



AN UNEXPECTED INTERVIEW.

See chapter XXII

*Martine, James A*  
**THE LAWYER'S STORY:**

OR,

**THE ORPHAN'S WRONGS.**

BY

**A MEMBER OF THE NEW-YORK BAR.**

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## Illustrations.

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- I. LADY MARY IN THE DRAWING-ROOM AT ALTON CASTLE.
- II. LADY MARY RESEECCHING THE EARL TO FOREGO HIS DESIGNS REGARDING HER MARRIAGE WITH LORD HENRY FITZHERBERT.
- III. THE BROTHER AND SISTER IN CONVERSATION AT MR. HUGHES' HOUSE.
- IV. AN UNEXPECTED INTERVIEW.

# THE LAWYER'S STORY; OR, THE ORPHAN'S WRONGS.

BY A MEMBER OF THE NEW-YORK BAR.

Beautifully Illustrated.

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 The publishers have great pleasure in introducing this work to the public. As a family novel it is unexceptionable, while it will be found equally interesting and amusing by the casual reader. No tale has ever been written which has attained greater popularity or been more eagerly sought for while in the course of serial publication. The perusal of the introductory remarks will satisfy the reader that the Lawyer's Story contains incident of more than common interest.

SOME time ago, the following paragraph, copied from an English provincial newspaper, appeared in the New York *Sunday Dispatch*, and other journals of wide circulation :—

A MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR.—We find the following curious story in one of our English exchanges, and as it relates to a couple of Americans, we give it a place :—  
“The quiet little town of Hemmingford Abbots, near St. Ives, Huntingdonshire, was recently visited by a young lady and gentleman from the United States,

under circumstances that have created considerable excitement in the neighborhood. The parties are brother and sister, and we believe are contestants for the large property known as the Fitzherbert Manor Lands, situated in this county, which estates have for a long time been in dispute. As will be recollected, this property was formerly Crown Land, and was given by George the Fourth, when Prince Regent, to Herbert Fitzherbert, Esq., who subsequently went to America. The right of the Prince to bestow Crown Land was contested, and the estate thrown into chancery. Herbert Fitzherbert died, we believe, in the United States, and his heirs at law, after the decision of the long contested suit, entered into possession of the property. These heirs were a son and daughter. The arrival of the new contestants for this property created quite a stir among the fashionable circles. So far, however, but little has leaked out in reference to the real object of our trans-Atlantic visitors, who created the unusual stir in the locality above indicated. One of our reporters called at the Hotel at which the strangers stopped, to gather the particulars, if possible, but found the parties had taken their departure very mysteriously, no one at the hotel having the slightest intimation of their business or their present whereabouts. It is said, upon what authority we know not, that a distinguished attorney from London accompanied them, and that some parties were subpoenaed to attend a private examination, but failed to appear, and have not since been heard of by their friends. Altogether there appears to be considerable mystery about this affair."

Shortly afterwards, a letter was received by the editor of the *Dispatch* from a Retired member of the New York

Bar, who stated that he was perfectly acquainted with the history of the incident so mysteriously alluded to in the English journals, and who is the author of the narrative published by the title of the "Lawyer's Story," or the "Orphan's Wrongs."

Few narratives have surpassed the Lawyer's simple story in the intense interest it has excited. The attention of the reader is arrested immediately upon commencing the first chapter, and once having been commenced, the tale is read on with continually increasing interest to its conclusion.

The following is the letter alluded to, in which the author gives permission to the Editor of the *Dispatch* to publish the narrative:—

*To the Editor of the ———.*

SIR:—Noticing in the last number of the *Sunday Dispatch*, a paragraph copied from a Huntingdonshire (England) newspaper, headed a "Mysterious Affair," in which two Americans, brother and sister, are spoken of as playing a prominent part, I beg to inform you that I have had an intimate knowledge of the parties alluded to for the last ten years, and that I was the first person to cause an investigation to be made into their claims. For a short period also, I was professionally engaged in the case. I therefore can partially clear up the "Mystery" in which the matter, according to the reporter of the English paper, is involved. If you think proper I give you permission to publish the accompanying manuscript, containing the facts woven together in the form



of a narrative. I have no interest in the matter; but as will be explained, my sympathies were from the first naturally enough enlisted in behalf of the American contestants, whose claims I considered indisputable; and I therefore watched every action *pro* and *con* that took place regarding their cause. Having retired from active practice, some six years since, I have made this case my hobby, and have but lately returned from Europe, where my services have voluntarily been rendered in behalf of the brother and sister. I am happy to say that the case has, after an arduous struggle, been decided in their favor, and that, so far as I know, they are now in secure and happy possession of the property it was sought to deprive them of. However, as I presume you will find the narrative to contain sufficient incident, and to possess sufficient interest to justify its publication, I will not anticipate the story. I give you my name in order to satisfy you that my statements are to be relied on; but it is not perhaps necessary that you should publish it, therefore I sign myself,

A RETIRED MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK BAR.

February 6th, 1853.

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# THE LAWYER'S STORY; OR, THE ORPHAN'S WRONGS.

## CHAPTER I.

*In which the reader is introduced to the Hero and Heroine of the Story—A Newspaper Advertisement and a fortunate meeting with a former acquaintance—A base attempt frustrated—The Heroine of the Story disappears in an unaccountable manner.*

IN the summer of 1843, having an extraordinary quantity of deeds to copy, I engaged temporarily an extra copying clerk, who interested me considerably, in consequence of his modest, quiet, gentlemanly demeanor and his intense application to his duties; so much so, indeed, that I was sorry when, at the expiration of a few weeks, the business of my office growing slack, I no longer had occasion for his services; neither, at the time, did I know of any vacancy that would suit him; but I desired him, at all events, should anything turn up, to apply to me for a recommendation, assuring him that I would do all in my power to afford him assistance. While employed by me, he had occasion once or twice, to be at my private residence late in the evening; and on one occasion, my wife when he was present, happen-

ing to observe that she wished she knew of some smart, clever girl to assist her in making up some children's dresses, he modestly said, that he believed his sister was perfectly competent to the task, and would be most happy to embrace the opportunity, for they were both very poor and found great difficulty in getting along. My wife desired him to bring her round with him early next morning; and on her presenting herself, her appearance and manners were so satisfactory, that she was immediately engaged. She was employed by us for perhaps a fortnight, and during that time she won the favor of my wife in an equal degree that her brother had mine. Both had evidently seen happier days; but they were reserved as regarded their past history; and being so, neither I nor my wife pressed them upon what appeared to be a disagreeable subject. I must not omit to mention that their names were respectively Adolphus and Georgiana Fitzherbert. The young man might have been perhaps twenty years of age, and his sister scarcely sixteen; both were good-looking—but the young man's countenance was shaded with constitutional or habitual melancholy—I judged the latter; because at times, when anything deeply interested him, this expression disappeared and left in its place an earnest and winning smile; but the sister possessed all the grace and artlessness of a Hebe.

After they had quitted us, I heard no more of them until three years had passed away. In fact, I had entirely forgotten them in the multiplicity of business, the cares of a family and the duties of an arduous profession.

In the fall of 1849 I had occasion to visit Philadelphia, where I put up at Jones' Hotel. While sitting in the reading-room the morning after my arrival, my attention was drawn to an advertisement in the columns of one of the morning papers. It ran thus:

**INFORMATION WANTED—OF ADOLPHUS AND GEORGIANA FITZHERBERT,** brother and sister, children of Herbert and Elizabeth Fitzherbert, who, it is supposed, came to this country from England, in the year 1825; and subsequently settled somewhere in the State of Pennsylvania, where they are supposed both to have died in 1830. If this advertisement should meet the eye of both or either of the parties mentioned,

and they will call upon or make their residence known to JAMES HARTLEY, at the United States Hotel, Philadelphia, they will hear of something that may accrue very much to their advantage. Any person giving information where they or either of them may be found, or furnish satisfactory proof of their decease, will be liberally recompensed for their trouble. Those knowing anything respecting them, are urgently requested not to withhold it, as the hereditary right of property in England and the United States, to a very large amount is involved in the matter, and the presence of the parties may save much litigation.

Now, excepting that the wording of this advertisement was a little more earnest than usual, and that was accounted for by the significant words, "*the hereditary right of property in England and the United States, to a very large amount is involved in the matter,*" there was nothing in it to perplex the mind of a busy member of the New York bar. Advertisements of a similar import are very often to be found in the columns of the morning papers of half the cities in the Union. Nevertheless, I could not get this one out of my head the whole day. It haunted me so much as to perplex me considerably in my business; and yet, cogitate as I might, I could find no reason for it. When I returned to the hotel in the evening, I took up the paper again and referred to the column which contained it, and spelt it over as if I were personally interested in it. Whether it was the rather uncommon names of the parties advertised, or whether the large property said to be depending upon the life or death of the parties mentioned, and the mention of the term "litigation" had peculiar charms to the ear of a member of the legal profession, I can't say; but, smiling at the conceit my mind had suggested to the prejudice of the cloth, as regards their supposed cupidity, I threw the paper aside and shortly afterwards retired to my own room, where a night's rest banished the recollection of the advertisement from my mind, and I thought no more about it. In a few days my business being finished, I returned to New York.

About a month after my return from Philadelphia, I was singularly struck with the features of a young female whom I met while walking in Broadway, on my way to my place of business from my residence up-town.

I thought I recollected her, yet could not tell where I had met her before. Her appearance was extremely lady-like, but her attire, although scrupulously neat and well fitting, was not of the material worn by persons in the more wealthy circles of society. I should rather have judged her to be one of the female operatives who are employed in great numbers in the numerous book-binding and publishing establishments located in Nassau and Ann streets, and as I was not personally acquainted, that I was aware of, with any of those industrious girls, I dismissed the subject from my mind, merely supposing that the girl bore one of those striking resemblances that we sometimes find in the features of strangers, to some one whom we are acquainted with, or whom we have known at a distant period.

For some days I saw no more of her, but shortly afterwards I was engaged in certain business of importance, which detained me to a later hour than usual down town, and as I walked from my office I frequently found myself almost hemmed in in Nassau-street by the bevy of fair operatives who were returning home from their day's labor, laughing and chatting in the full flow of animal spirits which honest labor and consequent independence is sure to bestow upon the youthful and healthful. Among these girls I again noticed the young female who had attracted my attention some days before in Broadway, and every time I saw her I became more and more impressed with the idea that I had met with her before.

I noticed likewise a shade of melancholy resting upon her fair delicate features, which made me feel still more interested in her, and one evening meeting her, without a companion, I made free to accost her:—

"Excuse me, Miss," said I, "but I have noticed you several times passing up the street opposite my office, and your features seem so familiar to me, that I cannot believe that I have not had the pleasure of meeting with you before, either at my house, or at the residence of some of my friends?"

The young woman shrunk back for a moment, with

a feeling of intuitive delicacy, on being thus accosted by a stranger, but, recovering herself, she looked at me earnestly for a moment and said:—

"Can it be possible that this is Mr. —?"

"It is," replied I, as a sudden flash of memory passed through my mind and, I thought how stupid I had been not to have recollected the young woman before, "and you," I continued, "if I recollect aright, are the young woman who was engaged some two or three years ago by my wife as a dress-maker for the children?"

"I am," she replied, "and I have often thought how kindly I was then treated by Mrs. —"

"And what are you doing now," I asked, "if I may take the liberty of an old acquaintance, in thus questioning you?"

"I am engaged as a book-folder and stitcher," she replied, mentioning at the same time the place where she worked—a well known establishment in that part of the city.

"Let me think. Had you not a brother who was also employed for a short time at my office?"

The young woman's countenance fell as she replied in an agitated tone of voice:—

"I had sir. Oh, that I knew where he is. He left me to go to Boston, to accept a situation offered him there, and I have never since heard of him, although he promised to write to me, and I am sure he would have written had he been well."

"Indeed," I replied, "that is a sad case. Have you written to him?"

"Finding I received no letter from Boston from him, sir, I wrote to the gentleman who engaged him, directing the letter to be left at the Post-office, for I do not know his address; but to that letter I have received no reply."

"What is your brother's name?" I asked.

"Adolphus Fitzherbert, sir."

"A new light now seemed to break upon me.

"And your own baptismal name——?"

"Is Georgiana, sir."

"By heaven!" said I, "it is the very name mentioned in the advertisement I read at Philadelphia, and now I can perceive how it haunted me so much. I had an indistinct recollection of the names, yet could not recall any circumstances connected with them to my mind." So saying I took out my pocket book, for I had had sufficient curiosity to cut out the advertisement, and to wafer it in a spare leaf of the book.

The young woman appeared to be alarmed at the earnestness I displayed; but begging her to calm herself, I asked her to read the advertisement; she did so, though her nervous system had been so excited that she trembled violently.

"There is nothing to be alarmed at in that advertisement, Miss Fitzherbert," said I, "on the contrary, I believe from its tenor it bodes good both to you and your brother; now tell me, are the names mentioned in the advertisement the baptismal names of your parents?"

"They are, sir," she replied.

"And they died in Pennsylvania in 1830?"

"Yes, sir. My mother died in the month of January of that year, just a week after I was born, at Reading in Pennsylvania, and my father died at the same place, of consumption, in the month of November of the same year. I never knew my parents, sir," she added, while the tears sprang into her eyes.

"And were you reared in Reading?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," she replied; "a kind friend adopted and educated us, but he and his wife died while we were both young, and since then we have had to buffet with the world, and have found the struggle arduous enough; but my brother has ever been more than a brother to me."

"Of that," I said, "from what I have seen of you both, I can have no doubt. Now, will you oblige me by calling at my residence to-morrow evening at 7 o'clock.



LADY MARY IN THE DRAWING ROOM AT ALTON CASTLE.

See chapter XI.

"You know where it is. I still live where I did when you were employed by my wife. Let me hear more of your story; and, as I am going on business to Boston, in the course of a few days, I will do what I can to find out your brother."

The young woman thanked me, and promised to call as I requested, and I wished her good evening.

As I walked home, it struck me that possibly her brother's strange silence, might arise out of some cause connected with the advertisement, for I had no doubt they were the parties enquired after, and I mentioned the circumstances to my wife in the evening. Her curiosity was aroused as well as my own, and I went home earlier the following evening, and waited with no little impatience for Miss Fitzherbert's visit.

She came according to appointment, and was recognized and kindly received by my wife, but she seemed sadly cast down in consequence of her brother's inexplicable silence. In the course of the evening she related in a simple, straight-forward and artless manner, the history of the joint adventures of her brother and herself since they had quitted our employment, as well as a brief outline, as much as she knew herself, of her father's and mother's history. Her father and mother were both English. Previously to the war of 1812—'14 her father, then a young man, having some little property and good expectations, conceived the idea of visiting the United States with the simple object of travel and amusement, natural to young men. While travelling in this country, he had purchased a considerable area of land in Virginia; but war ensuing, he found himself compelled to quit the country, not having taken out his naturalization papers, or even signified his intention to do so; perhaps having no immediate intention. The consequence was, as the young woman said, his property was claimed by some one, who, as her father had asserted, had previously threatened to contest the validity of the title deeds, although to the last he had deemed his claims spurious. However, under the pecu-



liar circumstances of the case, the property was lost to him, and he took no more trouble about it. In 1819, he married, in England, a young lady of great personal attractions and amiability of disposition, but, according to the notions of his friends, beneath him in rank, although the daughter of a poor, but worthy member of the medical profession. His expectations were almost altogether founded upon the good will of wealthy and titled friends, who repudiated him after this marriage; and disgusted with their aristocratic notions, and having a little money of his own, he determined to emigrate to the United States with his young wife, and to make America his adopted country. Accordingly he embarked from England with his slender stock of worldly goods and landing at Philadelphia, engaged in business. For some time he was successful; but at length fortune failed him, and selling off the remains of his property, as well as his household furniture, he removed to Reading, Pennsylvania, where both the surviving children were born; and where the eldest child born in Philadelphia, died. Miss Fitzherbert, as the reader is aware, had already narrated the manner and cause of her father and mother's death, so I need not repeat the story. She then went on to relate what had transpired subsequently to my having become acquainted with them in New York. Having a friend in Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania, they had gone thither, finding nothing that was likely to give them permanent employment in this city, and the brother obtained a situation in this friend's counting house, and for a year or two he managed to maintain his sister and himself in comfort and respectability; but the failure of his employer again cast him adrift in the world, and after lingering in Harrisburgh until the little money he had managed to save was almost expended, fruitlessly seeking employment, he had gone on to Philadelphia, where while seeking something to do, he had fallen in with a gentleman from Boston, who appeared to be favorably impressed by his appearance, and asked him various questions relative to his family and con-

nections in England, and who eventually engaged him as a clerk, at the same time introducing the sister to a friend, who promised to procure her light and profitable employment in New York. She would have preferred much going to Boston with Adolphus, but she was overruled by the gentleman who had engaged her brother, who, she thought, appeared anxious that she should not go to Boston. However, she was unsuspecting of any evil, and as the gentleman appeared to feel so kindly towards them both, she, rather against her brother's wish, decided to come to New York, where the person who had accompanied her had been as good as his word, and had procured her work at the establishment in which she was engaged at this time; but she was in great distress in consequence of her brother's strange silence.

From the nature of the questions which had been put to her by the stranger in Philadelphia, I was more confident than ever that he was cognizant of the motives which had led to the advertisement being inserted in the Philadelphia paper, and I at once made up my mind to take the case in hand and see if I could not ferret something out of it, even if I had to proceed to England. Indeed that difficulty I cared little about; for I had for some time previously harbored a desire to visit Europe.

I accordingly begged Miss Fitzherbert to resign her situation at the bookbinding establishment, and again to assist my wife in dress-making, as she was then on the look out for a young person to assist her in such matters, and I resolved at once to visit Boston, and seek to discover what had become of the young man.

Miss Fitzherbert gladly consented, and having arranged matters satisfactorily, my wife showed her to the apartment she had appropriated to her use.

The next morning as soon as I reached my office, I mechanically took up a file of Boston papers, scarcely expecting they would give me any clue to follow in my proposed visit, yet still with that vague hope that we are all wont to repose sometimes on the merest trifles, on such



occasions as that of which I am speaking. Turning to the date on which Miss Fitzherbert had told me her brother had left Philadelphia for Boston, I carelessly glanced over the columns of paper after paper, half smiling to myself at my own foolish occupation, when I was startled on perceiving in the police news of one of the papers, a report that one Adolphus Fitzherbert had been committed to jail for trial on a charge of having embezzled money from his employer.

At first I was somewhat shocked; from what I had formerly seen of the young man, I could not bring myself to believe that he was guilty of such a crime; but I determined to visit Boston the very next day, and see him again, and thus form an opinion from what I could learn there, of the nature of the charge against him. Accordingly, having told Miss Fitzherbert that evening that I had heard already of her brother, and that he was in good health, I signified my intention of proceeding to Boston on the following morning. I could perceive that Miss Fitzherbert was not easy in her mind, notwithstanding what I had told her; doubtless because she was confident, had it been so, her brother would have written to her; but she had the good sense to control her feelings before me, however she might have given vent to them in private.

On arriving at Boston, I went to the residence of a friend and related to him the strange circumstances of the advertisement which had so interested me, and my subsequent meeting with the young woman, together with the charge preferred against her brother, and said I could not believe that he was really guilty.

My friend laughed at my interesting myself in a young fellow who in all probability might turn out to be a thorough scamp; but, at my request, consented to accompany me to a magistrate, from whom we obtained permission to visit the prisoner.

Young Fitzherbert immediately recognized me when I entered the cell in which he was confined; but poor fellow! I scarcely should have recognized him as the

youth I formerly befriended, so haggard and woe-begone was his appearance—nevertheless, his features betrayed indignation rather than guilt, and as I looked upon his frank, open countenance, I felt more than ever assured that there had been foul play regarding him. I entered into conversation with him, and he indignantly repelled the idea that he had been guilty of so base a crime as that he was charged with, and I at length learnt from him the whole of the circumstances connected with his visit to Boston and his subsequent incarceration in jail.

The stranger he had met with in Philadelphia, had first met him at an intelligence office in that city whither he had gone in search of employment. He appeared at first to be much interested in him, and had held some conversation with him respecting his parents, and his present and future prospects, and at length, on leaving him, requested him to call with his sister at his hotel on the following day. He had called, as requested, accompanied by his sister, when the stranger made further singular inquiries respecting his affairs, and concluded by offering him a situation in Boston, and also recommended his sister to some employment in New York, as Georgiana had told me. On arriving in Boston, this person, whose name was Dorcas, had engaged a double-bedded room at an hotel, and they had both retired to rest; and the young man was awakened in the morning by a policeman, who arrested him on the charge of having robbed the valise of Mr. Dorcas on the previous evening.—They searched his clothes, and a wallet containing a considerable amount in bills, was found in his pocket, although he solemnly asserted he knew not how it came there. His assertions however, were of no avail, and he was committed to jail for trial. He concluded with saying, he had not the heart to let his sister know of his unhappy situation.

The charge both to my friend and myself, appeared to be perfectly extravagant—for we could not believe, had the young man actually robbed his employer, that he would have retired to rest in the same room with him,

and with the proceeds of the robbery in his pocket, or that the employer would, had the robbery actually taken place, have procured the arrest of his future clerk, without first awakening him and charging him with the robbery, and we told our impressions to the youth, promising to use our best endeavors to investigate further the nature of the charge.

We ascertained from young Fitzherbert the name of the hotel at which Dorcas was stopping, and immediately determined on paying him a visit; and finding him in the reading-room, I, without prelude, boldly asked on what grounds Adolphus Fitzherbert had been imprisoned.

The man, who was a sinister-looking individual, was evidently surprised at seeing two respectable strangers, who were evidently interested in the prisoner: but he recovered himself, and replied, haughtily—

“On a charge of embezzlement.”

“Indeed!” said I, assuming a confidant tone; for, in spite of his assumed boldness, I saw the fellow was frightened. “It is strange that a young man, whom you had engaged as a clerk, should have the unaccountable audacity to rob you, and then retire to rest in the same room with you, with the money in his vest-pocket; and strange, also, that you should actually cause him to be arrested, without charging him with the crime, or even awakening him from sleep. To tell the plain truth, sir, I believe the young man is innocent, and that you have other reasons for causing him to be sent to prison, and so put out of the way. You asked some singular questions of him and his sister, in Philadelphia. Pray, sir, do you know anything of this advertisement?” showing him the slip, in my pocket-book.

The fellow became much agitated, but made no reply. I continued:

“Now, sir, in the first place, I wish to know where is your place of business in Boston, and what is the profession, to aid you in which, you were so eager to engage the services of young Fitzherbert, after having gleaned all you could from him respecting his family; and why

did you recommend his sister not to come with him to Boston, when you are well aware she could have got employment near her brother, as well as at New York? You see, sir, I know all connected with this matter, and am determined to sift it to the uttermost. I know that no person of your name is carrying on business in this city, for I have searched the Directory. The name of Jeremiah Dorcas is not to be found there. I can tell you, sir, you have got yourself into an awkward position.”

The fellow trembled like an aspen-leaf, and I was now confidant the whole charge was trumped up: but still he did not reply; and I was about to leave the hotel, and make known my suspicions to a magistrate. This I told him, when he confessed that he had placed the money in the pocket of the young man, and that he had been hired to do so by a person named Harley, whom he had met at Jones' Hotel, in Philadelphia, who had paid him liberally to get the young man out of the way. He had shown him the advertisement, but further than this he knew nothing of the business. I believed what he said; and he begged me to say nothing about the matter, and he would withdraw the charge.

My friend was for causing him to be arrested, for making a false charge, but I saw that evidently there was fraud and conspiracy at work respecting these young people, as regarded some inheritance that was justly their due; and I thought that the wisest plan to circumvent the machinations of their enemies, would be to keep things secret, the more especially as Dorcas had mentioned that Harley was in communication with others besides himself, while he was in Philadelphia. I insisted, however, upon his delivering to Adolphus the amount he had falsely charged him with stealing, as the price of my forbearance, and commanded him to keep Harley ignorant of the turn matters had taken. This the trembling coward gladly promised to do. As to Harley, he said he believed he had gone to England—at all events, he knew not where he could be found.

"I am now going to the jail," I added; "you will please to accompany me: the court is now sitting. Explain to the judge and committing magistrate, that you were wrong in your suspicion; that young Fitzherbert is innocent, and, to the best of your knowledge, has not a stain on his moral character—or I will not answer for the consequences."

The crest-fallen man did as I desired, and I had the satisfaction to see young Fitzherbert a free man.

A few days afterwards, having completed my own private business, we left Boston together, for New York. I need not describe the joyous emotions of young Fitzherbert as we entered the railroad-cars, and he thought how soon he should again see his sister, from whom he had, until now, never been a day separated since childhood, nor the flood of gratitude he expressed towards myself for my kindness to them both.

In due time we arrived at New York, and I made all possible haste to get home, as I saw how anxious Adolphus was to see his sister. Under the circumstances, it was not to be wondered at.

We reached my residence, and we were both welcomed at the door by my wife.

We had hardly taken off our overcoats, when young Fitzherbert asked for his sister.

"She must be up stairs in her room," said my wife; "for Mary came in with the children a few minutes since. I guess, had she heard you come in, she would have been down before now."

"Has she been abroad, then?" I asked.

"Yes," replied my wife; "the poor girl has been confined so long, that I thought a little fresh air would do her good; and she was every day so anxiously expecting a letter from her brother, that I let her go as far as the post-office. Mary has been with her and two of the children."

"Hasten, then, and call her down stairs, my dear," I said; "Adolphus is dying with impatience to see her."

My wife did as I desired her—but there was no re-

sponse. She went up stairs to her room, but she was not there.

"Where can she be?" said she; "I surely heard Mary come in, and heard the children's voices in the passage. Mary!" she called down the basement stairs; and, in a moment, the servant made her appearance.

"Where is Miss Fitzherbert, Mary?" said I.

"I do not know, sir," replied the servant; "I thought she got home before me."

"Did you part company with her, then, in the street?"

"We were stopping at a picture shop in Broadway, sir, after we had called at the post-office, where there was no letter for Miss Fitzherbert, and she was showing one of the pictures to the children, when the fire bells rang, and a great crowd of people rushed by with the engines. I took the hands of the children, and tried to escape the crowd, by turning down one of the by-streets until it had passed; and when I looked round, Miss Fitzherbert was not to be seen. She must have lost us in the crowd, and I thought, perhaps, she had taken a stage, and got home before us."

Poor Adolphus was in a sad state of excitement, and to tell the truth my wife and I were little less alarmed.

"You should on no consideration have let her go out of the house, Jane," said I to my wife, who appeared to be quite stupefied at the turn matters had taken.

However, after a few moments consideration, I began to think we were all viewing the affair too seriously, and I said—

"Miss Fitzherbert has no doubt missed Mary in the crowd, and has perhaps staid behind in the hope of finding her and the children again. I dare say she will be here shortly; for she knows the way from Broadway to our residence."

We all hoped and thought this would be the case, although we could not get rid of our uneasiness; but at length, when half-an-hour—an hour had elapsed, and it began to grow dusk, we got really and seriously alarmed, and Adolphus was almost beside himself with mingled

feelings of excitement and fear. In the course of another half-an-hour we walked out together, taking the direction of Broadway, although utterly unable to devise any means of learning any tidings of the lost one. "Had any accident happened to her? had she been run down and injured by the crowd?" were questions that we asked ourselves, and in the dreadful doubt whether or not this had been the case, we actually proceeded to the city hospital and asked if any one answering to her description had been carried thither? The answer was in the negative, and at our wits' ends what further to do, we returned to the house, hoping to find her there safe when we arrived; but it was now dark, and nothing had been heard of her. Neither her brother or I could rest at home, and we again went out—this time going to the Chief of the Police's office, where we stated what had occurred.

Again we returned home, and again heard the dismal news that Miss Fitzherbert had not arrived. Neither of us went to rest that night, and Adolphus was almost driven by his feelings into a state of insanity. He flung himself upon the chairs and sofas, and then rose and rapidly paced the floor, with clenched fists and wild gestures; he went from room to room and searched in the most ridiculous and impossible places, and I had great difficulty in controlling him or keeping him from again rushing out of the house and uselessly, at that hour, renewing the search.

Morning came at length, slowly enough it appeared to us, and as soon as it was daylight I hurried down town, accompanied by Adolphus, to the evening newspaper offices and desired an advertisement to be inserted, and then we pursued the same course at the offices of all the daily papers.

However, the advertisements answered no purpose, and days passed away and nothing was heard of the lost girl, although the police were put on the alert and every means we could devise employed to hear some tidings of her or to discover her whereabouts.

Meanwhile, dispirited though I was, I learnt from the

young man at various times, for he was too agitated to speak long on any subject, that his sister's version of the history of her family was perfectly correct so far as she knew. I also received a hint from him respecting the relatives of his father's family which I shall not at present disclose, as it would interfere with the interest of the subsequent narrative; and in the vague hope that the sister would eventually be found, I set about investigating as far as I was able, the mystery of the advertisement. I learnt that it had been answered by two young persons, representing their names and those of their parents to be the same as those of my youthful *protéges*, and thus as they had gained two months or more undisputed vantage ground, I found that I should have to commence the battle with strong odds against me. My counter evidence was, however, so conclusive that I had no doubt whatever of the eventual success of my clients, could I only find the poor girl, despite the tardiness and the proverbial uncertainty of the law in such cases as these. I soon had reason, however, to believe that the person whose name had appeared in the advertisement as the agent in the business was an Englishman, and was really the agent of the parties who claimed, in England, the right to the disputed property, and also that the parties, who had personified the brother and sister were paid agents themselves, employed for the purpose of carrying out what turned out to be one of the most foul conspiracies to defraud that was ever plotted. I will, at present, only observe that to those persons who recognize in the name of Fitzherbert that of a character once somewhat celebrated at the Court of St. James, some idea of the hint given me by young Fitzherbert regarding the position of his father's family may be arrived at; but the whole affair is so mixed up with shameless trickery and heartless duplicity on the part of some of the so-called aristocracy, both of this country and Great Britain, that it would be useless to say more at present. From the incidents I learnt I shall weave the whole affair into a narrative, which in my opinion, and that of all those

cognizant of any of the circumstances connected with it, will contain matter of the most thrilling interest, continuing it up to the date of the paragraph taken from the English paper, which, so far as it goes, is in the main correct.

I proceeded to work busily, although much disconcerted by the non-appearance of Miss Fitzherbert, whose identity it would be necessary to substantiate, or at least to have satisfactory proof of her death, and now we began really to fear that something fatal had befallen her. I was therefore hampered in commencing operations openly, so as to give me any chance of success. Young Fitzherbert also was so completely paralyzed by the loss of his sister that he appeared perfectly heedless regarding the matter, and careless as to what became of him; for three long, anxious, weary weeks had now passed away, and still nothing had been discovered respecting the missing girl.

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## CHAPTER II.

*Every search made for the heroine, is unsuccessful—A letter from Philadelphia leads to a strange discovery—The rescue of the heroine—Mysterious explanations respecting the abduction.*

WHAT a different estimation do we form of the value of time according to the peculiar circumstances under which we may be placed! Time flies so rapidly, says he or she whose mind is free from trouble; whose prospects are cheering, and whose future path appears strewn with flowers. Time lags so wearily along, says another, whose soul is beset with apprehensions; who is a prey to the demon of anxiety or remorse, or whose spirits and health are prostrated beneath that "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick."

Thus it was with poor Adolphus; thus, though in a less painful degree, was it with myself; while my wife



LADY MARY BESEECHING THE EARL TO FOREGO HIS DESIGNS.

See chapter XII.

was sorely distressed that she had, although unconsciously, been the cause of all our trouble in consequence of allowing Georgiana to go abroad on the ill-fated day of her visit to the Post Office; besides which, as a woman, she could but feel for the situation of the forlorn, desponding brother, as well as entertain mournful apprehensions regarding the sister whose mysterious disappearance and prolonged absence almost banished any hope that we had entertained of her return.

At the conclusion of the last chapter of this narrative, I said three weeks had passed away since I had returned from Boston with young Fitzherbert, and learnt the melancholy tidings of his sister's disappearance; but three weeks did not put a period to our anxiety. Twice that space of time had elapsed, and no intelligence had been heard from or of her, although her strange disappearance had been advertised throughout every state in the Union.

Adolphus and I had our suspicions at first that M——, of Boston, the person whose evil designs regarding both the brother and sister, have already been spoken of, had something to do with the matter; but he, we learnt, had sailed a week or two previous for England. He had been in New York about the time of the disappearance of Miss Fitzherbert, it is true; but there was nothing, so far as we could learn, to fasten suspicion directly upon him, or to lead us to believe he knew any thing of the matter.

One strange piece of information we received which, vague as it was, urged young Fitzherbert to the very brink of despair, as regarded his sister's fate. It was this:—Some weeks after we had advertised the disappearance of the young lady, I received a reply, by letter, from a Postmaster of a small town in Wisconsin, accompanied by a local newspaper, in the columns of which was a paragraph relating to a young female whose appearance seemed to agree with that of Miss Fitzherbert, and who had been in that neighborhood shortly after the



date of her disappearance from New York, or, at least, from her friends in this city. This young female, the Postmaster stated in his letter, had shown symptoms of aberration of intellect, and had since been found drowned in a creek in the neighborhood—it was supposed by accident, as she had apparently stepped off a partially opened draw-bridge. The features could not be recognized, as the body when found, had been several days in the water; but a locket had been taken from her neck which was sent on for me to identify if possible. Strange enough, Miss Fitzherbert, as her brother said, had worn a similar one, and though it was a counterpart of those which may be found in a jeweler's store at all times, he would not believe otherwise than that the unfortunate girl described in the newspaper, and letter, was his sister.

With regard to the advertisement respecting the property, I was prevented from taking any prompt and determined steps in the matter, for reasons, I have already explained, and to add to my uneasiness on this score, I read in a English newspaper, received by a late mail, that the two persons, who, I had not the slightest doubt, had wrongly personated the brother and sister enquired for in the advertisement, had arrived in London, and, to the satisfaction of all interested parties, were proceeding in a legal way to substantiate their claims. The evidence of Adolphus would have thrown a considerable obstacle in their way. This I was fully aware of; and I strenuously endeavored to urge him to co-operate with me, and to dispute the rights of the false claimants; but all my endeavors to arouse him to energy were futile. I told him that duty, as well as justice to himself and sister, required him to exert himself; that in the event of his sister's reappearance, so much time would be irrevocably lost, and with it every anticipation of obtaining future justice; for none knew better than I the intricacies of laws suits, wherein the rights of property are concerned, and often in the course of a long practice had I

experienced the truth of the axiom—"Possession is nine points of the law."

But when I mentioned the subject to him, he would reply, while the sickly smile of hopelessness gave a ghastly appearance to his wan features—"The recovery of my sister, Mr. —! Can I, can you, or any one now retain a hope of her return? Supposing that the Wisconsin Postmaster letter did not relate to her, where could an innocent, helpless girl have been immured for six weeks? No, no, Georgiana will return no more. I cannot, dare not say what I fear has been her fate," and as he spoke, a shudder pervaded his frame. "She has gone from me forever, and with her has fled every hope of my existence. What were the prospect of wealth and the possession of rights and property that may or may not be mine, provided she were not with me to share my good fortune. Poor, dear girl, she shared my evil fortune long enough, and her cheerful voice and winning smile and clinging sisterly love, were oftentimes, when I was most prostrated by misfortune, the only spur that goaded me on to fresh exertion. Hope for the future is dead within me. If wealth be mine, let others enjoy it if they will and can, to me it would be a source of perpetual rankling of soul. Could I revel in luxury, enjoy pleasure, bask in the sunshine of prosperity, witness the happiness of strangers, and not feel a constantly recurring pang, wounding me to the heart, and rendering each scene of enjoyment to others, one of torture to me? Could I witness brothers and sisters, aye, or lovers, mingling in the dance with those they loved, or enjoy themselves in any social festivity, without having the image of my poor sister—fair as the fairest, and dearer to me than myself—constantly before my eyes; perhaps, in fancy, looking reproachfully upon me as the cause of her death," and here his voice faltered as he added—"for I should not have left her. No, Mr. —, I feel all your kindness, but I have no motive now to urge me to exertion.

"While I live, I feel that I must work for my sup

port, and the very necessity of exertion that feeling will create, will prove a better balm to my sorrowing spirit than all the allurements that wealth could bestow. And this leads me to speak on a subject I have revolved in my mind this morning. I can live no longer on your generosity. I have done so too long already; but while a vestige of hope remained, I was unwilling to quit your residence. You will add one more favor to the many you have accorded to me, if you will, through your influence aid me in procuring even the humblest employment by means of which I can support myself and repay your kindness. At all events to-morrow I shall leave here. If my sister is lost to me, her brother shall be no longer—too long he has already been—the recipient of the charity of strangers.”

There was a bitterness in the tone in which the young man uttered these last words that I should have thought, under other circumstances, savored of ingratitude; but in the irritated state of his nerves, I could easily overlook and forgive it. I therefore replied:

“Mr. Fitzherbert, you are, from what I have heard from your own lips, corroborated, as it has been by the information I have already received, by means of the very slight investigation the sad circumstances in which we have been placed have permitted me to make, aware as well as I, that you and your sister are in all probability the heirs to wealth and rank compared with which the position I hold is one of poverty; therefore the slight favors I have rendered you, since you have made my house your home, cannot be placed to the score of charity on my part. The services I rendered your sister and yourself previously, were only such as any honest, right feeling man would render to any human beings placed in a similar position, therefore they have left no obligation behind. I can, however, feel, myself, the awkwardness of your position here, provided you still determine to take no steps to aid me in my endeavors to restore to you the inheritance that should have been your father's, without which all action on my part

would be worse than useless. But you shall not leave me unprovided for. I have influence to obtain you employment which will give you the means of gaining a comfortable livelihood, and it shall be employed in your behalf. I again, however, urge you to view the matter differently. You are a young man: brilliant prospects may be before you; happiness may yet await you. Time will blunt the keenest pangs of the grief you now feel on account of your sister's loss; your sister even may yet be restored to you. If not, recollect that others have suffered in a like degree, and if they have temporarily given way to despondency, it has not lasted forever. Excuse me for alluding to another subject, which perhaps may, under your present bereavement, be unpleasant to you. It is this: It cannot be expected that because you have lost a sister, however dear she was to you, you can remain indifferent to the fascinations of the sex. The time will come when some gentle being will awaken other, different and stronger emotions of love, and in her love you may be happy; and though the loss of your sister may never, *will* never be obliterated from your recollection, Time, as I have already said, the assuager of all mental grief, will enshrine her memory in your breast as one of the sad but yet not altogether painful recollections of the past; for there are moments in the lives of the happiest when there is a mournful pleasure in recalling even the bitterest sorrows of by gone days. Let me then once again entreat of you to overcome what I must term this morbid disposition to court hopelessness and despair. To-night I will say no more on the subject. Revolve what I have said in your mind, and tell me your determination to-morrow.”

Tears sprang into the young man's eyes, as he rose and seized me by the hand.

“I am sensible,” he said, “that I have spoken in words which might be construed into those of ingratitude; forgive me, and charge the fault to the distress into which my mind has been plunged. Had I lost Georgiana in any other manner, although I should feel



the loss bitterly, I should not so deeply grieve; but to lose her in this strange manner, brings heartrending forebodings as to what may have been her fate. And in reply to your remarks upon my distress of mind and your allusions to future happiness, listen to me, while I tell how it is that the cords of brotherly and sisterly love were so closely woven around our hearts, and then say if mine is a common case of sorrow. I am six years older than my sister, and when our mother died I was able to carry the little baby about—and my father's death occurring so shortly afterwards, although we were kindly adopted by strangers, as soon as my sister was out of her nurse's arms, I was naturally enough employed much in tending and amusing her. I, at the time of our parents' deaths, was old enough, child as I was, to lament their loss, and to feel a harrowing sense of our loneliness. Perhaps, I was prematurely inducted into the cares and sorrows of existence—for, such a loss as that, to a child of my age at the time, generally leads to precocity—I might, like other boys, had my parents lived, sought the society of my childhood's playmates, and thought but little of a baby sister; but as she began to walk, and then to lisp the name of "brother," and to dry up her childish tears and smile a welcome at my approach, can it be wondered at that she became all in all to me; and, then, as she grew older, she whispered in my ears all her childish joys and sorrows, and made me the confidant of her little secrets—and when I came home from the day school to which I was sent, it was my greatest delight to teach Georgiana her letters, and, boy as I was, I felt the pride and joy of a parent when she accomplished her tasks, and so applied herself to the little studies I sat her to, purposely to win her brother's smile and approbation—and then, our books laid aside, we would sit with our arms entwined about each other's necks, and I would tell her about the father and mother whom we both had lost, and kiss the tears from her eyelids, as she wept over the decease of the parents she had never known. I was at a very early age

compelled to earn, in a great measure, my own living; at least, I was expected to supply my own clothing, and it was my pride to supply my sister's too, and to furnish her, out of my scanty earnings, with the little trifles, so essential to the happiness of a child, which otherwise she would never have possessed. I need not say she was the constant companion of my leisure hours as we grew up, for I had little opportunity and less leisure to seek other society. You know how beautiful she was, and how gentle was her disposition; when we did mingle with the youth of our own age, I compared her with others whom I met, and was doubly proud to call her sister. Young as I am, I have met, in consequence of the misfortunes of those who were kind to me, with more trials than usually fall to the lot of youth. When these trials occurred, I found ample repayment for the love and care I had bestowed upon my sister. I am naturally of an impetuous disposition. I should, in all probability, but for her kind solicitude and constant cheerfulness, have recklessly cast myself away, I should have sought other and rougher scenes of employment, which might have given me ample support, but which would have made me different to what I am; nay, more, the lessons of virtue, I learnt from my mother's lips and taught to her, would, I fear, have been eradicated, had she not again brought them to my memory, and thus, by her gentle hopeful love, doubly repaid my boyhood's care. Few have been placed in circumstances such as we have been. She was sister, daughter—all to me—and thus to lose her! Mr. —, can you wonder at my grief or reproach me for succumbing beneath its weight? Believe me, sir, those alone who have been placed in similar circumstances, can know the earnestness, the depth, the holy purity of a brother's love."

He sat down and buried his face in his hands, and I, scarcely less affected at the touching picture he had drawn, and knowing that obtrusive attempts at consolation in moments of bitter mental suffering only add to its intensity, noiselessly quitted the room.

How very often do we find the atmospheric law, "The darkest hour is often that which ushers in the dawn," applicable to the tide of human affairs. There are few persons, young or old, who have not more than once in their lives found that when their prospects were most clouded, and when hope seemed to have whispered farewell, then the tide of trouble turned, and sunshine and prosperity succeeded the darkness of doubt and of almost despair.

I left Fitzherbert the evening on which the above recorded conversation had taken place between us, in the hope that he would think better of his determination, and be brought to take a more hopeful view of his future prospects. Consequently, I did not speak to him before leaving home for the city, the next morning, in order to give him as long as possible to arrive at his final determination.

About midday my servant was despatched by my wife to my office with a letter, which had been directed to me at my private residence, bearing the Philadelphia postmark, and marked "*Immediate*." I broke the seal, and found that the envelope contained another letter, directed in a delicate female hand-writing, to Mr. Adolphus Fitzherbert.

The reader may imagine the feelings with which I regarded this missive. I had never seen Miss Fitzherbert's hand-writing; but, what other female was likely to write to Adolphus, and to direct the letter, under cover, to me? was the question I put to myself. I turned over again and again, the outside envelope, in hopes to find some clue to the mystery, but not a word of explanation had been written. I examined the hand-writing. It was written in a bold, clerkly style; but I could not recollect that I had ever seen it before; at all events, I could not recognize it. Under the circumstances, I thought it inadvisable to wait until I returned home at night before I delivered the letter into the hands of Adolphus; and I also thought that it would be better that I should be present when he opened it, as it might con-

tain matter of importance, even if it were not from his sister. Perhaps, too, curiosity had a little to do in the matter; for, after all, let folks say what they may, curiosity is a failing not exclusively confined to the fairer portion of the creation. At all events, although I was rather pressed with business, after a little cogitation, I determined to be the bearer of the letter, myself, whether it boded good or evil, so I got into the carriage with the servant, and drove homewards.

On arriving at my house, I sent immediately for Adolphus, who was in his own room, and who shortly made his appearance with a saddened countenance, but with a spirit of determination impressed upon his features, which showed me that he had fully made up his mind as regarded his resolution of the previous evening. He was about to speak, thinking, no doubt, that I had sent for him to learn the purpose he had arrived at; but I stopped him, by silently placing the letter in his hand. He took it mechanically, but had no sooner glanced at the superscription, than he exclaimed—

"Good God! this is the hand-writing of my sister!"

His nostrils quivered, and his lips trembled nervously, as he sat down upon the sofa and hurriedly tore off the envelope. I watched his countenance as he read the letter, but his features did not change their expression; and, until he had read the last line, I could form no idea whether the news he had received was good or bad. At length he placed the letter into my hand, saying—

"My sister, thank God, is living, and is in Philadelphia. I must go thither immediately. Read the letter, sir."

I did as he desired. It ran thus:—

"*Market-Street, Philadelphia.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER:

"God only knows whether this letter will reach you, or, if it should reach you, whether it will do so in time to be of any avail. I have no time to enter into details, and can only say that I have, for the last six

weeks, been immured in a chamber in the house from which I now write. I was taken forcibly from New York, and brought here, since which time I have been permitted to hold no communication with any one but those connected with the family, who have, however, otherwise treated me kindly, and paid every attention to my comfort. Yesterday I was told by the lady—for those who have me in their power appear to be man and wife, and both persons of education and good standing in society—that I must prepare for a sea-voyage; that they were going to Italy, and that it was the desire of those interested in my welfare, and who had a right to the disposal of my person, that I should enter a convent there, with the view of ultimately taking the veil. I was forbidden to ask any questions, and those I persisted in asking, were unanswered. For the fiftieth time since I have been immured in this house, I begged that pen and ink might be given me, that at least I might relieve your and my own anxiety, and also that of kind Mr. —; but the indulgence was refused me. Dearest Adolphus, I was even told you were not my brother, and that I had relatives of rank in Europe, who claimed possession of my person! You cannot imagine the harrowing feelings which have tortured me for weary days and sleepless nights, ever since I was torn from you: *my pen cannot—no words can describe them.* To think that I must part with you thus, and for ever, and without your knowing what has become of me! Great God! the idea is too terrible; but this I know, should Heaven so ordain it, I shall not long live to grieve over my brother's loss—and then, dear Adolphus, if we meet no more on earth, we may surely hope, according to our dear mother's lessons, which I learnt from your lips, to meet in a happier world. But to this I cannot reconcile myself. As we were in childhood, *all* to each other, so would I desire that we should remain while life shall last. Can it be possible that we should thus be compelled forcibly to separate for ever in this world? I cannot believe it. God is too good—too just —. The only being who

has expressed pity for me, is the lady's maid, or companion, and she is fearful of showing it; but this evening I conjured her to bring me writing materials, in order that, at least, I might send you a line to tell you I am still living. I so wrought upon her feelings, that she complied, and even promised that her cousin, who is in some situation in this city, should enclose my letter to Mr. —, for you. I need not say with what joy I received the means of writing—and now, by the glimmer of a feeble lamp, while my keepers imagine that I am sleeping, or tossing upon my uneasy pillow, (for whoever they be, they cannot be so dead to human feelings as to believe I can sleep in quiet, separated from the only earthly tie I possess, and ignorant of the fate in reserve for me), I am penning these unconnected lines, for I cannot collect my thoughts to write as I would do, even to you, dear Adolphus; and, perhaps, the lady's maid may deceive me, and not send the letter. Perhaps it is a feint, to which her master and mistress are privy, in order that they may read what I write. Oh! I am the prey of fearful imaginings! but no, I will not mistrust Maria. If *she* has deceived me, what faith can I place in any human being? I understand, the vessel in which I am to leave the United States, will sail for Trieste on Wednesday next—four days hence. Dear Adolphus, if you do receive this letter, there is yet time to save me. I hear a footstep below, coming up the stairs, and must put out my light and conceal this letter. Farewell, Adolphus—and whatever happens, never cease to remember your sister.

“GEORGIANNA.

“P.S. The footstep I heard was Maria's. She called for my letter, and says she will deliver it faithfully into her cousin's hands. She speaks as though I may believe her—and I will. God bless her—and may her kind efforts in my behalf restore me to my brother. “G.”

I perused the letter carefully, and then turned to Fitzherbert, who was watching me with features in which

earnestness and suppressed emotion were perceptible in every lineament.

"I must go immediately to Philadelphia," he repeated, rising from the sofa, as he received back his sister's letter.

