come and help thee to one. Still I stirred not, and, fanning myself, continued silent. Said she, When I have asked thee, meek-one, half a dozen questions together, I suppose thou wilt answer them all at once! Pretty creature, is not that it?

I was so vexed, I bit a piece of my fan out, not knowing what I did; but still I said nothing, and did nothing but flutter it, and fan myself.

I believe, said she, my next question will make up half a dozen; and then, modest one, I shall be entitled to an answer.

He rose and brought the bottle and glass; Come, said he, Mrs. Bride, be pleased to help my lady, and I will be your deputy. Sir, replied I, it is in a good hand; help my lady yourself.—Why, creature, said she, dost thou think thyself above it?—And then flew into a passion:—Insolence! continued she, this moment, when I bid you, know your duty, and give me a glass of wine; or—

So I took a little spirit then—Thought I, I can but be beat.—If, said I, to attend your ladyship at table, or even kneel at your feet, was required of me, I would most gladly do it, were I only the person you think me; but, if it be to triumph over one who has received honours, that she thinks require her to act another part, not to be utterly unworthy of them, I must say, I cannot do it.

She seemed quite surprised, and looked now upon her kinsman, and then upon her woman—I'm astonished—quite astonished!—Well, then, I suppose you would have me conclude you my brother's wife; could you not?

Your ladyship, said I, compels me to say this!—Well, returned she, but dost thou thyself think thou art so?—Silence, said her kinsman, gives

consent. 'Tis plain enough she does. Shall I rise, madam, and pay my duty to my new aunt?

Tell me, said my lady, what, in the name of impudence, possesses thee to dare to look upon thyself as my sister?—Madam, replied I, that is a question will better become your most worthy brother to answer, than me.

She was rising in great wrath: but her woman said, Good your ladyship, you'll do yourself more harm than her; and if the poor girl has been deluded so, as you have heard, with the sham marriage, she'll be more deserving of your ladyship's pity than anger. True, Beck, very true, said my lady; but there's no bearing the impudence of the creature in the mean time.

I would have gone out at the door, but her kinsman ran and set his back against it. I expected bad treatment from her pride, and violent temper; but this was worse than I could have thought of. And I said to him, Sir, when my master comes to know your rude behaviour, you will, may be, have cause to repent it: and went and sat down in the window again.

Another challenge, by gad! said he; but I am glad she says her master!—You see, madam, she herself does not believe she is married, and so has not been so much deluded as you think for: And, coming to me with a most barbarous air of insult, he said, kneeling on one knee before me, My new aunt, your blessing or your curse, I care not which; but quickly give me one or other, that I may not lose my dinner!

I gave him a most contemptuous look: Tinselled toy, said I, (for he was laced all over), twenty or thirty years hence, when you are at age, I shall know how to answer you better; mean time, sport with your footman, and not with me! and so I removed to another window nearer the door, and he looked like a sad fool, as he is.

Beck, Beck, said my lady, this is not to be borne! Was ever the like heard! Is my kinsman and Lord Davers's to be thus used by such a slut? And was coming to me: And indeed I began to be afraid; for I have but a poor heart, after all. But Mrs. Jewkes hearing high words, came in again, with the second course, and said, Pray your ladyship, don't so discompose yourself. I am afraid this day's business will make matters wider than ever between your good ladyship and your brother: For my master doats upon madam.



Woman, said she, do thou be silent! Sure, I that was born in this house, may have some privilege in it, without being talked to by the saucy servants in it!

I beg pardon, madam, replied Mrs. Jewkes; and, turning to me, said, Madam, my master will take it very ill if you make him wait for you thus. So I rose to go out; but my lady said, If it was only for that reason she shan't go.—And went to the door and shut it, and said to Mrs. Jewkes, Woman, don't come again till I call you; and coming to me, took my hand, and said, Find your legs, miss, if you please.

I stood up, and she tapped my cheek! Oh, says she, that scarlet glow shews what a rancorous little heart thou hast, if thou durst shew it! but come this way; and so led me to her chair: Stand there, said she, and answer me a few questions while I dine, and I'll dismiss thee, till I call thy impudent master to account; and then I'll have you face to face, and all this mystery of iniquity shall be unravelled; for, between you, I will come to the bottom of it.

When she had sat down, I moved to the window on the other side of the parlour, looking into the private garden; and her woman said, Mrs. Pamela, don't make my lady angry. Stand by her ladyship, as she bids you. Said I, Pray, good now, let it suffice you to attend your lady's commands, and don't lay yours upon me.—Your pardon, sweet Mrs. Pamela, said she. Times are much altered with you, I'll assure you! said I, Her ladyship has a very good plea to be free in the house that she was born in; but you may as well confine your freedoms to the house in which you had your breedings. Why, how now, Mrs. Pamela, said she; since you provoke me to it, I'll tell you a piece of my mind. Hush, hush, good woman, said I, alluding to my lady's language to Mrs. Jewkes, my lady wants not your assistance:—Besides, I can't scold!

The woman was ready to flutter with vexation; and Lord Jackey laughed as if he would burst his sides: G—d d—n me, Beck, said he, you'd better let her alone to my lady here for she'll be too many for twenty such as you and I!—And then he laughed again, and repeated—I can't scold, quoth-a! but, by gad, miss, you can speak d——d spiteful words, I can tell you that!—Poor Beck, poor Beck!—'Fore gad, she's quite dumbfounded!

Well, but Pamela, said my lady, come hither, and tell me truly, Dost thou think thyself really married?—Said I, and approached her chair, My good

lady, I'll answer all your commands, if you'll have patience with me, and not be so angry as you are: But I can't bear to be used thus by this gentleman, and your ladyship's woman. Child, said she, thou art very impertinent to my kinsman; thou can'st not be civil to me; and my ladyship's woman is much thy betters. But that's not the thing!—Dost thou think thou art really married?

I see, madam, said I, you are resolved not to be pleased with any answer I shall return: If I should say, I am not, then your ladyship will call me hard names, and, perhaps, I should tell a fib. If I should say, I am, your ladyship will ask, how I have the impudence to be so?—and will call it a sham-marriage. I will, said she, be answered more directly. Why, what, madam, does it signify what I think? Your ladyship will believe as you please.

But can'st thou have the vanity, the pride, the folly, said she, to think thyself actually married to my brother? He is no fool, child; and libertine enough of conscience; and thou art not the first in the list of his credulous harlots.—Well, well, said I, (and was in a sad flutter,) as I am easy, and pleased with my lot, pray, madam, let me continue so, as long as I can. It will be time enough for me to know the worst, when the worst comes. And if it should be so bad, your ladyship should pity me, rather than thus torment me before my time.

Well, said she, but dost not think I am concerned, that a young wench, whom my poor dear mother loved so well, should thus cast herself away, and suffer herself to be deluded and undone, after such a noble stand as thou madst for so long a time?

I think myself far from being deluded and undone, and am as innocent and virtuous as ever I was in my life. Thou liest, child, said she.

So your ladyship told me twice before.

She gave me a slap on the hand for this; and I made a low courtesy, and said, I humbly thank your ladyship! but I could not refrain tears: And added, Your dear brother, madam, however, won't thank your ladyship for this usage of me, though I do. Come a little nearer me, my dear, said she, and thou shalt have a little more than that to tell him of, if thou think'st thou hast not made mischief enough already between a sister and brother. But, child, if he was here, I would serve thee worse, and him too. I wish he

was, said I.—Dost thou threaten me, mischief-maker, and insolent as thou art?

Now, pray, madam, said I, (but got to a little distance,) be pleased to reflect upon all that you have said to me, since I have had the honour, or rather misfortune, to come into your presence; whether you have said one thing befitting your ladyship's degree to me, even supposing I was the wench and the creature you imagine me to be?—Come hither, my pert dear, replied she, come but within my reach for one moment, and I'll answer thee as thou deservest.

To be sure she meant to box my ears. But I should not be worthy my happy lot if I could not shew some spirit.

When the cloth was taken away, I said, I suppose I may now depart your presence, madam? I suppose not, said she. Why, I'll lay thee a wager, child, thy stomach's too full to eat, and so thou may'st fast till thy mannerly master comes home.

Pray your ladyship, said her woman, let the poor girl sit down at table with Mrs. Jewkes and me.—Said I, You are very kind, Mrs. Worden; but times, as you said, are much altered with me; and I have been of late so much honoured with better company, that I can't stoop to yours.

Was ever such confidence! said my lady.—Poor Beck! poor Beck! said her kinsman; why she beats you quite out of the pit!—Will your ladyship, said I, be so good as to tell me how long I am to tarry? For you'll please to see by that letter, that I am obliged to attend my master's commands. And so I gave her the dear gentleman's letter from Mr. Carlton's, which I thought would make her use me better, as she might judge by it of the honour done me by him. Ay, said she, this is my worthy brother's hand. It is directed to Mrs. Andrews. That's to you, I suppose, child? And so she ran on, making remarks as she went along, in this manner:

My dearest PAMELA,—'Mighty well!'—I hope my not coming home this night, will not frighten you!—'Vastly tender, indeed!—And did it frighten you, child?'—You may believe I can't help it. 'No, to be sure!—A person in thy way of life, is more tenderly used than an honest wife. But mark the end of it!'—I could have wished—'Pr'ythee, Jackey, mind this,'—we—'mind the significant we,'—had not engaged to the good neighbourhood, at Sir Simon's, for to-morrow night.—'Why, does the good neighbourhood, and does Sir Simon, permit thy visits, child? They shall

have none of mine, then, I'll assure them!"—But I am so desirous to set out on Wednesday for the other house—"So, Jackey, but we just nicked it, I find!"—that, as well as in return for the civilities of so many good friends, who will be there on purpose, I would not put it off.—'Now mind, Jackey.'—What I beg of you—'Mind the wretch, that could use me and your uncle as he has done; he is turned beggar to this creature!'—I beg of you, therefore, my dear—'My dear! there's for you!—I wish I may not be quite sick before I get through.'—What I beg of you, therefore, my dear, [and then she looked me full in the face,] is, that you will go in the chariot to Sir Simon's, the sooner in the day the better;—'Dear heart! and why so, when WE were not expected till night? Why, pray observe the reason—Hem!' [said she]—Because you will be diverted with the company;—'Mighty kind, indeed!'—who all—'Jackey, Jackey, mind this,'—who all so much admire you. 'Now he'd ha' been hanged before he would have said so complaisant a thing, had he been married, I'm sure!'—Very true, aunt, said he: A plain case that!—[Thought I, that's hard upon poor matrimony, though I hope my lady don't find it so. But I durst not speak out.]—Who all so much admire you, [said she,] 'I must repeat that—Pretty miss!—I wish thou wast as admirable for thy virtue, as for that baby-face of thine!'—And I hope to join you there by your tea-time in the afternoon!—'So, you're in very good time, child, an hour or two hence, to answer all your important pre-engagements!'—which will be better than going home, and returning with you; as it will be six miles difference to me; and I know the good company will excuse my dress on this occasion.—'Very true; any dress is good enough, I'm sure, for such company as admire thee, child, for a companion, in thy ruined state!—Jackey, Jackey, mind, mind, again! more fine things still!'—I count every hour of this little absence for a day!—'There's for you! Let me repeat it'—I count every hour of this little absence for a day!—'Mind, too, the wit of the good man! One may see love is a new thing to him. Here is a very tedious time gone since he saw his deary; no less than, according to his amorous calculation, a dozen days and nights, at least! and yet, TEDIOUS as it is, it is but a LITTLE ABSENCE. Well said, my good, accurate, and consistent brother!—But wise men in love are always the greatest simpletons!—But now cones the reason why this LITTLE ABSENCE, which, at the same time, is SO GREAT an ABSENCE, is so tedious:'—FOR I am—'Ay, now for it!'—with the UTMOST sincerity, my dearest love—'Out upon DEAREST love! I

shall never love the word again! Pray bid your uncle never call me dearest love, Jackey!'—For ever yours!—'But, brother, thou liest!—Thou knowest thou dost.—And so, my good Lady Andrews, or what shall I call you? Your dearest love will be for ever yours! And hast thou the vanity to believe this?—But stay, here is a postscript. The poor man knew not when to have done to his dearest love.—He's sadly in for't, truly! Why, his dearest love, you are mighty happy in such a lover!'—If you could go to dine with them—'Cry you mercy, my dearest love, now comes the pre-engagement!'—it will be a freedom that will be very pleasing to them, and the more, as they don't expect it.

Well, so much for this kind letter! But you see you cannot honour this admiring company with this little expected, and, but in complaisance to his folly, I dare say, little desired freedom. And I cannot forbear admiring you so much myself, my dearest love, that I will not spare you at all, this whole evening: For 'tis a little hard, if thy master's sister may not be blest a little bit with thy charming company.

So I found I had shewn her my letter to very little purpose, and repented it several times, as she read on.—Well, then, said I, I hope your ladyship will give me leave to send my excuses to your good brother, and say, that your ladyship is come, and is so fond of me, that you will not let me leave you.—Pretty creature, said she; and wantest thou thy good master to come, and quarrel with his sister on thy account?—But thou shalt not stir from my presence; and I would now ask thee, What it is thou meanest by shewing me this letter?—Why, madam, said I, to shew your ladyship how I was engaged for this day and evening.—And for nothing else? said she. Why, I can't tell, madam, said I: But if you can collect from it any other circumstances, I might hope I should not be the worse treated.

I saw her eyes began to sparkle with passion: and she took my hand, and said, grasping it very hard, I know, confident creature, that thou shewedst it me to insult me!—You shewed it me, to let me see, that he could be civiller to a beggar born, than to me, or to my good Lord Davers!—You shewed it me, as if you'd have me to be as credulous a fool as yourself, to believe your marriage true, when I know the whole trick of it, and have reason to believe you do too; and you shewed it me, to upbraid me with his stooping to such painted dirt, to the disgrace of a family, ancient and

untainted beyond most in the kingdom. And now will I give thee one hundred guineas for one bold word, that I may fell thee at my foot!

Was not this very dreadful! To be sure, I had better have kept the letter from her. I was quite frightened!—And this fearful menace, and her fiery eyes, and rageful countenance, made me lose all my courage.—So I said, weeping, Good your ladyship, pity me!—Indeed I am honest; indeed I am virtuous; indeed I would not do a bad thing for the world!

Though I know, said she, the whole trick of thy pretended marriage, and thy foolish ring here, and all the rest of the wicked nonsense, yet I should not have patience with thee, if thou shouldst but offer to let me know thy vanity prompts thee to believe thou art married to my brother!—I could not bear the thought!—So take care, Pamela; take care, beggarly brat; take care.

Good madam, said I, spare my dear parents. They are honest and industrious: they were once in a very creditable way, and never were beggars. Misfortunes may attend any body: And I can bear the cruellest imputations on myself, because I know my innocence; but upon such honest, industrious parents, who went through the greatest trials, without being beholden to any thing but God's blessing, and their own hard labour; I cannot bear reflection.

What! art thou setting up for a family, creature as thou art! God give me patience with thee! I suppose my brother's folly, and his wickedness, together, will, in a little while, occasion a search at the heralds' office, to set out thy wretched obscurity! Provoke me, I desire thou wilt! One hundred guineas will I give thee, to say but thou thinkest thou art married to my brother.

Your ladyship, I hope, won't kill me: And since nothing I can say will please you, but your ladyship is resolved to quarrel with me; since I must not say what I think, on one hand nor another; whatever your ladyship designs by me, be pleased to do, and let me depart your presence!

She gave me a slap on the hand, and reached to box my ear; but Mrs. Jewkes hearkening without, and her woman too, they both came in at that instant; and Mrs. Jewkes said, pushing herself in between us; Your ladyship knows not what you do! Indeed you don't! My master would never forgive me, if I suffered, in his house, one he so dearly loves, to be so used; and it must not be, though you are Lady Davers. Her woman too

interposed, and told her, I was not worth her ladyship's anger. But she was like a person beside herself.

I offered to go out, and Mrs. Jewkes took my hand to lead me out: But her kinsman set his back against the door, and put his hand to his sword, and said, I should not go, till his aunt permitted it. He drew it half-way, and I was so terrified, that I cried out, Oh, the sword! the sword! and, not knowing what I did, I ran to my lady herself, and clasped my arms about her, forgetting, just then, how much she was my enemy, and said, sinking on my knees, Defend me, good your ladyship! the sword! the sword!—Mrs. Jewkes said, Oh! my lady will fall into fits! But Lady Davers was herself so startled at the matter being carried so far, that she did not mind her words, and said, Jackey, don't draw your sword!—You see, as great as her spirit is, she can't bear that.

Come, said she, be comforted; he shan't frighten you!—I'll try to overcome my anger, and will pity you. So, wench, rise up, and don't be foolish. Mrs. Jewkes held her salts to my nose, and I did not faint. And my lady said, Mrs. Jewkes, if you would be forgiven, leave Pamela and me by ourselves; and, Jackey, do you withdraw; only you, Beck, stay.

So I sat down in the window, all in a sad fluster; for, to be sure, I was sadly frightened.—Said her woman, You should not sit in my lady's presence, Mrs. Pamela. Yes, let her sit till she is a little recovered of her fright, said my lady, and do you set my chair by her. And so she sat over-against me, and said, To be sure, Pamela, you have been very provoking with your tongue, to be sure you have, as well upon my nephew, (who is a man of quality too,) as me. And palliating her cruel usage, and beginning, I suppose, to think herself she had carried it further than she could answer it to her brother, she wanted to lay the fault upon me. Own, said she, you have been very saucy; and beg my pardon, and beg Jackey's pardon, and I will try to pity you. For you are a sweet girl, after all; if you had but held out, and been honest.

'Tis injurious to me, madam, said I, to imagine I am not honest!—Said she, Have you not been a-bed with my brother? tell me that. Your ladyship, replied I, asks your questions in a strange way, and in strange words.

O! your delicacy is wounded, I suppose, by my plain questions!—This niceness will soon leave you, wench: It will, indeed. But answer me

directly. Then your ladyship's next question, said I, will be, Am I married? And you won't bear my answer to that—and will beat me again.

I han't beat you yet; have I, Beck? said she. So you want to make out a story, do you?—But, indeed, I can't bear thou shouldst so much as think thou art my sister. I know the whole trick of it; and so, 'tis my opinion, dost thou. It is only thy little cunning, that it might look like a cloak to thy yielding, and get better terms from him. Pr'ythee, pr'ythee, wench, thou seest I know the world a little;—almost as much at thirty-two, as thou dost at sixteen.—Remember that!

I rose from the window, and walking to the other end of the room, Beat me again, if you please, said I, but I must tell your ladyship, I scorn your words, and am as much married as your ladyship!

At that she ran to me; but her woman interposed again: Let the vain wicked creature go from your presence, madam, said she. She is not worthy to be in it. She will but vex your ladyship. Stand away, Beck, said she. That's an assertion that I would not take from my brother, I can't bear it. As much married as I!—Is that to be borne? But if the creature believes she is, madam, said her woman, she is to be as much pitied for her credulity, as despised for her vanity.

I was in hopes to have slipt out at the door; but she caught hold of my gown, and pulled me back. Pray your ladyship, said I, don't kill me!—I have done no harm.—But she locked the door, and put the key in her pocket. So, seeing Mrs. Jewkes before the window, I lifted up the sash, and said, Mrs. Jewkes, I believe it would be best for the chariot to go to your master, and let him know, that Lady Davers is here; and I cannot leave her ladyship.

She was resolved to be displeas'd, let me say what I would.

Said she, No, no; he'll then think, that I make the creature my companion, and know not how to part with her. I thought your ladyship, replied I, could not have taken exceptions at this message. Thou knowest nothing, wench, said she, of what belongs to people of condition: How shouldst thou? Nor, thought I, do I desire it, at this rate.

What shall I say, madam? said I. Nothing at all, replied she; let him expect his dearest love, and be disappointed; it is but adding a few more hours, and he will make every one a day, in his amorous account.—Mrs. Jewkes coming nearer me, and my lady walking about the room, being



then at the end, I whispered, Let Robert stay at the elms; I'll have a struggle for't by and by.

As much married as I! repeated she.—The insolence of the creature!—And so she walked about the room, talking to herself, to her woman, and now and then to me; but seeing I could not please her, I thought I had better be silent. And then it was, Am I not worthy an answer? If I speak, said I, your ladyship is angry at me, though ever so respectfully; if I do not, I cannot please: Would your ladyship tell me but how I shall oblige you, and I would do it with all my heart.

Confess the truth, said she, that thou art an undone creature; hast been in bed with thy master; and art sorry for it, and for the mischief thou hast occasioned between him and me; and then I'll pity thee, and persuade him to pack thee off, with a hundred or two of guineas; and some honest farmer may take pity of thee, and patch up thy shame, for the sake of the money; and if nobody will have thee, thou must vow penitence, and be as humble as I once thought thee.

I was quite sick at heart, at all this passionate extravagance, and to be hindered from being where was the desire of my soul, and afraid too of incurring my dear master's displeasure; and, as I sat, I saw it was no hard matter to get out of the window into the front yard, the parlour being even with the yard, and so have a fair run for it; and after I had seen my lady at the other end of the room again, in her walks, having not pulled down the sash, when I spoke to Mrs. Jewkes, I got upon the seat, and whipped out in a minute, and ran away as hard as I could drive, my lady calling after me to return, and her woman at the other window: But two of her servants appearing at her crying out, and she bidding them to stop me, I said, Touch me at your peril, fellows! But their lady's commands would have prevailed on them, had not Mr. Colbrand, who, it seems, had been kindly ordered, by Mrs. Jewkes, to be within call, when she saw how I was treated, come up, and put on one of his deadly fierce looks, the only time, I thought, it ever became him, and said, He would chine the man, that was his word, who offered to touch his lady; and so he ran alongside of me; and I heard my lady say, The creature flies like a bird! And, indeed, Mr. Colbrand, with his huge strides, could hardly keep pace with me; and I never stopped, till I got to the chariot; and Robert had got down, seeing me running at a distance, and held the door in his hand, with the step ready down; and in I

jumped, without touching the step, saying, Drive me, drive me, as fast as you can, out of my lady's reach! And he mounted; and Colbrand said, Don't be frightened, madam; nobody shall hurt you.—And shut the door, and away Robert drove; but I was quite out of breath, and did not recover it, and my fright, all the way.

Mr. Colbrand was so kind, but I did not know it till the chariot stopped at Sir Simon's, to step up behind the carriage, lest, as he said, my lady should send after me; and he told Mrs. Jewkes, when he got home, that he never saw such a runner as me in his life.

When the chariot stopped, which was not till six o'clock, so long did this cruel lady keep me, Miss Darnford ran out to me: O madam, said she, ten times welcome! but you'll be beat, I can tell you! for here has been Mr. B—— come these two hours, and is very angry with you.

That's hard indeed, said I;—Indeed I can't afford it;—for I hardly knew what I said, having not recovered my fright. Let me sit down, miss, any where, said I; for I have been sadly off. So I sat down, and was quite sick with the hurry of my spirits, and leaned upon her arm.

Said she, Your lord and master came in very moody; and when he had staid an hour, and you not come, he began to fret, and said, He did not expect so little complaisance from you. And he is now sat down, with great persuasion, to a game at loo.—Come, you must make your appearance, lady fair; for he is too sullen to attend you, I doubt.

You have no strangers, have you miss? said I.—Only two women relations from Stamford, replied she, and an humble servant of one of them.—Only all the world, miss! said I.—What shall I do, if he be angry? I can't bear that.

Just as I had said so, came in Lady Darnford and Lady Jones to chide me, as they said, for not coming sooner. And before I could speak, came in my dear master. I ran to him. How dy'e Pamela? said he; and saluting me, with a little more formality than I could well bear.—I expected half a word from me, when I was so complaisant to your choice, would have determined you, and that you'd have been here to dinner;—and the rather, as I made my request a reasonable one, and what I thought would be agreeable to you. O dear sir, said I, pray, pray, hear me, and you'll pity me, and not be displeas'd! Mrs. Jewkes will tell you, that as soon as I had your kind commands, I said, I would obey you, and come to dinner with these

good ladies; and so prepared myself instantly, with all the pleasure in the world. Lady Darnford and miss said I was their dear!—Look you, said miss, did I not tell you, stately one, that something must have happened? But, O these tyrants! these men!

Why, what hindered it, my dear? said he: give yourself time; you seem out of breath!—O sir, said I, out of breath! well I may!—For, just as I was ready to come away, who should drive into the court-yard, but Lady Davers!—Lady Davers! Nay, then, my sweet dear, said he, and saluted me more tenderly, hast thou had a worse trial than I wish thee, from one of the haughtiest women in England, though my sister!—For, she too, my Pamela, was spoiled by my good mother!—But have you seen her?

Yes, sir, said I, and more than seen her!—Why sure, said he, she has not had the insolence to strike my girl!—Sir, said I, but tell me you forgive me; for indeed I could not come sooner; and these good ladies but excuse me; and I'll tell you all another time; for to take up the good company's attention now, will spoil their pleasantry, and be to them, though more important to me, like the broken china you cautioned me about.

That's a dear girl! said he; I see my hints are not thrown away upon you; and I beg pardon for being angry with you; and, for the future, will stay till I hear your defence, before I judge you. Said Miss Darnford, This is a little better! To own a fault is some reparation; and what every lordly husband will not do. He said, But tell me, my dear, did Lady Davers offer you any incivility? O sir, replied I, she is your sister, and I must not tell you all; but she has used me very severely! Did you tell her, said he, you were married? Yes, sir, I did at last; but she will have it 'tis a sham-marriage, and that I am a vile creature: and she was ready to beat me, when I said so: for she could not have patience, that I should be deemed her sister, as she said.

How unlucky it was, replied he, I was not at home?—Why did you not send to me here? Send, sir! I was kept prisoner by force. They would not let me stir, or do you think I would have been hindered from obeying you? Nay, I told them, that I had a pre-engagement; but she ridiculed me, and said, Waiting-maids talk of pre-engagements! And then I shewed her your kind letter; and she made a thousand remarks upon it, and made me wish I had not. In short, whatever I could do or say, there was no pleasing her;

and I was a creature and wench, and all that was naught. But you must not be angry with her on my account.

Well, but, said he, I suppose she hardly asked you to dine with her; for she came before dinner, I presume, if it was soon after you had received my letter! No, sir, dine with my lady! no, indeed! Why, she would make me wait at table upon her, with her woman, because she would not expose herself and me before the men-servants; which you know, sir, was very good of her ladyship.

Well, said he, but did you wait upon her? Would you have had me, sir? said I.—Only, Pamela, replied he, if you did, and knew not what belonged to your character, as my wife, I shall be very angry with you. Sir, said I, I did not, but refused it, out of consideration to the dignity you have raised me to; else, sir, I could have waited on my knees upon your sister.

Now, said he, you confirm my opinion of your prudence and judgment. She is an insolent woman, and shall dearly repent it. But, sir, she is to be excused, because she won't believe I am indeed married; so don't be too angry at her ladyship.

He said, Ladies, pray don't let us keep you from the company; I'll only ask a question or two more, and attend you. Said Lady Jones, I so much long to hear this story of poor madam's persecution, that, if it was not improper, I should be glad to stay. Miss Darnford would stay for the same reason; my master saying, He had no secrets to ask; and that it was kind of them to interest themselves in my grievances.

But Lady Darnford went into the company, and told them the cause of my detention; for, it seems, my dear master loved me too well, to keep to himself the disappointment my not being here to receive him, was to him; and they had all given the two Misses Boroughs and Mr. Perry, the Stamford guests, such a character of me, that they said they were impatient to see me.

Said my master, But, Pamela, you said they and them: Who had my sister with her besides her woman? Her nephew, sir, and three footmen on horseback; and she and her woman were in her chariot and six.

That's a sad coxcomb, said he: How did he behave to you?—Not extraordinarily, sir; but I should not complain; for I was even with him; because I thought I ought not to bear with him as with my lady.

By Heaven! said he, if I knew he behaved unhandsomely to my jewel, I'd send him home to his uncle without his ears. Indeed, sir, returned I, I was as hard upon him as he was upon me. Said he, 'Tis kind to say so; but I believe I shall make them dearly repent their visit, if I find their behaviour to call for my resentment.

But, sure, my dear, you might have got away when you went to your own dinner? Indeed, sir, said I, her ladyship locked me in, and would not let me stir.—So you ha'nt ate any dinner? No, indeed, sir, nor had a stomach for any. My poor dear, said he. But then, how got you away at last? O sir, replied I, I jumped out of the parlour window, and ran away to the chariot, which had waited for me several hours, by the elm-walk, from the time of my lady's coming (for I was just going, as I said); and Mr. Colbrand conducted me through her servants, whom she called to, to stop me; and was so kind to step behind the chariot, unknown to me, and saw me safe here.

I'm sure, said he, these insolent creatures must have treated you vilely. But tell me, what part did Mrs. Jewkes act in this affair? A very kind part, sir, said I, in my behalf; and I shall thank her for it. Sweet creature! said he, thou lovest to speak well of every body; but I hope she deserves it; for she knew you were married.—But come, we'll now join the company, and try to forget all you have suffered, for two or three hours, that we may not tire the company with our concerns and resume the subject as we go home: and you shall find I will do you justice, as I ought. But you forgive me, sir, said I, and are not angry? Forgive you, my dear! returned he—I hope you forgive me! I shall never make you satisfaction for what you have suffered from me, and for me! And with those words he led me into the company.

He very kindly presented me to the two stranger ladies, and the gentleman, and them to me: and Sir Simon, who was at cards, rose from table, and saluted me: Adad! madam, said he, I'm glad to see you here. What, it seems you have been a prisoner! 'Twas well you was, or your spouse and I should have sat in judgment upon you, and condemned you to a fearful punishment for your first crime of *laesae majestatis*: (I had this explained to me afterwards, as a sort of treason against my liege lord and husband:) for we husbands hereabouts, said he, are resolved to turn over a new leaf with our wives, and your lord and master shall shew us the way, I

can tell you that. But I see by your eyes, my sweet culprit, added he, and your complexion, you have had sour sauce to your sweet meat.

Miss Darnford said, I think we are obliged to our sweet guest, at last; for she was forced to jump out at a window to come to us. Indeed! said Mrs. Peters;—and my master's back being turned, says she, Lady Davers, when a maiden, was always vastly passionate; but a very good lady when her passion was over. And she'd make nothing of slapping her maids about, and begging their pardons afterwards, if they took it patiently; otherwise she used to say the creatures were even with her.

Ay, said I, I have been a many creatures and wenches, and I know not what; for these were the names she gave me. And I thought I ought to act up to the part her dear brother has given me; and so I have but just escaped a good cuffing.

Miss Boroughs said to her sister, as I overheard, but she did not design I should, What a sweet creature is this! and then she takes so little upon her, is so free, so easy, and owns the honour done her, so obligingly! said Mr. Perry, softly, The loveliest person I ever saw! Who could have the heart to be angry with her one moment?

Says Miss Darnford, Here, my dearest neighbour, these gentry are admiring you strangely; and Mr. Perry says, you are the loveliest lady he ever saw; and he says it to his own mistress's face too, I'll assure you!—Or else, says Miss Boroughs, I should think he much flattered me.

O, madam, you are exceedingly obliging! but your kind opinion ought to teach me humility, and to reverence so generous a worth as can give a preference against yourself, where it is so little due. Indeed, madam, said Miss Nanny Boroughs, I love my sister well; but it would be a high compliment to any lady, to be deemed worthy a second or third place after you.

There is no answering such politeness, said I: I am sure Lady Davers was very cruel to keep me from such company. 'Twas our loss, madam, says Miss Darnford. I'll allow it, said I, in degree; for you have all been deprived, several hours, of an humble admirer.

Mr. Perry said, I never before saw so young a lady shine forth with such graces of mind and person. Alas! sir, said I, my master coming up, mine is but a borrowed shine, like that of the moon. Here is the sun, to whose

fervent glow of generosity I owe all the faint lustre, that your goodness is pleased to look upon with so much kind distinction.

Mr. Perry was pleased to hold up his hands; and the ladies looked upon one another. And my master said, hearing part of the last sentence, What's the pretty subject, that my Pamela is displaying so sweetly her talents upon?

Oh! sir, said Mr. Perry, I will pronounce you the happiest man in England: and so said they all.

My master said, most generously, Thank ye, thank ye, thank ye, all round, my dear friends. I know not your subject; but if you believe me so, for a single instance of this dear girl's goodness, what must I think myself, when blessed with a thousand instances, and experiencing it in every single act and word! I do assure you my Pamela's person, all lovely as you see it, is far short of her mind: That, indeed, first attracted my admiration, and made me her lover: but they were the beauties of her mind, that made me her husband; and proud, my sweet dear, said he, pressing my hand, am I of that title.

Well, said Mr. Perry, very kindly and politely, excellent as your lady is, I know not the gentleman that could deserve her, but that one who could say such just and such fine things.

I was all abashed; and took Miss Darnford's hand, and said, Save me, dear miss, by your sweet example, from my rising pride. But could I deserve half these kind things, what a happy creature should I be! said Miss Darnford, You deserve them all, indeed you do.

The greatest part of the company having sat down to loo, my master being pressed, said he would take one game at whist; but had rather be excused too, having been up all night: and I asked how his friend did? We'll talk of that, said he, another time; which, and his seriousness, made me fear the poor gentleman was dead, as it proved.

We cast in, and Miss Boroughs and my master were together, and Mr. Perry and I; and I had all four honours the first time, and we were up at one deal. Said my master, An honourable hand, Pamela, should go with an honourable heart; but you'd not have been up, if a knave had not been one. Whist, sir, said Mr. Perry, you know, was a court game originally; and the knave, I suppose, signified always the prime minister.

'Tis well, said my master, if now there is but one knave in a court, out of four persons, take the court through.

The king and queen, sir, said Mr. Perry, can do no wrong, you know. So there are two that must be good out of four; and the ace seems too plain a card to mean much hurt.

We compliment the king, said my master, in that manner; and 'tis well to do so, because there is something sacred in the character. But yet, if force of example be considered, it is going a great way; for certainly a good master makes a good servant, generally speaking.

One thing, added he, I will say, in regard to the ace: I have always looked upon that plain and honest looking card in the light you do: and have considered whist as an English game in its original; which has made me fonder of it than of any other. For by the ace I have always thought the laws of the land denoted; and as the ace is above the king or queen, and wins them, I think the law should be thought so too; though, may be, I shall be deemed a Whig for my opinion.

I shall never play whist, said Mr. Perry, without thinking of this, and shall love the game the better for the thought; though I am no party-man. Nor I, said my master; for I think the distinctions of whig and tory odious; and love the one or the other only as they are honest and worthy men; and have never (nor never shall, hope) given a vote, but according to what I thought was for the public good, let either whig or tory propose it.

I wish, sir, replied Mr. Perry, all gentlemen in your station would act so. If there was no undue influence, said my master, I am willing to think so well of all mankind, that I believe they generally would.

But you see, said he, by my Pamela's hand, when all the court-cards get together, and are acted by one mind, the game is usually turned accordingly: Though now and then, too, it may be so circumstanced, that honours will do them no good, and they are forced to depend altogether upon tricks.

I thought this way of talking prettier than the game itself. But I said, Though I have won the game, I hope I am no trickster. No, said my master, God forbid but court-cards should sometimes win with honour! But you see, for all that, your game is as much owing to the knave as the king; and you, my fair-one, lost no advantage, when it was put into your power.



Else, sir, said I, I should not have done justice to my partner. You are certainly right, Pamela, replied he; though you thereby beat your husband. Sir, said I, you may be my partner next, and I must do justice, you know. Well, said he, always choose so worthy a friend, as chance has given you for a partner, and I shall never find fault with you, do what you will.

Mr. Perry said, You are very good to me, sir; and Miss Boroughs, I observed, seemed pleased with the compliment to her humble servant; by which I saw she esteemed him, as he appears to deserve. Dear sir! said I, how much better is this, than to be locked in by Lady Davers!

The supper was brought in sooner on my account, because I had had no dinner; and there passed very agreeable compliments on the occasion. Lady Darnford would help me first, because I had so long fasted, as she said. Sir Simon would have placed himself next me: And my master said, He thought it was best, where there was an equal number of ladies and gentlemen, that they should sit, intermingled, that the gentlemen might be employed in helping and serving the ladies. Lady Darnford said, She hoped Sir Simon would not sit above any ladies at his own table especially. Well, said he, I shall sit over-against her, however, and that's as well.

My dearest sir could not keep his eyes off me, and seemed generously delighted with all I did, and all I said; and every one was pleased to see his kind and affectionate behaviour to me.

Lady Jones brought up the discourse about Lady Davers again; and my master said, I fear, Pamela, you have been hardly used, more than you'll say. I know my sister's passionate temper too well, to believe she could be over-civil to you, especially as it happened so unluckily that I was out. If, added he, she had no pique to you, my dear, yet what has passed between her and me, has so exasperated her, that I know she would have quarrelled with my horse, if she had thought I valued it, and nobody else was in her way. Dear sir, said I, don't say so of good Lady Davers.

Why, my dear, said he, I know she came on purpose to quarrel; and had she not found herself under a very violent uneasiness, after what had passed between us, and my treatment of her lord's letter, she would not have offered to come near me. What sort of language had she for me, Pamela? O sir, very good, only her well-mannered brother, and such as that!

Only, said he, 'tis taking up the attention of the company disagreeably, or I could tell you almost every word she said. Lady Jones wished to hear a further account of my lady's conduct, and most of the company joined with her, particularly Mrs. Peters; who said, that as they knew the story, and Lady Davers's temper, though she was very good in the main, they could wish to be so agreeably entertained, if he and I pleased; because they imagined I should have no difficulties after this.

Tell me, then, Pamela, said he, did she lift up her hand at you? Did she strike you? But I hope not! A little slap of the hand, said I, or so.—Insolent woman! She did not, I hope, offer to strike your face? Why, said I, I was a little saucy once or twice; and she would have given me a cuff on the ear, if her woman and Mrs. Jewkes had not interposed. Why did you not come out at the door? Because, said I, her ladyship sat in the chair against it, one while, and another while locked it; else I offered several times to get away.

She knew I expected you here: You say, you shewed her my letter to you? Yes, sir, said I; but I had better not; for she as then more exasperated, and made strange comments upon it. I doubt it not, said he; but, did she not see, by the kind epithets in it, that there was no room to doubt of our being married? O, sir, replied I, and made the company smile, she said, For that very reason she was sure I was not married.

That's like my sister! said he; exactly like her; and yet she lives very happily herself: for her poor lord never contradicts her. Indeed he dares not.

You were a great many wenches, were you not, my dear? for that's a great word with her.—Yes, sir, said I, wenches and creatures out of number; and worse than all that. What? tell me, my dear. Sir, said I, I must not have you angry with Lady Davers; while you are so good to me, 'tis all nothing; only the trouble I have that I cannot be suffered to shew how much I honoured her ladyship, as your sister.

Well, said he, you need not be afraid to tell me: I must love her after all; though I shall not be pleased with her on this occasion. I know it is her love for me, though thus oddly expressed, that makes her so uneasy: and, after all, she comes, I'm sure, to be reconciled to me; though it must be through a good hearty quarrel first: for she can shew a good deal of

sunshine; but it must be always after a storm; and I'll love her dearly, if she has not been, and will not be, too hard upon my dearest.

Mr. Peters said, Sir, you are very good, and very kind; I love to see this complaisance to your sister, though she be in fault, so long as you can shew it with so much justice to the sweetest innocence and merit in the world. By all that's good, Mr. Peters, said he, I'd present my sister with a thousand pounds, if she would kindly take my dear Pamela by the hand, and wish her joy, and call her sister!—And yet I should be unworthy of the dear creature that smiles upon me there, if it was not principally for her sake, and the pleasure it would give her, that I say this: for I will never be thoroughly reconciled to my sister till she does; for I most sincerely think, as to myself, that my dear wife, there she sits, does me more honour in her new relation, than she receives from me.

Sir, said I, I am overwhelmed with your goodness!—And my eyes were filled with tears of joy and gratitude: and all the company with one voice blessed him. And Lady Jones was pleased to say, The behaviour of you two happy ones, to each other, is the most edifying I ever knew. I am always improved when I see you. How happy would every good lady be with such a gentleman, and every good gentleman with such a lady!—In short, you seem made for one another.

O madam, said I, you are so kind, so good to me, that I know not how to thank you enough!—Said she, You deserve more than I can express; for, to all that know your story, you are a matchless person. You are an ornament to our sex and your virtue, though Mr. B—— is so generous as he is, has met with no more than its due reward. God long bless you together!

You are, said my dearest sir, very good to me, madam, I am sure. I have taken liberties in my former life, that deserved not so much excellence. I have offended extremely, by trials glorious to my Pamela, but disgraceful to me, against a virtue that I now consider as almost sacred; and I shall not think I deserve her, till I can bring my manners, my sentiments, and my actions, to a conformity with her own. In short, my Pamela, continued he, I want you to be nothing but what you are, and have been. You cannot be better; and if you could, it would be but filling me with despair to attain the awful heights of virtue at which you have arrived. Perhaps, added the dear gentleman, the scene I have beheld within these twelve hours, has made me more serious than otherwise I should have been: but I'll assure you, before all this good company, I speak the sentiments of my heart, and those not of this day only.

What a happy daughter is yours, O my dear father and mother! I owe it all to God's grace, and to yours and my good lady's instructions: And to these let me always look back with grateful acknowledgments, that I may not impute to myself, and be proud, my inexpressible happiness.

The company were so kindly pleased with our concern, and my dear master's goodness, that he, observing their indulgence, and being himself curious to know the further particulars of what had passed between my lady and me, repeated his question, What she had called me besides wench and creature? And I said, My lady, supposing I was wicked, lamented over me, very kindly, my depravity and fall, and said, What a thousand pities it was, so much virtue, as she was pleased to say, was so destroyed; and that I had yielded, after so noble a stand! as she said.

Excuse me, gentlemen and ladies, said I! you know my story, it seems; and I am commanded, by one who has a title to all my obedience, to proceed.

