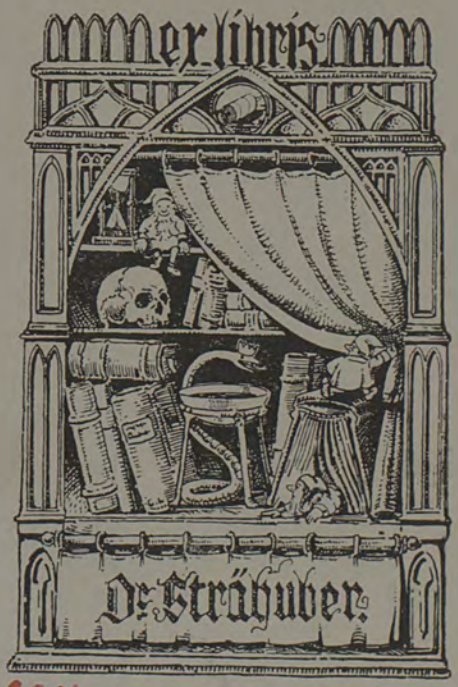
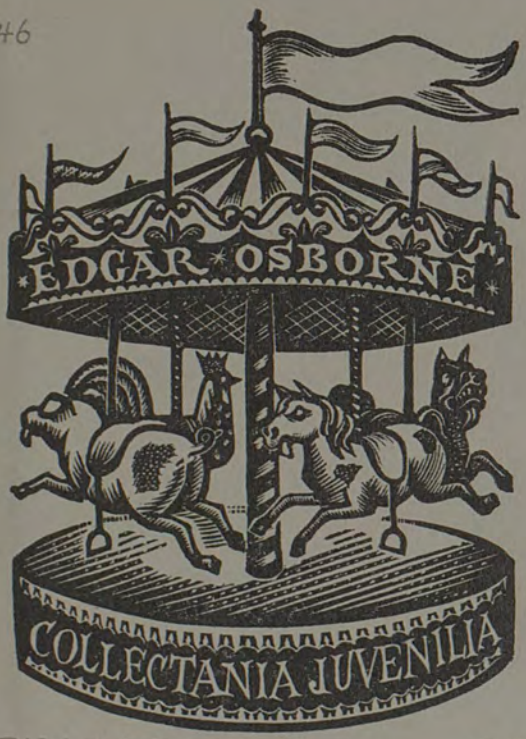
NEW YEAR'S DAY

BY

Mrs. GORE





NEW YEAR'S DAY.

The Accident

NEW YEAR'S DAY,

A WINTER'S TALE.

BY

MRS. GORE.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY GEO. CRUIKSHANK.

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TO A. F. W. G.

November, 1846.

Droop not, fair boy,—though threateningly
The Norland tempests blow,
Driving the poor old tottering year
O'er winter's waste of snow,—
Without a kindly voice to bid
Heaven speed him, ere he go.—

Droop not!—Right joyful shouts anon
Shall greet thy gladden'd ear,
Calling, from East, West, North, and South,
On Christmas to appear,
And bring, wrapt in his furry robe,
A smiling new-born year!—

Auspicious heir of ages past,—
Fair pledge of love and grace,—
Cheers, long and loud, will welcome it,
And smiles in every face,—
As though its birth brought amnesty
To man's long-suffering race!—

And hand in hand, with thrilling hearts,
Around each household fire,
The listening child, the reasoning man,
The grave grey-headed sire,
Will read its horoscope, wherein
Good stars alone conspire!—

Oh! let us join our voice to theirs,
And emulate their trust
That better days are dawning for
The pilgrims of the dust;—
That years to come will separate
The just from the unjust!—

But till the dayspring burst on high
Be not our spirits blind
Unto the evils and the wrongs
Still preying on mankind:—
Where'er the rainbow brightest shines
The clouds are dark behind!

Child of my love!—if from thine eyes
The scales have fallen away,—
If with a warmer pulse thy heart
Throb for the ills of clay,—
Requite with mingled smiles and tears
My gift of—NEW YEAR'S DAY.—

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

CHAPTER I.

"But I do assure you, uncle, that the carriage was within an inch of going over the little fellow!"—said Mira Hallet to her uncle, Sir Jasper, as they sat together at dinner in the splendid mansion of the latter, near Belgrave Square.—

"The better proof, my dear, of Robert's excellent coachmanship — to shave the child by an inch!"—

"Yes!—after allowing the horses to knock him down!"—

"The urchin should not have stood in the road. —It is only deaf old women, Mira, who have any pretext for being run over.—An active child has time to get out of the way."—

"Not out of the way of a pair of blood-horses driven at the rate Robert is apt to drive."

"Why, yes!—no one can say that he does not manage to take me a pretty pace!—Up hill, or down dale, all's one to Robert.—So steady a hand, that he could drive through Holborn Bars, and back by the Turnstile; and not a coachman in London turns out his carriage and horses as *he* does.—You said so yourself, Mira, at the last levee. —It is his pride,—his pleasure."—

"And to his credit;—but *that* does not excuse his carelessness in knocking down the poor little boy!"—

"My dear, I have told you again and again, that any other coachman would infallibly have driven over him. And now, let me hear no more of the matter, Mira.—You won't put me out of conceit of Robert; but you *may* out of the megrims of sensi-

bility which, every now and then, take possession of your little head." —

It was not till some minutes afterwards, when the General had reached his second glass of claret, and good or bad coachmanship no longer occupied his attention, that his niece ventured carelessly to inquire — "You subscribe, I think, uncle, to the Philanthropic Society?"—

"Yes, my dear."

"And to the Orphan School?"—

"Yes."

"And the Refuge for the Destitute, and Infants Protection Association?"—

"I dare say I do.—I don't keep a list of that sort of thing!—One's banker, or some other benevolence-monger is sure to force upon one a prospectus of his pet charity,—on the strength of which, he bids one stand and deliver!"—said Sir Jasper, as apprehensive of having it known how large a share of his fine income was devoted to charitable institutions, as most men that their smallest almsgiving should remain unknown.—

"At all events, dear uncle, you *do* stand and deliver,—and to the amount of many hundreds a year," resumed Miss Hallet, "for the purpose of preserving and comforting the lives of infirm and needy persons. And yet, when a slight reprimand to Robert would"—

"Confound Robert, and you, and the beggar-boy whose clumsiness has put all this intolerable nonsense into your head!"—cried Sir Jasper, fairly roused into a passion.—"If you thought the poor animal likely to die of a little bleeding at the nose, why couldn't you send the footman after him, to ascertain how far he was hurt?"—

"I did, my dear uncle, as soon as the crowd collected by the accident allowed the carriage to proceed, so that my orders could be heard. But in the bustle, the poor child had scuffled off. Some said he had been carried home by a humane cabman;—some, that the police had taken him up, as a vagrant.—But though I despatched Thomas in all directions, till he came back as heated and indignant as a June day and his sense of offended

dignity could make him, not a syllable was I able to learn of the little sufferer!"

"I don't suppose Thomas showed much assiduity in hunting him up.—I dare say *he* looks upon little dirty boys as good only to be converted into tigers, or chimney-sweeps, or thrust by housebreakers through the pane of a window."—

"Thomas may be pardoned such an estimate. Thomas is not a subscriber to humane societies and orphan schools.—But he would not be the less indictable for manslaughter, uncle, if proved guilty of aiding and abetting the death of a 'little dirty boy' by furious driving."—

"Mira," cried Sir Jasper, in a thundering voice, "let me beg you, once for all, to understand"—

But Mira, having finished her dessert as well as her peroration, was already out of the room.—And though Sir Jasper raged and swore, and all the longer and louder for her absence,—and though, while threatening that he would not be lectured and twitted in his own house by a girl who ought to be sewing her sampler, he broke the stem of his

claret-glass by the violence with which he stamped it upon the table,—he had not been five minutes alone, before his exasperation subsided. For in his niece's frankness of character and plain-speaking, consisted half her charm in his eyes.—A childless man,—rendered childless, indeed, by his own ungovernable temper, — he was conscious how cruelly his great wealth laid him open to the toadying of his connections, and the subservience of sneaking hangers-on ;—and not the less, because there was much in his habits and disposition which only sneaks and toadies could pass over without remonstrance. His impetuosity of nature often betrayed him into the grossest injustice; and even when self-convicted, he had not the generosity to avow himself in fault.—Indulge in what absurdities or brutalities he might, he chose to establish a justification.

And it was because his niece Mira, the only daughter of his only brother, had courage to assert an opinion of her own, that, from a child, he had preferred her to the rest of his family. The

truisms uttered by little Mira, provoking as they often were, constituted a sort of artificial conscience for her peppery uncle. And now that he had retired from active service to settle in London, sinking under the rewards and honours of his Indian campaigns, and with gold enough at command to gild over in the eyes of his poor relations his worst deformities of temper, the frank-hearted girl having progressed into a lovely and intelligent young woman, resided with him as an adopted child.

Mistrusting his own caprices, he had secured her independence by settling upon her, previous to her installation in his family, a sum of twenty thousand pounds. But as his fortune was known to exceed twenty times twenty, this was a small sacrifice ; nor, had her views been of an interested nature, was the sum sufficient to justify the upright opposition exhibited by the adopted child, on such occasions as the present.

The equity innate in the General's heart, pleaded, however, in calmer moments, her apology.

Sir Jasper knew that Mira was right.—He knew that her presence in the house imposed a tone of decency both on himself and his establishment; and felt satisfied that the gratitude of her good and feeling nature would repay a thousand-fold the kindness he heaped upon her, in the day, which he still fancied remote, when the infirmities of age would place him at the mercy of his dependents.

The idea of being left alone with servants in the helplessness of his decrepitude, was the only bugbear that appalled the sturdy old soldier:—perhaps, because he felt that such a destiny would afford fitting retribution for the sternness of his youth, and tyrannies of his middle age. But there was not much to fear. Mira dearly loved her uncle:—partly from the instincts of kindred blood;—but still more, from knowing him to be a far better man in the main than he chose to be at the pains of appearing.

His two great enemies,—the two grand chances against her remaining single,—consisted in her youth and beauty. As to her prospects of

heiress-ship to his immense fortune, any man who could have been tempted by such considerations to make her his wife, would also be indueed to remain the inmate of Sir Jasper. But Mira was pretty and attractive enough to possess more than one admirer, in a class not to be bought into dependence upon a fractious and overbearing old man.

"Marry?—Yes, of course, she will marry!"—was her uncle's frequent cry, in answer to the observations made at his club by brother K.G.B.s.—bald-pated vultures, belonging to his own species. "Though she has her way in my house to her heart's content,—no one to say her nay, or baulk her fancy, let her indulge in what whims and expenses she might—no doubt she fancies she should be more her own mistress if married to some smirking young despot, who would grudge her the use of her own coach-horses, or a score of guineas or so, over and above her pin-money!—But, as you say, I suppose I mustn't expect her to bide single. It needs only to call a girl an old maid, to drive her into

throwing herself away on the most plausible humbug at hand."

"But why must Miss Hallet's suitors be necessarily humbugs, my dear Sir Jasper?" was the demure inquiry of Sir Æneas Scrimgeour, a canny Scotsman, who, having preserved his North British accent and prudence undiminished throughout the toils and dangers of the Mahratta war, was secretly resolved to supply from his own family a nephew for his wealthy brother veteran.

"All men are humbugs when paying their addresses, whether their object be love or money!" retorted the captious Sir Jasper.—"Of professional men, (or, as my friend Hardy calls them, preachers, poisoners, and persecutors,) humbug is the staple commodity; and fellows who spend half their lives in quacking and rogueing their fellow-creatures, can scarcely be expected to devote the remaining half to making their wives happy."

"Why not?" interposed Admiral Hardy, the good-humoured friend, whose saying he had just

quoted ; "they may bottle up their virtues for home consumption."

"Give me generous wine and generous virtue, that bears being drunk out of the wood!"—retorted Sir Jasper.

"Or in other words, my dear Sir, give you the *un*learned professions!" rejoined the obsequious Sir Æneas.—"Soldiers and sailors, I am glad to find, are not on the prohibited list!"—

"Don't fancy, however," cried Sir Jasper, snappishly, "that I am going to throw away a girl like Mira Hallet on the first self-conceited ass with an epaulet on his shoulder who fancies that my sicca rupees would be a pleasant addition to his pay!"

"But why must Miss Hallet's admirers needs be professional?" cried Admiral Hardy—"Why not let her fair hand be the prize of a fair fight, in an open field? Hang it! give the country gentlemen a chance!—Though we've worsted the squires out of their corn-laws, let them glean where they can.—I'm not sure," continued he, glancing with

one of his luminous smiles towards Sir Æneas, "but I'd let even the baronets try their luck; if they'd only give over badge-hunting, and making such confounded blockheads of themselves."

"And pray what hurry is there for making a fight of it at all?" demanded Jasper,—hobbling to the window to certify himself that his brougham was in waiting, that he might get rid of his friends and the subject together.—"For my part, (and I don't care who knows it), I would almost as soon have a funeral in my house as a wedding!—What is matrimony good for, I should like to know, except to set a couple of happy people a-wrangling, like dogs in a chain! If my niece be but half the wise girl I take her for, I promise you she will manage to have her name recorded in my will, simply as Mira Hallet!"

CHAPTER II.

As it had pleased providence that Sir Jasper Hallet should return from his campaigns, abounding not only in crosses and clasps but in hundreds of thousands of pounds, without the drawback of so much as a fleshwound or liver complaint, he might have wanted some stimulus to quicken the circulation of his blood under so luxurious a complication of good fortune, had he not provided himself not only with a fair inmate possessing opinions and a will of her own ; but retained the services of a faithful adherent, still more likely to stir up the old general's choler,—from being apparently wanting in both.

Half a century had elapsed since honest John Talbot (recruited, within view of the Wrekin, by a gallant sergeant of the regiment of the line

in which young Hallet was serving as ensign,) had entered *his* service shortly after embracing that of George the Third. And as the Salopian bumpkin possessed, at that period, not only a will of his own, but a tolerably tough one, it surprised many that his young master, even then as full of combustible materials as a hand-grenade, did not annihilate the poor fellow in one of his frequent explosions of wrath. But this was accounted for by the fact that, very early in their connection as master and man, John Talbot and Ensign Hallet were on the point of being extinguished by the same cannon-shot, in the trenches of Valenciennes; and that, some hours afterwards, the former was carried to the hospital desperately wounded, from having flung himself between the breast of his young master and the sabre of one of Pichegru's dragoons.

From that day, John Talbot became a privileged man. Without however abusing his privilege. —The deeply indented scar on his forehead and left cheek, which in the eyes of strangers rendered

him an unsightly servitor, afforded him too powerful an advantage over the master for whose behalf it was incurred, not to render a fellow of genuinely English nature scrupulous about asserting it. John Talbot consequently bore twice as much from Sir Jasper, as other people. His endurance, indeed, was dogged rather than patient,—demonstrated chiefly in taciturnity of speech and immobility of gesture ;—so that many of the General's guests professed an opinion that they would as soon be waited upon by an automaton. Fifty years' experience, however, had enabled the two veterans to accommodate so perfectly to each other the salient angles of their natures, that they were seldom known to jar.

It had not always been so well between them. The gallant ensign, after so providentially escaping at Valenciennes, had shortly afterwards fallen a victim to a pair of the bluest eyes in Flanders ; and become a husband, and in due time a father, though wanting means of maintenance even for himself.

And then it was that the influence of John Talbot came into play. Not to oppose the influence of the pair of blue eyes; for that, the brave soldier was not sufficiently fool-hardy: nor even to reproach his young master with the rash results of his attachment, by which himself and others were incurring great risk of starvation. But he saw no reason why, the marriage having been the ensign's own act and deed, he should visit upon others, and more especially upon beings so ill qualified to contend against his gusts of temper as a woman little past the age of girlhood, and a child little past the age of infancy, miseries that demanded, on the contrary, double rations of mutual forbearance. The wife was a lovely and submissive wife—the boy, a noble and hopeful boy; and if, even in his mother's arms, he exhibited a little touch of his father's gunpowder temper, John Talbot did not understand why this should expose him to his father's gunpowder wrath.

Very often, therefore, did he incur the chance

of being kicked out of the miserable barrack-room which constituted the home of the young couple, for interposing in behalf of the little fellow, cuffed or sworn at by his father from the moment he was able to run alone; while the streaming eyes and heaving bosom of the young mother evinced the anguish she was suffering from not daring to lift up hand or voice in its defence.

Her chief reliance was on John. Overawed by the violence of the man who had raised her from an inferior station to become his wife—a station, however, where she was happy and content—she soon found that the chief comfort of her life, as the wife of an English subaltern living on his pay, was derived from the dutiful devotion of his poor follower. To lighten his mistress's domestic slavery, John became as adroit and nimble-fingered as a woman. The finest lady in the land had never a tenderer nurse to wait upon her firstborn. His master's boy was the great glory of his life.

There was fighting on the earth in those days, and soldiership was a thriving trade. The last

years of the last century, and the first of the present, are inscribed in the page of history in characters of blood. Killing and slaying was as much a national pastime as in the days of Goths and Vandals ; and the four quarters of this world of GOD'S making and of CHRIST'S civilizing, were unanimous only in sending up as a sacrifice to Heaven the reek of human gore !

Young Hallet's professional advancement was consequently rapid. By stepping upon the dead bodies of his comrades, he rose to early promotion. The more to his advantage, because, on embarking with his regiment for Egypt, the delicate state of health of his wife having compelled him to leave her and his boy behind, the schooling of the one and nursing of the other weighed heavily on the family budget. While fighting the French and the ophthalmia on the African shore, John Talbot often expressed his apprehensions to his young master, that, cost what they might, those two helpless beings must be sorely put to it during his absence. But even *he* never contemplated the worst danger

to arise from the separation ; that, under the superintendence of a mother so gentle, little Master Jass would acquire a will and a way too much his own.

The discovery, however, was not long in making, after the peace of Amiens had established in garrison at Plymouth the skeleton of the regiment in which Captain Hallet and his faithful John had been doing such severe duty. To the fondness of the first few weeks of domestic reunion, discord soon succeeded. The feeble invalid was accused of having suffered the young rebel left under her charge to progress into a sturdy ruffian ;—and even John Talbot, while maintaining that, "If a ruffian, 'twas the stoutest little chap of his years as any one had ever set eyes on,"—was forced to admit, with a sigh, that "'twas a chip of the old block :"—and the old block had in its nature, alas ! only too much of the cudgel.

Even that awful man, "the Captain," so terrible in the eyes of his company and his wife, imposed small restraint upon young Jass. The imp spoke

his mind as freely as though he could speak plain ; and on one occasion, when his mother was somewhat ferociously threatened by her intemperate husband, doubled his little fist as daringly in her defence, as though it had been capable of felling to the earth a full-grown rabbit. His spirit, in short, was as much beyond his years as beyond his strength ; and his father, adopting in that single instance the precepts of Solomon, took care that, for his future welfare, his chastisement should be proportionate.

A hard matter was it for John Talbot to keep the peace among them ; that is, not a hard matter, but an impossible. The utmost his good-will could effect was to dry the tears of the declining mother when she saw the child too savagely punished, by assuring her that if the rod were spared, Master Jasper would grow up a tyrant—he did not *quite* add, 'like his father,' but the mother understood, and submitted.

And when, at last, the refractory boy was despatched to the school which, of all within reach

of Plymouth, bore the bitterest character for discipline, it was John who endeavoured to smooth the ruggedness of the path of learning to the young tyro, by constant supplies of palliatives; and from the brightened face worn by the Captain's sickly wife after these hamper-sendings, it is more than probable that she was art and part in the act.

As young Hallet had been committed to the charge of the strict disciplinarian under whom he was placed, with instructions that no severity should be spared, he had of course somewhat more than his share of the task and the ferule. At the first act of injustice practised upon him, however, the boy swore that, on its repetition, he would run away; and as school-tactics seldom accredit such hints, by forbearance, the boy had speedy justification for keeping his word.

Unluckily, he ran home; for his father reasoned with him, as exasperated fathers are apt to do, by a severe flogging.

"Punish me as much as you please,—you're my father, and you've a right!" said the infuriated

child, when restored by the tender care of John Talbot to the power of thinking and speaking.—"But don't send me back to be bullied and beaten by that man. Don't, father!—If you do, you'll repent it.—If you do"—

"Well, Sir?"—interrupted the enraged Captain, irresolute only whether he should not submit the untameable urchin to regimental discipline at once:—"*if I do?*"

"If you do, *I will drown myself!*"—replied the boy, in a stern and steady voice.