"We must *both* go and that immediately," I replied. "This is Monday. If the vessel in which Miss Fitzherbert says she is to take passage, for Italy, sails on Wednesday, and the letter itself be not a forgery, there is no time to lose. We shall start this evening, and shall arrive there early in the morning."

"The letter is no deception," said Fitzherbert, "and I can swear to my sister's handwriting. Let us prepare to start."

I could not help admiring the composure and steady determination of the young man now that he had some purpose in view. All his wavering fretfulness disappeared as if by magic. He expressed no violent emotions of delight, for as yet neither of us knew how matters might turn out, but calmly advised with me what course we had best to pursue. We then packed our carpet bags, and, in the course of an hour, were on our way to the Sister City. Of the three parties interested, my wife was the most agitated when she was informed of the result of our private conference. She could scarcely restrain her emotion, for, poor woman, she had never ceased to reproach herself for her heedlessness in permitting Miss Fitzherbert to go abroad during our absence from the city.

Upon our arrival at Philadelphia, we put up at my customary stopping place, Jones' Hotel, and then considered what would be the most advisable step for us to take next. We had not learnt either the number of the house in Market-street, nor the names of the persons who had illegally obtained possession of the young lady, and, therefore, to waste our limited time in the endeavor to find the residence of Miss Fitzherbert would have been useless; besides, for aught we know, the poor girl might have been misinformed as to the name of the street itself,

for it was very probable that the lady's maid, although moved by compassion to procure the materials of writing for her, would hesitate ere she involved her employers in trouble, and I thought it was very evident that she was connected with the business, or with the principals in the affair, in such a manner as to involve herself in some difficulty should the parties be arrested. In fact, accustomed as I was, through the nature of my profession to scan narrowly and jealously the actions of mankind in matters of difficulty or danger, I viewed the letter in the same light as I should have done had it fallen into my hands from one of the opposing party in a case in which I was retained, who had from compassion or some other cause, shown a desire to assist my client without involving himself further than he could avoid. I again carefully read the letter, and coupled with the asseverations of Fitzherbert that it was assuredly in his sister's handwriting, I could not, with all my caution, come to any other conclusion than that it was genuine. "What, then," said I to myself, "could have been the motives that prompted this woman to give Miss Fitzherbert the means of communicating with her friends? and why has she delayed doing so, until almost the day appointed for her departure for Italy. Compassion, I have no doubt, was the moving cause, but why the delay if she has not some object in view, and that most likely the safety of herself and those with whom she is connected. That she was in earnest, is shown by her prompt dispatch of the letter; nor is it likely she sent it without knowing what information it contained; therefore she must be desirous that the poor girl should be rescued. Her not giving Miss Fitzherbert the number of the house is satisfactory proof to me that she wishes to disguise her own action in the matter, and her allowing it to be known to the young lady's brother that she is to sail in a vessel bound to Trieste is also proof that she desires he should be on board the vessel on the day of her sailing, in order to search the ship and claim his sister."

Having thus cogitated with myself, I came to the con-

clusion that the object was a rescue from the vessel at the last moment in order to allow the escape of the abductors. I mentioned this to Adolphus, who was of the same opinion as myself, and our next step was to ascertain whether any vessel was really on the point of sailing for Trieste, rather an unusual thing at that period in Philadelphia. We discovered from the shipping lists that such was really the case, and that the Giovanni brig was to leave on the following day. This was still further corroboration of the truth and correctness of the statements made in the letter, although I was still doubtful whether it had not been all a feint—of course, without Miss Fitzherbert's connivance—to throw us off the scent; "but then," I argued, "why allow her to write at all?"

Desirous to avoid any movement that might lead to suspicion, we made no further inquiries respecting the vessel; but contented ourselves with walking along the wharves until we discovered at which pier she was lying, and then we stood at the corner of Pine-street apparently carelessly scanning her appearance, with the full determination of being on board in the morning with a warrant for her detention until we had ascertained she had sailed without Miss Fitzherbert.

While thus standing just as it was growing dusk—for after having made the necessary arrangements, we had again walked to the pier—a young man with a slightly foreign accent, asked Adolphus if his name was Fitzherbert?

"It is," he replied.

"Then, sir," said the stranger, "I am to give you this note," and placing a letter in Fitzherbert's hand, he hastily withdrew and was lost to sight in a moment.

It struck us both immediately that this singular circumstance had some connection with the errand we had come to Philadelphia upon, and as it was already too dark to read in the streets, we immediately adjourned to the nearest tavern. The letter was seemingly in a woman's handwriting, and in broken English, evidently in an Italian idiom, but it was perfectly easy to under-

stand, and I shall therefore render it into good English for the benefit of my readers. It bore no date, but simply said:

"After much consideration, my better feelings have prevailed. On Saturday last I furnished Miss Fitzherbert with materials, in order that she might write to the brother whom she so deeply mourns. I was still doubtful whether to send the letter; but the poor young lady's pleading, trusting look, when she placed it in my hands, at once overpowered me and I caused it to be sent. My feelings of compassion once enlisted in her behalf, I could not stop their current. She was confident that if her brother was in New York and received the letter, he would be here to save her. She told me this, and again fears for myself and those to whom I am irrevocably bound, almost overcame what our Order would consider my criminal weakness. In fact I had laid myself open to the penalty of death. I could still have prevented her brother from obtaining possession of her; but my woman's heart forbade me. I once, when little more than a child in *mia bella Italia*, had a brother and other earthly ties, whom I devotedly loved, and, alas! who loved me. That is past. I dare not think of it or my heart would break. My duty now is due alone to the superiors of my Order. I am the bride of Heaven. Enough of this. I would save myself; I would release Miss Fitzherbert, and I would prevent any evil befalling my coadjutors. I trust then to her brother's honor. He will not harm the woman who has restored to him his sister. Miss Fitzherbert described her brother to me, also a friend who she believed would be with him. I have told my cousin to watch if such persons arrive, and if so to give this letter to him who answered to the name of Fitzherbert.

"Take no violent steps. Miss Fitzherbert will be conveyed on board the vessel before daylight to-morrow. Be at this spot, and when you see a white kerchief wave from a coach window, follow the coach to the pier. I



shall be with her, and also one whom I can trust—one who is bound by oath to obey my will. Miss Fitzherbert will be delivered into your hands when she leaves the carriage. Hasten away immediately. For the rest I have so managed that no suspicion shall attach to me. Be silent for the present, the time may come when you will know more.

MARIA."

The perusal of this strange epistle gave us a fresh clue to the object of Miss Fitzherbert's abduction. We had no doubt that it was planned by the contestants of the English property, although we were ignorant how they became aware of her being in New York, at the period of the abduction, and also of the method they had employed. We determined, however, to act as we had been directed to do, and considered ourselves bound in honor, in consideration of the compassionate feelings of the female who had assisted her, not to take the violent measures which she deprecated.

We accordingly dispensed with the attendance of the legal force we had requested to meet us on board the vessel on the following morning, and, agreeably to our instructions, were at the appointed rendezvous at a very early hour; in fact, we procured a carriage to await us there, and determined to remain on the spot all night ourselves.

Adolphus was much agitated, and I had much difficulty in controlling my feelings. However, we summoned all the patience we could to our aid.

About three o'clock we observed a close carriage coming down Pine-street towards the wharf, and as it passed the spot where we were standing, the window was slightly raised, and a white handkerchief shown for a moment. We rushed after the carriage, which stopped a few rods further on, and we observed two females and a stout built man alight from it. We were on the spot in a second, and in another moment Georgiana had fainted in her brother's arms. A closely veiled female approached me, and placing her finger to her lips whisp-

ered, "Leave here quickly, and be silent." Her bearded companion and herself then went on board the vessel and the empty vehicle was driven away. Between us we bore the fainting girl to the carriage, we ourselves had in waiting, and in a few minutes more Georgiana was safe at our hotel.

It long was before she was sufficiently composed to speak to us, and she almost frantically gave way to the feelings of joy which her restoration to her brother had given rise to. Poor Adolphus bore himself manfully and endeavored to soothe the agitated girl as much as possible, and when she became more composed, we insisted, anxious as we were, that before any explanations were given, she should retire and take some repose.

In the evening she had sufficiently recovered her composure to state to us the circumstances of the abduction:

"I was admiring and showing to the children," said she, "a picture in a shop window in Broadway, when the fire bells rang and a crowd shortly rushed past, with an engine running on the sidewalk, compelling the people to scatter in every direction. The servant girl took hold of the children and I turned down a by street to escape the crush. When the crowd had in some measure passed by, I looked about for the servant, but I could not see her, and after waiting some time, I thought I would find my way home alone. There was still a number of people running to the fire in Broadway, and to avoid them I pursued my way along a narrow street which ran, as I thought, parallel to the great thoroughfare, intending, after proceeding some little distance, again to turn into Broadway. The street I was in was comparatively deserted; but a man passed me, who I recognized as having closely observed me when inquiring at the Post-office for a letter from my brother. He passed me at a rapid pace and stopped a short distance ahead, at the corner of a cross street, and held some conversation with another man muffled in a cloak, who resembled, as I thought, the individual who had persuaded

Adolphus to go to Boston. I could not be sure it really was he, but I became alarmed and turned up the next street I came to. They must have dodged me, somehow or other, for in a few moments I again saw them before me. I thought the better way would be to pass them without appearing to observe them, as they were now sauntering slowly along; but before I came up with them, the latter of the two, he whom I fancied was my brother's persecutor, turned off in another direction. The man with him stopped opposite a courtyard, and as I was passing, he seized and dragged me into it, covering my mouth with his hands, so as to prevent me from giving any alarm. I struggled violently, but I might as well have sought to wrestle with a giant, and I was borne into a house in the court. I was assured that no harm was intended me, provided I remained quiet, and was left in the room with two elderly females until evening.

It must have been a very late hour of the night when a lady and gentleman, apparently, were shown into the room, and the two women who had kept ward over me left us to ourselves.

My new visitors, who were the same persons who have detained me for so many weeks in this city, spoke to me kindly. They assured me that all they were doing would be eventually for my benefit; but that to attempt to escape would be useless, and would only lead to rigid treatment I should otherwise avoid.

"I was too distressed to utter a word further than to beg of them to let me go home, for I partly hoped my brother would be back from Boston that night, and I knew what a state of agonizing suspense he would be in were I not to return. All my entreaties, however, were of no avail, and in the course of another hour, a coach came to the door, and I was hurriedly placed in it by the gentleman, who, after assisting the lady in, also entered it himself. I attempted to call for assistance, but was prevented from doing so by the gentleman, who placed a muffler to my mouth, while the lady continued

to assure me that I would be well treated if I remained quiet. I must have fainted, for I can recollect nothing further, until, towards daylight, I found I had been transferred to another vehicle, in which was seated a second female, whom I afterwards found was the companion of the lady, and the same who allowed me to make known my situation to my brother. I could see that we were on a country road, but not a word was spoken to me by either of my three companions. After some time we approached a large city, which I have since learned was Philadelphia, where we now are.

"As we entered, I was again warned, on peril of my life, to make no attempt to escape, and not to utter a word to any one; and seeing how completely I was in the power of my mysterious companions, I knew it would be useless to do so, until some more favorable opportunity arrived. We stopped opposite a large house which I was compelled to enter, and was shown by the females into a room which I was told I was to consider my own; that I was to be supplied with books or anything I required excepting that which I most desired, the means of communicating with my brother. This was resolutely denied me. My meals were sent up into my room, but I seldom had any company but Maria, who spoke English very imperfectly; but who certainly was a more desirable companion than her mistress, who was taciturn and severe in the extreme.

So passed several weeks, during which period I was a prey to the utmost distress of mind, and the only one who seemed any way to take an interest in me was Maria. The lady seldom visited my apartment, which, however, she always kept a key of, Maria having another, neither, at any time leaving the door unlocked; the gentleman I saw but twice after the evening of my arrival at Philadelphia.

About a week ago the lady came into my room and told me that I was not the brother of Adolphus, but was related to several families of wealth and importance in Europe; that it was the desire of those who were my

rightful guardians that I should enter a convent and become a nun; 'perhaps,' she said, 'eventually, an abbess.' They had been long detained, she said, endeavoring to procure a vessel going direct to Italy, and now, having procured one, they should sail in a few days. Without waiting for any reply she left me with Maria.

I was in an agony of distress, and I could perceive that Maria was more than usually affected at the sight of my grief. I besought her, by the love she bore her own friends, to let me at least inform my brother that I was living, and where was my destination. For a long time she demurred at this; but at length, I so won upon her feelings that she consented.

My letter will have informed you of all that occurred until yesterday, the day fixed for our going on board the vessel. Maria then told me that she would endeavor, if I promised to follow her directions, to obtain my restoration to my brother, and she begged me to describe his appearance, should he come on to Philadelphia, on receiving the letter, which I did. This morning before daylight, I was placed in a carriage with Maria and a strange man whom I had not before seen; and, as we drove off, I heard the lady tell her maid that she and her husband would be on board by daybreak. Thank God! this last great sorrow has been spared me, and once again, Adolphus, I am under your protection."

The Giovanni sailed for Trieste; but what passengers she carried, we took no pains to inquire. In a few days we all returned to New York, and the brother and sister, to the great relief of my wife, took up their temporary abode at my house.

Nothing now laid in the way of my proceeding with the investigation regarding the advertisement, which, on account of the late attempt at a daring abduction, having, I had no doubt, connection with it, considerably increased my opinion of its importance. Adolphus was now most eager to assist me, and I wrote to an eminent English lawyer, asking his co-operation and advice. I sub-

sequently learned the cause of the attempt at abduction, and the source whence the information regarding Miss Fitzherbert had been received; but as it will be made known in its proper place in the course of the narrative, it would destroy the interest to narrate it in this chapter.

In the next chapter I shall have to enlighten my readers as to the real parentage of the brother and sister: the singular incidents connected with their parents' marriage, and the actual nature of the claims they were about to contest, as well as the character of the opposing claimants, whom I suspected of having obtained partial possession, through frauds and misrepresentations which will be hereafter disclosed.

### CHAPTER III.

*In which the reader is transported back half a century, and is introduced to the acquaintance of some well known personages of former days.*

I MUST now transport the reader, in imagination to London, and go back in my narrative a period of half a century. It will be as well to state that there were then in London and indeed are now, a class of private club-houses, differing from the magnificent establishments of a more public character, such as "White's," and the more modern "Reform Club," which are the resort of the nobility and gentry of the capital in their leisure hours and in which, indeed, many unmarried men occupy suites of apartments and take up their town residence.

The private club-houses are equally aristocratic in character; but in them a more perfect familiarity is observed regarding the difference of rank and station. Here all meet as gentlemen on an equal footing, and the formula of addressing those present by their titles, is dispensed with. The balloting which is necessary to per-



mit the privilege of the *entree* to a new member, is, therefore, if possible, even more strict than at the great club-houses, in order to prevent the possibility of the admittance of persons not considered to be of sufficiently high family, to become members, and in these places of comparative seclusion, some very strange projects have been hatched and brought to a consummation, which if generally known to the world, would be considered as compromising the blood of many a family tracing their lineage from the Norman conquest, and boasting to belong, by the purest pedigree, to the ultra aristocracy of the kingdom.

About the commencement of the present century, a splendid mansion in Cavendish Square, London, was occupied as a private club-house, and one evening in December, a large assemblage of gentlemen were seated in a magnificent drawing-room on the second floor, which was brilliantly lighted with elegant chandeliers of cut glass, suspended from the ceiling, in each of which was a profusion of wax candles, the pendants reflecting their light in all the colors of the prism, and the plate glass mirrors, which, interspersed with beautiful paintings, covered the walls, again reflecting the images of the chandeliers and appearing to quintuple their number. The floor was covered with a Turkey carpet, soft as velvet to the feet, and about the large apartment were strewn chairs, lounging couches, and ottomans, without any apparent order, while perhaps, a dozen tables of highly polished mahogany were placed in different parts of the room, at each end of which blazed a bright and cheerful fire, the intense heat of which was modified to those who were seated in too close proximity to it by a large plate glass screen, pure and without blemish, allowing the bright glow of the kennel coal to be seen without the heat being disagreeably felt.

Around the table were seated groups of gentlemen, some engaged in conversation, others perusing the newspapers and periodicals of the day—again others were amusing themselves at chess or cards, or by throwing the

dice, or making up their betting-books for some aristocratic sporting match that was shortly to come off. But one or two tables were unoccupied, when a gentleman apparently about thirty years of age, entered the room, and nodding familiarly to two or three friends, without speaking, he singled out one of the unoccupied tables, and seated himself beside it, at the same time taking up a magazine which laid upon it and carelessly turning over its pages. The new comer was attired in the very extreme of the somewhat grotesque fashion of the "bucks," as they were then termed, of the day. A sky blue coat, with gilt buttons, powdered hair tied up in a black silk bag behind, a long flapped, embroidered vest and a profusion of shirt-frill, giving to his breast the form of a pouter pigeon's, among which blazed a quantity of jewelry, comprised the upper portion of his attire, which was completed by white plush small clothes, flesh-colored silk stockings and low-quartered shoes, with diamond buckles. His small clothes were also fastened at the knee with buckles of the same description, and lace ruffles of the finest and most rare quality, half covered his hands, on the fingers of which glittered some half dozen jewelled rings.

This somewhat remarkable personage having sat for a quarter of an hour, looking over the magazine, glanced somewhat impatiently at the ormolu clock which was fixed on the wall of the room over the fireplace, and compared its time with that of a large gold repeater which he took from his fob and from which, attached to a broad, black silk ribbon, hung a perfect labyrinth of seals. The longer he sat, the more impatient and uneasy he seemed to grow, and the watch was repeatedly consulted, as though the inspection would cause time to fly with greater rapidity.

"Strange, egad!" he muttered to himself, "that he does not come. It is now growing close upon the hour, and all my arrangements will be useless if we are not prompt in attendance. He has got into some adventure again, and with his usual recklessness, has forgot all about our

appointment. Heigh ho! they say the jackall feeds well by smelling out game for the lion, and trusting to his superior powers in hunting it down, afterwards banquetting on the spoils. Well, I don't do amiss, its true; but after all, this hanging on the skirts of others, is wearisome work. All my trouble and persuasion in endeavoring to bring that scheming money-lender, Mordecai, into reasonable terms, thrown away. He'll want twenty per cent more to-morrow; and then, the appointment in Bond-street. That was to be at ten o'clock, and now it's past eight, and we must see Mordecai first; too bad—too bad. Egad! here he comes at last," he added, as a stout, portly, but remarkably handsome man, of perhaps thirty-five years of age, entered the room, and glancing round it, encountered the eyes of the speaker, and made his way to the table at which he was seated. Several gentlemen who were seated at the other tables, observed the entrance of the new comer; but as if by some preconcerted arrangement, none appeared to notice him except those to whom he bowed or said a few words of ordinary salutation. These however, replied to them with more than ordinary courtesy.

The attire of the gentleman who had just entered the apartment was very different from that of the companion by whose side he seated himself, although it was the counterpart of that of several others in the room. He would have been taken anywhere, so far as his dress went, for a wealthy country gentleman; it consisting simply of a brown coat, cut after the fashion of the day, white buckskin breeches and yellow top boots, an article of dress then much affected by gentlemen in ordinary or walking costume. His hair was not disfigured by powder, but was dressed with great care in curls all over his head; it was of a rich chestnut color and admirably set off his fair and somewhat florid complexion. His features were good and even intellectual; his figure though, as I have said, somewhat stout, was also tall and graceful and the rather *nonchalant* elegance of his deportment and the easy simplicity of his manners bespoke



THE BROTHER AND SISTER IN CONVERSATION AT MR. HUGHES' HOUSE.

See chapter, XXXII.

the perfect gentleman. The only fault that any one could have found, was that his countenance already betrayed that he indulged too freely in high living and the gratification of the animal passions, but even this was only apparent to a keen observer.

"All right, eh! All settled, Brummell, is it?" was his salutation to the gentleman who had waited so impatiently for him.

"It may be, George, if we make haste," replied the individual addressed, in a somewhat vexed tone of voice, which however, was still marked by great courtesy and even obsequiousness of manner. "But surely you must have mistaken the time appointed to meet me here. We have barely time to reach the Minories by nine o'clock, and hard work I assure you I had to bring Mordecai to terms. He will put on a fresh screw, depend upon it, if we fail in our appointment to-night and then there is the other appointment in Bond-street at ten."

"Oh," replied the gentleman, whom he had addressed by the name of George, laughingly. "Eleanor can wait till eleven; but let's be off, Brummell. I have a private cab at the corner of the square, waiting for us, for I was so well engaged in Curzon-street that I was not aware of the rapid flight of time and was really quite alarmed when I looked at my repeater, for the money is a *sine qua non*; by hook or by crook, Mordecai must hand it over to-night. What said the old fellow, Brummell?"

"More than ever he said before," was the reply: "when I told him he must raise five thousand pounds to-night, he at first said he was utterly unable to do so; that the interest of the last ten thousand was overdue, and the whole amount, reckoning that now demanded, was nearly sixty thousand pounds, for which he had no security but your signature. He even went so far as flatly to refuse at first, and threatened to acquaint your father of the claims he had upon you."

"What!" said the other, interrupting him, while a

flush came over his countenance, "the villain dare not do that. No security! has he not my honor? Ah! times are sadly changed since the good old days when I could have extracted a tooth from the head of the old rascal, for every refusal he gave, if indeed he has any left in his wizened gums. No security indeed! what further security can he need?"

A smile flitted across the features of Brummell, as he muttered to himself something about putting ones trust in princes; but he did not allow his companion to perceive it, and observing his ruffled temper, he said—

"Calm yourself, sir, calm yourself! I managed to make it all right before I left him; and now let us away at once."

The two gentlemen then rose and quitted the room together, apparently as unnoticed as they had entered. The effects of irritation must have, however, been still perceptible in the countenance of Brummell's friend, for after they had left, one of the gentlemen present said—

"What's in the wind I wonder—the prince seems annoyed to-night?"

"I fancy," said another, "he has met with game he'll find it hard to bring down. He is completely fascinated with the handsome widow, Mrs. Fitzherbert; and the lady, forsooth! aspires to matrimony; and refuses to treat with him on any other terms—at least, so the rumor goes. It was the common topic of conversation at White's to-day; besides, I have my reasons for thinking that his royal Highness is closely pressed for money just now, and that's enough to vex a saint; as most of us have felt at one time or another."

A titter pervaded the immediate neighborhood of the speaker, and the subject was dropped.

The reader must now follow me to a very different portion of the great metropolis. The two gentlemen whom it will be already seen, were no less personages than the Prince of Wales—subsequently George the

Fourth—and the celebrated leader of the fashions and jackall of the Prince, Beau Brummell, as he was termed, on account of his singular fastidiousness in dress, entered a hack carriage and were driven from the fashionable locality they had just quitted, into the city, where the vehicle stopped at a house in the Minories. Here they got out, and Brummell led the way into a low, dirty shop which appeared to be stocked with second-hand goods of every possible description, from jewelry apparently of enormous value to coats and vests almost threadbare, and shoes and boots which certainly needed the skill of the cobbler, to render them even wearable. The housekeeper could have been supplied here with every article of household furniture she desired; and, though most had seen service and were in a dilapidated condition, there were many articles which were still scarcely changed from their pristine splendor.

"Vat you buy?" was the salutation the two gentlemen met with as they entered this dirty storehouse of heterogeneous stock.

"Where's Mr. Mordecai?" said Brummell.

"Mr. Mordecai ish up stairs," was the rejoinder of the dirty visaged, shabby-genteel dressed youth, who was officiating in his master's absence. "Vat you have to shell?" "Nothing," said Brummell, impatiently. "Get along with you, you cur, and tell your master the gentlemen who promised to meet him in private, this evening, are waiting. Off with you, quick!"

Notwithstanding the impatient tone in which this last order was uttered, the youth shuffled rather than walked leisurely along towards the back part of the shop, where he bawled down a dingy staircase, which must have led to an apartment under ground—"Rebecca, come up stairs a moment."

A good-looking girl enough, if her black hair had only been untangled and brushed into something like decency and her face cleansed of the dirt which seemed encrusted upon it, answered the summons, and was told to stay and watch the shop while the youth carried the

message to his master. "And, mind, 'Becca," whispered he, as he passed her, "mind de shwells doesn't walk off with none of de goods."

In a few moments he returned and requested the two gentlemen to walk up-stairs to his master.

They followed him to a small room on the second floor, or the first story, as it is called in England, which was occupied, apparently, as an office by the money lender.

It was a dingy, dusty looking place, the windows appearing as though they had never felt the touch of water since the glazier had first inserted the panes. Around the room, affixed to the walls, were a number of shelves and pigeon holes which were loaded with boxes, such as may be seen in a lawyer's office for the purpose of holding copies of deeds, &c., and with papers carefully arranged and labelled, and tied up with red tape.

The room was dimly lighted by a solitary tallow candle, which flickered upon a table at the further end of the apartments at which was seated a man, perhaps sixty years of age, as near as one could judge: but the peculiarity of his dress consisting chiefly in a coarse serge overcoat or surtout of a snuff color reaching to his heels, and the long thick beard, slightly grizzled, which descended to his waist, together with the black skull cap he wore on his head, made him appear older than he really was. His features, although strongly marked with the expression of habitual cunning, were regular, and in youth or in the prime of life must have been considered handsome.

The old man did not rise from his chair as the strangers entered the apartment, but motioned them to be seated, saying:

"You can place chairs for the shentlemen, and leave the room, Jacob. Vat ish you standing gaping there, for?" for the youth appeared, now that he had shown the gentlemen up, to be in no hurry to go down stairs again, no doubt seized with a laudable curiosity to know

what bargain they were about to strike with his master at that hour of the night. However, on receiving this order he left the apartment.

Mordecai, the wealthy Jewish money-lender, was a man well-known to the fast portion of the young aristocracy of England at the period of which I write, and George, Prince of Wales, was deep in his books. In fact, the prince never had sufficient money at his command to satisfy his extravagant desires, notwithstanding the weakness of the old king and the partiality of his mother, Queen Charlotte, who supplied him with a royal allowance, exceeding that ever allowed the sons of royalty before. In addition to this, the nation was taxed, from the period of the prince's attaining his majority, to afford him a princely annual income, and a very large revenue was also drawn by him, in his own right, from the Duchy of Cornwall; but the coffers of England's treasury would not have sufficed for the extravagances of the Prince of Wales, had he had his own will in the expenditure of that treasure; consequently, he was always in debt, and was deeply in the books of more than one of the London usurers.

"Mordecai of the Minorities," as he was familiarly termed by his money-borrowing acquaintance, had advanced the prince more money than any of the rest, and it was to his seasonable aid he looked in cases of emergency. His sudden and ardent admiration for Mrs. Fitzherbert, had led him into unusual extravagances, even for him, and as even princes sometimes find that the patience of tradesmen has its limits, he was under the necessity of procuring ready money for the purposes of purchasing some costly gifts he had promised the lady. He dared not let his father or even the Queen know of his late unbounded extravagance. Hence the immediate necessity he had for five thousand pounds.

Hitherto his dealings with money-lenders had been transacted through the medium of his go-between, Beau Brummell; but Mordecai had of late become extremely hard to deal with, and at length positively refused to ad-

vance another penny unless he had an interview, at least with the steward of the prince's household. It was no part of the prince's policy to let this officer into his secrets, and therefore, as his person was unknown to the Jew, he had promised to accompany Brummell, and himself personate the character of his own master of the household.

"So you have called about de advance of dose monish?" said the money-lender, looking up at Brummell. "It ish late, shentlemen—eight o'clock wash de hour, and it is now near nine. I shaid I would advance de monish, though the times ish hard—very hard, indeed, and de monish seems all to have sunk in de ground, for de sum of thirty per shent, provided you was here at eight o'clock—vid me a bargain ish a bargain; but now I shall vant more per shentage. This, I suppose ish de gentleman vat vash to come vit you to sheal de bargainsh?"

"It is," replied Brummell; "but my good Mordecai, have you any conscience? Consider—thirty per cent.; money lent at compound interest too—for the prince, I believe, has not paid up the interest as it fell due—to be paid upon his royal highness's accession to the throne, if not before. Why, my good sir, your gains will be incalculable."

"Very goot to talk of my gains—vere ish my security? Dere is sixty tousand pound already, or near upon it, besides interest, and no security but the signature of the prince. It ish a very goot prince—hash a very pretty notion of spending de monish; but de prince may die, and then vere is my securities?"

"My dear Mordecai, the honor of the nation would compel the government in case of such an unfortunate event, to pay all claims acknowledged by the signature of the prince. George the Third would drain the treasury, before he would allow his son's name to be dishonored."

"Ah! all dat ish very fine talk; but de material se-

curities is better than all de fine words and signatures in de world——"

"Then," suddenly interrupted the prince himself, who was getting disgusted with the conversation, "I am to understand you refuse to accommodate the prince any farther? If so, our conference may as well be closed at once."

"Nay, I did not shay dat; it ish a very goot prince, and I would do all I can; but de monish is scarce—very scarce. I should have to advance part in goods."

"Well then, sir," continued the prince, "let us hear your terms at once, and bring the business to a conclusion."

"Ah, dat ish fair and reasonable—dat ish speaking like a shentleman. Vell then, suppose we say £5000 at 30 per shent., one tousand to be advanced in wines. I have some excellent wines in my cellar, fit for de king himself."

"Confound your wines," exclaimed the prince, "such a compound of vitriol and aloe leaves never was brewed, as that which you sent to Carlton House, two months ago."

"Vell den, if de vines is not agreeable, I can shend an assortment of walking-sticks, guns and pistols, and little trinkets of jewelry to de amount," said the Jew, no way stirred from his composure.

"By heavens!" said the prince, laughing in spite of himself, at the ridiculous idea of such a consignment finding its way into Carlton House, "you are an amusing fellow, Mordecai. What the d—I would the prince do with your walking-sticks and guns and cheap jewelry?"

"My jewelry ish goot," retorted the money-lender, "and de prince had better buy cheap jewelry than costly wares, de peoples ish to pay for."

"Are you aware, sir, in whose presence you are giving utterance to such sentiments?" said the prince, in his anger, forgetting the character he was assuming.

A momentary flush passed over the cold, calculating



countenance of the money-lender, as he at once surmised that it was the Prince of Wales, in *propria personæ* that he had been speaking to, and his tone and demeanor assumed an appearance of respect and submission, in which, however, hypocrisy seemed equally blended with the other sentiments.

"I vash not aware that my small, humble abode had received the honor of a visit from the Prince," said he submissively.

"Enough, sir, enough," said the prince—"state at once whether you are willing to grant the accommodation or not."

"Oh, certainly—certainly—ve vill shay four tousand down, and de rest ve vill arrange another time. I would not be hard vid de honorable Prince."

The cash was necessary, and the Prince and his companion were compelled to comply with the terms of the old usurer, who begged them to remain a few moments, while he went to see a friend from whom he could borrow the money.

The friend was his own strong box, which was in an adjoining apartment, where, in anticipation of the result of the interview, the bank notes had already been placed early in the evening. To give color to his excuse of absence, however, the Jew seated himself in a chair in his private closet, and indulged in the following soliloquy:—

"So, it ish de dirty Jew—de willain Jew, vith de Christians, till dey ish pinched for de monish, and den it ish goot Jew—mine goot friend—lend me de monish and I shall be eternally obliged. Psha!" and he spat on the floor. "Thus," he continued, "would they spit on the Jew, as he does on them—the Prince!—yes, it ish de people who pays—vell, it ish all de same to me so I hash my monish—and dey think de Jews live in squalid poverty and misery to amass this wealth for them to spend. The Jew hash no charity! the Jew hash no compassion! the Jew hash none of earth's comforts. Faugh! Let them come to my house in Duke's Place—let them see

me with my family—let them ask themselves if they see a Jew mendicant. How rarely a Jewish criminal—how seldom a Jew without education. Pshaw! the charity of the Jew is active in good works—that of the Christian in empty sound."

The old man sat a few moments longer, and then rose, and with the money in his hand, returned to his visitors. The terms were agreed upon, and the Prince signed his name to the contract. This signature the Jew compared narrowly with some others attached to some documents he kept in his pocket-book, and then, apparently satisfied with the genuineness of the latter, of which perhaps he had begun to entertain some doubt, he humbly bowed his royal visitor from the room.

When the gentlemen had gone, he summed up an estimate of his probable gain from the transaction, and then wrapping himself up in his cloak, he quitted his squalid place of business in the Minories for his comfortable—nay, luxurious abode in Duke's Place.

"Ha, ha!" he muttered to himself, as he shuffled along the slushy pavement; "he spends de monish—de people pays—and de Jew is de gainer by de bargainsh."

The two gentlemen, meanwhile descended the dark staircase, passed through the shop and reached the street.

"By Jove, Brummell," said the prince, as he drew a long breath of fresh air: "even the air of the Minories is a luxury after one has so long been pent up in that vile den. Now to Randell & Bridge's to pay for that casket of Jewelry, and then to Mrs. Fitzherbert's." A short walk brought them to the celebrated jeweller's on Ludgate Hill, and entering by a private door, for the shop had long been closed, the casket containing a diamond necklace and earrings, was secured and paid for with one thousand pounds of the cash just received. Again returning to the street, they entered a cab and ordered the driver to set them down in Bond-street.

"Is your royal highness going to appear before Mrs. Fitzherbert in that costume?" asked Brummell.

"And why not?" replied the prince, laughing. "Do you think that I am like you, my prince of musk and civet, never at ease unless *Ajusté à toutes pointes*. The dress is well enough; at all events it is too late to think of dress now—but here we are at Bond-street. I will not trouble you to accompany me further. *Au revoir* my dear Brummell. I will see you and report progress to-morrow."

At this hint, Brummell descended from the vehicle and directed his steps to his club, and the Prince of Wales, ordering the driver to stop at a large confectioner's shop, got out, paid the fare, and entering the house by a private door, shortly found himself in the presence of Mrs. Fitzherbert.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*In which the ancestors of the hero and heroine are introduced to the reader.*

MRS. FITZHERBERT, at the period she had so fascinated the Prince, was a widow, and verging towards the fortieth year of her age. I have heard it said that she had been twice married; but this is somewhat doubtful. It is also supposed, although, as is well known, she bore issue to George, Prince of Wales, that she had no children previously; this the search it became necessary to institute in order to endeavor to correctly trace back the history of the Fitzherbert orphans, and to substantiate their claims, and through which I learnt the incidents I have woven into a narrative form in the preceding chapter, proved to be false. Whether or not she was twice married and twice a widow, she had borne a child to her husband, Captain Fitzherbert.

Although at this period past the age when female charms are supposed to possess their greatest attractions, she was still a most beautiful woman. Time had left no

wrinkled impress upon her countenance, and her fair complexion was still as delicate as it had been in the days of her girlhood. She had a slight tendency to *embonpoint*, it is true; but this was a style of beauty which the Prince of Wales affected to admire, so long as it did not degenerate into too gross fulness. Her hair was of a light brown, and curled in short, luxuriant natural ringlets, which, however, according to the fashion of the day, were disfigured by the application of hair-powder; her features were regular as those of a Grecian goddess, her hands and feet small and symmetrical, and the charms of her person enhanced by the richness, yet graceful simplicity of her attire, which was so arranged as to display all her perfections of person to the greatest possible advantage. She was also a remarkably accomplished woman for that day, when the female mind was not cultivated as it now is.

At the death of her husband, who was of a highly respectable and wealthy family, she had been left the mistress of a very comfortable though not large income, derived from property in the funds; and her society being much courted by the fashionables of the day in consequence of her rare endowments, she had at a soiree given at a nobleman's mansion in Picadilly, fallen in with her royal lover. Scandal almost immediately followed this introduction—for the prince that very evening had insisted upon escorting her home in his own carriage, much to the chagrin of many who would have given almost any thing for such a mark of favor; and the envious feelings towards the widow once having been aroused, there was no limit to the looseness of the tongue of scandal.

It was soon discovered that from that evening his royal highness paid frequent private visits to the residence of the new object of his fascination, and a ban was put upon her admission as a welcome guest in the circles she had hitherto moved, alike courted, flattered and admired. She, however, was a woman of spirit, and she determined, possessing as she did, the consciousness of innocence, in



so far as the inuendos cast upon her reputation were concerned, to treat with contempt and scorn those who had insulted her. The prince likewise, at that period, cared little for anybody or anything that clashed with his own pleasures or fancy, and Mrs. Fitzherbert was purposely included in all the invitations to Carlton House; the prince likewise frequently made it the *sine qua non* as regarded his own visits, that Mrs. Fitzherbert should be among the guests invited to meet him, and as few dared to insult the heir apparent, those who wished to retain his favor, were compelled, in spite of themselves, to swallow their envy and indignation as best they might, and to witness the most delicate attention paid to its object, while they themselves were comparatively slighted.

The widow, however, could but feel the covert insults which were offered to her—no woman could do otherwise—and she determined upon revenge. It was to the fostering of this feeling more than to anything else, that the prince found the lady apparently so easily won to a reciprocation of his own feelings towards her. In fact, conscious of the power she possessed over the Prince, she determined to become his wife, if not legally so according to the constitution of the country, which demands a royal and a Protestant alliance (and Mrs. Fitzherbert was a Roman Catholic,) for the prince of the blood royal, at least his wife in the eye of heaven and according to the rites and ceremonies of her own church, and thus to still further excite the spleen and envy of her detractors.

When the prince entered the apartment, she was reclining upon a sofa in a richly furnished parlor, looking over the pages of a fashionable periodical. She rose as he entered, although she retained her position sufficiently long for him to observe the graceful negligence of her attitude, which had been carefully studied.

"My dear prince," said she, as she advanced towards him, extending both her hands which the prince took in his own, "what a weary evening you have caused

me to pass. I expected you here an hour ago. It is now eleven o'clock, and although I am aware that there are reasons why you should visit me secretly in this humble abode, you should not have caused me this disappointment."

"It has been unavoidable on my part, dear Eleanor," replied the prince, "I came, as you well may believe, as soon as I possibly could; but do not call me by the formal name of Prince, Eleanor: call me George. You are my queen, I the most attached of your subjects and admirers."

"Be it so, then, George," she replied, emphasizing the name; but you are aware that I can scarcely do so with propriety considering the relations existing between us."

"Have you considered the proposition I made to you on the occasion of my last visit, Eleanor?"

"I have."

"And what determination have you arrived at?"

"My determination remains unaltered, dear George. It is better since fate interposes a barrier to our union, according to the absurd notion of courts, that this be our last private interview. I grieve and deplore that it should be unhappily necessary; but you, George, cannot deny that it will be best for us both."

"Can nothing alter your mind?" said the prince, completely taken by surprise by this decision of the lady's.

"Nothing—nothing. The world could not tempt me to an act of dishonor; my hand must be given with my heart, or I will retain the affections of the latter in my own keeping, 'though it break beneath the restraint.'"

There was an expression of mournful feeling in the tone in which Mrs. Fitzherbert uttered these words, which had the effect intended upon the heart of the prince, while they were spoken in a manner so firm and decided that he saw the lady was in earnest. He tried new arguments, however, to induce her to alter her resolve.

"I need not tell you," said he, "how willingly I would embrace your wishes on this point; but you as well as I, are aware of the restraint imposed upon the best and holiest affections of the sons of England's sovereign. As my wife in the sight of heaven, you and our offspring would never be acknowledged in the eye of the law. What then would be your feelings, should the country demand that I, upon ascending the throne of my father, should conclude a royal alliance with the daughter of some foreign Court? Could I or you endure the separation we must then submit to, or could you see me ascend the throne of England, and virtually deny, by refusing to declare you my queen, that you were my wedded wife?"

"I could dare all, if I but retained the approving smile of my own conscience. The affections and the rites of holy Mother Church are decreed by God, and his ministers on earth, to be the only ties that shall bind true love in the bonds of wedlock, not the decrees dictated by the ambition of earthly courts and kings. Once again, dear George, though my heart may break beneath the weight of its affliction, I aver solemnly, we must part to-night forever, or if your love, as you avow, equals my own, I must become your lawful wife."

"Then be it so," replied the prince, "I feel that I cannot live without you; be mine—my wife, by private marriage, according to the rites of your own church, and let this next week witness the ceremonies which shall make us one; and now, dear Eleanor, I must leave you; take this," said he, clasping the gorgeous, sparkling necklace around the neck of his *affiancée*, and placing the ear-rings in her hand, "as the first gift of your betrothed husband. I had intended them only as a fresh proof of my regard. Your decision has rendered the gift one of another nature."

The compact was sealed, as I presume such compacts usually are, and the prince left the house as secretly as he had entered it, and walked to Carlton House, his own royal residence.

Mrs. Fitzherbert sat for some moments in deep thought. At length she gave utterance to the following soliloquy:

"And so, my end is all but gained. I have triumphed; but at what a cost! To gratify pride and ambition, and to punish envy and malice, I have consented to wed one whom I do not—can never love; and I have sacrificed a mother's love for her only child. Oh! that I now could recall the words I gave utterance to this evening; or rather, would to God I had never dared to commence this fearful ordeal. My child, I must disown him; he must never in future know a mother's love and care. Poor child! but little has he known it since I first became infatuated with the desire of conquering this obdurate libertine and bringing him to my feet—now a year ago. To-morrow is my boy's fifth birthday, and I will see him then, perhaps for the last time. How shall I bear the trial? Curse on the hapless hour when my evil destiny first caused the prince to regard me with interest! Alas! a curse, I fear, must ever attach itself to the mother whose ambition led her to forsake—aye, to deny her child." So saying, the unhappy lady buried her face in her hands and burst into tears.

To understand the cause of this soliloquy, it is necessary to inform the reader that Mrs. Fitzherbert when she first conceived the idea of turning the evident admiration of the prince, as she believed to her own advantage, had perceived that it was necessary to disguise the fact of her having a child, and at length on the question being put to her, perhaps on account of information the prince had surreptitiously received, she had, urged at the moment by feelings of ambition which absorbed all others, denied the fact and been, of course, compelled to maintain the denial; for she was aware the prince would never consent to become the father-in-law of the child of a humble subject of his own father's. The child was nurtured in the house of a brother of Mrs. Fitzherbert's, who was in comparatively humble circumstances, but who was seriously

offended at the course of duplicity practised by his sister. When she had one day declared to him her design as regarded the prince, he replied—

"Eleanor, if you repudiate your own offspring to gratify your own evil feelings, and your wicked ambition, the child is no longer yours. You can see him no more. Let me but know that you dare after that to attempt it and I will proclaim to your royal lover and to the world, your falsehood and your unnatural cruelty. You know me; be assured that what I have said I will do."

She did know him, and felt well assured that he would be as good as his word; by dint of bribes, however, when her future marriage with the prince became town gossip, as it had been for some months—though but a few believed the rumor;—and when her brother had put his threat into execution, by forbidding her the house, she had often visited the child; her brother's housekeeper (he was unmarried) having privately admitted her after dark, when the boy had retired to rest. As the hour of the consummation of her ambitious project drew nearer, her maternal affections had received a new impulse, and her visits had been long and frequent. Her brother, by some means suspected her, and had again warned the housekeeper. The indulgence of her affections had therefore become dangerous; and now, knowing that they must cease, she determined to see him once again, as her child—and then, as such, to know him no more.

For an hour, she sat in the position which I have described; her frame at times convulsed with emotion. At length she rose, bathed her forehead and her eyes, cast the jewel'd bauble presented by her royal lover, on the table—almost with loathing, and retired to her chamber.

Late on the evening following the events above recorded, a lady might have been seen, closely muffled, threading her way amidst the maze of streets diverging from Bloomsbury-square, London. At length, after

glancing cautiously around, as though afraid of being seen, she approached a house of moderate pretensions in Lamb's Conduit-street, and knocked timidly, three raps at the door. In a few moments she was admitted by an elderly female, who thus accosted her:

"Is that you, my lady? I expected you sooner, and yet I am glad you did not come till now, for master has but just retired to rest, and he has been raving furiously about you. I am afraid if he should find out you were here, something dreadful would happen."

"Good Martha," said the lady, "do not, I pray you, waste words and time. I dare stay but a few minutes, and I could not get here sooner, for the prince has but a short time since left my residence; take me to my child, and, oh God! for the last time, as my acknowledged offspring, let me took upon him. Here, Martha," she continued, placing in her hand a heavy purse; "take this, and be a mother to my boy, now that his own unnatural parent is about to cast him off."

"Nay, lady, don't take on so," replied the old woman; "it makes me feel bad like. What does it signify, if the child does not die—and he is a hearty, healthy boy, so there's no fear of that—that you can't acknowledge him as your child? Sure he's your own flesh and blood all the same. Come up stairs, ma'arm, and please to tread softly past master's room. I wouldn't for the world he should hear me."

Without uttering another word the lady followed the old housekeeper up stairs into a small bedroom in the upper story, where lay sleeping a beautiful boy of five years of age.

The lady stepped gently to the bed and bent over the child, while the tear-drops fell fast from her eyes. "My poor babe," she said, "oh that I could recall the last year of my life. What is the gratification of revenge; what the pride of successful ambition, to counterbalance the anguish I now feel?" and she stooped still lower and imprinted burning kisses on the cheeks, brow and lips of the boy. He awoke, and while a smile of pleasure illu-

mined his features, he exclaimed "Mama!" and laid his hand in hers. "What makes you cry, mama?" he continued; "are you sorry to see me, or are you ill? I hope you are not ill. Let me come and live with you, and I will take care of you and do everything you require of me."

"Dear Herbert," said the unhappy woman, "it will be a long time before you see me again after to-night. I weep, love, because I am forced to bid you farewell for so long a time. You will be a good child, will you not, and do what Martha and your uncle tell you? And dearest boy, never forget your mother."

"I will not—never," said the child, himself beginning to weep; "but why must you go away, mama? Why not take me with you? I love you better than Martha, or my uncle, though you come to see me so seldom. Let me go with you."

"It must not, cannot be, my darling Herbert. Would to God, my dear child, I could take you with me and fly to the uttermost part of the earth, to escape the fate in reserve for me——"

"Mama," said the child, interrupting her, "have you done anything wicked? Uncle said to-night, I must not think of you or speak about you; but I will, though. For ain't you my mother, still?"

"Good God! and has it come to this? Vilified by my own brother, before my child," said the unhappy lady, looking wildly around her and gasping for breath. For some moments she made violent efforts to regain her composure; but each effort only increased her emotion, and at length she gave vent to a piercing shriek, and fell fainting to the floor.

While the terrified servant was endeavoring to restore her to animation, amidst the loud lamentations of the boy, who had risen from his bed and was weeping over the insensate form of his only parent, a voice was heard in the room below, demanding the cause of the uproar. The woman was too much frightened to reply, and in another minute, just as consciousness was returning to the faint-

ing female, the brother of Mrs. Fitzherbert entered the room. She opened her eyes, and their first glance met his. The shock again caused her to faint; but she soon became conscious, and raising herself up, she said in a deprecating tone of voice—

"Dear Henry, you are my brother and once loved me. I have come to take one last farewell of my child. You would not refuse me that mercy?"

"Eleanor," he replied solemnly, "bid him farewell, and forever, and on those conditions I will not inquire by what means you gained admittance to my house in this surreptitious manner," glancing sternly at the trembling housekeeper. "Henceforward we are strangers. You are my only sister, and as you say, I once loved you. *You* have broken the bonds of affection between us—not I; and another such visit as this, will lead to your exposure, and render you the scorn and laughing stock of the world. I leave you, and give you five minutes longer to remain with your child; then go, and be happy if you can with the royal profligate whom, forsooth, you have taken for a *husband*. Will the world so consider him, or have you not reduced yourself to a level at which, poor as I am, I will never acknowledge you as my sister. Give me your hand," he added, with perceptible emotion; "never did I think to see my sister in this fallen condition. May you be happy, if you can be, amid the scenes of licentious splendor in which you will live, until some day you will be cast aside, like a useless toy. Eleanor, (taking her hand,) henceforward we are brother and sister no longer."

He quitted the room, while a heart-rending scene ensued between the mother and child; but at the expiration of five minutes, she withdrew, and a week from that date, George, Prince of Wales, and Mrs. Fitzherbert were privately married by a Romish priest.

I need scarcely add that Herbert Fitzherbert was the father of the orphans whose claims to the advertised property I was diligently investigating. I shall in my next chapter briefly narrate the events of his youth and his

marriage, and then return to the thread of the original narrative of the persecutions to which the orphan brother and sister were subjected, during the prosecution of this vexatious law-suit.