They gave all of them bows of approbation, that they might not interrupt me; and I continued my story—the men-servants withdrawing, at a motion of Mr. B——, on my looking towards them: and then, at Lady Darnford's coming in, I proceeded.

I told her ladyship, that I was still innocent, and would be so, and it was injurious to suppose me otherwise. Why, tell me, wench, said she—But I think I must not tell you what she said. Yes, do, said my master, to clear my sister; we shall think it very bad else.

I held my hand before my face—Why, she said, Tell me, wench, hast thou not been—hesitating—a very free creature with thy master? That she said, or to that effect—And when I said, She asked strange questions, and in strange words, she ridiculed my delicacy, as she called it; and said, My niceness would not last long. She said, I must know I was not really married, that my ring was only a sham, and all was my cunning to cloak my yielding, and get better terms. She said, She knew the world as much at thirty-two, as I did at sixteen; and bid me remember that.

I took the liberty to say, (but I got a good way off,) that I scorned her ladyship's words, and was as much married as her ladyship. And then I had certainly been cuffed, if her woman had not interposed, and told her I was not worthy her anger; and that I was as much to be pitied for my credulity, as despised for my vanity.

My poor Pamela, said my master, this was too, too hard upon you! O sir, said I, how much easier it was to me than if it had been so!—That would have broken my heart quite!—For then I should have deserved it all, and worse; and these reproaches, added to my own guilt, would have made me truly wretched!

Lady Darnford, at whose right-hand I sat, kissed me with a kind of rapture, and called me a sweet exemplar for all my sex. Mr. Peters said very handsome things; so did Mr. Perry and Sir Simon, with tears in his eyes, said to my master, Why, neighbour, neighbour, this is excellent, by my troth. I believe there is something in virtue, that we had not well considered. On my soul, there has been but one angel come down for these thousand years, and you have got her.

Well, my dearest, said my master, pray proceed with your story until, we have done supper, since the ladies seem pleased with it. Why, sir, said I, her ladyship went on in the same manner; but said, one time, (and held me by the hand,) she would give me an hundred guineas for one provoking word; or, if I would but say I believed myself married, that she might fell me at her foot: But, sir, you must not be angry with her ladyship. She called me painted dirt, baby-face, waiting-maid, beggar's brat, and beggar-born; but I said, As long as I knew my innocence, I was easy in every thing, but to have my dear parents abused. They were never beggars, nor beholden to any body; nor to any thing but God's grace and their own

labour; that they once lived in credit; that misfortunes might befall any body; and that I could not bear they should be treated so undeservedly.

Then her ladyship said, Ay, she supposed my master's folly would make us set up for a family, and that the heralds' office would shortly be searched to make it out.

Exactly my sister again! said he. So you could not please her any way?

No, indeed, sir. When she commanded me to fill her a glass of wine, and would not let her woman do it, she asked, If I was above it? I then said, If to attend your ladyship at table, or even kneel at your feet, was required of me, I would most gladly do it, were I only the person you think me. But if it be to triumph over one, who has received honours which she thinks require from her another part, that she may not be utterly unworthy of them, I must say, I cannot do it. This quite astonished her ladyship; and a little before, her kinsman brought me the bottle and glass, and required me to fill it for my lady, at her command, and called himself my deputy: And I said, 'Tis in a good hand; help my lady yourself. So, sir, added I, you see I could be a little saucy upon occasion.

You please me well, my Pamela, said he. This was quite right. But proceed.

Her ladyship said, She was astonished! adding, She supposed I would have her look upon me as her brother's wife: And asked me, What, in the name of impudence, possessed me, to dare to look upon myself as her sister? And I said, That was a question better became her most worthy brother to answer, than me. And then I thought I should have had her ladyship upon me; but her woman interposed.

I afterwards told Mrs. Jewkes, at the window, that since I was hindered from going to you, I believed it was best to let Robert go with the chariot, and say, Lady Davers was come, and I could not leave her ladyship. But this did not please; and I thought it would too; for she said, No, no, he'll think I make the creature my companion, and know not how to part with her.

Exactly, said he, my sister again.

And she said, I knew nothing what belonged to people of condition; how should I?—What shall I say, madam? said I. Nothing at all, answered she; let him expect his dearest love, alluding to your kind epithet in your letter,

and be disappointed; it is but adding a few more hours to this heavy absence, and every one will become a day in his amorous account.

So, to be short, I saw nothing was to be done; and I feared, sir, you would wonder at my stay, and be angry; and I watched my opportunity, till my lady, who was walking about the room, was at the further end; and the parlour being a ground-floor, in a manner, I jumped out at the window, and ran for it.

Her ladyship called after me; so did her woman; and I heard her say, I flew like a bird; and she called two of her servants in sight to stop me; but I said, Touch me at your peril, fellows! And Mr. Colbrand, having been planted at hand by Mrs. Jewkes, (who was very good in the whole affair, and incurred her ladyship's displeasure, once or twice, by taking my part,) seeing how I was used, put on a fierce look, cocked his hat with one hand, and put t'other on his sword, and said, he would chine the man who offered to touch his lady. And so he ran alongside of me, and could hardly keep pace with me:—And here, my dear sir, concluded I, I am, at yours and the good company's service.

They seemed highly pleased with my relation; and my master said, he was glad Mrs. Jewkes behaved so well, as also Mr. Colbrand. Yes, sir, said I: when Mrs. Jewkes interposed once, her ladyship said, It was hard, she, who was born in that house, could not have some privilege in it, without being talked to by the saucy servants. And she called her another time fat-face, and womaned her most violently.

Well, said my master, I am glad, my dear, you have had such an escape. My sister was always passionate, as Mrs. Peters knows: And my poor mother had enough to do with us both. For we neither of us wanted spirit: and when I was a boy, I never came home from school or college for a few days, but though we longed to see one another before, yet ere the first day was over, we had a quarrel; for she, being seven years older than I, was always for domineering over me, and I could not bear it. And I used, on her frequently quarrelling with the maids, and being always at a word and a blow, to call her Captain Bab; for her name is Barbara. And when my Lord Davers courted her, my poor mother has made up quarrels between them three times in a day; and I used to tell her, she would certainly beat her husband, marry whom she would, if he did not beat her first, and break her spirit.

Yet has she, continued he, very good qualities. She was a dutiful daughter, is a good wife; she is bountiful to her servants, firm in her friendships, charitable to the poor, and, I believe, never any sister better loved a brother, than she me: and yet she always loved to vex and tease me; and as I would bear a resentment longer than she, she'd be one moment the most provoking creature in the world, and the next would do any thing to be forgiven; and I have made her, when she was the aggressor, follow me all over the house and garden to be upon good terms with me.

But this case piques her more, because she had found out a match for me in the family of a person of quality, and had set her heart upon bringing it to effect, and had even proceeded far in it, without my knowledge, and brought me into the lady's company, unknowing of her design. But I was then averse to matrimony upon any terms; and was angry at her proceeding in it so far without my privity or encouragement: And she cannot, for this reason, bear the thoughts of my being now married, and to her mother's waiting-maid too, as she reminds my dear Pamela, when I had declined her proposal with the daughter of a noble earl.

This is the whole case, said he; and, allowing for the pride and violence of her spirit, and that she knows not, as I do, the transcendent excellencies of my dear Pamela, and that all her view, in her own conception, is mine and the family honour, she is a little to be allowed for: Though, never fear, my Pamela, but that I, who never had a struggle with her, wherein I did not get the better, will do you justice, and myself too.

This account of Lady Davers pleased every body, and was far from being to her ladyship's disadvantage in the main; and I would do any thing in the world to have the honour to be in her good graces: Yet I fear it will not be easily, if at all, effected. But I will proceed.

After supper, nothing would serve Miss Darnford and Miss Boroughs, but we must have a dance; and Mr. Peters, who plays a good fiddle, urged it forward. My dear master, though in a riding-dress, took out Miss Boroughs.

Sir Simon, for a man of his years, danced well, and took me out; but put on one of his free jokes, that I was fitter to dance with a younger man; and he would have it, (though I had not danced since my dear lady's death to signify, except once or twice to please Mrs. Jervis, and, indeed, believed all my dancing days over,) that as my master and I were the best dancers,



we should dance once together, before folks, as the odd gentleman said; and my dear sir was pleased to oblige him: And afterwards danced with Miss Darnford, who has much more skill and judgment than I; though they compliment me with an easier shape and air.

We left the company with great difficulty at about eleven, my dear master having been up all night before, and we being at the greatest distance from home; though they seemed inclinable not to break up so soon, as they were neighbours; and the ladies said, They longed to hear what would be the end of Lady Davers's interview with her brother.

My master said, He feared we must not now think of going next day to Bedfordshire, as we had intended; and perhaps might see them again. And so we took leave, and set out for home; where we arrived not till twelve o'clock; and found Lady Davers had gone to bed about eleven, wanting sadly that we should come home first; but so did not I.

Mrs. Jewkes told us, That my lady was sadly fretted that I had got away so; and seemed a little apprehensive of what I would say of the usage I had received from her. She asked Mrs. Jewkes, if she thought I was really married? And Mrs. Jewkes telling her yes, she fell into a passion, and said, Begone, bold woman, I cannot bear thee! See not my face till I send for thee! Thou hast been very impudent to me once or twice to-day already, and art now worse than ever. She said, She would not have told her ladyship, if she had not asked her; and was sorry she had offended.

She sent for her at supper time: Said she, I have another question to ask thee, woman, and tell me yes, if thou darest. Was ever any thing so odd?—Why then, said Mrs. Jewkes, I will say No, before your ladyship speaks.—My master laughed: Poor woman! said he.—She called her insolent, and assurance; and said, Begone, bold woman as thou art!—but come hither. Dost thou know if that young harlot is to be with my brother to-night?

She said she knew not what to answer, because she had threatened her if she said yes. But at last my lady said, I will know the bottom of this iniquity. I suppose they won't have so much impudence to be together while I'm in the house; but I dare say they have been bed-fellows.

Said she, I will lie to-night in the room I was born in; so get that bed ready. That room being our bedchamber, Mrs. Jewkes, after some hesitation, replied, Madam, my master lies there, and has the key. I believe, woman, said she, thou tellest me a story. Indeed, madam, said she,

he does; and has some papers there he will let nobody see; for Mrs. Jewkes said, she feared she would beat her if she went up, and found by my clothes, and some of my master's, how it was.

So she said, I will then lie in the best room, as it is called; and Jackey shall lie in the little green room adjoining to it. Has thy master got the keys of those?—No, madam, said Mrs. Jewkes: I will order them to be made ready for your ladyship.

And where dost thou lay the pury sides? said she. Up two pair of stairs, madam, next the garden. And where lies the young harlotry? continued she. Sometimes with me, madam, said she. And sometimes with thy virtuous master, I suppose? said my lady.—Ha, woman! what sayest thou? I must not speak, said Mrs. Jewkes. Well, thou mayest go, said she; but thou hast the air of a secret keeper of that sort I dare say thoul't set the good work forward most cordially. Poor Mrs. Jewkes, said my master, and laughed most heartily.

This talk we had whilst we were undressing. So she and her woman lay together in the room my master lay in before I was happy.

I said, Dear sir, pray, in the morning let me lock myself up in the closet, as soon as you rise; and not be called down for ever so much; for I am afraid to see her ladyship: And I will employ myself about my journal, while these things are in my head. Don't be afraid, my dear, said he: Am not I with you?

Mrs. Jewkes pitied me for what I had undergone in the day; and I said, We won't make the worst of it to my dear master, because we won't exasperate where we would reconcile: but, added I, I am much obliged to you, Mrs. Jewkes, and I thank you. Said my master, I hope she did not beat your lady, Mrs. Jewkes? Not much, sir, said she; but I believe I saved my lady once: Yet, added she, I was most vexed at the young lord. Ay, Mrs. Jewkes, said my master, let me know his behaviour. I can chastise him, though I cannot my sister, who is a woman; let me therefore know the part he acted.

Nothing, my dear sir, said I, but impertinence, if I may so say, and foolishness, that was very provoking; but I spared him not; and so there is no room, sir, for your anger. No, sir, said Mrs. Jewkes, nothing else indeed.

How was her woman? said my master. Pretty impertinent, replied Mrs. Jewkes, as ladies' women will be. But, said I, you know she saved me once

or twice. Very true, madam, returned Mrs. Jewkes. And she said to me at table, that you were a sweet creature; she never saw your equal; but that you had a spirit; and she was sorry you answered her lady so, who never bore so much contradiction before. I told her, added Mrs. Jewkes, that if I was in your ladyship's place, I should have taken much more upon me, and that you were all sweetness. And she said, I was got over, she saw.

Tuesday morning, the sixth of my happiness.

My master had said to Mrs. Jewkes, that he should not rise till eight or nine, as he had sat up all the night before: but it seems, my lady, knowing he usually rose about six, got up soon after that hour; raised her woman and her nephew; having a whimsical scheme in her head, to try to find whether we were in bed together: And, about half an hour after six, she rapped at our chamber door.

My master was waked at the noise, and asked, Who was there? Open the door, said she; open it this minute! I said, clinging about his neck, Dear, dear sir, pray, pray don't!—O save me, save me! Don't fear, Pamela, said he. The woman's mad, I believe.

But he called out; Who are you? What do you want?—You know my voice well enough, said she:—I will come in.—Pray, sir, said I, don't let her ladyship in.—Don't be frightened, my dear, said he; she thinks we are not married, and are afraid to be found a-bed together. I'll let her in; but she shan't come near my dearest.

So he slipt out of bed, and putting on some of his clothes, and gown and slippers, he said, What bold body dare disturb my repose thus? and opened the door. In rushed she: I'll see your wickedness, said she, I will! In vain shall you think to hide it from me.—What should I hide? said he. How dare you set a foot into my house, after the usage I have received from you?—I had covered myself over head and ears, and trembled every joint. He looked, and 'spied her woman and kinsman in the room, she crying out, Bear witness, Jackey; bear witness, Beck; the creature is now in his bed! And not seeing the young gentleman before, who was at the feet of the bed, he said, How now, sir? What's your business in this apartment? Begone this moment!—And he went away directly.

Beck, said my lady, you see the creature is in his bed. I do, madam, answered she. My master came to me, and said, Ay, look, Beck, and bear

witness: Here is my Pamela!—My dear angel, my lovely creature, don't be afraid; look up, and see how frantically this woman of quality behaves.

At that, I just peeped, and saw my lady, who could not bear this, coming to me; and she said, Wicked abandoned wretch! Vile brother, to brave me thus! I'll tear the creature out of bed before your face, and expose you both as you deserve.

At that he took her in his arms, as if she had been nothing; and carrying her out of the room, she cried out, Beck! Beck! help me, Beck! the wretch is going to fling me down stairs! Her woman ran to him, and said, Good sir, for Heaven's sake do no violence to my lady! Her ladyship has been ill all night.

He sat her down in the chamber she lay in, and she could not speak for passion. Take care of your lady, said he; and when she has rendered herself more worthy of my attention, I'll see her; till then, at her peril, and yours too, come not near my apartment. And so he came to me, and, with all the sweet soothing words in the world, pacified my fears, and gave me leave to go to write in my closet, as soon as my fright was over, and to stay there till things were more calm. And so he dressed himself, and went out of the chamber, permitting me, at my desire, to fasten the door after him.

At breakfast-time my master tapped at the door, and I said, Who's there? I, my dearest, said he. Oh! then, replied I, I will open it with pleasure. I had written on a good deal; but I put it by, when I ran to the door. I would have locked it again, when he was in; but he said, Am not I here? Don't be afraid. Said he, Will you come down to breakfast, my love? O no, dear sir, said I; be pleased to excuse me! said he, I cannot bear the look of it, that the mistress of my house should breakfast in her closet, as if she durst not come down, and I at home!—O, dearest sir, replied I, pray pass that over, for my sake; and don't let my presence aggravate your sister, for a kind punctilio! Then, my dear, said he, I will breakfast with you here. No, pray, dear sir, answered I, breakfast with your sister. That, my dear, replied he, will too much gratify her pride, and look like a slight to you.—Dear sir, said I, your goodness is too great, for me to want punctilious proofs of it. Pray oblige her ladyship. She is your guest surely, sir, you may be freest with your dutiful wife!

She is a strange woman, said he: How I pity her!—She has thrown herself into a violent fit of the colic, through passion: And is but now, her

woman says, a little easier. I hope, sir, said I, when you carried her ladyship out, you did not hurt her. No, replied he, I love her too well. I set her down in the apartment she had chosen: and she but now desires to see me, and that I will breakfast with her, or refuses to touch any thing. But, if my dearest please, I will insist it shall be with you at the same time.

O, no, no, dear sir! said I; I should not forgive myself, if I did. I would on my knees beg her ladyship's goodness to me, now I am in your presence; though I thought I ought to carry it a little stiff when you were absent, for the sake of the honour you have done me. And, dear sir, if my deepest humility will please, permit me to shew it.

You shall do nothing, returned he, unworthy of my wife, to please the proud woman!—But I will, however, permit you to breakfast by yourself this once, as I have not seen her since I have used her in so barbarous a manner, as I understand she exclaims I have; and as she will not eat any thing, unless I give her my company.—So he saluted me, and withdrew; and I locked the door after him again for fear.

Mrs. Jewkes soon after rapped at the door. Who's there? said I. Only I, madam. So I opened the door. 'Tis a sad thing, madam, said she, you should be so much afraid in your own house. She brought me some chocolate and toast; and I asked her about my lady's behaviour. She said, she would not suffer any body to attend but her woman, because she would not be heard what she had to say; but she believed, she said, her master was very angry with the young lord, as she called her kinsman; for, as she passed by the door, she heard him say, in a high tone, I hope, sir, you did not forget what belongs to the character you assume; or to that effect.

About one o'clock my master came up again, and he said, Will you come down to dinner, Pamela, when I send for you? Whatever you command, sir, I must do. But my lady won't desire to see me. No matter whether she will or no. But I will not suffer, that she shall prescribe her insolent will to my wife, and in your own house too.—I will, by my tenderness to you, mortify her pride; and it cannot be done so well as to her face.

Dearest sir, said I, pray indulge me, and let me dine here by myself. It will make my lady but more inveterate.—Said he, I have told her we are married. She is out of all patience about it, and yet pretends not to believe it. Upon that I tell her, Then she shall have it her own way, and that I am

not. And what has she to do with it either way? She has scolded and begged, commanded and prayed, blessed me, and cursed me, by turns, twenty times in these few hours. And I have sometimes soothed her, sometimes raged; and at last left her, and took a turn in the garden for an hour to compose myself, because you should not see how the foolish woman has ruffled me; and just now I came out, seeing her coming in.

Just as he had said so, I cried, Oh! my lady, my lady! for I heard her voice in the chamber, saying, Brother, brother, one word with you—stopping in sight of the closet where I was. He stepped out, and she went up to the window that looks towards the garden, and said, Mean fool that I am, to follow you up and down the house in this manner, though I am shunned and avoided by you! You a brother!—You a barbarian! Is it possible we could be born of one mother?

Why, said he, do you charge me with a conduct to you, that you bring upon yourself?—Is it not surprising that you should take the liberty with me, that the dear mother you have named never gave you an example for to any of her relations?—Was it not sufficient, that I was insolently taken to task by you in your letters, but my retirements must be invaded? My house insulted? And, if I have one person dearer to me than another, that that person must be singled out for an object of your violence?

Ay, said she, that one person is the thing!—But though I came with a resolution to be temperate, and to expostulate with you on your avoiding me so unkindly, yet cannot I have patience to look upon that bed in which I was born, and to be made the guilty scene of your wickedness with such a

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Hush! said he, I charge you! call not the dear girl by any name unworthy of her. You know not, as I told you, her excellence; and I desire you'll not repeat the freedoms you have taken below.

She stamped with her foot, and said, God give me patience! So much contempt to a sister that loves you so well; and so much tenderness to a vile——

He put his hand before her mouth: Be silent, said he, once more, I charge you! You know not the innocence you abuse so freely. I ought not, neither will I bear it.

She sat down and fanned herself, and burst into tears, and such sobs of grief, or rather passion, that grieved me to hear; and I sat and trembled

sadly.

He walked about the room in great anger; and at last said, Let me ask you, Lady Davers, why I am thus insolently to be called to account by you? Am I not independent? Am I not of age? Am I not at liberty to please myself?—Would to God, that, instead of a woman, and my sister, any man breathing had dared, whatever were his relation under that of a father, to give himself half the airs you have done!—Why did you not send on this accursed errand your lord, who could write me such a letter as no gentleman should write, nor any gentleman tamely receive? He should have seen the difference.

We all know, said she, that, since your Italian duel, you have commenced a bravo; and all your airs breathe as strongly of the manslayer as of the libertine. This, said he, I will bear; for I have no reason to be ashamed of that duel, nor the cause of it; since it was to save a friend, and because it is levelled at myself only: but suffer not your tongue to take too great a liberty with my Pamela.

She interrupted him in a violent burst of passion. If I bear this, said she, I can bear any thing!—O the little strumpet!—He interrupted her then, and said wrathfully, Begone, rageful woman! begone this moment from my presence! Leave my house this instant!—I renounce you, and all relation to you! and never more let me see your face, or call me brother! And took her by the hand to lead her out. She laid hold of the curtains of the window, and said, I will not go! You shall not force me from you thus ignominiously in the wretch's hearing, and suffer her to triumph over me in your barbarous treatment of me.

Not considering any thing, I ran out of the closet, and threw myself at my dear master's feet, as he held her hand, in order to lead her out; and I said, Dearest sir, let me beg, that no act of unkindness, for my sake, pass between so worthy and so near relations. Dear, dear madam, said I, and clasped her knees, pardon and excuse the unhappy cause of all this evil; on my knees I beg your ladyship to receive me to your grace and favour, and you shall find me incapable of any triumph but in your ladyship's goodness to me.

Creature, said she, art thou to beg an excuse for me?—Art thou to implore my forgiveness? Is it to thee I am to owe the favour, that I am not

cast headlong from my brother's presence? Begone to thy corner, wench! begone, I say, lest thy paramour kill me for trampling thee under my foot!

Rise, my dear Pamela, said my master; rise, dear life of my life; and expose not so much worthiness to the ungrateful scorn of so violent a spirit. And so he led me to my closet again, and there I sat and wept.

Her woman came up, just as he had led me to my closet, and was returning to her lady; and she very humbly said, Excuse my intrusion, good sir!—I hope I may come to my lady. Yes, Mrs. Worden, said he, you may come in; and pray take your lady down stairs with you, for fear I should too much forget what belongs either to my sister or myself!

I began to think (seeing her ladyship so outrageous with her brother) what a happy escape I had had the day before, though hardly enough used in conscience too, as I thought.

Her woman begged her ladyship to walk down; and she said, Beck, seest thou that bed? That was the bed that I was born in; and yet that was the bed thou sawest, as well as I, the wicked Pamela in, this morning, and this brother of mine just risen from her!

True, said he; you both saw it, and it is my pride that you could see it. 'Tis my bridal bed; and 'tis abominable that the happiness I knew before you came hither, should be so barbarously interrupted.

Swear to me but, thou bold wretch! said she, swear to me, that Pamela Andrews is really and truly thy lawful wife, without sham, without deceit, without double-meaning; and I know what I have to say!

I'll humour you for once, said he; and then swore a solemn oath that I was. And, said he, did I not tell you so at first?

I cannot yet believe you, said she; because, in this particular, I had rather have called you knave than fool.—Provoke me not too much, said he; for, if I should as much forget myself as you have done, you'd have no more of a brother in me, than I have a sister in you.

Who married you? said she: tell me that! Was it not a broken attorney in a parson's habit? Tell me truly, in the wench's hearing. When she's undeceived, she'll know how to behave herself better! Thank God, thought I, it is not so.

No, said he; and I'll tell you, that I bless God, I abhorred that project, before it was brought to bear: and Mr. Williams married us.—Nay then,



said she—but answer me another question or two, I beseech you: Who gave her away? Parson Peters, said he. Where was the ceremony performed? In my little chapel, which you may see, as it was put in order on purpose.

Now, said she, I begin to fear there is something in it! But who was present? said she. Methinks, replied he, I look like a fine puppy, to suffer myself to be thus interrogated by an insolent sister: but, if you must know, Mrs. Jewkes was present. O the procuress! said she: But nobody else? Yes, said he, all my heart and soul!

Wretch! said she; and what would thy father and mother have said, had they lived to this day? Their consents, replied he, I should have thought it my duty to ask; but not yours, madam.

Suppose, said she, I had married my father's groom! what would you have said to that?—I could not have behaved worse, replied he, than you have done. And would you not have thought, said she, I had deserved it.

Said he, Does your pride let you see no difference in the case you put? None at all, said she. Where can the difference be between a beggar's son married by a lady, or a beggar's daughter made a gentleman's wife?

Then I'll tell you, replied he; the difference is, a man ennobles the woman he takes, be she who she will; and adopts her into his own rank, be it what it will: but a woman, though ever so nobly born, debases herself by a mean marriage, and descends from her own rank to his she stoops to.

When the royal family of Stuart allied itself into the low family of Hyde, (comparatively low, I mean,) did any body scruple to call the lady, Royal Highness, and Duchess of York? And did any body think her daughters, the late Queen Mary and Queen Anne, less royal for that?

When the broken-fortuned peer goes into the city to marry a rich tradesman's daughter, be he duke or earl, does not his consort immediately become ennobled by his choice? and who scruples to call her lady, duchess, or countess?

But when a duchess or countess dowager descends to mingle with a person of obscure birth, does she not then degrade herself? and is she not effectually degraded? And will any duchess or countess rank with her?

Now, Lady Davers, do you not see a difference between my marrying my dear mother's beloved and deserving waiting-maid, with a million of

excellencies about her, and such graces of mind and person as would adorn any distinction; and your marrying a sordid groom, whose constant train of education, conversation, and opportunities, could possibly give him no other merit, than that which must proceed from the vilest, lowest taste, in his sordid dignifier?

O the wretch! said she, how he finds excuses to palliate his meanness!

Again, said he, let me observe to you, Lady Davers, When a duke marries a private person, is he not still her head, by virtue of being her husband? But, when a lady descends to marry a groom, is not the groom her head, being her husband? And does not the difference strike you? For what lady of quality ought to respect another, who has made so sordid a choice, and set a groom above her? For, would not that be to put that groom upon a par with themselves?—Call this palliation, or what you will; but if you see not the difference, you are blind; and a very unfit judge for yourself, much more unfit to be a censorer of me.

I'd have you, said she, publish your fine reasons to the world, and they will be sweet encouragements to all the young gentlemen who read them to cast themselves away on the servant-wenches in their families.

Not at all, Lady Davers, replied he: For, if any young gentleman stays till he finds such a person as my Pamela, so enriched with the beauties of person and mind, so well accomplished, and so fitted to adorn the degree she is raised to, he will stand as easily acquitted, as I shall be to all the world that sees her, except there be many more Lady Davers than I apprehend can possibly be met with.

And so, returned she, you say you are actually and really married, honestly, or rather foolishly married, to this slut?

I am, indeed, says he, if you presume to call her so! And why should I not, if I please? Who is there ought to contradict me? Whom have I hurt by it?—Have I not an estate, free and independent?—Am I likely to be beholden to you, or any of my relations? And why, when I have a sufficiency in my own single hands, should I scruple to make a woman equally happy, who has all I want? For beauty, virtue, prudence, and generosity too, I will tell you, she has more than any lady I ever saw. Yes, Lady Davers, she has all these naturally; they are born with her; and a few years' education, with her genius, has done more for her, than a whole life has done for others.

No more, no more, I beseech you, said she; thou surfeitest me, honest man! with thy weak folly. Thou art worse than an idolater; thou hast made a graven image, and thou fallest down and worshippest the works of thy own hands; and, Jeroboam-like, wouldst have every body else bow down before thy calf!

Well said, Lady Davers! Whenever your passion suffers you to descend to witticism; 'tis almost over with you. But let me tell you, though I myself worship this sweet creature, that you call such names, I want nobody else to do it; and should be glad you had not intruded upon me, to interrupt me in the course of our mutual happiness.

Well said, well said, my kind, my well-mannered brother! said she. I shall, after this, very little interrupt your mutual happiness, I'll assure you. I thought you a gentleman once, and prided myself in my brother: But I'll say now with the burial service, Ashes to ashes, and dirt to dirt!

Ay, said he, Lady Davers, and there we must all end at last; you with all your pride, and I with my plentiful fortune, must come to it; and then where will be your distinction? Let me tell you, except you and I both mend our manners, though you have been no duellist, no libertine, as you call me, this amiable girl, whom your vanity and folly so much despise, will out-soar us both, infinitely out-soar us; and he who judges best, will give the preference where due, without regard to birth or fortune.

Egregious preacher! said she: What, my brother already turned Puritan!—See what marriage and repentance may bring a man to! I heartily congratulate this change!—Well, said she, (and came towards me, and I trembled to see her coming; but her brother followed to observe her, and I stood up at her approach, and she said,) give me thy hand, Mrs. Pamela, Mrs. Andrews, Mrs. what shall I call thee?—Thou hast done wonders in a little time; thou hast not only made a rake a husband but thou hast made a rake a preacher! But take care, added she, after all, in ironical anger, and tapped me on the neck, take care that thy vanity begins not where his ends; and that thou callest not thyself my sister.

She shall, I hope, Lady Davers, said he, when she can make as great a convert of you from pride, as she has of me, from libertinism.

Mrs. Jewkes just then came up, and said dinner was ready. Come, my Pamela, said my dear master; you desired to be excused from breakfasting

with us; but I hope you'll give Lady Davers and me your company to dinner.

How dare you insult me thus? said my lady.—How dare you, said he, insult me by your conduct in my own house, after I have told you I am married? How dare you think of staying here one moment, and refuse my wife the honours that belong to her as such?

Merciful God! said she, give me patience! and held her hand to her forehead.

Pray, sir, dear sir, said I, excuse me, don't vex my lady:—Be silent, my dear love, said he; you see already what you have got by your sweet condescension. You have thrown yourself at her feet, and, insolent as she is, she has threatened to trample upon you. She'll ask you, presently, if she is to owe her excuse to your interposition? and yet nothing else can make her forgiven.

Poor lady, she could not bear this; and, as if she was discomposed, she ran to her poor grieved woman, and took hold of her hand, and said, Lead me down, lead me down, Beck! Let us instantly quit this house, this cursed house, that once I took pleasure in! Order the fellows to get ready, and I will never see it, nor its owner, more. And away she went down stairs, in a great hurry. And the servants were ordered to make ready for their departure.

I saw my master was troubled, and I went to him, and said, Pray, dear sir, follow my lady down, and pacify her. 'Tis her love to you.—Poor woman! said he, I am concerned for her! But I insist upon your coming down, since things are gone so far. Her pride will get new strength else, and we shall be all to begin again.

Dearest, dear sir, said I, excuse my going down this once! Indeed, my dear, I won't, replied he. What! shall it be said, that my sister shall scare my wife from my table, and I present?—No, I have borne too much already; and so have you: And I charge you come down when I send for you.

He departed, saying these words, and I durst not dispute; for I saw he was determined. And there is as much majesty as goodness in him, as I have often had reason to observe; though never more than on the present occasion with his sister. Her ladyship instantly put on her hood and gloves, and her woman tied up a handkerchief full of things; for her principal

matters were not unpacked; and her coachman got her chariot ready, and her footmen their horses; and she appeared resolved to go. But her kinsman and Mr. Colbrand had taken a turn together, somewhere; and she would not come in, but sat fretting on a seat in the fore-yard, with her woman by her; and, at last, said to one of the footmen, Do you, James, stay to attend my nephew; and we'll take the road we came.

Mrs. Jewkes went to her ladyship, and said, Your ladyship will be pleased to stay dinner; 'tis just coming upon table? No, said she, I have enough of this house; I have indeed. But give my service to your master, and I wish him happier than he has made me.

He had sent for me down, and I came, though unwillingly, and the cloth was laid in the parlour I had jumped out of; and there was my master walking about it. Mrs. Jewkes came in, and asked, if he pleased to have dinner brought in? for my lady would not come in, but desired her service, and wished him happier than he had made her. He, seeing her at the window, when he went to that side of the room, all ready to go, stept out to her, and said, Lady Davers, if I thought you would not be hardened, rather than softened, by my civility, I would ask you to walk in; and, at least, let your kinsman and servants dine before they go. She wept, and turned her face from him, to hide it. He took her hand, and said, Come, sister, let me prevail upon you: Walk in. No, said she, don't ask me.—I wish I could hate you, as much as you hate me!—You do, said he, and a great deal more, I'll assure you; or else you'd not vex me as you do.—Come, pray walk in. Don't ask me, said she. Her kinsman just then returned: Why, madam, said he, your ladyship won't go till you have dined, I hope. No, Jackey, said she, I can't stay; I'm an intruder here, it seems!—Think, said my master, of the occasion you gave for that word. Your violent passions are the only intruders! Lay them aside, and never sister was dearer to a brother. Don't say such another word, said she, I beseech you; for I am too easy to forgive you any thing for one kind word!—You shall have one hundred, said he, nay, ten thousand, if they will do, my dear sister. And, kissing her, he added, Pray give me your hand. John, said he, put up the horses; you are all as welcome to me, for all your lady's angry with me, as at any inn you can put up at. Come, Mr. H——, said he, lead your aunt in; for she won't permit that honour to me.

This quite overcame her; and she said, giving her brother her hand, Yes, I will, and you shall lead me any where! and kissed him. But don't think, said she, I can forgive you neither. And so he led her into the parlour where I was. But, said she, why do you lead me to this wench? 'Tis my wife, my dear sister; and if you will not love her, yet don't forget common civilities to her, for your own sake.

Pray, madam, said her kinsman, since your brother is pleased to own his marriage, we must not forget common civilities, as Mr. B—— says. And, sir, added he, permit me to wish you joy. Thank you, sir, said he. And may I? said he, looking at me. Yes, sir, replied my master. So he saluted me, very complaisantly; and said, I vow to Gad, madam, I did not know this yesterday; and if I was guilty of a fault, I beg your pardon.

My lady said, Thou'rt a good-natured foolish fellow; thou might'st have saved this nonsensical parade, till I had given thee leave. Why, aunt, said he, if they are actually married, there's no help for it; and we must not make mischief between man and wife.

But brother, said she, do you think I'll sit at table with the creature? No contemptuous names, I beseech you, Lady Davers! I tell you she is really my wife; and I must be a villain to suffer her to be ill used. She has no protector but me; and, if you will permit her, she will always love and honour you.—Indeed, indeed I will, madam, said I.

I cannot, I won't sit down at table with her, said she: Pamela, I hope thou dost not think I will?—Indeed, madam, said I, if your good brother will permit it, I will attend your chair all the time you dine, to shew my veneration for your ladyship, as the sister of my kind protector. See, said he, her condition has not altered her; but I cannot permit in her a conduct unworthy of my wife; and I hope my sister will not expect it neither.

Let her leave the room, replied she, if I must stay. Indeed you are out of the way, aunt, said her kinsman; that is not right, as things stand. Said my master, No, madam, that must not be; but, if it must be so, we'll have two tables; you and your nephew shall sit at one, and my wife and I at the other: and then see what a figure your unreasonable punctilio will make you cut.—She seemed irresolute, and he placed her at the table; the first course, which was fish, being brought in. Where, said she to me, would'st thou presume to sit? Would'st have me give place to thee too, wench?—Come, come, said my master, I'll put that out of dispute; and so set

himself down by her ladyship, at the upper end of the table, and placed me at his left hand. Excuse me, my dear, said he; this once excuse me!—Oh! your cursed complaisance, said she, to such a——. Hush, sister! hush! said he: I will not bear to hear her spoken slightly of! 'Tis enough, that, to oblige your violent and indecent caprice, you make me compromise with you thus.

Come, sir, added he, pray take your place next your gentle aunt!—Beck, said she, do you sit down by Pamela there, since it must be so; we'll be hail fellow all! With all my heart, replied my master; I have so much honour for all the sex, that I would not have the meanest person of it stand, while I sit, had I been to have made the custom. Mrs. Worden, pray sit down. Sir, said she, I hope I shall know my place better.

My lady sat considering; and then, lifting up her hands, said, Lord! what will this world come to?—To nothing but what's very good, replied my master, if such spirits as Lady Davers's do but take the rule of it. Shall I help you, sister, to some of the carp? Help your beloved! said she. That's kind! said he.—Now, that's my good Lady Davers! Here, my love, let me help you, since my sister desires it.—Mighty well, returned she, mighty well!—But sat on one side, turning from me, as it were.

Dear aunt, said her kinsman, let's see you buss and be friends: since 'tis so, what signifies it? Hold thy fool's tongue! said she: Is thy tone so soon turned since yesterday? said my master, I hope nothing affronting was offered yesterday to my wife, in her own house. She hit him a good smart slap on the shoulder: Take that, impudent brother said she. I'll wife you, and in her own house! She seemed half afraid: but he, in very good humour, kissed her, and said, I thank you, sister, I thank you. But I have not had a blow from you before for some time!

'Fore gad, said her kinsman, 'tis very kind of you to take it so well. Her ladyship is as good a woman as ever lived; but I've had many a cuff from her myself.

I won't put it up neither, said my master, except you'll assure me you have seen her serve her lord so.

I pressed my foot to his, and said, softly, Don't, dear sir!—What! said she, is the creature begging me off from insult? If his manners won't keep him from outraging me, I won't owe his forbearance to thee, wench.

Said my master, and put some fish on my lady's plate, Well does Lady Davers use the word insult!—But, come, let me see you eat one mouthful, and I'll forgive you; and he put the knife in one of her hands, and the fork in the other. As I hope to live, said he, I cannot bear this silly childishness, for nothing at all! I am quite ashamed of it.

She put a little bit to her mouth, but laid it down in her plate again: I cannot eat, said she; I cannot swallow, I'm sure. It will certainly choak me. He had forbid his menservants to come in, that they might not behold the scene he expected; and rose from table himself, and filled a glass of wine, her woman offering, and her kinsman rising, to do it. Mean-time, his seat between us being vacant, she turned to me: How now, confidence, said she, darest thou sit next me? Why dost thou not rise, and take the glass from thy property?

Sit still, my dear, said he; I'll help you both. But I arose; for I was afraid of a good cuff; and said, Pray, sir, let me help my lady. So you shall, replied he, when she's in a humour to receive it as she ought. Sister, said he, with a glass in his hand, pray drink; you'll perhaps eat a little bit of something then. Is this to insult me? said she.—No, really, returned he: but to incite you to eat; for you'll be sick for want of it.

She took the glass, and said, God forgive you, wicked wretch, for your usage of me this day!—This is a little as it used to be!—I once had your love;—and now it is changed; and for whom? that vexes me! And wept so, she was forced to set down the glass.

You don't do well, said he. You neither treat me like your brother nor a gentleman; and if you would suffer me, I would love you as well as ever.—But for a woman of sense and understanding, and a fine-bred woman, as I once thought my sister, you act quite a childish part. Come, added he, and held the glass to her lips, let your brother, that you once loved, prevail on you to drink this glass of wine.—She then drank it. He kissed her, and said, Oh! how passion deforms the noblest minds! You have lost a good deal of that loveliness that used to adorn my sister. And let me persuade you to compose yourself, and be my sister again!—For Lady Davers is, indeed, a fine woman; and has a presence as majestic for a lady, as her dear brother has for a gentleman.

He then sat down between us again, and said, when the second course came in, Let Abraham come in and wait. I touched his toe again; but he



minded it not; and I saw he was right; for her ladyship began to recollect herself, and did not behave half so ill before the servants, as she had done; and helped herself with some little freedom; but she could not forbear a strong sigh and a sob now and then. She called for a glass of the same wine she had drank before. Said he, Shall I help you again, Lady Davers?—and rose, at the same time, and went to the sideboard, and filled her a glass. Indeed, said she, I love to be soothed by my brother!—Your health, sir!

Said my master to me, with great sweetness, My dear, now I'm up, I'll fill for you!—I must serve both sisters alike! She looked at the servant, as if he were a little check upon her, and said to my master, How now, sir!—Not that you know of. He whispered her, Don't shew any contempt before my servants to one I have so deservedly made their mistress. Consider, 'tis done.—Ay, said she, that's the thing that kills me.

He gave me a glass: My good lady's health, sir, said I.—That won't do, said she, leaning towards me, softly: and was going to say wench, or creature, or some such word. And my master, seeing Abraham look towards her, her eyes being red and swelled, said, Indeed, sister, I would not vex myself about it, if I was you. About what? said she. Why, replied he, about your lord's not coming down, as he had promised. He sat down, and she tapped him on the shoulder: Ah! wicked one, said she, nor will that do neither!—Why, to be sure, added he, it would vex a lady of your sense and merit to be slighted, if it was so; but I am sure my lord loves you, as well as you love him; and you know not what may have happened.

She shook her head, and said, That's like your art!—This makes one amazed you should be so caught!—Who, my lord caught! said he: No, no! he'll have more wit than so! But I never heard you were jealous before. Nor, said he, have you any reason to think so now!—Honest friend, you need not wait, said she; my woman will help us to what we want. Yes, let him, replied he. Abraham, fill me a glass. Come, said my master, Lord Davers to you, madam: I hope he'll take care he is not found out!—You're very provoking, brother, said she. I wish you were as good as Lord Davers.—But don't carry your jest too far. Well, said he, 'tis a tender point, I own. I've done.

By these kind managements the dinner passed over better than I expected. And when the servants were withdrawn, my master said, still keeping his place between us, I have a question to ask you, Lady Davers,

and that is, If you'll bear me company to Bedfordshire? I was intending to set out thither to-morrow, but I'll tarry your pleasure, if you'll go with me.

Is thy wife, as thou callest her, to go along with thee, friend? said she. Yes, to be sure, answered he, my dear Quaker sister; and took her hand, and smiled. And would'st have me parade it with her on the road?—Hey?—And make one to grace her retinue?—Hey? Tell me how thoud'st chalk it out, if I would do as thou would'st have me, honest friend?