And though a threat so heinous brought down instant punishment on the offender, and though the trembling mother all but came in for her share, for presuming to interpose in mitigation, John Talbot found courage, after putting the tortured child to bed, and sitting beside him till he had moaned himself to sleep, to walk back into the sitting-room and humbly face his master.

"Better not try my young master's temper too far, Captain Hallet," said he, as respectfully as was compatible with the presumption of the act. "He's

just your own child, Sir!—As sure as God's in Heaven, Sir, he'd make no bones of doing as he threatens."

But John Talbot's eloquence was not destined to prevail. The Captain was a bold man. The Captain made it a point of conscience to abide by his word. The following day, the little prisoner was recommitted, with glowing cheeks and a throbbing heart, into the custody of his task-master.

On the day following, he had again disappeared! —Not as before, however, to return to his ungenial home. On the present occasion, he provided himself with a surer place of rest.—His cap and coat were found on the sea-shore, near a lonely part of the road he had to traverse on his way to Plymouth; and, like Jacob of old, the unhappy father was seen to weep in anguish over the garments of his lost son!—

CHAPTER III.

THEN came the triumph of John Talbot;—that, amid all his grief, exceeding perhaps even that of the bereaved parents, he was never once heard to whisper—"I warned him!—I said how it would be!"

As in the instance of his sabre-cut at Valenciennes, his advantage was too great to be pursued by one of generous mind. Never was he heard to mention, in his master's presence, the name of the child. But, being summer-time when this great misfortune befel, he was up every morning before other people had retired to bed, to keep watch upon the sea-shore, in case the tide should bring with it what remained of the lost boy. There he used to stand, in the dim twilight, straining his eyes in hopes to discern upon the distant waves

some floating object about to be cast upon the strand. None but the sea-birds, that before his task was done circled tamely round him, knew how many hours, for how many succeeding weeks and months, were devoted by the poor soldier to watching—how vainly—for the remains of the headstrong boy.

But a stronger call was soon made upon his zeal. The poor mother, whose hopes for this world were extinguished by this sad bereavement, was pronounced by the surgeon of the regiment to be sinking rapidly into the grave; and as she strove and struggled to conceal from her husband the fatal symptoms which she seemed to fear he might resent as a reproach, John Talbot felt it incumbent on him to supply, by redoubled care and attendance, the kindly aid of which his dying mistress stood in need.

Refreshing drinks were as regularly prepared for her, as though she had complained of the fever that was slowly consuming her exhausted frame; and as her husband was perpetually absent, on

pretext of regimental duty, but in reality to conceal in far and solitary wanderings the remorse that was preying upon his mind, and even when at home, was too deeply absorbed in gloomy thoughts to comfort or tend her as he ought, it was John Talbot who not only secured for his mistress the attendance of one of the sergeants' wives, reported to be a skilful nurse, but, through her, prevailed upon the forlorn woman to commune with a priest of her faith, and seal her peace with her Father who was in heaven.

For, that fear of her husband alone prevented her, he justly suspected. Aware that the difference of faith between them was a stumbling-block which nothing but the impetuosity of youthful passion had tempted Captain Hallet to overlook, she scarcely dared,—now that he was grown so surly, and she so weak,—adventure the fury into which he might fall, on finding a priest in the house.

It was done, however.—By the thoughtful interposition of the worthy John, who if a good Protestant, was a better Christian, the consolations of

religion were admistered to one who so greatly needed consolation.

"*Now* I shall die happy!" faltered she, turning her mild eyes thankfully upon him to whom her boy had been indebted for the few comforts of his unquiet life; "but happier still, John, if you promise me that, betide what may, you will never, *never* desert your master.—He respects your worth; and from you, will bear more than from others. And what you have borne from *him*, who knows better than myself? For love of the child who loved you so dearly, therefore, stay with him! Watch over him, and be good to *him* as you have been to me. For he will need it. When I am gone, little as he has seemed to care for me of late, he will feel lonely—very, *very* lonely:—and there may come times when thoughts of me and of the boy will weigh sorely on his heart; and who will there be but his faithful servant to talk to him, or listen to *him* when talking of those he has lost!"

"I *will* stay with him,—I will stay with him

while there is breath in my body," sobbed the faithful soldier.

"Ay, that I'm sure thee will," cried the sergeant's wife, wiping her eyes, "for a good soul and a dutiful servant as thee art."

"And above all, John Talbot," resumed the dying woman, "let nothing tempt you—no unkindness,—no anger,—no injustice,—to remind him of the part he may have had in the ill-faring of the child. *That* he could never forgive,—*that* he might not survive. Set a watch upon your lips, my poor John, whenever vexatious thoughts are in your heart: and may your last moments be comforted, as mine are now, by the thought of having spared a pang to a fellow-creature."

Before the promise could be ratified, the Captain burst in, to revile the "idle scoundrels" who stood trembling on the threshold of the sick-room, for wasting on woman's work the time that was due elsewhere.—But in the depths of his honest soul, John Talbot had tacitly pledged himself; and even when, shortly afterwards, his poor mistress was

found dead in her bed, after one of her husband's intemperate ebullitions of rage, and the surgeon who examined her wasted remains pronounced that she had neither been spared, nor cherished, nor nourished as she ought to have been, recalling her prohibitions to mind, the faithful fellow "set a watch over his lips."—For the sake of the poor martyr who had passed unto her rest, he forbore to exclaim, "Ay! he has murdered the mother, as before he murdered the son!"—

And right thankful was John that his lady's injunctions *had* imposed silence upon him, when he saw with what a burst of anguish the self-convicted man flung himself, on his return from duty, beside the dead body,—imploring from those senseless remains pardon for his numberless offences. To all, and far more than all wherewith John could have accused him, did he plead guilty; and scarcely could his brother officers succeed in parting him from the corpse when came the time for nailing it into its coffin, and consigning it to that silent bed where the cruel cease from troub-

ling and the weary are at rest. Even when the earth had closed over his victim, the repentance of the distracted husband did not subside.—From that day, he scarcely ever left the house from which he had been so often driven by dread of witnessing the poor mother's reproachful tears. Never was man, in short, more truly or more justly broken-hearted.

At length the colonel of his corps, by whom, whatever his faults of temper, Captain Hallet was valued as one of the bravest soldiers and smartest officers in the service, apprehensive that severe illness, or perhaps insanity, would ensue from his indulgence in solitary grief, offered him leave of absence, and suggested change of scene. But, lo! a change of scene far different from what was meditated by either, awaited the widower.—The Peninsular war broke out; and the regiment was one of the first that received orders for foreign service.

But though, amid the cheers with which the news were received by the brave fellows on whose

lips already burned the words—"glory,—victory,—and promotion," the voice of Hallet was unheard, more fervent, more heartfelt far was his first prayer of thankfulness that, after sacrificing the lives so dear to him, he was spared the guilt of suicide by the chances of war.—

"Too honourable a fate for one like me!"—murmured he, (while John Talbot was occupied in making hurried preparations for their embarkation,) "to fall in the service of my country. May my death at least afford some atonement for the faults of my wretched life!"—

Death, however, comes not with a call—especially to those who call in humbleness of heart.—Six months after Captain Hallet's arrival at Lisbon, he was a field-officer;—four years afterwards, he was a hero!

Throughout the reverses attending the earlier years of that memorable struggle, the cool desperation with which the man who felt that he had no longer a tie to this world, confronted every danger and submitted to every privation, seemed

to confer a spell of impunity upon his person. Where the strife raged deadliest, Hallet was at once the most alert and the most tranquil.—There was something almost superhuman in his self-possession.—Attack or retreat—siege or sortie—he was as stedfast and unmoved in presence of death as if executing his duties on parade.—

Recommended for early promotion, and still, though promoted as far as his date of service would allow, mentioned again and again in the despatches, his name became proverbial throughout the army. —Whenever some desperate manœuvre was to be attempted, it was entrusted to Major Hallet.—On one occasion, when about to head a forlorn hope, the general of brigade to whom he officiated as aide-de-camp, shook hands with him at parting, with tears in his eyes, as one whom he should behold no more.—And the shout of exultation with which the predestined man waived on his men to the breach, though subsequently attributed to a foresight of the victory obtained chiefly by means of his desperate valour, arose in fact from

conviction that his probation was nearly at an end.

Conviction of the value of his services restored him by degrees to a happier frame of mind. By the time the surgeon and John Talbot had attended upon him half-a-dozen times, for wounds which he scarcely permitted to heal ere he was again in the field, he learned to know the value of life. So long as the French were in the Peninsula, and Wellesley in need of his arm, he could not afford to die!

With a few hundred more of such field-officers at his disposal, at once so experienced and so reckless, "Wellesley" might have found his task less trying; and the seven years of hard fighting which it required to place Major Hallet in command of one of the finest regiments in the service, might have been abbreviated by half.

Though subsequently left on the field for dead at Waterloo, the man so little enamoured of life was recalled to partake still more largely of its honours and rewards; till at length, at the close of the

American war, Sir Jasper Hallet, as one of the survivors of New Orleans, was pronounced to be one of the most distinguished, as well as the youngest generals in the British service.

Need it be added that, by this time, John Talbot had conceded to his master a full and complete pardon? So proud as he was of the General and his achievements, it was not likely that the veteran should so much as remember anterior grounds of offence. Soon after his return from the Peninsula, a comparatively rich man, Sir Jasper had taken occasion to bestow upon his faithful follower a handsome gold watch, in recognition of his zealous devotion; and when poor John perceived that the back of the seal accompanying the gift was set with hair—hair of two different colours—a lock of the fairest flaxen and a glossy black curl, such as his hands had shred so often from the head of poor Master Jass, he rushed sobbing out of the room. At that moment, he could have found it in his heart to intreat from the master who had so well divined his wishes—the master whose memory was still

so tender of the dead—a morsel of his own hair, white with premature affliction, to blend with those valued relics.

He had often wondered, while fighting in Spain, whether the frequent interposition of his master for the rescue of women and children, arose from mere impulses of humanity, or partly from reminiscences of the past. But his doubts were now cleared up ; nor did it surprise him, when, having obtained leave of absence on pretence of visiting his family in Shropshire, but in reality to hurry down to Plymouth, for a survey of old scenes connected with old times, to find that a fair monument had been erected by Sir Jasper Hallet to the memory of the boy and his angel-mother ; still, as dear and sacred to poor Talbot's heart, as though a wife and child of his own.

CHAPTER IV.

Dignified and enriched by a pension and a Waterloo medal, John Talbot had now every pretext for retiring to the enjoyment of his *otium cum dignitate;* nay, to the peril of his *otium,* he might even have perfected his destinies by the acquirement of a home and a wife.—But he would not hear of it.—The General was his home,—the General was his wife,—the General was a property over which it was appointed him to watch faithfully for the remainder of his days.—*Otium* was no word for the vocabulary of John Talbot. A paramount duty,—a sacred promise to the dead,—required him to labour to the end.

Though discharged as a soldier, "was he not the General's own man!"—Even when, shortly after the accession of George IV., Sir Jasper was despatched

to India, to assume a high command at the seat of war, John Talbot would as soon have thought of allowing him to embark without him, as without his pistols or sabre.—

Already above the world in fortune, the Bhurtpoor campaign converted the gallant Hallet into an opulent man.—The English government and India company vied with each other in securing the independence of one whom the chances of war had already sufficiently enriched; and, as if to mock him with superfluous riches, as he had been before derided by unwished-for length of days, scarcely had he returned to England, when a fortunate speculation, hazarded by the agent in whose hands his prize-money was invested, more than doubled the amount.

"Ay, rich enough, and to spare,—and what then?"—cried he, in answer to the ejaculation of joy which his disclosure of the circumstance extorted from the faithful attendant. "Where 's the use of it, John, to two old worn-out stumps like you and me?—Who the deuce cares for either of

us,—or who shall we ever care for more?—Money won't bring back the past!—Money won't bring back the *dead!*—And what matters to any human being whether the life that a couple of crazy veterans are like to lead, be maintained by white bread or brown?"—

John Talbot, after his usual custom, uttered not a syllable in reply.—But this was no manner of proof that he was of the General's way of thinking.—On the contrary, in *his* opinion, it was precisely in the decline of life that people need to have their way made smooth before them. India had made somewhat of an epicurean of honest John.—But if he had grown nearly as fond of being waited upon as he was assiduous in waiting upon his master, no one could deny that he had earned his ease; and the more so, that his heart was none the harder for his habits being a trifle more soft.—

The joy with which he beheld the General's niece, Miss Mira, installed as the comfort of her uncle's old age, in authority over his splendid establishment, formed a sufficient apology for the

care taken by John, or, as he was now called by the underlings, "*Mr.* Talbot," that his own sitting-room and bed-room should be far from the least commodious in the house.

While taking heed of himself, he was never known to neglect, in a single instance, the comfort of his master; and though the General had released him, hundreds of times, from the duty of waiting on him at table, or any where else, Talbot was evidently of opinion, that unless his white waistcoat and scarred visage figured behind Sir Jasper's chair, the currie of the hero of Bhurtpoor would not be served to him sufficiently hot, or his claret sufficiently cold. For what pantler, unapprenticed in the land of tiffins, would venture to endanger, by even a hint of the ice-pail, the delicate bouquet of a bottle of Château Margout!—

His persevering attendance, indeed, was often a source of merriment to the General's guests. The high responsibilities of his appointment, and the change of habits and companionships effected by twenty years' sojourn in India, had created a lacune

in Sir Jasper's train of associations tending to annihilate the influences and reminiscences of earlier life. But John Talbot, like the Bourbons during their exile, had learned and forgotten nothing. With *him*, the Plymouth barrack-room, all but effaced from the recollections of the General, was still all in all.—It was *there* that, thanks to that darling child, he had, for once in his life, been an object of affectionate caresses. It was *there* he had been happy,—it was *there* he had been *young!*—And is not youth the sole inheritance, the sole prosperity, of the Helots of our Sparta?—

But whenever this magnetic chain of association was accidentally touched, embarrassing indeed were the results! The spacious dining-room of Sir Jasper was adorned with a number of fine modern pictures,—the fresh and truly English landscapes of Callcott, Constable, Glover, Stanfield, and Barrett.—Among them, were several marine subjects; and one, unluckily, a picture representing "a wild and weather-beaten coast," where the circling curlews, thrown out into relief by the

darkness of the still semi-transparent waves, so figured to the mind of poor John Talbot the spot where, nearly forty years before, he had been wont to take his stand, straining his eyes almost to starting when floating on the crest of some distant billow he beheld a dark object, which might be either the little body he came to rescue from the deep or a wreath of sea-weed, — that if, during dinner, he caught sight of that noble picture, he became as one paralyzed.—In vain did his master call for madeira : — In vain did Burton, the under-butler, apply to him for instructions about "taking away."—There stood the poor old serving-man,—as one distraught.—Even if, as was not unfrequently the case, the great Captain of the age,—a man reverenced by John Talbot as a demi-god,—chanced to be a guest at the board, there was no recalling the old man to a sense of his duties.—

He was not often, however, thus oblivious ; for he took care to place himself on the left hand of the General, with his back to the picture. But as

not a soul present was able to connect his reverie with its melancholy origin, when he *did* fall into a fit of musing, it only afforded a topic of mirth after the servants were withdrawn, and some privileged guest alluded to the "woolgathering" of the General's venerable follower.—

When *not* musing, he was still alert and busy as a bee;—cheerful even, in his own way;—unless when keeping guard over his lips, while attending on his master; or confronted in the housekeeper's room with Miss Mira's maid, who was a sore stumbling-block in his path.—Lucy's prettiness and jauntiness, though of no unusual quality, were regarded by the obstinate old bachelor with the abhorrent eyes of a St. Antony; or as wandering knights in a German ballad regard the fays and imps that gambol wickedly in their way.—But that he knew the poor girl to be fondly attached to her young lady, there would have been no bounds to his antipathy.—

For to his master's niece, John Talbot was sworn almost as devotedly as, aforetime, to his master's

wife and child. Partly, because there was something good and benevolent in her nature, that reminded him of the poor young foreigner whom he had seen so sorely tried ; and partly, for the sake of her kinship with those for whom he had lived, and with whom he must shortly die.—Few things he would not have done, to please and serve her,—except transgress the interdiction, as holy in his sight as if a commandment superadded exclusively for his own instruction to the sacred articles of the Law.—Even *that*, under certain circumstances, he might have been tempted to infringe. For John had made up his mind that he would not submit to see a creature young, good, and gracious as Miss Mira, sacrificed, as he had seen others sacrificed. He had never forgiven himself his non-intervention on a former fatal occasion ; and if the General were ever to take it into his head to exercise upon his niece's destinies the tyrannous control he was still occasionally tempted to practise upon his subordinates, John Talbot was prepared to "up and speak!"—Yes!—if the hero of Waterloo

himself were in presence, John Talbot had sworn to himself that he would up and speak! —

Such was the old fellow who, on the night of the disagreement between Miss Hallet and her uncle touching the rashness of his coachman, had to listen to the fiery outbreak of Sir Jasper's exacerbation, while waiting upon him with his nightgown and slippers on retiring to bed.—But though, in this instance, the angry man redoubled on the head of the offending Robert the blame attributed in milder terms by Miss Hallet, John Talbot, after his praiseworthy custom, answered him never a word.—

"So then, sir,"—cried his master at last, after heaping every possible species of invective on his favourite coachman, hoping to call forth some sort of defence or apology on the part of his fellow-servant,—"So then, sir,—*you* are of opinion that there is nothing to find fault with in the conduct of a reckless blackguard, who, to get back ten minutes sooner to his pipe and pot of ale, endangers the lives of her Majesty's subjects, as though they

were beasts that perish?—a fellow who, for the sake of cutting a splash through the kennel, and making the crossing-sweepers open their eyes, drives so nearly over the limbs of a poor helpless child, compelled, perhaps, by the wants of its family, to get a living in the streets,—that my poor chicken-hearted girl yonder, couldn't eat her dinner to-day, for thinking over the scene!—*You* see nothing to blame in such brutality!"

"Your honour told Robert when you engaged him, that letting a carriage cut in before our'n, was warning," observed John Talbot, in a tone of remonstrance, "and that you wouldn't keep the king for coachman, unless he went a slapping pace."—

"Oh! *that* 's it, is it?—*That* 's the defence which you and that rascal Robert have been laying your heads together to trump up, in case the police find it worth while to take up the business, and send it to the quarter-sessions!"

John Talbot replied by tottering down on one knee, as well as his lumbago would permit, to sub-

stitute for the General's stiff boots a pair of comfortable velvet slippers, worked for him by his niece.

"How often must I tell you, Talbot, that I am better able to take off my own boots than you to help me!"—cried the enraged General,—"But I suppose you want to prove that I am paralytic—helpless—imbecile!—I dare say you have authorized that impudent fellow of a coachman to circulate in the neighbourhood that his master is a crippled crack-brained old fool, who requires him to drive over poor people's children!"—

"Shall you want anything more to-night, Sir Jasper?" respectfully inquired the old servant, gradually approaching the dressing-room door, with the view of a speedy retreat from this volley of abuse.

"No, sir!—You know I never want you to sit up for me o' nights!—Send Burton!—I choose to be waited upon by Burton.—Go to-bed, sir,—go to-bed!"—

Had Sir Jasper commanded him to ascend the

chimney instead of going out of the door, the old man would have done his best to obey.—As it was, he closed the door gently and patiently after him ; —*so* gently, indeed, that there was nothing to prevent his overhearing, as he quitted the room, his exasperated master's ejaculation of — "Confound them all together !"

Before he had advanced ten steps, however, towards the head of the stairs, a far louder apostrophe reached him, of — "Talbot ! — here, you, sir!—John Talbot, I say!"—still in the General's voice, though far different from before.—There was something hoarse and choaking in the last few syllables.

"To-morrow morning, sir,"—said Sir Jasper, as soon as he reached the door again, in answer to the summons,—"you will lose no time in making what inquiries you can concerning the child that was so nearly run over.—Take Robert with you, that he may identify the spot and the boy, in case you are so lucky as to find him out ; and leave with the child's family the purse yonder—the green

purse lying on my bureau.—Tell the coachman, if he wishes to stay in my service, to let all this be a lesson to him so long as he lives. But take care that neither he nor you mention a word about the matter in the house, and more especially before that blabbing chit, Lucy, Miss Hallet's aider and abettor in her sentimental folly:—or I shall be having all the dirty urchins in the neighbourhood flinging themselves under my horse's heels.—Good-night, Talbot.—Go to-bed."—

"Good-night, General!" replied the old soldier, after possessing himself of the purse pointed out, in a tone of voice which the General perfectly understood, as grateful acceptance of the *amende honorable* to his feelings, afforded by that kindly word.