## CHAPTER V.

*A royal sensualist and a sad separation—A boyish resolve manfully fulfilled—A visit to England, and an introduction to a lawyer of the old school—The doubles of the hero and heroine.*

THE Prince of Wales, after his private marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, maintained an establishment upon a magnificent scale for her use and enjoyment, and in every respect, except acknowledging her before the world, as his wife, his manner towards her was that of a devoted and loving husband, while the conduct of the lady was marked with such circumspection, that even the ready tongue of scandal scarcely dared to whisper a syllable to the prejudice of her fair fame. She was generally received in aristocratic and courtly circles, without a thought being openly expressed regarding her equivocal connection with the heir apparent.

The constant attention of the prince to Mrs. Fitzherbert, had by degrees overcome the prejudice and even dislike, that, in spite of her obstinate determination to entangle him into an alliance, we have shown to have existed in the early days of their union, and if she did not love him with the devoted affection that should characterize the love of a wife, they probably got along together quite as respectably as many other couples, whose union has been the result of circumstances over which love has had little or no control.

The brother of Mrs. Fitzherbert, who had been an officer in the army, and who was dependent entirely upon his slender half-pay for support, was as the reader will

have seen, a man whose ideas of virtue partook of the sternness of the Spartan character. He could make no allowance for the frailties of human nature, and was firmly fixed in the belief that every human being had the power of restraining his passions and keeping them within due bounds. Mrs. Fitzherbert resembled her brother in disposition, and under no other circumstances than those we have described, would she have been induced to deviate from the strict line marked out by duty; but, like most persons of her temperament, the fiery current of passion once having found an outlet—once having burst the bonds of restraint, its course cannot be stayed, whether it be urged onward by love, ambition, envy or hatred. Like the waters of the cataract which are unrestrainingly drawn, first by slow degrees, and then faster and faster onwards, until they have taken the fearful leap and can never again commingle with the placid stream from which they have strayed, so the victim of this passion, let it be what it may, has, in giving himself up to its strange fascination, been urged onwards—onwards, until he has at length taken the fatal step which has forever banished the peace of mind he once enjoyed. We have mentioned that Mrs. Fitzherbert was a Roman Catholic, and although not bigoted, she was strict in regard to matters of religion, and had she not unfortunately met with the Prince of Wales, she would in all probability have lived a quiet, happy, and retired life, and, dying, left behind her the character of a strictly conscientious and virtuous woman—a model to her sex as regards the duties of a widowed mother to an only child.

As it was, she was compelled to mingle in the vortex of fashion; while her feelings loathed the splendid misery she endured, and to appear gay and happy, when her heart was weeping blood for the child whose very existence she had repudiated, in a moment when maddening ambition held sway over her feelings.

For some three or four years she never again dared visit the child; and so determined was her brother to adhere to his resolution, that all her attempts even to

hear from the boy, were futile; and thus, while the mother was reveling in wealth, and apparently in the enjoyment of every luxury and pleasure that wealth can secure, the boy was living upon the limited means of a relative, who had barely sufficient for his own decent subsistence. At the termination of this period, Lieut. Crossly was drowned while crossing over from England to Ireland, of which country he was a native—and so utterly was all communication between the brother and sister suspended, that the first intimation of her brother's death, received by Mrs. Fitzherbert, was through the columns of the newspaper which recorded the melancholy shipwreck of the packet in which he had sailed. The shock for some minutes overpowered her; for, separated as they had been, she still loved her brother—loved him even, perhaps, the more, on account of his hard, stern, but truly honest disposition; and then, she thought of her boy left now without a protector—perhaps without a home.

The thought was more than a mother's heart could endure, and she determined to seek him out, and at all risks to tell the prince that she had deceived him; that she had a child by her former husband, besides the two she had borne to him.

She did not find any difficulty in discovering the child; and for hours she allowed full scope to the flood of maternal affection that had so long been pent up; and when restored to some degree of composure, she provided the old housekeeper of her brother's, who had acted in the place of a mother to the boy, with ample means for his and her own future support.

But now the cup of bitterness that she in her thoughtless ambition had filled, began to overflow, and she found herself doomed to the wretchedness her brother had foreboded; and which her own heart had foreshadowed, through weary years, even from the moment when she had proudly triumphed and brought the prince a suitor at her feet. She met her husband that evening, and determined at once to dare his anger; perhaps his

utter repudiation, sooner than bear any longer the secret pangs which racked her tortured breast. He was more than usually affectionate in his words and demeanor; and the unhappy woman, time after time, when on the point of speaking on the subject, checked her utterance; as if she thought procrastination, though it prolonged her misery, were better than at such a moment to sever, perhaps forever, the ties that bound her to her royal husband. The prince himself was in a melancholy mood; and like herself, it was apparent that he had something upon his mind he dared not give expression to.

Mrs. Fitzherbert at length observed this, and with truly feminine instinct, her soul foreboded the nature of the terrible disclosure which awaited her. Her heart sunk within her, and she gasped for breath. Already strange rumors had gone abroad, and had found their way to her unwilling ears, and she had closed them to their cruel breathings; but now the truth burst upon her, and she could bear the torture that racked her bosom and burned in her brain no longer.

"George," she said, in a tone the agony of which caused the prince to turn pale, "you have something dreadful to tell me. My husband, speak—speak at once, or my heart will break, and I shall fall a corpse at your feet. The rumors I have heard and obstinately refused to listen to, while my heart foreboded still they were too true, are indeed correct. George, arrangements are in preparation for your marriage with the Princess Caroline; and I—I—your wife in the sight of heaven—" She could say no more; a film came over her eyes; she gasped for breath, as though she were suffering strangulation, and fell fainting in the arms of the prince.

He summoned assistance, and the unhappy lady was borne to her couch. A night of hopeless agony followed and in a succession of fainting fits, and wanderings of the mind, she lay until morning. The prince was deeply affected, and never left the side of the couch. Medical aid had been called in, and towards morning her anguish found vent in a copious flood of tears, for hitherto her



agony of mind had been too great to allow a tear to come to her relief.

She in some measure recovered her composure and besought her husband to tell her the worst at once—to hide nothing—for longer suspense would surely kill her.

"Dear Eleanor—my wife—the only woman I have ever fixed my affections upon—it is as you surmise. It were useless now to attempt to deny it, or to offer consolation only to render future anguish doubly bitter. I am affianced to the Princess Caroline, and I dare not do otherwise than follow the wishes—the wishes, do I say—nay, the commands of my father and his ministers. As for the princess, I have never seen more than her portrait; it tells me she is fair, and they tell me she is amiable. Unhappy woman! I must call her wife while I loathe her very name—nay more, must not only acknowledge but live with her as such. Eleanor, we must part. It were better for us both that we part at once and forever. You—you, my dearest wife, shall be amply provided for, and any boon you ask, no matter what it be, shall be granted. Curse on the law which thus places a restraint on the holiest affections of the heart and makes the prince, oh how infinitely beneath the poorest peasant. I dare not at this moment deny the profligacy of my youth, but had not fate ordained that I should be the son of England's King, it might not ever have been thus with me, for on you my affections would have been firmly fixed; now I am reckless of the future, as I have been of the past. Speak dear Eleanor," he continued, as he felt the weight fall heavily upon the arm that encircled the waist of his wife. "Speak—say one word, say that you can forgive me—that you do not spurn me from you. Oh, God! she has fainted—she is dying—I have killed her," and tears fell like rain drops from the eyes of one whose conscience was seared by the vile course of life he had led, prince though he was, and those tears were perhaps the first he had wept since manhood planted the beard upon his chin—perhaps the

last that affection or any feeling akin to virtue ever drew from his eyes.

Mrs. Fitzherbert again recovered her consciousness, and in a short time was restored to partial composure.

"It must be so," she said, "I have felt it for years. The feeling has been gnawing at my heart-strings, even at the moment when I seemed gayest. George, we must part forever; but I have a secret to disclose—I have deceived you—aye, and myself, too. In the madness of ambition, I thought I could cast from me the holiest feelings of a mother—the last chord which detaches itself from the heart when life is departing, and the grave is already opening to the view. George, I have another child besides those I have borne you, and last night, ere I heard the terrible tidings from your own lips, I had determined to disclose a secret which, to keep longer locked in my breast, would have shortly worn away my life."

"Another child!" said the prince, in a tone of amazement.

"Yes," she continued feebly, "a child by Captain Fitzherbert, as you, I fancy, once partially suspected, and whose existence I—unnatural parent that I am—denied."

The prince was evidently relieved, for a strange suspicion had crossed his mind.

"A child by Capt. Fitzherbert," he replied. "Why did you hide this from me, Eleanor?"

"Because, had I told you the truth, I could not have compassed my ends, and become your wife. We both have much to answer for; but I have the greatest burthen to bear. Perhaps it is just, for my sin has been the greatest. Dear George, I have one favor to ask before we part for ever, not for myself, but for my poor, long forsaken boy. I shall retire from this busy scene, and by fasting and prayer, and in the penances enjoined by my church, shall endeavor to make my peace with Heaven. I have a small private fortune, sufficient for myself, but for the love you bear me, dear George—this is the last time I shall call you by

that name—provide for my fatherless child as the child of one who has been the wife and has borne children to his future sovereign should be provided for? Do this, and Heaven will bless you—his mother will bless you with her latest breath.”

“I swear that I will,” replied the prince.

“Then, now, farewell; henceforward forget Eleanor Fitzherbert. She will soon be laid in her grave,—forget that she ever existed.”

The husband and wife parted then and forever; but the prince kept his word with regard to the boy, upon whom and his heirs forever he settled valuable crown lands in the interior of England. It was well, perhaps, that this was done on the spur of the moment, for the Prince of Wales soon forgot her he had once so ardently loved, and relapsed into the inherent profligacy which had marked his career from boyhood, and which he continued until age and infirmity forbade his further indulgence in sensual pleasures.

This property had at one period belonged to the Church; but by some means, the nature of which I know not, had reverted to the crown, and the estate was among the royal gifts, though it could not be held by any prince of the blood royal. It had long been matter of litigation between the Church and the Crown, and the decision had only lately been given in favor of the latter. When I speak of the good fortune, as far as Herbert was concerned, that the prince acted on the spur of the moment, I mean that had the prince given himself time to reflect, he would, in all probability have sold the estate privately to the highest bidder, instead of thus placing it altogether out of his control, without having received any pecuniary benefit from it.

Young Fitzherbert was at this period in the tenth year of his age. He was tall for his age, and slightly but firmly built. Although naturally of a bold disposition, the privacy in which he had been brought up by his uncle, had rendered him apparently timid and bashful, especially in the presence of strangers. His educa-

tion had been well cared for, and though he had not been as yet inducted into the rudiments even, of any showy accomplishments, he was as well grounded in the first principles of substantial and useful knowledge as most boys of his age who had had twice his opportunities.

When the Prince of Wales had presented to his newly-discovered step-son the extensive manor lands we have alluded to, he had done so with the proviso that until of age the boy should remain under the joint guardianship of his mother and a distant relative of her family, the Earl of Shropshire. The rent roll of the estate amounted to fifteen thousand pounds per annum, out of which the expenses of the boy's education at Eton and Oxford were to be paid, and a liberal annual allowance afforded him, the balance of the annual income to accumulate in the Bank until he was twenty-one years old, or to be otherwise employed for his benefit, with the joint concurrence of his mother and his male guardian.

The alteration in the circumstances of young Herbert Fitzherbert, soon effected a complete change in his character. Like most persons of a naturally impulsive temperament who have been in early youth subjected to too great restraint, the long pent-up passions soon developed themselves with uncontrollable strength. He had little that was really vicious in his disposition, but the timid, bashful lad of ten years old, was, at the age of sixteen, the leader of every mischievous project at Eton College, the dread of under ushers, and the admiration of his school-fellows, especially of those younger than himself who took him as their model, and humbly strove to imitate alike his good and bad qualities.

The very liberal allowance of pocket-money he received, gave him a great advantage over his, in this respect, less fortunate school-fellows, while at the same time it afforded him the opportunity of indulging in every freak of fancy that seized hold of his imagination.

and which not unfrequently led him into excesses which he afterwards bitterly lamented.

I do not, however, intend to linger over the school-boy days of Herbert Fitzherbert. At the age of eighteen, he was entered a gentleman commoner at Christ Church College, Oxford, and previously to his entering the University, he paid a short visit to his mother and his guardian. Mrs. Fitzherbert's health had been slowly declining for some years. She lived in the strictest seclusion, never receiving company and fulfilling all the duties of a religious devotee. What portion of her income she could spare, and but a small portion of it was expended on her own subsistence and that of a single servant, was devoted to acts of charity, and only in the occasional visits of her son and those of the daughter of the physician who attended her, did she appear to take the slightest pleasure. Herbert was fondly attached to his mother, and it grieved him sadly on this visit to perceive that she was fast failing in health, and, as he feared, was not much longer to remain an inhabitant of this earth. This, too, she knew, and she felt all a mother's anxiety in the future prospects of the son to whom she was so soon to bid a long farewell.

It appears that she had doubts of the honest intentions of his guardian towards him, and the night before he was to leave her to pay the desired visit to the Earl of Shropshire, at Alton Castle, she held a long conversation with the youth in the course of which, she gave expression to her doubts and fears.

"But, mother, the earl has always behaved with the utmost liberality towards me," said Herbert, in reply to some remarks to the above effect that Mrs. Fitzherbert had just uttered. "It was but six months ago that I asked for an increase of my allowance from £600 to £1000, which he immediately granted, and in the letter which requested me to stay a week at the castle on my way to Oxford, after having visited you, he hints at a still larger allowance during the few years that yet remain before I take possession of the Huntingdonshire

property, as being necessary for my support at Oxford, in the style he desires me to maintain. To me, there does not seem much enmity in this!"

"Nor is there," replied the lady: "nor do I know that I should have mentioned the subject, did I not feel that I shall soon be called hence, and you, dear Herbert, will be left solely to your guardian's care, and no longer will the voice of a mother be able to counsel or advise with you as regards your future welfare; but I held some conversation with the earl about a month since, when he called here to visit me, which has filled my heart with dismal forebodings."

"Then banish them, mother," said Herbert, endeavoring to assume an appearance of gaiety, with the object of cheering his mother's spirits, that he in reality did not feel, "banish them and do not give way to low spirits, nor speak of death. You will live to see me take possession of Brampton Manor on my twenty-first birthday; aye, and many years afterwards I trust, to preside over my household. Mother," he added, in a tone of deep feeling, "you live too much alone—you should go more into society. Living thus, your mind is occupied with doleful fancies, which have an evil effect upon your bodily health. In a few years I shall occupy Brampton Manor—then you must live with me. Perhaps I may take a wife to share my good fortune, and you must instruct her in the duties of her novel position. We shall have gay times when all this comes to pass, shall we not?"

Mrs. Fitzherbert smiled faintly. "Herbert," she said, "you talk hopefully, my dear boy—may that hope cling to you through life. For me, I feel that the hand of death is even now upon me, and I in the body, shall not live to witness your installation to the heritage given you by the prince; but if the spirits of the departed are allowed to watch over those they have loved on earth, my spirit will constantly hover around you and share, if share it may, in your every earthly happiness. But my dear

boy, you spoke of marriage—it is on that subject I would now speak with you, perhaps for the last time.”

She stopped speaking for a moment, as though for the purpose of giving Herbert an opportunity to reply; but he did not say a word. He was too much affected by the solemnity of his mother's manner, to trust himself to speak.

She continued:

“I have told you, Herbert, that I had lately some conversation with the earl regarding yourself, and then he hinted to me his wish—nay, more than hinted his wish; he expressed an urgent desire that the Shropshire and Huntingdonshire estates should be united, and this union he proposed should be effected by means of an alliance to be contracted between you, and Lady Mary Alton, his daughter, and sole heiress. He desired—almost commanded my interference in this matter, and requested me to press upon you the benefits that would accrue from the consummation of this, on his part, anticipated union. I told him that I had suffered too much from the evils of a misalliance, even to lend my aid to the contraction of a marriage in which the affections were not the primary agents. I have no personal objection to your marriage with Lady Mary—nay, I believe that it would for many reasons, be a most advantageous match; but I have also reasons for believing that your affections are also otherwise engaged. Is it so, Herbert? This is no time to disguise your sentiments before your mother. A little time, as I have said, and she will be here no longer to counsel or advise with you.”

“Mother,” said Herbert, “you are right. My affections are engaged—my hand is pledged, and you know to whom. Much beneath Lady Mary Alton in what the world calls rank and station—one too humble even for her to notice—much inferior to her I am willing to grant in what is generally considered as beauty, is Ellen Harcourt; but I need not tell you how much she is her superior in all that constitutes the real worth of woman, in all the qualities calculated to make a husband happy—to

attract his love and render it enduring as life. One is as the sun flowers in the parterre, seen and admired by every one—but admired most at a distance; the other as the violet hidden beneath the moss-grown bank—its presence only known by the fragrance it diffuses around: loved and admired and valued the more, the closer it is seen. Mother, who would choose to pluck and bedeck himself with the sun flower? who would not wear the modest, beauteous violet in his bosom?”

The young man ceased speaking, and Mrs. Fitzherbert replied:

“It is as I thought; as I could have hoped,” and then she continued, in a low tone of voice, as if unconsciously, “and yet a fatality appears to attend our family in regard to the affections of the heart. I have suffered—so did my poor, honest, stern, but true-hearted brother; so did my mother: and is my son to suffer under the same curse? Oh! what deadly sin have my ancestors committed, that the sins of the fathers are thus visited upon the children;” then she continued, more audibly, and addressing her son, “Herbert, I have not told you all. The earl became so importunate that I confessed to him my belief that your love was plighted to another, and asked him if he could wish me, your mother, to interfere in a matter of such vital importance as regards your future happiness in life. He replied:

“Mrs. Fitzherbert, I offer your son an alliance that princes might court, and, pardon me for saying it—such an alliance as his birth does not entitle him to. I am aware of the nature of the grant bestowed upon your son by the Prince of Wales; and I may as well at once inform you that it is liable to be contested—that it is doubtful whether the prince had a right to bestow it; and further, that there is an older claimant, who can bring proof that Frederick, Prince of Wales, the father of King George the Third, made a similar grant, it is said, of the same property to him. No one knows this but myself, as yet. I can prevent any further action being taken; but I will only do so upon condition that through the

alliance of Herbert with Lady Mary, the estate of Brampton Manor and Alton Castle are united. Let your son cast from him all thoughts of the lowly match he dreams of. He is but a boy; and let him think of his prospects in the future: they are wealth, rank and station, and the hand of Lady Mary Alton, or beggary, and misery, and love in a cottage, with the low-born girl who has woven her toils around him, and sought to ensnare him for the gratification of her own ambitious purposes."

"The earl rose from his seat, and without waiting my reply, left the room, and in a few minutes I saw his carriage drive past the window. I know his scheming, treacherous disposition, and I know that he will take any measures, no matter how vile, to carry out any purpose he has formed, and perhaps there may be truth in what he has said respecting the Huntingdonshire property. What say you now, my son?"

"As I said before, mother. Poverty with Ellen Harcourt sooner than wealth with Lady Mary. Good Heaven! as well might one try to warm an icicle into flame as to extract love from the cold, selfish heart of Lady Mary Alton. Mother, I am no silly child to dream that mutual love, alone, can constitute happiness. Love in a cottage is very pretty in a picture or a novel; but unless there is something more substantial in the cottage—fuel to warm it and food to give it strength—love is very likely to die of starvation. But why should poverty, much less beggary, be my lot if I marry Ellen, even supposing what I utterly disbelieve, the trumped up tale of Lord Alton to be true? Am I not strong and healthy? Can I not labor for my living as others do, who, like me, have been favored with a good education, but, who, unlike me, have not been pampered with the smiles of fortune. Let me be thankful that in my early youth my uncle taught me the virtues of self-denial; and although I have enjoyed fortune's favors, I have not forgotten her frowns. Poverty, with Ellen Harcourt!—never, while I have the strong arm and true heart wherewith to gain independence. Never!

This is no boy boasting, mother. I feel what I say, and shall act up to it. If Heaven spares my life and hers, I shall marry Ellen Harcourt; if the world were offered me as her dower, with that dower I would reject the hand of Lady Mary Alton."

"Nobly said, my brave son," said Mrs. Fitzherbert; "I pray God, my honest boy, your purpose may be as nobly sustained should the day of trial unhappily ever come; and now, dear, good night. I feel unusually tired and oppressed in spirits to-night. To-morrow you leave for Alton Castle; do not go until night. I must yet have one day more to pass in your society."

The mother and son joined in a mutual embrace, and Mrs. Fitzherbert retired to her chamber.

Ellen Harcourt, as the reader may have suspected, was the daughter of a physician of the city, on the outskirts of which Mrs. Fitzherbert resided, and, as we have said, was a frequent and favored visitor at Mrs. Fitzherbert's. Here Herbert had frequently met her when on a visit to his mother; and they had, as mere children, conceived an affection for each other. This had ripened into love as they grew in years, and on his previous visit Herbert had told his love to the gentle girl, and she had reciprocated his affection; and although until the interview with her son just described, Mrs. Fitzherbert had not known that matters had gone so far, she had long ago guessed pretty clearly how things really stood between them. The father of Ellen was in moderate circumstances, having a respectable practice in the city and neighborhood; her mother had died while she was a child, and she, though still so young, admirably filled the position of her father's housekeeper. She was a pretty, delicate, amiable girl, very retiring in manner, but affectionate in disposition, and loved by every one who knew her. As to Lady Mary Alton, she has been well described by Herbert. She was a handsome girl of twenty-two or three years of age; but cold and calculating in disposition, and so haughty and overbearing as to render her manners almost repulsive.



A few hours after Herbert had retired for the night, he was awakened by the ringing of a bell and the bustle of persons hurrying to and fro, and while gathering his scattered, dreaming senses, he was startled into full consciousness by a loud knock at his chamber door, and by the voice of the servant, who entreated him to hurry down stairs for she thought her lady was dying.

Herbert sprang from his bed and hurriedly putting on his clothes, hastened down stairs to his mother's bed-room. She was as the servant had stated, almost at her last gasp, and apparently unconscious of all that was going on around her; but as Herbert bent over her and uttered a few unconnected sentences, for the sudden and unexpected blow had unmanned him, she opened her eyes, as she heard the well-known and loved voice, and smiled faintly, at the same time essaying to grasp his hand. Poor Herbert seized the half extended hand and stooped to kiss her cheek, his eyes almost blinded with the starting tears. There was one more smile as she seemed to feel his warm breath—a slight convulsive shudder—and Mrs. Fitzherbert was no more; but that smile—the last faint effort of a mother's love, when to her filmy eyes, all else but the loved object of her holiest affection, was mist and darkness, still lingered after death, and the pale, cold corpse carried that last loving smile even into the damp, cold grave.

Herbert was overwhelmed with grief; he had schooled himself to bear the loss which he knew he would soon be called to suffer; but he had not thought the sad blow would fall upon him so suddenly. He rose from his half recumbent posture, and still holding his mother's hand in his own, seated himself by the bedside, and there for hours he sat, motionless—stupid—his faculties benumbed with the intensity of his grief.

The physician arrived just as the spirit had fled from his expiring patient, as though it were in mockery of the vain efforts of human skill when the dread fiat has gone forth; but the doctor, though startled at the suddenness of Mrs. Fitzherbert's decease, was not greatly sur-

prised. Her disease was ossification of the heart, and at any moment of excitement might have proved fatal.

Ellen too, shortly arrived, and strove to and at length succeeded in consoling the bereaved son; their tears mingled together, for Ellen had long looked upon Mrs. Fitzherbert as a second mother to her, sent by Heaven in place of the mother she had lost, and in that hour of sorrow the troth plighted at a happier moment was sealed too firmly to be torn asunder by mortal hands.

I will pass over the details of the funeral, merely stating that the body of the deceased was carried to Ireland; and followed by Herbert and Ellen as chief mourners, was interred in the family vault in Dublin; and in the course of a few weeks, when the keen edge of his sorrow was somewhat blunted, Herbert paid his promised visit to the Earl of Shropshire at Alton Castle.

He was kindly and hospitably received, and for a few days nothing was said to him by the Earl as to the views he entertained regarding his daughter's marriage, although it was evident that Lady Mary, who had heretofore always treated him with almost scornful hauteur, now took every opportunity to ingratiate herself into his favor; but it was in vain. He met her advances coldly but respectfully, and never suffered himself, by word or deed, to imply that he could ever view her in any other light than as the daughter of his guardian.

At length the earl, one morning, having invited his young guest to join him in a morning walk in the Park, broached the subject that occupied his mind, and to his great astonishment his condescending offer was courteously but firmly declined by his ward. The old nobleman was too cunning and too well-bred to resort to threats, and he adroitly changed the subject of conversation, and during the remainder of the visit he never again reverted to it.

In a few days Herbert went to Oxford, and remained for one year, during which period he received several letters from the earl, in all of which the object which



lay nearest his heart was hinted at, without Herbert's seeming to notice it.

At length his guardian conceived the idea that travel and consequent absence from the object of his idolatry, might root out the, as he imagined, incipient, boyish love, which so fascinated his ward, and while Herbert was away he would see the girl's father and by a pecuniary gift or other means, endeavor to gain over the father's co-operation in his sinister designs, and when his ward returned he hoped he might be found more inclined to yield to his wishes.

He proposed travel to Herbert, who was delighted, at the age of nineteen, thus to become his own master, and who eagerly accepted the proposition.

To the earl's great delight he proposed to visit the United States instead of some of those countries in Europe, with which England was then on friendly terms, and where it would have been practicable for an Englishman to travel. His lordship thought to himself—"this is better than ever;" (at that period the communication between the old and the new world was not so easy, rapid and regular, as at present,) "while in Europe this cunning gypsy of a physician's daughter might find means to correspond with her lover. In America this will be barely practicable," and in a short time Herbert, who had early imbibed a love for republican institutions, sailed for America, with the intention of remaining until he was of age.

The reader will recollect it was while on this visit I first introduced him in this record through the information I received from the daughter.

Being abundantly supplied with money, he took it into his head to purchase some extensive tracts of land in Virginia which were for sale at this period, the title deeds of which he received; but the war breaking out with the mother country, he was compelled to return to England a few months earlier than he would otherwise have done.

When he arrived home the persecutions of the earl

re-commenced, and now assumed a threatening form. At length Herbert positively refused to listen longer to his guardian's overtures, declaring that he should shortly be of age and then, at all hazards, he would marry Ellen. The earl stamped and stormed but all to no purpose, and at length threatened him with the loss of his inheritance, as he had once hinted to the young man's mother. Herbert laughed the threat to scorn, and turning his back on the earl, left him dumb with astonishment at his ward's spirited independence.

Herbert went to the earl's solicitor the following week, on arriving in London, and made inquiry as to the correctness of his lordship's statement. But the lawyer had received instructions from the earl, who suspected this movement on the part of his ward, and he corroborated the hints the young man had received from Lord Alton.

Ignorant of the intricacies of law, and of a proud, impetuous spirit that would not brook humiliation, Herbert manfully determined to depend upon his own exertions, and his late mother's property affording him an income sufficient for his economical maintenance, he returned to college to finish his studies, and having a penchant for the medical profession, he took the necessary steps to qualify himself for its practice. Four years after this, during which period he proudly refused to listen to any overtures from the earl, who sought several opportunities to bring the determined youth to terms, he commenced practice, and the following year married Ellen Harcourt: but not succeeding so rapidly as his impetuous spirit had led him to believe he ought to do, and longing to revisit the United States, he determined to dispose of his practice, sell out his late mother's property in the funds, and emigrate to this country with the little capital he could thus collect together. He did so, and commenced business in Philadelphia, whence after some time he removed to Reading, where he died shortly after his wife, leaving Adolphus and Georgiana, infants and orphans, without a relative or a friend that they knew of in the wide world; for that very year,

1830, King George the Fourth, who according to the precepts of divinity and all the recognized laws of social life among civilized nations, was in reality the husband of their grandmother, had himself been gathered to the tomb of his royal ancestors.

Having thus completed the introduction to my narrative by tracing the anterior family records up to the date of the opening of my story, I shall now beg the reader to follow me in imagination again to England, for which country I sailed with my two *proteges* within a few weeks after the happy recovery of Georgiana.

I was advised by the professional gentleman, who was acting in England in co-operation with me, to keep secret for the present the arrival of the brother and sister in that country. Accordingly on my arrival in London, I procured suitable lodgings at the West End, and having established them therein, I walked to Lincoln's Inn-Fields, where was located the law office of Mr. Hughes, to whom I introduced myself as the gentleman who had corresponded with him relative to the Fitzherbert case from the United States.

Our mutual greetings having been exchanged, I immediately entered into the business which had induced me, from the interest I had taken in the young people, to cross the Atlantic with them and endeavor to see them righted as regarded what I considered their just claims.

"I as well as you, Mr. —," said Mr. Hughes in reply to some remarks I had made, "fully believe that the young gentleman and lady you have brought with you from the United States, are the lawful heirs to this contested property; nevertheless, I fear we shall have considerable difficulty in bringing forward sufficient proof, the more especially since two young persons have been in this country now nearly three months, and strange to say, their story exactly coincides with that which you tell me you have heard from your *proteges*; more than that, their claims have been very well received by the parties interested, who will work with all

their might to establish them in possession, and do all they can to prove our clients to be impostors."

"But I have with me proof of the death of Mr. Herbert Fitzherbert, and his wife, Ellen Harcourt, at Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1830," said I, considerably taken aback, as sailors say, by the story of my English legal friend, "and I presume nothing will be easier now I am in London to procure from the registers, proof of the birth of Herbert Fitzherbert, and his marriage with Miss Harcourt, at Canterbury, where her father resided, and also from some persons who must be cognizant of the event, proof of the emigration of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzherbert to the United States."

"Nothing could possibly be more simple than to do as you say," replied Mr. Hughes with the most imperturbable coolness and dryness, "for every facility would be afforded you at the vestries of the churches in which the ceremony of christening and marriage were performed, and you might also discover the date of the infants' birth register; but unfortunately, all that has been done already by the solicitor of the opposing parties in this case."

"How is it possible," I replied, "that they can have thus managed to make every little circumstance agree as regards names and dates? How could two parties, brother and sister, of a similar age as our clients, and of the same rather uncommon name, have possessed parents who were born, married and died at the same date and under similar circumstances, unless there is gross fraud somewhere?"

"That's just where the difficulty lies," said Mr. Hughes; "that there is gross fraud on one side or the other, no one possessed of common sense will presume to deny. The question is to prove on which side the fraud exists."

"I never can be brought to believe that Adolphus and Georgiana have deceived me; indeed, under the circumstances it is impossible," said I, in an excited manner; for I was not only astonished at the idea of such a

connected system of deceit having been thus far successfully carried out; but I was irritated by the undisturbed coolness of my coadjutor in the intended investigation.

"Neither do I in the slightest degree doubt the perfect honesty of our clients, and the truth of their statements; but, my good friend, you are a lawyer, and you know as well as I do that what we believe is of very little consequence; the question is, what can we make the jury believe? I presume, in the course of our practice, we have both experienced the correctness of my last observation."

I could not help smiling in spite of myself at the quiet and gentlemanly self-possession of my new acquaintance, and I acquiesced in the perfect truth of his remarks. "But," added I, "if, as I understand, the possession of the property is contested by yet another claimant or party of claimants, it appears strange to me that the claims of the young persons who you say are favorably received, should be so generously admitted."

"Exactly so," said Mr. Hughes; "that is where I view the matter in a suspicious light. I believe this young man and woman are mere agents posted up by some persons unknown, who know more of the true state of the case than either of us. Depend upon it, my good sir, these poor dupes are paid for their services, and when their claim is fully settled by the law of the land, they will be paid off, and perhaps sent out of the country with a competency for the rest of their lives. The whole affair, sir, is a fraud—a deeply laid conspiracy—and it is my opinion certain persons holding a high position in society, are concerned in it. Why, sir, the property is immense—perfectly enormous—£15,000 a year, annual rental from the estates, and that sum annually, has been accumulating at compound interest since—let me see—ah! since the year 1805 or thereabouts. Good heavens! sir, the value of the contested property in this case, is perfectly overwhelming."

"Have you seen the young persons who represent themselves as the heirs Fitzherbert?" said I.

"I have, and a very interesting looking couple they are. The young lady I should imagine to be about nineteen years of age, delicate, extremely pretty and very modest; even retiring in her demeanor. Her brother I should say was twenty-five or thereabouts; about six years her senior—a fine, tall, well-looking youth, rather reserved in manner, and with a slight dash of melancholy in the expression of his features when at rest; but withal a fine gentlemanly-looking fellow, apparently devotedly attached to his sister, who has indeed been everything to him since childhood, and who is doubly endeared to him in consequence of the misfortunes they have encountered together; in the midst of which her love, devotion and cheerful uncomplaining disposition, as I have heard him say to his counsel, has been all that restrained him from casting himself away in utter despair. But what is the matter," continued he in utter astonishment; for as he was speaking, I had started up from my chair: "have I made any observation which may have been the cause of your astonishment? Pray be seated, sir; you look quite excited. It is necessary in our profession, to be calm and collected upon all occasions."

"Good heavens! Mr. Hughes," said I, "you have described to a hair the young couple I have brought over from New York with me. Had I been asked to describe their appearance and character, I could not have made the resemblance more perfect."

"Indeed!" said he, for the first time disturbed from his equanimity; "this is strange—very singular indeed! By the bye, are you fully aware of the facts of the case so far as they have yet transpired?"

"I am not," I replied; for, of course, at that time I was ignorant of much in regard to which I have enlightened the reader.

"It is necessary then that you should know them. The story will be too long to tell at present, (looking at his watch); if you will favor me with your company to dinner to-day, at my house, at Clapham Common, we will talk the matter over in the evening. It is five o'clock,

and my servant will be here with the gig directly. Allow me to offer you a seat in it."

I accepted the invitation; for I assure the reader my mind was in a perfect state of perplexity from the strange account I had heard, and I felt I could have no rest till I was further enlightened in the matter.

"By-the-bye," said Mr. Hughes, as in the course of a few minutes the servant arrived with the gig, and I seated myself in the vehicle by his side; "by-the-bye, we pass very close to the lodgings you have taken for your young friends. Would it be asking too much to beg to be introduced to them to-night? for I assure you your remarks in reply to my description of their opponents in this singular case, have interested me considerably, and it is rarely I allow anything to disturb my mind."

"With the greatest pleasure," I replied, and I really felt what I said; for I began to think I was dreaming, and that the strange claimants and my young clients were the same persons.

In a few minutes we were set down at the boarding-house, and I ushered Mr. Hughes up stairs into the room where the Fitzherberts were seated.

He was introduced by me and we spent a few minutes in conversation together, and then both started for Clapham.

"I could not have believed it, had I not seen it with my own eyes," said Mr. Hughes, when we were again fairly under weigh. "Such a perfect resemblance I never saw before in human beings. They are not the same; that's certain—they can't well be. Besides, I stood by the young man, and he is taller than I, while his almost perfect counterpart is just about my height; his hair and eyes too, are a shade darker, and there is a slight, but to a careful observer, a perceptible difference in the tone of his voice. The young lady too, has a fresher complexion; but after all, the resemblance is truly astonishing; perfectly miraculous!"

In the course of an hour we were set down at Mr. Hughes's handsome residence on Clapham Common, and

I received in the course of the evening a great deal of information from him respecting the case. He was, I found, a gentleman of widely extended knowledge, and I spent a delightful evening.

## CHAPTER VI.

*The reader is introduced to an Old Bailey lawyer. Also, to a counsellor of a too common, but not very reputable class.*

DURING my conversation with Mr. Hughes, I learned that he suspected that the Earl of Shropshire was a party to the proceedings in the disputed title of the Brampton Manor estate; but this he only obscurely hinted at, as he as well as I, was ignorant, at this date of my story, of much that the reader is cognizant of, and which we learnt in the course of subsequent investigation; but which it was necessary for me to mention in order to bring my narrative to a fresh starting point.

He had imagined this merely from some information he had received at Canterbury from an old servant of Dr. Harcourt's, who was still living, although in a state of almost total mental imbecility. It was very evident, however, to me, that he suspected another party strongly as having something to do with it, and that party was the uncle of our clients by the mother's side; no other, indeed, than Lord Henry Fitzherbert, son of the Prince of Wales, and Mrs. Fitzherbert, the grandmother of the orphan heirs; but as yet, he as well as I, was profoundly ignorant of the nature of—could not even conjecture any reasonable cause for these strange proceedings.

I must now introduce my readers to another lawyer's office in the city of London, bearing quite a different aspect to the quaint, but comfortable, and even tasteful chambers occupied by Mr. Hughes, in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Let the reader follow me in imagination beyond the

limits of the city proper, along Whitechapel, in which the very atmosphere is reeking with the tainted exhalations from the large slaughter-houses situated side by side, in the rear of the butchers' stalls for which that locality is famed—the blood and filth pouring in a stream into the gutter, and the pestilential effluvia by no means improved by the stench of onions and of refuse vegetable matter trampled into the mud beneath the petty green-grocers' stalls, which line the pavement opposite the meat-market; and if he can get safely through without being suffocated by the vapor of the foul malaria, still let him follow me on until the street widens, and if not more cleanly in reality, becomes at least freed in some measure from the vile stench he has left behind. We will pass through Whitechapel Gate and turn to the left, threading the mazes of the poverty-stricken and disreputable neighborhood of Spitalfields, and when in a street diverging from the Globe Road in an easterly direction, we will ascend a narrow stair-case, near a pawn-broker's shop—by far the largest and handsomest establishment in the street, if we except the gin-palaces, and on the first floor of this unprepossessing dwelling, is situated the office of which we speak. In sooth, it is a dingy place—enough to give one the horrors to look at it. God pity the poor souls who have fallen into the clutches of its presiding genius; for it forcibly recalls to mind the well-known quotation from Dante's "Inferno." "Hope is shut out from those who enter here."

The lawyer is within, and evidently not in the most pleasant of humors, if, indeed to judge from his features, he ever can be in a good humor. He is seated in the inner office, and entering the outer one, we hear the following dialogue going on inside:

"Have there been any letters for me, this morning, Wilkins?"

"No, sir; none," replies a middle-aged man, very shabbily attired in clothing which looks still more shabby from its having been originally intended for a less robust wearer, and its also boasting of a most fash-

ionable cut; the coat being so tight as to threaten to burst open the back seam at every motion of the wearer, while the sleeves terminate at least two inches above his lean, bony wrists, showing an extraordinary quantity of very yellow-looking linen; while the trowsers are so tightly strapped beneath a pair of large, dilapidated boots, as seriously to impede the wearer's progress; the said straps at the same time reaching almost to the ancles, and meeting the trowsers, since the trowsers refused to meet them on proper terms of intimacy.

"No, sir," he repeats; "there hasn't been any letters this morning."

"Confound it," exclaimed the lawyer, taking a Liverpool paper from his pocket, and perusing and reperusing a paragraph which seemed to occasion him considerable annoyance. "Mind I can't be seen by any one to-day; but should a letter arrive, bring it to me instantly, and see and put some more coals on the fire. It appears to have only just been lighted. I tell you what it is, Wilkins, you must do better than this, or you and I must part, and that's the long and short of the matter. It's now near ten o'clock. Pray what time did you get to the office this morning?"

"At nine, sir, and as soon as I had swept it out I lit the fire. I didn't expect you so soon, sir."

"At nine! and pray what hour was it when you closed last night?"

"I didn't get through copying those affidavits till midnight, sir, and this morning at eight o'clock I had to serve the suit upon Smithson. I couldn't get a chance to serve it until I had watched the house nearly an hour."

"That's no excuse, Wilkins—none at all. You must manage things better, or find some other situation. Now, what are you staring at?" continued the lawyer, as the man stopped before him in a hesitating manner as though he had some favor to ask, yet feared the present was an unpropitious moment to prefer it.

"If you please, sir, my wife is lying in with her sixth child, and the doctor's bill is heavy, I thought sir—I—

that is, sir, I told my wife this morning—I would ask for a slight increase of salary."

"Good God! what does the man mean? An increase of salary! No, sir. I pay you now 15s. a week—a handsome salary considering the duties you have to perform. Go to your work, sir; and look you here, Mr. Wilkins. If you make such an impertinent request again, out you bundle into the street, sir, and starve, sir—starve if you can't do better. A wife and family, indeed! I should like to know what a lawyer's clerk wants with a wife and family. There—go to your work, sir, at once, and let me know if any letters come."

As soon as the clerk had retreated into the outer room the lawyer locked the door of the inner one, and thus soliloquised:

"It's always the way: any job that has got any dirty work attached to it, that infernal Gripes thrusts upon my shoulders, while he manages to keep clear of danger himself. If I complain, he threatens me and says he can hang me at any moment. Well, if he can, two can play at the same game, for I can transport him for life, high as he holds his head. I've got the papers relative to that case of conspiracy, *Mordaunt vs. Selwyn*; and if I committed the forgery, he perjured himself, and I have proof of it in this box," tapping a small tin deed box that stood near him. "Well, well, the less that's said of that matter the better for us both just now; but," grinding his teeth, "I never forgive or forget. By-and-bye my day will come and then, Gripes, I'll have revenge. But about this paragraph; I sent Gripes word last night, and surely it needs attention. I wonder if there's any truth in it." So saying, he recommenced reading the newspaper.

He was interrupted at this moment by a knock at the door, and upon opening it, his clerk gave him a letter which had just arrived, merely saying: "A letter from Mr. Gripes, sir. Immediate."

The lawyer tore open the envelope, perused the brief epistle, and then throwing his cloak over his shoulders,

left the office in charge of his clerk, desiring him not to quit until he returned, if he were delayed till midnight. Mr. Cheatem, the worthy member of the legal profession, to whom the reader has just been introduced, was one of that class known in England by the *soubriquet* of "Old Bailey lawyers," in consequence of their hanging about prisons for the purpose of taking advantage of the urgency of the cases that sometimes come up. They have their prototypes in other lands; but, perhaps, in consequence of the wider field London lays open to the practice of their villainy, they exceed their foreign brethren in their utter disregard of the nature of the cases they take in hand. Forever on the look out, like vultures, for any dirty job which may chance to place a few guineas in their pockets, woe to the unhappy wretch who entrusts his cause in their hands, whether it be a just or an unjust one. As the vampire is said to drain the life's blood from the unconscious sleeper while it fans and lulls him to sleep with the cooling breath from its wings, so these wretches drain the last shilling from their victims, deceiving them and lulling their suspicions by specious promises to the last, and when they are utterly penniless, leaving them pitilessly to their fate.

It is these men and such as these who cast a stigma upon a profession which has enriched the world with many of the brightest ornaments of humanity, and the avenues to which should be closed to all but men of honesty and strict integrity of character. Mr. Gripes, to whom I shall presently introduce the reader, was another of the same class, but one of the leading men of his wretched tribe. By dint of superior tact and talent, he had managed to maintain a good name and a passing fair fame in the world, and consequently was enabled completely to control the poor lawyers of his class, who were fain to accept thankfully from his hands, and to carry out under his direction any work that he thought too dirty or too dangerous for him to meddle with in *propria personæ*.

Gripes lived in a handsome house at the West End;



mingled freely, though only on sufferance, for the wretch was suspected, with his honest professional brethren; bore a charitable name, for he gave freely to any charity when the names of the donors were to be published in the newspapers,—though otherwise he would not have given a penny to save a poor wretch from starvation; and to crown all he rented a pew in a fashionable church, and was a regular recipient of the sacrament. To all but his professional brethren he was a saint; but they could not help at times seeing through the cloak of hypocrisy beneath which he sought to hide his real character. I have been thus particular with these two men because they will bear a prominent part in the *denouement* of my narrative.

As soon as Cheatem reached the Whitechapel road, he got into an omnibus, which sat him down in Fleet-street, whence he turned into a court filled with law offices, one of which was occupied by Isaiah Gripes, Esq.

Cheatem entered the office and found Mr. Gripes seated within, as he expected.

"What is this you tell me, Cheatem, about the arrival of that d—d Yankee lawyer at Liverpool, with the two Fitzherberts? The girl must be in Italy by this time, and once there, there is little fear of her returning to trouble us."

Cheatem handed him the newspaper, without reply, from which he read as follows:

"The American packet ship Washington, Captain Silas Wright, commander, which arrived last night, as will be seen by reference to the shipping list, brought over several passengers, among whom, according to our indefatigable reporter, who is ever on hand to glean intelligence, were a gentleman of the legal profession, from New York, and a young gentleman and lady of the name of Fitzherbert, who, it is said, claim to be the veritable heirs to the property in Huntingdonshire, which is under litigation, and which has attracted public attention so strongly of late. Our reporter learnt this from one of the passengers. It is said the parties themselves intended to have kept

their arrival secret, at least for the present. If our reporter be not misinformed, we may expect shortly to hear of some novel and rich disclosures regarding this case."

"D——n," said Gripes, after having read the paragraph, "there must be some mistake. De Paoli wrote me to say that all was arranged respecting the girl, and they were to sail for Trieste the next morning, and I was just pleasing myself at the thought of her arrival in Italy. See here, (taking up an Italian paper, and reading from it in English,) 'The San Giovanni arrived at this port (Trieste,) this morning, having on board as passengers, Signor de Paoli and his family.' There must be some mistake somewhere. Those prying reporters must thrust their brazen faces everywhere, and hatch up a story if they cannot get hold of one by fair means. But if they have really arrived, they mean to keep it a secret, do they? Well, we are obliged to this veracious reporter for informing us of that fact, at any rate. I must see his lordship to day, and we must ferret out more of this business, and satisfy ourselves either of its truth or falsehood; but its getting into the newspapers is bad—very bad. It will be trumpeted from one end of the country to the other. There really should be some restriction as regards the freedom of the press. The license these editors take, is getting to be quite abominable."

"Letting everybody know our tricks, eh!" said Cheatem, who could never let an opportunity for an ill-natured joke pass, even though it told against himself.

Gripes took no notice of his coadjutor's remarks; but repeated—

"I must see his lordship to-day. He said he would send his card, stating the hour for an interview. Cheatem, you must be on hand if you are wanted, do you hear?"

"Yes sir. Dobson," pointing to Gripes's man of all work, "will know where to find me at a moment's warning."

And he left the office and ensconced himself in the

back parlor of one of the snug public houses to be found in all sorts of out-of-the-way places in the city. Then he called for a pipe and a pot of porter, and while enjoying the cheap luxury, sat cogitating the various matters of rascality he had in operation.

Mr. Gripes sat communing with his own mind for some time, and at length was upon the point of going out, when the porter brought him a card, on which was engraved,

"LORD HENRY FITZHERBERT, LIFE-GUARDS," and below the inscription was written in pencil, "will meet Mr. Gripes at his apartments in the Albany, at four P. M."

Gripes read the inscription, and then said:

"Upon my word, it's too bad—prevented from going about any other work for the whole day, so that I may meet this bastard sprig of royalty just when the day's work should be over. He might just as well say what he has to say now as then; but it can't be helped. I suppose I must keep the appointment—meanwhile, since the day's business is so broken into, I'll just join Cheatem, and have a chat with the rascal. Cheatem's at the snug-gery in Fennel court, I suppose, Dobson?" added he, addressing his clerk.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, if any one wants me, say that I have been sent for, to consult with Counsellor Bruffem, on an important legal point at issue; but am expected back immediately, and then step round to the snug-gery, and let me know who it is."

## CHAPTER VII.

*The reader is introduced to bachelor apartments in the Albany, and to a life-guardsmen—Unpleasant intelligence from abroad—An aristocrat of the first water—A slight ignorance of Geography—Foul play is contemplated.*

THE scene changes, and I introduce my readers to a magnificent suite of apartments in that well-known fashionable place of bachelor residence, the Albany. In a handsomely furnished parlor a gentleman of probably forty years of age is half-sitting, half-lounging upon a *vis-a-vis* which he has wheeled to a table on which are the debris of a breakfast. The gentleman is still sipping a cup of chocolate at intervals, and occasionally yawning, as though he had not long risen from his bed, although it is near noon. A gorgeous dressing-gown is wrapped carelessly around him, and his feet are encased in a pair of velvet slippers, made after the Turkish fashion. His features are delicate, and, but for the jet black moustache which covered his upper lip, his countenance would have almost a feminine appearance. The walls of the room are hung round with engravings, executed in the highest style of art, and on tasteful marble pedestals placed in the corners of the apartment, stand classic groups of statuary, carved in the same material. Mingled with miniatures, seals, small articles of jewelry, handsomely bound annuals, and other trifles, showing a certain fastidious refinement on the part of the possessor, are a pair of boxing-gloves, a brace of handsomely mounted duelling-pistols, a couple of pair of fencing-foils, a dog's collar, and a host of heterogeneous articles spread without any regard to order, over a large marble-topped centre-table, giving to the room the perfect *vraisemblance* of a wealthy, fashiona-

ble bachelor's apartment. A beautiful Italian greyhound, and a Scotch terrier, so ugly that it seems to have been chosen purposely as a foil to the elegance of its brute companion, but which appears to be equally a favorite with its master, are with him the only living occupants of the room.