He clasped his arms about her, and kissed her: You are a dear saucy sister, said he; but I must love you!—Why, I'll tell you how I'd have it. Here shall you, and my Pamela—Leave out my, I desire you, if you'd have me sit patiently. No, replied he, I can't do that. Here shall you, and my Pamela, go together in your chariot, if you please; and she will then appear as one of your retinue; and your nephew and I will sometimes ride, and sometimes go into my chariot, to your woman.

Should'st thou like this, creature? said she to me.—If your ladyship think it not too great an honour for me, madam, said I. Yes, replied she, but my ladyship does think it would be too great an honour.

Now I think of it, said he, this must not be neither; for, without you'd give her the hand in your own chariot, my wife would be thought your woman, and that must not be. Why, that would, may be, said she, be the only inducement for me to bear her near me, in my chariot.—But, how then?—Why then, when we came home, we'd get Lord Davers to come to us, and stay a month or two.

And what if he was to come?—Why I would have you, as I know you have a good fancy, give Pamela your judgment on some patterns I expect from London, for clothes.—Provoking wretch! said she; now I wish I may keep my hands to myself. I don't say it to provoke you, said he, nor ought it to do so. But when I tell you I am married, is it not a consequence that we must have new clothes?

Hast thou any more of these obliging things to say to me, friend? said she. I will make you a present, returned he, worth your acceptance, if you will grace us with your company at church, when we make our appearance.—Take that, said she, if I die for it, wretch that thou art! and was going to hit him a great slap; but he held her hand. Her kinsman said, Dear aunt, I wonder at you! Why, all these are things of course.

I begged leave to withdraw; and, as I went out, my good master said, There's a person! There's a shape! There's a sweetness! O, Lady Davers! were you a man, you would doat on her, as I do. Yes, said the naughty lady, so I should, for my harlot, but not for my wife. I turned, on this, and said, Indeed your ladyship is cruel; and well may gentlemen take liberties, when ladies of honour say such things! And I wept, and added, Your ladyship's inference, if your good brother was not the most generous of men, would make me very unhappy.

No fear, wench; no fear, said she; thou'lt hold him as long as any body can, I see that!—Poor Sally Godfrey never had half the interest in him, I'll assure you.

Stay, my Pamela, said he, in a passion; stay, when I bid you. You have now heard two vile charges upon me!—I love you with such a true affection, that I ought to say something before this malicious accuser, that you may not think your consummate virtue linked to so black a villain.

Her nephew seemed uneasy, and blamed her much; and I came back, but trembled as I stood; and he set me down, and said, taking my hand, I have been accused, my dear, as a dueller, and now as a profligate, in another sense; and there was a time I should not have received these imputations with so much concern as I now do, when I would wish, by degrees, by a conformity of my manners to your virtue, to shew every one the force your example has upon me. But this briefly is the case of the first.

I had a friend, who had been basely attempted to be assassinated by bravoës, hired by a man of title in Italy, who, like many other persons of title, had no honour; and, at Padua, I had the fortune to disarm one of these bravoës in my friend's defence, and made him confess his employer; and him, I own, I challenged. At Sienna we met, and he died in a month after, of a fever; but, I hope, not occasioned by the slight wounds he had received from me; though I was obliged to leave Italy upon it, sooner than I intended, because of his numerous relations, who looked upon me as the cause of his death; though I pacified them by a letter I wrote them from Inspruck, acquainting them with the baseness of the deceased: and they followed me not to Munich, as they intended.

This is one of the good-natured hints that might shock your sweetness, on reflecting that you are yoked with a murderer. The other—Nay, brother,

said she, say no more. 'Tis your own fault if you go further. She shall know it all, said he; and I defy the utmost stretch of your malice.

When I was at college, I was well received by a widow lady, who had several daughters, and but small fortunes to give them; and the old lady set one of them (a deserving good girl she was,) to draw me into marriage with her, for the sake of the fortune I was heir to; and contrived many opportunities to bring us and leave us together. I was not then of age; and the young lady, not half so artful as her mother, yielded to my addresses before the mother's plot could be ripened, and so utterly disappointed it. This, my Pamela, is the Sally Godfrey, this malicious woman, with the worst intentions, has informed you of. And whatever other liberties I may have taken, (for perhaps some more I have, which, had she known, you had heard of, as well as this,) I desire Heaven will only forgive me, till I revive its vengeance by the like offences, in injury to my Pamela.

And now, my dear, you may withdraw; for this worthy sister of mine has said all the bad she knows of me; and what, at a proper opportunity, when I could have convinced you, that they were not my boast, but my concern, I should have acquainted you with myself; for I am not fond of being thought better than I am: though I hope, from the hour I devoted myself to so much virtue, to that of my death, my conduct shall be irreproachable.

She was greatly moved at this, and the noble manner in which the dear gentleman owned and repented of his faults; and gushed out into tears, and said, No, don't yet go, Pamela, I beseech you. My passion has carried me too far, a great deal; and, coming to me, she shook my hand, and said, You must stay to hear me beg his pardon; and so took his hand.—But, to my concern, (for I was grieved for her ladyship's grief,) he burst from her; and went out of the parlour into the garden in a violent rage, that made me tremble. Her ladyship sat down, and leaned her head against my bosom, and made my neck wet with her tears, holding me by the hands; and I wept for company.—Her kinsman walked up and down the parlour in a sad fret; and going out afterwards, he came in, and said, Mr. B—— has ordered his chariot to be got ready, and won't be spoken to by any body. Where is he? said she.—Walking in the garden till it is ready, replied he.

Well, said she, I have indeed gone too far. I was bewitched! And now, said she, malicious as he calls me, will he not forgive me for a twelvemonth: for I tell you, Pamela, if ever you offend, he will not easily

forgive. I was all delighted, though sad, to see her ladyship so good to me. Will you venture, said she, to accompany me to him?—Dare you follow a lion in his retreats?—I'll attend your ladyship, said I, wherever you command. Well, wench, said she; Pamela, I mean; thou art very good in the main!—I should have loved thee as well as my mother did—if—but 'tis all over now! Indeed you should not have married my brother! But come, I must love him! Let's find him out! And yet will he use me worse than a dog!—I should not, added she, have so much exasperated him: for, whenever I have, I have always had the worst of it. He knows I love him!

In this manner her ladyship talked to me, leaning on my arm, and walking into the garden. I saw he was still in a tumult, as it were; and he took another walk to avoid us. She called after him, and said, Brother, brother, let me speak to you!—One word with you! And as we made haste towards him, and came near to him; I desire, said he, that you'll not oppress me more with your follies, and your violence. I have borne too much with you, and I will vow for a twelvemonth, from this day—Hush, said she, don't vow, I beg you for too well will you keep it, I know by experience, if you do. You see, said she, I stoop to ask Pamela to be my advocate. Sure that will pacify you!

Indeed, said he, I desire to see neither of you, on such an occasion; and let me only be left to myself, for I will not be intruded upon thus; and was going away.—But, said she, One word first, I desire.—If you'll forgive me, I'll forgive you.—What, said the dear man, haughtily, will you forgive me?—Why, said she, for she saw him too angry to mention his marriage, as a subject that required her pardon—I will forgive you all your bad usage of me this day.

I will be serious with you, sister, said he: I wish you most sincerely well; but let us, from this time, study so much one another's quiet, as never to come near one another more. Never? said she.—And can you desire this? barbarous brother! can you?—I can, I do, said he; and I have nothing to do, but to hide from you, not a brother, but a murderer, and a profligate, unworthy of your relation; and let me be consigned to penitence for my past evils: A penitence, however, that shall not be broken in upon by so violent an accuser.

Pamela, said he, and made me tremble, How dare you approach me, without leave, when you see me thus disturbed?—Never, for the future,

come near me, when I am in these tumults, unless I send for you.

Dear sir! said I—Leave me, interrupted he. I will set out for Bedfordshire this moment! What! sir, said I, without me?—What have I done? You have too meanly, said he, for my wife, stooped to this furious sister of mine; and, till I can recollect, I am not pleased with you: But Colbrand shall attend you, and two other of my servants; and Mrs. Jewkes shall wait upon you part of the way: And I hope you'll find me in a better disposition to receive you there, than I am at parting with you here.

Had I not hoped, that this was partly put on to intimidate my lady, I believe I could not have borne it: But it was grievous to me; for I saw he was most sincerely in a passion.

I was afraid, said she, he would be angry at you, as well as me; for well do I know his unreasonable violence, when he is moved. But one word, sir, said she; Pardon Pamela, if you won't me; for she has committed no offence, but that of good-nature to me, and at my request. I will be gone myself, directly as I was about to do, had you not prevented me.

I prevented you, said he, through love; but you have strung me for it, through hatred. But as for my Pamela, I know, besides the present moment, I cannot be angry with her; and therefore I desire her never to see me, on such occasions, till I can see her in the temper I ought to be in, when so much sweetness approaches me. 'Tis therefore I say, my dearest, leave me now.

But, sir, said I, must I leave you, and let you go to Bedfordshire without me? Oh, dear sir, how can I?—Said my lady, You may go to-morrow, both of you, as you had designed; and I will go away this afternoon: And, since I cannot be forgiven, will try to forget I have a brother.

May I, sir, said I, beg all your anger on myself, and to be reconciled to your good sister? Presuming Pamela! replied he, and made me start; Art thou then so hardy, so well able to sustain a displeasure, which of all things, I expected from thy affection, and thy tenderness, thou would'st have wished to avoid?—Now, said he, and took my hand, and, as it were, tossed it from him, begone from my presence, and reflect upon what you have said to me!

I was so frightened, (for then I saw he took amiss what I said,) that I took hold of his knees, as he was turning from me; and I said, Forgive me,

good sir! you see I am not so hardy! I cannot bear your displeasure! And was ready to sink.

His sister said, Only forgive Pamela; 'tis all I ask—You'll break her spirit quite!—You'll carry your passion as much too far as I have done!—I need not say, said he, how well I love her; but she must not intrude upon me at such times as these!—I had intended, as soon as I could have quelled, by my reason, the tumults you had caused by your violence, to have come in, and taken such a leave of you both, as might become a husband, and a brother: But she has, unbidden, broke in upon me, and must take the consequence of a passion, which, when raised, is as uncontrollable as your own.

Said she, Did I not love you so well, as sister never loved a brother, I should not have given you all this trouble. And did I not, said he, love you better than you are resolved to deserve, I should be indifferent to all you say. But this last instance, after the duelling story (which you would not have mentioned, had you not known it is always matter of concern for me to think upon), of poor Sally Godfrey, is a piece of spite and meanness, that I can renounce you my blood for.

Well, said she, I am convinced it was wrong. I am ashamed of it myself. 'Twas poor, 'twas mean, 'twas unworthy of your sister: And 'tis for this reason I stoop to follow you, to beg your pardon, and even to procure one for my advocate, who I thought had some interest in you, if I might have believed your own professions to her; which now I shall begin to think made purposely to insult me.

I care not what you think!—After the meanness you have been guilty of, I can only look upon you with pity: For, indeed, you have fallen very low with me.

'Tis plain I have, said she. But I'll begone.—And so, brother, let me call you for this once! God bless you! And Pamela, said her ladyship, God bless you! and kissed me, and wept.

I durst say no more: And my lady turning from him, he said, Your sex is the d—! how strangely can you discompose, calm, and turn, as you please, us poor weathercocks of men! Your last kind blessing to my Pamela I cannot stand! Kiss but each other again. And then he took both our hands, and joined them; and my lady saluting me again, with tears on both sides, he put his kind arms about each of our waists, and saluted us

with great affection, saying, Now, God bless you both, the two dearest creatures I have in the world!

Well, said she, you will quite forget my fault about Miss—He stopt her before she could speak the name, and said, For ever forget it!—And, Pamela, I'll forgive you too, if you don't again make my displeasure so light a thing to you, as you did just now.

Said my lady, She did not make your displeasure a light thing to her; but the heavier it was, the higher compliment she made me, that she would bear it all, rather than not see you and me reconciled. No matter for that, said he: It was either an absence of thought, or a slight by implication, at least, that my niceness could not bear from her tenderness: For looked it not presuming, that she could stand my displeasure, or was sure of making her terms when she pleased? Which, fond as I am of her, I assure her, will not be always, in wilful faults, in her power.

Nay, said my lady, I can tell you, Pamela, you have a gentleman here in my brother; and you may expect such treatment from him, as that character, and his known good sense and breeding, will always oblige him to shew: But if you offend, the Lord have mercy upon you!—You see how it is by poor me!—And yet I never knew him to forgive so soon.

I am sure, said I, I will take care as much as I can; for I have been frightened out of my wits, and had offended, before I knew where I was.

So happily did this storm blow over; and my lady was quite subdued and pacified.

When we came out of the garden, his chariot was ready; and he said, Well, sister, I had most assuredly gone away towards my other house, if things had not taken this happy turn; and, if you please, instead of it, you and I will take an airing: And pray, my dear, said he to me, bid Mrs. Jewkes order supper by eight o'clock, and we shall then join you.

Sir, added he, to her nephew, will you take your horse and escort us? I will, said he: and am glad, at my soul, to see you all so good friends.

So my dear lord and master handed my lady into his chariot, and her kinsman and his servants rode after them and I went up to my closet to ruminate on these things. And, foolish thing that I am, this poor Miss Sally Godfrey runs into my head!—How soon the name and quality of a wife gives one privileges, in one's own account!—Yet, methinks, I want to



know more about her; for, is it not strange, that I, who lived years in the family, should have heard nothing of this? But I was so constantly with my lady, that I might the less hear of it; for she, I dare say, never knew it, or she would have told me.

But I dare not ask him about the poor lady.—Yet I wonder what became of her! Whether she be living? And whether any thing came of it?—May be I shall hear full soon enough!—But I hope not to any bad purpose.

As to the other unhappy case, I know it was talked of, that in his travels, before I was taken into the family long, he had one or two broils; and, from a youth, he was always remarkable for courage, and is reckoned a great master of his sword. God grant he may never be put to use it! and that he may be always preserved in honour and safety!

About seven o'clock my master sent word, that he would have me not expect him to supper; for that he, and my lady his sister, and nephew, were prevailed upon to stay with Lady Jones; and that Lady Darnford, and Mr. Peters's family, had promised to meet them there. I was glad they did not send for me; and the rather, as I hoped those good families being my friends, would confirm my lady a little in my favour; and so I followed my writing closely.

About eleven o'clock they returned. I had but just come down, having tired myself with my pen, and was sitting talking with Mrs. Jewkes and Mrs. Worden, whom I would, though unwillingly on their sides, make sit down, which they did over against me. Mrs. Worden asked my pardon, in a good deal of confusion, for the part she had acted against me; saying, That things had been very differently represented to her; and that she little thought I was married, and that she was behaving so rudely to the lady of the house.

I said, I took nothing amiss; and very freely forgave her; and hoped my new condition would not make me forget how to behave properly to every one; but that I must endeavour to act not unworthy of it, for the honour of the gentleman who had so generously raised me to it.

Mrs. Jewkes said, that my situation gave me great opportunities of shewing the excellence of my nature, that I could forgive offences against me so readily, as she, for her own part, must always, she said, acknowledge, with confusion of face.

People, said I, Mrs. Jewkes, don't know how they shall act, when their wills are in the power of their superiors; and I always thought one should distinguish between acts of malice, and of implicit obedience; though, at the same time, a person should know how to judge between lawful and unlawful. And even the great, though at present angry they are not obeyed, will afterwards have no ill opinion of a person for withstanding them in their unlawful commands.

Mrs. Jewkes seemed a little concerned at this; and I said, I spoke chiefly from my own experience: For that I might say, as they both knew my story, that I had not wanted both for menaces and temptations; and had I complied with the one, or been intimidated by the other, I should not have been what I was.

Ah, madam! replied Mrs. Jewkes, I never knew any body like you; and I think your temper sweeter, since the happy day, than before; and that, if possible, you take less upon you.

Why, a good reason, said I, may be assigned for that: I thought myself in danger: I looked upon every one as my enemy; and it was impossible that I should not be fretful, uneasy, jealous. But when my dearest friend had taken from me the ground of my uneasiness, and made me quite happy, I should have been very blamable, if I had not shewn a satisfied and easy mind, and a temper that should engage every one's respect and love at the same time, if possible: And so much the more, as it was but justifying, in some sort, the honour I had received: For the fewer enemies I made myself, the more I engaged every one to think, that my good benefactor had been less to blame in descending as he has done.

This way of talking pleased them both very much; and they made me many compliments upon it, and wished me always to be happy, as, they said, I so well deserved.

We were thus engaged, when my master, and his sister and her nephew, came in: and they made me quite alive, in the happy humour in which they all returned. The two women would have withdrawn: but my master said, Don't go, Mrs. Worden: Mrs. Jewkes, pray stay; I shall speak to you presently. So he came to me, and, saluting me, said, Well, my dear love, I hope I have not trespassed upon your patience, by an absence longer than we designed. But it has not been to your disadvantage; for though we had not your company, we have talked of nobody else but you.

My lady came up to me, and said, Ay, child, you have been all our subject. I don't know how it is: but you have made two or three good families, in this neighbourhood, as much your admirers, as your friend here.

My sister, said he, has been hearing your praises, Pamela, from half a score mouths, with more pleasure than her heart will easily let her express.

My good Lady Davers's favour, said I, and the continuance of yours, sir, would give me more pride than that of all the rest of the world put together.

Well, child, said she, proud hearts don't come down all at once; though my brother, here, has this day set mine a good many pegs lower than I ever knew it: But I will say, I wish you joy with my brother; and so kissed me.

My dear lady, said I, you for ever oblige me!—I shall now believe myself quite happy. This was all I wanted to make me so!—And I hope I shall always, through my life, shew your ladyship, that I have the most grateful and respectful sense of your goodness.

But, child, said she, I shall not give you my company when you make your appearance. Let your own merit make all your Bedfordshire neighbours your friends, as it has done here, by your Lincolnshire ones; and you'll have no need of my countenance, nor any body's else.

Now, said her nephew, 'tis my turn: I wish you joy with all my soul, madam; and, by what I have seen, and by what I have heard, 'fore Gad, I think you have met with no more than you deserve; and so all the company says, where we have been: And pray forgive all my nonsense to you.

Sir, said I, I shall always, I hope, respect as I ought, so near a relation of my good Lord and Lady Davers; and I thank you for your kind compliment.

Gad, Beck, said he, I believe you've some forgiveness too to ask; for we were all to blame, to make madam, here, fly the pit, as she did. Little did we think we made her quit her own house.

Thou always, said my lady, sayest too much, or too little.

Mrs. Worden said, I have been treated with so much goodness and condescension since you went, that I have been beforehand, sir, in asking pardon myself.

So my lady sat down with me half an hour, and told me, that her brother had carried her a fine airing, and had quite charmed her with his kind treatment of her; and had much confirmed her in the good opinion she had begun to entertain of my discreet and obliging behaviour: But, continued she, when he would make me visit, without intending to stay, my old neighbours, (for, said she, Lady Jones being nearest, we visited her first; and she scraped all the rest of the company together,) they were all so full of your praises, that I was quite borne down; and, truly, it was Saul among the prophets!

You may believe how much I was delighted with this; and I spared not my due acknowledgments.

When her ladyship took leave, to go to bed, she said, Goodnight to you, heartily, and to your good man. I kissed you when I came in, out of form; but I now kiss you out of more than form, I'll assure you.

Join with me, my dear parents, in my joy for this happy turn; the contrary of which I so much dreaded, and was the only difficulty I had to labour with. This poor Miss Sally Godfrey, I wonder what's become of her, poor soul! I wish he would, of his own head, mention her again.—Not that I am very uneasy, neither.—You'll say, I must be a little saucy, if I was.

My dear master gave me an account, when we went up, of the pains he had taken with his beloved sister, as he himself styled her; and of all the kind things the good families had said in my behalf; and that he observed she was not so much displeased with hearing them, as she was at first; when she would not permit any body to speak of me as his wife: And that my health, as his spouse, being put; when it came to her, she drank it; but

said, Come, brother, here's your Pamela to you: But I shall not know how to stand this affair, when the Countess——, and the young ladies, come to visit me. One of these young ladies was the person she was so fond of promoting a match for, with her brother.—Lady Betty, I know, she said, will rally me smartly upon it; and you know, brother, she wants neither wit nor satire. He said, I hope, Lady Betty, whenever she marries, will meet with a better husband than I should have made her; for, in my conscience, I think I should hardly have made a tolerable one to any but Pamela.

He told me that they rallied him on the stateliness of his temper; and said, They saw he would make an exceeding good husband where he was; but it must be owing to my meekness, more than to his complaisance; for, said Miss Darnford, I could see well enough, when your ladyship detained her, though he had but hinted his desire of finding her at our house, he was so out of humour at her supposed noncompliance, that mine and my sister's pity for her was much more engaged, than our envy.

Ay, said my lady, he is too lordly a creature, by much; and can't bear disappointment, nor ever could.

Said he, Well, Lady Davers, you should not, of all persons, find fault with me; for I bore a great deal from you, before I was at all angry.

Yes, replied she: but when I had gone a little too far, as I own I did, you made me pay for it severely enough! You know you did, sauce-box. And the poor thing too, added she, that I took with me for my advocate, so low had he brought me! he treated her in such a manner as made my heart ache for her: But part was art, I know, to make me think the better of her.

Indeed, sister, said he, there was very little of that; for, at that time, I cared not what you thought, nor had complaisance enough to have given a shilling for your good or bad opinion of her or me. And, I own, I was displeas'd to be broken in upon, after your provocations, by either of you and she must learn that lesson, never to come near me, when I am in those humours; which shall be as little as possible: For, after a while, if let alone, I always come to myself, and am sorry for the violence of a temper, so like my dear sister's here: And, for this reason think it is no matter how few witnesses I have of its intemperance, while it lasts; especially since every witness, whether they merit it or not, as you see in my Pamela's case, must be a sufferer by it, if, unsent for, they come in my way.

He repeated the same lesson to me again, and enforced it and owned, that he was angry with me in earnest, just then; though more with himself, afterwards, for being so: But when, Pamela, said he, you wanted to transfer all my displeasure upon yourself, it was so much braving me with your merit, as if I must soon end my anger, if placed there; or it was making it so light to you, that I was truly displeased: for, continued he, I cannot bear that you should wish, on any occasion whatever, to have me angry with you, or not to value my displeasure as the heaviest misfortune that could befall you.

But, sir, said I, you know, that what I did was to try to reconcile my lady; and, as she herself observed, it was paying her a high regard. It was so, replied he; but never think of making a compliment to her, or any body living, at my expense. Besides, she had behaved herself so intolerably, that I began to think you had stooped too much, and more than I ought to permit my wife to do; and acts of meanness are what I can't endure in any body, but especially where I love: and as she had been guilty of a very signal one, I had much rather have renounced her at that time, than have been reconciled to her.

Sir, said I, I hope I shall always comport myself so, as not wilfully to disoblige you for the future; and the rather do I hope this, as I am sure I shall want only to know your pleasure to obey it. But this instance shews me, that I may much offend, without designing it in the least.

Now, Pamela, replied he, don't be too serious: I hope I shan't be a very tyrannical husband to you: Yet do I not pretend to be perfect, or to be always governed by reason in my first transports; and I expect, from your affection, that you will bear with me when you find me wrong. I have no ungrateful spirit, and can, when cool, enter as impartially into myself as most men; and then I am always kind and acknowledging, in proportion as I have been out of the way.

But to convince you, my dear, continued he, of your fault, (I mean, with regard to the impetuosity of my temper; for there was no fault in your intention, that I acknowledge,) I'll observe only, that you met, when you came to me, while I was so out of humour, a reception you did not expect, and a harsh word or two that you did not deserve. Now, had you not broken in upon me while my anger lasted, but staid till I had come to you, or sent to desire your company, you'd have seen none of this; but that affectionate

behaviour, which I doubt not you'll always merit, and I shall always take pleasure in expressing: and in this temper shall you always find a proper influence over me: But you must not suppose, whenever I am out of humour, that, in opposing yourself to my passion, you oppose a proper butt to it; but when you are so good, like the slender reed, to bend to the hurricane, rather than, like the sturdy oak, to resist it, you will always stand firm in my kind opinion, while a contrary conduct would uproot you, with all your excellencies, from my soul.

Sir, said I, I will endeavour to conform myself, in all things, to your will. I make no doubt but you will: and I'll endeavour to make my will as conformable to reason as I can. And let me tell you, that this belief of you is one of the inducements I have had to marry at all: for nobody was more averse to this state than myself; and, now we are upon this subject, I'll tell you why I was so averse.

We people of fortune, or such as are born to large expectations, of both sexes, are generally educated wrong. You have occasionally touched upon this, Pamela, several times in your journal, so justly, that I need say the less to you. We are usually so headstrong, so violent in our wills, that we very little bear control.

Humoured by our nurses, through the faults of our parents, we practise first upon them; and shew the gratitude of our dispositions, in an insolence that ought rather to be checked and restrained, than encouraged.

Next, we are to be indulged in every thing at school; and our masters and mistresses are rewarded with further grateful instances of our boisterous behaviour.

But, in our wise parents' eyes, all looks well, all is forgiven and excused; and for no other reason, but because we are theirs.

Our next progression is, we exercise our spirits, when brought home, to the torment and regret of our parents themselves, and torture their hearts by our undutiful and perverse behaviour to them, which, however ungrateful in us, is but the natural consequence of their culpable indulgence to us, from infancy upwards.

And then, next, after we have, perhaps, half broken their hearts, a wife is looked out for: convenience, or birth, or fortune, are the first motives, affection the last (if it is at all consulted): and two people thus educated, thus trained up, in a course of unnatural ingratitude, and who have been

headstrong torments to every one who has had a share in their education, as well as to those to whom they owe their being, are brought together; and what can be expected, but that they should pursue, and carry on, the same comfortable conduct in matrimony, and join most heartily to plague one another? And, in some measure, indeed, this is right; because hereby they revenge the cause of all those who have been aggrieved and insulted by them, upon one another.

The gentleman has never been controlled: the lady has never been contradicted.

He cannot bear it from one whose new relation, he thinks, should oblige her to shew a quite contrary conduct.

She thinks it very barbarous, now, for the first time, to be opposed in her will, and that by a man from whom she expected nothing but tenderness.

So great is the difference between what they both expect from one another, and what they both find in each other, that no wonder misunderstandings happen; that these ripen to quarrels; that acts of unkindness pass, which, even had the first motive to their union been affection, as usually it is not, would have effaced all manner of tender impressions on both sides.

Appeals to parents or guardians often ensue. If, by mediation of friends, a reconciliation takes place, it hardly ever holds: for why? The fault is in the minds of both, and neither of them will think so; so that the wound (not permitted to be probed) is but skinned over, and rankles still at the bottom, and at last breaks out with more pain and anguish than before. Separate beds are often the consequence; perhaps elopements: if not, an unconquerable indifference, possibly aversion. And whenever, for appearance-sake, they are obliged to be together, every one sees, that the yawning husband, and the vapourish wife, are truly insupportable to one another; but separate, have freer spirits, and can be tolerable company.

Now, my dear, I would have you think, and I hope you will have no other reason, that had I married the first lady in the land, I would not have treated her better than I will my Pamela. For my wife is my wife; and I was the longer in resolving on the state, because I knew its requisites, and doubted my conduct in it.

I believe I am more nice than many gentlemen; but it is because I have been a close observer of the behaviour of wedded folks, and hardly ever



have seen it to be such as I could like in my own case. I shall, possibly, give you instances of a more particular nature of this, as we are longer, and, perhaps, I might say, better acquainted.

Had I married with the views of many gentlemen, and with such as my good sister (supplying the place of my father and mother,) would have recommended, I had wedded a fine lady, brought up pretty much in my own manner, and used to have her will in every thing.

Some gentlemen can come into a compromise; and, after a few struggles, sit down tolerably contented. But, had I married a princess, I could not have done so. I must have loved her exceedingly well, before I had consented to knit the knot with her, and preferred her to all her sex; for without this, Pamela, indifferences, if not disgusts, will arise in every wedded life, that could not have made me happy at home; and there are fewer instances, I believe, of men's loving better, after matrimony, than of women's; the reason of which 'tis not my present purpose to account for.

Then I must have been morally sure, that she preferred me to all men; and, to convince me of this, she must have lessened, not aggravated, my failings: She must have borne with my imperfections; she must have watched and studied my temper; and if ever she had any points to carry, any desire of overcoming, it must have been by sweetness and complaisance; and yet not such a slavish one, as should make her condescension seem to be rather the effect of her insensibility, than judgment or affection.

She should not have given cause for any part of my conduct to her to wear the least aspect of compulsion or force. The word command, on my side, or obedience on hers, I would have blotted from my vocabulary. For this reason I should have thought it my duty to have desired nothing of her, that was not significant, reasonable, or just; and that then she should, on hers, have shewn no reluctance, uneasiness, or doubt, to oblige me, even at half a word.

I would not have excused her to let me twice enjoin the same thing, while I took so much care to make her compliance with me reasonable, and such as should not destroy her own free agency, in points that ought to be allowed her: And if I was not always right, that yet she would bear with me, if she saw me set upon it; and expostulate with me on the right side of compliance; for that would shew me, (supposing small points in dispute,

from which the greatest quarrels, among friends, generally arise,) that she differed from me, not for contradiction-sake, but desired to convince me for my own; and that I should, another time, take better resolutions.

This would be so obliging a conduct, that I should, in justice, have doubled my esteem for one, who, to humour me, could give up her own judgment; and I should see she could have no other view in her expostulations, after her compliance had passed, than to rectify my motions for the future; and it would have been impossible then, but I must have paid the greater deference to her opinion and advice in more momentous matters.

In all companies she must have shewn, that she had, whether I deserved it altogether or not, a high regard and opinion of me; and this the rather, as such a conduct in her would be a reputation and security to herself: For if we rakes attempt a married lady, our first encouragement, exclusive of our own vanity, arises from the indifferent opinion, slight, or contempt, she expresses of her husband.

I should expect, therefore, that she should draw a kind veil over my faults; that such as she could not hide, she would extenuate; that she would place my better actions in an advantageous light, and shew that I had her good opinion, at least, whatever liberties the world took with my character.

She must have valued my friends for my sake; been cheerful and easy, whomsoever I had brought home with me; and, whatever faults she had observed in me, have never blamed me before company; at least, with such an air of superiority, as should have shewn she had a better opinion of her own judgment, than of mine.

Now, my Pamela, this is but a faint sketch of the conduct I must have expected from my wife, let her quality have been what it would; or have lived with her on bad terms. Judge then, if to me a lady of the modish taste could have been tolerable.

The perverseness and contradiction I have too often seen, in some of my visits, even among people of sense, as well as condition, had prejudiced me to the married state; and, as I knew I could not bear it, surely I was in the right to decline it: And you see, my dear, that I have not gone among this class of people for a wife; nor know I, indeed, where, in any class, I could have sought one, or had one suitable to my mind, if not you: For

here is my misfortune; I could not have been contented to have been but moderately happy in a wife.

Judge you, from all this, if I could very well bear that you should think yourself so well secured of my affection, that you could take the faults of others upon yourself; and, by a supposed supererogatory merit, think your interposition sufficient to atone for the faults of others.

Yet am I not perfect myself: No, I am greatly imperfect. Yet will I not allow, that my imperfections shall excuse those of my wife, or make her think I ought to bear faults in her, that she can rectify, because she bears greater from me.

Upon the whole, I may expect, that you will bear with me, and study my temper, till, and only till, you see I am capable of returning insult for obligation; and till you think, that I shall be of a gentler deportment, if I am roughly used, than otherwise. One thing more I will add, That I should scorn myself, if there was one privilege of your sex, that a princess might expect, as my wife, to be indulged in, that I would not allow to my Pamela; for you are the wife of my affections: I never wished for one before you, nor ever do I hope to have another.

I hope, sir, said I, my future conduct—Pardon me, said he, my dear, for interrupting you; but it is to assure you, that I am so well convinced of your affectionate regard for me, that I know I might have spared the greatest part of what I have said: And, indeed, it must be very bad for both of us, if I should have reason to think it necessary to say so much. But one thing has brought on another; and I have rather spoken what my niceness has made me observe in other families, than what I fear in my own. And, therefore, let me assure you, I am thoroughly satisfied with your conduct hitherto. You shall have no occasion to repent it: And you shall find, though greatly imperfect, and passionate, on particular provocations, (which yet I will try to overcome,) that you have not a brutal or ungenerous husband, who is capable of offering insult for condescension, or returning evil for good.

I thanked him for these kind rules, and generous assurances: and assured him, that they had made so much impression on my mind, that these, and his most agreeable injunctions before given me, and such as he should hereafter be pleased to give me, should be so many rules for my future behaviour.

And I am glad of the method I have taken of making a Journal of all that passes in these first stages of my happiness, because it will sink the impression still deeper; and I shall have recourse to them for my better regulation, as often as I shall mistrust my memory.

Let me see: What are the rules I am to observe from this awful lecture? Why these:

1. That I must not, when he is in great wrath with any body, break in upon him without his leave. Well, I'll remember it, I warrant. But yet I think this rule is almost peculiar to himself.

2. That I must think his displeasure the heaviest thing that can befall me. To be sure I shall.

3. And so that I must not wish to incur it, to save any body else. I'll be further if I do.

4. That I must never make a compliment to any body at his expense.

5. That I must not be guilty of any acts of wilful meanness. There is a great deal meant in this; and I'll endeavour to observe it all. To be sure, the occasion on which he mentions this, explains it; that I must say nothing, though in anger, that is spiteful or malicious; that is disrespectful or undutiful, and such-like.

6. That I must bear with him, even when I find him in the wrong. This is a little hard, as the case may be!

I wonder whether poor Miss Sally Godfrey be living or dead!

7. That I must be as flexible as the reed in the fable, lest, by resisting the tempest, like the oak, I be torn up by the roots. Well, I'll do the best I can!—There is no great likelihood, I hope, that I should be too perverse; yet sure, the tempest will not lay me quite level with the ground, neither.

8. That the education of young people of condition is generally wrong. Memorandum; That if any part of children's education fall to my lot, I never indulge and humour them in things that they ought to be restrained in.

9. That I accustom them to bear disappointments and control.

10. That I suffer them not to be too much indulged in their infancy.

11. Nor at school.

12. Nor spoil them when they come home.

13. For that children generally extend their perverseness from the nurse to the schoolmaster: from the schoolmaster to the parents:

14. And, in their next step, as a proper punishment for all, make their ownelves unhappy.

15. That undutiful and perverse children make bad husbands and wives: And, collaterally, bad masters and mistresses.

16. That, not being subject to be controlled early, they cannot, when married, bear one another.

17. That the fault lying deep, and in the minds of each other, neither will mend it.

18. Whence follow misunderstandings, quarrels, appeals, ineffectual reconciliations, separations, elopements; or, at best, indifference; perhaps, aversion.—Memorandum; A good image of unhappy wedlock, in the words YAWNING HUSBAND, and VAPOURISH WIFE, when together: But separate, both quite alive.

19. Few married persons behave as he likes. Let me ponder this with awe and improvement.

20. Some gentlemen can compromise with their wives, for quietness sake; but he can't. Indeed I believe that's true; I don't desire he should.

21. That love before marriage is absolutely necessary.

22. That there are fewer instances of men's than women's loving better after marriage. But why so? I wish he had given his reasons for this! I fancy they would not have been to the advantage of his own sex.

23. That a woman give her husband reason to think she prefers him before all men. Well, to be sure this should be so.

24. That if she would overcome, it must be by sweetness and complaisance; that is, by yielding, he means, no doubt.

25. Yet not such a slavish one neither, as should rather seem the effect of her insensibility, than judgment or affection.

26. That the words COMMAND and OBEY shall be blotted out of the Vocabulary. Very good!

27. That a man should desire nothing of his wife, but what is significant, reasonable, just. To be sure, that is right.

28. But then, that she must not shew reluctance, uneasiness, or doubt, to oblige him; and that too at half a word; and must not be bid twice to do one thing. But may not there be some occasions, where this may be a little dispensed with? But he says afterwards, indeed,

29. That this must be only while he took care to make her compliance reasonable, and consistent with her free agency, in points that ought to be allowed her. Come, this is pretty well, considering.

30. That if the husband be set upon a wrong thing, she must not dispute with him, but do it and, expostulate afterwards. Good sirs! I don't know what to say to this! It looks a little hard, methinks! This would bear a smart debate, I fancy, in a parliament of women. But then he says,

31. Supposing they are only small points that are in dispute. Well, this mends it a little. For small points, I think, should not be stood upon.

32. That the greatest quarrels among friends (and wives and husbands are, or should be, friends) arise from small matters. I believe this is very true; for I had like to have had anger here, when I intended very well.

33. That a wife should not desire to convince her husband for CONTRADICTION sake, but for HIS OWN. As both will find their account in this, if one does, I believe 'tis very just.

34. That in all companies a wife must shew respect and love to her husband.

35. And this for the sake of her own reputation and security; for,

36. That rakes cannot have a greater encouragement to attempt a married lady's virtue, than her slight opinion of her husband. To be sure this stands to reason, and is a fine lesson.

37. That a wife should therefore draw a kind veil over her husband's faults.

38. That such as she could not conceal, she should extenuate.

39. That his virtues she should place in an advantageous light

40. And shew the world, that he had HER good opinion at least.

41. That she must value his friends for his sake.

42. That she must be cheerful and easy in her behaviour, to whomsoever he brings home with him.

43. That whatever faults she sees in him, she never blame him before company.

44. At least, with such an air of superiority, as if she had a less opinion of his judgment than her own.

45. That a man of nice observation cannot be contented to be only moderately happy in a wife.

46. That a wife take care how she ascribe supererogatory merit to herself; so as to take the faults of others upon her.

Indeed, I think it is well if we can bear our own! This is of the same nature with the third; and touches upon me, on the present occasion, for this wholesome lecture.

47. That his imperfections must not be a plea for hers. To be sure, 'tis no matter how good the women are; but 'tis to be hoped men will allow a little. But, indeed, he says,

48. That a husband, who expects all this, is to be incapable of returning insult for obligation, or evil for good; and ought not to abridge her of any privilege of her sex.

Well, my dear parents, I think this last rule crowns the rest, and makes them all very tolerable; and a generous man, and a man of sense, cannot be too much obliged. And, as I have this happiness, I shall be very unworthy, if I do not always so think, and so act.

Yet, after all, you'll see I have not the easiest task in the world. But I know my own intentions, that I shall not wilfully err; and so fear the less.

Not one hint did he give, that I durst lay hold of, about poor Miss Sally Godfrey. I wish my lady had not spoken of it: for it has given me a curiosity that is not quite so pretty in me; especially so early in my nuptials, and in a case so long ago past. Yet he intimated too, to his sister, that he had had other faults, (of this sort, I suppose,) that had not come to her knowledge!—But I make no doubt he has seen his error, and will be very good for the future. I wish it, and pray it may be so, for his own dear sake!

Wednesday, the seventh.

When I arose in the morning, I went to wait on Lady Davers, seeing her door open; and she was in bed, but awake, and talking to her woman. I said, I hope I don't disturb your ladyship. Not at all, said she; I am glad to

see you. How do you do? Well, added she, when do you set out for Bedfordshire?—I said, I can't tell, madam; it was designed as to-day, but I have heard no more of it.

Sit down, said she, on the bed-side.—I find, by the talk we had yesterday and last night, you have had but a poor time of it, Pamela, (I must call you so yet, said she,) since you were brought to this house, till within these few days. And Mrs. Jewkes too has given Beck such an account, as makes me pity you.

Indeed, madam, said I, if your ladyship knew all, you would pity me; for never poor creature was so hard put to it. But I ought to forget it all now, and be thankful.

Why, said she, as far as I can find, 'tis a mercy you are here now. I was sadly moved with some part of your story and you have really made a noble defence, and deserve the praises of all our sex.

It was God enabled me, madam, replied I. Why, said she, 'tis the more extraordinary, because I believe, if the truth was known, you loved the wretch not a little. While my trials lasted, madam, said I, I had not a thought of any thing, but to preserve my innocence, much less of love.

But, tell me truly, said she, did you not love him all the time? I had always, madam, answered I, a great reverence for my master, and thought all his good actions doubly good and for his naughty ones, though I abhorred his attempts upon me, yet I could not hate him; and always wished him well; but I did not know that it was love. Indeed I had not the presumption.

Sweet girl! said she; that's prettily said: But when he found he could not gain his ends, and began to be sorry for your sufferings, and to admire your virtue, and to profess honourable love to you, what did you think?

Think! Indeed, madam, I did not know what to think! could neither hope nor believe so great an honour would fall to my lot, and feared more from his kindness, for some time, than I had done from his unkindness: And, having had a private intimation, from a kind friend, of a sham marriage, intended by means of a man who was to personate a minister, it kept my mind in too much suspense, to be greatly overjoyed at his kind declaration.

Said she, I think he did make two or three attempts upon you in Bedfordshire? Yes, madam, said I; he was very naughty, to be sure.



And here he proposed articles to you, I understand? Yes, madam, replied I; but I abhorred so much the thoughts of being a kept creature, that I rejected them with great boldness; and was resolved to die before I would consent to them.

He afterwards attempted you, I think: Did he not? O yes, madam, said I, a most sad attempt he made! and I had like to have been lost; for Mrs. Jewkes was not so good as she should have been. And so I told her ladyship that sad affair, and how I fell into fits; and that they believing me dying, forbore.—Any attempts after this base one? she said.

He was not so good as he should have been, returned I, once in the garden, afterwards; but I was so watchful, and so ready to take the alarm!

But, said she, did he not threaten you, at times, and put on his stern airs, every now and then?—Threaten, madam, replied I; yes, I had enough of that! I thought I should have died for fear several times.—How could you bear that? said she: for he is a most daring and majestic mortal! He has none of your puny hearts, but is as courageous as a lion; and, boy and man, never feared any thing. I myself, said she, have a pretty good spirit; but, when I have made him truly angry, I have always been forced to make it up with him, as well as I could: for, child, he is not one that is easily reconciled, I assure you.