But, alas! three days afterwards the green purse was found by the General carefully re-deposited in its former place.

"The young dog is obstinate, then, and don't choose to accept payment for his injuries?" demanded Sir Jasper, in his gruffest voice, of his

taciturn almoner,—having ascertained by snatching it angrily into his hand, that the weight of sovereigns was undiminished.

"After the best endeavours, General, and the best help from the police, we 've not been able to make out nothing of the poor child," replied Talbot, shaking his head.—"Poor children enow, we found, Heaven help 'em; and many as had run a nigh chance of being druv' over by gentlefolk's carriages. But not one as could be mistaken for the boy described to me, again and again, by Miss Mira.—Even Robert, General, though flustrated at the time of the accident, had found leisure to notice that the pair o' blue eyes the poor little fellow cast up at him, as he lay striving in vain to rise, was the largest and saddest-looking he'd ever seed in his life.—And a fine spirit he had, Robert says; for instead of waiting to be pitied and backed up by the mob as gathered, he was away, and out o' sight, afore my young lady could get speech of him to bid him wait upon her here."

"In short, like two confounded blockheads, as

you are, you've done nothing in the business?" cried Sir Jasper.

To which indignant appeal, Echo, or a faint whisper from John Talbot, mournfully responded —"Nothing!"—

CHAPTER IV.

People who are fated to restrict those tendencies to exploration, which, duly indulged, might detect the whereabout of the lost tribes of Israel or the site of a few more forgotten cities amid the Mexican wilds, to detecting the odd holes and corners of a metropolis which plans, maps, guides, and post-office directories have rendered anti-mysterious enough to defy even the pen of Eugène Sue,—are aware that, within reach of London's most crowded causeways, there exist Courts, and Rents, and Buildings, deep in whose recesses, Misery conceals her rags and starvation, without much chance of being either sought or found by the purple-and-fine-linen wearers of the neighbouring squares.

In more than one street of the West End,

fashionable equipages and giddy pedestrians glance daily past some low-browed archway or shabby gateway, which appears, like the flourishing speech of a newly-returned member, to lead to nothing; but which constitutes the entrance to a forlorn city of refuge for hundreds of inhabitants; people who are born and die without a chance of rescuing their names from obscurity by so much as inscription on a tomb-stone, unless given in custody on a night-charge, or committed by still more serious indictment, after some affray wherein Irish blood predominates and English blood is spilled.

In these wretched courts, apparently overlooked by the sun in his daily duty of shining to warm the frame and cheer the hearts of mankind, or narrow streets, *too* narrow for the transit of so much as a costermonger's cart, or any vehicle of higher account than a truck or hand-barrow, there prevails, singularly at variance with the aspect and habits of the population, a perpetual smell of soap-suds and reek of the laundry; while, in addition to the meagre children swarming forth

like emmets from every door, a race of lean, masterless dogs is sure to abound, as if hunted thither from more respectable neighbourhoods.—Even at the height of summer, a black and greasy loam is seen oozing between the ill-fitting stones of a pavement, which drought itself is inefficient to dry.—All is dampness and squalor. The half-starved children seem born to no other exercise of the human voice than screeching ;—nor have they vigour to ridge their little sunken cheeks into a smile.

Though in many instances, and especially in that of the court to which the attention of the reader is entreated, situated so near the confines of St. James's Street, that the savoury fumes of the clubs serve to tantalize its half-famished refugees, the houses stand so few feet apart, and exhibit so little dignity in the maintenance of the perpendicular, that, were their inmates neighbourishly inclined, they might shake hands from the upper windows, the unhappy parias denizened in such localities, are remarkable for maintaining a surly

reserve. Unless in the case of flagrant offenders, made known to each other by the interposition of the police in some domestic brawl, such as every now and then rouses the stagnant atmosphere of the place, and shakes the court from its propriety by the sound of blows and shrieks, and the voice of authority, louder and harsher than both,—the lodgers of one floor seldom know the names of those occupying the one above, or below.—A death in the cellar, or birth in the attic, is alone likely to bring the squatters in those airy or subterranean tenements, within ken of the proud inhabitants of a first floor.

Though so near the outlying piquets of royalty, that from the narrow gateway or passage forming its entrance, might be heard the movement of the guard of St. James's palace, when saluting some illustrious personage, the court in question was chiefly inhabited by servants out of place, or the families of those in service in great families,—all more or less retainers or hangers-on of a higher class. And this it was, perhaps, that imparted

a tone of superior decency to the place.—To obtain lodgings there, it was necessary to exhibit a qualification not always required by a fashionable hotel; —it was necessary to be "respectable." The eating-house, which constituted at once its only shop and lord-chamberlain's office, was supposed to exercise considerable authority over the morals and deportment of the chair-men and ticket-porters of the neighbourhood.

So reserved, indeed, were the habits of the place, —so busy was the laundress with her suds,—the sempstress with her seam,—the cobbler with his awl,—and the turner with his lathe,—so soberly did even the "manglin don hear," announced by a square of dingy paper wafered into the window of one of its grandest localities, perform its evolutions, —that, if perchance the policeman on its beat had inquiries to make concerning some suspicious character supposed to be thereabouts concealed, nobody had a word to say about anybody. When, at the instigation of John Talbot and Sir Jasper's coachman, questions were asked there, as elsewhere in

the purlieus of St. James's, concerning a child supposed to have been run over by a gentleman's chariot, or at least injured by a fall, no one had heard of any accident of the kind. The keeper of the eating-house went so far as to hazard a decided negative; almost angry, indeed, that it could be supposed any inhabitant of a court so "respectable" should allow their children to play about the streets. As she spoke, she glanced haughtily towards the first-floors opposite, the windows of one or two of which indulged in the luxuries of life so far as to exhibit a pot of seedy stocks, or weedy-looking mignionette, or dingy sweet-marjoram; howbeit the ray of sunshine occasionally slanting down into that grim interstice of Western population, seemed to have as little pretension to promote vegetation, as if peeping into one of the crevices of Mont Blanc.

It was there, nevertheless, that the pair of large blue eyes, which had made so strong an impression on Mira Hallet, opened daily to their limited proportion of the light of day.—There it was the little

fellow suffered, and there concealed his sufferings. —For from *his* lips, no one had ever heard mention of the risk of life and limb he had undergone; or the severe pain he still sometimes underwent on lying down at night on his hard pallet on the floor, from the swollen shoulder produced by his severe contusions.

Not a word had escaped his lips, lest he should alarm the severe grandmother with whom he resided; and who exercised her authority as harshly as though she were not indebted to his exertions for the whole comfort of her miserable life. She would, perhaps, be uneasy during his absence, if thus apprized of the perils to which he was exposed; or, in one of the fits of wayward inconsistency to which she was subject, and which the little fellow regarded as an infirmity inseparable from poverty and age, might perhaps interdict his daily expeditions, which *he* knew to be indispensable to the maintenance of their miserable existence.

It was only a pang the more to keep to himself. —He was used to it. George Foreman could

scarcely remember the day when he had not suffered, either from cold, or hunger, or grief.—

Some vague reminiscences floated indeed in his mind,—as in the showing of an ill-remembered dream,—of a far-away country, and a fair face and tender voice, breathing love and endearments, such as he heard bestowed by harsh voices and faces anything but fair on the dirty recesses of the court, when they ran yelping from some squabble to their several dams.—But if it were indeed his own mother whom he thus yearningly remembered, his impressions must have been prematurely imbibed.—For George was not four years old when she was carried to the grave ; and that irreparable loss had so broken up the peace of her surviving family, that very soon afterwards, they embarked at New York (of which city the boy was a native) ; he, his father, and grandmother,—to seek in Europe consolation for their grievous bereavement. —This was not, indeed, the sole object of the voyage. The widowed father of George Foreman, (a man who had seen hard service, and, according

to the compensations of a new country, achieved high, honourable, and liberal rewards, in promoting the cause of South American independence,) was of European origin,—or, as *he* stated the case, of *high* European origin ; who, separated from his family by early follies, was desirous, now that he stood in the world on ground of his own creation, to renew his connection with, and settle for the remainder of his days among, his relatives in the mother-country.—

Nor was it much of a sacrifice to old Mrs. Lawrie to bear him company in the expedition. —The last of a race of early settlers, she had reluctantly beheld her husband espouse the liberal side in the great national struggle ; and, compelled in her old age to reside among people to whom she fancied herself superior, and to whom her loyalist opinions rendered her obnoxious, she was thankful to the wealthy stranger who had become the husband of her only daughter, for offering her a home with her little grandson.

Though, for a century and a half, her family had

flourished on transatlantic ground, the old lady still made it her pride to designate Old England by the name of Home ; how little expecting that, at threescore years, it would be appointed her to set foot upon the sacred soil of the land of liberty !—

Better, however, had she contented herself to die as she had lived !—Better had her son-in-law consented to set forth alone upon his pilgrimage of discovery ; and in the event of success, summoned his son and his son's grandame to share his prosperity. For providence was not on their side. The ship on which they embarked was a doomed one ! Of the forty-four living souls that constituted her crew, seven only were destined to see land ; among whom were the old lady and her grandchild, forced by Colonel Foreman into the long-boat, on the striking of the vessel upon a reef off the Scilly Islands ; while *he* remained behind to assist the distracted captain in standing to the last by the wreck containing his whole property—the hard-earned spoil of a toil-worn life !

But not so much as a vestige of it was washed on shore.—The great deep engulphed those heavy chests of specie, and with them the family-papers which might have served to create a new patrimony for Foreman's orphan.—A purse, a pocket-book, a small trunk containing property of her own, were all that remained to enable poor old Mrs. Lawrie to bestow decent burial on the body of her son-in-law; which, with that of the captain and mate, was at length rescued from the waves.

And now, what was to become of the helpless old lady, in the strange country which she had fondly called her home?—Not a friendly hand was outstretched to welcome her. Those who, in a momentary glow of humanity, at first pitied and assisted the friendless survivors of the wreck, soon grew weary of listening to her complaints.—Not a document of any kind could she produce in attestation of what she had heard so often repeated by her daughter's husband that she implicitly believed it,—namely, that he was connected with great and opulent people; nor was there any-

thing in the name of Foreman to support her assertion.

As the scanty means that remained to her were speedily disappearing, she was advised by the minister of the village on the coast of Cornwall, where she had installed herself, and who foresaw an incumbrance on his parish, to advertise in the newspapers an account of her remarkable case.—But, alas! the result tended only to render her purse more light, and her heart more heavy.—Not a single answer was vouchsafed; and after a few onerous repetitions of the advertisement, which served to prove that no person of the name of Foreman acknowledged kinsfolk in New York, the proud old lady, who found that the interest she had at first excited was vanishing with her means of support, resolved to devote a few of the last of those bright, well-hoarded hundred guineas, on which figured the effigy of George III. in all the unmeaning smoothness of countenance of his five-and-twentieth year, to effect her removal to the metropolis proverbially said to be paved with gold;

and where Foremans were doubtless to be found by dozens, high in the queen's council, or the royal household, or the episcopal bench.—

Still, her pride prevailed.—Pride was as inherent in the old lady's heart as if a Percy born.—It was Colonel Foreman's boast of gentle blood which had bespoken her deference towards him, far more than his chests of doubloons, or casket of rough gems; for there does not perhaps exist an order of pride more rampant or more stiffnecked, than is exhibited by the elder-settled families of an old colony.—

Poor Mrs. Lawrie's pride, alas! served only to aggravate her misfortunes. Alone, in that mighty city whose pulses throb as with the life-blood of millions, and which turns nevertheless so stony a face and stony a heart towards the need of wretches whose tale of woe is unbacked by the attestations of some thriving banker or the recommendations of Exeter Hall, she soon found that for threadbare gentility there is no resource but the grave. And as a step towards it—a step towards the cold obstruction wherein no sun would ever shine—no

pleasant sound assail the ear, she took up her abode in the dreary court already alluded to ;—to which she found her way soon after her arrival in town, while prowling about the precincts of the old palace, and admiring the novel spectacle of guards and sentries.

Still harping on the hopes and projects of her lost son-in-law, she abided in her dark and narrow lodging, fully convinced, that a golden web of destiny was weaving elsewhere for herself and the youthful heir of the house of Foreman ; and that, some day or other, a gorgeous carriage with footmen clustered behind, and a well-wigged body-coachman seated on its pompous hammer-cloth, such as she occasionally saw approach the gateway of St. James's or Marlborough House, would draw up before the archway of the court, and claim its own from those squalid recesses of poverty and shame.—

For some time, the boy, a mere child, shared in her delusions. But as his intellects became sharpened by too hard a contact with the realities

of life—by care, disease, and necessity,—poor George began to see that his grandmother was all but doting. In the few shops of the neighbourhood where her custom at first procured an audience for her strange eventful history, he saw that she was treated as an impostor; and as her purchases grew slender in proportion to her slender means, the discourtesy of English nature broke out in blunt rejoinders, that — "No noble family of the name of Foreman was ever in existence;" or, that she had better recount her shipwreck and "the loss sustained by her family, of chests of Spanish gold and English patents of nobility off the Scilly Isles, to the marines;"— till poor little George, vexed to hear her insulted, ventured to entreat that she would give up all hope of accomplishing the discovery of which she was so sanguine.

"What, child!—would you have me believe your poor father—(a gentleman to the backbone, if ever gentleman saw the light!) a liar and a deceiver?" cried the old lady.—

" He may have lain under a mistake, dear grandmother !"

"Not he, child,—not he !—His head was as sound as his heart. And no later, George, than one evening as we stood on the deck of that unlucky Antelope, within three days, as the captain assured us, of shore,—the Colonel, being less in spirits than I expected at the prospect of returning to his native country, 'How do I know,' says he,—when I made some observation about his lowness—'how do I know, Mrs. Lawrie, that my father will choose to receive me ?—We did not part friends. He was not a kind father !'—'No fear about *your* being kindly welcomed, Colonel,' said I.—'Those who return to their kinsfolk wanting nothing of nobody, and provided for like a prince, as you are, are pretty sure of the best place by the fireside.' —I said this, you may be sure, to cheer him,—scarcely knowing what to make of his downheartedness ; which I now see, my dear, was nothing more nor less than the shadow cast before of the great evil that was coming upon us all."—

"And did he say nothing further then, grandmother, concerning his family?"

"Yes!—he said that if I thought *his* fortune princelike, it was not a fourth part of that enjoyed by his father. And that it was only because the old gentleman was so rich and thriving, he had abstained so many, many years, from claiming his blessing and forgiveness.—'I chose,' said he, 'to be independent, first, myself; that he might never fancy it was for a livelihood I returned to him, to own myself in fault.'"

Poor George raised his head with a brightened countenance at this observation,—so strongly corroborating the old lady's often-repeated declaration, that "her son-in-law was a gentleman to the backbone."—

"But if for so long a time he had held no communication with his family," argued George, "how was he sure that his old father was yet alive?"—

"Ay! that was just what I asked him, George!" retorted Mrs. Lawrie.—"But his answer was soon

made.—'The newspapers often spoke of him.'—And yet, though with that very view I sometimes looked over the English papers, where mention is made of the comings and goings of most people who are a trifle above the world, not once—not one single once—did I ever find the name of Foreman!"—

"Perhaps my father's family was known by some other name?"—observed the child.

"So I often thought. But your father was one whom there was no questioning further than he chose to be questioned.—What he said was to be law, ay, and gospel too; and what he did *not* say was sacred.—Even his wife, even my poor Jane, who loved him so, and whom he so loved, knew him better than ever to risk so much as a word about what was past of his life, unless, indeed, he gave her the clue to the question!"—

A heavy sigh formed the sole answer of her grandson.—Young as he was on quitting New York, not all the tears with which he had since lamented the fate of the father he loved so fondly,

—the father who to *him* was always so mild and tender,—had sufficed to efface from his memory the violence he had seen used by Colonel Foreman, so long as he could remember, towards the black servants of their household! A word and a blow, of which the blow had usually precedence, was his mode of giving an order to one of "those confounded negro fellows, whose heads were as thick as the wool that covered them!"—

"And this, then, was all he ever said about his family?"—murmured the boy, after a dreary pause.

"All he ever said to *me*,—except, again and again,—when your childish faults were in question,—that, above all things, we must never overlook, in your rearing, that you were to be brought up as became a gentleman born,—a gentleman who would have to occupy hereafter a noble position in society."

"You are sure he said that?"—

"Again and again!—To the Captain, on our voyage home, I suspect he communicated more than he chose to entrust to myself; for nothing

could be more marked than the increase of respect testified towards my son-in-law after we had been a week or so at sea.—However, even if the Colonel disclosed to him the exact name and address of his family, George, we are none the forwarder; since they met their hard fate at one and the same moment, and are buried side by side:—God rest them both!"—

"Not a chance, then, dear grandmother,—not the least, *least* chance that I can see, of our ever finding out what my poor father thought of sufficient consequence to cross the Atlantic, to bring about!"—faltered the desponding boy.—

"No one can foresee in what way it may be the wise will of Providence to accomplish its purposes!" —was the pious rejoinder of poor Mrs. Lawrie.— "One thing, however, George, is strong in my memory; and bear it ever, boy, in your's. On the day the Captain announced that two more would bring us within sight of land—'Then it will be just forty years and six days,' said your father, 'since I lost sight of England, on sailing for Lima

from Plymouth harbour, on the 3d of August, eighteen hundred and four.'—Some day or other George, it may be of consequence to you to know exactly when, and from whence, my son-in-law,—my poor Jasper,—quitted his native land."—

CHAPTER V.

HAPPY was it for the boy thus disastrously situated, that the injunction concerning his rearing had been strongly impressed on the mind of the old lady. For, though unable to provide him with the education becoming a gentleman's son, she exerted her utmost efforts to teach him the little she knew. During the three first years of her sojourn in the mother-country that exhibited towards her so small a share of maternal affection, while her scanty hoard and the sale of a few old trinkets and articles of plate supplied her with the means of a sordid subsistence, she devoted her whole leisure to his instruction; so that, at seven years' old, he could read, and write, and cipher, as well as other boys of his years rejoicing in better qualified instructors than a half-doting grandame. Luckily, indeed;—

Bitterly did the Old Lady complain of the encroachments of the grave. p. 92.

for at that age her lessons ceased.—A stroke of palsy disabled her, hand and foot, for the remainder of her days!—

Poverty is a bitter thing;—bitterer, when coupled with decrepitude;—bitterest of all, when, after a youth of luxury or competence, want and infirmity arrive together.—Poor Mrs. Lawrie, who had struggled courageously with misfortune while strength was vouchsafed her, gave way at once, so soon as she could no longer do the needful service once done for her by others, or sleep at night worn out by those daily labours. Fretful discontent succeeded to her former pious resignation.—The poor boy, so active, so obedient, so intelligent, became an object of constant reproof.

While toiling for her by day, and watching beside her by night, he had seldom the good fortune to earn in requital a kindly word.—With the infirmity of judgment produced by disease, she often accused *him* as the cause of her misfortunes.—Was it not by his father she had been induced to forsake the country where, for nearly threescore

years, she had abided in peace?—not opulent, indeed,—but at least uncompelled, as now, to measure the crust she ate, or moisten it with tears of anxiety lest, soon, even that crust should be wanting.—

For the golden guineas were all gone. The last bank-note had been changed, and melted away. The twelve silver forks and spoons, marked with the crest of her "family," were as good as lost to her heirs for ever;—and the old pearl-locket and diamond-ring, once sacred in her sight as the crown jewels in those of a beef-eater, had been converted into raiment and food.—Even a portion of the former had been sacrificed in its turn, to procure medicine and medical advice; and when, in the dead of night—the dead of night which even in winter they could not afford to cheer by a watch-light,—poor George overheard the old lady, who believed him to be asleep, moaning on her restless pillow, and calling upon death to release her, that there might be only one of them left to starve, the cold moisture rose upon his young forehead at the

thought of his helplessness and inability to afford her relief.—

All he could do was to wait upon her with untiring patience, and prepare her food, and repair her now almost tattered garments, with the skill of a woman's hand.—After reading her into a doze, he would sit for hours by her side, and work ; till she woke again, to recommence her grumblings, and indulge in the daydream which had usurped the place in her fancy formerly occupied by the coach-and-four of the Foremans,—*i. e.* her return to the country she had so ungratefully deserted.—

Having addressed letters of supplication to a few of her former friends and acquaintance at New York imploring aid for the voyage, she still indulged in the hope of relief at their hands.—But a land of industry is seldom a land of alms-giving ; and those to whom she applied, either remembered with disgust her former haughty airs of superiority, or conceived that it might be as well for their pockets to allow the Atlantic to intervene between them and the distresses she

described ; — for not a line was vouchsafed in answer to her applications !—Had she not expressed an intention of returning, relief might have been afforded her. But the prospect of having a cross and paralytic old woman thrown upon their hands, apparently steeled their hearts.