A footman, attired in a handsome, but quiet livery, opened the door of the apartment, after having knocked and received a command to come in, and announced in a loud voice—

"The right honorable the Earl of Shropshire."

"Show his lordship up stairs, Harrison," said the gentleman; and, when the servant had retired, he added:

"Weally, its vewy distwessing to be annoyed at such an hour of the day. What the d—l can Lord Shropshire want, I wonder."

This fretful soliloquy was broken short by the entrance into the room of a tall, slender gentleman, remarkably plainly dressed; but of a most aristocratic bearing, and of a haughty, cold, severe expression of countenance.—His lordship, at this period, must have been at least sixty-five years old; but he showed no mark of age, save in the thick sprinkling of grey amongst his once dark hair. His step was firm, his bearing as steady, and his deep-set grey eye as keen and piercing as it had been twenty years before.

"Good morning, Fitzherbert—still at breakfast, I see," was the salutation, as he walked into the room and seated himself *sans cérémonie*.

"No, my lord—I have finished breakfast; in fact I've vewy little appetite now for breakfast, or any other meal. The fact is, I didn't get home till day-light this morning, and I still feel the effects of the champagne I drank last night. I must reform some of these days. I begin to find I can't indulge with impunity as I once could; but, can I offer your lordship a cup of coffee or chocolate?"

"No, Henry, no—I thank you; I always breakfast at eight o'clock, whether at Alton Castle or at Grosvenor Square, and never touch anything afterwards until din-

ner-time. I have called this morning on business which nearly concerns us both. Hadn't you better order the servant to remove the breakfast things, and then we can converse without interruption?"

The younger gentleman languidly touched the bell-pull, and the remains of the breakfast were removed by the footman. The earl then rose from his chair, and quietly locked the door of the apartment, and, having resumed his seat, he said:—

"Henry, I received a letter from Trieste this morning, from the Countess de Paoli, from which I have learnt the rather unpleasant intelligence that our plan as regarded the placing of Georgianna Fitzherbert in the Convent at Milan, has partly fallen through. The letter was evidently written at sea, before the Giovanni (the vessel on board of which they sailed from Philadelphia, had got into port—for that it was posted immediately, is evident from the fact that, by the same mail, I have received an Italian newspaper announcing the vessel's arrival. The letter I received prior to this, intimated that they had managed everything in the most satisfactory manner, and were to sail with the girl on the following day. This one states that they did sail as they had intimated—that the girl was sent on board in charge of Maria, and it was supposed, retired to her cabin. When, however, the vessel was clear of the harbor, the countess sent Maria to bring Georgianna on deck to breathe the fresh sea air—for the poor girl had naturally enough, fretted and pined a great deal during her confinement at Philadelphia; but she was no where to be found, and the supposition on their part is, that she has thrown herself overboard in a fit of frenzy and despair. If that was all, it would not be so serious, nor give us so much trouble, though I should feel really sorry if any thing so dreadful has befallen the poor child; but while I was reading the letter from Trieste, a note from that fellow Gripes, was put in my hand by my valet, in which he states that his partner, Peachem or Cheatem, or something like that (I can never think of these fellow's names,) has shown him

a Liverpool newspaper, in which a paragraph appears announcing the arrival at that port, of a ship from the United States, having on board a gentleman of the legal profession from New York, who is accompanied by a young gentleman and a *lady*, who claim to be the real heirs Fitzherbert. Now if this report be correct, it certainly is awkward—for the girl must somehow or other have escaped from the vessel instead of being drowned. Perhaps picked up by some boat that chanced to be near, or else, worse still, she has some accomplices who know more than it is convenient to us they should know. For anything we can tell, they may even at this moment be in London.

"'Pon my honor, it's d——d awkward," replied Lord Fitzherbert, "it's vewy twoublesome to be mixed up with these things. For my part I wish I had nothing to do with it."

"Do I understand you rightly, my lord?" said the earl, in an angry tone of voice; "you infer that you have no desire for the projected matrimonial alliance between Lady Mary Alton, my daughter, and yourself. If so, I wash my hands of the whole affair, and you can carry on the law suit in conjunction with Gripes & Peachem, Cheatem I mean, as best you may."

"Not at all, my lord," replied Lord Fitzherbert. "Your lordship is so vewy hasty. I shall esteem the honor of an alliance with the lovely Lady Mawry very highly I assure you. But somehow or other, I wish the business was not in Gwipes hands. He may be a vewy honest, good sort of man, but that class of people are my abhorwence. I always think Gwipes smells of the 'Old Bailey,' whenever he comes into the room; and, by-the-bye, the fellow is to meet me here at four o'clock to-day; though what I can do in the matter is more than I know."

"My dear Henry, you should really show a little more energy of character, and at your time of life, devote yourself a little more to business. Instead of that, you are as listless in the matter as if you were quite un-

concerned in the turn it takes. You are aware, of course, that it is only upon the event of your obtaining possession of the Huntingdonshire estates that our contract holds good, regarding your marriage to my daughter. You have no ambition, sir—no energy whatever—no strength of purpose. For my part, twenty years ago my mind was set upon the union of these large estates, and to the furtherance of that object have my whole energies been directed, and I will move heaven and earth but, by some means or other, it shall be accomplished."

"I acknowledge," replied Lord Fitzherbert, "that your lordship possesses energies and strength of purpose such as few men are blessed with; but you are wrong in supposing that my life is one of idleness. Your lordship has never been in the 'Gwards,' and you can have no idea of the dreadful fatigue of going through parade every day: marching and counter-marching, up or avenue of St. James' Park and down another, in all weathers. It's vewy distwessing—vewy fatiguing, I assure you. 'Pon honor, I believe the constant recurrence of the same monotonous duties is more fatiguing than a regular campaign on the continent would be."

Lord Shropshire smiled contemptuously, then he said: "You say Gripes is to meet you at four o'clock. It is now one," (looking at his watch,) "and at two o'clock I must be at the House. The question of the tariff comes up in the 'Lords' to-day, and it is important that I should remain until the vote is taken, or I would see Gripes myself. However, oblige me by desiring the fellow to meet me at my house in Grosvenor-square to-morrow at ten o'clock precisely, and then we will see further into this business, and arrange our future operations—and now, Henry, good morning."

"Good morning, my lord, present my best respects to Lady Mawry, and say I will do myself the pleasure of seeing her at 'Almacks' to-night. I pwesume she will be there—and oh; my lord, would it be convenient to you to lend me a thousand just now. I lost heavily at

Ascott last week. I believe I was duped into betting on the wrong horse by that infernal fellow, Davis, and I am completely plucked for the present."

"Henry," replied the earl, "I would do much to oblige you; but I fear you are given to very great extravagance. I hope you will give up that odious practice of betting on horse races, when you are married to Lady Mary; however, I will give you a check upon Coutts for the money," and the earl sat down at a side-table, and taking his check-book from his pocket, wrote a check for a thousand pounds, and presented it to Fitzherbert, merely saying:

"There, Henry, is the amount you need, and I hope it will be the last you will require for any such purpose."

He then left the room and in the course of half an hour Lord Fitzherbert rang for his valet and proceeded to his dressing-room to make himself presentable for the day.

Punctually to the hour of four, Isaiah Gripes, Esq., presented his card to the porter at the Albany, and was ushered into the presence of his noble client.

One of the strange contrarieties of the human character was evidently discernible in the demeanor of the crafty lawyer in the presence of Lord Fitzherbert. He was perfectly aware of the iniquity and falsehood of the business he was engaged to carry out, and as fully aware that his client was as deeply implicated in the conspiracy to defraud as himself, yet though he would have treated a poor but honest client, with hauteur and contempt, he exhibited in Lord Fitzherbert's presence a submissiveness of demeanor, quite contrary to his usual vulgar arrogance, even with those who were his equals in the social scale; while on the part of his lordship he was met with coolness, almost amounting to scorn, for though Lord Fitzherbert knew, himself, how matters stood between them, he had managed to clear his own conscience to his satisfaction of all participation in the fraud, and really had brought himself to

believe that Gripes—the tool—was the principal, indeed, the only delinquent, and to look upon him with dislike approaching to disgust. Lord Fitzherbert would have been civil to the humblest person who approached him, although brought up in the hot bed of aristocracy, partly from a habit of condescension and partly from a natural indolence of disposition which really made it too much trouble to him even to assume an appearance of hauteur; but when Gripes was in his presence, he plucked up spirit and showed the haughty aristocrat, and Gripes—the mean spirited cur—submitted to be thus treated with contempt, and only became more subservient in his demeanor the more grossly he was insulted, as the spaniel fawns more submissively the more he is beaten by his master.

"What is it to me," replied Fitzherbert, to some remark of the obsequious lawyer; "if the young folks are in England, it is your business to devise some scheme to get them away again. It is for that and such like purposes you and such as you are employed. I knew, when you sought an interview that it would be useless, so far as related to any further arrangements regarding this cursed business that Lord Shropshire has got me into, and I wish he had been at the door before I had consented to his schemes, although, to tell the truth," he continued *sotto voce*, "I want the money bad enough, God knows; and I suppose that conceited piece of vixenish old-maidhood, Lady Mary, must be thrown into the bargain. A pretty wife she'll make, confound her. She's upwards of forty, if she's a day, and puts on as many airs and graces as a young girl. She would cheat the world, if she could, into the belief that she is young; faugh!" Then he continued, again addressing Gripes, who, while his lordship had been talking abstractedly to himself, had been diligently occupied in examining the engravings on the walls, as though totally unconcerned, while in reality his ears had been wide open, and he had heard every word.

"By-the-bye, Gripes, I may as well say at once that I



am utterly incompetent to make any arrangements or to advise at all as regards this matter. Lord Shropshire will see you at Grosvenor-square, to-morrow at ten o'clock, and then you can arrange with him. Mind, ten o'clock. His lordship is particular in regard to punctuality. Good morning;" and his lordship bowed the lawyer very unceremoniously out of the room.

"It will be, perhaps, as well for your lordship as for some other folks, if nothing happens to mar this pretty plot you have concocted together," said the discomfited Gripes, when he found himself again in the open street, and free from the constraint his mean soul suffered under, when in the presence of nobility. "There must come a day of heavy payment on my side, for this dog's duty I am doing, or a day of retribution on yours. Well, well—as that scoundrel, Cheatem, says—'Every dog will have his day,' and I'll have mine, some day; and if I don't apply the thumb-screw to some purpose, my name's not Gripes. I'll give some of these proud aristocrats the *gripes*," added he, punning upon his own name. He walked back to his office at Fennel Court, and sent his clerk to tell Cheatem that no business could be done that night and to desire him to call at an early hour on the morrow, and then he locked up the office and went home, in no pleasant humor with himself or with the world.

The next morning, punctually to time, he made his appearance at the door of Lord Shropshire's noble mansion in Grosvenor-square, and was ushered by the footman in waiting, into the presence of the earl, who was seated in his study busily employed in looking over newspapers from different parts of the country, as well as the morning papers of the city.

"Good morning, Gripes—take a chair," said the earl, "I find that you were, unfortunately, quite correct as regards the information you received from your partner, —What's his name—Clutchum—"

"Cheatem, may it please your lordship," interrupted the lawyer in a respectful manner.

"Ah!" continued the earl, "I knew it was something like that—Clutchum—Cheatem—its pretty much the same thing with him I presume; the one is a necessary *sequitur* of the other, eh!—but about this confounded paragraph, Gripes, I see it's copied into all the Liverpool papers of yesterday, accompanied with some very taunting and impertinent remarks. Furthermore I see that the *Mercury* positively testifies to its truth, and asserts that the party proceeded direct to London on the day after their arrival. Now, you, as well as I, Gripes, must be aware that this is a very serious matter, and may cause us a good deal of trouble. In the first place, then, it will be necessary for you to take measures to ferret them out, and discover where they are stopping, and in order to do this speedily and properly, spare no expense; that done, we must try to get the young fellow out of the way some where or other. How we shall manage about that I don't know; we must both tax our ingenuity, and perhaps between us we may be able to hatch up some practicable scheme. When I was a young man, these matters were easily enough managed, but now they are more difficult. I recollect a cousin of mine wanted once to get rid of a witness whose testimony would have lost him a valuable farm, besides involving his honor; but at that day the press-gang—an invaluable institution for the purposes of the aristocracy—which this present silly twaddle about the *freedom* of the *subject*—a misnomer, to say the least of it—has, conjointly with several other institutions for coercing the common people, and marking the difference between them and the higher classes, been done away with; for my part, I don't know where they are going to stop; but, as I was saying, this young man was one of those obstinate fellows who take it into their heads that they are bound to speak the truth at all hazards, no matter how, by so doing, they compromise the honor of a noble family, as if, forsooth! there was any comparison to be made between their reputation for honesty, and that of a lineage which can be traced



back to the Conquest. To do my cousin justice—for he was a benevolent man and an indulgent landlord—he offered to bribe the young fellow to a large amount, before he proceeded to harsh measures, for, you see, he had a mother and a young wife both dependent upon his industry, and a good son and husband he was, too; but it was all of no use; he stuck to the idea that he was bound in conscience to say what he believed to be the truth. What was the consequence? Why, the poor, silly fellow was quietly knocked down by the press-gang one night in Portsmouth, whither he had been sent by my cousin on some business arranged for the purpose, and carried on board the tender. The battle of Trafalgar was fought shortly afterwards, and I believe he was sent on board Nelson's frigate. At all events, his obstinacy caused his own and his wife's premature death, for the young woman died of a broken heart when she heard her husband had been seized by the press-gang, and his mother died a pauper in the parish work-house.

"If there was such a thing as a press-gang now-a-days, once having found this youth, we might easily get rid of him, and I could manage that he should not come back in a hurry. Then half of the difficulty having been removed, we could afterwards turn our attention to the girl. We must think what we can do in this matter; but as I have said, the first thing is to find out their whereabouts."

"I have an idea in my head suggested by the anecdote your lordship has been pleased to relate," replied Gripes, "which perhaps I may be enabled to carry into effect; but until I see my way more clearly I will not mention it to your lordship."

"By-the-bye," said Lord Shropshire, "that man Hartley, whom we sent to Philadelphia to discover whether these children of Herbert Fitzherbert were living or dead, was a clever fellow. I saw him the other day on matters connected with this business, and he was telling me that he found them out at Harrisburgh; and

having satisfied himself, as he thought, though there he was at fault, that there was no fear of them troubling us, he took a minute survey of their persons, and then having arranged matters to his satisfaction, came back to England. He recollected a young man and woman, brother and sister, who were strolling players, and engaged in some provincial theatre to perform the underlings parts, who very much resembled the Fitzherberts. He found them out; bargained with them for the job; got them thoroughly posted up as to the locality in the United States, where they were to say they had been bred and born, then introduced them as the veritable heirs, at the same time taking care to spread a report in the United States, in certain quarters, to the effect that his advertisement had been satisfactorily answered, in case of the real Simon Pure's turning up in future, in order that if any body really should take an interest in the case, they might have cold water thrown upon them at the outset. It was really a clever idea—quite a stroke of genius—and they say the young folks play their part admirably. I myself can see a strong family resemblance to Mrs. Fitzherbert in their features; but Gripes, we must keep them clear of any prying Yankees. Of course the poor creatures' education has been neglected, and, with all their late schooling on this subject, they sometimes betray profound and unpardonable ignorance as regards the geography of their pretended country. The other day they met, by chance, an American gentleman, who entered into conversation with the youth, and I was perfectly horrified to hear him allude in the course of the conversation, to the State of Georgia, which he said was, he believed, near the city of Maryland. As for the Yankee, he was struck with amazement, and I saw was about to ask him some more questions, when I adroitly changed the subject of conversation. I will not detain you longer this morning, Gripes. Send me word if you have any further intelligence, and I wish you good day."

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Gossip in an English village—What has become of the hero of the story?*

AGAIN the scene is shifted, and this time from the confined precincts of busy, smoky London, to a pretty country village, in one of the midland counties of England. It is the evening of a fine day in early summer, and the plowmen and shepherds, and others who have been employed in the fields during the day, have all returned from their labors, and have mostly, if we may judge from appearances, partaken of their evening meal; for at each cottage-door is seated an old peasant, or sometimes a couple, smoking their pipes and chatting over the events of the day.

How faarmer Daintree be a going to plant you big lot, drained off t'common, wi wheat next autumn, and what a rare crop o'hay 't'll give t'year. How dame Plunkett, whose husband was gored by faarmer Giddings' bull, has had two cows gien her by t'Reverend, God bless him; he bees a good friend to poor voalk. How Squoire Tapley be a goin to cut down the plantation t'back of his place, and build a row of hous'n on't for his tenantry, and various such like matters, of as grave import to them, good, simple souls, as the strife and turmoil of politics to the denizens of close, pent-up cities. The blacksmith's forge, too, is by degrees accumulating around it the groups of young men, who, in English villages invariably make that their place of meeting at night, and there they stand attired in their brown smock frocks and knee breeches, and stout hobnailed "highlows," indulging in innocent skylarking, or interchanging jokes with the village maidens, who, at this particular time of the evening, always

have some errand to run, or some neighbor to visit, the performance of which duty invariably leads them directly past this rendezvous of the village beaux.

And now the hour has grown later—the sun has set behind the hills which bound the landscape to the westward, and the village street is silent and deserted. Let us step into yonder cottage, where a group of villagers are assembled, and listen to what is being said. That is dame Harris' cottage, and she is famed for being the gossip of the village of Hemmingford, and upon exciting occasions her lowly abode is, comparatively speaking, as much the centre of attraction to the news-seeker, as is the corner of Nassau and Fulton-streets, New York.

Beneath the ample chimney, around the embers of a wood fire—for it is still early in the season, and the evenings grow chilly after nightfall, are seated some half-dozen of the patriarchs and grandames of the village, while mingled, here and there, are knots of the younger members of the small community, listening to the talk of the old folks, and sometimes engrossing the conversation almost wholly to themselves.

"Tell thee I see 'em lad, as I was coming back from Brampton t' afternoon, after selling the basket o' eggs, I bowt at Huntingdon, and skeery voalks t' be. Not muck loike t' gentlevoalks as I've been a used to. T' seemed loike t' look so proud and conceited, and when the voalks bowed and curtsied to em, they just bowed stiff and stately in return, and, when the squoire who was showing 'em round 'long wi' a Lunnen gentleman, spoke up and said, 'This be dame Harris o' Hemmingford, an old tenant o' mine,' 'stead o' saying, as real gentlevoalks would ha' said: 'Glad to see thee dame Harris,' and smiling pleasant loike, they looked as if they never seen poor voalk afore. Tell thee lad it's my opinion, they beant no real gentlevoalks after all."

"Who is't thout's talking about Dame?" said a young man who had just come in.

"Why, the new voalks as has come to take possession of Brampton Manor, least wise to look over the pro-

perty—for I hear the dispute beant settled yet, though it's been a powerful long time agoing on."

"Where do they come from?" asked another of the group."

"If thou means the new voalks of the Manor," said the young man who had asked the preceding question, "they come from 'Merica."

"Whereabouts be that?"

"Oh, a long ways ower t' sea. Jim Boulton, who went with t' squire's son, a fishin', three years ago, and who came back t'other day with lashins of money, telled me all about 'Merica, and a powerful nice story it was, too, I can tell thee."

"I tell thou, Sam Watson, and I've tellt thou afore, nayther on 'em went a fishin'," said an old man, who was smoking his pipe in the corner of the chimney. "What t' dickens should squire's son go a fishin' three years for? and dress himself up all in gold lace and foine clothes, and take Jim Boulton to 'tend on him loike, if so be as he was goin' a fishin'? Thou thinks everybody as goes on t' water goes a fishin'. Squire's son went out a midshipman on board a big man-o'-war. Squire's butler tellt me so himself."

"Never mind whether he went fishin' or no," cried a chorus of voices. "What did Jim Boulton tell thou 'bout 'Merica, Sam?"

"'Twould take time, lads, to tell thee all he said. He told me a powerful heap o' big things, half of which I can't recollect."

"Tell us what thou can recollect," said they.

"Well, lads," said Sam Watson, proud to be the spokesman of the party, as he seated himself on the table so as to be in the centre of his audience; "Jim Boulton said 'twas a powerful great country, thousands of miles across the salt water."

"Be they black voalks there?" said an eager listener, interrupting the speaker.

"Doant thou be interrupting me—else I won't tell the story," said Sam. "No, they beant black, though there

be lots of black voalks and Injins amongst 'em; they be white loike we, only a little tanned, loike leather—'cause the sun's powerful hot there; and lads there beant no poor voalks—for everybody has heaps and lashins o' money, and does jist as they loikes, and no one dares speak to 'em. They makes a king, Jim says, every four years, from among the people, loike ourselves, and judges, and princesses, and coonstables, and all that."

"Then there must be fine goings on," said an old man, "if there beant no gentry voalk, and no one to keep order, and they make kings and judges when they loikes."

"No, Jim says, as they live all peaceable loike, barrin a scrimmage at 'lection times, same as 'mong ourselves, only there, everybody votes."

"And beant there no polis to keep order?" asked another of the listeners.

"Yes, there be polis; but they don't need be,—'cause everything be in perfect order, and everybody having plenty of money, there beant no crime. Jim was in New York, a mighty big city, e'en a-most like Lunnun, he tellt me, and to see the way the money were flying about, was a caution. They doan't care 'bout goold and silver, bless ye. A lot o' gentlemen writes their names on bits of pictur paper, and every body takes the paper for money; and so when money gets short, why these gentlemen makes more."

"And does the king of 'Merica live in New York?" asked another.

"No, Jim says the king lives a powerful long way off south; and now I think on't, 't'want the king, Jim called him—but seme outlandish name I never hearn on afore, and can't think on; but summut that means all the same. There beant no king in New York, but lots o' judges and aldermen, and such like voalks. The aldermen be the magistrates of the city, and a mighty righteous set of voalks they be, too. Jim said sometimes voalks what wanted a job done, handy like, offered what he calls bribes—that be heaps o' money, lads—so as to get a chance to do it neat; but 'taint o' no use—they alder-

men be incorruptable; they be chosen from the people, by the people, and that makes 'em honest and true, lads."

"Dash my wig if I shouldn't like to go a fishin' to 'Merica myself, if 'twant for t'old woman and t' childer," said an enthusiastic young man among the audience.

"I tell thou 'taint a fishin' they goes't 'Merica," said the old man before spoken of.

"Well, never thou mind whether it be fishin' or not, feyther. They goes over t'water, any way, and 'Merica must be a mighty fine country for poor voalks to live in."

As it was getting late, the party broke up, and went to their respective dwellings, one of the old men as he left, saying to the old lady who kept the house—

"If thou hears any more 'bout t' new gentlevoalks down t' manor, Dame Harris, thou'll let us hear the news to-morrow."

To explain the above rustic conversation, I should mention that Gripes had, at the request of Lord Shropshire, taken the two young people who were the tools of the defrauding parties, down to the property, under pretence of looking over it, and to make their persons known to the villagers, as well as to give color to their scheme in the eyes of the world.

Meanwhile, Mr. Hughes and I, though we had taken no open measures until we were perfectly satisfied upon what ground we stood, had not been idle. We had searched the records and discovered signs of fraud and forgery, which we had taken due note of, and at length we determined to proceed to work boldly, and to enter our protest at "Doctors Commons," against the parties in the possession of the Huntingdonshire property. I called, accordingly, upon my young friends and desired them to be in readiness on the appointed day, when they promised to be; and that day week, having myself in the meantime visited, with Mr. Hughes, the property in question, I called at the Fitzherberts' lodgings for the purpose of taking them with me to the "Doctors Com-

mons," to take the necessary oaths; but, I found only Miss Fitzherbert at home, and to my great surprise and dismay I learnt from the poor girl, who was dreadfully agitated, that her brother had not been home since the previous morning, when he had gone out with the object of witnessing a review in Hyde Park.

Here was another stumbling block thrown in our way. I was of opinion that he had met with some accident; and I went immediately to the office of Mr. Hughes, and told him what had happened.

He shook his head and said: "I fear it is an accident which has been intentionally caused. My dear, sir, you can have no conception of the villainy of the two men who are engaged on the other side. Sorry indeed am I that men of such character can gain admittance to our profession; and to-day I have learnt that they have heard that you and our two young clients have arrived in this country. Take my advice, sir: remove the young lady to my residence at once, where she will be properly taken care of; and we must immediately set to work, but cautiously and quietly, to endeavor to discover her brother. I only hope that his absence may prove to be caused by an accident over which others had no control."

## CHAPTER IX.

*A Dissertation upon Novel Writing and History—Some New and not Uninteresting Characters Introduced to the Notice of the Reader.*

BEFORE I commence this chapter I have a word to say to my readers. It has been asked whether this narrative be true in its details. Certain persons ask how it is possible that one man can be here, there, and everywhere at once; can listen to the conversation in private parlors; can know what is going on at the same mo-

ment here and thousands of miles hence; what occurred fifty years ago and that which is daily occurring at the present time. To these I reply: Is history true? Has anything ever been written in a narrative or colloquial form in which every word and action was strictly weighed, and not a jot or tittle set down which did not occur *verbatim et seriatim*? Such a thing is impossible. Writers as well as historians can only recount faithfully the events which actually passed under their observation, and in giving a narrative of the past they are often necessarily compelled to imagine possible events in order to arrive at positive conclusions. To effect this, all writers have, in a great measure, to draw upon their imaginations; the particular thread of their fancy being guided by the well known habits of the characters they attempt to delineate, and the events that were actually brought about. The historian who writes the life of Julius Cæsar or Napoleon Bonaparte, was not present at the scenes he depicts; he could not know what transpired in the domestic privacy of the two heroes of ancient and modern times; but he reads the various narratives; he compares one with another, and every report with the peculiar characteristics of his subject. He knows what did actually occur, and he endeavors to give an idea as perfectly as possible, of the events which led to their actual occurrence, and generally speaking, he is perhaps pretty correct. At all events, the historian's object is gained, for, by dint of patient and diligent investigation, he has given the most plausible narrative of the various trifling causes which put together, and acting one with the other, have led, according to history, to the "wreck of empires and the shock of worlds."

The novelist, in depicting truth beneath the garb of fiction, has a somewhat similar duty to perform, with this difference, viz., that he, if depicting a series of events of late occurrence, is often actually an eye-witness of a great many of the circumstances which he relates: he, probably, is acquainted with all, or at any rate, with

most of the characters, and he knows the idiosyncracies of the remainder. He has had ocular demonstration of the occurrence of the principal facts which he places before his readers, and, with this knowledge, he has no difficulty in surmising the minor causes which have led to their consummation. He is not endowed with ubiquity, nor with the power of transporting himself on some fairy wand, hither and thither in a moment, as may suit his purpose; nor, like the wandering Jew, is he personally conversant with events which happened so long ago as to render such a supposition impossible; but a careful observer of human nature can readily conceive, knowing the character and the position of those of whom he writes, and knowing, also, that the chief events of which he speaks did occur, what were likely to have been the motives which led the actors on to the consummation of their projects.

I therefore assure the reader that, although in some, not in all instances, the names are disguised, the characters are, or have been living actors on this world's busy scene.

The heirs Fitzherbert are true characters. "Gripes and Cheatem" are well-known characters in London. So is Mr. Hughes, the Earl of Shropshire, Lord Henry Fitzherbert, and the various *dramatis personæ*, I have introduced in the preceding chapters. In the opening of this narrative I stated that I was about to tell a tale of fraud and conspiracy, in the detection and partial prevention of which I was an agent; but I do not pretend to have listened to every conversation that I have mentioned as having taken place; and, more than that, I have informed the reader, in order to his better understanding of the story, of much that I was ignorant of myself until matters had reached a riper state, than they have, in the present stage of my story arrived at. Of course, I only pretend to speak of that which came under my own observation as having occurred word and deed: but the facts are truth, however, the causes may often unavoidably deviate into fiction.



Having thus given what I consider a perfectly satisfactory explanation and reply to carping critics, I think I may lay a claim for the conscientious novelist to a position as near the truth as that of any other writer. It is impossible for any man to assert honestly that all he states is strictly true. The limited period of human life, and the confined sphere of human action, forbid any such assertion. If, after this, any one should doubt, or be seized with a desire to criticise, I beg them to remember how, in telling an anecdote relating to facts which they have themselves witnessed, they often find it necessary, for the elucidation of their story, to suppose much that they have not seen; and, also, to recollect the Latin legal quotation, "*Super subjectum materiam*." (No man can be held professionally responsible for opinions which have been founded, *super subjectum materiam*, on the statement submitted to him by his clients, or others.)

To proceed with my story:—

It was on a glorious evening in autumn, when woodland scenery assumes its most gorgeous aspect, before the leaves fade away and wither beneath the cold blasts of winter, a few months after the period at which my acquaintance with the Fitzherberts commenced, that a young lady and gentleman, accompanied by an elder couple, were driving in an open carriage amidst some of the magnificent scenery to be found in the proximity of the Alleghany mountains in Virginia. The party were on their way home after a summer tour in their own carriage over the greater portion of the State. They resided at Christianbourg, and were approaching it from the northward, skirting as nearly as possible the foot of the mountain range, having chosen this route, bad as were the roads and scanty and wide apart the means of accommodation, from a desire to view a large extent of forest land which had come into the possession, some years before, of the father of the young lady alluded to, and which by will had been left as a legacy to her. The parties with her were an uncle and aunt her guardians

until she became of age, (she was now about seventeen,) and her cousin, the son of the elder couple.

"Rather a wild-looking demesne, this of yours, Juliet," said the old gentleman; "but withal, a beautiful and romantic spot. Nature has embellished it bountifully, and though now it may not be of much productive value, when art steps in and smooths off nature's handiwork, it will render you one of the richest heiresses in the United States. What splendid sites in the clearings amidst those noble monarchs of the forest, to build a stately mansion, and to construct park avenues on the grandest scale, where a young and happy couple might pass their days in a round of mutual love and connubial bliss, undisturbed, at any rate, for years to come, by the encroachment of busy cities, with their manufactories, steam and saw-mills, railroads, and all the other accessories which, wide as is this favored land of ours, are fast occupying every possible abiding place. George is a lucky fellow. If my wife was not sitting by my side, I should almost wish I were twenty years younger, that I might have a chance to supplant him in his 'fair lady's' favor. It would be no 'love in a cottage' here—but love in a palace, with all the accessories of wealth and magnificence, natural and artificial to boot, that the most romantic imagination could desire."

The young lady thus addressed, pouted a little as she listened to the latter portion of this speech, and seemed by no means to reciprocate the advances of the young man by whose side she was seated, and who, at the mention of his name by his father, had colored slightly and glanced towards her, his eyes expressive of an admiration which seemed to appeal to hers for a reply of the same significant character; but presently recovering herself, and blushing in a manner that considerably enhanced her beauty, as if she were ashamed of showing her petulant feelings—although, no doubt, the young man attributed the blush to another cause—she said:

"It is indeed a most romantic and beautiful spot, uncle, that at which we are now gazing, and, indeed, the



whole extent of the property is beautiful. It seems to develop every variety of scenery. Some time ago we drove past a waterfall. Did you notice how the spray glistened in the rays of the setting sun, like diamonds, showing such a lovely contrast to the many hued foliage of the forest trees, and here and there we have passed by level patches of great extent, which appear as if they had been intended by nature for future pasture grounds; and then the gloomy rocky summits of the Alleghanies, towering in the distant back ground, over all this varied luxuriance of landscape, altogether forms a picture such as is seldom witnessed. He who first selected and purchased this lovely oasis, in the comparatively desert, waste lands which hem it in, must have had an eye—yes, and a soul too, for the picturesque.”

“Yes,” replied the elderly gentleman, “and then to think how cheaply your father purchased it; it was, you know, property confiscated during the last war, and laid for some years uncared for, and I may say forgotten, until your father obtained it for a mere song, as the vulgar saying is.”

“That it is, which renders it impossible, some how or other, for me to consider the property really mine, uncle,” continued the young lady. “I know, too, that my father for many years scarcely considered himself its owner, except upon trust; and repeatedly I have heard him say that if he knew the original claimant from whom it was confiscated, he should insist upon his taking a much more liberal price for the title deeds. It was only after my mother's death, and when he found that there was little likelihood of the original purchaser ever being found, that he consented to insert it in his will as a legacy to me; and so, uncle,” she added laughingly, “I only consider myself to be the heiress of this lovely property upon trust. Besides, I am rich enough without it, any way.”

“Pooh, pooh!” said the old gentleman, “Edward had ridiculous notions of his own. I hope you have not inherited his strange ideas with his property. Recollect that although you have a fortune of your own besides

this estate, what a splendid addition this will make to it. You and George will be the wealthiest couple in the States, some twenty or thirty years hence.” Again the pout was visible upon the pretty lips of the young lady, and as rapidly again did she endeavor to hide it, and to dissemble her feelings, as regarded the evident understanding between her uncle and cousin. She, however, replied:

“Indeed, uncle, I think I do possess all my father's conscientiousness, as regards the possession of this property. Mine legally it may be—but in holding it, I am perhaps aiding to involve others in poverty—perhaps in ruin. May be it was all the poor man, from whom it was confiscated, possessed.”

“Your ideas, Juliet, are far too sentimental for me to understand,” replied the old gentleman. “You are going to Europe, with your aunt, shortly. You had better make a search while in England, which country, of course, you will visit first; and, perhaps you may discover the original possessor you allude to, and magnanimously make the property over to him—though the heirs of the *original claimant*, in my humble opinion, are more likely to be found amongst some of the descendants of Powhattan, the once Indian chief of this territory, who are said still to be residing in the State.”

It was growing late, and the party drove to the plantation near the village where they were stopping, and the subject of conversation was dropped.

Juliet Hawthorne was the daughter of English parents, who had emigrated to America before she was born.—Her father had been possessed of considerable property when he landed in America, with which he had at first embarked in business and been very successful; subsequently he had speculated in land, and in this new profession, fortune had likewise befriended him—so that at the period of his death, about a twelve month before, when his daughter Juliet was in her sixteenth year, he was the possessor of a considerable fortune, the whole of which had been left to her; for she was an only child,

born several years after the marriage of her father and mother. Her mother had been dead about three years, and she was left by her father's will under the guardianship of Mr. Lyman, her uncle, a gentleman who had married her father's sister, who had accompanied the young lady's parents from England. It was this lady, under whose care Juliet was about to visit Europe, which she was anxious to see—especially England, the birth-place of her father and mother. As the reader will have perceived, it was the old gentleman's wish that his son should marry his ward—not from any selfish motive; but because he had taken it into his head that, as they were cousins, and had been brought up from childhood together, it was perfectly natural they should love, and eventually marry each other.

Juliet might and probably did love her cousin George well enough as a cousin; but, she had begun to conceive a dislike to him now that her uncle seemed desirous to force him upon her as a husband—though the old man was so kind to her, that she could not find it in her heart to tell him the real state of her feelings towards his son. As to George Lyman himself, he had certainly received sufficient rebuffs, though delicately administered, to assure him that his attentions were distasteful to his fair cousin; but he was one of those people who cannot be persuaded to take a hint. He thought, as his father did, that as he and Juliet had been brought up in each other's society, she must love him as much as he did her, and it would have been a difficult matter to have persuaded him otherwise.

Mrs. Lyman, with woman's quick perception, had guessed how matters stood between the young folks, and though she felt for her son, she knew that he was not of a temperament to take a disappointment of this kind much to heart. It was partly for the purpose of separating the young people for a time, and partly on account of the desire she had to re-visit her native land, that had induced her to persuade her husband to hasten the period of a visit to Europe that had long been talked of. He

could not go with her, as he had lately purchased a new plantation, the contemplated improvements on which required his own and his son's close superintendence—so they had procured the escort of a friend to New York, whence they were to take shipping; and they were to be met at Liverpool by some relatives of Mrs. Lyman, who resided at Canterbury, and with whom they were to spend some time.

Juliet was a tall, handsome girl, uniting in her features the bloom and freshness of an English girl with the grace and delicate beauty of a daughter of the "Old Dominion." She was naturally kind and generous, but impulsive; and from having had her own way from the first day she commenced to lisp forth her childish fancies, she had a will of her own, which she somewhat pertinaciously adhered to. Fortunately it was generally exercised in the cause of right and justice, and therefore, while she was beloved by her familiar friends, she was perfectly idolized by the dependants and slaves on her father's and uncle's estates, with whom she had been a favorite from an infant, and who would have done anything in their power to give pleasure to their young mistress.

George Lyman, by many believed to be her accepted lover, was quite opposite to her in disposition. He was calm, cool and calculating, *never* put out of the way, whatever happened, yet withal, a good-hearted, manly, and good-looking youth, for all he could not get into the good graces of his fair cousin. And this was from no prior attachment on the part of Miss Hawthorne; for at this period, although like most young ladies she had, no doubt, both thought of love and dreamed of marriage, her affections had not been fixed upon any one, as a lover, and she was, in that respect, still left

"To maiden meditation, fancy free."

Having thus introduced these new characters to my readers, I shall leave them at this point until, as the farther progress of this drama of real life is developed, they are again brought forward upon the stage.

## CHAPTER X.

*Several Persons of Consideration are Introduced in a Visit to the "Cat and Bagpipes"—A Yankee Lawyer finds himself in rather a Ludicrous Situation, and is so found by his Friend—Some suspicion is aroused as to the fate of the Hero.*

LET me now return to the subject of young Fitzherbert's disappearance.

Agreeably to the advice of Mr. Hughes, I immediately caused Georgiana to remove to his residence, where, under the watchful guardianship of Mr. Hughes, she, at all events, was safe from molestation, and there I left her, in sad apprehension respecting her brother's fate, with the somewhat poor consolation, yet all I was enabled to bestow, that Mr. Hughes and I would do everything in our power to discover what had befallen him.

I then got into a stage at the end of the Common, and in the course of an hour was set down near Mr. Hughes' office in Lincoln's-inn.

"What steps do you think it best for us to pursue?" said I, after we had discussed the subject of the young man's sudden disappearance, at some length.

"I scarcely know; you see, it appears very evident to me, from various occurrences, that the parties engaged in this business, (this fraudulent business, I should perhaps call it; but as yet we have no legitimate proof that it is so, and to make use of that expression, would subject me to libel), but, as I was saying, it is evident to me that they know you and the Fitzherberts are in this country, I believe I mentioned that to you before, so that further attempt at secrecy on our part,

would be useless; therefore, I should say, the best thing that could be done, would be to advertise in the *Times*, describing the youth, and offering a reward for any information that can be obtained respecting him, and in the course of the day, I will call and see the city editor, of that paper, with whom I am acquainted, and I will state the facts of the singular disappearance of the young man to him, and perhaps he will insert a short editorial paragraph. You know the *Times* office, in Printing House Square. You recollect I pointed it out to you the other day? Well, I have got this brief to attend to this morning; suppose you drop in *en passant*, and leave the advertisement, and I will attend to the rest."

I accordingly caused an advertisement to be inserted, of the nature Mr. Hughes had suggested, desiring all communications to be addressed to me, at my hotel, as it was thought advisable not to let it be known as yet, that a gentleman of Mr. Hughes' celebrity in the profession, was engaged in the matter, lest it might put the adverse parties more strictly on their guard.

Two days afterwards, I received a dirty, square-folded note, which ran as follows:—

"SIR,—I see an advertisement in the *Times*, axin for hinformation of a young man as is supposed to have met with some haxident, or to have fell into bad hands, from the description of the young man i think as how he was at my house with some rum lookin coves on vensday night. If so be as twas he, they was all tipsy. if you will call at my house at the sign of the Cat and Bagpipes, near Greenwich hospitle, you shall here all i have to tell on the subject. from your humble servant,

THOMAS MACE,  
landlord of the Cat and Bagpipes,  
where the best XX, "old Tom," and Mieux and cos  
porter, besides other likers, can be procured to perfection."

This elegant epistle, sealed with a sprawling red wafer,

upon which the impression of a big, dirty thumb was clearly visible, at once determined me to call at the place known by the euphonious and sensible name of the "Cat and Bagpipes," and hastily swallowing my breakfast, I made the best of my way thither. I found it to be a public house of considerable dimensions, and apparently doing a thriving business, although the frequenters seemed to be men of the lowest class. I do not mean hard working mechanics, sailors and laborers, but well, although gaudily dressed fellows, whose dogged, brutal countenances were at once a sufficient index of their minds.

Unfortunately for me, it was Fair day at Greenwich, and the house was more than usually crowded with visitors, so that it was a long time before I could get an opportunity to speak with the landlord, who was a fat, paunchy fellow, with a broad, fresh colored, good humored face, and who, notwithstanding his immense girth displayed no inconsiderable agility in moving to and fro as he attended to the wants of, or cracked a rude joke with his customers.

At length the festivities of the day drew all away but two, who were still chatting together over a pot of beer, about some pugilistic combat that either had occurred or was shortly to come off. They, at last, rose and sauntered out of the bar room, and then I stepped up to the landlord and told him that I was the person who was in search of the missing young gentleman, respecting whom he had addressed a note to me.

"Glad to see you, sir—glad to see you," was his reply, as he stretched out his large, brawny fist, and almost wrenched my hand off, as a token of welcome. "Step inside to the inner bar, sir, and we will talk the matter over; here, *you Sally!*" calling to a girl in the kitchen; "come and attend to the bar, lass, while I and this gentleman has a confab together. By-the-bye," added he, suddenly, as if impressed with a notion that he had forgotten to give me some information he ought to have

done before, "do you know who them two gentlemen are who have just gone out?"

"No," I replied.

"D—n it, I ought to have told you and introduced yer, d'ye see? 'taint everyday day you get such a chance; them two gentlemen," continued he, stretching his bullet shaped head towards me, and speaking as if in a confidential whisper, "*was no less persons than Tom Crib and Jack Langan!*" and he nodded his head sagely, as much as to say, "What do you think of that, now?"

"I have not the pleasure," said I, "to know Messrs. Crib and Langan, though I have no doubt they are very worthy people."

"Worthy people! I believe yer, slap up, and no mistake. There ain't no gammon about them. Of course *you* know that; you've hearn on 'em?"

"Not that I recollect," said I. "I am afraid I must acknowledge my ignorance."

"Not know nor never hearn on Tom Crib and Jack Langan, the fighting men!" screamed rather than spoke the worthy landlord of the Cat and Bagpipes. "Why, you must be a regular hignoramus; where the d—l was yer fetched up?"

Unwilling to give offence to a man from whom I hoped to yet glean some information respecting my missing client, I replied—

"My good sir, you are not aware that I am an American, and therefore am unacquainted possibly with *certain* of the distinguished men of your country."

"An American, eh?" said mine host, scrutinizing me more closely; "and aren't they heern of Tom Crib and Jack Langan in America? Guess they have, old fellow."

"May be they have," replied I; "but my professional avocations have always kept me so constantly employed that I may be ignorant of much that is well known in my own country, regarding the great men of your country in that line of business."

"And so, now, you've come over to Hingland to get a little 'lightenment on that 'ere subject. Well, old fellow, I honors yer for your pluck. Englishmen allers likes pluck; and I can tell yer, the Cat and Bagpipes is the best place yer could have picked out to get 'lightenment, 'mong a thousand. My house is the reg'lar house o' call, on the Greenwich road, for them 'ere coves, and Tom Mace is just the boy can put you up to a thing or two."

"But, my good sir, you forget; my business here to-day was to learn more respecting the information you professed to be able to give, of a young gentleman who came to England with me."

"Oh, I see now; you brought the young un over from America, and then expected to keep him close in London, eh? But he was too wide awake, so he guv his gov'ner the slip. That's the dodge, is it?"

"No," said I, getting out of patience. "I came over on business nearly concerning this young man, and I am afraid that he has fallen into bad hands. I am willing to pay liberally for any information you can give that may be of service in discovering his whereabouts. If you have none to give, tell me so at once, and I will wish you good morning."

"You needn't be so gumptious, guv'ner," replied the landlord. "Fell into bad hands, eh! Well, the young un *were* mortal drunk, if that was he as was here; that's a fact, and no mistake. He's been a betting and a spending money like winkin', I s'pose, eh?"

"If you know anything of the young man, pray let me know at once, without further circumlocution?"

The landlord was about to reply, when two customers who heard his voice began to bawl lustily for him to make his appearance, and he hurried to the bar to greet them.

"Hilloa, Snipes! old feller, when did you come down from Newmarket?" said he, addressing a little dapper man, who stood on the outer side of the bar, smoking a cigar, and drinking a mixture of gin and beer. "Come

down with Sam, eh? on the coach. How do, Sam? How goes it, old cock? All right, eh?"

The person addressed as Sam, was a stout, portly man, attired in a rough white overcoat, with a vast number of capes, and having apparently a like imposing display of mufflers tied round his throat, completely enveloping his ample chin.

"So, so, Tom; so, so;" said the man addressed as Sam. "How do times go with you? pretty brisk, eh? You see Snipes and I thought we'd like to see some of the frolickin' a goin' on at the fair to-day, so I fetched him down on the 'Highflyer,' and we thought as we'd come and see an old chum, jist for old acquaintance sake. Have a drop of brandy, Tom?"

"Yes, a drop of brandy all round," chimed in the little, dapper man, emptying his tumbler at a draught. "Won't that genelman," pointing to me, "jine us, eh?"

"No, I thank you," I replied. "I never taste liquor of any kind so early in the day."

"Well, no offence, master, I hope. Here's luck all the same;" nodding to me, as he filled a wine glass with brandy, and drank it off.

After some further conversation, the visitors withdrew, and then I hoped that the required information would be forthcoming at last. But the landlord was so delighted at the opportunity of introducing to me two more British worthies, that I saw it was useless to put in a word respecting my business until he had done speaking of his own.

"I told yer, yer was in luck for an American as wanted to see life in Hingland, to come to my crib; ne'er a better spot 'twixt this and Charin' Cross to see life. That ere big man as you see'd just now is Sam Billings, as drives the Highflyer 'twixt London and Newmarket; the best vip on the road, since the railroads are sending' all the long stages to smash. But, Lor' bless you! the Newmarket boys, the big uns that is, they still keep up the Highflyer. Cause vy? Sam's sich a tarnation good vip. He drives more lords to and fro on race-days



than ever you see'd in America. They all goes by Sam's stage, and it's a sight to see 'em a shakin' hands along on him; and 'Von't you take a drop o' summut, Sam?' says von; and 'Von't you take a drop o' summut, Sam?' says another. Sam's real fly with the nobs, I can tell yer. And t'other little chap is Jack Snipes, the best jockey as rides at Newmarket. He's von the Lord knows how many silver cups. It's a sight to see Jack Snipes a cuttin' round the course on trainin' days. Lots o' ladies goes to look at him; and then, my eye! o' race days!! Sich a flockin in of folks—sich a cheerin' and a wavin' o' handkerchers, *you* never see'd in your born days."

Here the landlord got quite excited with his recollections, and commenced a series of ludicrous antics, which brought his heavy carcass and his thick boots into dangerous proximity to me.

"Here," said he, "here comes Snipes round the course"—suiting his action to his words, by imitating the motion of a man on horseback, bending his knees, and jerking himself up and down as if performing a series of short canters, letting his body rise and fall, his shoulders keeping a corresponding motion, while he played with his hands as though he were holding in the horse's head. "Here he comes—boys a shoutin'—gals a screamin'—ladies a wavin' o' their handkerchers—men a bettin', and cussin' and swearin'—dust a flyin' out o' the dry turf. My eye! such a rumpus. On comes Snipes.—Ti-tippit—ti-tippet—ti-tippit. Hurraa, hurraa, hurraa! Snipes for ever.—Snipes has von the plate—hoora-a-a!"

By this time he had worked up his enthusiasm almost to a pitch of phrenzy, actually leaping from the floor, and by catching hold of my hands compelling me to keep time with his motions to avoid being crushed by his weight, as every now and then he came down with a "plump" that was sufficient, had he stamped on my toes, to have lamed me for life, for he was three times my weight. The little room in which we stood was very narrow,

and the only method of exit was through a doorway leading to the outer bar, before which the landlord had planted his burly person, so that I had enough to do to keep clear of him. I called to him to forbear, but it was useless, for my feeble voice was drowned by the shouts from his stentorian lungs; and these shouts were raised to a loftier pitch at every fresh exclamation, until at last he fairly screamed, while his fat cheeks and sides shook like jelly bags with the unwonted exercise.