But, after he had professed honourable love to you, did he never attempt you again?—No, indeed, madam, he did not. But he was a good while struggling with himself, and with his pride, as he was pleased to call it, before he could stoop so low; and considered, and considered again: and once, upon my saying but two or three words, that displeased him, when he was very kind to me, he turned me out of doors, in a manner, at an hour's warning; for he sent me above a day's journey towards my father's; and then sent a man and horse, post-haste, to fetch me back again; and has been exceedingly kind and gracious to me ever since, and made me happy.

That sending you away, said she, one hour, and sending after you the next, is exactly like my brother; and 'tis well if he don't turn you off twice or thrice before a year comes about, if you vex him: and he would have done the same by the first lady in the land, if he had been married to her. Yet has he his virtues, as well as his faults; for he is generous; nay, he is noble in his spirit; hates little dirty actions: he delights in doing good; but does not pass over a wilful fault easily. He is wise, prudent, sober, and

magnanimous, and will not tell a lie, nor disguise his faults; but you must not expect to have him all to yourself, I doubt.

But I'll no more harp upon this string: You see how he was exasperated at me; and he seemed to be angry at you too; though something of it was art, I believe.

Indeed, madam, said I, he has been pleased to give me a most noble lecture; and I find he was angry with me in earnest, and that it will not be an easy task to behave unexceptionably to him: for he is very nice and delicate in his notions, I perceive; but yet, as your ladyship says, exceeding generous.

Well, said she, I'm glad thou hadst a little bit of his anger; else I should have thought it art; and I don't love to be treated with low art, any more than he; and I should have been vexed if he had done it by me.

But I understand, child, said she, that you keep a journal of all matters that pass, and he has several times found means to get at it: Should you care I should see it? It could not be to your disadvantage; for I find it had no small weight with him in your favour; and I should take great pleasure to read all his stratagems, attempts, contrivances, menaces, and offers to you, on one hand, and all your pretty counter-plottings, which he much praises; your resolute resistance, and the noble stand you have made to preserve your virtue; and the steps by which his pride was subdued, and his mind induced to honourable love, till you were made what you now are: for it must be a rare and uncommon story; and will not only give me great pleasure in reading, but will entirely reconcile me to the step he has taken: and that, let me tell you, is what I never thought to be; for I had gone a great way in bringing about a match with him and Lady Betty—; and had said so much of it, that the earl, her father, approved of it: and so did the Duke of ———, her uncle; and Lady Betty herself was not averse: and now I shall be hunted to death about it; and this has made me so outrageous as you have seen me upon the matter. But when I can find, by your writings, that your virtue is but suitably rewarded, it will be not only a good excuse for me, but for him, and make me love you. There is nothing that I would not do, said I, to oblige your ladyship; but my poor father and mother (who would rather have seen me buried quick in the earth, than to be seduced by the greatest of princes) have them in their hands at present; and your dear brother has bespoken them, when they

have done reading them: but, if he gives me leave, I will shew them to your ladyship, with all my heart; not doubting your generous allowances, as I have had his; though I have treated him very freely all the way, while he had naughty views; and that your ladyship would consider them as the naked sentiments of my heart, from time to time delivered to those, whose indulgence I was sure of; and for whose sight only they were written.

Give me a kiss now, said her ladyship, for your cheerful compliance: for I make no doubt my brother will consent I shall see them, because they must needs make for your honour; and I see he loves you better than any one in the world.

I have heard, continued her ladyship, a mighty good character of your parents, as industrious, honest, sensible, good folks, who know the world; and, as I doubt not my brother's generosity, I am glad they will make no ill figure in the world's eye.

Madam, said I, they are the honestest, the lovingest, and the most conscientious couple breathing. They once lived creditably; and brought up a great family, of which I am the youngest; but had misfortunes, through their doing beyond their power for two unhappy brothers, who are both dead, and whose debts they stood bound for; and so became reduced, and, by harsh creditors, (where most of the debts were, not of their own contracting,) turned out of all; and having, without success, tried to set up a little country-school; (for my father understood a little of accounts, and wrote a pretty good hand;) forced to take to hard labour; but honest all the time; contented; never repining; and loving to one another; and, in the midst of their poverty and disappointments, above all temptation; and all their fear was, that I should be wicked, and yield to temptation for the sake of worldly riches and to God's grace, and their good lessons, and those I imbibed from my dear good lady, your ladyship's mother, it is that I owe the preservation of my innocence,—and the happy station I am exalted to.

She was pleased to kiss me again, and said, There is such a noble simplicity in thy story, such an honest artlessness in thy mind, and such a sweet humility in thy deportment, notwithstanding thy present station, that I believe I shall be forced to love thee, whether I will or not: and the sight of your papers, I dare say, will crown the work; will disarm my pride, banish my resentment on Lady Betty's account, and justify my brother's conduct; and, at the same time, redound to your own everlasting honour, as

well as to the credit of our sex: and so I make no doubt but my brother will let me see them.

Worden, said my lady, I can say any thing before you; and you will take no notice of our conversation; but I see you are much touched with it: Did you ever hear any thing prettier, more unaffected, sincere, free, easy?—No, never, madam, answered she, in my life; and it is a great pleasure to see so happy a reconciliation taking place, where there is so much merit.

I said, I have discovered so much prudence in Mrs. Worden, that, as well for that, as for the confidence your ladyship places in her, I have made no scruple of speaking my mind freely before her; and of blaming my dear master while he was blameworthy, as well as acknowledging his transcendent goodness to me since; which, I am sure, exceeds all I can ever deserve. May be not, said my lady; I hope you'll be very happy in one another; and I'll now rise, and tell him my thoughts, and ask him to let me have the reading of your papers; for I promise myself much pleasure in them; and shall not grudge a journey and a visit to you, to the other house, to fetch them.

Your ladyship's favour, said I, was all I had to wish for; and if I have that, and the continuance of your dear brother's goodness to me, I shall be easy under whatever else may happen.

And so I took my leave, and withdrew; and she let me hear her say to Mrs. Worden, 'Tis a charming creature, Worden!—I know not which excels; her person, or her mind!—And so young a creature too!—Well may my brother love her!

I am afraid, my dear father and mother, I shall now be too proud indeed.

I had once a good mind to have asked her ladyship about Miss Sally Godfrey; but I thought it was better let alone, since she did not mention It herself. May be I shall hear it too soon. But I hope not. I wonder, though, whether she be living or dead.

We breakfasted together with great good temper; and my lady was very kind, and, asking my good master, he gave leave very readily, she should see all my papers, when you returned them to me; and he said, He was sure, when she came to read them, she would say, that I had well deserved the fortune I had met with: and would be of opinion, that all the kindness of his future life would hardly be a sufficient reward for my virtue, and make me amends for my sufferings.

My lady resolving to set out the next morning to return to her lord, my master ordered every thing to be made ready for his doing the like to Bedfordshire; and this evening our good neighbours will sup with us, to take leave of my lady and us.

Wednesday night.

Nothing particular having passed at dinner or supper, but the most condescending goodness, on my lady's side, to me; and the highest civilities from Mr. Peters's family, from Lady Jones, from Sir Simon's family, etc. and reciprocal good wishes all around; and a promise obtained from my benefactor, that he would endeavour to pass a fortnight or three weeks in these parts, before the winter set in; I shall conclude this day with observing, that I disposed of the money my master was so good to put into my hands, in the manner he was pleased to direct; and I gave Mrs. Jewkes hers in such a manner as highly pleased her; and she wished me, with tears, all kinds of happiness; and prayed me to forgive her all her wickedness to me, as she herself called it. I begged leave of my master to present Mrs. Worden with five guineas for a pair of gloves; which he said was well thought of.

I should have mentioned, that Miss Darnford and I agreed upon a correspondence, which will be no small pleasure to me; for she is an admirable young lady, whom I prefer to every one I have seen; and I shall, I make no doubt, improve by her letters; for she is said to have a happy talent in writing, and is well read, for so young a lady.

Saturday.

On Thursday morning my lady set out for her own seat; and my best friend and I, attended by Mr. Colbrand, Abraham, and Thomas, for this dear house. Her ladyship parted with her brother and me with great tenderness, and made me promise to send her my papers; which I find she intends to entertain Lady Betty with, and another lady or two, her intimates, as also her lord; and hopes to find, as I believe, in the reading of them, some excuse for her brother's choice.

My dearest master has been all love and tenderness on the road, as he is in every place, and on every occasion. And oh, what a delightful change was this journey, to that which, so contrary to all my wishes, and so much to my apprehensions, carried me hence to the Lincolnshire house! And how did I bless God at every turn, and at every stage!

We did not arrive here till yesterday noon. Abraham rode before, to let them know we were coming: and I had the satisfaction to find every body there I wished to see.

When the chariot entered the court-yard, I was so strongly impressed with the favour and mercies of God Almighty, on remembering how I was sent away the last time I saw this house; the leave I took; the dangers I had encountered; a poor cast-off servant girl; and now returning a joyful wife, and the mistress, through his favour, of the noble house I was turned out of; that I was hardly able to support the joy I felt in my mind on the occasion. He saw how much I was moved, and tenderly asked me, Why I seemed so affected? I told him, and lifted his dear hand to my lips, and said, O sir! God's mercies, and your goodness to me on entering this dear, dear place, are above my expression; I can hardly bear the thoughts of them!—He said, Welcome, thrice welcome, joy of my life! to your own house; and kissed my hand in return. All the common servants stood at the windows, as unseen as they could, to observe us. He took my hand, with the most condescending goodness in the world; and, with great complaisance, led me into the parlour, and kissed me with the greatest ardour. Welcome again, my dearest life! said he, a thousand times welcome to the possession of a house that is not more mine than yours!

I threw myself at his feet: Permit me, dear sir, thus to bless God, and thank you, for all his mercies and your goodness. O may I so behave, as not to be utterly unworthy; and then how happy shall I be! God give me, my dearest, said he, life and health to reward all your sweetness! and no man can be so blest as I.

Where (said he to Abraham, who passed by the door), where is Mrs. Jervis?—She bolted in: Here, good sir! said she; here, good madam! am I, waiting impatiently, till called for, to congratulate you both.—I ran to her, and clasped my arms about her neck, and kissed her; O my dear Mrs. Jervis! said I, my other dear mother! receive your happy, happy Pamela; and join with me to bless God, and bless our master, for all these great things!—I was ready to sink in her arms through excess of joy, to see the dear good woman, who had been so often a mournful witness of my distress, as now of my triumph.—Dearest madam, said she, you do me too much honour. Let my whole life shew the joy I take in your deserved good fortune, and in my duty to you, for the early instance I received of your

goodness in your kind letter. O Mrs. Jervis! replied I, there all thanks are due, both from you and me: for our dear master granted me this blessing, as I may justly call it, the very first moment I begged it of him. Your goodness, sir, said she, I will for ever acknowledge; and I beg pardon for the wrong step I made in applying to my Lady Davers.—He was so good as to salute her, and said, All is over now, Mrs. Jervis; and I shall not remember you ever disobliged me. I always respected you, and shall now more and more value you, for the sake of that dear good creature, whom, with joy unfeigned, I can call my wife. God bless your honour for ever! said she; and many many happy years may ye live together, the envy and wonder of all who know you!

But where, said my dear master, is honest Longman? and where is Jonathan?—Come, Mrs. Jervis, said I, you shall shew me them, and all the good folks, presently; and let me go up with you to behold the dear apartments, which I have seen before with such different emotions to what I shall now do.

We went up; and in every room, the chamber I took refuge in, when my master pursued me, my lady's chamber, her dressing-room, Mrs. Jervis's room, not forgetting her closet, my own little bed-chamber, the green-room, and in each of the others, I blessed God for my past escapes, and present happiness; and the good woman was quite affected with the zeal and pleasure with which I made my thankful acknowledgments to the divine goodness. O my excellent lady! said she, you are still the same good, pious, humble soul I knew you; and your marriage has added to your graces, as I hope it will to your blessings.

Dear Mrs. Jervis, said I, you know not what I have gone through! You know not what God has done for me! You know not what a happy creature I am now! I have a thousand thousand things to tell you; and a whole week will be too little, every moment of it spent in relating to you what has befallen me, to make you acquainted with it all. We shall be sweetly happy together, I make no doubt. But I charge you, my dear Mrs. Jervis, whatever you call me before strangers, that when we are by ourselves you call me nothing but your Pamela. For what an ungrateful creature should I be, who have received so many mercies, if I attributed them not to the divine goodness, but assumed to myself insolent airs upon them! No, I hope I

shall be, more and more thankful, as I am more and more blest! and more humble, as God, the author of all my happiness, shall more distinguish me.

We went down again to the parlour, to my dear master. Said he, Call Longman in again; he longs to see you, my dear. He came in: God bless you, my sweet lady, said he; as now, Heaven be praised, I may call you! Did I not tell you, madam, that Providence would find you out? O, Mr. Longman, said I, God be praised for all his mercies! I am rejoiced to see you; and I laid my hand on his, and said, Good Mr. Longman, how do you do?—I must always value you; and you don't know how much of my present happiness I owe to the sheets of paper, and pens and ink, you furnished me with. I hope my dear sir and you are quite reconciled.—O, madam, said he, how good you are! Why, I cannot contain myself for joy! and then he wiped his eyes; good man!

Said my master, Yes, I have been telling Longman that I am obliged to him for his ready return to me; and that I will entirely forget his appeal to Lady Davers; and I hope he'll find himself quite as easy and happy as he wishes. My dear partner here, Mr. Longman, I dare promise you, will do all she can to make you so.—Heaven bless you both together! said he. 'Tis the pride of my heart to see this! I returned with double delight, when I heard the blessed news; and I am sure, sir, said he, (mark old Longman's words,) God will bless you for this every year more and more! You don't know how many hearts you have made happy by this generous deed!—I am glad of it, said my dear master; I am sure I have made my own happy: and, Longman, though I must think you **SOMEBODY**, yet, as you are not a young man, and so won't make me jealous, I can allow you to wish my dear wife joy in the tenderest manner. Adad! sir, said he, I am sure you rejoice me with your favour: 'Tis what I longed for, but durst not presume. My dear, said my master, receive the compliment of one of the honestest hearts in England, that always revered your virtues!—and the good man saluted me with great respect, and said, God in Heaven bless you both! and kneeled on one knee. I must quit your presence! Indeed I must!—And away he went.

Your goodness, sir, said I, knows no bounds: O may my gratitude never find any!—I saw, said my master, when the good man approached you, that he did it with so much awe and love mingled together, that I fancied he longed to salute my angel; and I could not but indulge his honest heart.



How blessed am I! said I, and kissed his hand.—And indeed I make nothing now of kissing his dear hand, as if it was my own!

When honest old Mr. Jonathan come in to attend at dinner, so clean, so sleek, and so neat, as he always is, with his silver hair, I said, Well, Mr. Jonathan, how do you do? I am glad to see you.—You look as well as ever, thank God! O, dear madam! said he, better than ever, to have such a blessed sight! God bless you and my good master!—and I hope, sir, said he, you'll excuse all my past failings. Ay, that I will, Jonathan, said he; because you never had any, but what your regard for my dear wife here was the occasion of. And now I can tell you, you can never err, because you cannot respect her too much. O sir, said he, your honour is exceeding good! I'm sure I shall always pray for you both.

After dinner, Mr. Longman coming in, and talking of some affairs under his care, he said afterwards, All your honour's servants are now happy; for Robert, who left you, had a pretty little fortune fallen to him, or he never would have quitted your service. He was here but yesterday, to inquire when you and my lady returned hither; and hoped he might have leave to pay his duty to you both. Ay, said my master, I shall be glad to see honest Robert; for that's another of your favourites, Pamela. It was high time, I think, I should marry you, were it but to engage the respects of all my family to myself.—There are, sir, said I, ten thousand reasons why I should rejoice in your goodness.

But I was going to say, said Mr. Longman, That all your honour's old servants are now happy, but one. You mean John Arnold? said my master. I do, indeed, said he, if you'll excuse me, sir. O, said I, I have had my prayer for poor John answered, as favourably as I could wish.—Why, said Mr. Longman, to be sure poor John has acted no very good part, take it altogether; but he so much honoured you, sir, and so much respected you, madam, that he would have been glad to have been obedient to both; and so was faithful to neither. But, indeed, the poor fellow's heart is almost broke, and he won't look out for any other place; and says, he must live in your honour's service, or he must die wretched very shortly. Mrs. Jervis was there when this was said: Indeed, said she, the poor man has been here every day since he heard the tidings, that have rejoiced us all; and he says, he hopes he shall yet be forgiven. Is he in the house now? said my master. He is, sir; and was here when your honour came in, and played at hide and

seek to have one look at you both when you alighted; and was ready to go out of his wits for joy, when we saw your honour hand my lady in. Pamela, said my dear master, you're to do with John as you please. You have full power. Then pray, sir, said I, let poor John come in.

The poor fellow came in, with so much confusion, that I have never seen a countenance that expressed so lively a consciousness of his faults, and mingled joy and shame. How do you do, John? said I; I hope you are very well!—The poor fellow could hardly speak, and looked with awe upon my master, and pleasure upon me. Said my master, Well, John, there is no room to say any thing to a man that has so much concern already: I am told you will serve me whether I will or not; but I turn you over altogether to my spouse here: and she is to do by you as she pleases. You see, John, said I, your good master's indulgence. Well may I forgive, that have so generous an example. I was always persuaded of your honest intentions, if you had known how to distinguish between your duty to your master, and your good-will to me: You will now have no more puzzles on that account, from the goodness of your dear master. I shall be but too happy I said the poor man. God bless your honour! God bless you, madam!—I now have the joy of my soul, in serving you both; and I will make the best of servants, to my power. Well, then, John, said I, your wages will go on, as if you had not left your master: May I not say so, sir? said I. Yes, surely, my dear, replied he; and augment them too, if you find his duty to you deserves it. A thousand millions of thanks, said the poor man: I am very well satisfied, and desire no augmentation. And so he withdrew, overjoyed; and Mrs. Jervis and Mr. Longman were highly pleased; for though they were incensed against him for his fault to me, when matters looked badly for me, yet they, and all his fellow-servants, always loved John.

When Mr. Longman and Mrs. Jervis had dined, they came in again, to know if he had any commands; and my dear master, filling a glass of wine, said, Longman, I am going to toast the happiest and honestest couple in England, my dear Pamela's father and mother.—Thank you, dear sir, said I.

I think, continued he, that little Kentish purchase wants a manager; and as it is a little out of your way, Longman, I have been purposing, if I thought Mr. Andrews would accept it, that he should enter upon Hodge's farm that was, and so manage for me that whole little affair; and we will well stock the farm for him, and make it comfortable; and I think, if he

will take that trouble upon him, it will be an ease to you, and a favour to me.

Your honour, said he, cannot do a better thing; and I have had some inkling given me, that you may, if you please, augment that estate, by a purchase, of equal amount, contiguous to it; and as you have so much money to spare, I can't see your honour can do better. Well, said he, let me have the particulars another time, and we will consider about it. But, my dear, added he, you'll mention this to your father, if you please.

I have too much money, Longman, continued he, lies useless; though, upon this occasion, I shall not grudge laying out as much in liveries and other things, as if I had married a lady of a fortune equal, if possible, to my Pamela's merit; and I reckon you have a good deal in hand. Yes, sir, said he, more than I wish I had. But I have a mortgage in view, if you don't buy that Kentish thing, that I believe will answer very well; and when matters are riper, will mention it to your honour.

I took with me, to Lincolnshire, said my master, upwards of six hundred guineas, and thought to have laid most of them out there: (Thank God, thought I, you did not! for he offered me five hundred of them, you know:) but I have not laid out above two hundred and fifty of them; so two hundred I left there in my escritoire; because I shall go again for a fortnight or so, before winter; and two hundred I have brought with me: and I have money, I know not what, in three places here, the account of which is in my pocket-book, in my library.

You have made some little presents, Pamela, to my servants there, on our nuptials; and these two hundred that I have brought up, I will put into your disposal, that, with some of them, you shall do here as you did there.

I am ashamed, good sir, said I, to be so costly, and so worthless! Pray, my dear, replied he, say not a word of that. Said Mr. Longman, Why, madam, with money in stocks, and one thing or another, his honour could buy half the gentlemen around him. He wants not money, and lays up every year. And it would have been pity but his honour should have wedded just as he has. Very true, Longman, said my master; and, pulling out his purse, said, Tell out, my dear, two hundred guineas, and give me the rest.—I did so. Now, said he, take them yourself, for the purposes I mentioned. But, Mr. Longman, do you, before sunset, bring my dear girl fifty pounds, which is due to her this day, by my promise; and every three

months, from this day, pay her fifty pounds; which will be two hundred pounds per annum; and this is for her to lay out at her own discretion, and without account, in such a way as shall derive a blessing upon us all: for she was my mother's almoner, and shall be mine, and her own too.—I'll go for it this instant, said Mr. Longman.

When he was done, I looked upon my dear generous master, and on Mrs. Jervis, and he gave me a nod of assent; and I took twenty guineas, and said, Dear Mrs. Jervis, accept of this, which is no more than my generous master ordered me to present to Mrs. Jewkes, for a pair of gloves, on my happy nuptials; and so you, who are much better entitled to them by the love I bear you, must not refuse them.

Said she, Mrs. Jewkes was on the spot, madam, at the happy time. Yes, said my master; but Pamela would have rejoiced to have had you there instead of her. That I should, sir, replied I, or instead of any body, except my own mother. She gratefully accepted them, and thanked us both: But I don't know what she should thank me for; for I was not worth a fourth of them myself.

I'd have you, my dear, said he, in some handsome manner, as you know how, oblige Longman to accept of the like present.

Mr. Longman returned from his office, and brought me the fifty pounds, saying, I have entered this new article with great pleasure: 'To my Lady fifty pounds: to be paid the same sum quarterly.' O sir! said I, what will become of me, to be so poor in myself, and so rich in your bounty!—It is a shame to take all that your profuse goodness would heap upon me thus: But indeed it shall not be without account.—Make no words, my dear, said he: Are you not my wife? And have I not endowed you with my goods; and, hitherto, this is a very small part.

Mr. Longman, said I, and Mrs. Jervis, you both see how I am even oppressed with unreturnable obligations. God bless the donor, and the receiver too! said Mr. Longman: I am sure they will bring back good interest; for, madam, you had ever a bountiful heart; and I have seen the pleasure you used to take to dispense my late lady's alms and donations.

I'll warrant, Mr. Longman, said I, notwithstanding you are so willing to have me take large sums for nothing at all, I should affront you, if I asked you to accept from me a pair of gloves only, on account of my happy nuptials. He seemed not readily to know how to answer; and my master

said, If Longman refuse you, my dear, he may be said to refuse your first favour. On that I put twenty guineas in his hand; but he insisted upon it, that he would take but five. I said, I must desire you to oblige me, Mr. Longman, or I shall think I have affronted you. Well, if I must, said he, I know what I know. What is that, Mr. Longman? said I.—Why, madam, said he, I will not lay it out till my young master's birth-day, which I hope will be within this twelvemonth.

Not expecting anything like this from the old gentleman, I looked at my master, and then blushed so, I could not hold up my head. Charmingly said, Longman! said my master, and clasped me in his arms: O, my dear life! God send it may be so!—You have quite delighted me, Longman! Though I durst not have said such a thing for the world.—Madam, said the old gentleman, I beg your pardon; I hope no offence: but I'd speak it ten times in a breath to have it so, take it how you please, as long as my good master takes it so well. Mrs. Jervis, said my master, this is an over-nice dear creature; you don't know what a life I have had with her, even on this side matrimony.—Said Mrs. Jervis, I think Mr. Longman says very well; I am sure I shall hope for it too.

Mr. Longman, who had struck me of a heap, withdrawing soon after, my master said, Why, my dear, you can't look up! The old man said nothing shocking. I did not expect it, though, from him, said I. I was not aware but of some innocent pleasantry. Why, so it was, said he, both innocent and pleasant: and I won't forgive you, if you don't say as he says. Come, speak before Mrs. Jervis. May every thing happen, sir, said I, that will give you delight!—That's my dearest love, said he, and kissed me with great tenderness.

When the servants had dined, I desired to see the maidens; and all four came up together. You are welcome home, madam, said Rachel; we rejoice all to see you here, and more to see you our lady. O my good old acquaintances, said I, I joy to see you! How do you do, Rachel? How do you all do? And I took each of them by the hand, and could have kissed them. For, said I to myself, I kissed you all, last time I saw you, in sorrow; why should I not kiss you all with joy? But I forbore, in honour of their master's presence.

They seemed quite transported with me: and my good master was pleased with the scene. See here, my lasses, said he, your mistress! I need

not bid you respect her; for you always loved her; and she'll have it as much in her power as inclination to be kind to the deserving. Indeed, said I, I shall always be a kind friend to you; and your dear master has ordered me to give each of you this, that you may rejoice with me on my happiness. And so I gave them five guineas a-piece, and said, God bless you every one! I am overjoyed to see you! And they withdrew with the greatest gratitude and pleasure, praying for us both.

I turned to my dear master: 'Tis to you, dear sir, said I, next to God, who put it into your generous heart, that all my happiness is owing! That my mind thus overflows with joy and gratitude! And I would have kissed his hand; but he clasped me in his arms, and said, You deserve it, my dear: You deserve it all. Mrs. Jervis came in. Said she, I have seen a very affecting sight; you have made your maidens quite happy, madam, with your kindness and condescension! I saw them all four, as I came by the hall-door, just got up from their knees, praising and praying for you both! Dear good bodies! said I; and did Jane pray too? May their prayers be returned upon themselves, I say!

My master sent for Jonathan, and I held up all the fingers of my two hands; and my master giving a nod of approbation as he came in, I said, Well, Mr. Jonathan, I could not be satisfied without seeing you in form, as it were, and thanking you for all your past good-will to me. You'll accept of that, for a pair of gloves, on this happy occasion; and I gave him ten guineas, and took his honest hand between both mine: God bless you, said I, with your silver hairs, so like my dear father!—I shall always value such a good old servant of the best of masters!—He said, O such goodness! Such kind words! It is balm to my heart! Blessed be God I have lived to this day!—And his eyes swam in tears, and he withdrew.—My dear, said my master, you make every one happy!—O, sir, said I, 'tis you, 'tis you! And let my grateful heart always spring to my lips, to acknowledge the blessings you heap upon me.

Then in came Harry, and Isaac, and Benjamin, and the two grooms of this house, and Arthur the gardener; for my dear master had ordered them, by Mrs. Jervis, thus to be marshalled out: and he said, Where's John? Poor John was ashamed, and did not come in till he heard himself called for. I said to them, How do you do, my old friends and fellow-servants? I am glad to see you all.

My master said, I have given you a mistress, my lads, that is the joy of my heart: You see her goodness and condescension! Let your respects to her be but answerable, and she'll be proportionately as great a blessing to you all, as she is to me. Harry said, In the names of all your servants, sir, I bless your honour, and your good lady: and it shall be all our studies to deserve her ladyship's favours, as well as your honour's. And so I gave every one five guineas, to rejoice, as I said, in my happiness.

When I came to John, I said, I saw you before, John; but I again tell you, I am glad to see you. He said, he was quite ashamed and confounded. O, said I, forget every thing that's past, John!—Your dear good master will, and so will I. For God has wonderfully brought about all these things, by the very means I once thought most grievous. Let us, therefore, look forward, and be only ashamed to commit faults for the time to come: for they may not always be attended with like happy consequences.

Arthur, said my master, I have brought you a mistress that is a great gardener. She'll shew you a new way to plant beans: And never any body had such a hand at improving a sun-flower as she!—O sir, sir, said I, (but yet a little dashed,) all my improvements in every kind of thing are owing to you, I am sure!—And so I think I was even with the dear man, and yet appeared grateful before his servants. They withdrew, blessing us both, as the rest had done. And then came in the postilion, and two helpers, (for my master has both here, and at Lincolnshire, fine hunting horses; and it is the chief sport he takes delight in,) as also the scullion-boy: And I said, How do all of you? And how dost do, Tommy? I hope you're very good. Here your dear master has ordered you something a-piece, in honour of me. And my master holding three fingers to me, I gave the postilion and helpers three guineas each, and the little boy two; and bid him let his poor mother lay it out for him, for he must not spend it idly. Mr. Colbrand, Abraham, and Thomas, I had before presented at t'other house.

And when they were all gone but Mrs. Jervis, I said, And now, dearest sir, permit me, on my knees, thus to bless you, and pray for you. And oh, may God crown you with length of days, and increase of honour; and may your happy, happy Pamela, by her grateful heart, appear always worthy in your dear eyes, though she cannot be so in her own, nor in those of any others!

Mrs. Jervis, said my master, you see the excellency of this sweet creature! And when I tell you that the charms of her person, all lovely as she is, bind me not so strongly to her, as the graces of her mind; congratulate me, that my happiness is built on so stable a basis. Indeed I do, most sincerely, sir, said she: This is a happy day to me!

I stept into the library, while he was thus pouring out his kindness for me to Mrs. Jervis; and blessed God there on my knees, for the difference I now found to what I had once known in it.—And when I have done the same in the first scene of my fears, the once frightful summer-house, I shall have gone through most of my distressful scenes with gratitude; but shall never forbear thanking God in my mind, for his goodness to me in every one. Mrs. Jervis, I find, had whispered him what I had done above, and he saw me upon my knees, with my back towards him, unknown to me; but softly put to the door again, as he had opened it a little way. And I said, not knowing he had seen me, You have some charming pictures here, sir.—Yes, said he, my dear life, so I have; but none equal to that which your piety affords me; And may the God you delight to serve, bless more and more my dear angel!—Sir, said I, you are all goodness!—I hope, replied he, after your sweet example, I shall be better and better.

Do you think, my dear father and mother, there ever was so happy a creature as I? To be sure it would be very ungrateful to think with uneasiness, or any thing but compassion, of poor Miss Sally Godfrey.

He ordered Jonathan to let the evening be passed merrily, but wisely, as he said, with what every one liked, whether wine or October.

He was pleased afterwards to lead me up stairs, and gave me possession of my lady's dressing-room and cabinet, and her fine repeating-watch and equipage; and, in short, of a complete set of diamonds, that were his good mother's; as also of the two pair of diamond ear-rings, the two diamond rings, and diamond necklace, he mentioned in his naughty articles, which her ladyship had intended for presents to Miss Tomlins, a rich heiress, that was proposed for his wife, when he was just come from his travels; but which went off, after all was agreed upon on both the friends' sides, because he approved not her conversation; and she had, as he told his mother, too masculine an air; and he never could be brought to see her but once, though the lady liked him very well. He presented me also with her ladyship's books, pictures, linen, laces, etc. that were in her apartments;



and bid me call those apartments mine. O give me, my good God! humility and gratitude.

Sunday night.

This day, as matters could not be ready for our appearance at a better place, we staid at home; and my dear master employed himself a good deal in his library: And I have been taken up pretty much, I hope, as I ought to be, in thankfulness, prayer and meditation, in my newly-presented closet And I hope God will be pleased to give a blessing to me; for I have the pleasure to think I am not puffed up with this great alteration; and yet am I not wanting to look upon all these favours and blessings in the light wherein I ought to receive them, both at the hands of Heaven, and my dear benefactor.

We dined together with great pleasure; and I had, in every word and action, all the instances of kindness and affection that the most indulged heart could wish. He said he would return to his closet again; and at five o'clock would come and take a walk with me in the garden: And so retired as soon as he had dined, and I went up to mine.

About six, he was pleased to come up to me, and said, Now, my dear, I will attend you for a little walk in the garden; and I gave him my hand with great pleasure.

This garden is much better cultivated than the Lincolnshire one; but that is larger, and has nobler walks in it; and yet there is a pretty canal in this, and a fountain and cascade. We had a deal of sweet conversation as we walked; and, after we had taken a turn round, I bent towards the little garden; and when I came near the summer-house, took the opportunity to slip from him, and just whipt up the steps of this once frightful place, and kneeled down, and said, I bless thee, O God! for my escapes, and for thy mercies! O let me always possess a grateful, humble heart! and I whipt down again and joined him; and he hardly missed me.

Several of the neighbouring gentry sent their compliments to him on his return, but not a word about his marriage; particularly Mr. Arthur, Mr. Towers, Mr. Brooks, and Mr. Martin of the Grove.

Monday.

I had a good deal of employment in choosing patterns for my new clothes. He thought nothing too good; but I thought every thing I saw was; and he was so kind to pick out six of the richest for me to choose three suits out of, saying, We would furnish ourselves with more in town, when we went thither. One was white, flowered with silver most richly; and he was pleased to say, that, as I was a bride, I should make my appearance in that the following Sunday. And so we shall have in two or three days, from several places, nothing but mantua-makers and tailors at work. Bless me! what a chargeable and what a worthless hussy I am to the dear gentleman!—But his fortune and station require a great deal of it; and his value for me will not let him do less, than if he had married a fortune equal to his own: and then, as he says, it would be a reflection upon him, if he did.—And so I doubt it will be, as it is: For either way the world will have something to say. He made me also choose some very fine laces, and linen; and has sent a message on purpose, with his orders, to hasten all down, what can be done in town, as the millinery matters, etc. to be completed there, and sent by particular messengers, as done. All to be here, and finished by Saturday afternoon, without fail.

I sent away John this morning, with some more of my papers to you, and with the few he will give you separate. My desire is, that you will send me all the papers you have done with, that I may keep my word with Lady Davers; to beg the continuance of your prayers and blessings; to hope you will give me your answer about my dear benefactor's proposal of the Kentish farm; to beg you to buy, two suits of clothes each; of the finest cloth for you, my dear father; and of a creditable silk for my dear mother; and good linen, and every thing answerable; and that you will, as my best friend bid me say, let us see you here as soon as possible; and he will have his chariot come for you, when you tell John the day. Oh! how I long to see you both, my dear good parents, and to share with you my felicities!

You will have, I'm sure, the goodness to go to all your creditors, which are chiefly those of my poor unhappy brothers, and get an account of all you are bound for; and every one shall be paid to the utmost farthing, and

interest besides, though some of them have been very cruel and unrelenting.—But they are entitled to their own, and shall be thankfully paid.

Now I think of it, John shall take my papers down to this place; that you may have something to amuse you, of your dear child's, instead of those you part with; and I will continue writing till I am settled, and you are determined; and then I shall apply myself to the duties of the family, in order to become as useful to my dear benefactor, as my small abilities will let me.

If you think a couple of guineas will be of use to Mrs. Mumford, who, I doubt, has not much aforehand, pray give them to her, from me, (and I will return them to you,) as for a pair of gloves on my nuptials: And look through your poor acquaintances and neighbours, and let me have a list of such honest industrious poor, as may be true objects of charity, and have no other assistance; particularly such as are blind, lame, or sickly, with their several cases; and also such poor families and housekeepers as are reduced by misfortunes, as ours was, and where a great number of children may keep them from rising to a state of tolerable comfort: And I will choose as well as I can; for I long to be making a beginning, with the kind quarterly benevolence my dear good benefactor has bestowed upon me for such good purposes.

I am resolved to keep account of all these matters, and Mr. Longman has already furnished me with a vellum book of white paper; some sides of which I hope soon to fill with the names of proper objects: And though my dear master has given me all this without account, yet shall he see (but nobody else) how I lay it out, from quarter to quarter; and I will, if any be left, carry it on, like an accomptant, to the next quarter, and strike a balance four times a year, and a general balance at every year's end.—And I have written in it, Humble RETURNS for DIVINE MERCIES; and locked it up safe in my newly-presented cabinet.

I intend to let Lady Davers see no farther of my papers, than to her own angry letter to her brother; for I would not have her see my reflections upon it; and she'll know, down to that place, all that's necessary for her curiosity, as to my sufferings, and the stratagems used against me, and the honest part I have been enabled to act: And I hope, when she has read them all, she will be quite reconciled: for she will see it is all God Almighty's

doings; and that a gentleman of his parts and knowledge was not to be drawn in by such a poor young body as me.

I will detain John no longer. He will tell you to read this last part first, and while he stays. And so, with my humble duty to you both, and my dear Mr. B——'s kind remembrance, I rest

Your ever-dutiful and gratefully happy DAUGHTER.

Wednesday evening.

HONOURED FATHER AND MOTHER!

I will now proceed with my journal.

On Tuesday morning, my dear sir rode out, and brought with him to dinner, Mr. Martin of the Grove, and Mr. Arthur, and Mr. Brooks, and one Mr. Chambers; and he stepped up to me, and said he had rode out too far to return to breakfast; but he had brought with him some of his old acquaintance, to dine with me. Are you sorry for it, Pamela? said he. I remembered his lessons, and said No, sure, sir; I cannot be angry at any thing you are pleased to do. Said he, You know Mr. Martin's character, and have severely censured him in one of your letters, as one of my brother rakes, and for his three lyings-in.

He then gave me the following account, how he came to bring them. Said he, 'I met them all at Mr. Arthur's; and his lady asked me, if I was really married? I said, Yes, really. And to whom? said Mr. Martin. Why, replied I, bluntly, to my mother's waiting-maid. They could not tell what to say to me hereupon, and looked one upon another. And I saw I had spoiled a jest, from each. Mrs. Arthur said, You have, indeed, sir, a charming creature, as ever I saw; and she has mighty good luck. Ay, said I, and so have I. But I shall say the less, because a man never did any thing of this nature, that he did not think he ought, if it were but in policy, to make the best of it. Nay, said Mr. Arthur, if you have sinned, it is with your eyes open: for you know the world as well as any gentleman of your years in it.'

'Why, really, gentlemen, said I, I should be glad to please all my friends; but I can't expect, till they know my motives and inducements, that it will be so immediately. But I do assure you, I am exceedingly pleased myself; and that, you know, is most to the purpose.'

'Said Mr. Brooks, I have heard my wife praise your spouse that is, so much for person and beauty, that I wanted to see her of all things. Why,

replied I, if you'll all go and take a dinner with me, you shall see her with all my heart. And, Mrs. Arthur, will you bear us company? No, indeed, sir, said she. What, I'll warrant, my wife will not be able to reconcile you to my mother's waiting-maid; is not that it? Tell truth, Mrs. Arthur. Nay, said she, I shan't be backward to pay your spouse a visit, in company of the neighbouring ladies; but for one single woman to go, on such a sudden motion too, with so many gentlemen, is not right. But that need not hinder you, gentlemen. So, said he, the rest sent, that they should not dine at home; and they and Mr. Chambers, a gentleman lately settled in these parts, one and all came with me: And so, my dear, concluded he, when you make your appearance next Sunday, you're sure of a party in your favour; for all that see you must esteem you.'

He went to them; and when I came down to dinner, he was pleased to take me by the hand, at my entrance into the parlour, and said, My dear, I have brought some of my good neighbours to dine with you. I said, You are very good, sir.—My dear, this gentleman is Mr. Chambers; and so he presented every one to me; and they saluted me, and wished us both joy.

I, for my part, said Mr. Brooks, wish you joy most heartily. My wife told me a good deal of the beauties of your person; but I did not think we had such a flower in our country. Sir, said I, your lady is very partial to me; and you are so polite a gentleman, that you will not contradict your good lady.

I'll assure you, madam, returned he, you have not hit the matter at all; for we contradict one another twice or thrice a day. But the devil's in't if we are not agreed in so clear a case!

Said Mr. Martin, Mr. Brooks says very true, madam, in both respects; (meaning his wife's and his own contradiction to one another, as well as in my favour;) for, added he, they have been married some years.

As I had not the best opinion of this gentleman, nor his jest, I said, I am almost sorry, sir, for the gentleman's jest upon himself and his lady; but I think it should have relieved him from a greater jest, your pleasant confirmation of it.—But still the reason you give that it may be so, I hope, is the reason that may be given that it is not so; to wit, that they have been married some years.

Said Mr. Arthur, Mr. Martin, I think the lady has very handsomely reproved you. I think so too, said Mr. Chambers; and it was but a very

indifferent compliment to a bride. Said Mr. Martin, Compliment or not, gentlemen, I have never seen a matrimony of any time standing, that it was not so, little or much: But I dare say it will never be so here.

To be sure, sir, said I, if it was, I must be the ungratefulest person in the world, because I am the most obliged person in it. That notion, said Mr. Arthur, is so excellent, that it gives a moral certainty it never can.

Sir, said Mr. Brooks to my dear master, softly, You have a most accomplished lady, I do assure you, as well in her behaviour and wit, as in her person, call her what you please. Why, my dear friend, said my master, I must tell you, as I have said before now, that her person made me her lover, but her mind made her my wife.

The first course coming in, my dear sir led me himself to my place; and set Mr. Chambers, as the greatest stranger, at my right hand, and Mr. Brooks at my left; and Mr. Arthur was pleased to observe, much to my advantage, on the ease and freedom with which I behaved myself, and helped them; and said, he would bring his lady to be a witness, and a learner both, of my manners. I said, I should be proud of any honour Mrs. Arthur would vouchsafe to do me; and if once I could promise myself the opportunity of his good lady's example, and those of the other gentlemen present, I should have the greater opinion of my worthiness to sit in the place I filled at present with much insufficiency.

Mr. Arthur drank to my health and happiness, and said, My wife told your spouse, madam, you had very good luck in such a husband; but I now see who has the best of it. Said Mr. Brooks, Come, come, let's make no compliments; for the plain truth of the matter is, our good neighbour's generosity and judgment have met with so equal a match in his lady's beauty and merit, that I know not which has the best luck. But may you be both long happy together, say I! And so he drank a glass of wine.

My best friend, who always takes delight to have me praised, seemed much pleased with our conversation; and he said the kindest, tenderest, and most respectful things in the world to me. Insomuch, that the rough Mr. Martin said, Did you ever think our good friend here, who used to ridicule matrimony so much, would have made so complaisant a husband? How long do you intend, sir, that this shall hold? As long as my good girl deserves it, said he; and that, I hope, will be for ever. But, continued the kind gentleman, you need not wonder I have changed my mind as to

wedlock; for I never expected to meet with one whose behaviour and sweetness of temper were so well adapted to make me happy.