Poor George, who had met with too little kindness from his fellow-creatures to be very sanguine concerning the warmth of Christian charity, was much less disappointed than the old lady, when, after keeping watch, morning after morning, at her bidding, beside the archway, to watch the coming of the postman, he had still and ever to record the same result,—namely, that "no ship-letter, or letter of any description, for one Mrs. Lawrie had ever passed through his hands." Though too submissive to her will to demur about inditing the epistles she saw fit to dictate, he sometimes deliberated about the wisdom of putting them into the post. It seemed like a direct contravention of his poor father's commands, thus to become a beggar !—Though no longer indulging in the

chimera of becoming a great man, he still maintained his faith in the assertion that he was a gentleman born ;—and when bidden to trace the assurance that the smallest trifle would be acceptable to their utter destitution, his little cheeks glowed like fire, even though his teeth were chattering with the winter's cold.

He wrote it, however, because commanded.—But knowing that, even were the means afforded them of returning to America, there, as in London, they must still depend upon others for support, the boy found nothing to regret in their inability to embark once more upon that cruel ocean which had deprived him of his father.

That the poor lad had little to be grateful for in the kindness of others, was, however, in a great measure, the fault of the old lady.—Her strict injunctions to him, in more prosperous times, to remember that, whatever poverty he might come to, he was "a gentleman born," and must never exchange a word with the children of their plebeian neighbours in the court, exposed him to sad ill-will.

No better dressed than they,—no better fed,—there appeared little justification of his keeping aloof; and the decent reserve of his manners was consequently an offence.

By degrees, as he came to be worse fed than the rest, and in his garments threadbare, they had no mercy on what was called his pride. It was well known in the court, that bread, and bread alone, found its way into the one-pair lodgings of No. 9; and that people who found it such a hard matter to sustain themselves, should pretend to give themselves airs, was beyond bearing. It had transpired, through the keeper of the eating-house, with whom, on her first arrival, before her golden guineas disappeared, the old lady was on neighbourly terms, —that the boy and his grandame were of American extraction; and the name of the Yankee Prince was accordingly often flung in the face of poor George, as, faint with hunger, he tottered out into the open street, for a breath of purer air.—

But even when refreshed and comforted, in spite of the jeers of those who would fain have been his

playmates, it was a hard trial to return into that close room, and be reviled by the fractious old lady for neglecting her, and wasting, or not making the most of, the means still remaining for their subsistence.—

"You leave me here for hours," muttered she,—though minutes only had elapsed,—"while you are playing below with the little reprobates, your companions!—I hear your voice, I can tell you, George, and louder too than all the rest,—though you fancy your poor deaf, dying grandmother will not recognize it.—But I *do*, though: and when I am shortly re-united to your poor parents, child, in a better land, we shall intercede together to the Almighty, to forgive you for having so cruelly neglected your duty."—

Not a syllable was ever breathed by the little fellow in self-defence. She was so sad, so sick, so helpless!—There was every excuse for the old lady's fractious injustice.—

It *was* a trial, though, when she accused him of wanton waste, in keeping a bird, "while *she*,—a

Christian,—she, his grandmother,—was perishing for lack of food!"—For, the moment she said it, he knew that the bird must go.—Though fed from the crumbs of his own frugal meal, and housed in a cage little better than a mouse-trap, of his own manufacture, if his grandmother felt injured by having it in the room with her, he must resign himself.—True enough, it was his only friend,—his only playmate;—the only living thing from which, at that dreary time, he could claim a caress.—He had tamed it.—It would hop upon his finger, or sit upon his shoulder, looking happy and thankful. Not singing, however. It was not a singing bird. No one else would have been at the trouble of feeding or taming it.—George had found it in the park, one summer morning, when it had fallen half-fledged from the nest; and brought it home, and reared it as a treasure.—

After Mrs. Lawrie had expressed some dozen times, however, that she would not be eaten out of house and home by useless pets, he took the poor little thing back, as near as might be, to the spot

"It will die!" P. 81.

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where, three years before, he had picked it up; and there, perched on one of the bushes of St. James's Park, left it.—It would have been useless to give it liberty in the dingy court.—It would have returned again and again to the old window!—

"It will die.—They say cage-birds, when released, never know how to get their living," murmured George, as he slowly left the place, turning back now and then, with a vain hope that the little creature might be following him.—"Had it been a song-bird, somebody might have been prevailed upon to keep it."—

And then came sad thoughts into his head of the forlornness of those who, like himself and his bird, had nothing wherewithal to propitiate the good offices of others.—And, in spite of himself, the tears *would* gush forth, when, on returning to the gloomy room, now gloomier than ever, he saw the uncouth cage of his favourite lying in a corner; which, had it been winter time, would at least have been convertible into fuel. As it was, it served only to remind him that he was alone.—

When the old lady awoke, his red eyes became the cause of further reproaches.—

"You cry for a useless, ugly, troublesome bird, child," said she.—"But were it to please God to take *me*,—as is my daily and nightly prayer,—not a tear would you find for the poor old grandmother who has bred you up, and reduced herself to rags and starvation for your sake.—You are an ungrateful boy, George.—But for the sake of those who are gone, I pray the Almighty to forgive you!"—

CHAPTER VI.

Among the opprobrious epithets lavished by the neighbours and neighbours' children on the Yankee Prince, it was wonderful that no one ever taxed him with tailorship;—since he was clearly indebted to his own industry for the decent exterior, which, amid all their necessities, he managed to keep up.—Though far from realizing in his appearance the paternal vaunt so often repeated by his grandmother, that he was "a gentleman's son," he looked at least like a respectable errand boy.—

Nature had done much towards producing prepossessions in his favour. His large expressive blue eyes gained rather than lost by the alternation of feature that only appeared to augment their size and lustre.—The fair hair that hung loosely curling over his broad forehead, derived its lustre from

daily immersions in fresh water that cost him nothing ; and there was something subdued in his voice and gestures which, though arising from the feebleness produced by want, appeared to indicate gentility.—Nothing about George Foreman of the bluntness,—coarseness,—or roughness of humble life.—

"Can you read, my boy ;—and are you sharp enough to undertake an errand?"—said a young officer of the guards,—on whose well-fitting uniform little George had fixed a wistful eye, one summer morning at the corner of St. James's Street, as he was lounging near Sams's shop, on pretence of looking at the engravings of a fashionable annual.

"I can read, sir,"—replied the boy,—longing to add, "and if you will employ me for a message, I will do my best to give you satisfaction ;"—for the handsome countenance of the young officer captivated his fancy. But the often-repeated injunction of his grandmother, that, betide what might, he was never to derogate from the habits of life of a gentleman's son, forbad his endeavouring

to earn a shilling,—a coin that rarely found its way into the palm of his hand.

"You have an honest face of your own," added the officer, after casting a hasty glance around, to ascertain that no one was at hand to overhear or notice their colloquy. "Do you think you could make out Belgrave Street, Belgrave Square?"—

"To be sure I could, sir."

"In that case, my lad, here's half-a-crown for you, to make the best of your way to number seven,—where you will leave this letter,"—continued he, placing one in his hand.—"And remember, should any questions be asked by the servants, you are to say that it was given you by a lady you never saw before, and of whom you don't know the name."—

"If I'm to say *that*, sir, I'm afraid I can't oblige you," replied the child, returning the money and the letter. "And at all events, I should not have accepted the half-crown.—I am not an errand-boy, sir.—I am a gentleman's son."—

"You are a confounded little ass, I suspect!"—

returned the officer, nettled and surprised. "What on earth can it signify whether you received the letter from a gentleman or lady?"

"Not the least, sir. It signifies only that I should not say the one, when the other is the case. But I will undertake to carry your letter safe and speedily, and give no explanation at all, however much questioned,—if that would suit you?"

"I fancy I can trust you, my lad," replied the officer,—more and more surprised by the tone and bearing of the child. "But I should be glad to learn, on your return, how you have prospered in your errand."—

"You are on guard, I think, sir?" said George, glancing at his gay accoutrements—"I shall be in Belgrave Street and back, in less than twenty minutes.—You can manage, perhaps, to remain hereabouts, till then?"—

And the appointment once made, George did not allow the grass to grow under his feet.—Fresh from a first perusal of Paul and Virginia, he seemed to understand (on perceiving that the letter

about which the young Captain appeared so anxious was addressed to a "Miss Hallet,") *why* he was so anxious concerning the delivery.—

"I left it safe, sir, at number seven.—No questions were asked;" said he, a little out of breath, as soon as he came within hail of the scarlet coat.

"So far, so good!"—observed the young man, turning towards a friend on whose arm he was leaning.—"I think I may be sure, *this* time, that it will reach her hand."

And as George had now fully discharged his commission, he was making off towards home, when the officer suddenly called him back.—

"Hillo, my lad!—We mustn't part in this way," said he.—"You 've done me better service than you think for; and though you don't choose to be paid for it, you must have something to keep in remembrance of my gratitude."—

The whole party were now opposite the shop of Palmer the cutler; into which the apparently overjoyed letter-sender ordered his prompt messenger to follow him; and in a moment, a tray of

many-bladed knives, — knives after a boy's own heart,—glittered before the eyes of George.—

"Make your choice, youngster!" — said the officer, who, by the obsequiousness of the shopman, was apparently well known and highly considered. "You seem steady enough to be trusted with sharp implements."

"Recollect, my dear Wroxton," interrupted his companion, good-humouredly, "that a knife is the most unlucky keepsake in the world!"—

"Ay, between lovers!" — retorted the young guardsman, pointing out to his protegé, a handsome four-bladed knive with a mother-of-pearl handle, which he seemed to recommend.—"But in this case, all I want is to remind this trusty Pacolet of mine that I am in existence; and that he will often find me on the same spot, waiting to engage him for the same service he executed so well just now."—

Scarcely knowing in what words to express his gratitude for the generous manner in which his trifling assistance was requited, poor George thank-

fully acquiesced in the shopman's suggestion that his initials should be engraved on the silver escutcheon ornamenting the handle of the knife.—It could be finished in a few hours. On the morrow, George was to call for it at Palmer's.

"And mind you don't disappoint the little fellow!" said his new friend, preparing to leave the shop.—"It is impossible for me to send my own servants to Sir Jasper's," continued he, addressing his companion, as they proceeded down the steps to resume their lounge in St. James's Street;—"and this boy is precisely the sort of messenger not to excite suspicion."—

All that now remained for the delighted George was to hurry home; trusting that his grandmother might not *very* much have wanted him, during the hour allowed him for his morning exercise and recreation.—But although his stint was exceeded only by eleven minutes, he saw, from the manner in which, as he entered the room, she pointed to a great silver watch of the shape and nearly the size of a warmingpan, suspended at

the head of her bed, that his fault was not to escape unpunished. — One of the psalms of the day was accordingly set him as a task.—But even when learned and repeated, he had still to undergo nearly double his quotidian allowance of complaints against his hard-hearted ingratitude.

But it was far easier than usual to the boy to submit in silence. So many new and pleasant emotions were stirring in his mind!—He had been addressed, for the first time since his poor father's death, in words of kindly acknowledgment.—He had been smiled upon by a gracious face.—He had been promised that the services exciting these demonstrations of gratitude, should be speedily renewed. — And yet, the individual who spoke to him so courteously and was so much less haughty of deportment than the parish taxgatherer, or his grandmother's landlord, had been obsequiously addressed by the master of a shop whose gorgeous frontage had for years divided his reverence with the dingy face of the adjacent palace, by the august title of "my lord!"—He had consequently

not only found a friend,—a friend of his own making,—but the friend was a great man,—a man who might perhaps assist him in his long-defeated researches!—

But this was not all. George had gathered from his lordship's observations that the master of the grand house in Belgrave Street to which he had been despatched, was named "Jasper;"—his father's name,—a name which, baffled by long and useless seeking, he knew to be somewhat uncommon. Might not this afford some clue to his family connections?—Might not the errand which by the wafting of the winds of Heaven seemed to have lighted on his shoulders, be an express interposition of providence, leading into the golden road which he had sought so long, and sought in vain?—

He could not sleep, that night, for thinking of it, and cogitating over the best mode of making known to his patron his peculiar situation.—And what was worse, he could not work next morning for thinking of it;—and bitterly did the old lady

complain of the oversugaring of the gruel which, as usual, he made for her breakfast.

"It was waste,—sheer waste; and what did he think was to become of them, if he indulged in such profligate habits, now that so little was left to save them from the humiliation of going upon the parish?"—

He thought,—he thought—only of the interview which, between twelve and one of the clock, was to bring him once more into the presence of him whom poor George was beginning to regard as the arbitrator of his destinies.

No sooner, therefore, did the palace clock strike twelve, the hour which gave the signal for drawing the serge curtains of the room, and disposing every thing for the old lady's meridian doze, while he enjoyed his play-hour, than, having brushed himself into his neatest aspect, poor George hurried to the cutler's to claim his knife, and, if possible, obtain a second interview with his benefactor.

But though the little parcel containing his gift lay neatly folded up on the counter, "waiting to

be called for," his hopes of the latter satisfaction were speedily crushed.

"You 're in luck, my boy, I can tell you!" said the shopman, by whom his packet was delivered to him. "You 've knocked your nail on the head at the right moment.—My lord 's off to Ireland. His lordship was here an hour ago, to ask whether we 'd heerd or seen anything of you, or whether you 'd left your address."—

"Gone to Ireland?"—repeated the child, losing all heart to open the parcel, and ascertain whether the initials were correctly inscribed—"How very *very* unlucky!—You could not tell me, I suppose, sir, when his Lordship is likely to be back again?"—

"Not I!" replied the shopman. "But you may call again, if you like, in a week or two.—We 're seldom long without seeing his Lordship when he 's in Lon'on."—

Sorry comfort for poor George, who had been building such gorgeous castles in the air!—A journey to Ireland sounded to him almost as bad as

a voyage to America. Already he felt convinced that he should never look upon Lord Wroxton's open sunshiny face again,—never again listen to that ringing joyous voice which had cheered him with praises and thanks!—

Instead of pausing in the first quiet spot to examine his beautiful knife,—the first object of value he had ever been able to call his own,—as most boys of his age would have done, George Foreman went his moping way into the park, to reflect over his tantalizing mischance; and the probability that, if it had pleased providence that he should have visited the cutler's an hour earlier, and encountered his benefactor, he might have excited an interest in his favour, leading to discoveries connected with the name of Jasper securing his future welfare, and enabling him to comfort his poor disabled grandmother's declining years.

CHAPTER VII.

"'Tis of no mortal use sitting with one's arms crossed, and fretting, and fuming!" said George, after nearly an hour's cogitation,—winking his eyes so repeatedly as to induce a suspicion that there were tears in them he would fain get rid of without the shame of wiping them away,—as he sat on the parched grass of a shrubbery-nook of the St. James's park enclosure, into which he had retreated ;—

> A populous solitude of beasts and birds,

or rather of nursemaids, children, and Solan geese, which constituted his utmost experience of rustic pleasures—"'Tis of no mortal use hoping that folks will come out of their way to assist those who are too proud or too lazy to do so much as ask for assistance! As the proverb says, 'One must strive

to thrive!'—'Help thyself, and God will help thee!' was one of the few things I remember to have been taught me by my poor father."—

The result of which mental soliloquy was that, the young lord who had suddenly alighted in his path like a guardian angel, having disappeared with the same angelic celerity, George Foreman determined, instead of lounging away his hour's holiday on the morrow, to proceed straight to the noble mansion whose master answered to the name of Jasper; and ascertain what progress he could make, on his own account, in the establishment of his genealogical tree.—

"The grand footman in livery who opened the door, and looked so civilly at me when he found I had brought a letter to Miss Hallet," reflected George, "cannot be *very* angry at my merely asking him whether his master Sir Jasper has any relations of the name of Foreman, and more particularly a kinsman residing at New York."—

Very angry, however, the grand footman *was!* It was not the same man as the day before; though as

nearly resembling him as "a double cherry, seeming parted;" and conceiving himself to be "chaffed" by some saucy errand-boy of the neighbourhood, who had chosen a new reading of the "Does Mr. Thompson live here?"—immortalized in song,—he was about to inflict summary justice on the offender by flinging him down the stone steps; when the loudness of his threats brought into the hall a fellow-servant, who was busy in the adjoining dining-room.

"As I hope for mercy," cried he, "if this ben't the self-same little scum of a vagabond as brought the letter yesterday as fell into Sir Jasper's hand, and put the old gentleman into such a confounded fit of flustrums!"—

"The deuce it is!"—rejoined his companion, in whose huge fist the meagre shoulder of poor George was still grasped.—"In that case, my man, I recommend you to cut your lucky afore you're half a minute older. For I've the General's orders, in case as ever you showed your face agin, to give you to the p'lice."—

Strange to say, the circumstance of his being an object of displeasure to Sir Jasper, appeared to have mollified towards him the heart of the footman who so often found himself in a similar case; and though Thomas, his fellow-servant, (being perhaps less of a tyrant-hater,) still continued to mutter that "the urchin by his lurking about the premises belonged, may be, to a gang of housebreakers," the original enemy held open the street-door, and was glad to see the child turn the corner of Halkin Street in safety, before he closed it, to return to his work.—

Had Mr. Talbot (who, at that moment, was dozing with his eyes open over the Supplement to the Morning Herald, in his own room,) chanced to enter the hall while the altercation was carrying on, and beheld before him the living image of his own dear Master Jass, as he parted from him in the High Street of Plymouth, forty years before, what a change had been wrought in the destinies of the poor little starveling who returned that day in utter despondency to the court — to be

taunted by its urchin population with inquiries how the jacket of the Yankee Prince came to be patched at the elbows?—

Still, notwithstanding the failure of his project for want of other sympathies, George felt irresistibly attracted towards a house where abided one of the name of Jasper, as well as the damsel so dear to the handsome young lord. Whenever he could obtain from his grandmother scope for wandering, his feet mechanically turned in the direction of Belgrave Square. Though threatened with broken bones if he presented himself again at the house, the public causeway was free.—Experience had taught him, indeed, since he abided in England, that the freedom of the land of liberty is of a more limited nature than dwellers beyond the high seas are apt to suppose. Still, he could not but hope that there existed neither law nor enactment rendering it treasonable to saunter past the windows of this or that house in Belgrave or any other Street; inhaling the sweetness of the mignionette in its balconies, and listening to the

sweet voice of an unseen musician; the touching charm of whose music he could not, somehow or other, but connect with the absence from England of her noble correspondent.

Again and again, did he wander in the same direction; listening and listening with feelings nearly as deeply touched as Lord Wroxton's might have been, had he found himself within reach of the same precious voice. For ill as his lordship conceived himself to have been used by the girl who, after affording encouragement to his courtship, had so violated the common courtesies of society towards him as to re-enclose him in a blank cover the letter delivered at her uncle's house by his trusty little messenger, it was not in his nature to resent her conduct as he ought.—At the moment of quitting London, to avoid the painful ordeal of some accidental encounter with the coquette who had so wantonly encouraged and so cruelly blighted his hopes, he felt that he loved her better than ever. It had required indeed all the excitement created by wounded pride, to enable him to tear

himself from the spot that contained the object of his attachment.

All this, however, was little dreamed of by poor Mira.—Lord Wroxton's sudden disappearance from the London world in the midst of a flirtation apparently indicative of an intention to offer her his hand, — without explanation, — without apology, — could only be attributed to one of those fits of caprice in which young men, particularly when guardsmen,—more particularly when so handsome as Lord Wroxton,—think themselves privileged to indulge; regardless of the heart-break or discredit they occasion to the weaker sex.