Suddenly he changed his action, saying as he did so, "and then to see Sam, ven the nobs goes home in the evening—coach all spruce and clean—brass and steel polished like gold and silver—four bays, black hoofs, half-bloods, jist fresh from the stable—skins soft and smooth as velvet—ears pricked up—full o' mettle—bunches o' ribands fastened to their heads—harness as bright and shinin' as a new pin! Up get the nobs—up mounts Sam arter 'em, and takes his seat upon the box—'All right?' says they. 'All right,' says he, 'let go the 'osses heads, Jim.'—Crack! goes his vip. Whe-e-e-w!! and off she goes!!!" he stopped speaking and capering, apparently because his breath would hold out no longer, and at the same moment his right arm, which was raised to represent the action of Sam with the "vip," came into contact with my shoulder, causing me to reel heavily against a stand upon which were a number of tumblers and wine glasses, which all came with a thundering crash to the floor, smashed to atoms. I recovered my balance and began rubbing my shoulder, while the landlord, aroused from the seat on which he had fallen exhausted, by the crash of the broken glass, began to make profuse apologies.

I cast my eyes around in hopes to gain the door and get clear of the confusion, when who should I see but Mr. Hughes, to whom I had sent a note before leaving my hotel, stating the errand upon which I was bound. He had left home immediately to meet me at Greenwich at the urgent request of Georgiana, to whom he had read the contents of the note, and had just arrived at the



door of the public house in time to witness the strange, and to him, unaccountable antics going on inside, and the hapless denouement. There he stood like a statue, attired, as usual, in his prim, old-school style of dress, black coat, knee breeches with gold buckles, and black silk stockings, and looking on in amazement, seemingly without the power of utterance. At length he said:—

"Good heavens! Mr. —! what in the name of wonder have you been doing? Here have I been looking at you bobbing to and fro and up and down, in company with the landlord of the house, I presume; both of you talking at your highest pitch of voice. I was transfixed with amazement, sir, until the crash of the broken glass restored me to my senses. However, I hope you have not cut yourself, sir."

I had not done so, and with some little difficulty, owing to the interlarding of the profuse apologies of the landlord, I explained the cause of my strange situation, and joined with Mr. Hughes in the laugh at my own expense.

"Nothing have I been able to learn, as yet," said I.

However, the landlord, whose late exertion seemed to have restored him to the recollection of what was required of him, proceeded to state that, on the Wednesday night previous, a party of sailors, accompanied by some persons whose manners showed that they did not follow the sea, had called at his house; they had a young man with them whose appearance tallied with the description I had given of Adolphus in the advertisement, who was either very drunk or else (as he rather thought was the real state of the case) drugged with some sleepy compound. That this idea had led him to take particular notice of the young man, and, on seeing the advertisement, he recognized the description immediately, and sent me the note. The party, he said, had proceeded, after making a short stay at his house, to Woolwich, in an open boat which was waiting for them, and, while in the house, they had called for liquors and paid liberally, as though they had plenty of money to spend. When

they left, they had to carry the young man to the boat; for, while in the house, he had drank more liquor at the request of one of the gentlemen, and had become completely stupified, in fact insensible. All the landlord knew further was, that the sailors had spoken of some man-of-war they were going on board of, and he saw, in the papers, that three frigates had sailed from Woolwich for the Mediterranean station on the following morning.

This was all the information we could glean, so, after presenting the landlord with a sovereign, we left the house. We ascertained that he was correct as regarded the sailing of the squadron for the Mediterranean, and we suspected that young Fitzherbert had by some means, still unaccountable to us, been inveigled away.

All that was left for us to do was to write immediately to the admiral on the station, stating the facts, and intimating our suspicions that a young gentleman had been decoyed on board one of the vessels, and begging his discharge. This Mr. Hughes did, having previously obtained a permit of discharge from the Admiralty office, which he inclosed in his letter to the admiral. This done, we had to wait with patience. It might be, perhaps, months before the letter would reach its destination, for we knew neither where the admiral was at that time, nor did we know to what part of the Mediterranean the ships were destined. All we ascertained was that their names were the Redoubtable, the Thunderer, and the Vixen; but then Fitzherbert, if indeed he were on board either of them, might have been transferred to some other of the vessels on the station before the letter reached the admiral.

Thus matters rested for the present, and all we could do to console poor Georgiana, was to buoy her up with the belief that her brother had been decoyed on board one of the men-of-war, and that measures had been taken to procure his certain discharge, as soon as the information could reach the commander of the Mediterranean squadron.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Alton Castle—An Introduction to the Heiress of Alton—A Noble Maiden's Soliloquy.*

SOME months have passed away and we have heard nothing of Adolphus. The early summer has burst into full bloom, and its freshness has begun to fade. The autumn has commenced, the "London Season" is over, and the gay coronetted equipages which lately rolled through the streets of the "West End," with their liveried coachmen and powdered lacqueys, bedecked in all the colors of the rainbow, are now rarely to be met with; the fashionables of London have deserted Westminster for their country mansions, and to be in "town" now, is to risk the chance of being struck off the roll of fashion. It is the shooting season and the country is alive with the aristocracy, who have now doffed the fashionable garb in which they were wont to parade Regent-street, and Piccadilly, or to lounge in the parks, and have donned the more sober, but infinitely more comfortable sportsman's attire. Young men and old men—men of all ages—may now be met in the fields and woods, and game preserves, dressed in shooting jackets with manifold pockets, and breeches and brown leathern gaiters buttoned to the knee, gun in hand, and perhaps with several brace of game peeping from the aforesaid pockets. It is the gala time of setters and other sporting dogs, which race to and fro and thrust themselves obtrusively into all sorts of places, as if they were perfectly conscious of their importance during the shooting season. From break of day until sunset, the woods echo and re-echo with the report of fowling pieces, each sharp report being the death-knell

of some hapless pheasant, or scattering death and destruction and wofully thinning some unfortunate covey of partridges; and the woods and groves, although they no longer rejoice in the brilliant green foliage of summer, are still not less beautiful; the mellow, many-colored tints of their foliage, promiscuously mingled, render their appearance even more picturesque; for, as yet the leaves have not begun to fall, and the air though fresh and bracing at morn and eve, is still balmy and odorous with the perfume of autumn flowers. It is not yet winter; though occasionally, just after nightfall, the melancholy, mournful "sough" borne on the breeze, impresses those who chance to be abroad with the idea that even now nature is sighing over the decay which awaits her handiworks ere many more weeks have passed by. The sunsets at this season of the year possess features of extraordinary beauty. Scarcely do the woods and copses, when the bright rays of the sun are resting upon the foliage during the morning or noon of day, produce a more brilliant display of varied tints than do the clouds of the western sky, ere the bright luminary has yet descended beneath the horizon, and at these times all nature assumes an aspect of delicious repose.

It is the close of one of these autumnal days; groups of sportsmen are returning home, after a day spent in healthful but fatiguing exercise, to the numerous mansions of the noblemen and gentry of the country which can be discerned peeping out from amidst the forest of rich well trained shrubbery amidst which, at a distance, they seem to be imbedded. Situated upon an eminence is one of prouder pretensions than the rest; the stranger points to it and asks who owns that massive pile of castellated building? He is told that it "is Alton Castle, the baronial residence of the Earl of Shropshire." A flag waves over the loftiest turret, emblazoned with the shield and crest of the noble owner of the castle, a signal that he and his family are now residing there. Let us approach nearer; Alton Castle is worthy of a closer in-

spection. It is one of the very few baronial residences of England in which the pomp and ceremony of feudal times is still maintained on great occasions. It is but a fancy on the part of the earl; for the chivalry of those days has forever departed, and with it has fled the former power of the barons of England. We see that around the castle is a rampart from which can be obtained a glorious view of the surrounding country. This rampart is encircled by a moat, crossed by a drawbridge. The bridge is down now and the moat is dry, its bottom filled with earth and planted with flowers; but two or three centuries ago—for it is an ancient and venerable pile—and even in later days, that wide moat was filled with water, and when the drawbridge was raised, was impassable; while from the rampart, upon which cannon can still be seen, deadly destruction could be dealt by the knights and wardens, and seneschals within, upon the foe who should dare to attempt an entrance into that stately fortress. In the rear, a chapel can be seen surrounded with a golden cross, for the Earl of Shropshire is one of the few among England's proudest nobles who maintain the Catholic faith, and who still retain a confessor within the walls of their castles. I have said the ceremonies of feudal times are still maintained; this is when the earl has visitors, or when he entertains a large party at his castle; then, on their approach, the drawbridge is raised: a herald from without summons, by sounding the horn which hangs suspended from the outer gate, the warden of the castle who announces the arrival of distinguished guests to claim his lord's hospitality. The warden appears at the summons, (both he and the herald being dressed in complete armor,) and after hearing the message, he informs his lord, who forthwith comes to meet his guests; the drawbridge is lowered at his order, and the cavalcade passes over, and is welcomed to the castle. It is an idle parade, but it is worth seeing once, if only to give an idea of the habits and manners of olden times.

Around the castle for miles, extend the parks and

woods, and preserves attached to it, for Alton Castle is one of the finest specimens of the magnificence of the country seats of the wealthy English nobles.

Let us peep inside and see what is there going forward. Near a window, in a spacious apartment, superbly furnished, the walls covered with fresco paintings, and with mirrors, but which looks sombre and gloomy from the massive, antique appearance of the furniture, and the glossy darkness of the wood-work, which has become almost black with age, is seated a lady, gazing intently towards the golden sunset, for the window looks to the westward. In the dim light, she yet might pass for a young woman, although in reality she has attained the full meridian of middle age, for her form is yet slender and elegant, her features eminently handsome, her complexion fair, and her brow without a wrinkle.

When she smiles, she might, perhaps, still look young, even in the blaze of day, or the glare of gas-light; but there is a melancholy, seemingly imprinted upon her features, which is painful to the observer to witness, for it tells plainly that heartfelt anxiety must have been at work for years—long weary years ere the sad expression could have become so indelibly engraved there. The lady is plainly attired, for even she finds relief in casting aside for a season, the glitter and gewgaw of fashion she has been compelled to endure in London.

She sits in deep thought until the gray shades of evening have covered the landscape, and now she rises from her seat, and ringing a bell, desires a footman who enters, to draw the curtains, and light the chandelier. In a few moments more, the lately dark room is brilliantly lighted up by the flame from a host of wax candles.

"Is the earl within, John?" enquires the lady.

"Yes, my lady, he is in his study where he retired after dinner, and desired me not to disturb him until ten o'clock."

"That will do, John. You can retire, and tell Annette, I wish to be alone to-night. If I want her, I will summon her myself." The footman withdrew. "And

so, one more London season is over; when oh, when, will this dreary round of existence have an end?" soliloquized the lady when she was again left alone in the apartment. "People say I am heartless—insensible to the finer feelings of nature—a mere creature of fashion, whose life has been devoted to her idolatrous worship. True, they know not that *I* have heard this. Oh, no. No one would dare tell the truth to the wealthy heiress of Alton. I am flattered to my face, I have been so from a child, and while my heart has ever yearned for a friend, I have found none: but, have I not heard this in secret whispers, when no one knew I was by? could years have passed and I not have seen that sentiment regarding me, impressed in the countenance of every one with whom I have come in contact, and most of all on the features of those who sought to hide it beneath their noisome flattery. Perhaps many people envy me; they know that I am possessed of wealth; they see me *still* flattered and admired, although my youth has long since fled, if, indeed, I ever knew what youth was. The peasant girl whom I lately watched from the window of this room, is happier than I, for she has some one to love her—some one whom she can love. Would to God, I could change places with her, only I should be unwilling that any human heart should be compelled to endure my splendid misery. 'I have never loved—my bosom is too cold to entertain the passion,' say they. Little do those who speak thus, know how fondly I once loved. So fondly—so deeply, that as I then loved, I never can love again. Herbert, I am told, died in foreign lands, and in poverty. If it be so, I will not—dare not carry my resentment into the sanctity of the grave; but how, once, I loved, and how since then, have I hated him! and yet, I scarce can call it hate, for I have worn, and still shall wear, his miniature in my bosom. When I heard that he was married—and married to one far inferior to me in wealth, and even in personal attractions; but, as people whispered, (and such whispers are always heard by those to whom they refer),

my superior in amiability of disposition, and those thousand attractions which render a husband happy, I laughed in derision, while my heart wept tears of bitter sorrow; for had I married Herbert, I should have devoted my life to render him happy.

"I would have cast the miniature from me when the news fell like a thunderbolt upon my ear, for it was *then* that my love was turned to hate; but even *then*, I could not do that. The miniature was a *gage d' amour*, given me in exchange for mine, when we were both children of fourteen or fifteen years on the occasion of Herbert's having first been brought, by my father, on a visit to Alton Castle, and before I had foolishly sought to play the coquette with *him*, or *his* love for me had begun to fade away. When I took the miniature in my hand, with the intention of dashing it to the ground, the laughing eyes of the boy seemed to meet mine, and to gaze at me, as if instinct with life. I could not make the sacrifice, and I excused my weakness by the sophistical argument, that the miniature was not that of Herbert—the lover who had spurned me: but of Herbert—the happy, laughing boy-lover of my own girlhood. And yet it was my own fault that Herbert forsook me. I had been so schooled to treat every one with caprice, that when we were a year or two older, and Herbert began to talk more earnestly of the affection he bore me, I listened and laughed in his face, and one day told him never to mention the subject again. That evening I shunned him, though I saw he sought again to speak to me, and, in his hearing, I purposely made some caustic remark, respecting him to a frivolous fop who stood near me. I cast a furtive glance at his features as I spoke, and saw his lips quiver and his cheek turn pale. I rejoiced at the power I had over him, little thinking that, in the moment of my fancied triumph, he was wrenching my image from his heart; little dreaming then, that he was as proud as I. I was told that he had said that an icicle could as soon be kindled into a flame, as love could be kindled in the heart of lady Mary

Alton: that he often used a similar expression, and I smiled to think how soon by a few kind words and tender glances I could bring the utterer of such heresy again a suppliant at my feet. I had my father's sanction for my marriage. Everything seemed to favor me; but, alas! I found that I had gone too far; had touched the heart's chords with too rude a hand, and now, I, in turn, was treated with a cold civility, worse to bear than scorn.

"From that hour I have never loved as I did before; although my heart has ever felt the void that needed filling. I have had suitors in abundance, who sought me for my wealth and station. I knew none sought me for my love; for the tale had gone abroad that I was a heartless coquette, and the world was too ready to believe it true; and I too proud to undeceive it. My early faulty education in Italy had made me assume that character; the falsehood of the world and my own pride sustained me in it, while my heart was ever yearning to cast it aside. And so years have passed away; my father was too engrossed in affairs of state to care whether or not I married, or how I acted; so that my conduct was marked by the *dignity* that became his daughter. I have well sustained that dignity, truly!—sustained it at the cost of my own peace of mind, forever. Unhappily for me, my mother I never knew, or I might have been differently educated and now, perhaps, a happy wife and mother, instead of a wretched, withered old maid. 'Old Maid!' why should I shrink from that term? Let me see how bravely I bear my years. Surely, it is time now that I should know myself aright. I have no blazing jewels upon me now to give a false dazzle to my appearance. Let me for once be an impartial judge, and jury too, convened to pass sentence upon my own fading beauty;" and, as she spoke, she took a candlestick in her hand and stepped close to a full length mirror, where, for the space of some minutes she surveyed herself attentively: "It is well," she said, "Nature has been bountiful to me. There is not yet a silver thread

amongst this raven hair, and scarcely a wrinkle on my cheek or forehead. I might yet deceive the world; but, can I deceive myself? and how long will this still youthful aspect remain? The failings of age will only be more manifest when at last they come, and they must come in a few years more at furthest.

"Why, then, should I longer undergo this torture? Why not fulfil the desire of my heart for some years past, and by retiring to the convent in Italy over which my father's sister presides, forever bid farewell to the stale vanities of the world? Why not? Because my father now bids me prepare to marry Henry Fitzherbert, to carry out a purpose, the object of which I have partially divined. To marry a *roue*, and a *fool*, to suit his purposes and my father's, without being consulted in the matter—a mere piece of merchandize which, probably, the purchaser would willingly refuse; but which the vender insists upon his accepting in order to seal the bargain.

"And has it come to this at last? The proud, haughty, Lady Mary Alton, the belle amongst the ultra aristocratic belles of England, whose smile was once the envy of scores of rival cavaliers—reduced beneath the estimated value of the cattle on her father's farm. Be it so, then; I am sick of the world, weary of life, and careless of the future. I have heard too, though secretly, that wrong has been effected; that Herbert should not have died poor and friendless on foreign soil, and that he has left children who are heirs to property that is withheld from them. Am I to be made a party to this fraud? God knows my brain is racked till I have cause to dread that reason may desert me. I will try a little music; it may temporarily banish these sombre thoughts."

She approached the piano forte and played a few notes, but her fingers soon stayed their activity, and for some time she sat at the piano apparently in a deep reverie. She then rose and touched the bell.

The footman entered, and asked:



"Did you ring, my lady?"

"Yes, John; has Father Anselmo yet retired to rest? Have the goodness to inquire, and desire Annette to attend me."

The servant returned and said that Father Anselmo was reading in his own study.

"Very well; John; that will do. Oh, here is Annette. Annette," she continued, speaking in Italian, "I have always reposed full confidence in you. The world, besides, may have misunderstood my feelings; but I believe you know me too well to do so, willingly, at least. I have been strangely low-spirited to-night, and I am desirous of seeing Father Anselmo immediately. Step up to his room and ask him if he will oblige me by meeting me for a few moments at the altar in the chapel."

The lady's maid went with the message to the chaplain's room, and Lady Mary appeared anxiously to await her return.

"I must make a full confession to-night," she murmured. "Father Anselmo, I hope, will not refuse my somewhat untimely request."

Annette returned and said Father Anselmo had already gone to the chapel, and awaited her lady.

"Then, Annette, stay you here. It is nearly ten o'clock, and my father, before he retires for the night, will be sure to visit me. I shall not be many minutes absent; but, should he come in before I return, make some excuse for me, and say I will be back immediately."

So saying, she left the room, and the echo of her light footsteps was heard by the rather astonished Annette, treading the vaulted galleries which led to the chapel. The maid listened until she heard the chapel door gently close, and then took her seat near a table and commenced reading an Italian book.

In a few minutes the earl entered.

"Where is your lady, Annette?" said he.

Annette was too well trained to exhibit the least confusion, although she was very strangely concerned at

the mysterious behavior of her lady. She answered, "Lady Mary has but a few minutes ago quitted the room, my lord, and she desired me to tell your lordship, should you ask for her, that she would return in a few minutes," and she rose up from her seat as the earl took a chair.

"Sit still, Annette, sit still," said the earl. "You had better wait until Lady Mary returns; she may require your services. I will also wait for her, for I wish particularly to speak to her to-night, before I retire to rest."

The earl in his turn took up a book and sat listlessly turning over the leaves, while he waited his daughter's return.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Lady Mary in the chapel of the Castle—An interview with the confessor, Father Anselmo—Good advice in a matter of extreme difficulty—A Parent's displeasure.*

WE will follow Lady Mary Alton as she quitted her apartment to meet Father Anselmo in the chapel of the castle. She passed slowly along a narrow gallery, from the vaulted roof of which depended several lighted chandeliers, diffusing a mellow light over the place, it is true; but rather adding to than relieving the solemnity of its appearance. On either side of this gallery hung the portraits of the ancestors of the Earl of Shropshire, from the date of the first Henry, when the family had emigrated from France into England. Grim, mail-clad warriors were they in those early days. Knights, whose fortune was their swords; whose boast, their valiant deeds of arms; whose pride, that for centuries, even then, their swords had carved the road to honor and renown through many a bloody and hard fought field, in which the "falcon," its beak dripping blood, as though in the



act of tearing its prey, (the crest of the Knights of de Altoun, subsequently Anglesized into Alton,) emblazoned upon the banners borne by the family retainers, had ever been prominent in the battle-field, and foremost where the fight most furiously raged. Then ranged in order of antiquity, came the stern, uncompromising statesmen of the reign of the "Eighth Harry" and of Elizabeth—those statesmen who did so much to render the name of their country famous, and who were the real creators of the glory of the reign of the "Virgin Queen." Among these was the portrait of the first Lord Alton, stern and uncompromising in aspect; one whom, to judge from his portrait, few would have chosen to tamper with. After these followed in succession the haughty, princely cavaliers of the reign of James and of Charles the First; the prim, peruked courtiers of the time of Charles the Second, gradually sobering down through the periods of James the Second, William and Mary, Ann and the Georges, until the eye rested on the portrait of the present proud earl, and still through the whole range of portraits, embracing a period of seven centuries or twenty-one generations, might be traced a family likeness, not from similarity of feature or of form, but from the stern, haughty expression that shone in the countenance of the mailed warrior of the twelfth century, and was reflected in the features of the living representative of the race.

And along this gloomy gallery, between the portraits of her ancestors, softly trode the last daughter of the race—she in whose person it was probably doomed to become lineally extinct; for she was no youthful maiden who was likely to marry one who, for the sake of the honor, would take her name, and who would bear future heirs to inherit the title and the fortune of Alton; but one who, though still beautiful, was already past the meridian of life, and who, as she gazed almost fearfully at the grim portraits as she passed along, could not but feel that after her death the family title, though it might not

become *de facto* extinct, would in all probability pass into the possession of a distant branch of the family.

"I can conceive," she thought, "how it is that my father has cared so little for me. He wanted a male heir to his title and fortune. Oh, if I had but had a brother! my life might have been a happier one."

She reached the door of the chapel and opened it unobserved, for the chaplain was kneeling in silent prayer or in devout contemplation before the altar at the further end. The chapel, small as it was, was but dimly lighted by the pair of wax candles which burned, night and day upon the altar, and the scene was calculated to impress the mind with a sombre melancholy as the eye gazed upon the dark, antique and solemn adornments of the chapel, the painted glass windows; and the massive paintings, depicting religious subjects and the sufferings of martyrs to the holy faith in the days of the persecution of the early Christians, which covered the walls. The aspect of the chapel was eminently calculated to impress the imagination with religious feelings; but it was more likely to be that of a gloomy and despairing, than of a cheerful and hopeful character.

Softly did Lady Mary step to the spot where knelt the reverend father. He appeared not to have heard her footsteps, and for some minutes she stood silently beside him, unwilling to disturb his meditations.

It was a picture for a painter—the dimly lighted, gloomy chapel, the elaborately ornamented marble altar on which the rays of the candles fell, and by the bright contrast increased the solemn, cheerless aspect of the place—the priest, a tall man of slender, even attenuated frame, whose features betrayed that, though living in the abode of wealth and luxury, his life had been one of severe mortification of the flesh—the lady, youthful seeming in that light, and, in comparison with the aged father, her plain white evening dress and luxuriant, dark hair, contrasting vividly with the dark sacerdotal robes which the chaplain constantly wore, and with the fringe of white hair which encircled his head, the crown of which

was shaven—all these contrasts presented a striking tableau. She might have appeared to a painter's eye as a maiden wearied of the vanities of the world, who had come at last to seek for comfort in religion, or his imagination might have chosen another theme for the picture; she might have been represented as an angel of mercy sent by heaven to respond to the prayers of a religious devotee.

At length Father Anselmo rose from his kneeling posture, and he saw Lady Mary standing beside him.

"Pardon me, father," she said; "I should not have intruded had I thought you were engaged. I sent Annette to ask if you were disengaged, and she said you would await me here."

"It is well, my daughter. I received the message from Annette as I was about to come hither to pay my evening devotions, and said I would meet you here; but not finding you, I had forgotten the appointment, and commenced my prayers."

"Let me not interrupt you, father; another time will, perhaps, suit as well."

"My daughter, when the mind is ill at ease, there is no time like the *present* to seek for comfort where it can alone be found—in the consolations of religion. Heed not me. It is my duty, at all seasons and at all hours, to minister to the distressed in mind—to give my humble advice to all who seek it, and more especially to the members of your noble and honored father's family. In so doing, I am best serving Him to whose service my life is devoted. I heed not your interruption, and the late hour to me is little object. Here in this chapel I frequently keep the midnight vigil—aye, until cock-crow betrays the dawn of day, while all others in the castle are wrapped in slumber. Say then, daughter of my noble earthly patron, what calls *you* here in this late watch of the night to seek the company of Father Anselmo? I fear that the presence of some unwonted difficulty must weigh heavily upon your mind. Speak freely and fearlessly. In me you have a

spiritual father, whose heart yearns to you as kindly as can that of your earthly parent."

"It is not much, father, that I have to tell, and forgive me for saying, that I know not whether you can relieve my mind from its present trouble; nay, I know not whether I ought to divulge the secret I am about to whisper into your ear. You will tell me it is the duty of a child to obey the behests of her parent in all earthly matters, and think my confession unwise, uncalled for, perhaps unmaidenly."

"Nay, speak out, my daughter, and relieve your mind of its trouble; far be it from a poor erring mortal like me to adjudge blame where the intention is good. Tell me your sorrows, and rest assured that I will advise that which in my own poor judgment I think is the best course for you to pursue to gain relief."

"Father Anselmo," said Lady Mary, in a low voice, the tone of which told as much of child-like confidence and daughterly affection as it did of reverence, "you alone of all earthly beings know of the wretchedness which has filled my heart, almost as long as I can recollect. In the sacredness and secrecy of the confessional, I have disclosed to you that which has been hidden from all the world besides—of which my father is ignorant. *You*," she continued, looking earnestly and interrogatively in the face of the priest—"you have not thought me the cold, heartless creature, the world has given me the credit of being."

"No, my daughter, I have not; I have known your sorrows, and even as a father have I wept over them. I have besought you to seek grace to curb that pride of character which you have inherited from your ancestors, and which was the first cause of all your troubles; but with all this I have known and felt your kindness of heart. My daughter, that pride is your besetting sin; you should seek to purge it from you; and yet I know how difficult it is, and can make allowances for it; in all else you have achieved all that I have sought in my prayers for your soul's welfare."

"Then, father," continued Lady Mary, in a firmer voice, "I need not tell you *now*, that for some years past, even when compelled against my will to figure amidst the fashionable frivolities of London life, it has been my earnest desire to pass the remainder of my days in the convent over which my aunt is abbess, and where many years ago, when a mere child, I whispered my earliest innocent confessions in your ears. Of late, the desire has grown upon me more and more; for, as I grow in years, I perceive more clearly the vanity of earthly pleasures—perhaps, had matters turned out otherwise—you know, father, to what I now allude—I should have entertained other ideas; but, let me put aside these painful reminiscences. A short time since I spoke to my father, when I thought him in a kinder mood than usual, respecting those desires with which you have been long acquainted. He listened in surprise and was for some moments silent. At length he spoke, and his words were expressed in more gentle tones than I have been accustomed to hear from him; for although seldom harsh, his manner towards me has more resembled that which he might assume to a stranger, than to his only child—distant—coldly respectful. Father Anselmo, I could better have brooked occasional bursts of anger from a father's lips, if sometimes I had experienced the paternal affection my heart has so ardently panted for. 'Mary,' he said, 'you pain me greatly by this avowal. I have other views for you. I have long wished that the estates of Alton—and those, at one time, supposed to belong to my ungrateful ward, Herbert Fitzherbert—should be united. The property supposed to have been his, rightly belongs to Lord Henry Fitzherbert—his half-brother. Such will shortly be legally proved to be the case. Lord Henry Fitzherbert has sought your hand, and I have promised to use my influence to further his views. The dearest object of my heart will then be realized; and *you*, will not you accede to the only earnest request your father has ever made to you?"

"You may imagine, father, how my heart sank within me, while I listened to these words. Had my father been dignified and cold as usual, I should have promptly refused to have anything to do in the matter; but, somehow or other I have been so unaccustomed to hear him speak in a kindly tone of voice that I could not express my feelings. A mist seemed to surround me as he stooped and placing his arm round my neck, kissed my cheek. One of the empty, aching voids in my heart seemed to be filling up, as I drank in the tones of paternal affection, and I leant my head upon his shoulder, and wept the first tears I have shed for many a day. He sought to soothe me and left me, apparently in the belief that I had dutifully acceded to his views. Since then, he has made a point of visiting me every evening, before I retire to my chamber, and his manner has become almost affectionate. He thinks I am willing to wed Lord Henry, while I loathe and detest him—these are strong words, father, perhaps sinful ones; but, you know not Henry's character: imbecile, slothful; he is a stranger to any noble sentiment—a debauchee and a rouse; but, with all this, too inert to become even a thorough villain. To him I am to be made a sacrifice, as it is thought willingly; for, I have never had the heart to undeceive my father. If this were all, I might submit to this, even though unwillingly, in my yearning for paternal love; but, about three weeks since an anonymous letter was placed in my hands which informed me that my father was sacrificing my happiness to his desire for aggrandizement; that Lord Fitzherbert was to take our family name on the event of his marriage, and that the marriage was not to take place unless—which was still doubtful—the estates which were once supposed to be Herbert's, fell into his hands; thus, I was to be sold—a mere necessary attachment to the property in dispute. How my soul sickened at the thought! But *this* was not all. The letter further informed me that poor Herbert had children living in the United States, who were in a condition of

poverty, and were undergoing persecution on account of this property, which really had belonged to Herbert, and, of course, now rightfully belongs to his children. Father, if this be true, can I become a party to this foul wrong? can I submit myself to the life of wretchedness I am called upon to suffer for this? For a worthy purpose I might do so; but to aid in wronging the children of the man I once loved—never—never. His accusing spirit would haunt me in my dreams. I should be driven to madness. Nay, worse; I should not only bid farewell to earthly happiness, which, indeed, I have known but little the value of, but I should peril, nay, utterly cast away my hopes of future salvation. Father, what—what would you advise me to do?"

Father Anselmo had listened at first with the attention he was accustomed to give to one whose religious instructor he had been, almost from her earliest childhood, but as she proceeded, that attention assumed an expression of powerful interest, and when Lady Mary ceased speaking, he stood for some moments silent and apparently absorbed in thought. At length he said:

"How can you be assured that a letter, the contents of which are of such a terrible nature, is worthy of credit. Perhaps, my daughter, it is a shameful and disgraceful forgery."

"Would to Heaven I could believe it to be so," replied Lady Mary. "Even at the cost of marriage to one I loathe and despise, I could wish that I could believe my father innocent of any participation in such a scheme as this. But, Father Anselmo, the letter bears the Italian post mark; it is written in that language, and is dated from the convent where I was educated, and of which your father was then the confessor. Its tone is earnest, and bears the impress of truth; and I have an indistinct recollection of the handwriting as being that of one whom I knew, and received instruction from, in my youth. Oh! that I could disbelieve it. I have sought to do so, but I cannot—I cannot. Father, I shall not be doing wrong in showing it to you, in the

light of an adviser in this painful matter. You will not betray me; and perhaps your recollection may aid me in tracing my impressions as to the writer's name."

Thus speaking, she placed in the hands of the chaplain a letter, bearing a foreign post mark, and written in a delicate female hand.

Father Anselmo received the letter from her, and perused it attentively, his features, meanwhile, assuming an expression of mingled anxiety, pain and grief, while Lady Mary watched him with intense eagerness.

He finished reading, and deliberately folded the letter, and handed it back to its owner, without speaking.

"It is then as I conjectured and dreaded?" said Lady Mary.

"It is from sister Maria," was the sad response of the priest.

Both remained for some moments absorbed in painful thought. At length Lady Mary spoke:

"What would you have me to do?" she asked.

"My daughter," said the priest, his voice trembling with emotion; "painfully—painfully and sorely are you tried. The dictates of my Order would bid me say to you—obey the will of your father in all things, as they would bid me obey, unquestioned, the will of my superiors in the Holy Church; but I can scarcely advise you thus. Go, my daughter, to your father; tell him that you cannot marry Lord Fitzherbert; beseech him to withdraw his importunities to that purpose—to alter his intentions. Speak to him as a child would speak to a parent whom she loved, and whom she knew loved her—speak as you have spoken, when a girl, you asked in girlish earnestness, for some trifling favor. I have known such tones touch a parent's heart when a more determined and more obstinate display of feeling has utterly failed. As yet say nothing of the letter or of the disclosures therein made. Go, my daughter," he continued, placing his trembling hand upon her head, "and my blessing be with you, and I will meanwhile pray earnestly to Heaven that you may be successful. Let

me know the result to-morrow; if you are successful, we will give thanks together to Heaven; if not then—then—I will meditate and pray for advice how to act. This deadly sin I cannot allow you to commit. Go, my daughter—go, and the blessing of an old man, and the more potent blessing of Heaven go with you.” Lady Mary quitted the chapel, and Father Anselmo resumed his devotions.

Having endeavored to assume as calm an aspect and deportment as possible, the former entered her own sitting room, where, as she expected, she found her father and Annette awaiting her return.

The earl was about to speak, but his daughter was before-hand with him.

“Annette,” she said, “you can await me in my bed-chamber. I wish to speak with my father before I retire for the night.”

And as soon as the lady’s maid had quitted the room, she drew a stool beside the chair in which the earl was seated, and seating herself upon it, she took one of his hands in hers, at the same time saying:

“Dear papa, I have long wished to speak with you privately upon a matter which nearly interests me. May I do so now?”

For many years Lady Mary had not called her father by the fond appellation of “papa,” and the almost child-like posture she had assumed, the gentle pressure of her hand, and the unwonted sound of the word, “papa,” almost overpowered the partly natural and now habitual stoicism of the old earl. Old associations rushed to his recollection, and it was with difficulty he could conceal his emotion.

“Speak, Mary; what is it you would ask of me?”

“Papa,” continued Lady Mary, “I should have told you before; but from day to day I have put off the distressing moment. I was unwilling to pain or offend you, but, indeed, I cannot marry Lord Henry Fitzherbert.” The earl withdrew his hand from his daughter’s grasp. “I fear that my silence on this matter has led

you to believe that I was willing to agree to your proposals regarding him; but—it is necessary that I should explain my feelings before it is too late. I asked permission, some time since, to retire to the convent where—in I was educated; this desire I am willing to forego. I will devote my life to your care. I will watch over your declining years. I will be all that a daughter can be to a beloved parent; but, dear papa, again I say, I cannot consent to an union with one whom I cannot love.”

She ceased speaking, and anxiously and tremblingly awaited her father’s reply.

The earl was for some moments almost choked with passion; but with great exertion he managed to control his indignation, as he replied:

“How is this, Mary? What strange whim is this? Have you not, if not verbally, at least tacitly, given your consent to my wishes? Does not Fitzherbert himself believe this to be the case? What has put this notion into your head? You are surely joking? Speak, girl, what is it you mean?”

“Papa, I am not joking. I mean what I say. I am in no mood *now* to joke on so serious a subject. As to Fitzherbert, he cares not for me or my love. He is heartless, worthless, contemptible—as unworthy to be your son, as he is to be my husband. Father, withdraw your demands as regards this union. We can be happy in each other’s society. Believe me, I have long given up all thoughts of marriage.”

“Is this your deliberate and earnest determination, Lady Mary?” said the earl, his indignation obtaining the mastery over him.

“Father, it is.”

“Then, you would thwart my wishes *now*; as you thwarted them years ago by your pride and caprice, when I wished you to marry the boy Herbert. I have nourished a viper in my bosom, and now in my old age it would turn and sting me. Hear me, girl,” continued the Earl, rising from his chair; “this is some puling

conceit that a night's rest and a little reflection will cure. It was upon this very subject I wished to speak with you to-night, and for this purpose I waited while you were so long absent from your room. I will give you till this day week to decide, and then I hope to learn you have changed your mind. If not, a father's curse will await you. Hear me, girl, a father's curse. Nay, nay," he added, as he saw his daughter was about to reply—"not now. I will hear no more to-night;" and he hastily quitted the room.

Lady Mary remained for some moments in the attitude she had stood in as she listened to her father's bitter words. She then sank into a chair, and gave vent to her feelings in a flood of tears.

"A father's curse," she murmured. "Horrible—horrible; but better even an earthly parent's curse, than to bear throughout eternity the curse of God."

Gradually she resumed some degree of composure, and as she rested her aching head on her arm, she fell into a fit of musing. Her life from girlhood passed in review before her. She was again the happy child, sporting beneath the cloudless Italian sky. Again she was rejoicing amidst the groves and gardens of Alton Castle, happy in the love of her boy lover. From this blissful vision she awoke to a sense of the pent-up sorrows of her woman's life, and her present painful situation, and again she wept bitterly.

The midnight hour had long tolled, and still the eyes of Lady Mary were red with weeping. There is a gentle tap at the door, and the lady's maid enters the room.

"Pardon me, my lady," she said in Italian, "for this intrusion. It is late, very late, and I feared you were ill."

"No, good Annette," said Lady Mary, forcing a painful smile, "I am well—quite well, child. I have been in conversation with my father. I will now go with you up stairs;" and the two females left the room together.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Conversation between a noble Lord and an ignoble Lawyer—  
A re-introduction to the office of the Jew Money-lender in  
the Minorities.*

THE reader has, for some time, lost sight of the two worthies of the legal profession, Gripes and Cheatem, as well as of certain other characters to whom he has been introduced in previous chapters of this narrative.

A few days after the conversation already recorded as having taken place between the Earl of Shropshire and Mr. Gripes, the latter worthy was again closeted with the earl in a room at his mansion, in Grosvenor-square. A long conversation had evidently taken place between them which was about being brought to a conclusion; for the earl appeared at length to have made up his mind to a proposition made by Gripes, which had occasioned him no little uneasiness, Gripes thus addressed his lordship—

"There can be no possibility of detection, my lord, for of course no suspicion could be attached to your lordship. I shall set Cheatem to work at once, if your lordship is agreeable. His person is unknown to any of the parties concerned in this business excepting yourself, Lord Henry Fitzherbert and I. Besides, he is used to disguise himself for the purpose of doing sundry unpleasant jobs that I am occasionally obliged to set him about, and he *must* do my bidding. He has discovered that the youth (Adolphus, I believe they call him,) is accustomed to walk out in Hyde Park almost every fine morning, and he and I have already devised a scheme to lure him into our power, which there is no occasion that your lordship should be at all cognizant of. He, once out of the way, until judgment is given, at all events, if



not forever, the parties who favor the case of him and his sister, can give us a little trouble; although it would perhaps be as well, if we were afterwards to remove the girl. I have found out the Yankee lawyer who brought them over; but there is yet one thing which gives me some uneasiness. It is that there is some London lawyer of distinction in the profession, and who, of course is a very dangerous opponent, assisting in this matter.—If we could only discover him, I should feel a great deal more secure. I have hitherto failed in doing so but I shall yet succeed, or my name is not Gripes. My only fear is that he will put the Yankee up to some of the tricks of the trade, in which we might otherwise baffle him, though as for that these fellows from the other side of the Atlantic are pretty 'smart,' as they call it. Is your lordship satisfied?"

"There will be no violence used, I hope?"

"Dear me; none at all. Indeed I am not sure that it will not be really beneficial to the young fellow. It will put him in the way of learning how to buffet with the world, and to persons of his condition, this is desirable, and it will banish the silly notions people have been putting into his head. It is only to be lamented that the technicalities of the law rendered it necessary to publish that advertisement in the Philadelphia papers. I had my misgivings from the first about that; but it was an unavoidable form, which has led to much trouble."

"And I am to understand that in case of any—any—you understand me. My name is on no account to appear?"

"On no account, my lord; nor that of Lord Henry; who, by the way, appears to me to take little interest in the matter. His apathy is really astonishing."

"Henry is a fool. I am only sorry that no other person can possibly supply his place."

"And Lady Mary Alton, your lordship's daughter, is she agreeable to act according to your lordship's wishes in this regard?"

"Mr. Gripes, that is a matter in which you have no

business to meddle. Lady Mary Alton is my daughter, sir, and all arrangements regarding her, rest with me alone."

"I beg your lordship's pardon. Then, I may consider this business settled?"

"Yes, sir, and our interview for the present terminated. I wish you good morning."

Gripes left Grosvenor-square, and turning into the Strand, walked leisurely towards the city. Having reached his own office, he, according to appointment, met his partner, Cheatem, who was awaiting his chief's arrival.

"Has the earl consented to this scheme of ours?" said Cheatem, addressing Gripes.

"Yes, and you had better set about the job as soon as possible—say to-morrow morning, and follow it up until you get an opportunity to carry it out; but be very circumspect."

"Trust me for that," said Cheatem, with a hideous leer, which he intended for a facetious smile; "but about the cash—the sinews of war—the *ne plus ultra*. You understand."

"Here are twenty pounds to defray the expenses which may be incurred at present, and the remaining eighty pounds will be paid by the earl when his lordship has satisfactory assurance that the youth is safe off. I need not remind you that it will be necessary to complete the job within a week. It is now the 12th, and on the 20th, the vessels positively sail."

"I have no doubt but I shall be able to accomplish it in less time, but it is expensive work for me. My business is going to ruin while I am spending my time dabbling in this matter."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Gripes, "That is an excellent joke of yours, Cheatem—capital. Your business, eh! Dunning poor wretches for six-and-sixpenny debts. Your business! Capital, upon my word! By-the-bye, Cheatem, the earl said a good thing the other day. He could not, or most likely, he *would not* think of your

name. So he gave you a co-partnership. 'That fellow, Clutchem or Cheatem,' said he, 'I have no doubt either term is applicable!' Capital joke of his lordship, wasn't it?"

Cheatem turned livid with rage, but he controlled his feelings in the presence of Gripes, whom he held in great dread, and without replying, he left the office. When he reached the street, however, he muttered, "Let his lordship take care. I may get him in my *clutches* yet, and he may find himself most wofully *cheated* too; and as to you, Master Gripes, it is your day now, but some day it may be mine, and I may perhaps *gripe* you in a way that you will not like. Ha-a, how I hate them all. I hate everything and everybody. I should like to trample every one beneath my feet to crush them—to ruin them—ah-h-h-h," and he crunched his yellow teeth together as a snarling cur would do when, in cowardly, impotent, senseless rage, it seeks a spot wherein to fix its fangs, unperceived by the person it would attack.

Leaving these conspirators against poor Adolphus to work out their treacherous plans as best they may, I will speak of some of the other characters with whom the reader is acquainted.

Lord Henry Fitzherbert was at this period following still the same listless, monotonous life he had followed for years. A parade in the Park in the morning, two or three times a week, which his lordship considered an especial hardship; for on these days he had to rise two hours earlier than usual, to don his regimentals as a lieutenant of the Life Guards, to return to his apartments at the Albany, and then, doffing his uniform, to assume a morning costume; for his lordship, though esteeming it an honor to belong to a crack regiment, such as the Life Guards, would have thought himself irretrievably disgraced had he worn his regimentals on any other occasions but those of parade and court drawing rooms. At any other time it is the custom for all *gentlemen* of the army to appear in mufti.

He then took breakfast at 11 o'clock, and lounged on the sofa, in his dressing-gown, until two, when he summoned his valet to assist him in performing his walking or riding toilet. A stroll or a canter in the park occupied him till six or seven o'clock, when he adjourned to his club to dinner, after which he spent his evenings, and nights too, with some chosen boon companions in some dignified, aristocratic amusement, or in gambling; or else, when "Almacks" was open, returned to the Albany and dressed for the ball-room, where, according to order, he paid unmeaning and trifling attentions to Lady Mary Alton, who, on her part, received them coldly and almost scornfully.

At times his lordship was sadly short of ready money, notwithstanding he made no difficulty in borrowing from Lord Shropshire, or any one else whom he could persuade to lend him any; so, partly for the sake of re-introducing an old and venerable acquaintance, and partly because this re-introduction will have something to do in the denouement of my narrative, I will beg the reader to accompany me to one of the places for obtaining ready cash, so much patronized by the aristocracy of England who have either substantial securities or good expectations. Of the former, Lord Henry Fitzherbert had few to boast of, but latterly he had been persuading the money-lenders that he had good expectations as regarded the Huntingdonshire property, which was, in fact, already considerably reduced by promissory mortgages, as Lord Shropshire found, eventually, to his cost.

The place to which I beg the reader to accompany me is no other than the den in the Minories, to which he has been already introduced, as the business place of our old friend Mordecai.

Nearly fifty years have passed away since the conversation there narrated took place between Mordecai, Brummell, and the Prince of Wales, and then the Jew was an old man of nearly sixty years. Nevertheless he is still living—a shrivelled mummy, almost in the last

stage of second childhood—a living skeleton, covered with a skin of wrinkled parchment, as yellow as the gold he loved so well, and the contemplation of which comprises even now his sole delight. The active business has passed in the hands of Jacob, the youth heretofore mentioned, who is the nephew of the old usurer; but while he lives, Mordecai cannot be cajoled into giving it up. He still clings to it and to his gold and would carry both with him into another world had he the power to do so. Drivelling and childish as regards all else—for he is alone in the world—all his contemporaries—his wife and his own children even have gone before him to the grave—touch him on this subject and his faculties, though he is now in his hundred and tenth year, are as keen as ever. Daily does he crawl down from Dukes' Place to the Minorities, and creep up stairs, and there, in the old dusky office, at the old table, in the accustomed corner, may be found the once shrewd and energetic—the still keen, money-loving usurer. He has sense enough to know, old and childish as he is, that his gold is the only friend he has left; many friends he never did have, gold was always the friend he most loved and revered, and he has found his reward in its adhering to him when all others have failed; but he must soon leave even his gold, and as he feels the hour of parting drawing near, he clutches it faster and clings to it with more intensity of devotion.

Jacob is therefore obliged to treat his old uncle with some degree of courtesy, which he might not otherwise bestow upon him, for he knows he is still in the old man's power.

It is after dusk. Lord Fitzherbert has spent several hours of the previous night at the gaming table, and has lost heavily. He must raise a thousand or two somehow or other. He has a debt of honor to pay. If it were a tradesman's debt, there would be no occasion to trouble himself. If he were dunned, he could bid "the twoublesome cweature" to wait; but if he fails to pay to the moment a debt of honor, he knows that he

would become a marked man in fashionable society. He enters the office of the money lender, who rises to receive him. He is evidently a gentleman with whom our old friend Jacob is well acquainted, and business transactions have more than once passed between them.

"Glad to see your lordship," says Jacob, who, by the way, is a very different personage from the youthful Jacob heretofore described. The showy, shabby genteel dress, has been discarded long ago, and, but that we see in a corner of the room, apparently absorbed in contemplation, and paying no attention to what is going on, except by an occasional eager glance towards the table at which Jacob is seated, when he hears the clink of coin, a shrivelled, withered being, whom we recognize as the veritable Mordecai himself, we should also fancy we saw him as formerly depicted, again restored to us in Jacob. There is the same shrewdness of visage, the same restless eye—the same length of frowsy beard—aye, and we could almost swear to it, the same long Jewish gaberdine.

"Take a sheat, my lord," continues Jacob. "Vat ish your lordships bishnish to-day?"

"The old call, Jacob. I want money, and by Jove! money I must have."

"De monish is scaresh—very scaresh," replies Jacob, in a tone so much resembling that of the Mordecai of former days, that if the prince and Brummell could have heard him, they would have believed him to have been Mordecai, *renovato nomine*.

"D——n the scarcity. I must have it if it is to be got, or whether it is or not. You know my securities are good, on the Brampton Manor Estates; my father, the prince, who had dealings with your uncle in his time, had claims on them, and they must shortly be mine."

"It ish a good prince, but he must give good securitish," said a sepulchral voice, at the other end of the room, causing Lord Fitzherbert to start, on account of the unearthly tone in which the words were uttered.

"It ish noting but dat old shinner in the corner, muttering to himself," said Jacob, noticing the movement of his lordship; "but about dese shecuritish, you know dey ish only in prospective, and the present is de thing; de future ish not to be trusted."

"Pooh! pooh! cease this nonsense, Jacob. You fleece me pretty well, as regards interest, at all events. If you only get half, you will be well paid."

"Vat ish that you shay about half?" said Jacob, in a tone of apprehension.

"Nothing, my good fellow. You will get all, and a pretty good score, too, and that very shortly. So advance me two thousand more, at what interest you please."

"I have learned dat dere are other claimants in de field respecting dish property," replied Jacob, "and I must look to de securitish."

"Yesh, de goot securitish is everyting," re-echoed the same sepulchral voice, from the semi animated mummy in the corner, while Jacob continued:

"I don't shee dat I can advansh your lordship any more monish just now."

"Egad! Jacob, you *must*," said Lord Fitzherbert, and after a good deal of haggling, his lordship succeeded in obtaining the money at forty-five per cent., Jacob assuring him it would be the last until he was better satisfied respecting the security of the Brampton Manor estates, which he commenced to look into immediately; and thus by his incautious improvidence, Lord Fitzherbert threw another and an unexpected difficulty in the way of the earl and the two rascally lawyers. He, however, left in good spirits with the money in his pockets, while for the rest of the evening, Mordecai, in whose mind the mention of the name of the prince had revived a train of old reminiscences, continued to mutter:

"It ish a goot prince, spends de monish freely, and de peoplesh pays; but we must look to de securitish."