After dinner, and having drank good healths to each of their ladies, I withdrew; and they sat and drank two bottles of claret a-piece, and were very merry; and went away, full of my praises, and vowing to bring their ladies to see me.

John having brought me your kind letter, my dear father, I told my good master, after his friends were gone, how gratefully you received his generous intentions as to the Kentish farm, and promised your best endeavours to serve him in that estate; and that you hoped your industry and care would be so well employed in it, that you should be very little troublesome to him,—as to the liberal manner in which he had intended to add to a provision, that of itself exceeded all you wished. He was very well pleased with your cheerful acceptance of it.

I am glad your engagements in the world lie in so small a compass. As soon as you have gotten an account of them exactly, you will be pleased to send it me, with the list of the poor folks you are so kind to promise to procure me.

I think, as my dear master is so generous, you should account nothing that is plain, too good. Pray don't be afraid of laying out upon yourselves. My dear sir intends that you shall not, when you come to us, return to your old abode; but stay with us, till you set out for Kent; and so you must dispose of yourselves accordingly. And I hope, my dear father, you have quite left off all slavish business. As farmer Jones has been kind to you, as I have heard you say, pray, when you take leave of them, present them with three guineas worth of good books; such as a family bible, a common prayer, a whole duty of man, or any other you think will be acceptable; for they live a great way from church; and in winter the ways from their farm thither are impassable.

He has brought me my papers safe: and I will send them to Lady Davers the first opportunity, down to the place I mentioned in my last.

My dear Mr. B—— just now tells me, that he will carry me, in the morning, a little airing, about ten miles off, in his chariot and four, to breakfast at a farm-house, noted for a fine dairy, and where, now and then, the neighbouring gentry, of both sexes, resort for that purpose.

Thursday.

We set out at about half an hour after six, accordingly; and driving pretty smartly, got at this truly neat house at half an hour after eight; and I was much pleased with the neatness of the good woman, and her daughter and maid; and he was so good as to say he would now and then take a turn with me to the same place, and on the same occasion, as I seemed to like it; for that it would be a pretty exercise, and procure us appetites to our breakfasts, as well as our return would to our dinners. But I find this was not, though a very good reason, the only one for which he gave me this agreeable airing; as I shall acquaint you.

We were prettily received and entertained here, and an elegancy ran through every thing, persons as well as furniture, yet all plain. And my master said to the good housewife, Do your young boarding-school ladies still at times continue their visits to you, Mrs. Dobson? Yes, sir, said she, I expect three or four of them every minute.

There is, my dear, said he, within three miles of this farm, a very good boarding-school for ladies. The governess of it keeps a chaise and pair, which is to be made a double chaise at pleasure; and in summer time, when the misses perform their tasks to satisfaction, she favours them with an airing to this place, three or four at a time; and after they have breakfasted, they are carried back. And this serves both for a reward, and for exercise; and the misses who have this favour are not a little proud of it; and it brings them forward in their respective tasks.

A very good method, sir, said I. And just as we were talking, the chaise came in with four misses, all pretty much of a size, and a maid-servant to attend them. They were shewn another little neat apartment, that went through ours; and made their honours very prettily, as they passed by us. I went into the room to them, and asked them questions about their work, and their lessons; and what they had done to deserve such a fine airing and breakfasting; and they all answered me very prettily. And pray, little ladies, said I, what may I call your names? One was called Miss Burdoff, one Miss Nugent, one Miss Booth, and the fourth Miss Goodwin. I don't know which, said I, is the prettiest; but you are all best, my little dears; and you have a very good governess, to indulge you with such a fine airing, and such delicate cream, and bread and butter. I hope you think so too.



My master came in, and I had no mistrust in the world; and he kissed each of them; but looked more wishfully on Miss Goodwin, than on any of the others; but I thought nothing just then: Had she been called Miss Godfrey, I had hit upon it in a trice.

When we went from them, he said, Which do you think the prettiest of those misses? Really, sir, replied I, it is hard to say: Miss Booth is a pretty brown girl, and has a fine eye; Miss Burdoff has a great deal of sweetness in her countenance, but is not so regularly featured. Miss Nugent is very fair: and Miss Goodwin has a fine black eye, and is, besides, I think, the genteelest shaped child; but they are all pretty.

The maid led them into the garden, to shew them the beehives; and Miss Goodwin made a particular fine courtesy to my master; and I said, I believe miss knows you, sir; and, taking her by the hand, I said, Do you know this gentleman, my pretty dear?—Yes, madam, said she; it is my own dear uncle. I clasped her in my arms: O why did you not tell me, sir, said I, that you had a niece among these little ladies? And I kissed her, and away she tript after the others.

But pray, sir, said I, how can this be?—You have no sister nor brother, but Lady Davers.—How can this be?

He smiled: and then I said, O my dearest sir, tell me now the truth, Does not this pretty miss stand in a nearer relation to you, than as a niece?—I know she does! I know she does! And I embraced him as he stood.

'Tis even so, my dear, replied he; and you remember my sister's good-natured hint of Miss Sally Godfrey? I do well, sir, answered I. But this is Miss Goodwin. Her mother chose that name for her, said he, because she should not be called by her own.

Well, said I, excuse me, sir; I must go and have a little prattle with her. I'll send for her in again, replied he; and in she came in a moment. I took her in my arms, and said, O my charming dear! will you love me?—Will you let me be your aunt? Yes, madam, answered she, with all my heart! and I will love you dearly: But I mustn't love my uncle. Why so? said he. Because, replied she, you would not speak to me at first! And because you would not let me call you uncle (for it seems she was bid not, that I might not guess at her presently): and yet, said the pretty dear, I had not seen you a great while, so I hadn't.

Well, Pamela, said he, now can you allow me to love this little innocent? Allow you, sir, replied I; you would be very barbarous, if you did not; and I should be more so, if I did not further it all I could, and love the little lamb myself, for your sake and for her own sake; and in compassion to her poor mother, though unknown to me: And tears stood in my eyes.

Said he, Why, my love, are your words so kind, and your countenance so sad?—I drew to the window from the child; and said, Sad it is not, sir; but I have a strange grief and pleasure mingled at once in my breast, on this occasion. It is indeed a twofold grief, and a twofold pleasure.—As how, my dear? said he. Why, sir, replied I, I cannot help being grieved for the poor mother of this sweet babe, to think, if she be living, that she must call her chiefest delight her shame: If she be no more, that she must have had such remorse on her poor mind, when she came to leave the world, and her little babe: And, in the second place, I grieve, that it must be thought a kindness to the dear little soul, not to let her know how near the dearest relation she has in the world is to her.—Forgive me, dear sir, I say not this to reproach you, in the least. Indeed I don't. And I have a twofold cause of joy; first, That I have had the grace to escape the like unhappiness with this poor gentlewoman: and next, That this discovery has given me an opportunity to shew the sincerity of my grateful affection for you, sir, in the love I will always express to this dear child.

And then I stept to her again, and kissed her; and said, Join with me, my pretty love, to beg your dear uncle to let you come and live with your new aunt: Indeed, my little precious, I'll love you dearly.

Will you, sir? said the little charmer; will you let me go and live with my aunt?

You are very good, my Pamela, said he. And I have not once been deceived in the hopes my fond heart has entertained of your prudence.—But will you, sir? said I; will you grant me this favour? I shall most sincerely love the little charmer; and all I am capable of doing for her, both by example and affection, shall most cordially be done. My dearest sir, added I, oblige me in this thing! I think already my heart is set upon it! What a sweet employment and companionship shall I have!

We'll talk of this some other time, replied he; but I must, in prudence, put some bounds to your amiable generosity. I had always intended to

surprise you into this discovery; but my sister led the way to it, out of a poorness in her spite, that I could not brook: And though you have pleased me beyond expression, in your behaviour on this occasion; yet I can't say, that you have gone much beyond my expectations; for I have such a high opinion of you, that I think nothing could have shaken it, but a contrary conduct to this you have expressed on so tender a circumstance.

Well, sir, said the dear little miss, then you will not let me go home with my aunt, will you? I am sure she will love me. When you break up next, my dear, said he, if you are a good girl, you shall pay your new aunt a visit. She made a low courtesy. Thank you, sir, answered she. Yes, my dear, said I, and I will get you some fine things against the time. I would have brought you some now, had I known I should have seen my pretty love. Thank you, madam, returned she.

How old, sir, said I, is miss? Between six and seven, answered he. Was she ever, sir, said I, at your house? My sister, replied he, carried her thither once, as a near relation of her lord's. I remember, sir, said I, a little miss; and Mrs. Jervis and I took her to be a relation of Lord Davers.

My sister, returned he, knew the whole secret from the beginning; and it made her a great merit with me, that she kept it from the knowledge of my father, who was then living, and of my mother, to her dying-day; though she descended so low in her rage, to hint the matter to you.

The little misses took their leaves soon after: and I know not how, but I am strangely affected with this dear child. I wish he would be so good as to let me have her home. It would be a great pleasure to have such a fine opportunity, obliged as I am, to shew my love for himself, in my fondness for his dear miss.

As we came home together in the chariot, he gave me the following particulars of this affair, additional to what he had before mentioned:

That this lady was of a good family, and the flower of it but that her mother was a person of great art and address, and not altogether so nice in the particular between himself and miss, as she ought to have been: That, particularly, when she had reason to find him unsettled and wild, and her daughter in more danger from him, than he was from her, yet she encouraged their privacies; and even, at last, when she had reason to apprehend, from their being surprised together, in a way not so creditable to the lady, that she was far from forbidding their private meetings; on the

contrary, that, on a certain time, she had set one that had formerly been her footman, and a half-pay officer, her relation, to watch an opportunity, and to frighten him into a marriage with the lady: That, accordingly, when they had surprised him in her chamber, just as he had been let in, they drew their swords upon him, and threatened instantly to kill him, if he did not promise marriage on the spot; and that they had a parson ready below stairs, as he found afterwards: That then he suspected, from some strong circumstances, that miss was in the plot; which so enraged him, with their menaces together, that he drew, and stood upon his defence; and was so much in earnest, that the man he pushed into the arm, and disabled; and pressing pretty forward upon the other, as he retreated, he rushed in upon him near the top of the stairs, and pushed him down one pair, and he was much hurt by the fall: Not but that, he said, he might have paid for his rashness; but that the business of his antagonists was rather to frighten than to kill him: That, upon this, in the sight of the old lady, the parson she had provided, and her other daughters, he went out of their house, with bitter execrations against them all.

That after this, designing to break off all correspondence with the whole family, and miss too, she found means to engage him to give her a meeting at Woodstock, in order to clear herself: That, poor lady! she was there obliged, naughty creature as he was! to make herself quite guilty of a worse fault, in order to clear herself of a lighter: That they afterwards met at Godstow often, at Woodstock, and every neighbouring place to Oxford, where he was then studying, as it proved, guilty lessons, instead of improving ones; till, at last, the effect of their frequent interviews grew too obvious to be concealed: That the young lady then, when she was not fit to be seen, for the credit of the family, was confined, and all manner of means were used, to induce him to marry her: That, finding nothing would do, they at last resolved to complain to his father and mother; but that he made his sister acquainted with the matter, who then happened to be at home; and, by her management and spirit, their intentions of that sort were frustrated; and, seeing no hopes, they agreed to Lady Davers's proposals, and sent poor miss down to Marlborough, where, at her expense, which he answered to her again, she was provided for, and privately lay-in: That Lady Davers took upon herself the care of the little one, till it came to be fit to be put to the boarding-school, where it now is: And that he had settled upon the dear little miss such a sum of money, as the interest of it

would handsomely provide for her: and the principal would be a tolerable fortune, fit for a gentlewoman, when she came to be marriageable. And this, my dear, said he, is the story in brief. And I do assure you, Pamela, added he, I am far from making a boast of, or taking a pride in, this affair: But since it has happened, I can't say but I wish the poor child to live, and be happy; and I must endeavour to make her so.

Sir, said I, to be sure you should; and I shall take a very great pride to contribute to the dear little soul's felicity, if you will permit me to have her home.—But, added I, does miss know any thing who are her father and mother? I wanted him to say if the poor lady was living or dead.—No, answered he. Her governess has been told, by my sister, that she is the daughter of a gentleman and his lady, who are related, at a distance, to Lord Davers, and now live in Jamaica; and she calls me uncle, only because I am the brother to Lady Davers, whom she calls aunt, and who is very fond of her: as is also my lord, who knows the whole matter; and they have her, at all her little school recesses, at their house, and are very kind to her.

I believe, added he, the truth of the matter is very little known or suspected; for, as her mother is of no mean family, her friends endeavour to keep it secret, as much as I: and Lady Davers, till her wrath boiled over, t'other day, has managed the matter very dexterously and kindly.

The words, mother is of no mean family, gave me not to doubt the poor lady was living. And I said, But how, sir, can the dear miss's poor mother be content to deny herself the enjoyment of so sweet a child? Ah, Pamela, replied he, now you come in; I see you want to know what's become of the poor mother. 'Tis natural enough you should; but I was willing to see how the little suspense would operate upon you.—Dear sir, said I.—Nay, replied he, 'tis very natural, my dear! I think you have had a great deal of patience, and are come at this question so fairly that you deserve to be answered.

You must know then, there is some foundation for saying, that her mother, at least, lives in Jamaica; for there she does live, and very happily too. For I must observe, that she suffered so much in child-bed, that nobody expected her life; and this, when she was up, made such an impression upon her, that she dreaded nothing so much as the thoughts of returning to her former fault; and, to say the truth, I had intended to make

her a visit as soon as her month was well up. And so, unknown to me, she engaged herself to go to Jamaica, with two young ladies, who were born there; and were returning to their friends, after they had been four years in England for their education: and, recommending to me, by a very moving letter, her little baby, and that I would not suffer it to be called by her name, but Goodwin, that her shame might be the less known, for hers and her family's sake; she got her friends to assign her five hundred pounds, in full of all her demands upon her family, and went up to London, and embarked, with her companions, at Gravesend, and so sailed to Jamaica; where she is since well and happily married, passing to her husband for a young widow, with one daughter, which her husband's friends take care of, and provide for. And so you see, Pamela, that in the whole story on both sides, the truth is as much preserved as possible.

Poor lady! said I; how her story moves me! I am glad she is so happy at last!—And, my dear, said he, are you not glad she is so far off too?—As to that, sir, said I, I cannot be sorry, to be sure, as she is so happy; which she could not have been here. For, sir, I doubt you would have proceeded with your temptations, if she had not gone; and it shewed she was much in earnest to be good, that she could leave her native country, leave all her relations, leave you, whom she so well loved, leave her dear baby, and try a new fortune, in a new world, among quite strangers, and hazard the seas; and all to preserve herself from further guiltiness! Indeed, indeed, sir, said I, I bleed for what her distresses must be, in this case I am grieved for her poor mind's remorse, through her childbed terrors, which could have so great and so worthy an effect upon her afterwards; and I honour her resolution; and would rank such a returning dear lady in the class of those who are most virtuous; and doubt not God Almighty's mercy to her; and that her present happiness is the result of his gracious providence, blessing her penitence and reformation.—But, sir, said I, did you not once see the poor lady after her lying-in?

I did not believe her so much in earnest, answered he; and I went down to Marlborough, and heard she was gone from thence to Calne. I went to Calne, and heard she was gone to Reading, to a relation's there. Thither I went, and heard she was gone to Oxford. I followed; and there she was; but I could not see her.

She at last received a letter from me, begging a meeting with her; for I found her departure with the ladies was resolved on, and that she was with her friends, only to take leave of them, and receive her agreed on portion: And she appointed the Saturday following, and that was Wednesday, to give me a meeting at the old place, at Woodstock.

Then, added he, I thought I was sure of her, and doubted not I should spoil her intended voyage. I set out on Thursday to Gloucester, on a party of pleasure; and on Saturday I went to the place appointed, at Woodstock: But when I came thither, I found a letter instead of my lady; and when I opened it, it was to beg my pardon for deceiving me; expressing her concern for her past fault; her affection for me; and the apprehension she had, that she should be unable to keep her good resolves, if she met me: that she had set out on the Thursday for her embarkation; for that she feared nothing else could save her; and had appointed this meeting on Saturday, at the place of her former guilt, that I might be suitably impressed upon the occasion, and pity and allow for her; and that she might get three or four days start of me, and be quite out of my reach. She recommended again, as upon the spot where the poor little one owed its being, my tenderness to it, for her sake; and that was all she had to request of me, she said; but would not forget to pray for me in all her own dangers, and in every difficulty she was going to encounter.

I wept at this moving tale. And did not this make a deep impression upon you, sir? said I. Surely such an affecting lesson as this, on the very guilty spot too, (I admire the dear lady's pious contrivance!) must have had a great effect upon you. One would have thought, sir, it was enough to reclaim you for ever! All your naughty purposes, I make no doubt, were quite changed?

Why, my dear, said he, I was much moved, you may be sure, when I came to reflect: But, at first, I was so assured of being a successful tempter, and spoiling her voyage, that I was vexed, and much out of humour; but when I came to reflect, as I said, I was quite overcome with this instance of her prudence, her penitence, and her resolution; and more admired her than I ever had done. Yet I could not bear she should so escape me neither; so much overcome me, as it were, in an heroic bravery; and I hastened away, and got a bill of credit of Lord Davers, upon his banker in London, for five hundred pounds; and set out for that place,

having called at Oxford, and got what light I could, as to where I might hear of her there.

When I arrived in town, which was not till Monday morning, I went to a place called Crosby-square, where the friends of the two ladies lived. She had set out in the flying-coach on Tuesday; got to the two ladies that very night; and, on Saturday, had set out with them for Gravesend, much about the time I was expecting her at Woodstock.

You may suppose that I was much affected, my dear, with this. However, I got my bill of credit converted into money; and I set out with my servant on Monday afternoon, and reached Gravesend that night; and there I understood that she and the two ladies had gone on board from the very inn I put up at, in the morning; and the ship waited only for the wind, which then was turning about in its favour.

I got a boat directly, and went on board the ship, and asked for Mrs. Godfrey. But judge you, my dear Pamela, her surprise and confusion, when she saw me! She had like to have fainted away. I offered any money to put off the sailing till next day, but it would not be complied with; and fain would I have got her on shore, and promised to attend her, if she would go over land, to any part of England the ship would touch at. But she was immovable.

Every one concluded me her humble servant, and were touched at the moving interview; the young ladies, and their female attendants, especially. With great difficulty, upon my solemn assurances of honour, she trusted herself with me in one of the cabins; and there I tried, what I could, to prevail upon her to quit her purpose; but all in vain: She said, I had made her quite unhappy by this interview! She had difficulties enough upon her mind before; but now I had embittered all her voyage, and given her the deepest distress.

I could prevail upon her but for one favour, and that with the greatest reluctance; which was, to accept of the five hundred pounds, as a present from me; and she promised, at my earnest desire, to draw upon me for a greater sum, as a person that had her effects in my hands, when she arrived, if she should find it convenient for her. In short, this was all the favour I could procure; for she would not promise so much as to correspond with me, and was determined on going: and, I believe, if I



would have married her, which yet I had not in my head, she would not have deviated from her purpose.

But how, sir, said I, did you part? I would have sailed with her, answered he, and been landed at the first port in England or Ireland, I cared not which, they should put in at; but she was too full of apprehensions to admit it; And the rough fellow of a master, captain they called him, (but, in my mind, I could have thrown him overboard,) would not stay a moment, the wind and tide being quite fair; and was very urgent with me to go a-shore, or to go the voyage; and being impetuous in my temper, (spoiled, you know, my dear, by my mother,) and not used to control, I thought it very strange that wind or tide, or any thing else, should be preferred to me and my money: But so it was; I was forced to go; and so took leave of the ladies, and the other passengers; wished them a good voyage; gave five guineas among the ship's crew, to be good to the ladies, and took such a leave as you may better imagine than I express. She recommended once more to me, the dear guest, as she called her, the ladies being present; and thanked me for all these instances of my regard, which, she said, would leave a strong impression on her mind; and, at parting, she threw her arms about my neck, and we took such a leave, as affected every one present, men, as well as ladies.

So, with a truly heavy heart, I went down the ship's side to my boat; and stood up in it, looking at her, as long as I could see her, and she at me, with her handkerchief at her eyes; and then I gazed at the ship, till, and after I had landed, as long as I could discern the least appearance of it; for she was under sail, in a manner, when I left her; and so I returned highly disturbed to my inn.

I went to bed, but rested not; returned to London the next morning; and set out that afternoon again for the country. And so much, my dear, for poor Sally Godfrey.—She sends, I understand, by all opportunities, with the knowledge of her husband, to learn how her child, by her first husband, does; and has the satisfaction to know she is happily provided for. And, about half a year ago, her spouse sent a little negro boy, of about ten years old, as a present, to wait upon her. But he was taken ill of the small-pox, and died in a month after he was landed.

Sure, sir, said I, your generous mind must have been long affected with this melancholy case, and all its circumstances.

It hung upon me, indeed, some time, said he; but I was full of spirit and inconsideration. I went soon after to travel; a hundred new objects danced before my eyes, and kept reflection from me. And, you see, I had five or six years afterwards, and even before that, so thoroughly lost all the impressions you talk of, that I doubted not to make my Pamela change her name, without either act of parliament, or wedlock, and be Sally Godfrey the second.

O you dear naughty man! said I, this seems but too true! but I bless God that it is not so!—I bless God for your reformation, and that for your own dear sake, as well as mine!

Well, my dear, said he, and I bless God for it too!—I do most sincerely!—And 'tis my greater pleasure, because I have, as I hoped, seen my error so early; and that with such a stock of youth and health on my side, in all appearance, I can truly abhor my past liberties, and pity poor Sally Godfrey, from the same motives that I admire my Pamela's virtues; and resolve to make myself as worthy of them as possible: And I will hope, my dear, your prayers for my pardon, and my perseverance, will be of no small efficacy on this occasion.

These agreeable reflections, on this melancholy but instructive story, brought us in view of his own house; and we alighted, and took a walk in the garden till dinner was ready. And now we are so busy about making ready for our appearance, that I shall hardly have time to write till that be over.

Monday morning.

Yesterday we set out, attended by John, Abraham, Benjamin, and Isaac, in fine new liveries, in the best chariot, which had been new cleaned, and lined, and new harnessed; so that it looked like a quite new one. But I had no arms to quarter with my dear lord and master's; though he jocularly, upon my taking notice of my obscurity, said, that he had a good mind to have the olive-branch, which would allude to his hopes, quartered for mine. I was dressed in the suit I mentioned, of white flowered with silver, and a rich head-dress, and the diamond necklace, ear-rings, etc. I also mentioned before: And my dear sir, in a fine laced silk waistcoat, of blue paduasoy, and his coat a pearl-coloured fine cloth, with gold buttons and button-holes, and lined with white silk; and he looked charmingly indeed. I said, I was too fine, and would have laid aside some of the jewels; but he

said, It would be thought a slight to me from him, as his wife; and though as I apprehended, it might be, that people would talk as it was, yet he had rather they should say any thing, than that I was not put upon an equal footing, as his wife, with any lady he might have married.

It seems the neighbouring gentry had expected us; and there was a great congregation; for (against my wish) we were a little of the latest; so that, as we walked up the church to his seat, we had abundance of gazers and whisperers: But my dear master behaved with so intrepid an air, and was so cheerful and complaisant to me, that he did credit to his kind choice, instead of shewing as if he was ashamed of it: And as I was resolved to busy my mind entirely with the duties of the day, my intentness on that occasion, and my thankfulness to God, for his unspeakable mercies to me, so took up my thoughts, that I was much less concerned, than I should otherwise have been, at the gazings and whisperings of the ladies and gentlemen, as well as of the rest of the congregation, whose eyes were all turned to our seat.

When the sermon was ended, we staid the longer, because the church should be pretty empty; but we found great numbers at the church-doors, and in the church-porch; and I had the pleasure of hearing many commendations, as well of my person, as my dress and behaviour, and not one reflection, or mark of disrespect. Mr. Martin, who is single, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Arthur, and Mr. Brooks, with their families, were all there: And the four gentlemen came up to us, before we went into the chariot, and, in a very kind and respectful manner, complimented us both: and Mrs. Arthur and Mrs. Brooks were so kind as to wish me joy; and Mrs. Brooks said, You sent Mr. Brooks, madam, home t'other day, quite charmed with a manner, which, you have convinced a thousand persons this day, is natural to you.

You do me great honour, madam, replied I. Such a good lady's approbation must make me too sensible of my happiness. My dear master handed me into the chariot, and stood talking with Sir Thomas Atkyns, at the door of it, (who was making him abundance of compliments, and is a very ceremonious gentleman, a little too extreme in that way,) and, I believe, to familiarize me to the gazers, which concerned me a little; for I was dashed to hear the praises of the countrypeople, and to see how they crowded about the chariot. Several poor people begged my charity, and I

beckoned John with my fan, and said, Divide in the further church-porch, that money to the poor, and let them come to-morrow morning to me, and I will give them something more, if they don't importune me now. So I gave him all the silver I had, which happened to be between twenty and thirty shillings; and this drew away from me their clamorous prayers for charity.

Mr. Martin came up to me on the other side of the chariot, and leaned on the very door, while my master was talking to Sir Thomas, from whom he could not get away; and said, By all that's good, you have charmed the whole congregation! Not a soul but is full of your praises! My neighbour knew, better than any body could tell him, how to choose for himself. Why, said he, the dean himself looked more upon you than his book.

O sir, said I, you are very encouraging to a weak mind! I vow, said he, I say no more than is truth: I'd marry to-morrow, if I was sure of meeting with a person of but one-half the merit you have. You are, continued he, and 'tis not my way to praise too much, an ornament to your sex, an honour to your spouse, and a credit to religion.—Every body is saying so, added he; for you have, by your piety, edified the whole church.

As he had done speaking, the dean himself complimented me, that the behaviour of so worthy a lady, would be very edifying to his congregation, and encouraging to himself. Sir, said I, you are very kind: I hope I shall not behave unworthy of the good instructions I shall have the pleasure to receive from so worthy a divine. He bowed, and went on.

Sir Thomas then applied to me, my master stepping into the chariot, and said, I beg pardon, madam, for detaining your good spouse from you: but I have been saying, he is the happiest man in the world. I bowed to him, but I could have wished him further, to make me sit so in the notice of every one; which, for all I could do, dashed me not a little. Mr. Martin said to my master, If you'll come to church every Sunday with your charming lady, I will never absent myself, and she'll give a good example to all the neighbourhood. O, my dear sir! said I to my master, you know not how much I am obliged to good Mr. Martin! He has, by his kind expressions, made me dare to look up with pleasure and gratitude.

Said my master, My dear love, I am very much obliged, as well as you, to my good friend Mr. Martin. And he said to him, We will constantly go

to church, and to every other place, where we can have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin said, Gad, sir, you are a happy man; and I think your lady's example has made you more polite and handsome too, than I ever knew you before, though we never thought you unpolite, neither. And so he bowed, and went to his own chariot; and, as we drove away, the people kindly blessed us, and called us a charming pair.

As I have no other pride, I hope, in repeating these things, than in the countenance the general approbation gives to my dear master, for his stooping so low, you will excuse me for it, I know.

In the afternoon we went again to church, and a little early, at my request; but the church was quite full, and soon after even crowded; so much does novelty (the more's the pity!) attract the eyes of mankind. Mr. Martin came in after us, and made up to our seat; and said, If you please, my dear friend, I will take my seat with you this afternoon. With all my heart, said my master. I was sorry for it; but was resolved my duty should not be made second to bashfulness, or any other consideration; and when divine service began, I withdrew to the farther end of the pew, and left the gentlemen in the front, and they behaved quite suitably, both of them, to the occasion. I mention this the rather, because Mr. Martin was not very noted for coming to church, or attention when there, before.

The dean preached again, which he was not used to do, out of compliment to us; and an excellent sermon he made on the relative duties of Christianity: And it took my particular attention; for he made many fine observations on the subject. Mr. Martin addressed himself twice or thrice to me, during the sermon; but he saw me so wholly engrossed with hearkening to the good preacher, that he forbore interrupting me; yet I took care, according to the lessons formerly given me, to observe to him a cheerful and obliging behaviour, as one of Mr. B——'s friends and intimates. My master asked him to give him his company to supper; and he said, I am so taken with your lady, that you must not give me too much encouragement; for I shall be always with you, if you do. He was pleased to say, You cannot favour us with too much of your company; and as I have left you in the lurch in your single state, I think you will do well to oblige us as much as you can; and who knows but my happiness may reform

another rake? Who knows? said Mr. Martin: Why, I know; for I am more than half reformed already.

At the chariot door, Mrs. Arthur, Mrs. Brooks, and Mrs. Chambers, were brought to me, by their respective spouses; and presently the witty Lady Towers, who bantered me before, (as I once told you,) joined them; and Mrs. Arthur said, she wished me joy; and that all the good ladies, my neighbours, would collect themselves together, and make me a visit. This, said I, will be an honour, madam, that I can never enough acknowledge. It will be very kind so to countenance a person who will always study to deserve your favour, by the most respectful behaviour.

Lady Towers said, My dear neighbour, you want no countenance; your own merit is sufficient. I had a slight cold, that kept me at home in the morning; but I heard you so much talked of, and praised, that I resolved not to stay away in the afternoon; and I join in the joy every one gives you. She turned to my master, and said, You are a sly thief, as I always thought you. Where have you stolen this lady? And now, how barbarous is it, thus unawares, in a manner, to bring her here upon us, to mortify and eclipse us all?—You are very kind, madam, said he, that you and all my worthy neighbours see with my eyes. But had I not known she had so much excellency of mind and behaviour, as would strike every body in her favour at first sight, I should not have dared to class her with such of my worthy neighbours, as now so kindly congratulate us both.

I own, said she, softly, I was one of your censurers; but I never liked you so well in my life, as for this action, now I see how capable your bride is of giving distinction to any condition.—And, coming to me, My dear neighbour, said she, excuse me for having but in my thought, the remembrance that I have seen you formerly, when, by your sweet air and easy deportment, you so much surpass us all, and give credit to your present happy condition.

Dear good madam, said I, how shall I suitably return my acknowledgments! But it will never be a pain to me to look back upon my former days, now I have the kind allowance and example of so many worthy ladies to support me in the honours to which the most generous of men has raised me.

Sweetly said! she was pleased to say. If I was in another place, I would kiss you for that answer. Oh! happy, happy Mr. B——! said she to my

master; what reputation have you not brought upon your judgment! I won't be long before I see you, added she, I'll assure you, if I come by myself. That shall be your own fault, madam, said Mrs. Brooks.

And so they took leave; and I gave my hand to my dear master, and said, How happy have you made me, generous sir!—And the dean, who had just come up, heard me, and said, And how happy you have made your spouse, I'll venture to pronounce, is hard to say, from what I observe of you both. I courtesied, and blushed, not thinking any body heard me. And my master telling him he should be glad of the honour of a visit from him; he said, He would pay his respects to us the first opportunity, and bring his wife and daughter to attend me. I said, That was doubly kind; and I should be very proud of cultivating so worthy an acquaintance. I thanked him for his kind discourse; and he thanked me for my attention, which he called exemplary: and so my dear master handed me into the chariot; and we were carried home, both happy, and both pleased, thank God.

Mr. Martin came in the evening, with another gentleman, his friend, one Mr. Dormer; and he entertained us with the favourable opinion, he said, every one had of me, and of the choice my good benefactor had made.

This morning the poor came, according to my invitation; and I sent them away with glad hearts to the number of twenty-five. There were not above twelve or fourteen on Sunday, that John divided the silver among, which I gave him for that purpose; but others got hold of the matter, and made up to the above number.

Tuesday.

My generous master has given me, this morning, a most considerate, but yet, from the nature of it, melancholy instance of his great regard for my unworthiness, which I never could have wished, hoped for, or even thought of.

He took a walk with me, after breakfast, into the garden; and a little shower falling, he led me, for shelter, into the little summer-house, in the private garden, where he formerly gave me apprehensions; and, sitting down by me, he said, I have now finished all that lies on my mind, my dear, and am very easy: For have you not wondered, that I have so much employed myself in my library? Been so much at home, and yet not in your company?—No, sir, said I; I have never been so impertinent as to wonder at any thing you please to employ yourself about; nor would give

way to a curiosity that should be troublesome to you: And, besides, I know your large possessions; and the method you take of looking yourself into your affairs, must needs take up so much of your time, that I ought to be very careful how I intrude upon you.

Well, said he, but I'll tell you what has been my last work I have taken it into my consideration, that, at present, my line is almost extinct; and that the chief part of my maternal estate, in case I die without issue, will go to another line, and great part of my personal will fall into such hands, as I shall not care my Pamela should be at the mercy of. I have, therefore, as human life is uncertain, made such a disposition of my affairs, as will make you absolutely independent and happy; as will secure to you the power of doing a great deal of good, and living as a person ought to do, who is my relict; and shall put it out of any body's power to molest your father and mother, in the provision I design them, for the remainder of their days: And I have finished all this very morning, except to naming trustees for you; and if you have any body you would confide in more than another, I would have you speak.

I was so touched with this mournful instance of his excessive goodness to me, and the thoughts necessarily flowing from the solemn occasion, that I was unable to speak; and at last relieved my mind by a violent fit of weeping; and could only say, clasping my arms around the dear generous man, How shall I support this! So very cruel, yet so very kind!

Don't, my dear, said he, be concerned at what gives me pleasure. I am not the nearer my end, for having made this disposition; but I think the putting off these material points, when so many accidents every day happen, and life is so precarious, is one of the most inexcusable things in the world. And there are many important points to be thought of, when life is drawing to its utmost verge; and the mind may be so agitated and unfit, that it is a most sad thing to put off, to that time, any of those concerns, which more especially require a considerate and composed frame of temper, and perfect health and vigour, to give directions about. My poor friend, Mr. Carlton, who died in my arms so lately; and had a mind disturbed by worldly considerations on one side; a weakness of body, through the violence of his distemper, on another; and the concerns of still as much more moment, as the soul is to the body, on a third; made so great an impression upon me then, that I was the more impatient to come to this



house, where were most of my writings, in order to make the disposition I have now perfected: And since it is grievous to my dear girl, I will myself think of such trustees as shall be most for her benefit. I have only, therefore, to assure you, my dear, that in this instance, as I will do in any other I can think of, I have studied to make you quite easy, free, and independent. And because I shall avoid all occasions, for the future, which may discompose you, I have but one request to make; which is, that if it please God, for my sins, to separate me from my dearest Pamela, you will only resolve not to marry one person; for I would not be such a Herod, as to restrain you from a change of condition with any other, however reluctantly I may think of any other person's succeeding me in your esteem.

I could not answer, and thought my heart would have burst: And he continued, To conclude at once a subject that is so grievous to you, I will tell you, my Pamela, that this person is Mr. Williams. And now I will acquaint you with my motive for this request; which is wholly owing to my niceness, and to no dislike I have for him, or apprehension of any likelihood that it will be so: but, methinks it would reflect a little upon my Pamela, if she was to give way to such a conduct, as if she had married a man for his estate, when she had rather have had another, had it not been for that; and that now, the world will say, she is at liberty to pursue her inclination, the parson is the man!—And I cannot bear even the most distant apprehension, that I had not the preference with you, of any man living, let me have been what I would, as I have shewn my dear life, that I have preferred her to all her sex, of whatever degree.

I could not speak, might I have had the world; and he took me in his arms, and said, I have now spoken all my mind, and expect no answer; and I see you too much moved to give me one. Only forgive me the mention, since I have told you my motive; which as much affects your reputation, as my niceness; and offer not at an answer;—only say, you forgive me: And I hope I have not one discomposing thing to say to my dearest, for the rest of my life; which I pray God, for both our sakes, to lengthen for many happy years.

Grief still choaked up the passage of my words; and he said, The shower is over, my dear: let us walk out again.—He led me out, and I would have spoken; but he said, I will not hear my dear creature say any thing! To

hearken to your assurance of complying with my request, would look as if I doubted you, and wanted it. I am confident I needed only to speak my mind, to be observed by you; and I shall never more think on the subject, if you don't remind me of it. He then most sweetly changed the discourse.

Don't you with pleasure, my dear, said he, take in the delightful fragrance that this sweet shower has given to these banks of flowers? Your presence is so enlivening to me, that I could almost fancy, that what we owe to the shower, is owing to that: And all nature, methinks, blooms around me when I have my Pamela by my side. You are a poetess, my dear; and I will give you a few lines, that I made myself on such an occasion as this I am speaking of, the presence of a sweet companion, and the fresh verdure, that, after a shower, succeeding a long drought, shewed itself throughout all vegetable nature. And then, in a sweet and easy accent, (with his dear arms about me as we walked,) he sung me the following verses; of which he afterwards favoured me with a copy:

I.

All nature blooms when you appear;  
The fields their richest liv'ries wear;  
Oaks, elms, and pines, blest with your view,  
Shoot out fresh greens, and bud anew.  
The varying seasons you supply;  
And, when you're gone, they fade and die.

II.

Sweet Philomel, in mournful strains,  
To you appeals, to you complains.  
The tow'ring lark, on rising wing,  
Warbles to you, your praise does sing;  
He cuts the yielding air, and flies  
To heav'n, to type your future joys.

III.

The purple violet, damask rose,  
Each, to delight your senses, blows.  
The lilies ope', as you appear;  
And all the beauties of the year  
Diffuse their odours at your feet,  
Who give to ev'ry flow'r its sweet.

IV.

For flow'rs and women are allied;  
Both, nature's glory, and her pride!  
Of ev'ry fragrant sweet possest,  
They bloom but for the fair one's breast,  
And to the swelling bosom borne,  
Each other mutually adorn.

Thus sweetly did he palliate the woes, which the generosity of his actions, mixed with the solemnness of the occasion, and the strange request he had vouchsafed to make me, had occasioned. And all he would permit me to say, was, that I was not displeased with him!—Displeased with you, dearest sir! said I: Let me thus testify my obligations, and the force all your commands shall have upon me. And I took the liberty to clasp my arms about his neck, and kissed him.

But yet my mind was pained at times, and has been to this hour.—God grant that I may never see the dreadful moment, that shall shut up the precious life of this excellent, generous benefactor of mine! And—but I cannot bear to suppose—I cannot say more on such a deep subject.

Oh! what a poor thing is human life in its best enjoyments! subjected to imaginary evils, when it has no real ones to disturb it; and that can be made as effectually unhappy by its apprehensions of remote contingencies,

as if it was struggling with the pangs of a present distress! This, duly reflected upon, methinks, should convince every one, that this world is not a place for the immortal mind to be confined to; and that there must be an hereafter, where the whole soul shall be satisfied.

But I shall get out of my depth; my shallow mind cannot comprehend, as it ought, these weighty subjects: Let me only therefore pray, that, after having made a grateful use of God's mercies here, I may, with my dear benefactor, rejoice in that happy state, where is no mixture, no unsatisfiedness; and where all is joy, and peace, and love, for evermore!

I said, when we sat at supper, The charming taste you gave me, sir, of your poetical fancy, makes me sure you have more favours of this kind to delight me with, if you please; and may I beg to be indulged on this agreeable head? Hitherto, said he, my life has been too much a life of gayety and action, to be busied so innocently. Some little essays I have now and then attempted; but very few have I completed. Indeed I had not patience nor attention enough to hold me long to any one thing. Now and then, perhaps, I may occasionally shew you what I have essayed. But I never could please myself in this way.

Friday.

We were yesterday favoured with the company of almost all the neighbouring gentlemen and their ladies, who, by appointment with one another, met to congratulate our happiness. Nothing could be more obliging, more free and affectionate, than the ladies; nothing more polite than the gentlemen. All was performed (for they came to supper) with decency and order, and much to every one's satisfaction; which was principally owing to good Mrs. Jervis's care and skill; who is an excellent manager.

For my part, I was dressed out only to be admired, as it seems: and truly, if I had not known, that I did not make myself, as you, my dear father, once hinted to me, and if I had had the vanity to think as well of myself, as the good company was pleased to do, I might possibly have been proud. But I know, as my Lady Davers said, though in anger, yet in truth, that I am but a poor bit of painted dirt. All that I value myself upon, is, that God has raised me to a condition to be useful, in my generation, to better persons than myself. This is my pride: And I hope this will be all my pride. For what was I of myself!—All the good I can do, is but a poor

third-hand good; for my dearest master himself is but the second-hand. God, the all-gracious, the all-good, the all-bountiful, the all-mighty, the all-merciful God, is the first: To him, therefore, be all the glory!

As I expect the happiness, the unspeakable happiness, my ever-dear and ever-honoured father and mother, of enjoying you both here, under this roof, so soon, (and pray let it be as soon as you can,) I will not enter into the particulars of the last agreeable evening: For I shall have a thousand things, as well as that, to talk to you upon. I fear you will be tired with my prattle when I see you!

I am to return these visits singly; and there were eight ladies here of different families. Dear heart! I shall find enough to do!—I doubt my time will not be so well filled up, as I once promised my dear master!—But he is pleased, cheerful, kind, affectionate! O what a happy creature am I!—May I be always thankful to God, and grateful to him!

When all these tumultuous visitings are over, I shall have my mind, I hope, subside into a family calm, that I may make myself a little useful to the household of my dear master; or else I shall be an unprofitable servant indeed!

Lady Davers sent this morning her compliments to us both, very affectionately; and her lord's good wishes and congratulations: and she desired my writings per bearer; and says, she will herself bring them to me again, with thanks, as soon as she has read them; and she and her lord will come and be my guests (that was her particularly kind word) for a fortnight.

I have now but one thing to wish for; and then, methinks, I shall be all ecstasy: and that is, your presence, both of you, and your blessings; which I hope you will bestow upon me every morning and night, till you are settled in the happy manner my dear Mr. B—— has intended.