For how was she to surmise that he had written, placing his hand and heart at her disposal; and that his letter had been ignominiously returned to him, within an hour of the sending? or how conjecture that the malicious Sir Æneas, who had fixed his cunning eye upon her and her fortune to become the booty of his cubbish son, had found means to convince her uncle (of all men living, perhaps,

the most ignorant of the world)—that the Lord Wroxton, who pretended to the hand of his niece was a professed gamester,—a man of neither substance nor credit,—who sought her only as heiress-presumptive to the wealth of the hero of Bhurtpoor!—

Even had poor Mira witnessed the burst of rage with which Sir Jasper examined the seal of the letter thrown by chance into his hands, and, on recognizing the arms of the man who, only the night before, had been placed before him in so opprobrious a light, her guilelessness of disposition would have prevented her suspecting half the truth.—She could never have brought herself to believe that Sir Jasper had a treacherous friend.—She could never have brought herself to believe that Lord Wroxton had an enemy!—

Grievous as was the result of all these misunderstandings to poor George Foreman, a worse was still to ensue in the chapter of accidents that formed the history of the ill-fated boy.—Amidst the whirl of pleasures with which Sir Jasper endeavoured to

raise the spirits of his niece after the departure of the handsome young guardsman,—fêtes,—operas,—balls,—exhibitions,—dejeuners,—and picnic parties,—occurred the mischance already described as endangering his life.

One day, after watching for some time the handsome chariot waiting before the door of Sir Jasper's house, in the hope of obtaining a glimpse of its master, he saw the young and lovely girl to whose melting voice he had so often listened with delight, step hurriedly into the carriage, and drive off towards Piccadilly as rapidly as a pair of blood-horses could lay legs to the ground; and having previously resolved to indulge his eyes with a sight of the face and features of Lord Wroxton's fair correspondent, the boy was rash enough to set off after the carriage, intending to stop when and where it stopped.

In hurrying along till they reached Grosvenor Place, poor George looked neither before him nor behind. He seemed to *feel* rather than see that he was following a carriage containing an indivi-

dual with whose destinies his own were strangely and inexplicably intertwined; nor was he able to calculate upon the movement likely to be produced by Miss Hallet's pulling the checkstring with the express view of making the coachman drive slower.—

The result had already been insisted upon.—Thrown down by the horses in the swerve produced by a sudden effort to stop them, half an inch and half a second more, would have sufficed to place the little fellow beyond reach of further suffering, by carrying the wheels over his body. But when, still dizzy from the shock of his stunning overthrow, he raised his eyes with the wistful earnestness of one in expectation of instant death, and caught sight of the lovely but indignant face of Miss Hallet, incensed by the reckless driving of the coachman, her anger was imputed by the child to resentment of his unfortunate presumption.—Nothing doubting that he had been recognized by the footman as the messenger so opprobriously thrust out of his master's doors the preceding

week, he had reason to apprehend further castigation.—

Hastily rising, therefore, and shaking himself, to prove to his own satisfaction and that of the resentful bystanders, that no bones were broken, he managed to creep away under the arms of the gathering crowd. Away he went—as fast as his luckily uninjured legs enabled him—to take refuge against the enemies his indiscretion had created.—Familiar with the by-ways of the neighbourhood, he reached his miserable hiding-place of a home, long before the servant employed by Miss Hallet to go in search of the poor boy who had been frightened, if not hurt, to bid him come to the house in Belgrave Street for compensation, the following day, returned out of breath to acquaint his young lady that the boy "warn't no whurs to be found."—

And now, commenced the darker days of poor George Foreman. A long-enduring pain is a grievous trial, even to well-tended and fondly-fostered children. To their limited comprehension

there is something unnatural,—something unrelenting,—something almost unjust, in the dispensation of prolonged suffering.—But a hard-working, ill-fed child,—a child who knows that its torment will be rebuked as a pretext for idleness, and that the tears of its restless feverish nights must be shed in silence,—is indeed an object of compassion !—

It was not much the boy had ever enjoyed, to sweeten his bitter bread, or lighten his constant labours. But that little, he had enjoyed heartily. —The finest lord in the land had never welcomed the breath of a May morning with the delight it called up in his heart, when, rising with the dawn, he managed to attain the river-side, or the confines of Kensington Gardens, hours before his grandmother was awake.—To watch the boats gliding along that mighty stream, or listen to the birds waking up and tuning their songs of gladness among the trees, as blithe as the impulses of his own buoyant nature, called up feelings of grateful exultation in his soul.

All this was over now.—A few days of severe

suffering sufficed to convince him that the internal injury occasioned by his contusions, was one that would take long in curing.—The dispensary surgeon who had attended his grandmother, declared that there was no harm done.—But advice and medicaments gratuitously bestowed, are seldom bestowed with due consideration; and finding it so difficult to walk, and so impossible to sleep, the boy began to suspect that, slight as the injury might appear, it would interfere with many of his duties, and all his pleasures.—

"I would not for the world my poor grandmother should suspect the truth," thought he, on rising from his wretched mattrass on the floor, with every pulse in his frame throbbing.—"She would be so uneasy if she knew how difficult I find it now to turn her in bed.—And were I to be quite laid up, what, what would become of her!—So little money left, to pay anybody for waiting upon her;—and without pay, who but such as are bound by duty, would submit to her constant scoldings and grumblings. Oh! how I hope that I may get rid of this gnawing

pain!—At *her* age, it would be so dreadful to be left to the mercy of strangers!—At *her* age, it would be so sad a trial to have to go into the workhouse at last!—

CHAPTER VIII.

"I AM sure I don't know why I take such pleasure in looking at you, my poor knife!" murmured the little fellow to himself, one dreary autumnal day, when the old lady, after snarling at him throughout the afternoon, having sunk into her evening doze, he attempted to comfort himself by examining his solitary piece of property.—"You are the cause, I'm afraid, of all my pains and aches!—But for taking that unlucky letter to Belgrave Street, I should never have drawn upon myself the ill-will of strangers. I often wonder, now that I am no longer able to get as far as that unlucky house (which, the last time I saw it, after they all went out of town, looked so changed and gloomy, the shutters closed up, as though some one lay dead in the house—no sweet singing heard out of the draw-

ing-room window, and the mignionette rustling brown and dead in the boxes,)—what it could be that, in spite of everything, seemed to draw me to the place, all through the summer weather!—The houses with gardens opening out of the Green Park and Spring Gardens, are twice as cheerful to look at.—But after I had once rung at the bell, to serve that handsome officer, it seemed as if I could hardly restrain my hands from doing it again!"

But, however conscious of the evil influence which his chance-encounter with Lord Wroxton had wrought over his destinies, George could not forbear handling with fondness his handsome gift. In that shabby, denuded room, it shone as with the brightness of a jewel!—The only pity was, that it was too beautiful for use.—

For George was becoming handy in the use of such implements.—A knife of common materials,—a stout old knife which he had appropriated to himself out of a shabby mildewed seal-skin pocket-book found among his grandmother's stores, (the handle of which was uncouthly marked with the initials

I. and T.) was the source of his pleasantest occupations. Soon after the accident which rendered exercise less easy, while searching in the dark closet that contained his few books, for the volume of Robinson Crusoe which has so often brightened the solitary hours of a playmate-less child, he laid his hand upon a piece of beech-wood, the residue of the materials of his poor old bird-cage, given him by a turner who occupied the ground-floor of the same house, and was interested in his favour by his intelligent curiosity concerning the mechanical powers of his lathe.—

On examining the block of wood, with the intention of making it useful by splitting it into matches, George remembered having laid it aside, after a fruitless endeavour to carve upon the surface an effigy of his lost favourite.—A more deliberate survey, now that the beauties of the poor chaffinch had somewhat declined in his fancy, convinced him that his attempt, if not a *chef-d'œuvre*, had failed only for want of sufficient leisure to bestow upon the completion of the details.—

"It was summer weather, then," said he, "and I had not yet lost the power of enjoying it;—which made it difficult to sit hour after hour, working and working away at the niceties of a bird's plumage. —But now that I have so much time upon my hands, I think I could manage to finish it better than I ever hoped for."

And being a labour of love, the patient boy never rested till the bird stood out in relief from the block,—a life-like portrait of his pet.

Exhibit his work to his grandmother, he dared not; for she would have called it idling away his time. The bird, indeed, was a sore subject altogether.—Mrs. Lawrie had often accused her grandson of having mischievously made away with it, only as a pretext for calling her a tyrant.

The difficulties he had surmounted in the execution of his task, however, inspired him with a taste for such efforts.—He found that, depending rather on dexterity than strength, the exercise of his right arm gave no pain to the sprained shoulder;—and as it was easy to obtain pieces of refuse wood from

his friend the turner, he next undertook the likeness of a monkey, which he remembered only too well as the favourite of the ship's crew of the ill-starred Antelope.—It was in fact the adroitness with which one of the sailors had carved in cocoa-shell a toy-image of the little beast, which afforded to young Foreman his first lesson in the art.

This specimen of his skill he ventured to exhibit to the invalid.—Nor did the discouraging indifference with which she surveyed it, prevent his renewing his attempt.—

"I feel sure," said the persevering child, in excuse to the old lady for his occupation, "that, by taking constant pains, I should make something of it in time."

"And what then?"—cried she. "Who ever earned a gentleman's living out of chopping sticks? The only thing that comes of the time you waste, is a litter of chips and sawdust!—However, I am daily expecting an answer to the letter I wrote last spring to my blood-relation General Smallshot, of Cincinnati, about the best way of getting you out

in the world; and then, George, there must be an end of all this child's play."

George was beginning to understand the value set upon his grandmother's application to her American kindred, too well to entertain much fear of General Smallshot's interference with his pursuits. But it had glanced of late more than once into his mind, that, by dint of careful application, he might render his carvings worthy, if not of his grandmother's applause, of the purchase of some itinerant vender of toys, such as he sometimes encountered in the streets of the West End. —From *her*, indeed, his trade must be kept a mystery.—The half-starved old lady need never know that he had derogated to a calling "unfit for a gentleman's son."—But if, by the labour of his hands, he was enabled to increase her scanty store of the necessaries of life, what a triumph for his industry!—

Having completed what, though not perhaps as delicately exquisite as one of the carvings of Grinling Gibbons, was a wonderful achievement

for the hand of an untaught child, a cow and her calf, which he was able to study from nature in the pastures of the park, he ventured one day to exhibit it to his neighbour of the lathe.—

"*Your* handiwork?—Do you mean to say, my man, that, with your own hands, you cut them cattle out o' one o' my useless clumps?"—cried the turner, who, though he fancied the animals would have had a neater looker had their skins been as smooth as if turned by his own lathe, regarded the little group as a miraculous effort of patience.—"Well, I *must* say as you re an industerous little fellow;—and you're welcome to any odd bit o' wood, not oversized, as you can find in my workshop.—'Tis a thousand pities but you could get some 'un to bind you apprentice to a carver and gilder, where you'd learn your trade, shipshape.—*My* boy Jack, (him as you used to slink away from, for his floutin' you with being a Yankee) is 'prenticed to a tiptop bricklayer."

"What would become of my poor grandmother, if I were forced to leave her?"—afforded a suffi-

cient explanation to the good-natured turner, of a reluctance, which the lad dared not ascribe to the prohibitions of the haughty old lady.—But though George longed to add an inquiry whether any of the toyshops worked for by his friend were likely to purchase his carvings, he had not courage. It seemed like encroaching on Mr. Daniel's good-will to ask his assistance in disposing of his merchandise, as well as in supplying him with materials.—

Nevertheless the times were bad enough with George and his grandmother to justify his overlooking such scruples.—No letters arrived from New York. Though Mrs. Lawrie had laid by some silver in the corner of her workbasket, for the express purpose of defraying the postage of the heavy enclosures she expected, she listened and listened vainly, day after day, week after week, for months, for the sound of the door-bell connected with the floor she occupied; which during her four years' occupancy had found leisure to grow rusty, and somewhat slow in its operations.

For some time after her seizure, indeed, the mysterious obstinacy with which she persisted in keeping the keys of her boxes, and having them brought to her bedside to be opened by her grandson before her eyes, instead of confiding in his discretion, induced, in the discursive fancy of one so young, a hope that secret treasures, more or less extensive, might be concealed therein;—thousands of pounds in notes,—or a rough gem or two of priceless value,—such as in his early childhood he had seen exhibited by his poor father to the Captain of the Antelope, as a portion of his Brasilian spoil.—But he was now only too sadly certain that their destitution was complete.—

By these untimely struggles with the cares of life,—the gripe of poverty, the depression of loneliness, and the endurance of uncompassionated pain,—the mind of the forlorn child meanwhile became at once strengthened and weakened;—strengthened by ascendancy over physical influences,—weakened, by perpetual indulgence in flights of imagination.—Companionless,—and provided

with books so few in number and powerful in nature, (such as the works of De Foe, and Bunyan, and Goldsmith,) that their fictions, often studied, had become truth to *him*,—the lives of Crusoe and the Primrose family being as it were a portion of his own,—the boy's existence was divided between a life of sordid labour and a sphere of ineffable enjoyment.—

His sense of religion was exalted as that of some solitary ascetic.—The Faith—the Hope of that young heart were intense as those of the wildest enthusiast.—None who looked upon the meek face of the sickly child, as he performed his daily tasks and sat down afterwards near the window,—where at mid-day, the daylight of the dim court scarcely equalled the twilight of more favoured localities,—with his knife and file, and an old watchspring bestowed on him by his friend the turner, to while away hours and hours in giving a life-like turn to his little groups, were likely to attribute the inspirations of genius to a nature apparently so plodding;—still less, to

surmise the visions of glory brightening his little soul;—visions which, prospered by instruction and encouragement, might have created a Michael Angelo or a Roubilliac; but which, rendered still more sublime by suffering and resignation, were preparing an angel for Heaven.—

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the house in Belgrave Street, whose departure from town created a blank in his existence, were deriving as much benefit in health and spirits from the move, as those of poor George had suffered.

Towards the end of the London spring, (the summer of every other country in Europe,) Miss Hallet's gradual loss of bloom, appetite, and cheerfulness, occasioned serious uneasiness to her uncle.—

"Mira's face is growing as white as her muslin gown!"—was his frequent complaint to his friend and frequent companion, Admiral Hardy.—

"What would you have,—what would you have?"—retorted the blunt old seaman.—"You stifle the girl, night after night, in ball-rooms, compared with which the climate of Mozambico is

an icehouse ; and then, wonder that she is no longer as fresh as a rose !"—

"But I don't see other young ladies, under the same circumstances, look as pale and drooping as my niece !"—

"May be not, my dear General ; but all is not gold that glistens.—If complexions of every dye, from maiden's blush to poppy, were not to be purchased in Regent Street at half-a-crown a scruple, one might better judge the bad effects of the Senegambian heat of our ill-ventilated fêtes."—

"I'm sadly afraid, my dear Hardy," persisted Sir Jasper, shaking his head,—"that there are other causes for my niece's altered appearance than hot rooms and the fag of the season !"—

"In love, perhaps ?"—

The General nodded assent.

"Well, so much the better !"—rejoined his warm-hearted companion.—"She's too good a girl, and too much of a lady, to have chosen unworthily ; and you won't deny, I hope, that there's money enough in your ship's coffers to make a young

couple and half-a-dozen bantlings happy and comfortable, without fear of bringing down banyan days upon yourself?"

They were proceeding, at that moment, leisurely along the "sweet shady side of Pall Mall," towards the United Service Club, without much fear of interruption. But, though thus pettishly apostrophized, Sir Jasper sauntered on in silence.

"And I must say, my dear Hallet," added the Admiral, more earnestly, "that, had I made up my mind as you say *you* have, to be represented hereafter in my fortune and name by my niece and her heirs for ever, I should be far better pleased to have them growing up under my eyes, than run the risk of what adventurers the heiress might fall in the way of, after I was dead and gone."—

"Not much chance of any heirs of Mira's growing up 'under my own eyes!'" was the almost surly rejoinder of Sir Jasper.—"Whatever you may think of her prudence, my dear Hardy, I promise you she has set her heart on a scamp who, to the longest day I have to live, shall never

obtain *my* sanction to her choice.—And what's more, she'll find by my will that the old pepperpot has taken precautions against having his coffin danced over by one who, if once she was his wife, would bring her to rags,—ay, and leave her in them,—before I was cold in my grave."

"You know your own affairs best, General," replied Hardy, too familiar with the force of his friend's prejudices and warmth of his temper, to run the risk of a quarrel by tilting against them in the dark.—"But I must needs say that, if you have set your mind upon restoring the poor girl's complexion, the best cosmetic you can use is to overlook a few faults in her sweetheart; or at least, give her an opportunity of reforming them into virtues."—

A groan, nearly resembling a growl, constituted the sole response of Sir Jasper. Little in the habit of taking advice that did not square with his purposes, he felt so firmly resolved against overlooking those vices of Lord Wroxton's which his friend the Admiral was mealy-mouthed enough to qualify

by the name of "faults," that on reaching the Club, and discerning his obsequious friend, Sir Æneas Scrimgeour, in the library, he hobbled off to meet him ; and, dragging him by the button into a distant window, began to discuss—in whispers, indeed, but impetuous and incoherent whispers,—a project suggested by that plausible gentleman over his piquet, some evenings before, that his eldest son, a prig of the first water, who after being "intended for the church," and "intended for the law," and proving by his rustication at college his unfitness for either vocation, should become the "intended" of Mira Hallet.

"I agree with you, Scrimgeour," said Sir Jasper, "that it is next to impossible for young folks to make acquaintance in London.—A formal morning visit or two, or bobbing through a quadrille together, now and then, is by no means the way to ascertain whether their tempers and pursuits are compatible."

"And, unluckily, my dear Sir Jasper, we have neither of us a country-seat, to promote a closer

intimacy between the young people," rejoined the demure speculator.—"Lady Scrimgeour and myself indeed, are thinking of passing the autumn at Brighton.—But what is Brighton but London viewed through the wrong end of the opera-glass!"—

"No, no!—That would never do!"—pettishly interrupted Sir Jasper. "I've a far better project than *that* for bringing matters to a crisis. You were laughing at me t'other day, if you remember, for getting a fashionable doctor, like Mildman, into my house—"

"I certainly ventured to express my anxiety, my dear General, to see you provided with some better antidote than Dr. Mitis Mildman, against an attack of cholera or brain-fever."

"And I told you, in answer, that when one or t'other broke out in my family, some fellow with a bald pate instead of a brown Brutus, would be the man for my money;—but that, meanwhile, my doctor with the dashing phaeton, was a field-piece whose calibre and range exactly suited my battery."

"And is Dr. Mitis Mildman, then, to be the means of"—

"He's to be nothing,—a part for which I suspect him to be admirably qualified by nature.—All I wanted of him is done. Mildman was recommended to me by a duke, to whom he had been recommended by another duke, as the very person for a nervous patient,—so agreeable,—so conciliating,—so—all that sort of thing—(you know the kind of humbug which is sure to get a man recommended by one duke to another?)—And I must do him the justice to say, that he has come fully up to the mark of their praises."—

"I truly rejoice to hear it," sighed the sympathizing Sir Æneas. "But I thought I understood just now that Miss Hallet's health was anything but improved?"—

"*Improved?*—Why, you don't suppose I was ass enough to fancy that a jackanapes like *that* was likely to *cure* the girl?—Not I!—All I wanted of him was to order us to the Continent.—It does not do for the head of a family, who has been swearing

blue blazes for the last half-dozen years that no earthly inducement should get him to set foot among the Mounseers or Meinherrs, to veer round, without rhyme or reason, and suddenly manifest a desire to go abroad.—But I foresaw that my phaeton-friend, the moment he found that as to getting a colour or an appetite for poor Mira, he might as well attempt to undome St. Paul's, would hit upon the panacea which, now-a-days, cures gout, liver-complaint, consumption, lameness, blindness, and old age,—the German Baths!—And yesterday, almost within half an hour of the time I expected, out he came with his prescription!—'His charming patient was not getting on quite so well as he could wish. What if we were to try Wiesbaden?' "—

"And to Wiesbaden, then, you are going?" demanded his friend,—glad at last to come to an understanding; "and you wish my son William to go with you?"—

"Not exactly *with* us,—*that* would be too much of a good thing!" said the plain-spoken Sir Jasper.