Poor Georgiana still remained at Mr. Hughes' house on Clapham common; seldom going abroad, except in

company with Mrs. Hughes, and daily becoming more apprehensive respecting the fate of her brother, and still Mr. Hughes and I remained without any intelligence respecting him, satisfactory or otherwise, beyond that which we had heard from the landlord of the "Cat and Bagpipes," which, for aught we knew, might, after all, relate to another person.

## CHAPTER XV.

*A sea-lawyer on board her majesty's ship Thunderer—A quarter-deck oration—A lady overboard, and a rescue from peril—The heir's prospects brighten—A startling discovery.*

HER Majesty's ship Thunderer had been several days at sea, during which period the weather had been excessively stormy. Crossing the Bay of Biscay, she had been compelled to "lie to" for nearly twenty-four hours, and as the vessel was bound for the Mediterranean station, where, in consequence of the general serenity of the elements, there is very little to do that calls into activity the professional knowledge of able seamen, a considerable portion of the crew, in fact, the whole of the "waisters" and "after guard," consisted of "green hands." These were rendered utterly useless, even for the performance of the duties that fell to their share, in consequence of sea-sickness; and thus the able seamen, the "old salts," had had an undue portion of work of all kinds thrust upon their shoulders. It was a relief, therefore, when the Rock of Gibraltar having been passed, the officers and crew found themselves safe and snug on the blue waters of the Mediterranean, where they could hope to obtain a little respite from their late fatiguing duties.

It was a fine moonlight night, and the heavy seventy-four was swiftly sailing before a strong, fair breeze along

the Spanish coast, opposite Carthagena. The captain and first lieutenant were walking the quarter-deck, enjoying the freshness of the breeze and the sweet perfume of the turf from off the land, while, in the various portions of the deck allotted to them, according to their stations on board, the officers and seamen walked to and fro, engaged in conversation, or lounged over the bulwarks thinking, some, perhaps, of nothing, others of the friends, wives, or sweethearts, they had left behind. Some of the officers had assembled in the fore part of the vessel to indulge in a cigar, beyond the smoke-interdicted precincts. All was inactivity and listless ease, for the hours of labor, even for the watch on deck, were over.

"Which do you say is he, Mr. Harlow?" said the captain to the lieutenant, with whom he had been for some time conversing.

"That tall, pale young man leaning over the bulwarks on the starboard side of the foremast," replied the lieutenant.

"I have an objection to these well educated fellows," continued the captain. "Of all persons on board a man-of-war, 'sea lawyers,' as they are not inaptly termed, are my abhorrence. As petty officers or able seamen, they are unendurable, and when found among the after guards, waiters or landsmen, the only way to take the law out of them is by punishment. Does the fellow work well?"

"To tell the truth, he seems pretty willing to do what he can; but that's little enough. What the d—l the Lords of the Admiralty mean by filling up Her Majesty's ships with such a lot of dead-and-alive lumber, I can't conceive. Here we have sixteen midshipmen, eight of whom have only just been let loose from their nurses' arms, and who won't be of the least service until the cruise is well nigh over; though it's very possible, from all appearances, that the youngest of them will walk over my head before I get promotion. Then there are no less than two hundred 'green hands' on board, of

various capacities, and what to do with the lubbers I can't tell."

The captain smiled at the wrath of the lieutenant, who was one of those unfortunate beings who had entered the most aristocratic national service in the world without family interest or admiralty influence, and who, though crowned with grey hairs, was still a simple first lieutenant, and likely to remain so, for he had seen several raw "suckling midshipmen," as he was wont to term them, walk over his head, as he observed, and had sailed under their orders; indeed, his present superior was twenty years his junior.

"Never mind the 'green hands,'" replied the captain, "we must make the best we can of them; but as to what you were saying about this youngster. What's his name?"

"Fitzherbert, sir."

"A d—l of a name for a foremast-man to go to sea with," replied the captain.

"Oh, as to that," chimed in the lieutenant, "the hands call him Fitz, and I put down his name as such on the ship's books—too much waste of Her Majesty's ink to spell it out at length."

"And you say this lad tells you he was decoyed on board, and that he is not an English subject," continued the captain.

"Yes, sir. He came to me with a long rigmarole story about some lawsuit, and said he claims the rights and freedom of an American citizen."

"He does, does he?" interrupted the captain. "Well, then, we'll teach him the rights of an English subject in double-quick time. Has the fellow been preaching the doctrine of equality among his messmates?"

"I can't say that," continued the lieutenant. "He does the work he is set to willingly, and as well as he can; but as to his long yarn, I told him I shouldn't listen to it. 'While on board the Thunderer, and under Her Majesty's flag (said I), you're bound to be a British subject, my lad; and if you don't do your duty willingly, you'll

be made to do it; that's the long and the short of it. When this cruise is over, you can be an American citizen again, or whatever you please. So go to your duty, sir, and let me hear no more grumbling, or it will be the worse for you."

"Quite right, quite right, Mr. Harlow. The youngster appears to be an intellectual, smart-looking fellow, too. Send him aft, and I'll speak to him myself."

The lieutenant walked forward to the end of the quarter-deck, and shouted—

"Pass the word for Fitz to come aft," and then he muttered to himself, "An intellectual looking fellow is he? some member of the swell mob, down upon his luck, or else a d—d pickpocket who finds London too hot to hold him, I'll be bound."

He then rejoined the captain, and Herbert came aft and made the customary salute.

"What's your name, my man?" said the captain.

"Adolphus Fitzherbert, sir."

"Adolphus Fitzherbert, eh? Named after some one of the Royal Duke's, I suppose?" said the captain, sarcastically.

"I believe I am, sir," replied Adolphus, innocently; not perceiving the sarcasm.

The captain and lieutenant smiled.

"Well, Adolphus," continued the captain, "you'll have to dock that name on board ship in the same manner that you docked your coat tails when you entered Her Majesty's navy. Mr. Harlow tells me that you have been aft to him with some long story about having been decoyed on board against your will, and you have had the modesty to ask him to use his influence to obtain a discharge for you from me. Now, look you here, sir. If I were to listen to such tales as these, I might discharge half my crew; and, if you were the Prince of Wales, and were once shipped on board the vessel I command, you would have to do your duty, sir; willingly, if you please—so much the better for yourself, then—if not you would be made to do it.

You will get your discharge three years hence and not a day sooner, unless by order of 'Davy Jones' or the Admiralty: and now I will give you one piece of advice, which you will do well to follow. I treat my men well, so long as they behave themselves well. If not, woe betide them. I have been told you are a 'sea lawyer.' I hope not, for your own sake; for, if I find you out putting bad notions into the heads of your mess-mates, I'll see your back bone, sir. Mark that. You look like a smart lad. Go to your duty; do it like a man, and let me hear no bad account of you, and you will soon get used to the ship and be comfortable enough; if you don't, you will wish yourself in h—l."

Having delivered himself of this speech, the captain turned on his heel and resumed his narrow walk, and Adolphus went forward with a heavy heart; for, poor fellow, he had thought in the simplicity of his heart and in his ignorance of naval discipline, that the lieutenant had told his story to the captain, and that may be he was to receive his discharge at the first port the vessel touched at.

He thought, however, it was best to take the advice of the captain, and from that moment he sedulously attended to his duties, and even became, after a time, quite a favorite with the officers.

The vessel proceeded to Corfu, where some dispatches were landed, and then cruised for some three months between the coast of Italy and the island of Sardinia. At the expiration of that time, she put into the bay of Naples, where she was to remain for some weeks, waiting orders from the admiral, who was at Malta. At length orders were received for her to proceed to Malta, and to take thither the British Ambassador in Italy, who was called to Malta on business of pressing urgency.

Some ladies belonging to an English and to an American family, who were travelling in the south of Europe, the latter of whom, through the American Minister, had been introduced to the British Ambassador's family,



expressed a strong desire to visit Malta, and although it was not strictly conformable with the rules of the service, the captain, at the request of the ambassador, had promised to give them a passage with their male friends. Accordingly, much to the chagrin of the first lieutenant, who swore that there was no luck on board a ship where there was a petticoat, and much to the delight of the junior officers and midshipmen, an English lady with her husband and daughter and an American lady with a nephew and a niece were received on board the Thunderer, the night she weighed anchor for Malta.

Of course the two young ladies were great favorites with the officers, and the trip to Malta was a very pleasant one. When they were about to leave the vessel at Valette, to go on shore, Fitzherbert was ordered into the boat, he being one of the cutter's crew.

The young American lady unfortunately made a false step in descending into the boat, and fell overboard, and though she was buoyed up by her clothing, she was rapidly swept astern by the tide. All was dismay and confusion; the boat was released from the tackles, and orders given to pull after the poor girl; but before this could be done, Adolphus, who was an excellent swimmer, had plunged over the side, and through his own powerful efforts, aided by the tide, had succeeded in reaching the young lady, and buoying her up, just as she was on the point of sinking, her clothes having become saturated with water. His strength was almost gone by the time the boat reached them, for they had drifted a long way astern; but happily they were both taken safely on board. The young lady was insensible, but she was soon restored by the skill of the surgeon, and carefully conveyed ashore. Adolphus also was almost overpowered, and was stripped and placed in his hammock.

In the evening the Captain called upon the ladies, to inquire how the young lady was after her unfortunate

submersion. She was, in fact, almost recovered, and was reclining on a sofa.

Of course, inquiries were made respecting the young sailor who had so gallantly risked his life in seeking to rescue the young lady from the water, and a wish was expressed to see him.

"By-the-bye," said the captain, "that puts me in mind that the admiral himself wishes to see the young man, who I believe is to receive his discharge. There is something romantic, I am told, in his history, and in the manner in which he was sent on board the Thunderer. I will bring him on shore with me by-and-bye, and then the young lady can thank her gallant deliverer in person. What the story is, I as yet do not know. But, by the way; upon my word, I had nearly forgotten it. I was by when they were stripping the young man in order to apply the necessary restoratives, and this miniature was taken from his neck, where it was suspended by a black riband. I took hold of it carelessly, imagining it be some love lorn damsel's *gage d'amour*, and was so struck with the extraordinary resemblance of the features of the lady it represents to your's, madam," continued he, turning to the American lady, "that I could not help putting it into my pocket and fetching it on shore to show you. Upon my word," he added, taking the miniature from his pocket and comparing it with the features of the lady, "the resemblance is *perfect*. She it represents and you, madam, might have been twin sisters."

The lady he had spoken to received the miniature from him, and had no sooner glanced at it than she exclaimed—

"Good God! this is the likeness of my poor sister Ellen!" Her agitation became extreme, and of course the anxiety to see and know more of the youth was redoubled—in fact intensified. All were now alike eager, and the captain promised that as soon as the young man had received his discharge papers from the admiral, he would bring him to the house.

"Probably," said he, "I may fetch him on shore with me to-morrow."

## CHAPTER XVI.

*A release from the Man-of-war—The hero is introduced to some newly discovered relatives—He gives a novel illustration of the old Press-gang system.*

ON the arrival of the *Thunderer* at Malta, the admiral on the station, as will have been perceived from the preceding chapter, had sent for Sir Edward Owen, the captain of the seventy-four, and held a long conversation with him, as regarded the operations of the Mediterranean fleet, of which Sir Edward was the senior captain:

"And, by the by, said the admiral, in conclusion, 'have you a young man of the name of Fitzherbert on board the *Thunderer*? I have received a letter (officially) from the Lords of the Admiralty, ordering me to procure his immediate discharge, should he be on board either of the three ships which have lately arrived from England. I have enquired of the captains of the *Redoubtable* and the *Vixen*, and they have no such person as is described, either in the official letter or in another private letter I have received from Mr. Hughes, a solicitor, or barrister of some note in London, and, indeed, the letters seem to imply that it is, at the least, doubtful, whether the young man is on board either one of the vessels."

"There is a young man of that name on board the *Thunderer*," replied the Captain, "who, if I recollect aright, preferred some silly suit to my first lieutenant requesting his discharge, on the plea that he had been decoyed on board against his will, and that he was an American by birth, and had come to England to look after some property to which he was heir, and the right of which was claimed by some other parties. Of course, I took no notice of that, except it was to tell the officers

to keep a bright look out as to the youngster's behavior; for you must yourself have experienced, sir," continued the captain, "what a nuisance these sea lawyer fellows are on board a ship. However, the lad has behaved pretty well, and to-day he performed a very gallant action in saving one of the ladies I brought over from Naples, from drowning."

"Ah!" exclaimed the admiral, "I have heard of that affair. So, this youth—this Fitzherbert, saved the lady? Well, I presume he's the young man who is mentioned in the letter, therefore, Sir Edward, you had better fetch him on shore with you to-morrow, and then we'll examine into the merits of the case."

"Your orders shall be obeyed sir," replied the captain.

"You'll dine with me at six o'clock, Captain Owen?"

"You must excuse me to-day, sir. I must perform an act of duty as well as of gallantry, in calling to see how the lady is after her unfortunate submersion, and then I shall be obliged to go on board my ship; for, as you say, our stay here may be very limited, I must give Mr. Harlow orders to have the rigging of the mainmast thoroughly overhauled at once. It is entirely new, and has stretched considerably since we got into warm weather."

"Very well, Sir Edward. Duty, as you know, must be attended to; but, I shall have the happiness of seeing you at my dinner table to-morrow?"

"With pleasure, sir," answered the captain; and he then proceeded to visit the ladies.

While engaged in the duty of washing decks, shortly after daylight on the following morning, Adolphus, who had quite recovered from the effects of the previous day's submersion, and who was up and at his post as usual, received a summons to go aft to the captain's cabin.

Having had no communication with the captain since the occasion already recorded, which was, as the reader will recollect, by no means a pleasant one, it was with a strange feeling of uncertainty that the young man hastened to obey the summons, and to appear before the autocrat of the quarter-deck. Nor was he at all re-

assured, as in passing the first lieutenant, who was standing in the hammock-nettings, looking at something on shore, through a spy-glass, that important functionary said to him:

"You're in luck, Fitz, my lad, and I wish you joy of it;" for Mr. Harlow had a very facetious way of expressing himself sometimes, and a joke was oftentimes nay, mostly, with him, the prelude to some sort of punishment.

Adolphus began to consider in what he might have failed. To be sure, he had saved the life of a young lady the day before, at the risk of his own, and he knew that under most circumstances that was a praiseworthy action; but, as yet, he found such strange contrarieties in the exaction of discipline on board a man-of-war, and he felt so certain of a reprimand for something or other, that he began to think that, according to the rules of the service, he had no right to desert his post as coxswain of the cutter, even to save life, without orders from his superior officer. It was then with something like fear and trembling, although with a perfect consciousness of innocence of any wilful neglect of duty, that he passed the sentry at the door of the captain's cabin, and found himself in the presence of the naval chief.

"Fitz," said the captain, "you behaved very gallantly, yesterday, in so promptly rescuing the young lady who fell overboard, from almost certain death, but for your timely assistance. Some months since, you preferred a request to Mr. Harlow, soliciting your discharge from the service; and you may recollect I told you that without an order from 'Davy Jones' or the Admiralty, no discharge would you get until the cruise came to an end. Well, my lad, 'Davy Jones' came near sending you an order yesterday, I take it, for a few more moments' delay with the boats, and both you and the lady would have sunk fathoms deep in his capacious locker, and a few hours afterwards I actually received an Admiralty order for your discharge, and I am happy to say that I can give you a good character with your discharge

papers. It may not seem likely to be of much service to you just now; but, my good lad, always strive to do your duty in any situation, however humble, that you may be called to fill, and you will not repent it. You will get yourself ready to go on shore with me to see the admiral, and then you will be free from my control. Afterwards, I will take you to see the young lady you rescued from the water, who is anxious, personally, to thank you. I am a little curious to know your story, now I find your application for liberty was not a humbug; nevertheless, you need tell me, or the admiral, as little of it as you choose. You know best your own affairs. And now let me ask you one question: Have you missed anything—any little valuable that you have been accustomed to carry about your person?"

"I have lost a small miniature portrait of my mother, Sir Edward, that I have worn since childhood; and although I have sought everywhere for it, I have been unable to find it."

"I have that portrait, and last night I left it at the house where the ladies are stopping. You can get it when you go ashore; and now answer me another question. Had your mother any sisters?"

"I believe she had one, sir, who went to America shortly after her marriage, and whom my poor mother subsequently lost sight of. When my mother first emigrated to the United States, she made inquiry respecting her sister, but without effect. She may be living or dead—but so far as I know, I have but one relation living in the world, and that is my sister, who is now living in London."

"Humph," exclaimed the captain, musingly, and then he added—"Well, Fitz, or Fitzherbert, I will restore your name to you now; be ready to go on shore within an hour."

"Yes, sir," replied Adolphus, and he left the cabin with a lightened heart.

"I told you you were in luck, Fitz," repeated the first lieutenant, as the young man passed him on his way

forward; "but I hope there's no more chaps on board found to row in the same boat, or else the Thunderer will fall short of hands. No great loss neither, when we think of their being such a pack of greenhorns."

At the appointed time, Adolphus, dressed in his finest sailor attire, was ready to attend the captain on shore, and a smarter, handsomer-looking sailor lad never stepped over the side of a ship than he; the fanciful blue navy jacket, the white shirt with the collar thrown back, and loosely confined at the throat with a black ribbon; the ample and snow-white trowsers, and polished low-quartered shoes, and the low crowned, natty straw hat which completed his attire, set off his handsome figure and intelligent face to great advantage. He had become considerable of a favorite among his messmates, and many a kindly wish was expressed as he descended into the boat alongside, such as,

"Good bye, Fitz, old boy; a happy meeting with absent friends." "Look sharp after your sweetheart, Fitz; see that no land-lubbers have been athwart her hawse since you parted company; if they have, trounce 'em well. Heigh, ho! I should like to be a-going home to see my Peggy." "Luck go with you, Fitz; I wish I was a-going to ship in the same vessel with you; you're in luck, old fellow."

Such exclamations as these, and sundry rough, but affectionate slaps on the back, and squeezes from tarry, brawny fists, followed the young man as he bid adieu to the rude but honest fellows, with whom, for months, he had been associated.

On reaching the shore, Fitzherbert followed the captain to the admiral's office, and, a preliminary examination having taken place, the admiral and captain were satisfied, and Adolphus was once more free.

The admiral complimented him highly upon his promptitude and courage in saving the young lady's life, and at the same time placed in his hands the amount of pay due to him, adding twenty pounds, which Adolphus would accept only as a loan, to assist him in paying his

expenses to England. He briefly related to the admiral and captain the means, so far as he was cognizant of them, that were used to entrap him and convey him on board the seventy-four, and also satisfied the captain as regarded his expressed curiosity respecting the lawsuit which had induced his friend (myself) to take him to England.

"By George! Fitzherbert," said Sir Edward, "I didn't think I was so near hitting the mark when I asked if you were named after one of the royal dukes, and you so *naively* answered that you believed you were. I thought, my lad, you were either a great rogue or a great fool, and I hardly know which I detest the most on board my ship. Now put on your best looks and we'll go and see the ladies."

The captain and his *protege* then walked to the house in which the ladies had taken up their residence, and were immediately ushered into their presence, and the most grateful acknowledgments were rendered to Adolphus for his gallant services by all the ladies.

The American lady, who, as the reader may have surmised, was no other than our friend Mrs. Lyman, who was accompanied by her niece Juliet, and a nephew she had met in England, who was acting as *cicerone* to the ladies during their southern tour, looked at the young man earnestly for some moments and whispered something to her niece, who in her turn regarded him with curiosity and anxiety blended.

"Ask him, aunt," said the latter, after some earnest, low-toned conversation.

"May I ask you what was the maiden name of your mother, young gentleman? for such I think I may now call you," said Mrs. Lyman.

"Ellen Harcourt, ma'am," replied Adolphus.

"Good God! it is as I hoped, yet doubted," said Mrs. Lyman to her niece, in a low tone of voice, while the young lady blushed deeply and trembled nervously.

"And this," she continued, addressing Adolphus, and taking up the miniature which lay on the table before

her, "this miniature which Sir Edward Owen brought on shore yesterday, is your mother's portrait?"

"It is, ma'am. I have worn it round my neck as long as I can recollect, and was deeply grieved when I fancied I had lost it, as I believed, in the water."

"And your name, sir?"

"Is Adolphus Fitzherbert, ma'am. My mother accompanied my father to the United States a few years after her marriage, and both my parents died there while I was still a child, and shortly after the birth of my sister Georgiana."

"Did you ever hear your parents speak of your aunt Juliet?"

"I was but a child when they died, ma'am, as I have said; but I have an indistinct recollection of hearing my mother speak of an elder sister who had married a gentleman whose name I do not recollect, and who had gone to America some years before she was married, accompanied by her husband and his sister."

"That is sufficient, Adolphus," said the lady, much agitated. "Pardon me for calling you by your baptismal name; but I am your aunt, as well as the aunt of this young lady, who is the daughter of your late aunt Juliet, who married my brother, Mr. Hawthorne. I accompanied them to the United States. Adolphus, you yesterday saved your cousin's life," she added, taking the hand of the blushing and now weeping girl, and placing it in that of her newly found cousin. Actuated by the impulse of the moment, the warm-hearted and grateful girl kissed her cousin, and the kiss was warmly returned by Adolphus. As for Mrs. Lyman, having introduced the cousins and acknowledged her nephew's relationship, she did as women are apt to do in such cases, gave way to tears; and the English lady and her daughter wept from sympathy. Adolphus felt himself like one awakening from a dream. He could not trust his senses, and he gazed around him and passed his hand across his brow; while Captain Owen, fancying that he was *un de trop*, quietly left the room. When the ladies had reco-

vered their composure, and Adolphus had become fully satisfied that he was not really dreaming, a conversation was commenced which naturally soon became of great interest to the assembled party, and it was decided that the young man should write to his sister, to Mr. Hughes, and to myself, stating that he had obtained his discharge, and thanking us for our efforts in his behalf: also detailing the strange and romantic adventure he had met with. He then, it was arranged, should return with his aunt and cousin to Naples, and take the earliest opportunity of revisiting England. This matter settled for the present, I must leave Adolphus in the company of his newly found relatives, and speak of other parties who figure in my narrative.

Before I conclude this chapter, however, I will briefly relate the story of his kidnapping, told by Adolphus to the admiral and captain, and also subsequently told to his aunt and cousin, and to myself after his return to England:

He had been watching with great interest a review of the Household troops, in Hyde Park, and while so engaged a gentleman who stood near him had directed his attention to the principal manoeuvres of the large body of soldiers; also pointing out several persons of distinction, who, on horseback or in carriages, were watching the interesting spectacle. When the review was over, he felt very warm, for the day was sultry, and the dust created by the rapid evolutions of the cavalry and infantry had provoked a sensation of great thirst. At the request of the gentleman who had been so attentive to him in the Park, (seeing, as Adolphus supposed, that he was a stranger,) he had accompanied him to a tavern to obtain some refreshment. He recollected calling for some sandwiches and a glass of Burton ale, and there his recollection failed him. He indistinctly remembered, however, being in the company of several other persons dressed as sailors, who he fancied carried him from place to place, until they prevailed upon him to visit Greenwich Hospital. He seemed to have lost all power of volition of



his own, but knew that somehow or other he arrived at Greenwich, and entered, with his companions, either the Hospital or some other dwelling, where there was a great bustle going on. While here he became perfectly unconscious, and the next morning when he awoke he found himself handcuffed to a rough looking seaman, on board the tender, in company with a great number of other pairs, in a similar unpleasant predicament. His mouth was parched, and he felt a horrid sensation of sickness at the stomach; and came to the conclusion that, for some purpose or other, the first glass of ale he had taken had been drugged. However, he had little time for consideration, for in a few moments the tender was got under way, and she bore down alongside a large ship, with three rows of cannon, which he was told was a seventy-four he had shipped on board of on the previous evening, and had subsequently been placed in the tender and handcuffed, lest he might alter his mind and take French leave in the morning, after having legally sold himself when he had taken Her Majesty's shilling.

The reader is conversant with the remainder of his history up to the date of his obtaining his discharge from the admiral at Malta.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*The Abduction of the Heroine—A little private transaction between a Noble Lord and his Legal Adviser, and a Lawyer and his man of All Work.*

I now introduce the reader to the drawing-room of Mr. Hughes' house on Clapham Common. Mrs. Hughes is sitting with Georgiana at an open window which looks upon a neatly kept lawn, lavishly, but not too profusely bedecked with flower beds, from which, with good taste all the more gaudy specimens of the floral tribe have

been excluded; the less showy but really more beautiful moss-rose, the lily and the pink, intermingled with southern-wood and other perfumed shrubbery, setting off their delicate beauty like the frame-work to a picture, being more in keeping with the quiet, trim, compact little pleasure ground, than would have been the gay hollyhock, the many colored tulip, or the gorgeous sunflower. Around the bay window clings in rich profusion the creeping woodbine filling the air with its delicate perfume. The house is a lovely specimen of a suburban villa. Both ladies are engaged in conversation and at the same time watching the pedestrians and the carriages, as they pass along the road across the Common, a few hundred yards distant from the gate of Mr. Hughes' dwelling. The postman is seen crossing the road and making his way towards the house. Mrs. Hughes is the first to see him, and she points him out to Georgiana, saying playfully:

"Suppose, my dear, the man should bring news at last of the knight errant. Let us walk down to the gate and meet him."

Both the ladies rose and stepped from the window on to the lawn.

"A letter for Mrs. Hughes—threepence if you please," said the postman when they had met him.

Mrs. Hughes took the letter and paid the man, saying—

"A letter from Mr. Hughes, I declare! What can have caused him to write from the city? He has not been gone away three hours."

She broke the seal and read as follows:

"LINCOLN'S INN, ———."

"MY DEAR MARY: In the course of half an hour a carriage will arrive for Miss Fitzherbert, whom I wish to meet me at the 'Inn' at two o'clock precisely and I will then accompany her to 'Doctor's Commons.'

"I have not time to explain further than to say that I



have heard good news respecting Adolphus, and Miss F. will meet her brother at the 'Commons.'

"Pray desire her to prepare herself immediately, so as to cause no delay when the carriage calls. I would have sent John back with my gig, but this unexpected business will keep him employed in town. The man I send, however, has full directions how to proceed.

"I will bring Adolphus and Georgiana home with me this evening.

"Your affectionate husband,

"HUGHES H. HUGHES."

"Am I not a true prophet," exclaimed Mrs. Hughes, when, after having perused the note, she placed it in the hands of Georgiana. "Said I not we should have news of the wandering knight?"

A flush of joy passed over the pale features of the poor girl as she read the happy intelligence of her brother's safety and of his return, and without power to utter a word in reply to the playful badinage of Mrs. Hughes, she bounded into the house, and made instant preparations for her visit to the city.

In the course of a few minutes she was ready, and shortly afterwards a post chaise drove up to the gate, and the coachman descending from his seat, informed the ladies that he had come, by request of Mr. Hughes, to convey Miss Fitzherbert to Lincoln's Inn.

Mrs. Hughes kissed Georgiana, as the latter sprung gaily into the carriage, saying:

"Tell Mr. Hughes, dear, that I shall have a feast prepared to-night to welcome the return of the prodigal."

The carriage rolled away rapidly in the direction of the city, and Mrs. Hughes, after watching it until it was no longer visible, returned into the house.

For the remainder of the day the good lady was in a great state of curiosity and excitement, and as five o'clock, the hour of her husband's usual return home, drew near, she posted herself at the gate at the entrance of the lawn, where she could obtain a view of the well-

known gig as soon as it turned the angle of the road at a considerable distance from the house.

At length, she heard the rumble of wheels, and she knew the sound of those wheels almost as well as she knew the sound of her husband's footsteps. The approaching vehicle turned the angle of the road, and she knew the outline of the gig. They were coming at last, and to such a pitch of excitement had she wrought herself, that she could almost hear the pulsations of her heart as it seemed to thump violently in her bosom.

Nearer and nearer came the gig, and she could at length distinguish her husband and the servant man John; but neither of the young folks were with him, that was certain.

"They are coming afterwards in another carriage," said she to herself; "but it is strange Hughes did not bring them with him. I declare, if they are detained in town on business, I shall feel quite disappointed."

The gig stopped at the gate, and Mr. Hughes alighted from it.

"A delightful evening, dear Mary," said he, as he opened the gate and kissed his wife; "but the air is rather chilly, my love, for you to be standing here without your bonnet and shawl."

"What have you done with Adolphus and Georgiana, my dear?" said she, unheeding her husband's precautionary observations.

"With whom, Mary?"

"With Mr. and Miss Fitzherbert, dear?"

"What are you speaking of, Mary? I don't understand you."

"Have you not seen Georgiana?" said Mrs. Hughes, in amazement; "did you not meet the carriage? Has not Adolphus arrived?"

"Adolphus arrived! seen Miss Fitzherbert! met the carriage!" repeated Mr. Hughes; "why, my dear, you are dreaming. Pray, explain yourself."

"Now, Hughes, you shouldn't joke, when you see me in such a state of nervous anxiety. It's cruel of

you," exclaimed the poor woman; "you know how anxious I must have been after I received your letter, and sent Georgiana to meet you at Lincoln's Inn, according to your request."

"My dear Mary, for Heaven's sake, do cease this nonsense, and tell me what you are driving at; I sent you no letter, neither have I seen Miss Fitzherbert since breakfast time this morning; and, as to poor Adolphus, I and Mr. — are as much in the dark as ever."

Mrs. Hughes stood petrified with amazement. She evidently thought her husband was out of his senses; but, without replying, she drew from her pocket the letter she had received in the morning, and placed it in his hands.

Mr. Hughes took the letter, read it, and stood transfixed with astonishment and dismay. For some moments he could not speak. At length he said:

"Mary, this letter is a *fac simile* of my handwriting, but it is a forgery; I never wrote a line of it. Good God! to what means will these people resort. I see it all now; those who have made away with Adolphus have now taken this plan to get Georgiana into their power; but if there be a God in Heaven, and justice to be obtained on earth, I will move Heaven and earth but they shall suffer for this—they shall swing for it. Good God! what barefaced, what audacious depravity. Let us go in doors, Mary. I do not blame you—my confidential clerk would have been deceived by this handwriting—I should have been deceived myself. However, matters have now gone too far to be borne with any longer. The whole affair must be made public, and the police must be actively employed in ferreting out and bringing to punishment the actors in this most damnable conspiracy;" and thus speaking, he walked with his wife into the house.

The evening before the day on which the events took place which are above recorded, Mr. Gripes suddenly made his appearance at Alton Castle, and requested an

interview with the Earl of Shropshire, which was granted, and the earl and the lawyer met in the library.

"I had the honor, during our last interview, to inform your lordship," said Gripes, after some preliminary conversation, "that there was a London barrister of note concerned in this business relative to the heirs of Fitzherbert, and I said I should track him out. I have done so, my lord. The person is Mr. Hughes, of Lincoln's Inn, whom your lordship must have heard of. A dangerous customer to come into collision with; yet, one who is perfectly unused to the wiles and tricks practised in such cases as this in which I have the honor to act for your lordship (the earl scowled fiercely at this covert hint), and under the present circumstances, clever lawyer, as he is, he may find himself outwitted. The girl, I have learnt, is residing with him and his wife at Clapham Common, and I have had some conversation respecting this matter with that fellow Cheatem, and we have so managed that if your lordship is willing to advance a trifle—say three or four hundred pounds—we can get her taken out of the way, as cleverly as we managed to get rid of the boy. This done, we will open the suit—bring it before the court (your lordship's influence and wealth will go a good way toward this), and then a verdict, once decidedly given in our favor, we may snap our fingers at any future attempts that may be made to contest the property. What does your lordship think of my proposal?"

"I would have no objection, Gripes, of course, to get the girl out of the way, provided I received a pledge that no mischief should befall her; but, I wish to remind you, sir, that when I employed you and your partner, it was on condition that my name should not be mentioned in the matter. In fact, I told you that should it fail, you must be prepared wholly to bear the blame—altogether exonerating me, as, in any case, you will be well paid. I was therefore, much surprised to hear you make use of the expression you did just now, when you said you were acting for *me*, sir. I beg you to under-

stand that you are acting for yourself; and now, sir, on the conditions I have mentioned, viz.: that my name is not mentioned and that no harm befalls the girl, I will give you a check, not for three or four hundred, but for five hundred pounds—mind you, Gripes—to aid in the prosecution of a lawsuit, in which you are engaged, and to carry on which, you have sought my pecuniary aid, I being unaware of its nature; but believing it to be just and honorable."

"Exactly so my lord; nothing could be more explicit. Your lordship would, had your condition in life been a more humble one, have made an excellent lawyer."

"As to law, I know but little of its technicalities, Gripes," said the earl, rather pleased with the compliment; "but I flatter myself that I have considerable skill in the art of diplomacy."

The earl drew a check on Coutt's, and the wily lawyer returned to town by the railroad that same evening, and immediately sent for Cheatem, who, indeed, was on the *qui vive* of expectation, to hear how his superior in villainy had succeeded.

"Cheatem," said Gripes, when the two worthies met, "so far all is satisfactory; but the earl thought the charge rather high. I, however, got a check for two hundred from him. One-half of that sum is yours to-morrow evening, if you succeed, and the remainder will, perhaps, suffice to pay the expenses of the girl's journey, if used economically. Be very careful though, how you go to work. It's dangerous ground to tread upon, and everything must be so arranged as to admit of *no possibility of mishap*, or it had better be left alone altogether."

Cheatem left, expressing his confidence in his ability to carry the business safely through, and Gripes, as he took from his pocket-book the £500 check, exclaimed with glee:

"Well, I've made £300 clear by that job;" but, changing his tone, and shaking his head, as he paced to and fro in his narrow office, "it's ticklish ground to stand upon—very ticklish ground."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Cheatem shows his practical benevolence—A clever forgery, and a slight altercation between two knaves.*

LET the reader now accompany me to the office of Crawley Cheatem, Esquire, solicitor and attorney at law Globe-street, White Chapel-road. We have visited this office before, and its general aspect is not sufficiently enticing to render a second description of it desirable.

It was at an early hour of the day on which Mrs. Hughes received the forged letter which led to the abduction of Georgiana, that Cheatem was seated in his office with his clerk Wilkins, who looked as wretchedly poor and as seedy as ever, only, as the facetious expression runs, "a little more so." The door is locked and Cheatem and Wilkins are both in the inner office. The latter looks as if he had been up all night, for his eyelids are heavy, and he has altogether a wretched appearance. Under the table at which he is seated are strewn a number of sheets of letter paper, perhaps two or three quires, written upon, and then, apparently, condemned; several other sheets are lying beside him on the table on which he appears to have tried his hand with like ill success, and he is still busy copying with great care the peculiar style of handwriting of a law record which lies before him.

Cheatem takes up one sheet after the other and throws them aside impatiently. At length he examines one more narrowly and then rises and compares the writing with that of the manuscript before the clerk.

"That's something like it, Wilkins," says he, "rather too much flourish to the e's and s's, and the tails of the g's and y's are a *leetle* too long. There, that's famous,"

he added, as the clerk laid another sheet before him. "You've got the way of it now; capital. The signature is perfect. Now make a fair, free copy of that; not too carefully written you know, but rather as if you were writing in haste, and your £5 will have been earned, and I fancy you will consider you've made a good night's work of it. Now let me ask you one thing, Wilkins; don't you find your mind easier now that you have earned five pounds by your own skill and industry than if I had advanced it out of your salary as you requested me to do? You see you can now get your wife decently buried, (Mumps will do the job in good style for three pounds) and have a couple of sovereigns to spare to buy mourning for yourself and the children. Let me see, you've six children, and yourself makes seven. Sevens into forty is five times seven's thirty-five and five over; that'll be a five shilling suit for each of the children and leave ten shillings for yourself. Now, when the letter is sent off, you can take the rest of the day from ten till four o'clock, to buy your mourning and get your wife buried, provided you promise to be back punctually at four, as I shall have a number of affidavits for you to copy this evening; but you will get through, if you make haste, by nine o'clock, and then you can go home, as you have been up all night, and get a good sleep, and by-the-bye, Wilkins, Moses, in Houndsditch, is the place I should advise you to buy your mourning at. Moses will lump the whole lot, and furnish you with seven good respectable suits for two pounds. How lucky that I wanted this little job done, Wilkins. I felt very much for you when you told me your wife was dead, and begged me to advance a trifle in order that you might bury her without being beholden to the parish; but you see I have taken an oath never to lend or give, or even advance money—it's a bad practice—leads to improvidence and all sorts of bad habits; but my heart bled for you, Wilkins, and I thought to myself, 'Can't I help the poor fellow any way, without violating my conscience?' and then I thought how I wanted a *fac*

*simile* of Mr. Hughes's handwriting and signature, and I said, 'Wilkins is the man that can do the job if anybody can, and it will be a God-send to him,' so I made up my mind at once. Not but I could have got it done cheaper—I might have got the job done for three pound ten; and according to my business principles I *should* by rights have got it done for that—but under the circumstances I stretched a point—and if I have, in a measure, violated my oath by doing so—why, I hope—considering the occasion, I shall be pardoned. Now fold the letter and seal it neatly and direct it to Mrs. Hughes, Clapham Common. There, that'll do, and there's a spick and span new five pound note for you."

Wilkins took the note in his hand and looked wistfully at it. It was many years, poor fellow, since he had had so much money of his own, and yet his hand trembled as he held it and thought how he had earned it.

He had been too full of grief for the loss of his wife and the knowledge that he could not even watch by the side of her who had for years uncomplainingly shared his poverty and wretchedness, in consequence of the stern exaction of his attendance at the office, by his employer, and he knew too, that he was unfit for and unable to obtain other employment, and if he was discharged, his miserable pittance of fifteen shillings a week would cease and his children would starve, while by working as he had done, all night, while his wife lay dead at home, he could at least pay her the last sad duty of respect and love by burying her at his own expense, and thus avoiding a parish funeral, and perhaps, afterwards, the dissecting-room; while not one shilling would his employer advance for this purpose, though he had begged of him, with tears in his eyes, to do so. He had accepted the job, unknowing, unheeding what it was, and it was only now that it was completed that he felt the full sense of the enormity of the crime that he had been guilty of.

"What are you fumbling the paper about in that way for?" said Cheatem, who sat watching the motions of his

clerk; "one would think you had never felt a five-pun note before. Well, they *do* feel nice and crisp, don't they? What on earth are you trembling and shaking about?"

"Mr. Cheatem," replied the clerk, "for God's sake, sir, take back the money and allow me to destroy the letter and these papers that I have been writing on. I have been working mechanically, sir. I have not known what I was doing. It is only now that I feel I have been committing forgery. Good cannot come of it. Better my wife be buried by the parish; better my children and myself perish by starvation than linger on a wretched existence, sustained by the wages of crime."

Mr. Cheatem turned deadly pale, and bit his lips till the blood started.

"A pretty—cunning—hypocrite—you are," said he, slowly, through his clenched teeth, as he gazed at his trembling clerk, with the fury of a tiger expressed in his small twinkling black eyes. "You have been committing forgery, eh? *I know you have* my fine fellow, and I have my grasp upon your throat. I can squeeze you to death—so," he continued, as he pressed his thumb hard upon the table—"I can hang you. See here," exhibiting one of the spoiled sheets, "I have got this safe, as a proof. Here are the names, in your hand-writing—'George Wilkins,' 'Hughes H. Hughes,' 'Hughes H. Hughes,' 'George Wilkins'—so on to the bottom of the page, and the last signature resembles Mr. Hughes much more than the first one; don't you think it does? My fine fellow, I advise you to burn all the pieces of paper that are laying about—every scrap—but this letter *forged by you*, I will send to its destination, and this proof of your skill in chirography, I shall keep in my own possession; and you had better keep a still tongue in your head, for if I hear one whisper respecting this last night's work, the next hour will find you under lock and key in Newgate. This is the return you make for the charity of years; keeping such a scarecrow as *you* to disgrace my office, and paying you fifteen shillings a week, when,

in fact, you are not worth your salt. Take my advice, go home, bury your wife, and be thankful that a wretched thing like you have got clear of the expenses of keeping her, and pray God that your weazing children may soon follow her, and when they do, don't think of burying them, but sell them to the doctor. He! he! he!" and he laughed a hideous laugh, "that's how such as you should dispose of your dead children and your wives, too, for that matter. It's the only way they can ever become profitable to you. *You* must bury your wife at your *own* expense, forsooth! I've no patience with such pride. Now, my fine fellow, take that money, go off, and do as I have bid you, or in half an hour you will feel a policeman's grip at your throat, and your puny children, in the course of a few weeks may, perhaps, get a holiday from the workhouse, to go and see their father hanged. How do you fancy the picture I have drawn, eh?"

Wilkins took the note, put it in his pocket mechanically—for he was so bowed down with grief that he knew not what he was doing, and he dared not say anything further to increase the anger and renew the taunts of his tyrant—then he made the best of his way to his miserable dwelling.

Cheatem carefully burned every scrap of the loose paper that was laying about, and then having locked the door of the office, he put the key in his pocket and started off towards the city. In the course of half-an-hour he entered the office of Mr. Gripes, who, after wishing him good morning, thus addressed him:

"Well, Cheatem, have you been successful?"

Cheatem triumphantly placed the letter he had received from his clerk in Gripes' hands and bid him look at the superscription.

"Capital, upon my word," replied he, after carefully examining it. "Hughes's hand-writing to a T. Whose handiwork is this?"

"My clerk Wilkins," replied Cheatem. "Nothing could have been more *apropos* to the occasion. You



know Wilkins is a capital hand at imitating handwriting; but the fool pretends to be conscientious, and I have never before been able to get him to do a job of this kind for me; while, at the same time, I can't turn him away, for, in the first place, he knows too much, and then I only pay him fifteen shillings a week, and nobody else would work as he does for twenty shillings. Well, on Monday evening, when he reached home, he found the children all crying, and his wife, who has not been about since the last child was born, lying dead and cold in bed, the infant screaming on the bed by its dead mother's side. The next morning the fellow came to me with a long face, and had the impudence to ask me to lend him five pounds, in advance of his salary, in order that he might bury his wife; and he also asked for leave to remain away from the office till after the funeral. Of course, I refused him, and told him if he was not punctual to his duties, to the minute, as usual, I would send him adrift, to starve with his beggarly children. I can always humble the stupid fool by telling him that, for he thinks I am in earnest. He doesn't know the service he is to me. Shortly afterwards, you mentioned this scheme to me, and it struck me directly that Wilkins was the man to do it—and now was the time to make him do it. So I called him into my private office, and set him to work to imitate the specimen of handwriting you procured for me from Hughes's office, and told him if he would sit up all night until he could imitate it exactly, and freely, I would give him the five pounds he needed. He gladly consented, and I locked him in the office and went home. This morning I went to the office early, with a draft of the letter I wanted written, and got him to copy that repeatedly until he was perfect in it; and then, before he was aware of what he was doing, I made him add Mr. Hughes's signature and seal, and direct the letter. "When he had finished it, I gave him the five pounds, and then the fool began to grumble at having been compelled to commit forgery, as he called it. I soon quieted him, however, by a little

bullying and threatening, and after sending him off to bury his wife, I came here. I shall now put the letter—if you will return it to me—in the post-office near Mr. Hughes's place of business. The carriage will be sent as agreed upon, and the girl will be in Southampton by three o'clock to-morrow morning. The vessel will sail with the tide at daylight, and no one can get the slightest cue as to where the girl has gone. You, I suppose, have obtained the necessary letters for the captain of the ship from the earl?"

"Yes, I have; but, to tell you the truth, I am somewhat fearful of the result of this business. Suppose Wilkins should blab?"

"He dare not. I should charge him with forgery, and get him arrested at once."

"And then he would acknowledge having written a letter to Mrs. Hughes, imitating, at your request, her husband's handwriting, and forging his signature."

"Who would believe him, if he did? Besides, I believe the fool is so completely cut up, in consequence of his wife's death, that he scarcely knows what he has been doing."

"I am not so *sure* that no one would believe him. At all events, it would blow up the whole affair, and make a pretty *exposé*. You would have to make yourself scarce as soon as you could, and be lucky if you got off at all."

"I would?" exclaimed Cheatem, with his sardonic smile and demon-like expression of countenance that usually accompanied it. "I *would*! Well, I rather like that; it's cool and refreshing. *I would, eh!* Well, Mr. Gripes, and of course *you* would be entirely safe. Your character would remain unimpeachable, under any circumstances. Would it? Let me tell you, sir, *should* any difficulty arise through this last business, *you* row in the same boat, chained to the same oar with me, and if I mistake not, some persons, holding a very lofty head, will bear us company."

"Cheatem, I have had nothing to do with forging



that letter. I merely talked the subject over with you, and you carried it out. I wash my hands of it altogether, sir."

"And pray, who procured the letters from the earl, and who gave *you*, Mr. Gripes—immaculate as you are—*two* hundred pounds *you* say, although I shouldn't wonder if it were twice that amount, to carry out the project. Answer me that."

"As to the letters from the earl that you speak of, my dear Cheatem, how do I know what is contained in the letters a nobleman, high in rank, gives into my possession, to transmit for him, to some friends abroad; and as to the *two* hundred pounds—upon my honor, Cheatem, that was the whole amount—his lordship is excessively stingy—I have given him an acknowledgment that the sum is a loan, for the purpose of enabling me to carry on a lawsuit according to the belief of his lordship, perfectly honorable in its nature."

"And what about the hundred pounds I am to receive to-night?" exclaimed Cheatem.

"Why, my dear fellow, unless you choose to give me just such an acknowledgment as I gave the earl, my opinion is, that you won't *get* the hundred pounds, nor yet a penny towards it; and you will have to carry the job through at your own expense; for my boy has put the *letter* you showed me in the *post-office* before this, and therefore it is now too late to retract."

"Gripes," exclaimed Cheatem, "upon my soul you are a smart fellow; you are, indeed! You have outwitted me. However, it's no use complaining, and I have no doubt the thing will succeed famously. As soon as the carriage arrives with the girl at Phoenix Tavern at Knightsbridge, where the post boy will change horses, I will see him fairly started, and come to you and write the *acknowledgment*, and receive the hundred pounds. Then I will call at my office and set Wilkins three or four days work, to keep his mind fully employed, and leave by the train to-night for Southampton, so as to

arrange matters, and see the girl fairly off out of the country."

"That is talking sensibly, Cheatem. You see you are in my power, and it is better that we should do things in a friendly manner. When the girl is clear of London without any suspicion having been aroused, I will pay the hundred pounds; and if you manage matters so as to get her off to sea without exciting suspicion, I promise to give you twenty pounds more, though I should have to pay it out of my own pocket. Now, as I am somewhat busy for the present, I wish you good day."

The two rascals then parted, Gripes retiring to his private office, and Cheatem proceeding to put his plans into operation.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*The Convent of St. Euphemia—The Lady Abbess receives a visitor, who does not appear to be very welcome.*

In a lovely, romantic valley a few miles distant from the city of Turin, in Italy, lying a furlong or more off the public road, and closely secluded amidst groves of venerable forest trees, whose majestic girth and wide-spreading limbs betoken the growth of centuries, is situated the convent of Saint Euphemia. However rigid may be the mental discipline to which its inmates are subjected, there is nothing ascetic in its outward appearance; for even the somewhat solemn aspect of the stately monastic pile of buildings of which it is composed is strictly in keeping with the wild and yet beautiful scenery by which it is surrounded, and the grounds immediately contiguous to the convent are laid out in a style of artistic elegance that the princely occupant of a palace might well envy, for nature and art have both done their utmost to embellish the spot. The delicious fruits which the glorious climate and fer-

tile soil of Italy produce in such abundance hang in tempting festoons from hundreds of fruit trees of the choicest description, and the soft balmy air is redolent with the perfume of flowers; the shade afforded by the trees tempers the heat of the sun's rays, which might otherwise be too oppressive in a country where for the greater portion of the year the sky is without a cloud; and from amidst the thick foliage of the trees is heard from morn till night the song of birds, who in this safe and peaceful retreat have built their nests and reared their young from generation to generation, and who seem as though they sought to repay the hospitable security thus afforded them with the sweetest music that can enliven the solitude and enhance the charms which nature has so bountifully lavished.

The visitor to this lovely place—and though few are allowed to intrude upon the sanctity of the convent, most travellers visit the grounds—might almost fancy that here Rasselas might have found the happiness he sought for in vain, after having escaped from the lovely gardens of the Abyssinian palace.

Over this convent presides Sister Anathasia, or the Countess de Tivoli, the sister-in-law of the Earl of Shropshire, and here did Lady Mary Alton receive her early education under the direction of Father Anselmo, who, as I have heretofore mentioned, was for several years chaplain and confessor of the convent. Well might the youthful imagination of Lady Mary have been impressed with the beauty and repose she saw around her here; well might she long, after having passed through years of mental suffering, to return and pass the remainder of her life in this peaceful sylvan retreat, where, to outward appearance at least, it would seem impossible that the trials and troubles incident to worldly life could find admittance.