Methinks I want sadly your list of the honest and worthy poor; for the money lies by me, and brings me no interest. You see I am become a mere usurer; and want to make use upon use: and yet, when I have done all, I cannot do so much as I ought. God forgive my imperfections!

I tell my dear spouse, I want another dairy-house visit. To be sure, if he won't, at present, permit it, I shall, if it please God to spare us, tease him like any over-indulged wife, if, as the dear charmer grows older, he won't let me have the pleasure of forming her tender mind, as well as I am able;

lest, poor little soul, she fall into such snares, as her unhappy dear mother fell into. I am providing a power of pretty things for her, against I see her next, that I may make her love me, if I can.

Just now I have the blessed news, that you will set out for this happy house on Tuesday morning. The chariot shall be with you without fail. God give us a happy meeting! O how I long for it! Forgive your impatient daughter, who sends this to amuse you on your journey; and desires to be  
Ever most dutifully yours.

Here end, at present, the letters of Pamela to her father and mother. They arrived at their daughter's house on Tuesday evening in the following week, and were received by her with the utmost joy and duty; and with great goodness and complaisance by Mr. B——. And having resided there till every thing was put in order for them at the Kentish estate, they were carried down thither by himself, and their daughter, and put into possession of the pretty farm he had designed for them.

The reader will here indulge us in a few brief observations, which naturally result from the story and characters; and which will serve as so many applications of its most material incidents to the minds of YOUTH of BOTH SEXES.

First, then, in the character of the GENTLEMAN, may be seen that of a fashionable libertine, who allowed himself in the free indulgence of his passions, especially to the fair sex; and found himself supported in his daring attempts, by an affluent fortune in possession, a personal bravery, as it is called, readier to give than take offence, and an imperious will: yet as he betimes sees his errors, and reforms in the bloom of youth, an edifying lesson may be drawn from it, for the use of such as are born to large fortunes; and who may be taught, by his example, the inexpressible difference between the hazards and remorse which attend a profligate course of life, and the pleasures which flow from virtuous love, and benevolent actions.

In the character of Lady DAVERS, let the proud, and the high-born, see the deformity of unreasonable passion, and how weak and ridiculous such persons must appear, who suffer themselves, as is usually the case, to be hurried from the height of violence, to the most abject submission; and subject themselves to be outdone by the humble virtue they so much despise.

Let good CLERGYMEN, in Mr. WILLIAMS, see, that whatever displeasure the doing of their duty may give, for a time, to their proud patrons, Providence will, at last, reward their piety, and turn their distresses to triumph; and make them even more valued for a conduct that gave offence while the violence of passion lasted, than if they had meanly stooped to flatter or soothe the vices of the great.

In the examples of good old ANDREWS and his WIFE, let those, who are reduced to a low estate, see, that Providence never fails to reward their honesty and integrity: and that God will, in his own good time, extricate them, by means unforeseen, out of their present difficulties, and reward them with benefits unhopd for.

The UPPER SERVANTS of great families may, from the odious character of Mrs. JEWKES, and the amiable ones of Mrs. JERVIS, Mr. LONGMAN, etc. learn what to avoid, and what to choose, to make themselves valued and esteemed by all who know them.

And, from the double conduct of poor JOHN, the LOWER SERVANTS may learn fidelity, and how to distinguish between the lawful and unlawful commands of a superior.

The poor deluded female, who, like the once unhappy Miss GODFREY, has given up her honour, and yielded to the allurements of her designing lover, may learn from her story, to stop at the first fault; and, by resolving to repent and amend, see the pardon and blessing which await her penitence, and a kind Providence ready to extend the arms of its mercy to receive and reward her returning duty: While the prostitute, pursuing the wicked courses, into which, perhaps, she was at first inadvertently drawn, hurries herself into filthy diseases, and an untimely death; and, too probably, into everlasting perdition.

Let the desponding heart be comforted by the happy issue which the troubles and trials of PAMELA met with, when they see, in her case, that no danger nor distress, however inevitable, or deep to their apprehensions, can be out of the power of Providence to obviate or relieve; and which, as in various instances in her story, can turn the most seemingly grievous things to its own glory, and the reward of suffering innocence; and that too, at a time when all human prospects seem to fail.

Let the rich, and those who are exalted from a low to a high estate, learn from her, that they are not promoted only for a single good; but that

Providence has raised them, that they should dispense to all within their reach, the blessings it has heaped upon them; and that the greater the power is to which God hath raised them, the greater is the good that will be expected from them.

From the low opinion she every where shews of herself, and her attributing all her excellencies to pious education, and her lady's virtuous instructions and bounty; let persons, even of genius and piety, learn not to arrogate to themselves those gifts and graces, which they owe least of all to themselves: Since the beauties of person are frail; and it is not in our power to give them to ourselves, or to be either prudent, wise, or good, without the assistance of divine grace.

From the same good example, let children see what a blessing awaits their duty to their parents, though ever so low in the world; and that the only disgrace, is to be dishonest; but none at all to be poor.

From the economy she purposes to observe in her elevation, let even ladies of condition learn, that there are family employments, in which they may and ought to make themselves useful, and give good examples to their inferiors, as well as equals: and that their duty to God, charity to the poor and sick, and the different branches of household management, ought to take up the most considerable portions of their time.

From her signal veracity, which she never forfeited, in all the hardships she was tried with, though her answers, as she had reason to apprehend, would often make against her; and the innocence she preserved throughout all her stratagems and contrivances to save herself from violation: Persons, even sorely tempted, may learn to preserve a sacred regard to truth; which always begets a reverence for them, even in the corruptest minds.

In short,

Her obliging behaviour to her equals, before her exaltation; her kindness to them afterwards; her forgiving spirit, and her generosity;

Her meekness, in every circumstance where her virtue was not concerned;

Her charitable allowances for others, as in the case of Miss Godfrey, for faults she would not have forgiven in herself;

Her kindness and prudence to the offspring of that melancholy adventure;



Her maiden and bridal purity, which extended as well to her thoughts as to her words and actions;

Her signal affiance in God;

Her thankful spirit;

Her grateful heart;

Her diffusive charity to the poor, which made her blessed by them whenever she appeared abroad;

The cheerful ease and freedom of her deportment;

Her parental, conjugal, and maternal duty;

Her social virtues;

Are all so many signal instances of the excellency of her mind, which may make her character worthy of the imitation of her sex. And the Editor of these sheets will have his end, if it inspires a laudable emulation in the minds of any worthy persons, who may thereby entitle themselves to the rewards, the praises, and the blessings, by which PAMELA was so deservedly distinguished.

THE END

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# Carmilla

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

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# Carmilla

J. Sheridan LeFanu

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## PROLOGUE

*Upon a paper attached to the Narrative which follows, Doctor Hesselius has written a rather elaborate note, which he accompanies with a reference to his Essay on the strange subject which the MS. illuminates.*

*This mysterious subject he treats, in that Essay, with his usual learning and acumen, and with remarkable directness and condensation. It will form but one volume of the series of that extraordinary man's collected papers.*

*As I publish the case, in this volume, simply to interest the "laity," I shall forestall the intelligent lady, who relates it, in nothing; and after due consideration, I have determined, therefore, to abstain from presenting any précis of the learned Doctor's reasoning, or extract from his statement on a subject which he describes as "involving, not improbably, some of the profoundest arcana of our dual*

*existence, and its intermediates."*

*I was anxious on discovering this paper, to reopen the correspondence commenced by Doctor Hesselius, so many years before, with a person so clever and careful as his informant seems to have been. Much to my regret, however, I found that she had died in the interval.*

*She, probably, could have added little to the Narrative which she communicates in the following pages, with, so far as I can pronounce, such conscientious particularity.*

# I

## **An Early Fright**

In Styria, we, though by no means magnificent people, inhabit a castle, or schloss. A small income, in that part of the world, goes a great way. Eight or nine hundred a year does wonders. Scantily enough ours would have answered among wealthy people at home. My father is English, and I bear an English name, although I never saw England. But here, in this lonely and primitive place, where everything is so marvelously cheap, I really don't see how ever so much more money would at all materially add to our comforts, or even luxuries.

My father was in the Austrian service, and retired upon a pension and his patrimony, and purchased this feudal residence, and the small estate on which it stands, a bargain.

Nothing can be more picturesque or solitary. It stands on a slight eminence in a forest. The road, very old and narrow, passes in front of its drawbridge, never raised in my time, and its moat, stocked with perch, and sailed over by many swans, and floating on its surface white fleets of water lilies.

Over all this the schloss shows its many-windowed front; its towers, and its Gothic chapel.

The forest opens in an irregular and very picturesque glade before its gate, and at the right a steep Gothic bridge carries the road over a stream that winds in deep shadow through the wood. I have said that this is a very lonely place. Judge whether I say truth. Looking from the hall door towards the road, the forest in which our castle stands extends fifteen miles to the right, and twelve to the left. The nearest inhabited village is about seven of your English miles to the left. The nearest inhabited schloss of any historic associations, is that of old General Spielsdorf, nearly twenty miles away to the right.

I have said "the nearest *inhabited* village," because there is, only three miles westward, that is to say in the direction of General Spielsdorf's schloss, a ruined village, with its quaint little church, now roofless, in the aisle of which are the moldering tombs of the proud family of Karnstein, now extinct, who once owned the equally desolate chateau which, in the thick of the forest, overlooks the silent ruins of the town.

Respecting the cause of the desertion of this striking and melancholy spot, there is a legend which I shall relate to you another time.

I must tell you now, how very small is the party who constitute the inhabitants of our castle. I don't include servants, or those dependents who occupy rooms in the buildings attached to the schloss. Listen, and wonder! My father, who is the kindest man on earth, but

growing old; and I, at the date of my story, only nineteen. Eight years have passed since then.

I and my father constituted the family at the schloss. My mother, a Styrian lady, died in my infancy, but I had a good-natured governess, who had been with me from, I might almost say, my infancy. I could not remember the time when her fat, benignant face was not a familiar picture in my memory.

This was Madame Perrodon, a native of Berne, whose care and good nature now in part supplied to me the loss of my mother, whom I do not even remember, so early I lost her. She made a third at our little dinner party. There was a fourth, Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, a lady such as you term, I believe, a "finishing governess." She spoke French and German, Madame Perrodon French and broken English, to which my father and I added English, which, partly to prevent its becoming a lost language among us, and partly from patriotic motives, we spoke every day. The consequence was a Babel, at which strangers used to laugh, and which I shall make no attempt to reproduce in this narrative. And there were two or three young lady friends besides, pretty nearly of my own age, who were occasional visitors, for longer or shorter terms; and these visits I sometimes returned.

These were our regular social resources; but of course there were chance visits from "neighbors" of only five or six leagues distance.

My life was, notwithstanding, rather a solitary one, I can assure you.

My gouvernantes had just so much control over me as you might conjecture such sage persons would have in the case of a rather spoiled girl, whose only parent allowed her pretty nearly her own way in everything.

The first occurrence in my existence, which produced a terrible impression upon my mind, which, in fact, never has been effaced, was one of the very earliest incidents of my life which I can recollect. Some people will think it so trifling that it should not be recorded here. You will see, however, by-and-by, why I mention it. The nursery, as it was called, though I had it all to myself, was a large room in the upper story of the castle, with a steep oak roof. I can't have been more than six years old, when one night I awoke, and looking round the room from my bed, failed to see the nursery maid. Neither was my nurse there; and I thought myself alone. I was not frightened, for I was one of those happy children who are studiously kept in ignorance of ghost stories, of fairy tales, and of all such lore as makes us cover up our heads when the door cracks suddenly, or the flicker of an expiring candle makes the shadow of a bedpost dance upon the wall, nearer to our faces. I was vexed and insulted at finding myself, as I conceived, neglected, and I began to whimper, preparatory to a hearty bout of roaring; when to my surprise, I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a



young lady who was kneeling, with her hands under the coverlet. I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling; I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was awakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep at the same moment, and I cried loudly. The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down upon the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed.

I was now for the first time frightened, and I yelled with all my might and main. Nurse, nursery maid, housekeeper, all came running in, and hearing my story, they made light of it, soothing me all they could meanwhile. But, child as I was, I could perceive that their faces were pale with an unwonted look of anxiety, and I saw them look under the bed, and about the room, and peep under tables and pluck open cupboards; and the housekeeper whispered to the nurse: "Lay your hand along that hollow in the bed; someone *did* lie there, so sure as you did not; the place is still warm."

I remember the nursery maid petting me, and all three examining my chest, where I told them I felt the puncture, and pronouncing that there was no sign visible that any such thing had happened to me.

The housekeeper and the two other servants who were in charge of the nursery, remained

sitting up all night; and from that time a servant always sat up in the nursery until I was about fourteen.

I was very nervous for a long time after this. A doctor was called in, he was pallid and elderly. How well I remember his long saturnine face, slightly pitted with smallpox, and his chestnut wig. For a good while, every second day, he came and gave me medicine, which of course I hated.

The morning after I saw this apparition I was in a state of terror, and could not bear to be left alone, daylight though it was, for a moment.

I remember my father coming up and standing at the bedside, and talking cheerfully, and asking the nurse a number of questions, and laughing very heartily at one of the answers; and patting me on the shoulder, and kissing me, and telling me not to be frightened, that it was nothing but a dream and could not hurt me.

But I was not comforted, for I knew the visit of the strange woman was *not* a dream; and I was *awfully* frightened.

I was a little consoled by the nursery maid's assuring me that it was she who had come and looked at me, and lain down beside me in the bed, and that I must have been half-dreaming not to have known her face. But this, though supported by the nurse, did not quite satisfy me.

I remembered, in the course of that day, a venerable old man, in a black cassock, coming into the room with the nurse and housekeeper, and talking a little to them, and very kindly to me; his face was very sweet and gentle, and he told me they were going to pray, and joined my hands together, and desired me to say, softly, while they were praying, "Lord hear all good prayers for us, for Jesus' sake." I think these were the very words, for I often repeated them to myself, and my nurse used for years to make me say them in my prayers.

I remembered so well the thoughtful sweet face of that white-haired old man, in his black cassock, as he stood in that rude, lofty, brown room, with the clumsy furniture of a fashion three hundred years old about him, and the scanty light entering its shadowy atmosphere through the small lattice. He kneeled, and the three women with him, and he prayed aloud with an earnest quavering voice for, what appeared to me, a long time. I forget all my life preceding that event, and for some time after it is all obscure also, but the scenes I have just described stand out vivid as the isolated pictures of the phantasmagoria surrounded by darkness.

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## II

### A Guest

I am now going to tell you something so strange that it will require all your faith in my veracity to believe my story. It is not only true, nevertheless, but truth of which I have been an eyewitness.

It was a sweet summer evening, and my father asked me, as he sometimes did, to take a little ramble with him along that beautiful forest vista which I have mentioned as lying in front of the schloss.

"General Spielsdorf cannot come to us so soon as I had hoped," said my father, as we pursued our walk.

He was to have paid us a visit of some weeks, and we had expected his arrival next day. He was to have brought with him a young lady, his niece and ward, Mademoiselle Rheinfeldt, whom I had never seen, but whom I had heard described as a very charming girl, and in whose society I had promised myself many happy days. I was more disappointed than a young lady living in a town, or a bustling neighborhood can possibly imagine. This visit, and the new acquaintance it promised, had furnished my day dream for many weeks.

"And how soon does he come?" I asked.

"Not till autumn. Not for two months, I dare say," he answered. "And I am very glad now, dear, that you never knew Mademoiselle Rheinfeldt."

"And why?" I asked, both mortified and curious.

"Because the poor young lady is dead," he replied. "I quite forgot I had not told you, but you were not in the room when I received the General's letter this evening."

I was very much shocked. General Spielsdorf had mentioned in his first letter, six or seven weeks before, that she was not so well as he would wish her, but there was nothing to suggest the remotest suspicion of danger.

"Here is the General's letter," he said, handing it to me. "I am afraid he is in great affliction; the letter appears to me to have been written very nearly in distraction."

We sat down on a rude bench, under a group of magnificent lime trees. The sun was setting with all its melancholy splendor behind the sylvan horizon, and the stream that flows beside our home, and passes under the steep old bridge I have mentioned, wound through many a group of noble trees, almost at our feet, reflecting in its current the fading crimson of the sky. General Spielsdorf's letter was so extraordinary, so vehement, and in some places so self-contradictory, that I read it twice

over--the second time aloud to my father--and was still unable to account for it, except by supposing that grief had unsettled his mind.

It said "I have lost my darling daughter, for as such I loved her. During the last days of dear Bertha's illness I was not able to write to you.

Before then I had no idea of her danger. I have lost her, and now learn *all*, too late. She died in the peace of innocence, and in the glorious hope of a blessed futurity. The fiend who betrayed our infatuated hospitality has done it all. I thought I was receiving into my house innocence, gaiety, a charming companion for my lost Bertha. Heavens! what a fool have I been!

I thank God my child died without a suspicion of the cause of her sufferings. She is gone without so much as conjecturing the nature of her illness, and the accursed passion of the agent of all this misery. I devote my remaining days to tracking and extinguishing a monster. I am told I may hope to accomplish my righteous and merciful purpose. At present there is scarcely a gleam of light to guide me. I curse my conceited incredulity, my despicable affectation of superiority, my blindness, my obstinacy--all--too late. I cannot write or talk collectedly now. I am distracted. So soon as I shall have a little recovered, I mean to devote myself for a time to enquiry, which may possibly lead me as far as Vienna. Some time in the autumn, two months hence, or earlier if I live, I will see you--that is, if you permit me;

I will then tell you all that I scarce dare put upon paper now. Farewell. Pray for me, dear friend."

In these terms ended this strange letter. Though I had never seen Bertha Rheinfeldt my eyes filled with tears at the sudden intelligence; I was startled, as well as profoundly disappointed.

The sun had now set, and it was twilight by the time I had returned the General's letter to my father.

It was a soft clear evening, and we loitered, speculating upon the possible meanings of the violent and incoherent sentences which I had just been reading. We had nearly a mile to walk before reaching the road that passes the schloss in front, and by that time the moon was shining brilliantly. At the drawbridge we met Madame Perrodon and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, who had come out, without their bonnets, to enjoy the exquisite moonlight.

We heard their voices gabbling in animated dialogue as we approached. We joined them at the drawbridge, and turned about to admire with them the beautiful scene.

The glade through which we had just walked lay before us. At our left the narrow road wound away under clumps of lordly trees, and was lost to sight amid the thickening forest. At the right the same road crosses the steep and picturesque bridge, near which stands a ruined

tower which once guarded that pass; and beyond the bridge an abrupt eminence rises, covered with trees, and showing in the shadows some grey ivy-clustered rocks.

Over the sward and low grounds a thin film of mist was stealing like smoke, marking the distances with a transparent veil; and here and there we could see the river faintly flashing in the moonlight.

No softer, sweeter scene could be imagined. The news I had just heard made it melancholy; but nothing could disturb its character of profound serenity, and the enchanted glory and vagueness of the prospect.

My father, who enjoyed the picturesque, and I, stood looking in silence over the expanse beneath us. The two good governesses, standing a little way behind us, discoursed upon the scene, and were eloquent upon the moon.

Madame Perrodon was fat, middle-aged, and romantic, and talked and sighed poetically. Mademoiselle De Lafontaine--in right of her father who was a German, assumed to be psychological, metaphysical, and something of a mystic--now declared that when the moon shone with a light so intense it was well known that it indicated a special spiritual activity. The effect of the full moon in such a state of brilliancy was manifold. It acted on dreams, it acted on lunacy, it acted on nervous people, it had marvelous physical influences connected



with life. Mademoiselle related that her cousin, who was mate of a merchant ship, having taken a nap on deck on such a night, lying on his back, with his face full in the light on the moon, had wakened, after a dream of an old woman clawing him by the cheek, with his features horribly drawn to one side; and his countenance had never quite recovered its equilibrium.

"The moon, this night," she said, "is full of idyllic and magnetic influence--and see, when you look behind you at the front of the schloss how all its windows flash and twinkle with that silvery splendor, as if unseen hands had lighted up the rooms to receive fairy guests."

There are indolent styles of the spirits in which, indisposed to talk ourselves, the talk of others is pleasant to our listless ears; and I gazed on, pleased with the tinkle of the ladies' conversation.

"I have got into one of my moping moods tonight," said my father, after a silence, and quoting Shakespeare, whom, by way of keeping up our English, he used to read aloud, he said:

"'In truth I know not why I am so sad.  
It wearies me: you say it wearies you;  
But how I got it--came by it.'

"I forget the rest. But I feel as if some great misfortune were hanging over us. I suppose

the poor General's afflicted letter has had something to do with it."

At this moment the unwonted sound of carriage wheels and many hoofs upon the road, arrested our attention.

They seemed to be approaching from the high ground overlooking the bridge, and very soon the equipage emerged from that point. Two horsemen first crossed the bridge, then came a carriage drawn by four horses, and two men rode behind.

It seemed to be the traveling carriage of a person of rank; and we were all immediately absorbed in watching that very unusual spectacle. It became, in a few moments, greatly more interesting, for just as the carriage had passed the summit of the steep bridge, one of the leaders, taking fright, communicated his panic to the rest, and after a plunge or two, the whole team broke into a wild gallop together, and dashing between the horsemen who rode in front, came thundering along the road towards us with the speed of a hurricane.

The excitement of the scene was made more painful by the clear, long-drawn screams of a female voice from the carriage window.

We all advanced in curiosity and horror; me rather in silence, the rest with various ejaculations of terror.

Our suspense did not last long. Just before you reach the castle drawbridge, on the route they were coming, there stands by the roadside a magnificent lime tree, on the other stands an ancient stone cross, at sight of which the horses, now going at a pace that was perfectly frightful, swerved so as to bring the wheel over the projecting roots of the tree.

I knew what was coming. I covered my eyes, unable to see it out, and turned my head away; at the same moment I heard a cry from my lady friends, who had gone on a little.

Curiosity opened my eyes, and I saw a scene of utter confusion. Two of the horses were on the ground, the carriage lay upon its side with two wheels in the air; the men were busy removing the traces, and a lady with a commanding air and figure had got out, and stood with clasped hands, raising the handkerchief that was in them every now and then to her eyes.

Through the carriage door was now lifted a young lady, who appeared to be lifeless. My dear old father was already beside the elder lady, with his hat in his hand, evidently tendering his aid and the resources of his schloss. The lady did not appear to hear him, or to have eyes for anything but the slender girl who was being placed against the slope of the bank.

I approached; the young lady was apparently stunned, but she was certainly not dead. My

father, who piqued himself on being something of a physician, had just had his fingers on her wrist and assured the lady, who declared herself her mother, that her pulse, though faint and irregular, was undoubtedly still distinguishable. The lady clasped her hands and looked upward, as if in a momentary transport of gratitude; but immediately she broke out again in that theatrical way which is, I believe, natural to some people.

She was what is called a fine looking woman for her time of life, and must have been handsome; she was tall, but not thin, and dressed in black velvet, and looked rather pale, but with a proud and commanding countenance, though now agitated strangely.

"Who was ever being so born to calamity?" I heard her say, with clasped hands, as I came up. "Here am I, on a journey of life and death, in prosecuting which to lose an hour is possibly to lose all. My child will not have recovered sufficiently to resume her route for who can say how long. I must leave her: I cannot, dare not, delay. How far on, sir, can you tell, is the nearest village? I must leave her there; and shall not see my darling, or even hear of her till my return, three months hence."

I plucked my father by the coat, and whispered earnestly in his ear: "Oh! papa, pray ask her to let her stay with us--it would be so delightful. Do, pray."

"If Madame will entrust her child to the care of my daughter, and of her good gouvernante, Madame Perrodon, and permit her to remain as our guest, under my charge, until her return, it will confer a distinction and an obligation upon us, and we shall treat her with all the care and devotion which so sacred a trust deserves."

"I cannot do that, sir, it would be to task your kindness and chivalry too cruelly," said the lady, distractedly.

"It would, on the contrary, be to confer on us a very great kindness at the moment when we most need it. My daughter has just been disappointed by a cruel misfortune, in a visit from which she had long anticipated a great deal of happiness. If you confide this young lady to our care it will be her best consolation. The nearest village on your route is distant, and affords no such inn as you could think of placing your daughter at; you cannot allow her to continue her journey for any considerable distance without danger. If, as you say, you cannot suspend your journey, you must part with her tonight, and nowhere could you do so with more honest assurances of care and tenderness than here."

There was something in this lady's air and appearance so distinguished and even imposing, and in her manner so engaging, as to impress one, quite apart from the dignity of her equipage, with a conviction that she was a person of consequence.

By this time the carriage was replaced in its upright position, and the horses, quite tractable, in the traces again.

The lady threw on her daughter a glance which I fancied was not quite so affectionate as one might have anticipated from the beginning of the scene; then she beckoned slightly to my father, and withdrew two or three steps with him out of hearing; and talked to him with a fixed and stern countenance, not at all like that with which she had hitherto spoken.

I was filled with wonder that my father did not seem to perceive the change, and also unspeakably curious to learn what it could be that she was speaking, almost in his ear, with so much earnestness and rapidity.

Two or three minutes at most I think she remained thus employed, then she turned, and a few steps brought her to where her daughter lay, supported by Madame Perrodon. She kneeled beside her for a moment and whispered, as Madame supposed, a little benediction in her ear; then hastily kissing her she stepped into her carriage, the door was closed, the footmen in stately liveries jumped up behind, the outriders spurred on, the postilions cracked their whips, the horses plunged and broke suddenly into a furious canter that threatened soon again to become a gallop, and the carriage whirled away, followed at the same rapid pace by the two horsemen in the rear.



### III

#### **We Compare Notes**

We followed the *cortege* with our eyes until it was swiftly lost to sight in the misty wood; and the very sound of the hoofs and the wheels died away in the silent night air.

Nothing remained to assure us that the adventure had not been an illusion of a moment but the young lady, who just at that moment opened her eyes. I could not see, for her face was turned from me, but she raised her head, evidently looking about her, and I heard a very sweet voice ask complainingly, "Where is mamma?"

Our good Madame Perrodon answered tenderly, and added some comfortable assurances.

I then heard her ask:

"Where am I? What is this place?" and after that she said, "I don't see the carriage; and Matska, where is she?"

Madame answered all her questions in so far as she understood them; and gradually the young lady remembered how the misadventure came about, and was glad to hear that no one in, or in attendance on, the carriage was hurt; and



on learning that her mamma had left her here, till her return in about three months, she wept.

I was going to add my consolations to those of Madame Perrodon when Mademoiselle De Lafontaine placed her hand upon my arm, saying:

"Don't approach, one at a time is as much as she can at present converse with; a very little excitement would possibly overpower her now."

As soon as she is comfortably in bed, I thought, I will run up to her room and see her.

My father in the meantime had sent a servant on horseback for the physician, who lived about two leagues away; and a bedroom was being prepared for the young lady's reception.

The stranger now rose, and leaning on Madame's arm, walked slowly over the drawbridge and into the castle gate.

In the hall, servants waited to receive her, and she was conducted forthwith to her room. The room we usually sat in as our drawing room is long, having four windows, that looked over the moat and drawbridge, upon the forest scene I have just described.

It is furnished in old carved oak, with large carved cabinets, and the chairs are cushioned with crimson Utrecht velvet. The walls are covered with tapestry, and surrounded with great gold frames, the figures being as large as life, in ancient and very curious costume, and

the subjects represented are hunting, hawking, and generally festive. It is not too stately to be extremely comfortable; and here we had our tea, for with his usual patriotic leanings he insisted that the national beverage should make its appearance regularly with our coffee and chocolate.

We sat here this night, and with candles lighted, were talking over the adventure of the evening.

Madame Perrodon and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine were both of our party. The young stranger had hardly lain down in her bed when she sank into a deep sleep; and those ladies had left her in the care of a servant.

"How do you like our guest?" I asked, as soon as Madame entered. "Tell me all about her?"

"I like her extremely," answered Madame, "she is, I almost think, the prettiest creature I ever saw; about your age, and so gentle and nice."

"She is absolutely beautiful," threw in Mademoiselle, who had peeped for a moment into the stranger's room.

"And such a sweet voice!" added Madame Perrodon.

"Did you remark a woman in the carriage, after it was set up again, who did not get out," inquired Mademoiselle, "but only looked from the window?"

"No, we had not seen her."

Then she described a hideous black woman, with a sort of colored turban on her head, and who was gazing all the time from the carriage window, nodding and grinning derisively towards the ladies, with gleaming eyes and large white eyeballs, and her teeth set as if in fury.

"Did you remark what an ill-looking pack of men the servants were?" asked Madame.

"Yes," said my father, who had just come in, "ugly, hang-dog looking fellows as ever I beheld in my life. I hope they mayn't rob the poor lady in the forest. They are clever rogues, however; they got everything to rights in a minute."

"I dare say they are worn out with too long traveling," said Madame.

"Besides looking wicked, their faces were so strangely lean, and dark, and sullen. I am very curious, I own; but I dare say the young lady will tell you all about it tomorrow, if she is sufficiently recovered."

"I don't think she will," said my father, with a mysterious smile, and a little nod of his head, as if he knew more about it than he cared to tell us.

This made us all the more inquisitive as to what had passed between him and the lady in the black velvet, in the brief but earnest

interview that had immediately preceded her departure.

We were scarcely alone, when I entreated him to tell me. He did not need much pressing.

"There is no particular reason why I should not tell you. She expressed a reluctance to trouble us with the care of her daughter, saying she was in delicate health, and nervous, but not subject to any kind of seizure--she volunteered that--nor to any illusion; being, in fact, perfectly sane."

"How very odd to say all that!" I interpolated. "It was so unnecessary."

"At all events it *was* said," he laughed, "and as you wish to know all that passed, which was indeed very little, I tell you. She then said, 'I am making a long journey of *vital* importance--she emphasized the word--rapid and secret; I shall return for my child in three months; in the meantime, she will be silent as to who we are, whence we come, and whither we are traveling.' That is all she said. She spoke very pure French. When she said the word 'secret,' she paused for a few seconds, looking sternly, her eyes fixed on mine. I fancy she makes a great point of that. You saw how quickly she was gone. I hope I have not done a very foolish thing, in taking charge of the young lady."

For my part, I was delighted. I was longing to see and talk to her; and only waiting till the

doctor should give me leave. You, who live in towns, can have no idea how great an event the introduction of a new friend is, in such a solitude as surrounded us.

The doctor did not arrive till nearly one o'clock; but I could no more have gone to my bed and slept, than I could have overtaken, on foot, the carriage in which the princess in black velvet had driven away.

When the physician came down to the drawing room, it was to report very favorably upon his patient. She was now sitting up, her pulse quite regular, apparently perfectly well. She had sustained no injury, and the little shock to her nerves had passed away quite harmlessly. There could be no harm certainly in my seeing her, if we both wished it; and, with this permission I sent, forthwith, to know whether she would allow me to visit her for a few minutes in her room.

The servant returned immediately to say that she desired nothing more.

You may be sure I was not long in availing myself of this permission.

Our visitor lay in one of the handsomest rooms in the schloss. It was, perhaps, a little stately. There was a somber piece of tapestry opposite the foot of the bed, representing Cleopatra with the asps to her bosom; and other solemn classic scenes were displayed, a little faded, upon the other walls. But there was gold

carving, and rich and varied color enough in the other decorations of the room, to more than redeem the gloom of the old tapestry.

There were candles at the bedside. She was sitting up; her slender pretty figure enveloped in the soft silk dressing gown, embroidered with flowers, and lined with thick quilted silk, which her mother had thrown over her feet as she lay upon the ground.

What was it that, as I reached the bedside and had just begun my little greeting, struck me dumb in a moment, and made me recoil a step or two from before her? I will tell you.

I saw the very face which had visited me in my childhood at night, which remained so fixed in my memory, and on which I had for so many years so often ruminated with horror, when no one suspected of what I was thinking.

It was pretty, even beautiful; and when I first beheld it, wore the same melancholy expression.

But this almost instantly lighted into a strange fixed smile of recognition.

There was a silence of fully a minute, and then at length she spoke; I could not.

"How wonderful!" she exclaimed. "Twelve years ago, I saw your face in a dream, and it has haunted me ever since."

"Wonderful indeed!" I repeated, overcoming with an effort the horror that had for a time suspended my utterances. "Twelve years ago, in vision or reality, I certainly saw you. I could not forget your face. It has remained before my eyes ever since."

Her smile had softened. Whatever I had fancied strange in it, was gone, and it and her dimpling cheeks were now delightfully pretty and intelligent.

I felt reassured, and continued more in the vein which hospitality indicated, to bid her welcome, and to tell her how much pleasure her accidental arrival had given us all, and especially what a happiness it was to me.

I took her hand as I spoke. I was a little shy, as lonely people are, but the situation made me eloquent, and even bold. She pressed my hand, she laid hers upon it, and her eyes glowed, as, looking hastily into mine, she smiled again, and blushed.

She answered my welcome very prettily. I sat down beside her, still wondering; and she said:

"I must tell you my vision about you; it is so very strange that you and I should have had, each of the other so vivid a dream, that each should have seen, I you and you me, looking as we do now, when of course we both were mere children. I was a child, about six years old, and I awoke from a confused and troubled dream, and found myself in a room, unlike my

nursery, wainscoted clumsily in some dark wood, and with cupboards and bedsteads, and chairs, and benches placed about it. The beds were, I thought, all empty, and the room itself without anyone but myself in it; and I, after looking about me for some time, and admiring especially an iron candlestick with two branches, which I should certainly know again, crept under one of the beds to reach the window; but as I got from under the bed, I heard someone crying; and looking up, while I was still upon my knees, I saw you--most assuredly you--as I see you now; a beautiful young lady, with golden hair and large blue eyes, and lips--your lips--you as you are here.

"Your looks won me; I climbed on the bed and put my arms about you, and I think we both fell asleep. I was aroused by a scream; you were sitting up screaming. I was frightened, and slipped down upon the ground, and, it seemed to me, lost consciousness for a moment; and when I came to myself, I was again in my nursery at home. Your face I have never forgotten since. I could not be misled by mere resemblance. *You are* the lady whom I saw then."

It was now my turn to relate my corresponding vision, which I did, to the undisguised wonder of my new acquaintance.

"I don't know which should be most afraid of the other," she said, again smiling--"If you were less pretty I think I should be very much afraid of you, but being as you are, and you



and I both so young, I feel only that I have made your acquaintance twelve years ago, and have already a right to your intimacy; at all events it does seem as if we were destined, from our earliest childhood, to be friends. I wonder whether you feel as strangely drawn towards me as I do to you; I have never had a friend--shall I find one now?" She sighed, and her fine dark eyes gazed passionately on me.

Now the truth is, I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger. I did feel, as she said, "drawn towards her," but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed. She interested and won me; she was so beautiful and so indescribably engaging.

I perceived now something of languor and exhaustion stealing over her, and hastened to bid her good night.

"The doctor thinks," I added, "that you ought to have a maid to sit up with you tonight; one of ours is waiting, and you will find her a very useful and quiet creature."

"How kind of you, but I could not sleep, I never could with an attendant in the room. I shan't require any assistance--and, shall I confess my weakness, I am haunted with a terror of robbers. Our house was robbed once, and two servants murdered, so I always lock my door. It has become a habit--and you look so kind I

know you will forgive me. I see there is a key in the lock."

She held me close in her pretty arms for a moment and whispered in my ear, "Good night, darling, it is very hard to part with you, but good night; tomorrow, but not early, I shall see you again."

She sank back on the pillow with a sigh, and her fine eyes followed me with a fond and melancholy gaze, and she murmured again "Good night, dear friend."

Young people like, and even love, on impulse. I was flattered by the evident, though as yet undeserved, fondness she showed me. I liked the confidence with which she at once received me. She was determined that we should be very near friends.

Next day came and we met again. I was delighted with my companion; that is to say, in many respects.

Her looks lost nothing in daylight--she was certainly the most beautiful creature I had ever seen, and the unpleasant remembrance of the face presented in my early dream, had lost the effect of the first unexpected recognition.

She confessed that she had experienced a similar shock on seeing me, and precisely the same faint antipathy that had mingled with my admiration of her. We now laughed together over our momentary horrors.



## **IV**

### **Her Habits--A Saunter**

I told you that I was charmed with her in most particulars.

There were some that did not please me so well.

She was above the middle height of women. I shall begin by describing her.

She was slender, and wonderfully graceful. Except that her movements were languid--very languid--indeed, there was nothing in her appearance to indicate an invalid. Her complexion was rich and brilliant; her features were small and beautifully formed; her eyes large, dark, and lustrous; her hair was quite wonderful, I never saw hair so magnificently thick and long when it was down about her shoulders; I have often placed my hands under it, and laughed with wonder at its weight. It was exquisitely fine and soft, and in color a rich very dark brown, with something of gold. I loved to let it down, tumbling with its own weight, as, in her room, she lay back in her chair talking in her sweet low voice, I used to fold and braid it, and spread it out and play with it. Heavens! If I had but known all!

I said there were particulars which did not please me. I have told you that her confidence won me the first night I saw her; but I found that she exercised with respect to herself, her mother, her history, everything in fact connected with her life, plans, and people, an ever wakeful reserve. I dare say I was unreasonable, perhaps I was wrong; I dare say I ought to have respected the solemn injunction laid upon my father by the stately lady in black velvet. But curiosity is a restless and unscrupulous passion, and no one girl can endure, with patience, that hers should be baffled by another. What harm could it do anyone to tell me what I so ardently desired to know? Had she no trust in my good sense or honor? Why would she not believe me when I assured her, so solemnly, that I would not divulge one syllable of what she told me to any mortal breathing.

There was a coldness, it seemed to me, beyond her years, in her smiling melancholy persistent refusal to afford me the least ray of light.

I cannot say we quarreled upon this point, for she would not quarrel upon any. It was, of course, very unfair of me to press her, very ill-bred, but I really could not help it; and I might just as well have let it alone.

What she did tell me amounted, in my unconscionable estimation--to nothing.

It was all summed up in three very vague disclosures:

First--Her name was Carmilla.

Second--Her family was very ancient and noble.

Third--Her home lay in the direction of the west.

She would not tell me the name of her family, nor their armorial bearings, nor the name of their estate, nor even that of the country they lived in.

You are not to suppose that I worried her incessantly on these subjects. I watched opportunity, and rather insinuated than urged my inquiries. Once or twice, indeed, I did attack her more directly. But no matter what my tactics, utter failure was invariably the result. Reproaches and caresses were all lost upon her. But I must add this, that her evasion was conducted with so pretty a melancholy and deprecation, with so many, and even passionate declarations of her liking for me, and trust in my honor, and with so many promises that I should at last know all, that I could not find it in my heart long to be offended with her.

She used to place her pretty arms about my neck, draw me to her, and laying her cheek to mine, murmur with her lips near my ear, "Dearest, your little heart is wounded; think me not cruel because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and weakness; if your dear heart is wounded, my wild heart bleeds with

yours. In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life, and you shall die--die, sweetly die--into mine. I cannot help it; as I draw near to you, you, in your turn, will draw near to others, and learn the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love; so, for a while, seek to know no more of me and mine, but trust me with all your loving spirit."

And when she had spoken such a rhapsody, she would press me more closely in her trembling embrace, and her lips in soft kisses gently glow upon my cheek.

Her agitations and her language were unintelligible to me.

From these foolish embraces, which were not of very frequent occurrence, I must allow, I used to wish to extricate myself; but my energies seemed to fail me. Her murmured words sounded like a lullaby in my ear, and soothed my resistance into a trance, from which I only seemed to recover myself when she withdrew her arms.

In these mysterious moods I did not like her. I experienced a strange tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable, ever and anon, mingled with a vague sense of fear and disgust. I had no distinct thoughts about her while such scenes lasted, but I was conscious of a love growing into adoration, and also of abhorrence. This I know is paradox, but I can make no other attempt to explain the feeling.

I now write, after an interval of more than ten years, with a trembling hand, with a confused and horrible recollection of certain occurrences and situations, in the ordeal through which I was unconsciously passing; though with a vivid and very sharp remembrance of the main current of my story.

But, I suspect, in all lives there are certain emotional scenes, those in which our passions have been most wildly and terribly roused, that are of all others the most vaguely and dimly remembered.

Sometimes after an hour of apathy, my strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure, renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration. It was like the ardor of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet over-powering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips traveled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, "You are mine, you *shall* be mine, you and I are one for ever." Then she had thrown herself back in her chair, with her small hands over her eyes, leaving me trembling.

"Are we related," I used to ask; "what can you mean by all this? I remind you perhaps of someone whom you love; but you must not, I hate it; I don't know you--I don't know myself when you look so and talk so."



She used to sigh at my vehemence, then turn away and drop my hand.

Respecting these very extraordinary manifestations I strove in vain to form any satisfactory theory--I could not refer them to affectation or trick. It was unmistakably the momentary breaking out of suppressed instinct and emotion. Was she, notwithstanding her mother's volunteered denial, subject to brief visitations of insanity; or was there here a disguise and a romance? I had read in old storybooks of such things. What if a boyish lover had found his way into the house, and sought to prosecute his suit in masquerade, with the assistance of a clever old adventuress. But there were many things against this hypothesis, highly interesting as it was to my vanity.

I could boast of no little attentions such as masculine gallantry delights to offer. Between these passionate moments there were long intervals of commonplace, of gaiety, of brooding melancholy, during which, except that I detected her eyes so full of melancholy fire, following me, at times I might have been as nothing to her. Except in these brief periods of mysterious excitement her ways were girlish; and there was always a languor about her, quite incompatible with a masculine system in a state of health.

In some respects her habits were odd. Perhaps not so singular in the opinion of a town lady like you, as they appeared to us rustic people.

She used to come down very late, generally not till one o'clock, she would then take a cup of chocolate, but eat nothing; we then went out for a walk, which was a mere saunter, and she seemed, almost immediately, exhausted, and either returned to the schloss or sat on one of the benches that were placed, here and there, among the trees. This was a bodily languor in which her mind did not sympathize. She was always an animated talker, and very intelligent.