"In these squeamish times, young folks don't travel together in the same carriage till they've got the ring on their finger. But as we 've both made up our minds, he can't do better than meet us on the Rhine. Folks have fine free-and-easy ways with them, I'm told, in those parts; and my poor girl will perhaps pluck up her spirits in a new scene, among new people; in which case, the young couple won't be long in finding out whether they'd rather be two, or one."—

Acquiescence,—and apparently joyful acquiescence,—was of course inevitable. But, by a certain screw in the upper lip of the wily Sir Æneas, as he mounted his hack after the colloquy to proceed to Rotten Row in search of his son and communicate the state of his prospects,—there were grounds for inferring that he thought the journey a long one for a gentleman hitherto so unlucky in the missions for which he was "intended."

"Bill might go further and fare worse, if one were *sure* of the girl,"—mused the crafty old gentleman. "But an heiress in hand is worth two in the

bush. I don't know what my son may think of it; but it strikes me, that a tour of the German Baths for the chance of being refused by Miss Hallet, is but angling with a golden hook, after all!"—

CHAPTER IX.

Few things more inspiriting, even in these days of "sensations," than, having resolved to cast aside for a time the cares and responsibilities of home, to set forth upon a sunny day, in a commodious English travelling-carriage, with an ample letter of credit and a sufficient bag of five-franc pieces in the custody of a trustworthy courier; with nothing to do but to hurry or slacken our journey at our own good liking:—and exercise, in concert with an intelligent companion, our eyes, ears, and understanding.

The wheels fly,—the waters sparkle,—the meadows send forth their moist exhalations,—the woods expand their green recesses,—the wide landscape extends its dissolving views of land and sea, melting into the blue horizon as we pass;—on,

on, on, — to-day over purple heaths and misty hills,—

To-morrow, through fresh fields and pastures new;

everywhere, a new aspect of nature;—everywhere, the pleasant sounds and sights that feed the hungry mind of the traveller;—everywhere welcome;—everywhere the sound night-rest of the weary, cheered by the prospect of a morrow full of hope and full of promise, containing the germ of a whole succession of morrows, that rise ready-crowned and triumphant from the earth, like the kings of Banquo's dynasty.

Such was the departure of the General and his niece; and, before they reached Charing Cross, so radiant with smiles became the face of Miss Hallet, that there might have been some pretext for Sir Jasper's ordering back the carriage, unpacking the trunks, and dismissing the courier; so clear was it that half the purpose of the journey was already accomplished, and so lukewarm the old gentleman's ardour for a foreign tour.—

But whereas, with the proverbial stolidity of

parents and guardians, it never occurred to him to inquire whether the "jackanapes of a lord," whose letter he had so unceremoniously returned, was *really* gone salmon-fishing to his estates in Ireland, as announced by those veracious chroniclers of London small-talk, the newspapers, (which, for the sum of one pound one, would have been equally ready to announce his safe arrival in Nova Zembla,) —Sir Jasper had of course no grounds for suspecting that the excitement of feeling beaming from Mira's beautiful eyes and mantling her glowing cheek, arose from the hope of meeting the object of her affections in her transit through Paris, where, whatever the newspapers might say about it, *she* knew him to be residing.

Still trusting that the strangeness of his conduct might be explained away, and that his abrupt departure was caused by circumstances over which he had no control, her continental trip was a blessing as welcome as unhoped for; and as it was impossible for her to know by intuition that the rumbling of their well-loaded carriage along Pall

Mall, shook upon his wretched mattrass the poor little fellow reduced to his present state of suffering by the inadvertence of her coachman, whom she had grieved over and sought after in vain, there was no drawback upon her satisfaction.

Sir Jasper, on the other hand, was a little out of spirits;—and, strange to tell, without being the least out of temper.—For the first time for more years than he was well able to count, he had parted from his trusty John Talbot.—John had been declining in health, of late, nearly as much as his young lady.—On finding that, in spite of his predetermination to fight her battles, his master had been beforehand with him in thwarting her inclinations and blighting the rose upon her cheek, the old man had suddenly fallen out with fate.—

"I was in hopes to see some 'un or another the better and happier for us, afore I died!" mused the veteran, shrugging his shoulders despondingly, after discovering Miss Mira one day in tears in her boudoir, exactly as he had many a time and oft

discovered poor Madam Hallet, in the old barrack-room.—"But it's no good hoping.—The old leaven of obstinacy and hard-heartedness is in him still; and he won't be easy till he 's worreted this sweet creatur' into her grave, like the others afore her."—

And so thoroughly did this train of reflection carry back the old fellow's mind into the past, that his heart became like a lump of clay within his breast; till sorrow brought on sickness, and he was unable to discharge his usual duties in the house.—

"If you will permit me, my dear Sir Jasper," observed Dr. Mitis Mildman, ("always submitting my judgment to that of a man so well qualified as yourself to legislate the affairs of your family,) I beg to offer my opinion that your gallant veteran would derive serious benefit from country air, and, above all, country quiet; and that, by taking him to the Continent, you might reckon with certainty on leaving his bones there on your return."—

On this hint, the General determined to grant

a petition frequently preferred to him by John since his return from India,—for leave to visit his native village at the foot of the Wrekin, and ascertain whether he had nephews or nieces surviving, to whom he might show himself a kinder uncle than certain other uncles that he wot of.—

The journey was easily settled.—Sir Jasper, being a stanch Christmas-keeper, had already signified his intention of returning to England and his fireside, early in the winter; and John Talbot was to precede the family in Belgrave Street, and see the house got ready for their reception.

But now that the parting had actually taken place, the General almost repented having consented to the plan.—Not because the adroit, officious courier, who was to officiate as his own man, annoyed him by his over-assiduity; but because John, overcome at the last moment by feeling that he was transgressing against the solemn promise made to his mistress on her death-bed, had responded to the affectionate gripe of the hand bestowed upon him by the General, by an irrepres-

sible burst of tears.—Master and man, in short, were so deeply affected, that nothing but Dr. Mildman's denunciations prevented Miss Hallet from entreating poor Talbot to give up his pilgrimage into Shropshire, and resume his usual place in the rumble.

By the time they reached Paris, however, she rejoiced that she had abstained from interference. Lucy, to whom the attentions of the officious courier were such as constitute an essential item among the perquisites of a pretty *soubrette*, succeeded in convincing her young lady that the "discomfits and fusses of foring travel would have made an end of poor old Mr. Talbot!"—

It is true the happy Mira was in a mood to be convinced of any thing that any body chose to be at the pains of impressing upon her mind, on any possible subject.—The start and flush of delight with which she was recognized by Lord Wroxton, when driving, on the day following her arrival, through the Bois de Boulogne, fragrant at that moment with the emanations of thousands of

acacia blossoms, to visit the palace of St. Cloud, having satisfied her that whatever the cause of his estrangement, it had not arisen from any change of feeling towards her, she found herself too much in charity with the world to be unnecessarily unpersuadable or incredulous.—

The promptitude of Lord Wroxton's conviction, on the other hand, that, if he presumed to address her again, his letter would not be again returned to him unopened, did great credit to the expressive eloquence of her countenance. And on the present occasion, he was either luckier in the selection of his foot-page, or the officious courier regarded the safe conveyance of all billet-doux addressed to the young lady of the party consigned to his polite tyranny and smiling extortions, peculiarly his affair; for, within four and twenty hours of their chance collision, letters had been exchanged between the young people; the explanations contained wherein, sufficed to prove to both that they had been cruelly dealt with by Sir Jasper.

To bring his motives and intentions more explicitly

to the proof, Lord Wroxton agreed to meet them at Wiesbaden, whither they were proceeding on the morrow; Miss Hallet being sanguine in her conviction that he had only to become better known to the General, to efface from his mind all erroneous impressions.—

"My poor uncle is hasty and hot-headed," argued she. "But there is so much kindness in his heart as well as honour in his character, that I am persuaded he will end by recognizing his mistake; and accord the consent so essential to my happiness."—

And though wilful old uncles seldom find indulgence in the eyes of those whose love-affairs are traversed by their petulance, the spirited young soldier felt too much deference towards a veteran who had won his laurels so nobly and wore them with so manly a grace, not to be disposed to more forbearance in *his* case than if dealing with the hauteur of the greatest duke in the peerage.—

As the General drew towards his journey's end, however, his deportment became anything but proud or petulant; and, little suspecting the precious

project he had concocted with Sir Æneas, his niece scarcely knew what to make of his unaccountable elation.

"What will you bet me, child," cried he, when, at Mayence, they first gained sight of the Rhine, "that you do not return to England under another name than the one inscribed in my passport?—I spy a wedding in my family, Miss Mira,—ay! and at no great distance off."—

So loud was the explosion of merriment with which he rewarded his own sally, that his astonished niece began to wonder whether his sudden change of deportment owed anything to the absence of John Talbot, whose gray head and grave face were, at all times, a mirror of decorum.

The sanguine spirit of youth, however, soon suggested a surmise that her uncle's wager and allusions might intimate further insight into what was going on between herself and Lord Wroxton, than he chose to confess. Yes! The wedding he pretended to foresee *could* allude only to her secret engagement!—Impossible for even the most way-

ward and despotic of uncles to imagine that she would give her hand to any other man than him who was in possession of her heart. Sir Jasper was doubtless preparing some charming surprise. The *trousseau* might have been secretly ordered. The special license was perhaps already procured!—

What, therefore, was Mira's consternation, when, the day after their arrival at Wiesbaden, in answer to her exclamation of "Who in the world, dear uncle, was that extraordinary-looking young man, who fastened upon us so familiarly on our way from the Kochbrunnen, this morning?" — Sir Jasper replied by a growling hint to her to show more forbearance towards "a young friend of his, the son of one of his oldest comrades;—who was likely to be their frequent guest and companion during their tour of the German baths."

Aware that remonstrance was useless, already Miss Hallet beheld the overthrow of her projects! — If Sir Jasper could discern attraction in the company of the flashy-looking forward cub, whose

insolent mode of discussing every foreigner they met served to provoke universal indignation, how unlikely that he would relent in favour of the mild and somewhat reserved Lord Wroxton!—

But could it really be in behalf of this noisy, prating Mr. Scrimgeour, that the General had proposed the bet concerning her marriage in foreign parts?—Could he *really* suppose that, after declining the addresses of men irreproachable in manners and prepossessing in appearance, she should be wrought upon to accept an ill-bred boor, merely because he was prepared to live in sneaking dependence upon her uncle for the remainder of his life?—

"No hope for us!"—was the intimation she managed to convey to the object of her affections, immediately on his arrival at the Quatre Saisons.—"Better defer, for a time, any further appeal to my uncle. At all events, do not call till you hear from me again."—

The General was, in truth, in one of his most irritable moods.—The total of the whole of Dr.

Mitis Mildman's emollient draughts and persuasive speeches, would not have medicined him into good humour.—Like other angry people, he grew doubly angry on finding himself in the wrong; and like other angry people, made the wrong more wrongful, by not choosing to admit himself in fault.—For though far from a polished man, Sir Jasper was a sterling gentleman; and the boastings and groundless pretensions of his protégé were in reality as offensive to *him* as to his niece.—But having chosen to fancy that the son of a friend he valued, must be full of valuable qualities, he was obstinate in devising palliatives for the bad ones only too manifest.—

"Young Scrimgeour was shy,—and shy people have the knack of doing impudent things.—It was the poor fellow's first visit to the Continent.—If he sinned, it was through ignorance of the habits of the place."—

But the wrath with which he did not choose to charge the shoulders of the man he had brought some hundreds of miles in pursuance of a caprice

of his own, fell with double weight on those of poor Miss Hallet. No John Talbot, now, to plead her cause with him at his up-risings and down-lyings. No faithful friend to remind him, while he was shaving, that woman, as the weaker vessel, demands the utmost support and indulgence of the nobler sex ;—and the consequence was, that his fractiousness expended itself in fault-finding from morning till night.

Young Scrimgeour, however, had received private instructions from his father, that, let the Bhurtpoor tiger roar or show his fangs as he might, *his* cue must be submission ; and on finding the "intended" prepared to swallow any amount of affronts, the General indulged him with more than his usual allowance of "fantastic tricks."

"Between the coldness of the young lady, and the warmth of the old gentleman, my life here is a perfect ague-fit !"—muttered the heiress-hunter.—

But as Miss Hallet insisted upon the early hours essential to bathers, he found no great difficulty in consoling himself with society better suited

to his taste,—which was far more that of a gent than a gentleman,—after Sir Jasper's sober family had retired to rest.—

"Yet we shall never succeed in persuading my uncle of all this, dear Admiral!" said poor Mira to Sir Jasper's faithful friend, old Hardy, who, having fretted for a week or ten days after the departure of the Belgrave Street family, had suddenly determined to exchange his usual autumn at Cheltenham for a digestion-hunt among the Brünnen of Nassau, and joined the party at the Hotel des Quatre Saisons.—

"If your intended possess but half the *vovç* of his wheedling old father," retorted the blunt sailor, "there may be some difficulty.—But depend upon me, my dear, that, against your will, you shall never be Mrs. Scrimgeour, or Mrs. Anything Else in the world."—

"And may I also depend upon *you*," inquired Miss Hallet, more timidly,—"to assist me in overcoming the antipathy my uncle has unhappily conceived against Lord Wroxton?"—

"Antipathy to a fine open-hearted, unaffected, young fellow,—one of the handsomest and most popular in the guards?" said the Admiral. "Antipathy to Wroxton?—Nay!—if *he* be the pretender to your hand to whom Hallet was alluding last night as a roué and a scamp, I'm afraid the state of my old friend's wits is matter for a strait waistcoat!"—

"But the strait waistcoat, my dear Admiral, would do little to improve our prospects," rejoined Mira, with a smile.—"Far better bring my poor uncle to reason, than drive him to distraction!"—

"To own the truth, my dear," resumed Admiral Hardy, "I'm as little fond of match-making as of match-marring;—having found by experience, that the happy couple are pretty sure to turn upon the go-between, as soon as the honey-moon's over, and give him his share of all that 's left,—the *whacks!*—eh! my dear?"—

But Mira could not laugh at what involved the whole happiness of her life!

"By meddling with one of these lovers of yours,"

continued the jocose old gentleman, "I should be sure to burn my fingers; — by meddling with t'other, to dirty them.—But how comes it, pray, that Lord Wroxton is not known to the General, by sight?"

"My uncle was detained by illness from the ball where your sister, Lady Culross, made us acquainted; when, unluckily, my praises of my new partner induced him to consult Sir Æneas Scrimgeour before he consented to the introduction I proposed."—

"Old Scrimgeour?—Ay, ay!—I understand it all now!—The letter which Hallet so unceremoniously returned to my young friend, on the strength of the scandals by which his mind was poisoned, contained proposals; — and hence, all these misunderstandings!"

"But since my uncle would certainly, for consistency sake, decline Lord Wroxton's acquaintance," observed the anxious girl, "surely, as his arrival here has not yet transpired, you might manage to make him known to the General."—

"Under a feigned name?"—interrupted the vivacious old man. "No, no! my dear—keep such paltry expedients as *that* for farces and novels."—

"Not under a feigned name, but under no name at all," eagerly added Miss Hallet. "My uncle will be sure to join you, when walking together; and all I ask is that you will abstain from presenting Lord Wroxton. The General is the last man in the world to ask for an introduction.—Ceremonies and formalities of all kinds are his aversion. And when he finds that the man so misrepresented to him is, in fact,—"

"A modern Sir Philip Sidney,—a Chevalier Bayard,—an Admirable Crichton,—a Sir Charles Grandison,—an Amadis de Gaul,—"

"If this be the way, Admiral," interrupted Mira, "in which you are going to stand my friend"—

"Nay, my dear, I have done!"—interrupted, in his turn, the merry old seaman. "I wished only to spare you the trouble of enumerating the perfections which every young lady of proper sensibility attri-

butes to her first love. Seriously, however, I'll do what I can.—I agree with you, that in dealing with such a temper as the General's, leading is safer than driving.—All I ask in return, my dear young lady, is that, should our matrimonial speculations prosper, you 'll be married in England,—allow this Sir Philip Sidney of yours to engage me as bridesman,—and let John Talbot dance at the wedding!"

"Now, indeed, your sanguine temper is running away with you,"—cried Miss Hallet.—

"Not it!—I know what I'm about," cried the Admiral; "I can see my way through a mile-stone as well as another!—I bet you a wedding-bracelet, Mira, my dear, against a purse of your own netting, that, before New Year's Day, we shall all meet together for a grand family solemnity, in a certain church, not a hundred miles from Belgrave Square."—

CHAPTER X.

The Wiesbaden season was now so far advanced, that few new arrivals were anticipated; except English people, who, wherever and whenever business is not concerned, are always the last to come and last to go.

Still, there remained a sufficient throng to insure brilliant fêtes and exorbitant play;—the usual allowance of fiery-whiskered Russian generals,—languishing Polish princesses,—and *hochgeborn* German families, (in whose domestic year, a certain number of weeks at some bathing-place forms an indispensable item,)—grave Aulic counsellors from Berlin,—and gay young chamberlains from Vienna,—with *Renommists* from the various universities, crowding the promenades of the Cursaal from morning till night.

Among these, thanks to the chattering of the officious courier, the pretensions of Miss Hallet as an English heiress, (the hundreds of thousands of her dowry not much more than doubled,) soon transpired; and but that the high military reputation of the venerable hero of Bhurtpoor surrounded her as with a rampart, she would have found some difficulty in keeping at bay the Herr Barons, with mustachios as long as their pedigree, and Belgian Count Vander Diddels, "bearded like a pard," who were disposed to puff their cigars and compliments, without ceremony, into her pretty face.

But to these, as well as to a few diplomatic celebrities more polished in deportment if not in mind, it was clear that Sir Jasper, after the laudable custom of his country-people of eating the roast-beef and mustard of Old England wherever they go, and calling for port wine or porter even at the foot of the Pyramids, carried with him for domestic consumption, an adorer for his niece, as well as a supply of Dinneford's magnesia and Bra-

mah's patent pens ; and though it certainly struck them that, in some country or other of the vast continent, a more favourable specimen of human nature might have been found to become the partner for life of the graceful, pleasing, unassuming Mira, than the over-dressed individual in question, they trusted, for her sake, that, as in the case of the peacock and macaw, his voice might not be as offensive as his feathers were gaudy.—

"Look at the fellow!" said Admiral Hardy one morning, (when Mira, who, on pretence of leaning on his arm, had been dragging the old gentleman along the ascent to Sonnenberg Castle, paused suddenly in the Cursaal gardens, on their return, on perceiving the General advance towards them, accompanied, as usual, by his shadow, Mr. William Scrimgeour.) "Look at his poplin coat and plaid ginghams,—his pearl-buttoned gaiters and straw hat ;—summer from top to toe,—like the dummy illustrating 'Fashions for the sea-side,' at the door of some ready-made-clothes emporium in the Strand !"—

"His very costume seems to bring a cloud of dust before one's eyes!" rejoined Miss Hallet.—

"He shan't throw dust into *mine* though, I can tell him!" cried the Admiral.—"You heard his cant about the sinfulness of play, yesterday, as we were looking on at the roulette table in the Cursaal?—Will you believe that, when we all are in bed and asleep, every night, Mr. Midsummer yonder is making the champagne corks and gold pieces fly like chaff;—and, that, were not his luck greater than his judgment, he would have been ruined long ago at *rouge et noir!*"

"Hush, hush!" said Miss Hallet, perceiving that Mr. Midsummer" had nearly reached the spot where they stood beside the rippling water, on pretence of feeding the water-fowl.—"Nothing but ocular demonstration would convince my uncle of the fact; and we must not put his precious protégé prematurely on his guard."—

A moment afterwards, as if to place the hypocrisy of young Scrimgeour in stronger relief, Admiral Hardy accosted his friend.—

"So, so, Sir Jasper!" — cried he. "While your niece and I are enjoying a quiet stroll to Sonnenberg, listening to the blackbirds and thrushes, and enjoying the cool verdure, as becomes two young people, like ourselves, undergoing their first paroxysms of German romance, you and *your* friend, forsooth, are stationary in the play-room; or looking on at a match at billiards between the French chevalier d'industrie with the diamond orders, (whom I remember relieving in London in the character of a distressed Pole,) and the Russian prince, whom I strongly suspect to be a cut-throat escaped from the hulks!"—

"On the contrary, I have been writing letters to England," replied the General, drily.—Whereupon, Mr. Midsummer, faithful to his cue, began to enlarge upon the criminality of high play, the folly of games of chance, and the danger of promiscuous acquaintance in foreign bathing-places.—

"By Jove! one does not know whether to call the fellow knave or fool who allows himself to be done brown at rouge et noir!" rejoined the Admiral.