The Countess de Tivoli was the second daughter of the Prince de Tivoli, upon whose estates this convent and its grounds were situated, and who had sold it to the church for a very large sum of money with the condi-

tion, that a member of his family, if so inclined, should always preside over it. The eldest daughter of the prince had married the Earl of Shropshire, and on the death of her father—the youngest daughter having signified her intention to take the veil—had succeeded to the paternal estates, from which the earl still draws a considerable revenue.

I have already mentioned that the Countess of Shropshire died while Lady Mary was quite an infant, and it was in consequence of this sad occurrence that she was placed, at the Countess de Tivoli's request, under her care, until she was of sufficient age to receive instruction from competent teachers at her father's paternal mansion. As is customary, the Countess de Tivoli had, upon assuming the veil, taken the name of a favorite saint by which name she was always spoken of by the inmates of the convent, although abroad she was still known by the title which she inherited through her noble birth.

She was, although, of course, a strict Catholic, by no means bigoted or averse to cheerfulness, and as she was very fond of her little niece; the natural desire peculiar to woman to concentrate her love on one darling object, which had not been destroyed, if it had perhaps been deadened by her severe mental and religious training, being apparent in the mother's care she bestowed upon the infant; who thus was early taught to love her, and deeply as she sometimes felt the cold sternness of her father's disposition, in after life, to yearn, in secret, for the affection she so well remembered as having been lavished upon her when a child.

The elder sister of the Countess de Tivoli had been remarkable for her beauty; but such was not the case with sister Anathasia, who had suffered severely from the small pox when a child, and the fell disease had left its imprint upon her features, besides otherwise destroying their symmetry. I would not wish to speak disparagingly; but perhaps the knowledge that she possessed few or no personal attractions and was therefore, at least

until she was intimately known, and the sweetness of her disposition acknowledged, little calculated to win the affections of the gay gallants around her, was the primary cause of her having resolved to devote her life to the service of religion. To this determination she found no obstacle presented; her father was anxious that the convent should be ruled by one of his daughters, although the estate had passed from his hands, and he was not displeased (according to rumor) that his homely, and while young, somewhat sickly child, should thus find good reason to absent herself from the gay festivities of his palace.

It was late in the evening of an early autumn day; the vespers had been said or sung, and the inhabitants of this little community had retired to their own small, cell like apartments, when the sound of wheels was heard and a carriage drove up to the gate of the convent and the bell was loudly rung. Sister Anathasia was startled from the perusal of a large illuminated missal spread open on a table at which she was seated, and she was advanced to the door of her apartment with the intention of summoning the portress and inquiring the cause of this unexpected and unwonted intrusion; at that late hour, when she was met by the nun, upon whom, in turn, the duty of portress had fallen, who informed her that two ladies were below who had arrived in the company of a gentleman who had driven off in the carriage as soon as she had answered the summons of the bell.

"Two ladies! who can they be who seek the hospitality of the convent at this late hour, sister Bertha?" said the abbess.

"Indeed I know not, my lady," replied the nun; "but the elder lady bade me present this token to the lady abbess."

"Ah!" said the Abbess, taking from the hands of sister Bertha a signet ring and reading the inscription on the stone; "De Paoli! strange indeed that she should visit me, and in this guise. This however is a token that she would have secrecy observed regarding her visit."

These latter words were muttered in whispers rather than spoken; but after musing for a few moments, the abbess turned to the portress and said aloud: "Come they late or early we must not be deficient in the rites of hospitality to those of our own sex and our holy religion. Bertha, show the Countess—I mean usher the ladies, into my presence.

When the nun had retired to obey this order, the abbess paced the room in a rapid, impatient manner, which showed that however she might desire to extend the outward semblance of hospitality, she was by no means pleased at the arrival of her visitors.

"Who can it be that has come with the Countess," she thought; "it cannot surely be Maria; and yet something tells me it can be no other than she. Well, sister Maria is welcome back to St. Euphemia, albeit that she is bound in thralldom to those who I fear me are by their own zeal doing injury to our holy faith; for her conscience is too pure, if she still remains the sister Maria of former days, to permit herself calmly to do evil that good may come therefrom. But the countess; stern, haughty and repelling as is her brother: intrigue follows wherever she plants her footsteps. It is now years since I have seen her, and I had hoped when she married de Paoli that I had seen the last of her; but I must assume an appearance of composure. I must not betray before her, the prejudice I feel; besides, it would be churlish not to bid her welcome after so long an absence."

As these thoughts crossed her mind, the lady who has been already introduced to my readers as being concerned in the futile endeavor to carry off Georgiana from Philadelphia, made her appearance, and accompanied by Maria, who it will be recollected wrote the letter which planned the method of the poor girl's escape.

The meeting between the abbess and the countess was constrained, notwithstanding the endeavor of both to throw as much warmth and cordiality into it as possible. But sister Maria's reception was marked by a kindness of tone and a friendly solicitude that showed the abbess

really held her in high estimation, although she differed, as we have seen, from some of her peculiar tenets.

"You can leave us, sister Maria," said the Countess de Paoli, after the first greetings had been exchanged; "I would speak to the Lady Abbess alone. Perhaps her ladyship will at once permit you to go to your dormitory, for I am sure, that like me, you must be fatigued with the travel we have lately undergone."

Sister Anathasia desired Bertha to conduct the newly arrived visitor to her sleeping apartment, and as soon as the two nuns had quitted the room, the Countess de Paoli said—

"I thank you, my noble sister, that you so well recognized the symbol of secrecy I sent to you by the portress. I have reasons wherefore I would not wish it to be known that I am here at present, and after I have made certain disclosures to you, I must beg your permission immediately to retire from the convent, as I have business of importance on hand, which must be attended to to-morrow morning. I will, however, solicit an extension of your hospitality for sister Maria, who, with your permission, will, for the present, remain here. I can place implicit confidence in her discretion.

"You are doubtless astonished at receiving a visit from me after so long an absence, and at this untimely hour; but I will briefly explain the cause.—Know in the first place that the business on which I have come, although unhappily it has fallen through, closely concerns your noble brother-in-law and *my brother*—the Earl of Shropshire. It is long since you have seen your niece, Lady Mary Alton?"

"Long since!" replied the abbess. "Yes, it is long indeed since I have seen her. Years and years ago, when she was a mere child, she left me to join her father in England, and never since then has she paid me a visit, although my heart still yearns towards her as that of a mother to an absent child."

"And therefore you are deeply interested in her welfare?"

"Deeply so, indeed; more deeply so, I fear, than be- seems one whose affections should be centred on things heavenly, to the exclusion of aught else; but we cannot cast aside at pleasure, the weakness of our frail humanity."

"And yet, my lady, it is our duty to do so at the bidding of the Church, whose authority has been sanctioned by Heaven. We must heed not the vain affections of the flesh where duty bids us throw them off, even though we, in our weakness, fancy that we are doing that which is in itself evil. We must recollect always that there are those placed over us in saintly authority whose province it is to command as it is ours to obey. You sigh; I know that you are strangely opposed to some of the stricter principles of the Order to which I am bound in secular obedience, although I have not taken upon myself the vows of its holier, loftier duties. 'Those also serve who only stand and wait,' and it is necessary that some, while they bow to the behests of the church, should mingle, unsuspected, amidst the busy throng of the world. However, I will not dwell upon this subject. Your nieces' future prospects have been greatly clouded for some years past, in consequence of false claimants having risen up to wrest from her certain property she possesses, and which (mark this, Sister Anathasia) she will liberally dispense for the support of the church. The Earl of Shropshire naturally became alarmed at the demonstrations that were made by those who urged these parties on to this foul scheme, and he sought my assistance, promising, should I be successful, to bestow a considerable portion of the estate contiguous to this convent, on the church. I sought counsel from those who are bound to advise as I am to obey, and received their sanction to use my utmost influence to put a stop to the iniquitous proceedings. With this object in view, a search for certain parties in America was commenced; these parties being ignorant themselves of the part they were called upon to play; but their acquiescence being necessary to carry out the intentions of Lady Mary's enemies. They were found—a boy and a girl—and since it was

necessary for the prosecution of the scheme that they should together visit England, it was determined to secure the girl and bring her hither, where, by kind treatment, and a judicious course of proceeding, mingled with threats, provided she should continue to hanker after the evil advice of those who are seeking to lead her astray, it was hoped that she might be induced, eventually, to take the veil, and thus hiding herself from the world, effectually to baffle the evil-minded men who would lead her to assist in the committal of this evil. Not only would Lady Mary thus be rescued from the difficulties which threaten her, but a soul would be rescued from the schisms of heresy and received into the bosom of Mother Church. All was arranged, and the Count de Paoli and I, accompanied by Sister Maria, who had been deputed to act under our orders in this matter, had succeeded in discovering the girl, and had taken passage for Trieste, with a view of bringing her hither to be placed under your instruction and control. But, alas for the vanity of earthly endeavors! when we thought that we had succeeded, and the vessel had actually left the port of Philadelphia, the girl was missing. How, no one knows; for she was brought on board but a few minutes before, under the eye of Sister Maria. Whether any accident has befallen her, or whether she has been decoyed away from the vessel at the very moment of her departure from the wharf, we are ignorant; enough for us to know that our plans have, for the present, failed, and all has to be done over again."

"And in what degree am I concerned in this misadventure?" said the abbess.

"Only," replied the countess, "inasmuch, that believing you would be inclined to aid us (should the girl be still alive, and again fall into our power) when once you were made aware of the nature of the case and the danger which threatens your niece, I thought it advisable to make the disclosure to you, in order to prepare you for any event that may happen."

"Even now, I am ignorant of the real facts respecting my niece," replied the abbess.

"And the details are too long and too complicated for me to define them in this brief interview," said the countess. "It is enough that I tell you I have your brother-in-law's sanction, and the higher sanction of my Superiors, to ask you to receive the girl in the convent, should she again fall into our power; for we suspect that she is still living, and that treachery has been employed to effect her escape."

"If it be as you say, I will do my best to convince the child of the heavy guilt of her course, and the evil that must eventually grow out of it."

"And should she be delivered into your charge, you will retain her here, at least until you are satisfied that my suspicions are unfounded."

"I know not that I have a right even to do this; but I will use my utmost powers of persuasion to induce her willingly to comply with my desires."

"It is enough. I will now bid you farewell."

"Not surely at this late hour; it is near the stroke of midnight. It would not be seemly or safe to quit the convent alone at this hour."

"Be not alarmed, my dear Lady Abbess. My husband awaits me without, with a carriage, in which we will return to Turin, whence we came this evening. It is but four days since we landed at Trieste. I will thank you to order sister Bertha to let me out secretly, and will leave Sister Maria, for the present, with you. Sister Anathasia, I bid you farewell."

She left the chamber of the abbess, and in a few minutes the latter heard the sound of carriage wheels, which gradually died away in the distance.

The abbess then retired to her couch, much troubled in mind at the promise she had been by such plausible argument, led to make, for she was not at all satisfied of the truth of all she had heard. The reader has already seen that she mistrusted the Countess de Paoli; "but," said she, as she laid her head upon her pillow, "I will speak to sister Maria upon the subject to-morrow."



## CHAPTER XX.

*Cheatem appears in a new phase of villany—An elopement, but not to Gretna Green.*

WE now return to the abduction of Miss Fitzherbert, spoken of in a former chapter.

As the carriage in which Georgiana was seated drove rapidly towards the city, the young girl gave herself up to a delightful reverie, occasioned by the anticipated meeting with her brother. "Where had he been; what had he been doing, and what had now brought him back?" were questions which she revolved in her own mind, and then she answered them triumphantly by thinking—"but I shall soon hear all from his own lips"—and so the time passed away until the post-chaise stopped to change horses at Knightsbridge; when, ignorant as she was of London localities, and busy as were her thoughts, she still was surprised at the idea of changing horses, when she knew that it was but eight miles from Mr. Hughes's residence at Clapham to his office in London.

Somewhat alarmed, she opened the door of the chaise, and was about to put some questions to the postboy, when she was accosted by a rather elderly gentleman, with hair as white as driven snow, which gave him a venerable appearance, that his weasel-like features at the same time did their best to belie.

"Pardon me," said the gentleman, who was no other than our friend Cheatem, disguised in a white wig, and a decent suit of black clothes, instead of his own red hair and well-worn suit of rusty, seedy cloth, from which the original dye had well nigh faded; "pardon me, miss; may I ask if I have the pleasure of seeing Miss Fitzherbert?"

"My name is Fitzherbert, sir," said Georgiana, not half liking the appearance of the interrogator, notwithstanding his made-up respectability.

"I am happy to make your acquaintance, miss. I am deputed on the part of Mr. Hughes to inform you that your brother Adolphus has been unexpectedly detained at Southampton, and he has gone there to meet him. He could not wait to see you, but he requested me to escort you thither, as you will perceive when you have read this letter."

He presented her a note, written in the handwriting of Mr. Hughes, which ran as follows:

"Miss Fitzherbert will excuse my having failed to meet her as I have promised in the note I sent to Clapham this morning; but the unexpected detention of her brother at Southampton has induced me to hasten thither without losing a moment's time. I have requested Mr. Wilson, a particular friend, to whose care Miss F. may safely confide herself, to accompany her to Southampton, at which place her brother and I will meet her. I have sent a note to Mrs. Hughes, apprising her of this change in my intentions.

"HUGHES H. HUGHES.  
"Lincoln's Inn—3 P. M."

The perusal of this note at once quieted the misgivings that had already begun to fill the mind of Georgiana with apprehension. Nevertheless, she could not but think the proceedings rather strange. "Why," thought she, "did the carriage stop here instead of proceeding to Mr. Hughes's office, at Lincoln's Inn? and why should he have sent a friend to meet me at the stage office, instead of requesting him to meet me at his own chambers?" Still, the note, in connection with that which had been received by Mrs. Hughes in the morning, plainly showed that all was right. However, she could not help putting the questions to her companion de



*voyage*, who had already ensconced himself in the post-chaise by her side.

"My dear Miss," replied Cheatem, alias Wilson, "it will be necessary for us to change horses several times in the course of the journey, and this is the first post-house, and the one nearest to Lincoln's Inn. In meeting you here, I have saved much delay, and as Mr. Hughes has the start of us he wished me to save as much time as possible."

(They were full two miles distant from Lincoln's Inn, and quite in a contrary direction from Clapham; but that, of course, Miss Fitzherbert was entirely ignorant of, as she knew nothing of the localities of London.)

"I wish I had only known that before I left Clapham," she replied, "and then I would have made preparations for a longer journey, for I am really now quite unprepared with any change of clothing."

"It must, of course, be a source of annoyance to a lady to undertake a journey at so short a warning," replied Cheatem, "but it will scarcely be twenty-four hours before you are back again in London with your brother and Mr. Hughes; therefore, I trust you will experience little inconvenience."

"At any rate, I must make the best of any I may experience," replied Georgiana, gaily, and she really felt not a little girlish delight at the thought of such a singular and unexpected escapade. "When shall we arrive at Southampton?" continued she, after some moments silence.

"I should imagine about three o'clock to-morrow morning," replied her companion.

"And shall we have to travel all night? that will, indeed, be something new to me here," and then a shade of melancholy crossed her countenance as she thought how once before she had made a midnight journey in the United States, under widely different circumstances; "then," she thought, "I did meet my brother, at last, though I thought I was going away from him for ever: I am now going purposely to meet him," and she fell

into a train of thought, superinduced by the reflections she had made, until about nine o'clock, when the post-chaise stopped at an hotel at Windsor, where she was aroused from her reverie by her companion asking her if she would now alight and take some supper, before they proceeded on the next stage of their journey.

This she was glad to do, for she had fasted since breakfast time, the excitement of her mind preventing her until now from feeling inclined to eat; but now she felt really hungry. Having dispatched a hasty and plain, but substantial meal, Cheatem and his unconscious victim again entered the post-chaise, and the rascally lawyer, having partaken at the hotel, of two or three glasses of whisky punch, was soon sound asleep.

Not so, however, his companion. The novelty of her situation, and the many strange thoughts that came crowding into her mind as the post-chaise rolled rapidly and smoothly along the road, kept her awake throughout the whole night; nor did she experience the least sense of weariness; for the road from Windsor to Southampton passes through some of the finest scenery in England, and towns and populous villages are thickly interspersed. The night was moonlight, and, altogether, to Georgiana the journey was scarcely less delightful than it was novel. At length, about half-past three o'clock, when the dawn of day had just begun to show symptoms of its approach, she caught from the summit of a rising ground, over which the post-chaise was passing, a distant view of the fine harbor of Southampton and the sea beyond, apparently smooth and glistening as a polished mirror, and reflecting on its surface the golden tints of the sun which had just shown its rim above the horizon. A turn in the road shut out the brilliant picture from view, and in twenty minutes more they entered Southampton, just as Cheatem had awoke from his long nap.

The post-chaise stopped at the hotel.

"This is Southampton, I do believe," said Cheatem,

who was rubbing his eyes and arranging his clothing, being as yet but half awake.

"Southampton, sir," said the postboy, opening the door, and touching his hat, "Please to remember the postboy, your honor."

Cheatem placed a sovereign in the man's hand.

"You have driven famously, my good fellow," said he, "and managed matters very well. There is a sovereign, over and above your bargain."

"Thank your honor, and when you want another little job like this done, I'm on hand. You'll remember Jack Horton, your honor."

"Aye, aye, my man," replied Cheatem, as after this confab with the postboy, which had taken place on the steps of the hotel, he assisted Georgiana to alight.

"A runaway match, I'll be bound," said the post boy, as he looked on at some little distance: "but the bridegroom be a kveer old 'un, for sitch a jolly young bride. 'Puzzles me as they didn't make headway to Gretna; my osses knows every inch o' that road: Howsomever may hap it be safer to place salt vater atween them and the young 'uns dadd, who'se sure to be arter her on the old Gretna road. I guess this be a new dodge."

"Are my brother and Mr. Hughes here?" exclaimed Georgiana, as she ascended the steps in front of the entrance to the hotel.

"I do not see them," replied Cheatem: "but I will conduct you to a place of safety, and then endeavor to find them out: May be, they are expecting us at some other hotel."

He led Georgiana into the ladies waiting-room, and having ordered a cup of coffee to be brought to her, requested her to wait his return with her brother and Mr. Hughes.

In a few moments he returned, saying that he had been informed that Mr. Hughes had gone on board a brig lying in the harbor, on board of which was Adolphus, who had been on a sea voyage, and he proposed

that they they should hire a boat and go on board and surprise them; "unless," he added, "you are too tired, Miss Fitzherbert?"

"Not at all," she replied, "indeed, I should like it above all things. The harbor looked so calm and beautiful as we came over the hill just before we entered the town, and Adolphus will be so surprised."

"You are quite a heroine, Miss Fitzherbert, I declare," said Cheatem, with an affectation of gallantry, as they sallied from the hotel and walked towards the beach, where a number of boats were waiting to be hired.

"Boat! yer honor—boat! lady—a fine morning for a row in the bay," was the salutation from twenty voices as they drew near.

"We wish to be put on board that Italian brig," said Cheatem, addressing one of the boatmen.

"All right, sir," said the man addressed; "capital boat mine, sir. Have you on board in less than five minutes. Easy, sir; take care how you step along the plank—so—that's well. Now, my pretty young lady, let an old sailor carry you across the plank, and sit you down beside your father, or else may be you'll wet your pretty feet. There, don't be frightened; lor bless you! I've got darters at home older nor you, and Jim Crispo's never the man to see a lady inconvenienced when his strong arm can perwent it."

Having been safely placed in the boat, the sturdy old sailor bent to his oars and in a few moments they were alongside the brig. One of the crew assisted the young lady up the side, followed by Cheatem, who, when he had seen her safely landed on the deck, and exchanged signals with a middle aged female who was on board, immediately, somewhat to the surprise of the boatman, again descended into the boat and desired him to pull ashore. At the same moment the order was given on board the brig in Italian, to "brace for'ard the main yard;" for the main yard had been backed, to allow of the approach of the boat, and the vessel glided swiftly out of the bay before a light favorable breeze.

There was a scream of hopeless agony and despair heard from on board the vessel, and then the distance was too great to hear more. The breeze had separated the brig far apart from the boat. The boatman appeared bewildered.

"Pull ashore, my man," said Cheatem.

"Well, this be a strange how d'ye do," said the old seaman, scratching his head, "blow me if I know what to make on it."

"The poor girl is insane," replied Cheatem, "she has been for some time under my care, and now her parents wish her to return to them, in hopes that the climate of Italy, where they are at present residing, may be beneficial to her. She has become so attached to me, that it was necessary to employ this little ruse to get her off quietly. Poor child! I shall be glad to hear that the change of air and scenery does her good; but I fear her case is incurable."

"Only to think on't," said the boatman, as he bent to his oars, "such a sweet, pretty young lady to be mad, and she so mild and gentle spoken, too. Her father and mother are to be pitied, poor things, as much as she herself. Do you know, sir, I tho't as how you were her father at first, tho' to tell the truth on't, there be'ant much resemblance between you; but you, I s'pose, be a mad doctor?"

"Yes, my good fellow," replied Cheatem.

"You must see a powerful heap o' orful sights," said the sailor, as the boat grounded on the beach and Cheatem stepped on shore. "Good-day, your honor, and thankee," added the boatman, as Cheatem, in high glee at his success, handed him half a crown, over and above his fare.

The sailor went home to tell his good fortune to his wife and family, pondering however, as he strolled carelessly along, on the supposed sad malady of the hapless lady, and Cheatem hastened back to London, where he speedily sought out his friend Gripes, showed satisfactory proof of the success of his adventure, and received the promised reward.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Another Visitor to the Convent of St. Euphemia—The Abbess takes charge of a Novice, whom she believes better fitted for a Lunatic Asylum.*

SOME months after the events had transpired, which are recorded in the foregoing chapter, a carriage, with the windows and blinds closely drawn, drove up the avenue to the convent of Saint Euphemia, heretofore described; the hall bell was rung and the portress admitted two females, the elder of whom demanded an audience of the Lady Abbess.

This was granted and she was shown into an antechamber, where she was met by sister Anathasia, having left her younger companion in the great hall of the convent, in charge of the portress.

The young female did not appear to be more than twenty years of age, and it was evident some secret sorrow was preying upon her mind, for she sighed deeply at times and held her head bowed down upon her breast; but she was so closely veiled that the portress, though not a little curious as became her sex, even in a convent, could not obtain a glimpse of her features.

The portress made one or two attempts to draw the lady into conversation, and to ascertain the nature of the business on which she and her companion had visited the convent; but receiving only evasive and brief replies, she soon tired of her scrutiny, and with a slight toss of the head, indicating insulted dignity, she set herself to work again at the sewing she was employed upon while engaged in the almost sinecure duty of portress, for the visits to the convent were rare.

Leaving the sister and the youthful visitor, each to

the enjoyment of their own thoughts, since no conversation appears likely to ensue, we will follow the elderly female into the presence of the abbess.—

"I have the honor," said she, in Italian, "to see the Lady Abbess?" as the Countess de Tivoli entered the room.

"I am Sister Anathasia, whose humble duty it is to preside over the convent of Saint Euphemia," was the reply.

"Your ladyship some time since received a visit from the Countess de Paoli, who mentioned to you some incidents relative to a young female, who had been inveigled by some designing persons into fraudulently representing herself as the heiress of a certain property of immense rental, which belongs to your niece, Lady Mary Alton, or rather I should say, which will be hers on the event of her marriage?"

"I did receive a visit from the Countess de Paoli; it must be three months since, and she mentioned something of this kind to me; although I do not recollect that she made any allusion to the marriage of my niece. If I understood her aright, the property she spoke of as sought to be despoiled by fraudulent parties, belonged to my niece in her own right."

"The countess was mistaken, signora, or probably she was not thoroughly acquainted with the merits of the case. The property of right belongs to Lord Henry Fitzherbert; but there is a lien upon it, which will prevent his taking possession, unless he likewise marries the lady Mary."

"There must be some singular misconception somewhere," replied the abbess, "Lady Mary Alton has repeatedly written to me stating her desire to devote the remainder of her days to a religious life, within the walls of this peaceful convent, and has asserted frequently that she had given up all idea of marriage, since she experienced a blight of her youthful affections years ago."

"Circumstances have since occurred, my lady, to alter her intentions; but the purpose for which I have

now sought an interview is to inform you that the young female of whom the countess spoke is now in attendance in the hall, and it is the wish of those most deeply interested in your niece's welfare and happiness that she should be detained here, at least until your ladyship hears further from the Earl of Shropshire, or the Countess de Paoli. The mind of this young woman, I am sorry to say, is much shattered, and she talks strangely of matters which have no foundation save in her own excited fancy. It is no doubt for this reason she has been chosen as the dupe of designing men to carry out their infamous plot as regards your niece. Her absence, and their ignorance of her place of seclusion, will thwart the designs of those unprincipled persons and in due time her mind may regain its balance, and she may be induced to take the veil or she may be released from durance; in the former case, the Earl of Shropshire will liberally reimburse the convent for the extra charge incurred: in the latter, his lordship will supply the young woman with means to earn her future living in her own proper station of life."

"I know not by what right the Earl of Shropshire or the Countess de Paoli assume the control of this convent," said the abbess, somewhat haughtily, "nor for what reason I should be placed in the position of a keeper over one, who, according to your own admission, is the more fitting occupant of a lunatic asylum, than a religious house; nor do I know who you are who make these propositions to me."

"Will your ladyship be pleased to read this letter?" was the reply of the stranger, who was perfectly unmoved at the wrath of the superior of the convent.

"The Countess de Tivoli took the letter and examined the seal, which bore the crest of the Earl of Shropshire, she then tore open the envelope, and read as follows:—

"Dear sister, by the holy ties of religion, as well as by those of consanguinity, I herewith introduce to your

notice, Louisa Tirozzi—a lay sister of the Holy Order of Jesus—one in whom every trust and confidence may be placed, and one highly respected by my sister, the Countess de Paoli. She brings with her an unhappy young woman, of whom, as de Paoli has informed me, you have already heard; one whom, on account of her sad mental affliction, has been deemed by my personal enemies, as well as the enemies of our mutual Holy Faith, a fitting instrument to carry out a scheme of fraud of the most atrocious nature, of which, *you* sister, in your peaceful and happy seclusion, and in your ignorance of the vice and wickedness of the world, can form no conception. I have succeeded in rescuing the unfortunate young woman out of the hands of those wicked and designing men, and think it advisable as well for her own sake as for the welfare of my daughter, your niece, that she should, for the present, be removed from the country. Perhaps in the peaceful and happy solitude of the convent of Saint Euphemia, she may in time recover the tone of her mind, and you will not only benefit an unfortunate girl, but likewise serve your niece, Lady Mary, by receiving her. I need not say that I will gladly pay any expenses that may be incurred on the poor girl's account, as I consider her merely the unwilling dupe of others, who alone are really guilty. The girl is an American, and has been schooled to pass herself off under the name of Fitzherbert, and is given to talk wildly of a brother she calls Adolphus, and of other strange matters which have existence only in her own imagination. Is it not strange how easily insane persons are trained to follow a course of systematic deceit? Yet it is easily accounted for: for the frailty of their minds leads them to identify themselves with any fable they have been schooled in.

"Lady Mary Alton sends her love to her beloved aunt, and were it not that circumstances have occurred which have led her to alter her mind as regards the intentions of years, she would wish to pass the latter part of her life as she passed the earliest, happiest days of her youth in the peaceful convent of St. Euphemia,

under the guardianship of the aunt she has never ceased to remember with feelings of earnest affection. She will shortly write and fully explain that which I have only hinted at—the cause of her having changed her mind.

"Trusting that your ladyship may long preside over the convent which has so thriven beneath your happy rule, and that you will lend your assistance to your niece in this present difficulty, I sign myself, with feelings of the deepest respect, your unworthy brother-in-law,  
SHROPSHIRE."

Having finished the perusal of this letter, Sister Anathasia mused for some moments. "There surely can be nothing wrong," she thought to herself, "in carrying out the request of my sister's brother, for the sake of my beloved niece. Indeed, if it be, as it is stated—and why should I think otherwise?—it will be an act of charity to a poor, unfortunate of my own sex, who may thus, by my influence be rescued from the vortex of crime, towards which evil-minded men are guiding her. Yet, it is strange, this alteration of purpose on the part of my niece! and singular that she has not addressed me a line! However, I will receive and duly care for the unhappy girl." Then, turning to the female who had been introduced through the letter as Louisa Tirozzi, she said:

"Pardon me for a sharpness of tone and a suspicion which ill becomes any one, and least of all, one in my position. I will receive the young person my brother-in-law has sent me. Perhaps you had better call her up stairs and I will see her at once."

"My Lady Abbess," replied the female, "the Earl of Shropshire, and my lady the Countess of Paoli, will be laid under deep obligations to you for this condescension on your part, but perhaps it would be as well that I should quit the convent without seeing the poor child; for she, like most unfortunates in her situation, has her peculiar antipathies, and is most violent when I am present. For some days past she has become

subdued in temper, for I have, with some difficulty, at last taught her that resistance would be useless; but seeing me in the presence of a stranger, may cause a renewal of her paroxysms."

"Be it so then. You can retire and tell those who have employed you, that I will do my best to aid them in all that my conscience tells me is right, and I will see the young woman alone. She is harmless I hope?"

"Perfectly harmless, my Lady Abbess. It is only in unmeaning words and fancies that her malady finds vent, and she thinks, poor girl, that I am one of those who have wronged her and torn her away from the brother and friends she fancies she possesses."

"But I thought the Countess de Paoli said she had a brother. If I mistake not, she spoke of two dupes in this concerted villany—a boy and a girl."

"She has a brother, my Lady Abbess, but he is an American, and she fancies that he came to England with her, and has been decoyed away or murdered."

"Poor, unhappy child!" replied the abbess.

"Then, now I will bid your ladyship farewell," said the woman; and as she turned to quit the apartment, she added: "Peace be with this holy house of religion."

"Peace be with you," replied sister Anathasia; and as soon as her visitor had quitted the convent, she sent for the unfortunate girl.

Before proceeding further with my narrative, I may as well state that the woman Tirozzi, as the reader has probably already surmised, was the female who had appeared on the deck of the Italian brig when Cheatem had carried his victim on board, and who had been charged to take care of Georgiana on her passage, and to see her safe into the convent, by Cheatem. She was a woman capable of the committal of any atrocity, and possessed sufficient intelligence, cunning and audacity to enable her to carry through almost any scheme she took in hand. She had been previously employed in Italy and in England, by the Countess de Paoli, who was a Jesuitical *intriguante* of the most skillful and de-

termined character; and she had recommended this woman, then in London, to the earl, who had mentioned her to Gripes, who, in his turn, had spoken of her to his *fac totum*, Cheatem; and when the latter had determined upon his plan, he had visited and arranged matters with the woman Tirozzi, and sent her on board an Italian brig, then about sailing from the St. Catherine's Dock, London, for Italy, and which was to touch, on her way down channel, at Southampton. When Georgiana found herself entrapped on board the brig, she felt all her courage fail her, and considered herself as lost forever to her friends. She gave one piercing shriek of agony, and then fell fainting on the deck. She was conveyed to the cabin, under the direction of Tirozzi, by the captain's orders, he having been given to understand by Cheatem, before he left London, that he was to receive on board his vessel, at Southampton, a young lady from a lunatic asylum, who was to be taken to her friends at Turin.

When Georgiana came to herself, she found Tirozzi watching by her side; and as soon as she saw the poor girl's eyes open, she addressed her in broken English, desiring her not to be alarmed, for she would be well treated and taken care of. It was in vain she sought to discover whither she was being carried to, or what was in store for her, and she was reduced to the necessity of waiting patiently and in silent agony until matters explained themselves. She endeavored to interest the captain, who seemed a good-natured man, in her behalf; and one day, when Tirozzi was asleep in the cabin, she forced herself into conversation with him, and began to tell him the story of her woes; but he spoke and understood but little English, and although he listened good humoredly, and, as the poor girl hoped, interestedly, she had the mortification of seeing him, after she had concluded her pathetic narrative, turn to his mate, when he thought she did not observe him, and place his finger significantly upon his forehead, while at the same time



his lips forced themselves into a smile, in which pity and irony were blended.

The truth then flashed upon the unhappy girl.

"They believe that I am mad," she thought to herself; "I can no longer bear this wrong, in patience;" and she sought the cabin of Tirozzi, where she gave vent to a torrent of indignant reproaches. The heartless, infamous woman used this occasion to her own advantage, and she subsequently, in many little unseen ways, so annoyed her charge, that she almost tortured her into real madness—nay, sometimes Georgiana thought to herself, "can it be possible that I am insane—that my past life has been a dream? If this be so, why should I care to live? Death would be a relief to me. Oh, God! relieve me of this horrible doubt—deliver me from my oppressors, or take me to thyself!" and she would press her fevered hands to her aching forehead.

In due time, after a favorable passage, the vessel arrived at her port of destination, and Tirozzi hastened with her charge to the convent, carrying with her, as we have seen, a letter from the Earl of Shropshire to the abbess, his sister-in-law.

Georgiana had by this time become completely subdued, as Tirozzi said to the abbess, and she followed the bidding of her keeper without an outward murmur. Her agony had reached and passed its climax, and now she thought any change of scene from the dirty, close, crowded little vessel, which would again allow her to breathe the pure air of heaven were preferable. Thus, in the company of Tirozzi, she arrived at the convent. As I mentioned above, the abbess (after Tirozzi had quitted the convent, having successfully completed her share of the work) sent for Georgiana, who immediately answered the summons.

"Do you speak Italian, my poor child?" said the abbess, speaking in that language.

Georgiana shook her head.

"Then," continued the abbess, "I must speak to you in such English as I can string together. Poor child,"

she added in Italian, after pitifully contemplating her for a few moments, "so young, so gentle-looking, and so pretty! and to be afflicted with so frightful a malady." Then she again spoke in English—"What is your name, my poor girl?"

"Georgiana Fitzherbert," signora.

The abbess smiled mournfully, and shook her head.

"Shall you be happy here, think you, Georgiana?" she continued.

"Indeed, signora," said Miss Fitzherbert, reassured by the kindly tones and benevolent countenance of her interrogator, "I shall be happier if I stay here than if I were to be again placed under the charge of that bad, deceitful woman who received me on board the ship in which I was conveyed from England; but I cannot know happiness until I hear of my brother, and know his fate; and until I am again restored to my friends."

"Poor child! poor child!" sighed the kind-hearted abbess, "what I have heard respecting her insanity is indeed too true." Then she added—"if you think you would be happier with me, my daughter, you may stay here, and perhaps by and by you may learn to be *really* happy in this place. Now go, my child, take some food and refreshment after your weary journey, and, if you feel tired, retire to rest."

And summoning one of the sisters, she placed the poor girl in her charge, after having exchanged some whispered conversation.

"You look kind and your words are gentle in their tone, signora," said Georgiana, as she was about to leave the room with the sister, "tell me then, why and for what purpose I have been brought hither—and shall I again be placed under the charge of Signora Tirozzi?"

"I cannot now reply to your first question, my daughter," said the abbess, sadly; "as to the second one, Signora Tirozzi has left the convent and left you behind, under my care, so you may rest easy as regards her."

"Thank heaven for that mercy," said Georgiana, as in

charge of the attendant sister, she left the room, and retired to the confectionary.

The reader will recollect that in a former chapter it was mentioned that sister Maria was an inmate of the convent, having been left there by the Countess de Paoli on the occasion of her visit to the Abbess.—Georgiana had been but a few days in the convent when she recognized sister Maria, as the female who had procured her liberation from the machinations of her enemies at Philadelphia. The recognition took place in the chapel during the solemnization of the morning orisons, and was mutual. Georgiana could scarcely express an exclamation of delight, but Maria placed her fingers to her lips and made signs to her to be silent. In the course of the day, however, she found means to enter into conversation with her, and Georgiana related all that had befallen her since their last interview.

In sister Maria she found a listener who gave her ready credence; but she advised her to be patient and things would work together for her release, and especially to cultivate the favor of the abbess, who thus would be led to converse with her, and perhaps, by and by, would begin to doubt the truth of her alleged insanity, (for it had been hinted abroad through the convent, that the new novice was insane) and then sister Anathasia would listen with interest to her story; "and she is too good a lady," added sister Maria, "to willingly connive at any unjust proceedings. As for myself I dare not, for reasons that I cannot explain to you (but which bind me by a solemn vow) *openly* do anything in your behalf; but the time may arrive when I may be of service to you, and now, my dear girl, go, and do not be seen too anxiously to seek my companionship. When I see a good opportunity we will converse together."

Some weeks passed away and Georgiana followed the advice she had received and had already begun to attract the favorable notice of the kind-hearted abbess, who still had no doubt of her pupil's insanity, but who began to flatter herself that her teachings and her gentle

usage would eventually completely eradicate the malady; but with all the kindness with which she was treated, these weeks seemed years in length to Georgiana, who brooded despondingly over her heavy and complicated misfortunes.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*A party visit the Convent—The unexpected meeting of the Brother and Sister—Georgiana is released from the Convent—Matters look badly for the Conspirators.*

IN the course of a week from the introduction of Adolphus to his newly-found aunt and cousin, related in a preceding chapter, the party returned to Naples. Adolphus had written, as I believe I have already stated, to his friends in England, and had told them, and myself among the number, to direct his letters to Paris, where he might find them on his arrival at that city on his way to England.

After quitting Naples, the party proceeded to Rome, and thence to various other Italian cities of note. At length they arrived at Turin, where Mrs. Lyman determined to remain for a few days, as she was expecting to receive letters from America, which she had directed to be addressed to her there.

The scenery around the city of Turin is remarkably beautiful, and the young folks of the party rode out every morning in the environs of the city.

"What a paradise of a spot is that," said Juliet, one morning to her two cousins, as they passed by the grounds of the Convent of St. Euphemia. "What place can it be, I wonder? See, you can just perceive, embowered amidst the thick foliage of yonder clumps of trees, the roof of some large building, and now, through the opening we have just reached, I can discern the upper windows of a large mansion. I should like to know who resides there. It must be the palace of some Italian

prince or nobleman of rank and wealth. See, Adolphus and Robert," (addressing her cousins,) "see the deer bounding to and fro upon the smooth lawns; and look there, Anna, (turning to her English friend,) is not that a noble buck that is now staring so boldly at our cavalcade. I must find out who lives there, in order that I may jot it down in my note-book."

"Blot it down in your note-book, you should have said, Juliet," exclaimed her cousin Robert, laughingly; "for I caught a glimpse of your note-book, as you call it, the other day, and upon my honor, it put me in mind of the remarks of somebody, I forget whom, upon the hand-writing of Lord Byron. He said it looked for all the world as though a drunken spider had fallen into an ink bottle, and then, after getting out, soaked with the dark fluid, had staggered over the paper."

"What a very ungallant speech, Robert. I am sure Adolphus would never have been guilty of such an unjust criticism. I assure you I take great pride in my note-book."

"And what may you intend to make out of it, my fair cousin; do you intend to publish 'Notes of Travel, by an American Lady,' *a la Trollope*, after you get back to the wild lands of Virginia?"

"No, sir, I do not; and as to those wild lands of Virginia, which you speak so disparagingly of at times, I assure you neither Italy or England have more glorious scenery to boast of than may there be found. Now, to make amends for your rudeness, just leap that low fence and penetrate into the grounds until you meet some one of the domestics, and inquire for me to whom this lovely place belongs?"

"And get a bullet, or an inch of cold steel into my body for my pains. No, my fair cousin, I have no fancy for trespassing on Italian grounds."

"Well, I declare! you are indeed excessively polite this morning. If I had asked Adolphus, he would have had his horse over the fence in a moment. I *would* ask him, only he has ridden on ahead with Anna."

"Oh! to be sure, Adolphus is everything in your eyes, Juliet; only he doesn't happen to be in the way when he is wanted to make these gallant demonstrations. However, I will for once oblige you, so here goes."

Just, however, as the young man was reining back his horse to prepare for the leap, a peasant passed on his way to market in the city, and to him Juliet preferred her request, asking him if he knew to whom that mansion and those beautiful grounds belonged.

"That is the convent of Saint Euphemia, *signorina*," replied the man, "and the grounds you are admiring belong to the convent."

"The convent of St. Euphemia! oh! I should so like to see a convent. Can we not gain admittance, at least to the grounds?"

"*Si Signorina*, if you prefer your request beforehand to the lady abbess, you can visit the grounds, and also a portion of the convent."

"Then I declare I shall make it a point for aunt to do so this very day; and to-morrow we will all go; will it not be delightful to visit a convent, and that convent a real Italian one?" continued the lively girl.

"I hope you don't mean to take the veil," replied her cousin; "because sooner than you should be reduced to that sad extremity, I would myself beg your acceptance of my hand."

"Indeed, sir! Well, suppose, upon second thoughts, I should 'think the veil' itself preferable to such a dire extremity. Upon my word, Robert, you are unendurable this morning. I shall ride forward and join Adolphus and Anna." And she put her pony into a canter, and joined her female companion.

On the return of the party, the proposition to visit the convent was made by Juliet, and it being warmly seconded by all the rest, permission was sought from the abbess, and politely granted. The entire party had permission to see the grounds and certain portions of the

convent, and the ladies were informed that they might see the whole of the interior.

On the following day they accordingly visited the place, and greatly admired the beauty of the grounds, and the admirable cultivation of the gardens.

While the gentlemen amused themselves by examining the horticultural treasures of the place, the ladies were hospitably received by the Lady Abbess, and shown the mysteries of the interior of the convent.

"Prayer is just about to commence in the chapel," said the abbess, after having shown them over the suites of apartments. "You can either amuse yourselves for half an hour in the library until I return, or, if you choose, you can follow me into the chapel."

"Oh, let us see the nuns at their noonday devotions, by all means," whispered Juliet to her aunt, and as all the ladies were equally desirous of witnessing this novelty to them, they thankfully accepted the offer of the abbess to take the party into the chapel. The abbess left them, after having escorted them to a convenient place for witnessing the proceedings, and Mrs. Lyman, who had previously visited a convent, was pointing out to her interested companions the various degrees of the nuns and novices present.

"Those," she whispered, pointing to a group of young women from sixteen to twenty-five years of age, "are novices who have just entered the convent, and are now becoming initiated in the primary duties of a monastic life. You perceive that, although they have adopted a uniform dress, their hair has not yet been cut close, and their faces are still unveiled. Now, listen to that chaunt. Is it not delightful? They cultivate music in these convents to a high degree. Let us be silent until this sweet chaunt is concluded."

The party listened with delight to the almost celestial music of the choir, and when it was brought to a conclusion, Juliet, who had been for some moments intently gazing at the features of a young girl, among the novices,

who happened to be nearest to her, and in full view of the whole party, said:

"Dear aunt, just look at the features of that young woman. Is she not like Adolphus? If he had not told us his sister was in England, I could almost have sworn they were brother and sister. Surely she cannot be an Italian—her complexion is too fair. Poor thing! she looks in ill health, too. Is not the resemblance striking, aunt?"

"It is indeed, my dear," replied Mrs. Lyman, and the entire party, having their attention directed to the girl, were equally struck with the resemblance.

Just at this moment they were rejoined by the abbess, the devotions being ended. Observing them to be interested in the young woman, she said:

"I see you are struck with the pallid looks of one of my latest novices. Poor thing! if you knew all, you would feel for her yet more deeply. She is a country woman of yours, too (for I presume you are English), and, I am sorry to say, is laboring under the dreadful disorder of insanity, although the quiet of the convent has already effected much good, and I have no doubt she will be eventually completely cured. It is a pity, for she is a mild, and gentle, as well, as you see, a very pretty girl. When she first came here, she clung very pertinaciously to her wild fancies. Now, I am happy to say, she seldom alludes to them, although, in spite of all my care and attention, I fear her health is declining."

"What is her name, pray?" said Mrs. Lyman, still more deeply interested, as she learnt the young woman was not an Italian, while, at the same time, a strange presentiment crossed her mind.

"She states her name to be Georgiana Fitzherbert," replied the abbess; "but I have reasons to believe that is not her real name; still, although I have sometimes questioned her sharply, I can get no other reply from her. Perhaps, after all, poor child, she really conceives that to be her real name."

"Georgiana Fitzherbert!" exclaimed Mrs. Lyman, in a tone in which amazement and deep emotion were mingled, while the other ladies were equally astonished on hearing the name.

"Dare I ask," she continued, "under what circumstances this young woman came to the convent?"

"That I am not at liberty to tell," said the abbess; "but, (noticing the astonishment that appeared in the faces of all the ladies,) surely *you*, madam, are not acquainted with the girl?"

"Will your ladyship allow me a few moments' private conversation," said Mrs. Lyman to the abbess, in an agitated tone, and without replying to the question of prior acquaintance.

"Surely, madam," answered the abbess (her own curiosity being now strongly excited,) and she led the lady into the antechamber, which constituted her customary hall of audience.

They were closeted for the space of half-an-hour, and at the expiration of that time Georgiana was summoned by the abbess.

"Can she not be confronted with the young man? that would at once corroborate or disprove the truth of her statement?" asked Mrs. Lyman, in reply to some remark of the abbess.

"It is against all rule that it should be so—and yet, under the circumstances, I will not refuse the ordeal," said the latter. And greatly to the surprise of the young men, who were waiting somewhat impatiently in the grounds, wondering what detained their female friends so long, and making some confidential and not very complimentary remarks upon the proverbial tardiness of the ladies, Adolphus was summoned by one of the domestics of the convent, and requested to follow her into the cloister.

"There is no one ill—nothing the matter, I hope?" said both the young men in the same breath.

"Oh, no, signors. The cavalier is only wanted to speak with one of the novices."

"Whew! the d——!" exclaimed Robert, not very reverently, considering the consecrated ground on which he stood; "I say, 'Dolph, what's up now? Don't be playing Don Juan, old fellow; nor yet taking the veil. Egad! you're a lucky fellow to get a peep inside. I'd almost agree to take the veil myself, for a year or two, at any rate, if they would only give me the privilege of talking to the girls when I pleased."

Adolphus followed the domestic into the convent, wondering what on earth he was summoned for.

"He is coming now," said Mrs. Lyman to the abbess, as she heard the tread of his footstep.

"Do not speak, then," said the abbess; "let us see if they recognize each other."

Georgiana had not been apprized of the intention of the abbess of sending for her brother, nor had she even been told he was in Italy, and actually so near her. She, poor girl, had simply told her tale of woe, and although the abbess had often heard and disbelieved her story, (latterly, perhaps, more properly speaking, rather doubted than disbelieved it,) she was now nearly convinced that the poor girl had been wronged; that she herself had been deceived, and that her story was really true. Hence her half unwilling consent so far to infringe upon the strict rules of the convent as to permit a male visitor to see even one of the youngest novices.

Georgiana was resting her head upon a table, and weeping bitterly, when her brother entered the room in a perfect state of wonderment as to what all this mystery meant.

"Look up, my daughter," said the abbess, and the poor girl raised her head; but she no sooner caught sight of Adolphus than she uttered a cry of delight, and springing towards him she fell upon his neck, murmuring—

"Adolphus, my dear—dear brother! *this is happiness unlooked for!*"

"My sister! dear Georgiana! What is the meaning

of all this?" exclaimed the young man, almost equally affected yet still apparently doubting his senses.

The ladies were too much affected to speak for some moments. At length the abbess said—

"It is enough. I have been cruelly deceived, and you, poor child, most terribly wronged. Not for another hour will I lend my sanction to such atrocity as this: I could not have believed it possible that such villany existed in the world."

Meanwhile, the rumor that the strange ladies had sent for the new novice, had become known throughout the convent; and in this community, occurrences of any description, that interrupted the monotony of their daily duties, occasioned no little curiosity. Thus the news had reached the ears of Sister Maria, who, immediately acting under an impulse she could no longer control, forgot the rules of decorum and forced herself into the presence of the abbess:

"Lady Abbess," she said, "I have known this a long time. I have known how this poor child has been wronged. It was I who freed her from the machinations of the Countess de Paoli, at Philadelphia. I am the Maria of whom she has told you. It was I who sent the letter to her brother. Here, in this convent, I recognized her when first she became an inmate of it; but I refrained, for reasons which you can judge of, from making our recognition known to others; but now I can bear this yoke no longer, and be the consequences to me what they may, I am ready to prove how grossly—how cruelly the poor child has been treated."

"Sister Maria, you have done well," said the abbess, taking her hand, "and, come what may, you shall have my protection. Ladies, my charge over this poor orphan ceases. She is free to rejoin her brother, and may success attend them both."

The party bid adieu to the kind-hearted abbess and left the convent together.

"Wonders will never cease," said Robert, as he saw

them approach. "By Jove! Adolphus has run off with a young nun, and a devilish pretty one, too."