She sometimes alluded for a moment to her own home, or mentioned an adventure or situation, or an early recollection, which indicated a people of strange manners, and described customs of which we knew nothing. I gathered from these chance hints that her native country was much more remote than I had at first fancied.

As we sat thus one afternoon under the trees a funeral passed us by. It was that of a pretty young girl, whom I had often seen, the daughter of one of the rangers of the forest. The poor man was walking behind the coffin of his darling; she was his only child, and he looked quite heartbroken.

Peasants walking two-and-two came behind, they were singing a funeral hymn.

I rose to mark my respect as they passed, and joined in the hymn they were very sweetly singing.

My companion shook me a little roughly, and I turned surprised.

She said brusquely, "Don't you perceive how discordant that is?"

"I think it very sweet, on the contrary," I answered, vexed at the interruption, and very uncomfortable, lest the people who composed the little procession should observe and resent what was passing.

I resumed, therefore, instantly, and was again interrupted. "You pierce my ears," said Carmilla, almost angrily, and stopping her ears with her tiny fingers. "Besides, how can you tell that your religion and mine are the same; your forms wound me, and I hate funerals. What a fuss! Why you must die--*everyone* must die; and all are happier when they do. Come home."

"My father has gone on with the clergyman to the churchyard. I thought you knew she was to be buried today."

"She? I don't trouble my head about peasants. I don't know who she is," answered Carmilla, with a flash from her fine eyes.

"She is the poor girl who fancied she saw a ghost a fortnight ago, and has been dying ever since, till yesterday, when she expired."

"Tell me nothing about ghosts. I shan't sleep tonight if you do."

"I hope there is no plague or fever coming; all this looks very like it," I continued. "The swineherd's young wife died only a week ago, and she thought something seized her by the throat as she lay in her bed, and nearly strangled her. Papa says such horrible fancies do accompany some forms of fever. She was quite well the day before. She sank afterwards, and died before a week."

"Well, *her* funeral is over, I hope, and *her* hymn sung; and our ears shan't be tortured with that discord and jargon. It has made me nervous. Sit down here, beside me; sit close; hold my hand; press it hard-hard-harder."

We had moved a little back, and had come to another seat.

She sat down. Her face underwent a change that alarmed and even terrified me for a moment. It darkened, and became horribly livid; her teeth and hands were clenched, and she frowned and compressed her lips, while she stared down upon the ground at her feet, and trembled all over with a continued shudder as irrepressible as ague. All her energies seemed strained to suppress a fit, with which she was then breathlessly tugging; and at length a low convulsive cry of suffering broke from her, and gradually the hysteria subsided. "There! That comes of strangling people with hymns!" she said at last. "Hold me, hold me still. It is passing away."

And so gradually it did; and perhaps to dissipate the somber impression which the spectacle had left upon me, she became unusually animated and chatty; and so we got home.

This was the first time I had seen her exhibit any definable symptoms of that delicacy of health which her mother had spoken of. It was the first time, also, I had seen her exhibit anything like temper.

Both passed away like a summer cloud; and never but once afterwards did I witness on her part a momentary sign of anger. I will tell you how it happened.

She and I were looking out of one of the long drawing room windows, when there entered the courtyard, over the drawbridge, a figure of a wanderer whom I knew very well. He used to visit the schloss generally twice a year.

It was the figure of a hunchback, with the sharp lean features that generally accompany deformity. He wore a pointed black beard, and he was smiling from ear to ear, showing his white fangs. He was dressed in buff, black, and scarlet, and crossed with more straps and belts than I could count, from which hung all manner of things. Behind, he carried a magic lantern, and two boxes, which I well knew, in one of which was a salamander, and in the other a mandrake. These monsters used to make my father laugh. They were compounded of parts of monkeys, parrots, squirrels, fish, and

hedgehogs, dried and stitched together with great neatness and startling effect. He had a fiddle, a box of conjuring apparatus, a pair of foils and masks attached to his belt, several other mysterious cases dangling about him, and a black staff with copper ferrules in his hand. His companion was a rough spare dog, that followed at his heels, but stopped short, suspiciously at the drawbridge, and in a little while began to howl dismally.

In the meantime, the mountebank, standing in the midst of the courtyard, raised his grotesque hat, and made us a very ceremonious bow, paying his compliments very volubly in execrable French, and German not much better.

Then, disengaging his fiddle, he began to scrape a lively air to which he sang with a merry discord, dancing with ludicrous airs and activity, that made me laugh, in spite of the dog's howling.

Then he advanced to the window with many smiles and salutations, and his hat in his left hand, his fiddle under his arm, and with a fluency that never took breath, he gabbled a long advertisement of all his accomplishments, and the resources of the various arts which he placed at our service, and the curiosities and entertainments which it was in his power, at our bidding, to display.

"Will your ladyships be pleased to buy an amulet against the oupire, which is going like

the wolf, I hear, through these woods," he said dropping his hat on the pavement. "They are dying of it right and left and here is a charm that never fails; only pinned to the pillow, and you may laugh in his face."

These charms consisted of oblong slips of vellum, with cabalistic ciphers and diagrams upon them.

Carmilla instantly purchased one, and so did I.

He was looking up, and we were smiling down upon him, amused; at least, I can answer for myself. His piercing black eye, as he looked up in our faces, seemed to detect something that fixed for a moment his curiosity,

In an instant he unrolled a leather case, full of all manner of odd little steel instruments.

"See here, my lady," he said, displaying it, and addressing me, "I profess, among other things less useful, the art of dentistry. Plague take the dog!" he interpolated. "Silence, beast! He howls so that your ladyships can scarcely hear a word. Your noble friend, the young lady at your right, has the sharpest tooth,--long, thin, pointed, like an awl, like a needle; ha, ha! With my sharp and long sight, as I look up, I have seen it distinctly; now if it happens to hurt the young lady, and I think it must, here am I, here are my file, my punch, my nippers; I will make it round and blunt, if her ladyship pleases; no longer the tooth of a fish, but of a beautiful young lady as she is. Hey? Is the

young lady displeased? Have I been too bold? Have I offended her?"

The young lady, indeed, looked very angry as she drew back from the window.

"How dares that mountebank insult us so? Where is your father? I shall demand redress from him. My father would have had the wretch tied up to the pump, and flogged with a cart whip, and burnt to the bones with the cattle brand!"

She retired from the window a step or two, and sat down, and had hardly lost sight of the offender, when her wrath subsided as suddenly as it had risen, and she gradually recovered her usual tone, and seemed to forget the little hunchback and his follies.

My father was out of spirits that evening. On coming in he told us that there had been another case very similar to the two fatal ones which had lately occurred. The sister of a young peasant on his estate, only a mile away, was very ill, had been, as she described it, attacked very nearly in the same way, and was now slowly but steadily sinking.

"All this," said my father, "is strictly referable to natural causes. These poor people infect one another with their superstitions, and so repeat in imagination the images of terror that have infested their neighbors."

"But that very circumstance frightens one horribly," said Carmilla.



"How so?" inquired my father.

"I am so afraid of fancying I see such things; I think it would be as bad as reality."

"We are in God's hands: nothing can happen without his permission, and all will end well for those who love him. He is our faithful creator; He has made us all, and will take care of us."

"Creator! *Nature!*" said the young lady in answer to my gentle father. "And this disease that invades the country is natural. Nature. All things proceed from Nature--don't they? All things in the heaven, in the earth, and under the earth, act and live as Nature ordains? I think so."

"The doctor said he would come here today," said my father, after a silence. "I want to know what he thinks about it, and what he thinks we had better do."

"Doctors never did me any good," said Carmilla.

"Then you have been ill?" I asked.

"More ill than ever you were," she answered.

"Long ago?"

"Yes, a long time. I suffered from this very illness; but I forget all but my pain and weakness, and they were not so bad as are suffered in other diseases."

"You were very young then?"

"I dare say, let us talk no more of it. You would not wound a friend?"

She looked languidly in my eyes, and passed her arm round my waist lovingly, and led me out of the room. My father was busy over some papers near the window.

"Why does your papa like to frighten us?" said the pretty girl with a sigh and a little shudder.

"He doesn't, dear Carmilla, it is the very furthest thing from his mind."

"Are you afraid, dearest?"

"I should be very much if I fancied there was any real danger of my being attacked as those poor people were."

"You are afraid to die?"

"Yes, every one is."

"But to die as lovers may--to die together, so that they may live together.

Girls are caterpillars while they live in the world, to be finally butterflies when the summer comes; but in the meantime there are grubs and larvae, don't you see--each with their peculiar propensities, necessities and structure. So says Monsieur Buffon, in his big book, in the next room."

Later in the day the doctor came, and was closeted with papa for some time.

He was a skilful man, of sixty and upwards, he wore powder, and shaved his pale face as smooth as a pumpkin. He and papa emerged from the room together, and I heard papa laugh, and say as they came out:

"Well, I do wonder at a wise man like you. What do you say to hippogriffs and dragons?"

The doctor was smiling, and made answer, shaking his head--

"Nevertheless life and death are mysterious states, and we know little of the resources of either."

And so they walked on, and I heard no more. I did not then know what the doctor had been broaching, but I think I guess it now.

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# V

## **A Wonderful Likeness**

This evening there arrived from Gratz the grave, dark-faced son of the picture cleaner, with a horse and cart laden with two large packing cases, having many pictures in each. It was a journey of ten leagues, and whenever a messenger arrived at the schloss from our little capital of Gratz, we used to crowd about him in the hall, to hear the news.

This arrival created in our secluded quarters quite a sensation. The cases remained in the hall, and the messenger was taken charge of by the servants till he had eaten his supper. Then with assistants, and armed with hammer, ripping chisel, and turnscrew, he met us in the hall, where we had assembled to witness the unpacking of the cases.

Carmilla sat looking listlessly on, while one after the other the old pictures, nearly all portraits, which had undergone the process of renovation, were brought to light. My mother was of an old Hungarian family, and most of these pictures, which were about to be restored to their places, had come to us through her.

My father had a list in his hand, from which he read, as the artist rummaged out the corresponding numbers. I don't know that the pictures were very good, but they were, undoubtedly, very old, and some of them very curious also. They had, for the most part, the merit of being now seen by me, I may say, for the first time; for the smoke and dust of time had all but obliterated them.

"There is a picture that I have not seen yet," said my father. "In one corner, at the top of it, is the name, as well as I could read, 'Marcia Karnstein,' and the date '1698'; and I am curious to see how it has turned out."

I remembered it; it was a small picture, about a foot and a half high, and nearly square, without a frame; but it was so blackened by age that I could not make it out.

The artist now produced it, with evident pride. It was quite beautiful; it was startling; it seemed to live. It was the effigy of Carmilla!

"Carmilla, dear, here is an absolute miracle. Here you are, living, smiling, ready to speak, in this picture. Isn't it beautiful, Papa? And see, even the little mole on her throat."

My father laughed, and said "Certainly it is a wonderful likeness," but he looked away, and to my surprise seemed but little struck by it, and went on talking to the picture cleaner, who was also something of an artist, and discoursed with intelligence about the portraits or other

works, which his art had just brought into light and color, while I was more and more lost in wonder the more I looked at the picture.

"Will you let me hang this picture in my room, papa?" I asked.

"Certainly, dear," said he, smiling, "I'm very glad you think it so like.

It must be prettier even than I thought it, if it is."

The young lady did not acknowledge this pretty speech, did not seem to hear it. She was leaning back in her seat, her fine eyes under their long lashes gazing on me in contemplation, and she smiled in a kind of rapture.

"And now you can read quite plainly the name that is written in the corner.

It is not Marcia; it looks as if it was done in gold. The name is Mircalla, Countess Karnstein, and this is a little coronet over and underneath A.D.

1698. I am descended from the Karnsteins; that is, mamma was."

"Ah!" said the lady, languidly, "so am I, I think, a very long descent, very ancient. Are there any Karnsteins living now?"

"None who bear the name, I believe. The family were ruined, I believe, in some civil

wars, long ago, but the ruins of the castle are only about three miles away."

"How interesting!" she said, languidly. "But see what beautiful moonlight!" She glanced through the hall door, which stood a little open. "Suppose you take a little ramble round the court, and look down at the road and river."

"It is so like the night you came to us," I said.

She sighed; smiling.

She rose, and each with her arm about the other's waist, we walked out upon the pavement.

In silence, slowly we walked down to the drawbridge, where the beautiful landscape opened before us.

"And so you were thinking of the night I came here?" she almost whispered.

"Are you glad I came?"

"Delighted, dear Carmilla," I answered.

"And you asked for the picture you think like me, to hang in your room," she murmured with a sigh, as she drew her arm closer about my waist, and let her pretty head sink upon my shoulder. "How romantic you are, Carmilla," I said. "Whenever you tell me your story, it will be made up chiefly of some one great romance."

She kissed me silently.

"I am sure, Carmilla, you have been in love; that there is, at this moment, an affair of the heart going on."

"I have been in love with no one, and never shall," she whispered, "unless it should be with you."

How beautiful she looked in the moonlight!

Shy and strange was the look with which she quickly hid her face in my neck and hair, with tumultuous sighs, that seemed almost to sob, and pressed in mine a hand that trembled.

Her soft cheek was glowing against mine. "Darling, darling," she murmured, "I live in you; and you would die for me, I love you so."

I started from her.

She was gazing on me with eyes from which all fire, all meaning had flown, and a face colorless and apathetic.

"Is there a chill in the air, dear?" she said drowsily. "I almost shiver; have I been dreaming? Let us come in. Come; come; come in."

"You look ill, Carmilla; a little faint. You certainly must take some wine," I said.

"Yes. I will. I'm better now. I shall be quite well in a few minutes. Yes, do give me a little wine,"



answered Carmilla, as we approached the door.

"Let us look again for a moment; it is the last time, perhaps, I shall see the moonlight with you."

"How do you feel now, dear Carmilla? Are you really better?" I asked.

I was beginning to take alarm, lest she should have been stricken with the strange epidemic that they said had invaded the country about us.

"Papa would be grieved beyond measure," I added, "if he thought you were ever so little ill, without immediately letting us know. We have a very skilful doctor near us, the physician who was with papa today."

"I'm sure he is. I know how kind you all are; but, dear child, I am quite well again. There is nothing ever wrong with me, but a little weakness.

People say I am languid; I am incapable of exertion; I can scarcely walk as far as a child of three years old: and every now and then the little strength I have falters, and I become as you have just seen me. But after all I am very easily set up again; in a moment I am perfectly myself. See how I have recovered."

So, indeed, she had; and she and I talked a great deal, and very animated she was; and the remainder of that evening passed without any recurrence of what I called her

infatuations. I mean her crazy talk and looks, which embarrassed, and even frightened me.

But there occurred that night an event which gave my thoughts quite a new turn, and seemed to startle even Carmilla's languid nature into momentary energy.

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## **VI**

### **A Very Strange Agony**

When we got into the drawing room, and had sat down to our coffee and chocolate, although Carmilla did not take any, she seemed quite herself again, and Madame, and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, joined us, and made a little card party, in the course of which papa came in for what he called his "dish of tea."

When the game was over he sat down beside Carmilla on the sofa, and asked her, a little anxiously, whether she had heard from her mother since her arrival.

She answered "No."

He then asked whether she knew where a letter would reach her at present.

"I cannot tell," she answered ambiguously, "but I have been thinking of leaving you; you have been already too hospitable and too kind to me. I have given you an infinity of trouble, and I should wish to take a carriage tomorrow, and post in pursuit of her; I know where I shall ultimately find her, although I dare not yet tell you."

"But you must not dream of any such thing," exclaimed my father, to my great relief. "We can't afford to lose you so, and I won't consent to your leaving us, except under the care of your mother, who was so good as to consent to your remaining with us till she should herself return. I should be quite happy if I knew that you heard from her: but this evening the accounts of the progress of the mysterious disease that has invaded our neighborhood, grow even more alarming; and my beautiful guest, I do feel the responsibility, unaided by advice from your mother, very much. But I shall do my best; and one thing is certain, that you must not think of leaving us without her distinct direction to that effect. We should suffer too much in parting from you to consent to it easily."

"Thank you, sir, a thousand times for your hospitality," she answered, smiling bashfully. "You have all been too kind to me; I have seldom been so happy in all my life before, as in your beautiful chateau, under your care, and in the society of your dear daughter."

So he gallantly, in his old-fashioned way, kissed her hand, smiling and pleased at her little speech.

I accompanied Carmilla as usual to her room, and sat and chatted with her while she was preparing for bed.

"Do you think," I said at length, "that you will ever confide fully in me?"

She turned round smiling, but made no answer, only continued to smile on me.

"You won't answer that?" I said. "You can't answer pleasantly; I ought not to have asked you."

"You were quite right to ask me that, or anything. You do not know how dear you are to me, or you could not think any confidence too great to look for.

But I am under vows, no nun half so awfully, and I dare not tell my story yet, even to you. The time is very near when you shall know everything. You will think me cruel, very selfish, but love is always selfish; the more ardent the more selfish. How jealous I am you cannot know. You must come with me, loving me, to death; or else hate me and still come with me. and *hating* me through death and after. There is no such word as indifference in my apathetic nature."

"Now, Carmilla, you are going to talk your wild nonsense again," I said hastily.

"Not I, silly little fool as I am, and full of whims and fancies; for your sake I'll talk like a sage. Were you ever at a ball?"

"No; how you do run on. What is it like? How charming it must be."

"I almost forget, it is years ago."

I laughed.

"You are not so old. Your first ball can hardly be forgotten yet."

"I remember everything about it--with an effort. I see it all, as divers see what is going on above them, through a medium, dense, rippling, but transparent. There occurred that night what has confused the picture, and made its colours faint. I was all but assassinated in my bed, wounded here," she touched her breast, "and never was the same since."

"Were you near dying?"

"Yes, very--a cruel love--strange love, that would have taken my life. Love will have its sacrifices. No sacrifice without blood. Let us go to sleep now; I feel so lazy. How can I get up just now and lock my door?"

She was lying with her tiny hands buried in her rich wavy hair, under her cheek, her little head upon the pillow, and her glittering eyes followed me wherever I moved, with a kind of shy smile that I could not decipher.

I bid her good night, and crept from the room with an uncomfortable sensation.

I often wondered whether our pretty guest ever said her prayers. I certainly had never seen her upon her knees. In the morning she never came down until long after our family prayers were over, and at night she never left the drawing room to attend our brief evening prayers in the hall.

If it had not been that it had casually come out in one of our careless talks that she had been baptised, I should have doubted her being a Christian. Religion was a subject on which I had never heard her speak a word. If I had known the world better, this particular neglect or antipathy would not have so much surprised me.

The precautions of nervous people are infectious, and persons of a like temperament are pretty sure, after a time, to imitate them. I had adopted Carmilla's habit of locking her bedroom door, having taken into my head all her whimsical alarms about midnight invaders and prowling assassins. I had also adopted her precaution of making a brief search through her room, to satisfy herself that no lurking assassin or robber was "ensconced."

These wise measures taken, I got into my bed and fell asleep. A light was burning in my room. This was an old habit, of very early date, and which nothing could have tempted me to dispense with.

Thus fortified I might take my rest in peace. But dreams come through stone walls, light up dark rooms, or darken light ones, and their persons make their exits and their entrances as they please, and laugh at locksmiths.

I had a dream that night that was the beginning of a very strange agony.

I cannot call it a nightmare, for I was quite conscious of being asleep.

But I was equally conscious of being in my room, and lying in bed, precisely as I actually was. I saw, or fancied I saw, the room and its furniture just as I had seen it last, except that it was very dark, and I saw something moving round the foot of the bed, which at first I could not accurately distinguish. But I soon saw that it was a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat. It appeared to me about four or five feet long for it measured fully the length of the hearthrug as it passed over it; and it continued to-ing and fro-ing with the lithe, sinister restlessness of a beast in a cage. I could not cry out, although as you may suppose, I was terrified. Its pace was growing faster, and the room rapidly darker and darker, and at length so dark that I could no longer see anything of it but its eyes. I felt it spring lightly on the bed. The two broad eyes approached my face, and suddenly I felt a stinging pain as if two large needles darted, an inch or two apart, deep into my breast. I waked with a scream. The room was lighted by the candle that burnt there all through the night, and I saw a female figure standing at the foot of the bed, a little at the right side. It was in a dark loose dress, and its hair was down and covered its shoulders. A block of stone could not have been more still. There was not the slightest stir of respiration. As I stared at it, the figure appeared to have changed its place, and was now nearer the



door; then, close to it, the door opened, and it passed out.

I was now relieved, and able to breathe and move. My first thought was that Carmilla had been playing me a trick, and that I had forgotten to secure my door. I hastened to it, and found it locked as usual on the inside. I was afraid to open it--I was horrified. I sprang into my bed and covered my head up in the bedclothes, and lay there more dead than alive till morning.

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## **VII**

### **Descending**

It would be vain my attempting to tell you the horror with which, even now, I recall the occurrence of that night. It was no such transitory terror as a dream leaves behind it. It seemed to deepen by time, and communicated itself to the room and the very furniture that had encompassed the apparition.

I could not bear next day to be alone for a moment. I should have told papa, but for two opposite reasons. At one time I thought he would laugh at my story, and I could not bear its being treated as a jest; and at another I thought he might fancy that I had been attacked by the mysterious complaint which had invaded our neighborhood. I had myself no misgiving of the kind, and as he had been rather an invalid for some time, I was afraid of alarming him.

I was comfortable enough with my good-natured companions, Madame Perrodon, and the vivacious Mademoiselle Lafontaine. They both perceived that I was out of spirits and nervous, and at length I told them what lay so heavy at my heart.

Mademoiselle laughed, but I fancied that Madame Perrodon looked anxious.

"By-the-by," said Mademoiselle, laughing, "the long lime tree walk, behind Carmilla's bedroom window, is haunted!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Madame, who probably thought the theme rather inopportune, "and who tells that story, my dear?"

"Martin says that he came up twice, when the old yard gate was being repaired, before sunrise, and twice saw the same female figure walking down the lime tree avenue."

"So he well might, as long as there are cows to milk in the river fields," said Madame.

"I daresay; but Martin chooses to be frightened, and never did I see fool more frightened."

"You must not say a word about it to Carmilla, because she can see down that walk from her room window," I interposed, "and she is, if possible, a greater coward than I."

Carmilla came down rather later than usual that day.

"I was so frightened last night," she said, so soon as we were together, "and I am sure I should have seen something dreadful if it had not been for that charm I bought from the poor little hunchback whom I called such hard names. I had a dream of something black

coming round my bed, and I awoke in a perfect horror, and I really thought, for some seconds, I saw a dark figure near the chimneypiece, but I felt under my pillow for my charm, and the moment my fingers touched it, the figure disappeared, and I felt quite certain, only that I had it by me, that something frightful would have made its appearance, and, perhaps, throttled me, as it did those poor people we heard of.

"Well, listen to me," I began, and recounted my adventure, at the recital of which she appeared horrified.

"And had you the charm near you?" she asked, earnestly.

"No, I had dropped it into a china vase in the drawing room, but I shall certainly take it with me tonight, as you have so much faith in it."

At this distance of time I cannot tell you, or even understand, how I overcame my horror so effectually as to lie alone in my room that night. I remember distinctly that I pinned the charm to my pillow. I fell asleep almost immediately, and slept even more soundly than usual all night.

Next night I passed as well. My sleep was delightfully deep and dreamless.

But I wakened with a sense of lassitude and melancholy, which, however, did not exceed a degree that was almost luxurious.

"Well, I told you so," said Carmilla, when I described my quiet sleep, "I had such delightful sleep myself last night; I pinned the charm to the breast of my nightdress. It was too far away the night before. I am quite sure it was all fancy, except the dreams. I used to think that evil spirits made dreams, but our doctor told me it is no such thing. Only a fever passing by, or some other malady, as they often do, he said, knocks at the door, and not being able to get in, passes on, with that alarm."

"And what do you think the charm is?" said I.

"It has been fumigated or immersed in some drug, and is an antidote against the malaria," she answered.

"Then it acts only on the body?"

"Certainly; you don't suppose that evil spirits are frightened by bits of ribbon, or the perfumes of a druggist's shop? No, these complaints, wandering in the air, begin by trying the nerves, and so infect the brain, but before they can seize upon you, the antidote repels them. That I am sure is what the charm has done for us. It is nothing magical, it is simply natural.

I should have been happier if I could have quite agreed with Carmilla, but I did my best, and the impression was a little losing its force.

For some nights I slept profoundly; but still every morning I felt the same lassitude, and a

languor weighed upon me all day. I felt myself a changed girl. A strange melancholy was stealing over me, a melancholy that I would not have interrupted. Dim thoughts of death began to open, and an idea that I was slowly sinking took gentle, and, somehow, not unwelcome, possession of me. If it was sad, the tone of mind which this induced was also sweet.

Whatever it might be, my soul acquiesced in it.

I would not admit that I was ill, I would not consent to tell my papa, or to have the doctor sent for.

Carmilla became more devoted to me than ever, and her strange paroxysms of languid adoration more frequent. She used to gloat on me with increasing ardor the more my strength and spirits waned. This always shocked me like a momentary glare of insanity.

Without knowing it, I was now in a pretty advanced stage of the strangest illness under which mortal ever suffered. There was an unaccountable fascination in its earlier symptoms that more than reconciled me to the incapacitating effect of that stage of the malady. This fascination increased for a time, until it reached a certain point, when gradually a sense of the horrible mingled itself with it, deepening, as you shall hear, until it discolored and perverted the whole state of my life.

The first change I experienced was rather agreeable. It was very near the turning point from which began the descent of Avernus.

Certain vague and strange sensations visited me in my sleep. The prevailing one was of that pleasant, peculiar cold thrill which we feel in bathing, when we move against the current of a river. This was soon accompanied by dreams that seemed interminable, and were so vague that I could never recollect their scenery and persons, or any one connected portion of their action. But they left an awful impression, and a sense of exhaustion, as if I had passed through a long period of great mental exertion and danger.

After all these dreams there remained on waking a remembrance of having been in a place very nearly dark, and of having spoken to people whom I could not see; and especially of one clear voice, of a female's, very deep, that spoke as if at a distance, slowly, and producing always the same sensation of indescribable solemnity and fear. Sometimes there came a sensation as if a hand was drawn softly along my cheek and neck. Sometimes it was as if warm lips kissed me, and longer and longer and more lovingly as they reached my throat, but there the caress fixed itself. My heart beat faster, my breathing rose and fell rapidly and full drawn; a sobbing, that rose into a sense of strangulation, supervened, and turned into a dreadful convulsion, in which my senses left me and I became unconscious.

It was now three weeks since the commencement of this unaccountable state.

My sufferings had, during the last week, told upon my appearance. I had grown pale, my eyes were dilated and darkened underneath, and the languor which I had long felt began to display itself in my countenance.

My father asked me often whether I was ill; but, with an obstinacy which now seems to me unaccountable, I persisted in assuring him that I was quite well.

In a sense this was true. I had no pain, I could complain of no bodily derangement. My complaint seemed to be one of the imagination, or the nerves, and, horrible as my sufferings were, I kept them, with a morbid reserve, very nearly to myself.

It could not be that terrible complaint which the peasants called the oupire, for I had now been suffering for three weeks, and they were seldom ill for much more than three days, when death put an end to their miseries.

Carmilla complained of dreams and feverish sensations, but by no means of so alarming a kind as mine. I say that mine were extremely alarming. Had I been capable of comprehending my condition, I would have invoked aid and advice on my knees. The narcotic of an unsuspected influence was acting upon me, and my perceptions were benumbed.



I am going to tell you now of a dream that led immediately to an odd discovery.

One night, instead of the voice I was accustomed to hear in the dark, I heard one, sweet and tender, and at the same time terrible, which said,

"Your mother warns you to beware of the assassin." At the same time a light unexpectedly sprang up, and I saw Carmilla, standing, near the foot of my bed, in her white nightdress, bathed, from her chin to her feet, in one great stain of blood.

I wakened with a shriek, possessed with the one idea that Carmilla was being murdered. I remember springing from my bed, and my next recollection is that of standing on the lobby, crying for help.

Madame and Mademoiselle came scurrying out of their rooms in alarm; a lamp burned always on the lobby, and seeing me, they soon learned the cause of my terror.

I insisted on our knocking at Carmilla's door. Our knocking was unanswered.

It soon became a pounding and an uproar. We shrieked her name, but all was vain.

We all grew frightened, for the door was locked. We hurried back, in panic, to my room. There we rang the bell long and furiously. If my father's room had been at that side of the house, we would have called him up at once to

our aid. But, alas! he was quite out of hearing, and to reach him involved an excursion for which we none of us had courage.

Servants, however, soon came running up the stairs; I had got on my dressing gown and slippers meanwhile, and my companions were already similarly furnished. Recognizing the voices of the servants on the lobby, we sallied out together; and having renewed, as fruitlessly, our summons at Carmilla's door, I ordered the men to force the lock. They did so, and we stood, holding our lights aloft, in the doorway, and so stared into the room.

We called her by name; but there was still no reply. We looked round the room. Everything was undisturbed. It was exactly in the state in which I had left it on bidding her good night. But Carmilla was gone.

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## VIII

### Search

At sight of the room, perfectly undisturbed except for our violent entrance, we began to cool a little, and soon recovered our senses sufficiently to dismiss the men. It had struck Mademoiselle that possibly Carmilla had been wakened by the uproar at her door, and in her first panic had jumped from her bed, and hid herself in a press, or behind a curtain, from which she could not, of course, emerge until the majordomo and his myrmidons had withdrawn. We now recommenced our search, and began to call her name again.

It was all to no purpose. Our perplexity and agitation increased. We examined the windows, but they were secured. I implored of Carmilla, if she had concealed herself, to play this cruel trick no longer--to come out and to end our anxieties. It was all useless. I was by this time convinced that she was not in the room, nor in the dressing room, the door of which was still locked on this side. She could not have passed it. I was utterly puzzled. Had Carmilla discovered one of those secret passages which the old housekeeper said were known to exist in the schloss, although the tradition of their exact situation had been lost? A little time

would, no doubt, explain all--utterly perplexed as, for the present, we were.

It was past four o'clock, and I preferred passing the remaining hours of darkness in Madame's room. Daylight brought no solution of the difficulty.

The whole household, with my father at its head, was in a state of agitation next morning. Every part of the chateau was searched. The grounds were explored. No trace of the missing lady could be discovered. The stream was about to be dragged; my father was in distraction; what a tale to have to tell the poor girl's mother on her return. I, too, was almost beside myself, though my grief was quite of a different kind.

The morning was passed in alarm and excitement. It was now one o'clock, and still no tidings. I ran up to Carmilla's room, and found her standing at her dressing table. I was astounded. I could not believe my eyes. She beckoned me to her with her pretty finger, in silence. Her face expressed extreme fear.

I ran to her in an ecstasy of joy; I kissed and embraced her again and again. I ran to the bell and rang it vehemently, to bring others to the spot who might at once relieve my father's anxiety.

"Dear Carmilla, what has become of you all this time? We have been in agonies of anxiety

about you," I exclaimed. "Where have you been? How did you come back?"

"Last night has been a night of wonders," she said.

"For mercy's sake, explain all you can."

"It was past two last night," she said, "when I went to sleep as usual in my bed, with my doors locked, that of the dressing room, and that opening upon the gallery. My sleep was uninterrupted, and, so far as I know, dreamless; but I woke just now on the sofa in the dressing room there, and I found the door between the rooms open, and the other door forced. How could all this have happened without my being wakened? It must have been accompanied with a great deal of noise, and I am particularly easily wakened; and how could I have been carried out of my bed without my sleep having been interrupted, I whom the slightest stir startles?"

By this time, Madame, Mademoiselle, my father, and a number of the servants were in the room. Carmilla was, of course, overwhelmed with inquiries, congratulations, and welcomes. She had but one story to tell, and seemed the least able of all the party to suggest any way of accounting for what had happened.

My father took a turn up and down the room, thinking. I saw Carmilla's eye follow him for a moment with a sly, dark glance.

When my father had sent the servants away, Mademoiselle having gone in search of a little bottle of valerian and salvolatile, and there being no one now in the room with Carmilla, except my father, Madame, and myself, he came to her thoughtfully, took her hand very kindly, led her to the sofa, and sat down beside her.

"Will you forgive me, my dear, if I risk a conjecture, and ask a question?"

"Who can have a better right?" she said. "Ask what you please, and I will tell you everything. But my story is simply one of bewilderment and darkness. I know absolutely nothing. Put any question you please, but you know, of course, the limitations mamma has placed me under."

"Perfectly, my dear child. I need not approach the topics on which she desires our silence. Now, the marvel of last night consists in your having been removed from your bed and your room, without being wakened, and this removal having occurred apparently while the windows were still secured, and the two doors locked upon the inside. I will tell you my theory and ask you a question."

Carmilla was leaning on her hand dejectedly; Madame and I were listening breathlessly.

"Now, my question is this. Have you ever been suspected of walking in your sleep?"

"Never, since I was very young indeed."

"But you did walk in your sleep when you were young?"

"Yes; I know I did. I have been told so often by my old nurse."

My father smiled and nodded.

"Well, what has happened is this. You got up in your sleep, unlocked the door, not leaving the key, as usual, in the lock, but taking it out and locking it on the outside; you again took the key out, and carried it away with you to some one of the five-and-twenty rooms on this floor, or perhaps upstairs or downstairs. There are so many rooms and closets, so much heavy furniture, and such accumulations of lumber, that it would require a week to search this old house thoroughly. Do you see, now, what I mean?"

"I do, but not all," she answered.

"And how, papa, do you account for her finding herself on the sofa in the dressing room, which we had searched so carefully?"

"She came there after you had searched it, still in her sleep, and at last awoke spontaneously, and was as much surprised to find herself where she was as any one else. I wish all mysteries were as easily and innocently explained as yours, Carmilla," he said, laughing. "And so we may congratulate ourselves on the certainty that the most natural explanation of the occurrence is one that involves no drugging, no tampering with

locks, no burglars, or poisoners, or witches-- nothing that need alarm Carmilla, or anyone else, for our safety."

Carmilla was looking charmingly. Nothing could be more beautiful than her tints. Her beauty was, I think, enhanced by that graceful languor that was peculiar to her. I think my father was silently contrasting her looks with mine, for he said:

"I wish my poor Laura was looking more like herself"; and he sighed.

So our alarms were happily ended, and Carmilla restored to her friends.

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# IX

## The Doctor

As Carmilla would not hear of an attendant sleeping in her room, my father arranged that a servant should sleep outside her door, so that she would not attempt to make another such excursion without being arrested at her own door.

That night passed quietly; and next morning early, the doctor, whom my father had sent for without telling me a word about it, arrived to see me.

Madame accompanied me to the library; and there the grave little doctor, with white hair and spectacles, whom I mentioned before, was waiting to receive me.

I told him my story, and as I proceeded he grew graver and graver.

We were standing, he and I, in the recess of one of the windows, facing one another. When my statement was over, he leaned with his shoulders against the wall, and with his eyes fixed on me earnestly, with an interest in which was a dash of horror.

After a minute's reflection, he asked Madame if he could see my father.

He was sent for accordingly, and as he entered, smiling, he said:

"I dare say, doctor, you are going to tell me that I am an old fool for having brought you here; I hope I am."

But his smile faded into shadow as the doctor, with a very grave face, beckoned him to him.

He and the doctor talked for some time in the same recess where I had just conferred with the physician. It seemed an earnest and argumentative conversation. The room is very large, and I and Madame stood together, burning with curiosity, at the farther end. Not a word could we hear, however, for they spoke in a very low tone, and the deep recess of the window quite concealed the doctor from view, and very nearly my father, whose foot, arm, and shoulder only could we see; and the voices were, I suppose, all the less audible for the sort of closet which the thick wall and window formed.

After a time my father's face looked into the room; it was pale, thoughtful, and, I fancied, agitated.

"Laura, dear, come here for a moment. Madame, we shan't trouble you, the doctor says, at present."

Accordingly I approached, for the first time a little alarmed; for, although I felt very weak, I did not feel ill; and strength, one always fancies, is a thing that may be picked up when we please.

My father held out his hand to me, as I drew near, but he was looking at the doctor, and he said:

"It certainly is very odd; I don't understand it quite. Laura, come here, dear; now attend to Doctor Spielsberg, and recollect yourself."

"You mentioned a sensation like that of two needles piercing the skin, somewhere about your neck, on the night when you experienced your first horrible dream. Is there still any soreness?"

"None at all," I answered.

"Can you indicate with your finger about the point at which you think this occurred?"

"Very little below my throat--here," I answered.

I wore a morning dress, which covered the place I pointed to.

"Now you can satisfy yourself," said the doctor. "You won't mind your papa's lowering your dress a very little. It is necessary, to detect a symptom of the complaint under which you have been suffering."

I acquiesced. It was only an inch or two below the edge of my collar.

"God bless me!--so it is," exclaimed my father, growing pale.

"You see it now with your own eyes," said the doctor, with a gloomy triumph.

"What is it?" I exclaimed, beginning to be frightened.

"Nothing, my dear young lady, but a small blue spot, about the size of the tip of your little finger; and now," he continued, turning to papa, "the question is what is best to be done?"

Is there any danger?" I urged, in great trepidation.

"I trust not, my dear," answered the doctor. "I don't see why you should not recover. I don't see why you should not begin immediately to get better. That is the point at which the sense of strangulation begins?"

"Yes," I answered.

"And--recollect as well as you can--the same point was a kind of center of that thrill which you described just now, like the current of a cold stream running against you?"

"It may have been; I think it was."

"Ay, you see?" he added, turning to my father.  
"Shall I say a word to Madame?"

"Certainly," said my father.

He called Madame to him, and said:

"I find my young friend here far from well. It won't be of any great consequence, I hope; but it will be necessary that some steps be taken, which I will explain by-and-by; but in the meantime, Madame, you will be so good as not to let Miss Laura be alone for one moment. That is the only direction I need give for the present. It is indispensable."

"We may rely upon your kindness, Madame, I know," added my father.

Madame satisfied him eagerly.

"And you, dear Laura, I know you will observe the doctor's direction."

"I shall have to ask your opinion upon another patient, whose symptoms slightly resemble those of my daughter, that have just been detailed to you--very much milder in degree, but I believe quite of the same sort. She is a young lady--our guest; but as you say you will be passing this way again this evening, you can't do better than take your supper here, and you can then see her. She does not come down till the afternoon."

"I thank you," said the doctor. "I shall be with you, then, at about seven this evening."

And then they repeated their directions to me and to Madame, and with this parting charge my father left us, and walked out with the doctor; and I saw them pacing together up and down between the road and the moat, on the grassy platform in front of the castle, evidently absorbed in earnest conversation.

The doctor did not return. I saw him mount his horse there, take his leave, and ride away eastward through the forest.

Nearly at the same time I saw the man arrive from Dranfield with the letters, and dismount and hand the bag to my father.

In the meantime, Madame and I were both busy, lost in conjecture as to the reasons of the singular and earnest direction which the doctor and my father had concurred in imposing. Madame, as she afterwards told me, was afraid the doctor apprehended a sudden seizure, and that, without prompt assistance, I might either lose my life in a fit, or at least be seriously hurt.

The interpretation did not strike me; and I fancied, perhaps luckily for my nerves, that the arrangement was prescribed simply to secure a companion, who would prevent my taking too much exercise, or eating unripe fruit, or doing any of the fifty foolish things to which young people are supposed to be prone.

About half an hour after my father came in--he had a letter in his hand--and said:

"This letter had been delayed; it is from General Spielsdorf. He might have been here yesterday, he may not come till tomorrow or he may be here today."

He put the open letter into my hand; but he did not look pleased, as he used when a guest, especially one so much loved as the General, was coming.

On the contrary, he looked as if he wished him at the bottom of the Red Sea. There was plainly something on his mind which he did not choose to divulge.

"Papa, darling, will you tell me this?" said I, suddenly laying my hand on his arm, and looking, I am sure, imploringly in his face.

"Perhaps," he answered, smoothing my hair caressingly over my eyes.

"Does the doctor think me very ill?"

"No, dear; he thinks, if right steps are taken, you will be quite well again, at least, on the high road to a complete recovery, in a day or two," he answered, a little dryly. "I wish our good friend, the General, had chosen any other time; that is, I wish you had been perfectly well to receive him."

"But do tell me, papa," I insisted, "what does he think is the matter with me?"

"Nothing; you must not plague me with questions," he answered, with more irritation

than I ever remember him to have displayed before; and seeing that I looked wounded, I suppose, he kissed me, and added, "You shall know all about it in a day or two; that is, all that I know. In the meantime you are not to trouble your head about it."

He turned and left the room, but came back before I had done wondering and puzzling over the oddity of all this; it was merely to say that he was going to Karnstein, and had ordered the carriage to be ready at twelve, and that I and Madame should accompany him; he was going to see the priest who lived near those picturesque grounds, upon business, and as Carmilla had never seen them, she could follow, when she came down, with Mademoiselle, who would bring materials for what you call a picnic, which might be laid for us in the ruined castle.

At twelve o'clock, accordingly, I was ready, and not long after, my father, Madame and I set out upon our projected drive.

Passing the drawbridge we turn to the right, and follow the road over the steep Gothic bridge, westward, to reach the deserted village and ruined castle of Karnstein.

No sylvan drive can be fancied prettier. The ground breaks into gentle hills and hollows, all clothed with beautiful wood, totally destitute of the comparative formality which artificial planting and early culture and pruning impart.



The irregularities of the ground often lead the road out of its course, and cause it to wind beautifully round the sides of broken hollows and the steeper sides of the hills, among varieties of ground almost inexhaustible.

Turning one of these points, we suddenly encountered our old friend, the General, riding towards us, attended by a mounted servant. His portmanteaus were following in a hired wagon, such as we term a cart.

The General dismounted as we pulled up, and, after the usual greetings, was easily persuaded to accept the vacant seat in the carriage and send his horse on with his servant to the schloss.