"But one does *not* hesitate," continued he, in a thundering voice, provoked by Scrimgeour's sanctified waive of the head in approbation of his remark,—"to call the fellow a confounded hypocrite, who, while indulging in play, goes on canting about its wickedness."—

"Ay,—like that gay guardsman whom you or Lady Culross were good enough to introduce to my niece!"—retorted Sir Jasper, perceiving, by a glance of old Hardy's eye, that, under erroneous impressions, he was talking at his protégé. "I 'm told your friend, Lord Wroxton, pretends he never touches a card."—

"Perhaps," suggested the young gentleman in tartan ginghams, with a prim smile, "he satisfies his conscience on the plea of preferring *dice*."—

"He *does* prefer dice, then?"—demanded the Admiral, fiercely.

"You are placing me, my dear sir," hesitated young Scrimgeour, "in a very awkward predicament."—

"What!—by asking you for a few words of

truth?"—persisted the Admiral, in the same angry tone.—

"It is not fair to require from one injurious truths of a man behind his back," replied the "intended;"—a piece of claptrap that called forth the plaudits of the General, and would perhaps have provoked from Admiral Hardy a retort, that nothing would be easier than to place him face to face with Lord Wroxton, had not Mira, all anxiety that her uncle should not be too hastily apprized of his lordship's arrival, pressed his arm as a signal for discretion.—

What, however, was her consternation, when, before they quitted the water-side, Lord Wroxton himself, perceiving them from a distance united in a group, according to previous agreement with Miss Hallet and the Admiral, deliberately joined the party! Having often heard him spoken of in the most familiar manner by her "intended," their well-laid scheme of imposing him as a stranger on the General, seemed utterly overthrown.

But, to her amazement, Mr. Scrimgeour not only

made no sign of recognition on Wroxton's approach, but when, having shaken hands heartily with Hardy, and bowed distantly to Miss Hallet, his lordship proceeded to give the particulars of some private theatricals, at which he had been present the preceding night, at Emms, whence he was that moment arrived,—describing with much zest and humour the uncouth endeavours at vaudeville sprightliness exhibited by certain Teutonic royal-highnesses, whose French was so nearly German in disguise,—"*que c'édait blaisir à endendre*,"—Mr. Midsummer, on perceiving the fair object of his courtship to be greatly amused, rewarded the sallies of the unknown by a series of horse-laughs such as Batty's Circus would have bought at any price.—

The new-comer, whoever he might be, lost no time in winning golden opinions from the whole party.—As they lounged leisurely round the green margin of the waters, where a party of giggling Frauleins from Frankfort were encouraging the efforts of a duodecimo Hesse Darmstadt diplomat, in angling for gudgeon with a string and pin fur-

nished by one of the party, the interest excited by this cockney sport afforded a text for some famous stories of Punjaub wild-sports, well known and carefully eschewed by the intimates of Sir Jasper Hallet;—and though neither young Scrimgeour, who had heard them dozens of times, nor the Admiral, who had heard them thousands, could command their attention sufficiently to respond in the right places by the ejaculations of wonder expected of them, Lord Wroxton, to whom the anecdotes were new, listened with unaffected interest. And show me a stronger bond on human gratitude, than for a professed storyteller to meet with a man, who, instead of thinking him a bore, is *really* disposed to encore his travellers' wonders!—

"Who *is* this gentlemanly young fellow,—and why did you not persuade him to join our dinner-party at the Quatre Saisons?"—cried the General, as soon as, having reached the Cursaal, the agreeable stranger looked at his watch, and, observing that he was just in time for the table d'hôte at

La Rose, made his bow and a precipitate retreat.—

"I will answer both questions to-morrow," replied the Admiral, glancing at young Scrimgeour, as if implying that *his* presence was the obstacle to immediate explanation; — and Sir Jasper, singularly captivated by the off-hand liveliness of his new acquaintance, kept reverting again and again throughout dinner, to his regret that he had not been invited to remain with them. — Even his steadiness at whist that evening was disturbed by yearnings after the animated stranger.—

"Come and breakfast with us, Hardy," said he, —half aside, to the Admiral, while booking up his scores at the close of the third rubber.—"Come and breakfast with me. We shall be alone *then*. And I want to get at the bottom of your strange mysteries concerning your friend from Emms."—

"We are alone *now!*"—replied his old friend, with a smile, perceiving that, at so broad a hint, the intended had taken his hat, and made his bow for the night. "But I shan't at present indulge

your curiosity.—I have a world of other things to say to you.—In the first place, as I intend that we shall hear the chimes together at midnight, desire that impudent varlet of a courier of yours, (who has far too much lace on his jacket for *me* to venture to address him,) to bring your hookah and sangaree, that you may manage to keep awake in the interim. —I think you told me that my friend John Talbot had taught the fellow how to prepare it, and how to currie a chicken, before he allowed you to leave him behind?"—

But though the hookah was speedily brought, and soon diffused its aromatic incense through the room, the General was slow to admit any necessity for his remaining, till the short hours, out of his bed.—

"When I tell you," peevishly retorted Admiral Hardy, "that it is not till he knows you to be safe in your nightcap, this young humbug (whom you have so unaccountably taken by the hand) shows his face in the play-room!"—

"And you really expect me to accompany you

across the Platz, and steal like a thief in the night into the Cursaal, in order to catch the son of an old friend in the act of disgracing himself?" cried Sir Jasper.

"I should not ask you, were he simply the son of an old friend," rejoined the Admiral,—"But I fancy you intend to marry the fellow (nay, never deny it!) to a girl, whom I wish to God's mercy I were five-and-twenty, with five-and-twenty thousand a-year, that I might beg, on my knees, for myself."—

"And if I do,—has not a man a right to do what he will with his own?—Is not Mira my adopted child?—And was not every guinea of the fine fortune she will inherit at my death earned by far more than the sweat of my brow,—even by the life-blood of my heart?"—

"Who denies it, my dear Hallet?" rejoined his friend. "On the contrary, it is for that very reason I am anxious to see both the girl and her money worthily disposed of.—Don't steal out of the room, my dear!—You have strength of mind to hear

whatever I may think proper to say about you."—

"But not what you may think proper to say about *others*," replied the blushing Mira, hastily taking her candle to retire to bed.

"No, no!—Nothing to fear!—I shall have quite enough on my hands, to-night, in showing up Mr. Mealy-Mouth! Not a syllable to-night, I promise you, which is likely to quicken your pulse. My heart is set on proving to the General, that there does not live a more desperate gamester than the man who has dared to accuse Lord Wroxton;—Wroxton, whom I have known from a child in petticoats,—who can scarce tell one card from another,—and whom you might puzzle at a game at All-fours!"—

One of Sir Jasper's most ominous growls was the sole response to this sortie. After which, he fell into a fit of musing, or fit of dozing, that lasted not only long after his niece had retired to bed, but so long as to require the Admiral to rouse him up, when the "witching hour of

night" gave the signal for repairing to the Cursaal.—

And, lo! precisely as Admiral Hardy had announced, *there* sat the delinquent, beside the green table he affected to regard with such abhorrence; opposite to divers golden piles of Napoleons and Guillaumes, which had evidently changed hands that evening, again and again, according to the hazard of the die.

Instead of the demure aspect he wore while listening to old Hallet's wrangling over the odd trick, he was now as vociferous as a town-crier; hand and glove with men whom he had often denounced to Sir Jasper as of equivocal character; knights of every order in Europe, which they wore at their button-holes unless when the presence of the ambassadors by whose sovereigns they were supposed to be conferred compelled them to put them in their pockets; with a sprinkling of Irish captains, professing to be on half-pay, and Polish counts in the pay of the police.

"Pray, sir, can you tell me the name of the

young gentleman in the embroidered shirt and blue satin Joinville?" whispered the Admiral, (pressing hard upon the arm of Sir Jasper, to call his attention to the reply,) to a stranger beside whom they were standing, who had the air of a seedy Frenchman, wearing out his last year's clothes, but who answered through his nose in English evidently imported into Europe by Cunard's line.—

"*That*, sir?—A Britisher, I carculate,—for he dresses like a woman, and plays like a child.—He's been cleared out twice, sir, since I've been a looker-on, that's a fact.—But the Frankfort bankers give him credit because he's a-goin to marry a gal with a sight o' money,—the darter of some crack-brained old In*dine* general."—

Even in deference to the place they were in, Admiral Hardy, on hearing his explicit reply, could scarcely refrain from expressing his satisfaction by a prolonged whistle.—

"The vagabond!—the humbug!—the dirty insinuating, canting hypocrite!"—ejaculated Sir

Jasper, in his turn, panting like the sobbing of a locomotive.—

But when, at the close of another quarter of an hour, — which was almost longer than his companion was able to retain him out of sight behind the crowd of lookers-on,—he saw the foolish fellow they were watching, rise from the table and stagger past them, his face at once blue and convulsed with a sense of his utter ruin, — the General was almost as much alarmed as indignant.—

"Let us step after him, Hardy!" said he. "Ass as he is, for my friend Scrimgeour's sake, I should be sorry to have him found floating to-morrow in the Cursaal duck-pond!"—

"Pho, pho!—It would be past *his* skill, I promise you, to keep afloat.—Let him sleep upon his folly.—Sackcloth and ashes will do him good."—

"At all events, my dear Admiral," said Sir Jasper, "as you seem to have your wits more about you than I in these cursed foreign parts, (where between the *parlez-vous Français* and *Sprechen*

Sie Deutsch I am fairly puzzled,) do me the favour to get a list made out to-morrow of the young block-head's liabilities.—As it was my own obstinacy that brought him hither, I am bound to send him back scotfree to his father.—I am ready to pay his losses to the last *kreuzer,* provided he quits Nassau before he 's half a day older.—But I shan't rest till I 've the responsibility off my shoulders."

CHAPTER XI.

"And now, Hardy," cried Sir Jasper,—after having covered by his signature, the following morning, the somewhat startling amount which it had cost to convince him that the son of an old acquaintance need not necessarily be a paragon, and witnessed the departure of the *eilwagen* containing the crest-fallen delinquent, (professing the utmost gratitude and compunction, but already prepared to astonish the weak minds of divans and promenade-concerts with the air of a travelled gent,)—"and now, my dear Hardy, that we have got rid of this bragging booby"——

"And expended upon his trip to the German baths a sum of"——

"Not a word more of *that*, as thou lovest me!—My experience is cheap at the money!—But I say

again, now that we have washed our hands of him, have the very great goodness to perform your promise, and tell me what made you so mysterious yesterday concerning your Emmsbaden friend?"

"Because a premature show-up of young Scrimgeour's mendacious propensities would not have suited my book."

"But what connection do you see between his dining with me, and the exposure of Scrimgeour's lies?"—

"His dining with you, my dear General?—*His* dining with *you?*—Nay, nay, nay,—though the best-humoured and most forgiving fellow in the world, my friend Wroxton could scarcely be expected to share the bread and salt of a man who has been going about denouncing him as a scamp and a roué,—"

"*Lord Wroxton?*"—

"And who sends back unopened a letter, placing his hand and heart and rank and fortune, at the disposal of his charming niece!"—

"Where does he put up,—where does he put

up ?"—cried Sir Jasper, groping in succession in all the dark corners of the room for his hat and stick, so eager was he to offer the apologies so much Lord Wroxton's due.—"Where am I likely to find him ?—Where is he ?"—

"At Emms again, by this time, if he have a grain of spirit. You don't suppose a young fellow like that could stand face to face with a man who has insulted him, and whom peculiar circumstances (to say nothing of his grey hairs) prevent him from calling out ?"—was the cool rejoinder of Admiral Hardy, who enjoyed not a little the lesson his impetuous old friend was receiving.

"Then, by Jupiter! to Emms will I follow him !"—cried the General,—"for if *he*'s the cause of Mira's moping ways and pining looks for the last three months, I can find it in my heart to forgive her,—ay, and forgive him; and what's far more, forgive for their sake the silly lout who has been melting away my exchequer bills.—You must come with me, Hardy,—you must really come with me, and act as umpire in the business; for after

being so easily gulled by the slanders of those impostors, the Scrimgeours old and young, I shall be ashamed to look him in the face."

"And so you ought to be. But I'm happy to say we are spared the trouble of the journey; for I all but promised (in answer to a note I received from him just now) that we would stroll together to Sonnenberg, this afternoon. The best proof of repentance you can afford him, my dear General, will be to allow the young people to pair off in advance of us, on our way back."

"With all my heart—with all my soul!—And yet, consider what it would be to me should the courtship end in a marriage, separating me for ever from my niece!—Reflect on the lonely old age awaiting me, when Mira is away with her lord to some confounded park or castle,—east, west, north, or south!"—

"Where you would pass your summers and autumns with them, while they returned with you, on the meeting of parliament, to spend the season in Belgrave Street!—Why, 't would be

only doubling the amount of your domestic happiness!"—

"It sounds well enough!"—rejoined Sir Jasper, shaking his head.—"But would a young fellow of Lord Wroxton's age ever put up with me and my hookah, and John Talbot, and all the rest of my whims, fancies, and incumbrances?"—

"All *that* you must please to battle out with himself!—He promises and vows that you shall keep a pet tiger in his drawing-room (no allusion to young Scrimgeour!) for anything he cares to the contrary, so you consent to his marriage with your niece!—And this time, he is wise enough to despatch his proposals *vivâ voce*, seeing that his letters are sent back unopened!"—

"Come, come! don't be too hard upon me,"—pleaded the General,—"for my only wish, just now, is to be on velvet with all the world!"

And during the promised walk to Sonnenberg, these hopeful projects were ratified. The two old heads were laid together, and the two young hearts laid open; and a happier *partie carrée*

than sat down to dinner that day at the *Quatre Saisons*, drowning all bitter recollections, and pledging to long days of future happiness in mellow old Hochheimer, never did honour to those far-famed cellars. Many a hearty laugh did the young couple enjoy at the expense of the General's credulity; for so happy was Sir Jasper at that moment, that he could even bear to be laughed at.—

"At all events, child," cried he, (after filling to Admiral Hardy's toast of—"A safe voyage across the Channel to the *non*-intended!")—"at all events please to remember that I have won my bet. And let the prettiest purse ever turned out by your fairy fingers, my dear Mira, be ready in no time. For we'll keep a merry Christmas together, my dear; and then for the wedding!—Not a care remaining in the heart of any one of us to welcome in New Year's Day!"—

Not many hours, therefore, were suffered to elapse before Sir Jasper despatched to his London solicitors instructions for the marriage-settlements; by which one hundred thousand pounds were

bestowed on his niece by way of dowry, and, at his death, the whole of his property; with the reversion to her second son or eldest daughter, on assuming the name and arms of the hero of Bhurtpoor.

"Everything I have in the world will be hers, either to-day or to-morrow,"—said he to his friend the Admiral, when talking over the terms of the settlement—"And it is a thing to thank God for, my dear Hardy, (and *you*, too, are entitled to no small share of my thanks,) that she has found a husband whose situation in life—superior to her own—proves him to be induced by affection only to offer her his hand."—

All, in short, was thankfulness and joy!—For once,—(but what is once out of ten million of times?)—Shakespeare was out.—For once, the course of true love was smooth as that of Epsom!—

Even the weather, less refractory in any country than in Great Britain, was so propitious, that, considering the impossibility of getting lawyers' clerks, coachmakers' apprentices, or mantua-makers' slaves

of the ring, to accomplish in less than six weeks what it required a couple of months to execute with due deliberation, they agreed to spend a jolly October in a tour of the Black Forest, and dissipate in Paris the gloomy month of November.

"So you let me get home by Christmas," argued the happy General, "I don't care where you take me in the mean while.—But, remember, boys,—(for I swear, Hardy, that, in spite of your bald head, you're the greater scapegrace of the two!)—remember, I must eat my Christmas turkey at home, with John Talbot behind my chair, and English spoken all round my table.—When the days are shortest, the greater reason they should be merry! And a merry Christmas we'll have,—if light hearts and heavy purses can make one.—I haven't a trouble left in the world, Hardy,—I haven't a trouble in the world!—I challenge all England to produce a man so happy as Jasper Hallet will be to welcome in a New Year."—

And so, too, even so, thought poor little George Foreman, as he lay declining on his pallet

in the gloomy court—"that, because the days were short, no need they should be dreary!"—And yet, how dreary they were—how dreary—how dreary, and how dark!—

In November, the London daylight seems to bring with it a heavy fog, unless to those whose sleepless nights convince them that the self-same fog has been overhanging their dwelling throughout the darker hours; and there are days when the dark opaque vapours are never at the trouble of dispersing sufficiently to enable the light of heaven to become more than faintly visible. More than one heavy November day, that winter, compelled Daniel the turner to have recourse at noon to candle-light, in order to get through his work!—

But on such occasions, the household of Mrs. Lawrie, which could not afford an outlay that nothing repaid, was forced to abide as the blind! —The old lady would not hear of so idle an expense;—little suspecting how carefully her poor little grandson turned every moment to account, to accomplish the carvings which, at first, he dis-

posed of to the passengers through Stable Yard, at humble prices indeed, but such as supplied bread for the poor old lady, who had otherwise perished for want; but which, now that he was nearly as infirm as herself, so that, in the few and tattered garments that remained to him, he was unable to confront the winter's cold, the good-natured turner sold for him to the West End toymen.

"No, no!" muttered the old woman, when one cheerless day at the beginning of December, poor George implored permission to burn a rushlight, without daring to tell her that, unless he completed his half-dozen of toys before night, according to agreement, they should lack food on the morrow.—"You are a wicked wasteful boy, to want candle-light to amuse yourself cutting up sticks for waste, that would warm my poor shivering old limbs, if thrust into the grate.—The dark does well enough to suffer in,—the dark does well enough to pray in.—It will be all darkness with us, soon, George,—all, *all* darkness with us soon!"—

So that the poor little fellow, who, on the strength of a sixpence advanced to purchase oatmeal, had agreed with the equally hard-working turner to complete a task against time, was forced, for his credit-sake, to work by a watchlight throughout the night, when the old lady was fast asleep;—though a hard matter it was for those weak, wasted, little fingers to fight against the intense cold that surrounded, as with a halo, the dim taper by which he was finishing his work.—

"I should not mind," thought he, blowing upon his trembling hands to warm them, after brushing away a solitary tear that found its way down his weary, hopeless, little face—"if I could only get some kind doctor to look at my shoulder, which swells larger and larger, and aches more and more,—till my very heart grows sick with the throbbing!—Perhaps some mere trifle that I do not think of, might give me ease.—And though it would be better still,—oh! how much better still—to lose *all* feeling and *all* fear, and have no more hunger, no more cold to bear up against,—I must

not think of that so long as my poor grandmother lies there, wanting my aid."

Next day, however, on recovering from a fainting-fit produced by pain and exhaustion, in which he should not have guessed how long he had lain but from the bitter complaints of Mrs. Lawrie, that he had chosen to sleep away the whole morning, and that, though she "had called out to him again and again, to wake up and come and set her bed to-rights, and give her a drop of warm gruel to drink, he gave no more thought to her than if she were a dog,"—he took courage to resolve that, if able to dress himself, he would crawl out and try to get so far as round the corner to Palmer's, to inquire what hope of my lord's arrival.

"At all events, as most likely 'tis the last time I shall ever have strength to cross the threshold," thought the child, "I will leave there for him with the shopman the dead bird I've carved, intending to make bold to offer it to his acceptance. 'Tis but a poor thing: but, perhaps, when I'm dead and gone, he 'll look at it sometimes in the grand house

no doubt he lives in, and remember the poor boy he was kind to—who never received a present or a kind word from any mortal being, except from *him!*—My poor knife!—I've often been afraid that grandmother's cravings would oblige me to sell you at last!—But 'tis too late now. I suppose the parish people will find burial for me; and when grandmother is quite, *quite* helpless, they'll force her to accept parish relief. Oh!—what a sad thing—what a trying thing,—her gray hairs to be brought to shame—and her old heart broken at last!"—

"No, my man,—no news of his lordship!" was, as usual, the reply at the cutler's.—But it did not on this occasion, as on many preceding ones, cause his little heart to sink.—He felt that all was over now.

"If you would please, sir," said he to the civil shopman, who had so often been forbearing with the trouble he gave, "if you would only please, when his lordship *does* return, to give him this piece of carving, and tell him it was done by the

poor boy to whom he so kindly gave the knife, who hoped he would have the goodness to keep it for his sake."

"Are you going away, then, my man?" said the shopman, who knew him to be an inhabitant of the adjoining court.

"Yes, sir!" replied George, with something that tried to be a smile; "I am going a long journey. I am going where I hope to find kinder friends than here."

And having laid down on the counter the little block of wood from which rose the image of a dead chaffinch, so life-like, so delicately plumed, that many an artist having the initials R.A. after his name might have been proud of the work, he crept away out of the shop, struggling with his tears. He felt as though the last tie were broken that bound him to this world.—

On that self-same counter, close to the *chef-d'œuvre* which it had cost hours and hours of such precious time to accomplish, stood a magnificent rosewood dressing-case, mounted in crystal and

gold ; of a cost, the hundredth part of which would have preserved that gifted child from perishing of hunger, or being tortured with pain.

"I think, sir," observed the master of the shop, addressing a respectable old man who made his appearance there a few minutes after George Foreman had quitted it,—"I think, sir, you will admit that we have been punctual. You specified the tenth of December, sir ; and here is the dressing-box, finished in all respects, except the lady's initials.—We have reason to hope, sir, that Sir Jasper will be satisfied with our execution of his order. But what cipher, pray, are we to engrave on the gold boxes!"—

"M. W., and the coronet of a Viscountess!" replied John Talbot, in a tone whose surliness purported to conceal his exultation.

"And may I take the liberty of asking, Mr. Talbot, the name of the nobleman so fortunate as to obtain the fair hand of Sir Jasper's lovely heiress?"—

"Lord Wroxton, sir ; and they tell me as

deserving a young gentleman as she s an angel-faced and angel-hearted young lady!" replied the old man, proud to be questioned.

"An old and excellent customer of ours, and a more honourable young nobleman doesn't exist!" cried the shopman. "But you said the dressing-box would be wanted forthwith. Can you tell me, pray, when the family are expected in England?"

"By Christmas time. The wedding will take place between that and New Year's Day," replied the confidential factotum.

"Perhaps, then, Mr. Talbot," added the shopman, "as you'll see his lordship sooner than we shall, you will be good enough to undertake a commission for a poor lad in whom Lord Wroxton is interested, who is dying by inches from being thrown down by a gentleman's carriage, last summer, in Grosvenor Place."

"Thrown down by a gentleman's carriage last summer in Grosvenor Place?" reiterated the old soldier. "Why, this must be the little fellow

I spent so much time in searching after!—How old is he?"—

"Nine or ten, may be,—but the children of poor parents are so often stunted in their growth."

"And with fair hair and large blue eyes?" persisted John, mechanically repeating the lesson he had learned from Miss Mira.—

"I haven't much time to pay attention to the colour of my customers' eyes," resumed the shopman,—"But if it hadn't been a good-looking little fellow, I doubt if I should have taken so much thought of him."

"Where does he live?" abruptly rejoined John Talbot, overjoyed at the thought of being able to accost his dear young lady, on her arrival, with news that her benevolent intentions were even thus tardily fulfilled.

"In a court hard by, sir," replied his civil informant; adding, when he saw the old man snatch up his umbrella, as if in haste to verify his surmises—"Our errand-lad shall go with you, if you please, Mr. Talbot, and show you the way."—

A wise precaution; for as it was now dusk, and the old man's sight none of the clearest, he might otherwise have found it difficult to make out the bell communicating with Mrs. Lawrie's lodging.—

But though pulled for him once, twice, and again, no token of an answer!—At the third ringing, however, effected with appropriate vigour by the errand boy who was in a hurry to get back to his business, the turner's wife opened the door with a peevish intimation, that "if they wanted the 'Merican people, they 'd best step up.—The boy being now nigh as infirm as his grandmother, had a hard matter to get up and down stairs."—

Up stepped the old soldier, therefore; and, having gently tapped at the door pointed out, without receiving an answer, *in* stepped he, also.—But the room was dark; and all he heard through the darkness was the feeble moaning of a child.—

At the sound of his voice, it ceased; for George believed the intruder to be the landlord of the house, come to insist more peremptorily than he had yet done on payment of the three-quarters'

rent owing, or that the bedridden old lady should be removed to the workhouse, to make way for more profitable lodgers.—

"I will get up and strike a light, sir," said poor George,—rising with difficulty from the mattrass to which he had crept to stifle his anguish.

And when the light appeared, and, dim as it was, fell strongly on the wasted but still beautiful features of the dying child, John Talbot, after staring at him in silence for some moments, as though his eyes were starting from their sockets, burst suddenly into a fit of sobbing that alarmed the poor little fellow almost as much as though the exasperated landlord had indeed stood before him.—

For to John, the soft melancholy face which had emerged from the darkness, was as though the spectre of his own dear Master Jass had suddenly appeared!—It was not to the poor infirm child, however, he could explain the origin of his emotion.—And as soon as he sufficiently recovered his self-possession to verify the fact that the forlorn

boy he was addressing was really the victim of his fellow-servant's rash driving, and that the chillness and darkness of that denuded room were the result of want—actual want, and want that fell at once upon infirmity and old age,—than he was well nigh ready to burst into new tears, at the thought that had he persevered in seeking out the child, some months before, all this misery might have been spared.—

"Ten guineas were in the purse!" thought he, aloud,—"and GOD knows the General was never known to grudge what money might be wanting when deserving objects were in need."—

It did not require a very long time for George, or even the half-doting old lady, to comprehend that they had found a friend; or for John Talbot to perceive that fuel and food and medical aid could not be too soon afforded to the little pain-nipped fellow before him. The former, indeed, he managed to obtain before he left the house,—through the assistance of the turner's wife; with whom, though the penury of her poor neighbours

had pleaded nothing, her gracious Majesty's countenance imprinted on a golden sovereign, said wonders in their favour.—Almost before the eager old man had reached the archway of the court, a fire was blazing in the grate.—

It was not in search of Dr. Mitis Mildman, however, that he directed the cab into which, for more haste and perhaps less speed, he stepped, on reaching St. James's Street. As this was no case of a nervous duchess whose dyspepsia required coaxing into an appetite, he hastened to an eminent surgeon, the friend and frequent guest of Sir Jasper; and, having waited in his hall till his return home to dinner, a brief statement of the urgency of the long-neglected case secured his instant attention.—Together, they repaired to the court; and while the eyes of the surgeon examined the swollen shoulder, those of the old serving-man were fixed as anxiously on his face; in the grave and grieved expression of which, he instantly discerned that he had not over-estimated the imminence of the danger.

"This case has been indeed neglected," — said Mr. K., taking the old man aside, — "neglected till it has become almost hopeless. — Constant attendance will be necessary. — I strongly advise removing the boy to St. George's Hospital, for which I can give him an in-patient's letter."—

"Not into an hospital, if you please, sir," interposed poor George, to whom the whisper was audible. — "Grandmother must not be left quite alone. Not into an hospital!—I am a gentleman's son.—Please, sir, let me die here."—

"But you would be far more comfortable, my man, — far better looked after," — Mr. K. was beginning.—

"Yes, sir.—But I am *accustomed* not to be comfortable.—I shan't feel it as another would.—Pray, *pray*, sir, let me remain in the old place."—

And the supplication of the child being readily acceded to by Talbot, aware that all possible expenses would be readily covered by his master,—it was agreed that a proper nurse should be supplied: —for, on the morrow at farthest, alas! a cruel

operation afforded the only chance of saving the unfortunate boy.—

"I'll be here to meet you, sir, myself," said the veteran, his tremulous lips attesting the emotion he was endeavouring to master. "Though I'm afeard, Mr. K., I havn't the heart to lend a hand in such matters as I had when the General received his wound at Saragossa, or at New Orleans, sir, when amputation was threatened,—I 'll do my best.—There 's a look about yonder poor boy's eyes that has gone down into the depths of my heart!"—

CHAPTER XII.

Vainly was it suggested, both by nurse and doctor, that, previous to the operation, it would be easy and desirable to remove the paralytic woman into the adjoining room.—Though the servant out of place who rented it was bought out by John Talbot, the old lady would not hear of a change.—Because George was ill, she did not choose to be laid on the shelf. "If her grandson had got hurt by running about the streets, like an idle boy as he was, it was no reason why her own ailments should be overlooked." With the peevishness of age and disease, she chose to come in for her share of whatever was going on.—

Even after the shriek wrung by momentary torture from the patient lips of her grandchild, while held in the arms of John Talbot, reached her from

the small close chamber into which, on her refusal, he had been carried, she seemed to think it hard he should monopolize even these surgical inflictions.—

But no sooner had John Talbot installed himself as chief attendant on the boy—(declaring that, "if left to the women, he would be disturbed by talk—contrary to the express prohibition of Mr. K.")—than the nurse condescended to devote to the old lady the attendance which of late, during her grandchild's recent severe sufferings, had been somewhat wanting.—

It was not till the second day enabled him to give a more favourable report of the state of the patient, that John Talbot returned to Belgrave Street, and took pen in hand to acquaint his young lady with the singular discovery he had made; and how they were indebted for it to "my lord." And though it would have been far easier to the old man to handle a musket or corkscrew than the patent Perryian which, held after his fashion, cut holes in the paper instead of skaiting over the surface, he contrived, after many efforts, to make

his story tolerably intelligible.—Not a word about hoping the General would not disapprove the expenses of the case; John Talbot having already determined that the care of one who reminded him so strongly of his own dear Master Jass, should be a matter for his own purse. Ten days were still wanting till Christmas; so that, though house, *trousseau*, dressing-box, and family jewels were in readiness for the grand event of the wedding, the old man congratulated himself on having a week upon his hands, previous to the arrival of the family, to devote to the poor little sufferer whose sweetness and resignation had won so strange a hold on his affections.

"Next week, George," said the veteran to his protégé, while placing some Portugal grapes in his little burning hand,—"next week, the General my master will be back in Lon'on,—and my young lady,—and my lord,—and all.—And 't wouldn't surprise me, my dear child, if Miss Mira herself, who took on so, she did, about your accident, was to come here and pay you a visit!"—

"Next week, sir, not till next week?"—murmured the boy.—"And I, who so much wished to see that kind young gentleman again!"—

"And so you shall, my boy.—He'll come with her, may be.—They're soon to be man and wife!"—

"But I shall be gone then, sir," faltered the sufferer, in a feeble voice. "Something tells me that my evils are almost over,—that my happiness is going to begin!"—

"Don't say so, child,—at least don't say so, and *look so!*" said the old soldier, subduing with some difficulty a choking in his throat.

"You have been very kind to me, Mr. Talbot," resumed George, in a firmer voice—"more kind than anybody ever was in the world, except my poor papa, who is dead and gone. It would be a great pleasure to me if you would accept the knife my lord gave me for a keepsake, that sometimes you may remember, when I'm at rest, how much you did to comfort me in my last sufferings."

And as the nurse was at that moment arranging

his pillow, the sick boy begged her to fetch from the other room, (his grandmother would tell her where to find it,) "the knife he so much valued."

"Not this one," said he, mildly, when, a moment afterwards, she placed in John Talbot's hands the old knife with which poor George executed his carvings—"That is only my working knife. Lord Wroxton's is far handsomer," added he, perceiving that the veteran, who held it with trembling hands, was anxiously and silently examining it.—

"Where, *where*, did you find this?—How long has it been in your possession?"—demanded John Talbot, at length, in a scarcely audible voice.

"I found it in an old pocket-book of my father's," replied the little fellow, amazed to see the old man's tears falling like rain, as he traced with his fingers the half-obliterated initials of I. T.;—those very initials which, so many, many years before, he had chided Master Jass for cutting upon that self-same knife.

"It belonged to this," said George, drawing from under his pillow the old seal-skin pocket-book,

which he had that morning asked of the nurse.—"See, sir!—I have written in it the day and the hour of your first visit."

"But what is this?—oh! what is *this?*" groaned the agitated veteran, pointing to some lines in faded ink, just above the indistinct pencil-marks which the trembling hand of the sick child has been inscribing.—For, oh! how deeply was the date in question—"*Plymouth, August the third, eighteen hundred and four,*"—engraven on his own memory!—The very day, the very spot, where he had lost sight of that precious child!—

"It is the date of my poor father's quitting his native country for South America, sir," replied the child, amazed by the frantic manner in which John Talbot continued to examine the old pocket-book,—a gift to himself from his poor lady—from himself to Master Jass.—"He ran away, I believe, from his family—(I told you, sir, the other day, if you remember, that I was a gentleman's son).—And he was returning to England, hoping to be reconciled to his father, an old gentleman of wealth

and distinction, when it pleased God to call him away."

"And what was his name, George?" said the old soldier, his breath suspended, and his face as white as ashes, while listening for the boy's reply.

"His name was Colonel Foreman, sir—*Jasper* Foreman.—But grandmother thinks that he went by another in his native country."—

"My child,—my boy,—my own dear Master Jass!—I knew it—I *felt* it!" sobbed the old man, throwing himself on his knees by the bedside, and burying his head in the clothes, as he pressed to his quivering lips the wasted hand of the poor child, full conviction of whose danger seemed at that moment for the first time to reach his mind.—

"And do you know my relations, then?"—faltered George faintly. "And is there indeed some one left of papa's family, who will see me buried, and attend to my poor grandmother when I am gone?"—

"Don't talk of burying—don't talk of going, Master Hallet, sir!" cried John Talbot, vainly con-

tending with his emotions. "There's them that will love you, and worship you, and make you like a prince in the land!—Why, you're your father's very picture, you are!"—

"So my poor grandmother often tells me," interrupted the boy.

"And there's my old master Sir Jasper, and your cousin, Lady Wroxton as is to be,—who 'll be ready to go out of their wits for joy at this providential discovery, which couldn't have been no wise brought about, Master Jasper, — Master George, that is,—but by the will of Almighty God!"—

"If I should only live to see them!"—murmured the child, on whose countenance the light of a better land was already shining. "You must write to them to make great, great haste, Mr. Talbot."

"Not *Mr.* Talbot—*John*!—call me John, my dear,—*old* John."—

"You must tell them to come back as fast as they can, dear John; that I may receive before I die the blessing of my father's father!"

Even thus adjured,—even after receiving from Mrs. Lawrie information tending thoroughly to confirm the identity, sufficiently established in the simple mind of John Talbot by possession of the pocket-book and knife,—the old soldier found it next to impossible to condense his feelings, and fears, and hopes, within compass of a letter.—

"He 's found, your honour!—The dear precious boy, who 's got your blood and the blood of poor Master Jass, General, running in his veins, and the very looks of him in his face!—is found!—But only for us to lose him again, sir.—So, please your honour, without losing a single moment, set off on receipt of this from your faithful servant to command:" would have been a somewhat unintelligible announcement even to those accustomed by long habit to jump at John Talbot's conclusions,—but for the luminous exposition of the state of the case kindly subjoined by the worthy surgeon, sufficiently in Sir Jasper's confidence to understand the painful interest of the case.

But though Mr. K. complied at once with the

veteran's desire that he would communicate to his old master all that had passed and was passing, he would not hear of sanctioning the removal of his young master to Belgrave Street. It was in vain John Talbot represented that the miserable court—the wretched room—was no fit place for Master Hallet,—Master Jass's son,—the heir of thousands of thousands!—

"I have but poor hopes of the little fellow," was all the reply he could obtain,—"and removal, in such weather as this, would finish him at once."

Instead, therefore, of installing him at once in his comfortable home, the old man was forced to content himself with taking up *his* quarters at the foot of the sick-bed, and, after being assured for the thousandth time that he must not agitate the patient by talking, satisfy himself, as best he might, with fixing his wistful eyes upon that wan face, tracing there every moment with greater certainty the likeness of the loved and lost!—

The only once that he hurried back to Belgrave Square, to collect a few comforts easy of removal,

for the little fellow's immediate use, John Talbot tottered into the dining-room, and with tears gushing from his eyes, uttered a sort of hysteric cry as he gazed on the old picture, with its raging sea and circling curlews. He felt as though at last—*at last*—the sea had given up its dead!—

The emotions, meanwhile, that arose when these two incoherent letters of John Talbot reached Paris, would be indeed hard to describe. Wonder, joy, pity, terror, possessed by turns the startled family; and lucky was it that the compassionate heart of Miss Hallet had determined, immediately on the receipt of the old man's first epistle, describing the sad plight of the interesting child so long the object of her search, to hasten by a few days their return to England; for, when the second arrived—the astounding—the overwhelming letters that brought at once such joyful and such grievous tidings, they were already on the point of starting for London.

"Compose yourself, my dear friend,—compose yourself!" whispered Admiral Hardy to Sir Jasper,

when, two days afterwards, at every pause of the train, as they flew along the Dover railway to town, the General wrung his hands in speechless emotion—"Not a moment has been lost.—Three hours more, and he will be in your arms."—

Still, the heavy gasping sighs of the poor grandfather revealed the agonies struggling in his bosom. Even Mira, usually so patient, so gentle, was every instant snatching out her watch, to count the lagging minutes. Not even the affectionate exhortations of Lord Wroxton, scarcely less interested than herself in the fate of his little protégé —his little cousin—were able to restore her composure.

"To have been so near him last summer," was her constant exclamation, "and through mere cold-hearted listlessness, to have let him escape our search!"—

But though far more patient, equally earnest was the watchfulness of the sinking child, as he lay with his sad eyes riveted upon the time-piece brought by John Talbot from what ought to have been his home,

to record the hours already numbered for his young head.

"Before this afternoon, they could not be here!" murmured he, giving his little hand with a faint smile to the veteran watching by his side, as the daylight struggled into his room on the day the family were expected to arrive at Dover.

"The weather 's against 'em—Christmas weather, darling,—don't you hear the snow a-beating again the window?"—sobbed poor John.

"God's will be done!"—said the boy. "I should like to have seen them all *once.*—Tell them,"—

"No, no, no!"—gasped John Talbot.—"I won't tell 'em nothing, my child.—Afore night, you shall tell 'em yourself,—Afore night, they 'll be here,—Afore night, you 'll be in the arms of your grandfather"—

"*Of my Father!*"—interrupted the boy, fondly intwining his wasted fingers with the hard hand of the old soldier; who, at the sound of that hollow voice, fell upon his knees, and prayed fervently—

John Talbot was still on his knees beside the little bed. P. 262

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how fervently—that GOD would have mercy upon them all!—

Long, long before night, however, the General and his friend traversed the miserable court. As they entered the archway, Sir Jasper, whose heart had scarcely power to beat, shook off the arm of Admiral Hardy, who was endeavouring to support him, and, by one of the great efforts of a brave heart, walked firm and steadily to the door. The place looked less repulsive than usual; for a heavy snow had just ceased to fall, which imparted unnatural whiteness and brightness even to that gloomy spot.

But when he entered the sick chamber, the brightness ceased.—The shutters were partially closed.—John Talbot was still on his knees beside the little bed.

"How is he?"—whispered the Admiral, perceiving that his friend was neither able to advance nor to utter a syllable.

There was no need of reply.—When the trembling hand of the old man drew down the sheet

from that cold pale face, and the wasted but still beautiful features became visible, they saw that all was well.—The little sufferer was with GOD.—

* * * * *

Mrs. Lawrie's predictions were fulfilled. A stately carriage *did* stop at the gateway of the court, to convey away the tardily recognized heir of an honoured line. But its pomps were the pomps of death.—The stately carriage was a hearse!—How sadly at variance with the mirth and merriment around!—

For New Year's Day was come. The joyous chimes of the various churches of the metropolis welcomed, as in cruel triumph, the morning that was to see the remains of poor little George consigned to the dust. A bright winter's sun shone glittering upon the snow that choked the wheels of that gloomy funeral procession; which many a happy family, united by the interest of the day, stopped short amidst its fondness and joy to gaze upon with saddened faces as it passed along;—and mothers grasped the hands of their young ones

more closely when they saw that it was *a child* those weeping mourners were bearing to its rest!

The General and his niece, indeed, concealed their heartfelt anguish from the sympathy of the crowd. But Lord Wroxton,—and John Talbot,—and the kind workman who had solaced the misery of him who was gone,—listened with un overed heads and tears rolling down their cheeks, to the solemn bell which, ever and anon, pealed mournfully through the gladsome music of the chimes commemorating

NEW YEAR'S DAY!—

THE END.

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