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# X

## **Bereaved**

It was about ten months since we had last seen him: but that time had sufficed to make an alteration of years in his appearance. He had grown thinner; something of gloom and anxiety had taken the place of that cordial serenity which used to characterize his features. His dark blue eyes, always penetrating, now gleamed with a sterner light from under his shaggy grey eyebrows. It was not such a change as grief alone usually induces, and angrier passions seemed to have had their share in bringing it about.

We had not long resumed our drive, when the General began to talk, with his usual soldierly directness, of the bereavement, as he termed it, which he had sustained in the death of his beloved niece and ward; and he then broke out in a tone of intense bitterness and fury, inveighing against the "hellish arts" to which she had fallen a victim, and expressing, with more exasperation than piety, his wonder that Heaven should tolerate so monstrous an indulgence of the lusts and malignity of hell.

My father, who saw at once that something very extraordinary had befallen, asked him, if not too painful to him, to detail the

circumstances which he thought justified the strong terms in which he expressed himself.

"I should tell you all with pleasure," said the General, "but you would not believe me."

"Why should I not?" he asked.

"Because," he answered testily, "you believe in nothing but what consists with your own prejudices and illusions. I remember when I was like you, but I have learned better."

"Try me," said my father; "I am not such a dogmatist as you suppose.

Besides which, I very well know that you generally require proof for what you believe, and am, therefore, very strongly predisposed to respect your conclusions."

"You are right in supposing that I have not been led lightly into a belief in the marvelous--for what I have experienced is marvelous--and I have been forced by extraordinary evidence to credit that which ran counter, diametrically, to all my theories. I have been made the dupe of a preternatural conspiracy."

Notwithstanding his professions of confidence in the General's penetration, I saw my father, at this point, glance at the General, with, as I thought, a marked suspicion of his sanity.

The General did not see it, luckily. He was looking gloomily and curiously into the glades

and vistas of the woods that were opening before us.

"You are going to the Ruins of Karnstein?" he said. "Yes, it is a lucky coincidence; do you know I was going to ask you to bring me there to inspect them. I have a special object in exploring. There is a ruined chapel, ain't there, with a great many tombs of that extinct family?"

"So there are--highly interesting," said my father. "I hope you are thinking of claiming the title and estates?"

My father said this gaily, but the General did not recollect the laugh, or even the smile, which courtesy exacts for a friend's joke; on the contrary, he looked grave and even fierce, ruminating on a matter that stirred his anger and horror.

"Something very different," he said, gruffly. "I mean to unearth some of those fine people. I hope, by God's blessing, to accomplish a pious sacrilege here, which will relieve our earth of certain monsters, and enable honest people to sleep in their beds without being assailed by murderers. I have strange things to tell you, my dear friend, such as I myself would have scouted as incredible a few months since."

My father looked at him again, but this time not with a glance of suspicion--with an eye, rather, of keen intelligence and alarm.

"The house of Karnstein," he said, "has been long extinct: a hundred years at least. My dear wife was maternally descended from the Karnsteins. But the name and title have long ceased to exist. The castle is a ruin; the very village is deserted; it is fifty years since the smoke of a chimney was seen there; not a roof left."

"Quite true. I have heard a great deal about that since I last saw you; a great deal that will astonish you. But I had better relate everything in the order in which it occurred," said the General. "You saw my dear ward--my child, I may call her. No creature could have been more beautiful, and only three months ago none more blooming."

"Yes, poor thing! when I saw her last she certainly was quite lovely," said my father. "I was grieved and shocked more than I can tell you, my dear friend; I knew what a blow it was to you."

He took the General's hand, and they exchanged a kind pressure. Tears gathered in the old soldier's eyes. He did not seek to conceal them. He said:

"We have been very old friends; I knew you would feel for me, childless as I am. She had become an object of very near interest to me, and repaid my care by an affection that cheered my home and made my life happy. That is all gone. The years that remain to me on earth may not be very long; but by God's

mercy I hope to accomplish a service to mankind before I die, and to subserve the vengeance of Heaven upon the fiends who have murdered my poor child in the spring of her hopes and beauty!"

"You said, just now, that you intended relating everything as it occurred," said my father.

"Pray do; I assure you that it is not mere curiosity that prompts me."

By this time we had reached the point at which the Drunstall road, by which the General had come, diverges from the road which we were traveling to Karnstein.

"How far is it to the ruins?" inquired the General, looking anxiously forward.

"About half a league," answered my father.

"Pray let us hear the story you were so good as to promise."

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# XI

## The Story

With all my heart," said the General, with an effort; and after a short pause in which to arrange his subject, he commenced one of the strangest narratives I ever heard.

"My dear child was looking forward with great pleasure to the visit you had been so good as to arrange for her to your charming daughter." Here he made me a gallant but melancholy bow. "In the meantime we had an invitation to my old friend the Count Carlsfeld, whose schloss is about six leagues to the other side of Karnstein. It was to attend the series of fetes which, you remember, were given by him in honor of his illustrious visitor, the Grand Duke Charles."

"Yes; and very splendid, I believe, they were," said my father.

"Princely! But then his hospitalities are quite regal. He has Aladdin's lamp. The night from which my sorrow dates was devoted to a magnificent masquerade. The grounds were thrown open, the trees hung with colored lamps. There was such a display of fireworks as Paris itself had never witnessed. And such music--music, you know, is my weakness--

such ravishing music! The finest instrumental band, perhaps, in the world, and the finest singers who could be collected from all the great operas in Europe. As you wandered through these fantastically illuminated grounds, the moon-lighted chateau throwing a rosy light from its long rows of windows, you would suddenly hear these ravishing voices stealing from the silence of some grove, or rising from boats upon the lake. I felt myself, as I looked and listened, carried back into the romance and poetry of my early youth.

"When the fireworks were ended, and the ball beginning, we returned to the noble suite of rooms that were thrown open to the dancers. A masked ball, you know, is a beautiful sight; but so brilliant a spectacle of the kind I never saw before.

"It was a very aristocratic assembly. I was myself almost the only 'nobody' present.

"My dear child was looking quite beautiful. She wore no mask. Her excitement and delight added an unspeakable charm to her features, always lovely. I remarked a young lady, dressed magnificently, but wearing a mask, who appeared to me to be observing my ward with extraordinary interest. I had seen her, earlier in the evening, in the great hall, and again, for a few minutes, walking near us, on the terrace under the castle windows, similarly employed. A lady, also masked, richly and gravely dressed, and with a stately air, like a



person of rank, accompanied her as a chaperon.

Had the young lady not worn a mask, I could, of course, have been much more certain upon the question whether she was really watching my poor darling.

I am now well assured that she was.

"We were now in one of the salons. My poor dear child had been dancing, and was resting a little in one of the chairs near the door; I was standing near. The two ladies I have mentioned had approached and the younger took the chair next my ward; while her companion stood beside me, and for a little time addressed herself, in a low tone, to her charge.

"Availing herself of the privilege of her mask, she turned to me, and in the tone of an old friend, and calling me by my name, opened a conversation with me, which piqued my curiosity a good deal. She referred to many scenes where she had met me--at Court, and at distinguished houses. She alluded to little incidents which I had long ceased to think of, but which, I found, had only lain in abeyance in my memory, for they instantly started into life at her touch.

"I became more and more curious to ascertain who she was, every moment. She parried my attempts to discover very adroitly and pleasantly. The knowledge she showed of many passages in my life seemed to me all but

unaccountable; and she appeared to take a not unnatural pleasure in foiling my curiosity, and in seeing me flounder in my eager perplexity, from one conjecture to another.

"In the meantime the young lady, whom her mother called by the odd name of Millarca, when she once or twice addressed her, had, with the same ease and grace, got into conversation with my ward.

"She introduced herself by saying that her mother was a very old acquaintance of mine. She spoke of the agreeable audacity which a mask rendered practicable; she talked like a friend; she admired her dress, and insinuated very prettily her admiration of her beauty. She amused her with laughing criticisms upon the people who crowded the ballroom, and laughed at my poor child's fun. She was very witty and lively when she pleased, and after a time they had grown very good friends, and the young stranger lowered her mask, displaying a remarkably beautiful face. I had never seen it before, neither had my dear child. But though it was new to us, the features were so engaging, as well as lovely, that it was impossible not to feel the attraction powerfully. My poor girl did so. I never saw anyone more taken with another at first sight, unless, indeed, it was the stranger herself, who seemed quite to have lost her heart to her.

"In the meantime, availing myself of the license of a masquerade, I put not a few questions to the elder lady.

"You have puzzled me utterly,' I said, laughing. 'Is that not enough?

Won't you, now, consent to stand on equal terms, and do me the kindness to remove your mask?'

"Can any request be more unreasonable?' she replied. 'Ask a lady to yield an advantage! Beside, how do you know you should recognize me? Years make changes.'

"As you see,' I said, with a bow, and, I suppose, a rather melancholy little laugh.

"As philosophers tell us,' she said; 'and how do you know that a sight of my face would help you?'

"I should take chance for that,' I answered. 'It is vain trying to make yourself out an old woman; your figure betrays you.'

"Years, nevertheless, have passed since I saw you, rather since you saw me, for that is what I am considering. Millarca, there, is my daughter; I cannot then be young, even in the opinion of people whom time has taught to be indulgent, and I may not like to be compared with what you remember me.

You have no mask to remove. You can offer me nothing in exchange.'

"My petition is to your pity, to remove it.'

"And mine to yours, to let it stay where it is,' she replied.

"Well, then, at least you will tell me whether you are French or German; you speak both languages so perfectly.'

"I don't think I shall tell you that, General; you intend a surprise, and are meditating the particular point of attack.'

"At all events, you won't deny this,' I said, 'that being honored by your permission to converse, I ought to know how to address you. Shall I say Madame la Comtesse?'

"She laughed, and she would, no doubt, have met me with another evasion--if, indeed, I can treat any occurrence in an interview every circumstance of which was prearranged, as I now believe, with the profoundest cunning, as liable to be modified by accident.

"As to that,' she began; but she was interrupted, almost as she opened her lips, by a gentleman, dressed in black, who looked particularly elegant and distinguished, with this drawback, that his face was the most deadly pale I ever saw, except in death. He was in no masquerade--in the plain evening dress of a gentleman; and he said, without a smile, but with a courtly and unusually low bow:--

"Will Madame la Comtesse permit me to say a very few words which may interest her?'

"The lady turned quickly to him, and touched her lip in token of silence; she then said to me, 'Keep my place for me, General; I shall return when I have said a few words.'

"And with this injunction, playfully given, she walked a little aside with the gentleman in black, and talked for some minutes, apparently very earnestly. They then walked away slowly together in the crowd, and I lost them for some minutes.

"I spent the interval in cudgeling my brains for a conjecture as to the identity of the lady who seemed to remember me so kindly, and I was thinking of turning about and joining in the conversation between my pretty ward and the Countess's daughter, and trying whether, by the time she returned, I might not have a surprise in store for her, by having her name, title, chateau, and estates at my fingers' ends. But at this moment she returned, accompanied by the pale man in black, who said:

"'I shall return and inform Madame la Comtesse when her carriage is at the door.'

"He withdrew with a bow."

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## **XII**

### **A Petition**

"Then we are to lose Madame la Comtesse, but I hope only for a few hours,' I said, with a low bow.

"It may be that only, or it may be a few weeks. It was very unlucky his speaking to me just now as he did. Do you now know me?'

"I assured her I did not.

"You shall know me,' she said, 'but not at present. We are older and better friends than, perhaps, you suspect. I cannot yet declare myself. I shall in three weeks pass your beautiful schloss, about which I have been making enquiries. I shall then look in upon you for an hour or two, and renew a friendship which I never think of without a thousand pleasant recollections. This moment a piece of news has reached me like a thunderbolt. I must set out now, and travel by a devious route, nearly a hundred miles, with all the dispatch I can possibly make. My perplexities multiply. I am only deterred by the compulsory reserve I practice as to my name from making a very singular request of you. My poor child has not quite recovered her strength. Her horse fell with her, at a hunt which she had

ridden out to witness, her nerves have not yet recovered the shock, and our physician says that she must on no account exert herself for some time to come. We came here, in consequence, by very easy stages--hardly six leagues a day. I must now travel day and night, on a mission of life and death--a mission the critical and momentous nature of which I shall be able to explain to you when we meet, as I hope we shall, in a few weeks, without the necessity of any concealment.'

"She went on to make her petition, and it was in the tone of a person from whom such a request amounted to conferring, rather than seeking a favor.

This was only in manner, and, as it seemed, quite unconsciously. Than the terms in which it was expressed, nothing could be more deprecatory. It was simply that I would consent to take charge of her daughter during her absence.

"This was, all things considered, a strange, not to say, an audacious request. She in some sort disarmed me, by stating and admitting everything that could be urged against it, and throwing herself entirely upon my chivalry. At the same moment, by a fatality that seems to have predetermined all that happened, my poor child came to my side, and, in an undertone, besought me to invite her new friend, Millarca, to pay us a visit. She had just been sounding her, and thought, if her mamma would allow her, she would like it extremely.

"At another time I should have told her to wait a little, until, at least, we knew who they were. But I had not a moment to think in. The two ladies assailed me together, and I must confess the refined and beautiful face of the young lady, about which there was something extremely engaging, as well as the elegance and fire of high birth, determined me; and, quite overpowered, I submitted, and undertook, too easily, the care of the young lady, whom her mother called Millarca.

"The Countess beckoned to her daughter, who listened with grave attention while she told her, in general terms, how suddenly and peremptorily she had been summoned, and also of the arrangement she had made for her under my care, adding that I was one of her earliest and most valued friends.

"I made, of course, such speeches as the case seemed to call for, and found myself, on reflection, in a position which I did not half like.

"The gentleman in black returned, and very ceremoniously conducted the lady from the room.

"The demeanor of this gentleman was such as to impress me with the conviction that the Countess was a lady of very much more importance than her modest title alone might have led me to assume.

"Her last charge to me was that no attempt was to be made to learn more about her than I



might have already guessed, until her return. Our distinguished host, whose guest she was, knew her reasons.

"'But here,' she said, 'neither I nor my daughter could safely remain for more than a day. I removed my mask imprudently for a moment, about an hour ago, and, too late, I fancied you saw me. So I resolved to seek an opportunity of talking a little to you. Had I found that you had seen me, I would have thrown myself on your high sense of honor to keep my secret some weeks. As it is, I am satisfied that you did not see me; but if you now suspect, or, on reflection, should suspect, who I am, I commit myself, in like manner, entirely to your honor. My daughter will observe the same secrecy, and I well know that you will, from time to time, remind her, lest she should thoughtlessly disclose it.'

"She whispered a few words to her daughter, kissed her hurriedly twice, and went away, accompanied by the pale gentleman in black, and disappeared in the crowd.

"'In the next room,' said Millarca, 'there is a window that looks upon the hall door. I should like to see the last of mamma, and to kiss my hand to her.'

"We assented, of course, and accompanied her to the window. We looked out, and saw a handsome old-fashioned carriage, with a troop of couriers and footmen. We saw the slim figure of the pale gentleman in black, as he

held a thick velvet cloak, and placed it about her shoulders and threw the hood over her head. She nodded to him, and just touched his hand with hers. He bowed low repeatedly as the door closed, and the carriage began to move.

"She is gone,' said Millarca, with a sigh.

"She is gone,' I repeated to myself, for the first time--in the hurried moments that had elapsed since my consent--reflecting upon the folly of my act.

"She did not look up,' said the young lady, plaintively.

"The Countess had taken off her mask, perhaps, and did not care to show her face,' I said; 'and she could not know that you were in the window.'

"She sighed, and looked in my face. She was so beautiful that I relented. I was sorry I had for a moment repented of my hospitality, and I determined to make her amends for the unavowed churlishness of my reception.

"The young lady, replacing her mask, joined my ward in persuading me to return to the grounds, where the concert was soon to be renewed. We did so, and walked up and down the terrace that lies under the castle windows.

Millarca became very intimate with us, and amused us with lively descriptions and stories of most of the great people whom we saw upon

the terrace. I liked her more and more every minute. Her gossip without being ill-natured, was extremely diverting to me, who had been so long out of the great world. I thought what life she would give to our sometimes lonely evenings at home.

"This ball was not over until the morning sun had almost reached the horizon. It pleased the Grand Duke to dance till then, so loyal people could not go away, or think of bed.

"We had just got through a crowded saloon, when my ward asked me what had become of Millarca. I thought she had been by her side, and she fancied she was by mine. The fact was, we had lost her.

"All my efforts to find her were vain. I feared that she had mistaken, in the confusion of a momentary separation from us, other people for her new friends, and had, possibly, pursued and lost them in the extensive grounds which were thrown open to us.

"Now, in its full force, I recognized a new folly in my having undertaken the charge of a young lady without so much as knowing her name; and fettered as I was by promises, of the reasons for imposing which I knew nothing, I could not even point my inquiries by saying that the missing young lady was the daughter of the Countess who had taken her departure a few hours before.

"Morning broke. It was clear daylight before I gave up my search. It was not till near two o'clock next day that we heard anything of my missing charge.

"At about that time a servant knocked at my niece's door, to say that he had been earnestly requested by a young lady, who appeared to be in great distress, to make out where she could find the General Baron Spielsdorf and the young lady his daughter, in whose charge she had been left by her mother.

"There could be no doubt, notwithstanding the slight inaccuracy, that our young friend had turned up; and so she had. Would to heaven we had lost her!

"She told my poor child a story to account for her having failed to recover us for so long. Very late, she said, she had got to the housekeeper's bedroom in despair of finding us, and had then fallen into a deep sleep which, long as it was, had hardly sufficed to recruit her strength after the fatigues of the ball.

"That day Millarca came home with us. I was only too happy, after all, to have secured so charming a companion for my dear girl."

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# XIII

## The Woodman

"There soon, however, appeared some drawbacks. In the first place, Millarca complained of extreme languor--the weakness that remained after her late illness--and she never emerged from her room till the afternoon was pretty far advanced. In the next place, it was accidentally discovered, although she always locked her door on the inside, and never disturbed the key from its place till she admitted the maid to assist at her toilet, that she was undoubtedly sometimes absent from her room in the very early morning, and at various times later in the day, before she wished it to be understood that she was stirring. She was repeatedly seen from the windows of the schloss, in the first faint grey of the morning, walking through the trees, in an easterly direction, and looking like a person in a trance. This convinced me that she walked in her sleep. But this hypothesis did not solve the puzzle. How did she pass out from her room, leaving the door locked on the inside? How did she escape from the house without unbarring door or window?

"In the midst of my perplexities, an anxiety of a far more urgent kind presented itself.

"My dear child began to lose her looks and health, and that in a manner so mysterious, and even horrible, that I became thoroughly frightened.

"She was at first visited by appalling dreams; then, as she fancied, by a specter, sometimes resembling Millarca, sometimes in the shape of a beast, indistinctly seen, walking round the foot of her bed, from side to side.

Lastly came sensations. One, not unpleasant, but very peculiar, she said, resembled the flow of an icy stream against her breast. At a later time, she felt something like a pair of large needles pierce her, a little below the throat, with a very sharp pain. A few nights after, followed a gradual and convulsive sense of strangulation; then came unconsciousness."

I could hear distinctly every word the kind old General was saying, because by this time we were driving upon the short grass that spreads on either side of the road as you approach the roofless village which had not shown the smoke of a chimney for more than half a century.

You may guess how strangely I felt as I heard my own symptoms so exactly described in those which had been experienced by the poor girl who, but for the catastrophe which followed, would have been at that moment a visitor at my father's chateau. You may suppose, also, how I felt as I heard him detail habits and mysterious peculiarities which were, in fact, those of our beautiful guest, Carmilla!

A vista opened in the forest; we were on a sudden under the chimneys and gables of the ruined village, and the towers and battlements of the dismantled castle, round which gigantic trees are grouped, overhung us from a slight eminence.

In a frightened dream I got down from the carriage, and in silence, for we had each abundant matter for thinking; we soon mounted the ascent, and were among the spacious chambers, winding stairs, and dark corridors of the castle.

"And this was once the palatial residence of the Karnsteins!" said the old General at length, as from a great window he looked out across the village, and saw the wide, undulating expanse of forest. "It was a bad family, and here its bloodstained annals were written," he continued. "It is hard that they should, after death, continue to plague the human race with their atrocious lusts. That is the chapel of the Karnsteins, down there."

He pointed down to the grey walls of the Gothic building partly visible through the foliage, a little way down the steep. "And I hear the axe of a woodman," he added, "busy among the trees that surround it; he possibly may give us the information of which I am in search, and point out the grave of Mircalla, Countess of Karnstein. These rustics preserve the local traditions of great families, whose stories die out among the rich and titled so soon as the families themselves become extinct."

"We have a portrait, at home, of Mircalla, the Countess Karnstein; should you like to see it?" asked my father.

"Time enough, dear friend," replied the General. "I believe that I have seen the original; and one motive which has led me to you earlier than I at first intended, was to explore the chapel which we are now approaching."

"What! see the Countess Mircalla," exclaimed my father; "why, she has been dead more than a century!"

"Not so dead as you fancy, I am told," answered the General.

"I confess, General, you puzzle me utterly," replied my father, looking at him, I fancied, for a moment with a return of the suspicion I detected before. But although there was anger and detestation, at times, in the old General's manner, there was nothing flighty.

"There remains to me," he said, as we passed under the heavy arch of the Gothic church--for its dimensions would have justified its being so styled--"but one object which can interest me during the few years that remain to me on earth, and that is to wreak on her the vengeance which, I thank God, may still be accomplished by a mortal arm."

"What vengeance can you mean?" asked my father, in increasing amazement.



"I mean, to decapitate the monster," he answered, with a fierce flush, and a stamp that echoed mournfully through the hollow ruin, and his clenched hand was at the same moment raised, as if it grasped the handle of an axe, while he shook it ferociously in the air.

"What?" exclaimed my father, more than ever bewildered.

"To strike her head off."

"Cut her head off!"

"Aye, with a hatchet, with a spade, or with anything that can cleave through her murderous throat. You shall hear," he answered, trembling with rage. And hurrying forward he said:

"That beam will answer for a seat; your dear child is fatigued; let her be seated, and I will, in a few sentences, close my dreadful story."

The squared block of wood, which lay on the grass-grown pavement of the chapel, formed a bench on which I was very glad to seat myself, and in the meantime the General called to the woodman, who had been removing some boughs which leaned upon the old walls; and, axe in hand, the hardy old fellow stood before us.

He could not tell us anything of these monuments; but there was an old man, he said, a ranger of this forest, at present sojourning in the house of the priest, about two

miles away, who could point out every monument of the old Karnstein family; and, for a trifle, he undertook to bring him back with him, if we would lend him one of our horses, in little more than half an hour.

"Have you been long employed about this forest?" asked my father of the old man.

"I have been a woodman here," he answered in his patois, "under the forester, all my days; so has my father before me, and so on, as many generations as I can count up. I could show you the very house in the village here, in which my ancestors lived."

"How came the village to be deserted?" asked the General.

"It was troubled by revenants, sir; several were tracked to their graves, there detected by the usual tests, and extinguished in the usual way, by decapitation, by the stake, and by burning; but not until many of the villagers were killed.

"But after all these proceedings according to law," he continued--"so many graves opened, and so many vampires deprived of their horrible animation--the village was not relieved. But a Moravian nobleman, who happened to be traveling this way, heard how matters were, and being skilled--as many people are in his country--in such affairs, he offered to deliver the village from its tormentor. He did so thus: There being a bright moon that night, he ascended, shortly after sunset, the

towers of the chapel here, from whence he could distinctly see the churchyard beneath him; you can see it from that window. From this point he watched until he saw the vampire come out of his grave, and place near it the linen clothes in which he had been folded, and then glide away towards the village to plague its inhabitants.

"The stranger, having seen all this, came down from the steeple, took the linen wrappings of the vampire, and carried them up to the top of the tower, which he again mounted. When the vampire returned from his prowlings and missed his clothes, he cried furiously to the Moravian, whom he saw at the summit of the tower, and who, in reply, beckoned him to ascend and take them. Whereupon the vampire, accepting his invitation, began to climb the steeple, and so soon as he had reached the battlements, the Moravian, with a stroke of his sword, clove his skull in twain, hurling him down to the churchyard, whither, descending by the winding stairs, the stranger followed and cut his head off, and next day delivered it and the body to the villagers, who duly impaled and burnt them.

"This Moravian nobleman had authority from the then head of the family to remove the tomb of Mircalla, Countess Karnstein, which he did effectually, so that in a little while its site was quite forgotten."

"Can you point out where it stood?" asked the General, eagerly.

The forester shook his head, and smiled.

"Not a soul living could tell you that now," he said; "besides, they say her body was removed; but no one is sure of that either."

Having thus spoken, as time pressed, he dropped his axe and departed, leaving us to hear the remainder of the General's strange story.



## **XIV**

### **The Meeting**

"My beloved child," he resumed, "was now growing rapidly worse. The physician who attended her had failed to produce the slightest impression on her disease, for such I then supposed it to be. He saw my alarm, and suggested a consultation. I called in an abler physician, from Gratz.

Several days elapsed before he arrived. He was a good and pious, as well as a learned man. Having seen my poor ward together, they withdrew to my library to confer and discuss. I, from the adjoining room, where I awaited their summons, heard these two gentlemen's voices raised in something sharper than a strictly philosophical discussion. I knocked at the door and entered. I found the old physician from Gratz maintaining his theory. His rival was combating it with undisguised ridicule, accompanied with bursts of laughter. This unseemly manifestation subsided and the altercation ended on my entrance.

"'Sir,' said my first physician, 'my learned brother seems to think that you want a conjuror, and not a doctor.'

"Pardon me,' said the old physician from Gratz, looking displeased, 'I shall state my own view of the case in my own way another time. I grieve, Monsieur le General, that by my skill and science I can be of no use.

Before I go I shall do myself the honor to suggest something to you.'

"He seemed thoughtful, and sat down at a table and began to write.

Profoundly disappointed, I made my bow, and as I turned to go, the other doctor pointed over his shoulder to his companion who was writing, and then, with a shrug, significantly touched his forehead.

"This consultation, then, left me precisely where I was. I walked out into the grounds, all but distracted. The doctor from Gratz, in ten or fifteen minutes, overtook me. He apologized for having followed me, but said that he could not conscientiously take his leave without a few words more. He told me that he could not be mistaken; no natural disease exhibited the same symptoms; and that death was already very near. There remained, however, a day, or possibly two, of life. If the fatal seizure were at once arrested, with great care and skill her strength might possibly return. But all hung now upon the confines of the irrevocable. One more assault might extinguish the last spark of vitality which is, every moment, ready to die.

"And what is the nature of the seizure you speak of?' I entreated.

"I have stated all fully in this note, which I place in your hands upon the distinct condition that you send for the nearest clergyman, and open my letter in his presence, and on no account read it till he is with you; you would despise it else, and it is a matter of life and death. Should the priest fail you, then, indeed, you may read it.'

"He asked me, before taking his leave finally, whether I would wish to see a man curiously learned upon the very subject, which, after I had read his letter, would probably interest me above all others, and he urged me earnestly to invite him to visit him there; and so took his leave.

"The ecclesiastic was absent, and I read the letter by myself. At another time, or in another case, it might have excited my ridicule. But into what quackeries will not people rush for a last chance, where all accustomed means have failed, and the life of a beloved object is at stake?

"Nothing, you will say, could be more absurd than the learned man's letter.

It was monstrous enough to have consigned him to a madhouse. He said that the patient was suffering from the visits of a vampire! The punctures which she described as having occurred near the throat, were, he insisted, the

insertion of those two long, thin, and sharp teeth which, it is well known, are peculiar to vampires; and there could be no doubt, he added, as to the well-defined presence of the small livid mark which all concurred in describing as that induced by the demon's lips, and every symptom described by the sufferer was in exact conformity with those recorded in every case of a similar visitation.

"Being myself wholly skeptical as to the existence of any such portent as the vampire, the supernatural theory of the good doctor furnished, in my opinion, but another instance of learning and intelligence oddly associated with some one hallucination. I was so miserable, however, that, rather than try nothing, I acted upon the instructions of the letter.

"I concealed myself in the dark dressing room, that opened upon the poor patient's room, in which a candle was burning, and watched there till she was fast asleep. I stood at the door, peeping through the small crevice, my sword laid on the table beside me, as my directions prescribed, until, a little after one, I saw a large black object, very ill-defined, crawl, as it seemed to me, over the foot of the bed, and swiftly spread itself up to the poor girl's throat, where it swelled, in a moment, into a great, palpitating mass.

"For a few moments I had stood petrified. I now sprang forward, with my sword in my hand. The black creature suddenly contracted



towards the foot of the bed, glided over it, and, standing on the floor about a yard below the foot of the bed, with a glare of skulking ferocity and horror fixed on me, I saw Millarca. Speculating I know not what, I struck at her instantly with my sword; but I saw her standing near the door, unscathed. Horrified, I pursued, and struck again. She was gone; and my sword flew to shivers against the door.

"I can't describe to you all that passed on that horrible night. The whole house was up and stirring. The specter Millarca was gone. But her victim was sinking fast, and before the morning dawned, she died."

The old General was agitated. We did not speak to him. My father walked to some little distance, and began reading the inscriptions on the tombstones; and thus occupied, he strolled into the door of a side chapel to prosecute his researches. The General leaned against the wall, dried his eyes, and sighed heavily. I was relieved on hearing the voices of Carmilla and Madame, who were at that moment approaching. The voices died away.

In this solitude, having just listened to so strange a story, connected, as it was, with the great and titled dead, whose monuments were moldering among the dust and ivy round us, and every incident of which bore so awfully upon my own mysterious case--in this haunted spot, darkened by the towering foliage that rose on every side, dense and high above its noiseless walls--a horror began to steal over

me, and my heart sank as I thought that my friends were, after all, not about to enter and disturb this triste and ominous scene.

The old General's eyes were fixed on the ground, as he leaned with his hand upon the basement of a shattered monument.

Under a narrow, arched doorway, surmounted by one of those demoniacal grotesques in which the cynical and ghastly fancy of old Gothic carving delights, I saw very gladly the beautiful face and figure of Carmilla enter the shadowy chapel.

I was just about to rise and speak, and nodded smiling, in answer to her peculiarly engaging smile; when with a cry, the old man by my side caught up the woodman's hatchet, and started forward. On seeing him a brutalized change came over her features. It was an instantaneous and horrible transformation, as she made a crouching step backwards. Before I could utter a scream, he struck at her with all his force, but she dived under his blow, and unscathed, caught him in her tiny grasp by the wrist. He struggled for a moment to release his arm, but his hand opened, the axe fell to the ground, and the girl was gone.

He staggered against the wall. His grey hair stood upon his head, and a moisture shone over his face, as if he were at the point of death.

The frightful scene had passed in a moment. The first thing I recollect after, is Madame standing before me, and impatiently repeating again and again, the question, "Where is Mademoiselle Carmilla?"

I answered at length, "I don't know--I can't tell--she went there," and I pointed to the door through which Madame had just entered; "only a minute or two since."

"But I have been standing there, in the passage, ever since Mademoiselle Carmilla entered; and she did not return."

She then began to call "Carmilla," through every door and passage and from the windows, but no answer came.

"She called herself Carmilla?" asked the General, still agitated.

"Carmilla, yes," I answered.

"Aye," he said; "that is Millarca. That is the same person who long ago was called Mircalla, Countess Karnstein. Depart from this accursed ground, my poor child, as quickly as you can. Drive to the clergyman's house, and stay there till we come. Begone! May you never behold Carmilla more; you will not find her here."

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# XV

## Ordeal and Execution

As he spoke one of the strangest looking men I ever beheld entered the chapel at the door through which Carmilla had made her entrance and her exit. He was tall, narrow-chested, stooping, with high shoulders, and dressed in black. His face was brown and dried in with deep furrows; he wore an oddly-shaped hat with a broad leaf. His hair, long and grizzled, hung on his shoulders. He wore a pair of gold spectacles, and walked slowly, with an odd shambling gait, with his face sometimes turned up to the sky, and sometimes bowed down towards the ground, seemed to wear a perpetual smile; his long thin arms were swinging, and his lank hands, in old black gloves ever so much too wide for them, waving and gesticulating in utter abstraction.

"The very man!" exclaimed the General, advancing with manifest delight. "My dear Baron, how happy I am to see you, I had no hope of meeting you so soon." He signed to my father, who had by this time returned, and leading the fantastic old gentleman, whom he called the Baron to meet him. He introduced him formally, and they at once entered into earnest conversation. The stranger took a roll

of paper from his pocket, and spread it on the worn surface of a tomb that stood by. He had a pencil case in his fingers, with which he traced imaginary lines from point to point on the paper, which from their often glancing from it, together, at certain points of the building, I concluded to be a plan of the chapel. He accompanied, what I may term, his lecture, with occasional readings from a dirty little book, whose yellow leaves were closely written over.

They sauntered together down the side aisle, opposite to the spot where I was standing, conversing as they went; then they began measuring distances by paces, and finally they all stood together, facing a piece of the sidewall, which they began to examine with great minuteness; pulling off the ivy that clung over it, and rapping the plaster with the ends of their sticks, scraping here, and knocking there. At length they ascertained the existence of a broad marble tablet, with letters carved in relief upon it.

With the assistance of the woodman, who soon returned, a monumental inscription, and carved escutcheon, were disclosed. They proved to be those of the long lost monument of Mircalla, Countess Karnstein.

The old General, though not I fear given to the praying mood, raised his hands and eyes to heaven, in mute thanksgiving for some moments.

"Tomorrow," I heard him say; "the commissioner will be here, and the Inquisition will be held according to law."

Then turning to the old man with the gold spectacles, whom I have described, he shook him warmly by both hands and said:

"Baron, how can I thank you? How can we all thank you? You will have delivered this region from a plague that has scourged its inhabitants for more than a century. The horrible enemy, thank God, is at last tracked."

My father led the stranger aside, and the General followed. I know that he had led them out of hearing, that he might relate my case, and I saw them glance often quickly at me, as the discussion proceeded.

My father came to me, kissed me again and again, and leading me from the chapel, said:

"It is time to return, but before we go home, we must add to our party the good priest, who lives but a little way from this; and persuade him to accompany us to the schloss."

In this quest we were successful: and I was glad, being unspeakably fatigued when we reached home. But my satisfaction was changed to dismay, on discovering that there were no tidings of Carmilla. Of the scene that had occurred in the ruined chapel, no explanation was offered to me, and it was clear that it was a secret which my father for the present determined to keep from me.

The sinister absence of Carmilla made the remembrance of the scene more horrible to me. The arrangements for the night were singular. Two servants, and Madame were to sit up in my room that night; and the ecclesiastic with my father kept watch in the adjoining dressing room.

The priest had performed certain solemn rites that night, the purport of which I did not understand any more than I comprehended the reason of this extraordinary precaution taken for my safety during sleep.

I saw all clearly a few days later.

The disappearance of Carmilla was followed by the discontinuance of my nightly sufferings.

You have heard, no doubt, of the appalling superstition that prevails in Upper and Lower Styria, in Moravia, Silesia, in Turkish Serbia, in Poland, even in Russia; the superstition, so we must call it, of the Vampire.

If human testimony, taken with every care and solemnity, judicially, before commissions innumerable, each consisting of many members, all chosen for integrity and intelligence, and constituting reports more voluminous perhaps than exist upon any one other class of cases, is worth anything, it is difficult to deny, or even to doubt the existence of such a phenomenon as the Vampire.

For my part I have heard no theory by which to explain what I myself have witnessed and

experienced, other than that supplied by the ancient and well-attested belief of the country.

The next day the formal proceedings took place in the Chapel of Karnstein.

The grave of the Countess Mircalla was opened; and the General and my father recognized each his perfidious and beautiful guest, in the face now disclosed to view. The features, though a hundred and fifty years had passed since her funeral, were tinted with the warmth of life. Her eyes were open; no cadaverous smell exhaled from the coffin. The two medical men, one officially present, the other on the part of the promoter of the inquiry, attested the marvelous fact that there was a faint but appreciable respiration, and a corresponding action of the heart. The limbs were perfectly flexible, the flesh elastic; and the leaden coffin floated with blood, in which to a depth of seven inches, the body lay immersed.

Here then, were all the admitted signs and proofs of vampirism. The body, therefore, in accordance with the ancient practice, was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek at the moment, in all respects such as might escape from a living person in the last agony. Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severed neck. The body and head was next placed on a pile of wood, and reduced to ashes, which were thrown upon the river and borne away, and



that territory has never since been plagued by the visits of a vampire.

My father has a copy of the report of the Imperial Commission, with the signatures of all who were present at these proceedings, attached in verification of the statement. It is from this official paper that I have summarized my account of this last shocking scene.

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# XVI

## Conclusion

I write all this you suppose with composure. But far from it; I cannot think of it without agitation. Nothing but your earnest desire so repeatedly expressed, could have induced me to sit down to a task that has unstrung my nerves for months to come, and reinduced a shadow of the unspeakable horror which years after my deliverance continued to make my days and nights dreadful, and solitude insupportably terrific.

Let me add a word or two about that quaint Baron Vordenburg, to whose curious lore we were indebted for the discovery of the Countess Mircalla's grave.

He had taken up his abode in Gratz, where, living upon a mere pittance, which was all that remained to him of the once princely estates of his family, in Upper Styria, he devoted himself to the minute and laborious investigation of the marvelously authenticated tradition of Vampirism. He had at his fingers' ends all the great and little works upon the subject.

"Magia Posthuma," "Phlegon de Mirabilibus,"  
"Augustinus de cura pro Mortuis,"  
"Philosophicae et Christianae Cogitationes de

Vampiris," by John Christofer Herenberg; and a thousand others, among which I remember only a few of those which he lent to my father. He had a voluminous digest of all the judicial cases, from which he had extracted a system of principles that appear to govern--some always, and others occasionally only--the condition of the vampire. I may mention, in passing, that the deadly pallor attributed to that sort of revenants, is a mere melodramatic fiction. They present, in the grave, and when they show themselves in human society, the appearance of healthy life. When disclosed to light in their coffins, they exhibit all the symptoms that are enumerated as those which proved the vampire-life of the long-dead Countess Karnstein.

How they escape from their graves and return to them for certain hours every day, without displacing the clay or leaving any trace of disturbance in the state of the coffin or the cerements, has always been admitted to be utterly inexplicable. The amphibious existence of the vampire is sustained by daily renewed slumber in the grave. Its horrible lust for living blood supplies the vigor of its waking existence. The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons. In pursuit of these it will exercise inexhaustible patience and stratagem, for access to a particular object may be obstructed in a hundred ways. It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim. But it will, in these

cases, husband and protract its murderous enjoyment with the refinement of an epicure, and heighten it by the gradual approaches of an artful courtship. In these cases it seems to yearn for something like sympathy and consent. In ordinary ones it goes direct to its object, overpowers with violence, and strangles and exhausts often at a single feast.

The vampire is, apparently, subject, in certain situations, to special conditions. In the particular instance of which I have given you a relation, Mircalla seemed to be limited to a name which, if not her real one, should at least reproduce, without the omission or addition of a single letter, those, as we say, anagrammatically, which compose it.

Carmilla did this; so did Millarca.

My father related to the Baron Vordenburg, who remained with us for two or three weeks after the expulsion of Carmilla, the story about the Moravian nobleman and the vampire at Karnstein churchyard, and then he asked the Baron how he had discovered the exact position of the long-concealed tomb of the Countess Mircalla? The Baron's grotesque features puckered up into a mysterious smile; he looked down, still smiling on his worn spectacle case and fumbled with it. Then looking up, he said:

"I have many journals, and other papers, written by that remarkable man; the most curious among them is one treating of the visit

of which you speak, to Karnstein. The tradition, of course, discolors and distorts a little. He might have been termed a Moravian nobleman, for he had changed his abode to that territory, and was, beside, a noble. But he was, in truth, a native of Upper Styria. It is enough to say that in very early youth he had been a passionate and favored lover of the beautiful Mircalla, Countess Karnstein. Her early death plunged him into inconsolable grief. It is the nature of vampires to increase and multiply, but according to an ascertained and ghostly law.

"Assume, at starting, a territory perfectly free from that pest. How does it begin, and how does it multiply itself? I will tell you. A person, more or less wicked, puts an end to himself. A suicide, under certain circumstances, becomes a vampire. That specter visits living people in their slumbers; they die, and almost invariably, in the grave, develop into vampires. This happened in the case of the beautiful Mircalla, who was haunted by one of those demons. My ancestor, Vordenburg, whose title I still bear, soon discovered this, and in the course of the studies to which he devoted himself, learned a great deal more.

"Among other things, he concluded that suspicion of vampirism would probably fall, sooner or later, upon the dead Countess, who in life had been his idol. He conceived a horror, be she what she might, of her remains being profaned by the outrage of a posthumous execution. He has left a curious paper to prove

that the vampire, on its expulsion from its amphibious existence, is projected into a far more horrible life; and he resolved to save his once beloved Mircalla from this.

"He adopted the stratagem of a journey here, a pretended removal of her remains, and a real obliteration of her monument. When age had stolen upon him, and from the vale of years, he looked back on the scenes he was leaving, he considered, in a different spirit, what he had done, and a horror took possession of him. He made the tracings and notes which have guided me to the very spot, and drew up a confession of the deception that he had practiced. If he had intended any further action in this matter, death prevented him; and the hand of a remote descendant has, too late for many, directed the pursuit to the lair of the beast."

We talked a little more, and among other things he said was this:

"One sign of the vampire is the power of the hand. The slender hand of Mircalla closed like a vice of steel on the General's wrist when he raised the hatchet to strike. But its power is not confined to its grasp; it leaves a numbness in the limb it seizes, which is slowly, if ever, recovered from."

The following Spring my father took me a tour through Italy. We remained away for more than a year. It was long before the terror of recent events subsided; and to this hour the image of

Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alternations--sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl; sometimes the writhing fiend I saw in the ruined church; and often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing room door.

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