He was proceeding with his badinage, when he was checked by his aunt, who briefly told him the story.

The party returned to Turin, and it was resolved that the enemies of the orphans should not know as yet that Georgiana was released from the convent. The abbess herself having advised that silence should be maintained on the subject.

In a few days Mrs. Lyman received the letters she expected, and the party set out on their way to England *via* Paris.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*The Confessor has an interview with the Earl—Its results are unsatisfactory—The Struggles of Ambition.*

I LEFT Father Anselmo at his midnight devotions in the chapel of Alton castle, after having listened to the story of Lady Mary Alton and given her his advice how to act. When the worthy father heard from Lady Mary the result of her attempts to induce her father to give up his ambitious and unjust designs, at least so far as she was involved in their consummation, he was utterly at a loss how further to proceed.

Bred in the strictest school of Jesuitism, Father Anselmo had been trained from his earliest youth to reverence authority of any kind, whether of spiritual or temporal character, and next to the authority exercised by the superiors of his Order and of the Church, he recognized that of a parent over his children.

How then could he reconcile the principles to which his life had been devoted, with those his conscience told him he should, as regarded the present difficult case, advise Lady Mary to follow? How, if it were right to turn aside and disobey the highest temporal authority



at the dictates of conscience, was it right and proper, heedless of the warnings of the same monitor, to follow blindly the biddings of spiritual authority, ordained by man; for although the worthy father could bring scriptural and inspired authority to his aid in the first instance; for is it not said, "Children, obey your parents in all things?" he could find none in the latter instance which could be construed as bearing otherwise than on the church at large, and not upon any particular sect or order.

In fact, the priest found himself in that very awkward, although undefinable position, styled "between the horns of a dilemma."

Then again the pleadings of affection came to increase his difficulty, for ascetic as he was, he had felt the human craving for something to love, and the affections of the stern priest, whose life was devoted to Heaven—whose bride was the Church—whose children her faithful members—had allowed almost unwittingly the daughter of his earthly patron, she whose mind he had trained, whose disposition he had watched over from the lisping days of her childhood, to secure a hold upon his heart as firm and undying as that held by a beloved and only child upon the affections of a fond and indulgent parent.

After much cogitation he sought an interview with the earl, which, of course, was readily and promptly granted, for the Earl of Shropshire probably respected Father Anselmo more than any other human being.

He met the earl, and plainly told him the reason wherefore he had sought to speak with him.

"And has my daughter dared to make known to others the family secrets with which she has necessarily been intrusted?" said the earl, after he had listened to the explanation of the reverend father, his voice trembling with the passion he could not control, even in the presence of the priest.

"My lord," said Father Anselmo, calmly and solemnly, "your lordship forgets that in the privacy of the con-

fessional, the heart must not know—dare acknowledge no secrets, or the sacrament would be a mere mockery, not of the humble servant of God, but of the High and Omnipotent Supreme himself. In matters of a temporal nature, I, the humble, dependent priest, bow with reverence to your rank; but in those matters in which I am called by my great Master to serve His Church, and to obey His behests, I owe no reverence but to Him—acknowledge no authority save His alone."

"Pardon me, father," replied the earl. "I was betrayed by the infirmity of my temper into the expression of words I should not have uttered. But you, in the calm pursuit of the duties of your holy profession, know not the difficulties and anxieties which surround other men—especially men whom it has pleased God to place in a prominent position—in the busy conflict with the world. You cannot know the many reasons which have urged me to this course regarding my daughter's marriage. On this subject you cannot feel as I do."

"My lord, pardon me for correcting a false impression your lordship, in common with the world, appears to entertain; the conscientious priest, who would honestly do his duty towards his heavenly Master, has more difficulties to wrestle with—more troubles to contend with—than the busiest man of the world; for he feels that the welfare of living souls is placed in his hands; while mere worldly men, but regard matters of a temporal nature. Believe me, my lord, the responsibilities of a priest of God's Holy Church, far, far exceed those of other men."

For some moments the earl and the priest sat silently engaged in thought. The earl was the first to break the silence.

"Father Anselmo," he said, "this business has now progressed too far to be suspended. To put a stop to it now would involve me in ruin."

"And better temporal ruin, my lord, than the eternal ruin of the soul's welfare of yourself and your only child. Allow a humble priest to offer your lordship some ad-

vice. I believe, my lord, I have ever been a faithful counsellor to your lordship, so far as my poor abilities allowed me to arrive at conclusions. Absolve Lady Mary from her allegiance to parental authority in this matter; bid her choose for herself the husband she would take; or, if she prefers it, as I believe she does, let her preserve a life of celibacy—and living unmarried, ever to be to you a daughter whose filial duties can better be rendered when no other earthly object shares her love."

"Father Anselmo, this cannot be. Even to you I cannot unburthen my mind with respect to this matter; neither does Lady Mary know the causes which drive me to this course. I do not ask you as a priest of our Holy Church to violate your conscience by bidding my child to obey her father in this, since you conceive it wrong so to do; but I pray you to be silent regarding this business, and to believe that Lady Mary is wrong in her surmises; that no evil is intended her or can possibly befall her; and in so doing, to let matters take their course."

"Then your lordship is determined not to alter your intentions in this regard?"

"Necessarily determined, father."

"I regret that it is so; and trust your lordship may yet think better of it: but, since my poor counsel is of no avail, I will intrude no longer upon your lordship, but will withdraw to my own apartment, and there, wrestling in earnest prayer, will leave the result with God."

Father Anselmo left the room, the earl rising from his seat to show him to the door.

When he had retired, Lord Alton threw himself into his luxurious arm chair, and sat for half an hour absorbed in thought; that those thoughts were not pleasing ones, might be known from the working of his features, and at length he gave vent to his feelings in the following soliloquy:

"What slaves our religion makes us to our spiritual advisers, even though those advisers be our earthly ser-

vants. I dare not offend this meddling priest—nor dare I accuse my daughter of tampering with him to suit her purposes. With both I am thus compelled to maintain an outward show of respect—and yet—I almost wish this business had never been commenced. Father Anselmo is so far right, that a parent has no authority to control the conscience of his child; but now that it has gone so far, there is no retreat save in exposure and dishonor, to which death were preferable. Strange! how ambition sears the heart. I can sympathize deeply with the orphans of Herbert—I can feel in my own heart the agony I am compelled to inflict upon his daughter. There are moments, in the still hour of the night, when the eyes are sleepless and conscience is most accusing, when I could almost rise from my troubled couch and countermand further proceedings in this matter; but with the morning ambition steps in and conscience shrinks from its presence. Pride lends its aid and asks whether the spirit can brook the world's contumely—can laugh at the finger of scorn pointed in derision, and the repentant feelings of the midnight hour take wing and fly away. After all, what am I seeking to do, *worse* than is being done every hour, and that has been done in every age. Pshaw! those sentimental ideas are foolish—only fitted for women and drivelling priests. There is Mary approaching the castle from the garden. I cannot see her now. My spirits are strangely oppressed with what Father Anselmo has said. I will ride and see if I can shake off these gloomy thoughts." And rising languidly from his seat, the earl rang the bell and desired the servant to order the groom to saddle his horse. "And tell Lady Mary, Edward," continued he, "that I am going to ride, and probably shall not return home until dinner time."

When Father Anselmo quitted the presence of the earl, he retired to his own chamber and there communed with himself as to the course he should pursue in future. But study as he might, wrestle in earnest prayer, as he did, he could arrive at no satisfactory con-

clusion. He thought of quitting the castle and retiring to the monastery of his Order in Italy, and then a secret yearning at his heart, forbade him to entertain the idea of leaving Lady Mary exposed, as he believed, to the machinations of her enemies, and among those enemies her natural protector—her only parent.

Again, he struggled within himself on account of the disloyalty he had felt, in spirit, towards the behests of those superiors, whom he had been taught to revere next to heaven. Was he wrong in this? To doubt the wisdom of the founders of the Order, to which he belonged, appeared to him to be equal to sacrilege. He felt as though in not at once banishing the first suspicion against the spiritual authority he was bound by a solemn, sacred oath to obey, unchallenged and unquestioned—he had committed the deadly sin; and yet he could not resolve to bid her whose spiritual instructor he was, to peril her soul by voluntarily committing evil.

Amidst these conflicting thoughts, hours passed away and the evening drew near. He retired at his usual hour to the chapel, and there, with feelings more reverential even than usual, he spent the greater portion of the night in prayer.

Just as day began to dawn he left the chapel and retired to his dormitory, and as he composed himself to take the few short hours of sleep he allowed his aged, weary frame, he murmured, even as the feeling of unconsciousness which precedes sleep stole over him—

"It must be so. I have sought guidance from Heaven in prayer for hours—strongly have I wrestled with God, and he has answered my prayers. I am resolved."

A moment more and the weary eyes of the venerable priest were sealed in slumber.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*Vague rumors afloat—A poor look-out ahead—"Hope springs eternal in the human breast."*

HAVING succeeded, as they believed to their heart's content, in removing the rightful heirs from the country, and, at the same time, in avoiding suspicion as to the means of the removal, the arch schemers in this desperate conspiracy began to urge forward the suit before the Ecclesiastical Court, where *viva voce* evidence could not be heard, and proverbial as are the law's delays in such cases as these, the influence *sub rosa*, of the Earl of Shropshire, and the untiring energy and perseverance of the harpies, Gripes and Cheatem, did at length succeed in arousing the torpid energies of the sleepy proctors of "Doctor's Commons," and soon the newspapers of the day began to put forth mysterious announcements, so worded (after the style of the gentlemen of the press), that while the public was quite unable to discover their meaning, something appeared to be hidden in the equivocal language, which led to the belief that the sapient editors knew more than they chose to disclose; and thus, whenever the half-promised future disclosures should be made, and whatever might be their purport, the editors could, without fear of challenge or compromise, safely assert that what they had predicted in a former number of their paper, had come to pass; and so manage to keep up, in the estimation of the good, easy, confiding public, the idea that they knew everything about everybody.

At length these vague rumors began to assume a more tangible shape; and there was an unusual stir and bustle among the gentlemen of the "long robe," and the "blue

bag," and one fine morning, the mountain which had been so long in labor, was delivered of its burden, and out crept—not a mouse, but the announcement of the fact, that the great case of Fitzherbert *vs.* Fitzherbert, was to commence at the beginning of the next term, immediately after the present vacation had come to an end.

Now, the mountain needn't have labored so long and so hard; for, although the matter assumed an appearance of most extraordinary interest in the eyes of the learned gentlemen of the legal profession, brief-full and briefless, who may be considered in the light of the accouchers in such cases as these—the busy public cared very little about the matter, and would not have been greatly discomposed, had the Fitzherbert property, contending parties and lawyers on both sides, into the bargain, been submerged in the ocean, or buried beneath the Godwin quicksands.

However, after all, it was a great case—a very great case—and it did occasion a great deal of chit-chat and caused a great deal of long-buried and almost forgotten scandal relative to certain courtly personages to be exhumed and revived. As the day drew near, the earl of Shropshire betrayed a great deal of nervous anxiety, and once or twice made some very absent-minded and incoherent remarks, from his place in the House of Peers, when that most honorable House was engaged in the heat of debate upon the corn law question, which caused some of the noble lords present to whisper and nod mysteriously to each other, and to tap their foreheads with their forefingers, as much as to say that the stalwart earl, whose constitution, mentally and physically, had hitherto appeared to be of iron, was beginning to feel the infirmities of age, and was verging towards the condition of second childhood; for no one suspected—so cunningly had matters been managed, that the noble earl had any peculiar interest in the case of Fitzherbert *vs.* Fitzherbert.

Lord Henry Fitzherbert likewise was a little agitated,

notwithstanding his constitutional indolence. He felt more *ennui* and *fatigué* than usual, he assured his anxious friends of the Life Guards, that the arduous duties of his profession—these "tewible marchings and counter-marchings in St. James's Park, had become more insupportable than ever. He would have resigned his commission in disgust—only, his pay formed a very considerable portion of his somewhat limited income, besides, his position as an officer in that distinguished corps (of the peace establishment), helped him materially in the way of victimizing tradesmen and money lenders; but one thing he was resolved upon, if he succeeded in his business and married Lady Mary—that is, wedded the Huntingdonshire estates, with the encumbrances thereunto belonging—he should immediately retire from the army, obtain a seat in the House of Commons, and devote the remainder of his life to—horse-racing. But even this favorite amusement had gone wrong with Lord Henry of late, for while engaged in mentally figuring up the amount of income and money in the funds, which he hoped soon to handle, he had made sundry awkward mistakes in figuring up his betting book (he was a man of one idea, who could never manage to keep the run of two things at a time), and had consequently lost considerable sums of money, while, as if purposely to aggravate him, the money lenders had grown excessively cautious of late, and our old friend Jacob of the Minorities, positively refused to advance another "farden." Indeed, Jacob, about this time, was remarked to be often at "Doctor's Commons," prying curiously into old worm-eaten MSS., and copies of wills and title deeds; and while many an *habitué* of the place wondered what the old Jew was seeking after with such caution, some of the younger loiterers in this venerable, dreamy lounging place, would place their fore-fingers on the side of their noses, and winking at each other, shrewdly and very explicitly remark, that the "old codger was up to snuff."

For my part, I will acknowledge that I was in a great

state of excitement, and anxiety, for although not being, of course, eligible to act in this case, in England, I had set my heart upon the success of my *proteges*, and had aided Mr. Hughes, not only gratuitously, but with eagerness, in every possible way that I could; and now to lose sight of both the young people, in this unaccountable manner, and to know that the suit was to be hurried forward at a time when no contestants could be produced to present a counter claim against, as I believed them to be, the defrauding conspirators, and in a court where *viva voce* evidence would not be received, annoyed me very much, to say nothing of the terrible state of anxiety I was in about the Fitzherberts themselves.

The composure of Mr. Hughes contributed to increase my vexation. Nothing seemed to put this man out of the way; whatever he felt on the subject he kept to himself.

On calling one morning at his office, I found him engaged in earnest conversation with a little, sharp-featured man, who held in his hand, and lugged about with him wherever he went, a great, blue bag, stuffed with papers, and almost as big and as heavy as himself.

"Good morning, Mr. —," said Mr. Hughes, when at length the conference being over, the little man had retired. "It's lovely weather, is it not? The 'Garden' looks quite rural and charming this morning." (The "Garden" was an inclosure in the court of Lincoln's-Inn, from which it derives its appellation of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and it presented to view from Mr. Hughes' office windows some stunted shrubbery smothered in dust, and a lawn the color of green baize. Certainly it looked *very* rural and charming.)

"That gentleman who has just left me is Mr. Ferret, one of the sharpest and cleverest attorneys in London. I have engaged him in the Fitzherbert case."

"Then you intend to contest the case?" said I, somewhat astonished.

"Of course I do. I am the counsel in the case. I have pledged myself to do my best to win it, and I never

break my word; and a better fellow than Ferret to pry and peer about, and to hunt up, and collect and unite facts and circumstances, and bring them to bear on the subject, I say again, could not be found. He put many a job into my hands years ago, when a young man and a briefless barrister, and I help him all I can, now that I have worked my way up in the world. We work together as counsel and attorney whenever we can get a chance. I would trust anything in the hands of Ferret."

"But, my dear Mr. Hughes," said I, "you forget that, in the first place, they have made a Chancery case of it, and besides that, our, or rather I should say, your clients are missing and not to be found, and to come into any court without them would be ridiculous and useless."

"I know full well all you have said; but a good many things may turn up between now and the day the case is to come on. Let me see; to-day is the 14th, and the case comes up on the 7th of next month; fourteen from thirty one and seventeen remains, seventeen and seven is twenty-four—full three weeks, exclusive of the present date and the day of issue. My good sir, a great many strange things happen in the course of three weeks. I have engaged my wife's brother, Counsellor Green, as junior counsel; and he too is hard at work. Even if nothing transpires between now and then to better our chances, I shall at least attempt, although it *may* be useless, to obtain a stay of proceedings, and to get the case transferred to the forthcoming assizes at Huntingdon; indeed, I have reason to believe I can insist upon the suit being taken out of Chancery and tried in the county in which the disputed estates are located, and that, you see, will give us another week; for the assizes will not commence in Huntingdon until the fourteenth day of the next month."

I could not do otherwise than express my satisfaction at the determination evinced by the worthy barrister; but still I gave expression to doubt, almost approaching to hopelessness, as regarded our final success, under the present dreary prospects.

"Well, certainly our prospects are not the most flattering in the world, but my dear sir, the doctor tells us, 'while there is life there is hope,' and your experience, as my own has done, must have taught you that sometimes the quirks and quibbles of the law, present some very unexpected phases in the position of a case, especially such an one as this, and what should we think of ourselves, if just at the eleventh hour something should turn up favorable to our clients, and find us unprepared."

I acquiesced in his remarks, and seeing that he was extremely busy, wished him good morning.

On the other side, all that at this time, I could learn, (for I have already informed the reader, that it has been necessary for me to disclose to him in the regular course of this narrative, facts, which I, even at this late hour, was ignorant of, and many of which I did not learn until months after) was, that the parties who had virtually claimed possession of the property, had engaged as chief counsel, Isaak Gripes, Esq., of the Inner Temple, Barrister, with whom was associated as junior counsel, Archer Snap, Esq., and that Mr. Crawley Cheatem was the attorney in the case. These were to act, should the case, as even they seemed to anticipate, be thrown out of Chancery. I made inquiry of Mr. Hughes and others relative to the standing of these men, and the reply I generally received was:

"Well, sir, Gripes has rather lowered himself in the opinion of the aristocracy of the profession in consequence of his having worked his way up in the criminal courts; but he is a very able counsellor, sir—very able, and difficult to catch tripping. As to Snap, he is one of the quickest and most subtle-minded barristers in London; and though I don't know much about Cheatem, as he is one of the 'Old Bailey' lawyers, as they are termed, who don't bear a very good name in the profession, and will do any dirty job for gain, I am told he is a clever, cunning attorney—a man that will grope in the mud for facts to bear upon any case he takes in hand, and is not

very particular as regards the cleanly appearance of the facts he gathers when he produces them before the court. They will be a tough trio to deal with, sir, I can assure you."

Thus stood matters at this time, apparently upon the eve of the decision of the suit, for it must be borne in mind that as yet no news had been received respecting young Fitzherbert.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### *A man of the world in a desperate strait.*

I STATED in the preceding chapter that Lord Fitzherbert was in rather an awkward position as regarded money matters; in fact he was beginning to experience the difficulties which had beset his royal father during the earlier portion of his life, being constantly pestered by vulgar, dunning tradesmen, who had not delicacy and refinement enough in their base, plebeian blood, to appreciate the honor of having the name of a gentleman on their books, or to feel how very annoying it is to the privileged classes to be asked to pay their debts, when they have not got the money to pay them with, or have debts of honor to meet, of much greater importance in the estimation of a gentleman, or wish to appropriate their money to their own pleasures.

Gentlemen of Lord Henry Fitzherbert's stamp, don't often lower themselves to the grade of the common people by keeping their tradesmen's accounts square; but there are times when it becomes necessary for them to pay up a part at least of their outstanding debts in order to obtain future credit. Tradesmen, as we observed in the early portion of this narrative, are not all blessed with the patience of Job, and sometimes they grow pertinacious if not absolutely insolent in their demands.



Lord Fitzherbert, then was dunned every day: his valet presented him with an imposing array of tradesmen's bills every morning along with his post-office letters, and whether he walked out into the parks, or lounged in Regent-street, or Bond-street, he was sure to be met by some of his creditors and most impudently, in the face of the whole world (of fashion) and in the broad glare of day, asked to settle that small account as soon as convenient; and to meet all these demands, amounting to many thousands, Lord Henry had £50 and his expectations. As it happened that his lordship was not a peer of the realm, there was nothing in the way to prevent his being arrested by the more obdurate of these vulgar tradesmen, and to tell the truth, his tailor had actually threatened to cause his arrest if his account due for five years, was not settled by the end of the following week. Lord Shropshire had been victimised several times to the tune of a cool thousand, and the last time the earl had given his check, he had rebuked Lord Henry pretty sharply for his extravagance, and positively assured him that he would lend him no more money. The money lenders had all grown shy of making further loans, and the advances he had lately received from this source had, besides the heavy interest which had been deducted for the first year, been so much further reduced by the miscellaneous articles forced upon him as part of the advance, as to have been rendered useless. For instance, with much humiliating persuasion, his lordship had obtained, a few weeks previously, the sum of five hundred pounds (a mere fleabite compared with what his necessities demanded, even had he obtained the whole sum in money) but this was far from being the case; in fact 20 per cent., or one hundred pounds, had been deducted for the first years' interest, leaving only four hundred pounds; and his lordship had actually received, two hundred pounds in cash; a Cremona violin (which he could make no use of) valued by the usurer at seventy-five guineas; a pair of stuffed owls—twenty pounds ten shillings; a doubled handled sword—a great relic, being

one of those which had belonged to Sir William Wallace, cheap, as the Jew said, at fifteen pounds ten; four tin cases filled with bottle corks, labelled, and with composition tops elegantly silvered—four pounds two and six pence; a barrel of Day and Martin's blacking; a set of harness; a box of shaving soap and a parcel of fine old port of the year 1804, which the Jew had lately purchased from a friend of his, a manufacturer of old wine and pure French brandies, who resided in the classic neighborhood of Houndsditch. These made up the sum total of the advance to the unfortunate nobleman, and it may be well imagined he was not a great deal better off by his bargain. His lordship sat in his apartment in the Albany absorbed in a brown study; at length he started up and muttering something between his clinched teeth, which sounded very like an oath, he said, "It's of no use, I must try Jacob again."

In the course of a couple of hours after having arrived at this determination, he made his appearance in the dingy office in the Minories into which we have, in imagination, already twice conducted the reader.

Putting on as bold a front as possible, his lordship entered the money lender's office.

"Ah!" exclaimed Jacob, who was sitting in his accustomed seat at the table, busily engaged in perusing some parchments, while still, in the old corner, sat the withered anatomy of dry bones—the centegenarian Mordecai. "Ah, happy to see your lordship. Vat ish your lordship's bishness? Hash you called to make arrangements to shettle up de advances I have had de pleasure to make to your lordship?"

"You are facetious, my dear friend Jacob," replied Lord Fitzherbert, endeavoring to appear unconcerned, "I am glad to see that neither the multitude of your business nor the close atmosphere of this place prevents you from indulging in a joke. So far from calling, as you pleasantly and good humoredly observe, to settle our account immediately, my business this

morning is to beg an additional loan of five thousand pounds."

"Can't be done, anyhow," replied Jacob. "Your lordship is twenty-five thousand pounds in my debt, without counting de interest, and vere de payment ish to come from nobody knows. De securitish isn't vorth a 'pheugh,'" snapping his fingers in the air.

"My dear friend, I must have the money, positively, or I shall be arrested for debt, and my prospects of future payment ruined."

"Oh yesh! It ish my dear friend, mine goot friend Jacob; but if you didn't vant de monish, how long should I be your goot friend Jacob, eh, my lord? Vat ish it to me whether you are arrested or not? Answer me that, mine goot friend Lord Henry Fitzherbert."

"It matters this much, Jacob, that the suit is about to come off on the success of which your repayment depends. It is sure to go in our favor, and the property, even in ready money, is sufficient to pay off the debt I owe you twenty times over. A few more thousands will only give you so much more profit, when the day of settlement comes. Should I be disgraced by an arrest, it must come to the ears of Lord Alton, and he would at once break off the marriage at any cost to himself—aye, at the cost of the whole property—I know his lordship well, and the means of paying you the money I owe would forever be taken from me. Now, Jacob, I have told you how I am situated; do you not see the necessity of granting me a further loan?"

"No, my lord, I don't shée no necessity, because de securitish ish all gammon. Suppose you gain de suit, you can't hold possession of de property should there be another claimant. It ish all a fraud."

"A fraud, sir! You are insolent," exclaimed his lordship.

"Insholent! God of my fathers, hear de Christian! Insholent! ven I have advanced tousands of my monish on securitish vich turns out to be, no securitish at all. Insholent! dat ish too goot."

"I have given you security, sir, upon the Brampton Manor property, which will shortly be in my possession, and if a rental of £15,000 per annum, and nearly £200,000 of arrears is not good security for the loan of a few paltry thousands, I should like to know what more you require."

"My Lord Fitzherbert, ven you came to get de loan of the lasht five thousand from me, I advanshed it to you vid good will; but I thought it would be as well to make sure dat de securitish vash goot. So I called at Doctor's Commons and examined de title deeds, and I found dat de claim made by you and your friends was no claim at all. Dat de securitish for mine monish was not vort one Christian d——n; dat de propertish was belonging to von Herbert Fitzherbert, and his heirs forever; and dat you yourself vash not even make de claims, but some von Fitzherbert and his sister, vot vash no Fitzherbert at all. Yesh, my lord, de lawyers may be gammoned, but de Jew can grope and search vere de lawyers vill not take de trouble ven they ish paid not to be too particular. My lord, you cannot gammon de Jew ven de monish and de securitish ish at fault."

"De goot securitish is everything in the vorld," exclaimed the shrivelled centegenarian, in a sepulchral voice from an obscure corner of the room.

"Can't you hold your tongue, you old shinner—vat ish de securitish to you now?"

"Ah, you speak! Yesh, it vash a goot prince—I will lend de monish, but I must have goot securitish," replied the old man, who was evidently in the very last stage of dotage, and who was accustomed now to harp upon one idea, that of his former dealings with the Prince of Wales.

"Bosh!" replied Jacob; "and ash to you, my lord, I have lent too much monish already, and will not advansh another farden. I told you so ven you came here de oder day; now I have told you de reason vy; and more, I shall wait till de shuit is decided, and den if I am not paid by de Earl of Shropshire, who, I have learned, is concerned in dish matter, I shall expose de

whole affair." Goot day, my lord—mine goot friend—I am very sorry I cannot accommodate you with de monish; but monish ish scarce—very scarce."

The tones were bitterly ironical, and too abashed to make any reply, Lord Henry left the room.

Regaining the street, he pushed his hat far over his brow, and scarcely knowing whither next he would direct his steps, he turned habitually after reaching the head of the street, towards the Strand. A heavy rain was falling, but Lord Fitzherbert heeded not the rain; for once in his life he was insensible to creature discomforts, and overpowered by the mental distraction produced by the knowledge of the ruin impending over him, could he not find some means to extricate himself from his overwhelming pecuniary difficulties.

There was no alternative but to write a penitential letter to the Earl of Shropshire, stating the exigencies of the case, and soliciting a loan, promising, at the same time, that it should really be the last he would ask for.

He hurried home to his apartments in the Albany, wrote the letter, and dispatched his valet with it to the post-office, for the earl had gone to his castle in Shropshire, and then hurried to his club, to forget, if he could, in the conversation of his friends and companions of the hour, the troubles which harassed his mind.

A few days afterwards, just about the hour of the post-office delivery of country letters, he was sitting impatiently on the tenter hooks of expectation, awaiting the earl's reply, hoping it would be favorable, yet fearing a denial, when his valet hurried into the room.

"A letter for me, Harrison, eh?" said Lord Fitzherbert.

"No, my lord; but I have hurried up stairs to inform your lordship that the Earl of Shropshire has just entered the Albany, and is now engaged in conversation with Sir John Harvey in the hall. I seized the opportunity to hasten up and inform your lordship that the earl is here."

"That is well, Harrison; but go down and be ready to announce his lordship when he has disengaged himself from Sir John."

The valet left the room, and in a few minutes returned, and, throwing open the door, announced the Earl of Shropshire.

As the earl entered, Lord Fitzherbert rose from his seat, and advanced to meet him. He appeared unusually serious, and Lord Fitzherbert anticipated an explosion of anger.

"What is the meaning of the letter you sent me, requesting a further loan of money, Henry?" said the earl, when he had taken a seat, without taking the younger gentleman's proffered hand.

"My lord, I have explained all in my letter. I have been recklessly improvident, of that I am well aware. I have no excuses to offer; but I faithfully promise to be guilty of such indiscretions no more, should your lordship kindly relieve me from my present difficulties."

"Henry, I told you when last I advanced you money, that it should be the last I would lend, under the circumstances. Shameful! disgraceful! at your time of life, thus to involve yourself in difficulties by a course of reckless expenditure which would be unpardonable in a spendthrift youth of high expectations, and heir to a certain succession in entail. There is no excuse, sir, for your conduct."

"My lord, I offer none; but you must be aware that my income is sadly disproportioned to my necessary expenses, in order to maintain my proper position in society. But I will, as I have said, be more guarded in future."

"Your income may be small, sir, but it is sufficient for your maintenance in comfort. I will grant it is not large enough to warrant your attendance at the gaming table and the race course."

"And these my lord, I will forswear, if once I can get out of my present difficulties."

For some moments the earl pondered over the case.

Matters were now in a critical position, and the arrest of Lord Fitzherbert might disconcert all his ambitious and avaricious views. It was not, therefore, any personal regard for the young nobleman, but solely motives of personal advantage, that led the earl to say:—

"And if I now come forward, and advance the money to pay your debts, you will faithfully promise that you will call upon me no more for any such purpose, under any circumstances."

"I promise, my lord."

"Then give me a full list of the debts you owe. Hide nothing, sir, and I will decide how to act."

Lord Fitzherbert, thus brought to this humiliating condition, wrote down in pencil the full amount of the various accounts that had been sent in to him, amounting in the whole to over £5,000, and silently handed the paper to the earl.

Lord Alton took it and glanced over the items:—

"This is all? this leaves no debt of honor; nothing else to be paid?"

"Nothing, my lord; my debts of honor have always been scrupulously paid when due."

"I am glad, at least, that amidst your extravagance you have preserved intact your honor as a gentleman, although those debts of honor have led to the nonpayment of the others. You should not have incurred them; but having incurred them, you have done well in discharging them. I will give you a check for £6,000, which will cover the amount of your debts, and leave a small sum of ready cash in your hands; but mark me, Henry,—this is the last time I will step between you and ruin."

Lord Fitzherbert acknowledged the generosity of the earl, and received the check, which was shortly afterwards cashed at Coutts' by his valet.

The earl rather coldly bid him good day, and drove to his mansion in Grosvenor-square.

Lord Fitzherbert felt his mind greatly relieved, for

the loan had saved him from immediate ruin; but the words of the Jew had considerably alarmed him, although he did not fully comprehend their meaning; but he knew he had carelessly used the name of the Earl of Shropshire in the presence of the cunning Israelite, who, as the reader is aware, had vaguely threatened him with exposure; he knew the earl was quite unaware that his expected future son-in-law was a victim to, or rather had victimized the money-lenders, and involved *his* name in these transactions. Had the earl known this his rage would have been uncontrollable, and this Lord Fitzherbert knew full well, and consequently his mind was ill at ease, notwithstanding the temporary relief afforded by the loan from Lord Alton.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

*Bad news from abroad—"When rogues fall out," &c.—Explanations of rascally dealings.*

THE day fixed for the settlement of the suit Fitzherbert vs. Fitzherbert, in the Ecclesiastical Court, Doctor's Commons, drew near; but just when everything seemed progressing favorably for the conspirators, Cheatem was overwhelmed with consternation, on learning from a private source, (for he had a spy in the vessel on board of which Adolphus had been kidnapped), that the youth had received his discharge at Malta.

The seaman who had sent this information, knew nothing of the reason of the discharge, but he stated briefly that Adolphus had saved the life of a young American lady, and on the following day had gone on shore with the Captain, to see the admiral, and had then received his discharge papers, and he had learnt that he had subsequently left Malta in company with the lady whom he had saved from drowning, and her party; he

believed they had gone to Naples, on their way back to England, and this was all he knew of the matter.

About the same time Mr. Hughes and I received letters, dated from Malta, from Adolphus, giving us the particulars of his impressment, as it may be termed, and informing us of all that had transpired besides, with which, however, the reader is already acquainted.

In the packet of letters, there was one which we looked upon with sad feelings—it was directed to "Miss Georgiana Fitzherbert," and was taken in charge by Mrs. Hughes. "No doubt," thought we, "it contains expressions of the deep brotherly love the poor lad feels for his sister; and where is she? A sad disappointment awaits him upon his arrival in England. It seems as though fortune had especially made these poor children her football to kick hither and thither, as malicious fancy tempts her." The letters from Adolphus to ourselves, however, were a strong point in our favor, especially as Mr. Hughes had hopes of yet getting the case out of the fatherly care of the Lord Chancellor, and causing it to be tried before a civil court in the county in which the property in litigation was situated. But I must not anticipate this portion of my narrative, as it was left to Messrs. Gripes and Cheatem in due time to make the discovery that Mr. Hughes had succeeded in effecting this, and thus not only postponed the decision they were so anxious to hurry forward, but completely overthrown their plans of privacy in the method of conducting the case.

On the receipt of the letter alluded to above, Cheatem lost no time in hurrying to his employer, Gripes, whom he found at his office perusing, with a very serious face, a letter he had just received by mail.

"A pretty mess you have made of it, Cheatem," said Gripes, as the former entered the office; "I never heard of such a bungling piece of business before. You have got yourself into a pretty pickle, for I wash my hands of having anything to do with the abduction. That part of the business rests with you. However, your bungling

has very probably lost our clients the suit into the bargain."

"It may not be so bad as you think," replied Cheatem, rather astonished to find that Gripes had got the news as soon as he; "the young man, to be sure, has managed to get his discharge, but it may be from some reason altogether extraneous from this matter; besides, he is probably still in Italy, and before he can get here the suit will be decided, and then we shall be all right. Let them fight it out among themselves afterwards."

"What the deuce are you talking about, you fool," exclaimed Gripes, in a paroxysm of rage; "who is speaking of the young man and his discharge. The man's mad! Here is a letter from Turin, in the handwriting of Signora Tirozzi, informing me that the girl has by some means escaped from the convent, and has thrown herself, as she believes, on the protection of some English family who are travelling in Italy. A pretty mess you have made of it, indeed."

"The girl escaped from the convent! the girl escaped from the convent!" muttered Cheatem, thoroughly frightened by this fresh piece of intelligence.

"Yes, sir—the girl *has* escaped from the convent, thanks to your infernal mismanagement, and here you come to me with a long rigmarole story about the young man having got his discharge from the seventy-four. What do you mean, sir? have your senses left you altogether? Will you please to speak and explain yourself," continued Gripes, as Cheatem still stood, apparently paralyzed by the news he had heard.

"Mr. Gripes," he said at length, "I have received a letter from Malta, this morning, informing me that young Fitzherbert has obtained his discharge from the man-of-war, and it was this I came to inform you of when you met me with such a fury of passion. I was not aware of your having also received a letter from Italy. Dear me! this is unpleasant intelligence, indeed!"

"The young man escaped too, eh? Well, really, Cheatem, I congratulate you on your address in mana-

ging these matters. Admirably managed *upon my word!* There is a fine field for legal practice, I understand, at Botany Bay, to which distant penal colony you are in a fair way of paying a visit, Mr. Cheatem, unless, indeed, you should grace the gallows at the Old Bailey, in which case the journey would be spared you. I would give you a piece of good advice, Mr. Cheatem: take passage in the first vessel that sails for America, while you have it in your power to be a free agent. Even I may find it necessary to bear testimony against you. Once let these young people arrive in England and the game is up with you. Take my advice and make yourself scarce as soon as possible."

"And so throw all the suspicion upon myself by my flight when the matter comes to be inquired into, and leave you to white-wash yourself and blacken my reputation as you please," replied Cheatem, stung to anger by the taunts of Gripe.

"I have nothing to do with the business, nothing at all, I tell you. I told you so before, and I repeat it. You kidnapped the young man; you forged the letters which led to the abduction of the girl; you managed the business with Signora Tirozzi; and Mr. Cheatem, I have *your acknowledgment* in black and white that I know not for what purpose you required the money. I don't know, indeed, that it is not my duty to cause you to be arrested sir; for your name is mentioned in this letter of Tirozzi's as having been an accomplice in the abduction of the young woman."

Cheatem by a sudden movement endeavored to snatch the letter from the hand of Gripe, who, however, was too quick for him, and both the villains, perhaps equally apprehensive of future consequences, stood gazing at each other with an expression of diabolical malice upon their sinister features.

Gripe at length broke the silence, and endeavoring to assume a conciliatory tone, he said:

"Cheatem, I may have been too hasty; there is time enough yet to prevent matters coming to an issue be-

tween us, and while we can, let us be friends. The case comes up in the Court of Chancery in three days' time. So far everything is prepared for a successful issue. The documentary evidence is all in our favor. Once let the property come into the possession of the two young persons who represent the real heirs, and thence into the hands of Lord Alton, and we shall be well remunerated for the part we have taken in prosecuting the claims of the young people, and then we may snap our fingers at what happens afterwards. A few years' residence abroad—say in the south of France, with £10,000, would not be objectionable to you, Cheatem, and we could silence Wilkins by threats and the promise of a better situation, and then, you absent from the country, no trouble could arise out of the business, you understand, and after a time all would be forgotten. The young Fitzherberts might do their worst, and the lawyers, whoever they are, who are urging on their claims."

"It is *we and us*," said Cheatem, as yet not quite pacified, "when it comes to money matters, in speaking of this business, but I am to bear all the burden of disgrace and infamy that may arise out of it alone."

"Well well, Cheatem, we were both a little hasty. Matters looked a little black at first; but I fancy I can see the way clear through. Let us say no more on that subject."

"With respect to Wilkins," said Cheatem, "the sheet of paper I have possession of will effectually keep him quiet: however, I am not opposed, if the business is once fairly settled, to doing something for him to put a still closer seal upon his lips."

"Well, we will talk of that some other time; let us now to business. All the latest documents must be copied to-morrow, so that everything may be in readiness for Thursday," and the two lawyers set to work in arranging things to their satisfaction.

While engaged in conversation on the subject of the approaching law suit, Cheatem observed:

"By the way, Gripes, deeply as I have been involved



in this business, I could never yet understand for what reason it was necessary to bring these false claimants of the estates into the field. The question it appears to me, relates to the possession of the estates by the Earl of Shropshire instead of the heirs Fitzherbert. For what reason then does the earl wish the false claimants to gain the suit? I have been all along in the dark on this subject."

"I will enlighten you," replied Gripe. "The estates belong of right to Herbert Fitzherbert, who, whilst a mere youth, in a fit of spleen occasioned by some threat made by the earl, threw up his claims in disgust, after having applied to me to know whether the earl had told him the truth respecting the flaw in the title deeds. While in conversation with him, after having led him to believe that the title deeds were not good, I managed to get him to write a letter to the earl relinquishing his claims, and in a taunting way, for he was a lad of spirit, he added, 'and your lordship can settle the estates on my half brother, upon his marrying Lady Mary, whom you seek to fasten upon me.'"

"Is this your will respecting this property?" said I.

"It is," he replied bitterly, 'a will by which I leave property to which it appears I have no right, to my half brother, on certain conditions that I would not bind myself to for the wealth of the Indies.'

"I pretended to be disgusted at the conduct of the earl in this matter, and told Herbert it would be a good jest to make out a testamentary form to this effect and send it to his guardian. This he did, and so the matter stands. Herbert never troubled himself further about the business. He went out to America after having married a physician's daughter at Canterbury, and died there."

"Still that does not explain wherefore the earl, with this will in his possession, should wish these false claimants to obtain possession of the property. Indeed neither they nor the real Fitzherberts have any claim that I can see."

"The Fitzherberts have a claim. Herbert was not of age when he affixed his signature to this will, and it is worthless. He was, however, approaching the period of his majority, and no one but the earl's heirs would discover the truth as regards this. Therefore, these false claimants having obtained possession against the Crown, which has, in fact, no claim, but a spurious one purposely created by the Earl of Shropshire, after he discovered the obstinacy of his ward, the earl will produce the will of Herbert. Of course, they will be paid for the part they have played, and the earl quietly takes possession of the property in behalf of his daughter on her marriage with Lord Henry Fitzherbert. If the real Fitzherberts gained the suit, and were to be ousted by this will, they would naturally institute inquiries by which they would discover that their father was a minor when he signed it, and thus render it valueless. Hence the necessity of destroying the identity of the real Fitzherberts; and this can only be done by keeping them out of the way—rendering them *non est inventus* when the suit is called up. They not being present, the suit Fitzherbert *vs.* Fitzherbert falls to the ground, and it is merely Fitzherbert *vs.* the Crown. Here the suit can be easily won by the personators of the real Fitzherberts, who, in the absence of the others, will be able, through the measures that have been taken, legally to establish their identity, for, as I have said, the claim of the Crown is a mere fiction adopted by the earl at my suggestion."

"Why, then, has the earl so long delayed his schemes?"

"Because he wished the overthrow of the Fitzherberts to be complete; therefore he waited until time had elapsed for the heirs of Herbert, had he any, or were they living, to attain their majority; otherwise it might have been managed years ago. We were, furthermore, in hopes that by this delay the real heirs, if in existence, could not be found, in which case their personification by others would have been unnecessary. In this we

were disappointed, as the agent sent to America discovered that they were living, and immediately set to work to personify them by means of others. Besides, the property has, during all these years, been accumulating until it has reached an enormous amount. Then there is said to be certain confiscated property in Virginia, which the earl intends, in the name of Adolphus Fitzherbert, to sue that state for re-possession of. Such things have been done successfully in the State of New York, and why not again in Virginia? The property was purchased by Herbert Fitzherbert, and confiscated during the war of 1812-'14; but that will be matter for future action. We must get the present suit settled first."

"It is a complex affair apparently, and yet simple enough when explained," said Cheatem. "The earl, however, is as deep in the mire as any of us."

"Yes, but he has so managed as to prevent almost the possibility of suspicion resting on him, unless through some very untoward accident."

"Well, then, let us hope that a few days more will settle the business."

Cheatem was just on the point of taking his departure when the office boy appeared with the evening paper.

"I wonder if there is anything relative to this business in the legal news," said Gripes, taking the paper from the boy, and running his eyes over the columns. "Damnation!" he exclaimed, "whoever it is that is interested in the Fitzherberts is worrying us closely. Confound it! the case is taken out of Chancery, and is to be tried by civil process at Huntingdon. There will be a week's delay at least; besides the annoyance of having to plead in person. This, too, after everything had been so nicely arranged. It is really too bad. Fortune appears bent upon persecuting us. Still they can scarcely reach England, I should hope, before the Assizes open at Huntingdon, and once keep them back,

and success is certain. Let us hope for the best, at any rate."

Thus terminated the interview of the two lawyers, which had commenced so fiercely, but which, they recognizing the axiom that "when rogues fall out, honest men get their rights," had terminated in such apparent union and friendship.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *Village gossip.*

I AGAIN introduce the reader to the village of Hemmingford. It is evening, as it was, when in fancy, we heretofore visited this quiet, rural retreat, and, as customary, a group of village gossipers have met in Dame Harris's cottage, to discuss the events of the day. I should have mentioned that Harris was the post-mistress of the village, and although her duties were not very arduous, the mail bag, which she fetched into the village from the county town of Huntingdon, about four miles distant, in a donkey cart, twice a week, along with her marketing, seldom containing more than half a dozen, or, at the most, a dozen letters; yet the very fact of her holding the appointment gave her considerable influence among the village friends, besides which she really did manage, in the course of her visits to the post-office, to pick up a considerable quantity of heterogeneous information which she made the most of when engaged in dealing it out piecemeal to her interested audience.

"What be t'news i' the town to-day, dame?" inquired an old man who was seated in the corner of the ample fire-place. "I seed thee a passin' i' the donkey cart as I war a putten up t'plow, an' thou stopped at Dame Draper's cottage. I know'd there was summat stirring, for t'old dame be main fond o' hearin' news, and thou and she had a mighty long confab togeth'er. So arter I

I had gotten my supper, I says to my old woman, 'Mother,' says I, 'I'll een go down t'village and see whatten news Dame Harris has got?' and Bet, she says, 'Aye, go feyther and tell us when thou comes back if there be anything fresh a-stirring. There doant be much news now-a-days.' So I een put on my hat and put my pipe in my pocket, and as I passed the 'public,' I happened in, and had a gill o' yill, and got my pouch filled with bacca, so that I might pass away an hour or two cosey and comfortable loike."

"Then, if thou's just gotten thy pouch filled, thou canst give a body t'small matter of a pipeful, for blow me if I've had a smoke to-day," said a young man in the room, pulling a short, black pipe from his hat-band.

"Aye, lad, thou'rt welcome to a pipe o' 'bacca; but thou shouldst save thy haa-pence and buy 'bacca for thyself. Thou'st always a-cadging from other voalk, and that's a bad sign in a lad like thee."

"Nay, feyther, doan't thou be a snudgin' me this a ways," exclaimed the youth, filling his pipe, at the same time, from the old man's pouch. "Tell thee what I'll do. I'll een stand sixpence for a mug o' yill. What says thou to that?"

"Well, lad, I've no objection to a mug o' yill, for it's dry work smoking and talking without a drop o' yill to wash a chap's throat down with; but Lor' bless you! what's a mug or two mugs o' yill 'mong so many voalks as be here to-night?"

"Well, then, feyther, we'll make a gatherin', and send Sally for a gallon," and the youth went round among the assembly, hat in hand, to receive their penny subscriptions, having first deposited his own sixpence in the hat, and the requisite sum for the purchase of a gallon of ale, and a little tobacco besides, having been obtained, Dame Harris's niece Sally was sent out to the village public house, or, as it was styled in village parlance, the "public," to procure the refreshments.

Meanwhile, several new comers had dropped into the

dame's hospitable cottage, among whom were our former acquaintances, Sam Watson and Jim Boulton; the latter of whom, it will be recollected, had gone to sea with the son of Squire Tapley, when he went his first voyage as a midshipman, and had enlightened Sam Watson so much respecting America.

The young midshipman had gone to sea again, but Jim had staid behind, and now was hired as an in-door servant or a kind of half-footman, half-farming man, in the squire's family.

"Sam, how dost thou, lad? How dost thee, Jim?" was the greeting of the company, as the two young mer made their appearance.

"Jim," said the young fellow who had made the request for the tobacco of the old man, "a sight o' thee's good for sore eyes, lad; sin' thou's gotten into the squoire's family thou holds thy head mighty stiff. What with thy going till 'Merica with squoire's son, and then being made in-door sarvant, thou thinks thou's gotten to be above poor voalks. Dash me, what a plaguey foine waistcoat thou's got on, all cross-bars, goold and scarlet. Moy eyes! but thou cuts a swell—doant thou."

"I know thou'rt only a jokin', Bill Spoolley," replied Jim; "but to tell God's truth, it's mighty little time I get to go a visiting, sin' I've been in the squoire's family; there be so much to do in the house, and the new butler be a mighty queer sort of a chap. He keeps a fellow pretty hard at work, I can tell you."

"Aye, he be one of your foine gentlemen from Lunnun, beant he, Jim?" said another. "He holds his head mighty stiff here, as if he couldn't stoop to look at poor voalks. They be powerful proud, them Lunnun sarvants."

"And they do say," said another, "that he be castin' 'sheep's eyes' at Fanny Watson," (Fanny Watson was the sister of Sam Watson, who has been introduced to the reader, and was the belle of the village.) "They say 't gard'ner's e'en a most crazy about it, for he

has been looking after pretty Fanny for many a day; and now this here Lunnun jackanapes be come, Bob shaves himself and blacks his boots every morning, to make him look as smart as the butler; but the gals is fond o' finery, and I guess the Lunnun'er 'll carry off the prize. T' butler guv Fan, a foine new sash riband t'other day, and a tortus shell comb e'en a most as big as my hand."

"I'd thank thou to hold thy tongue about moy sister, Master Dick," said Sam Watson to the young man who had last spoken. "Fanny cares nought either for gard'ner Bob, nor yet for t' Squire's new butler. Fan looks for a better match for either. Squire's son tell'd her when he was at home, that she was pretty enough to be a foine lady—and prettier than half the foine ladies he met in Lunnun; and as for that powdered jackanapes, the Lunnun butler, dash moy wig! if I catched him palavering to moy sister Fanny, if I wouldn't kick him with my hob nail shoes in the seat of his red plush breeches till he wished himself back in Lunnun again."

"Ah! Sam, lad," said the old man who had been sitting in the corner, quietly smoking his pipe, and listening to the conversation that had been going on. "Ah! Sam, lad, thou should'st put such silly notions out of thy sister's head as listenin' to the fine words of squire's son. Believe an old man; when gentlemen like he, whisper soft words in the ears of the daughters of their feyther's tenants, especially if the girls be pretty, it bodes them no good. Take my advice Sam; gard'ner Bob's a good, honest young fellow, and loves thy sister, and has loved her for a main long spell! thee get her to marry un 'afore t'squire's son comes back again, and thee and she'll both be glad on't. They sailor chaps, especially when they be gentlemens sons, beant to be trusted whisperin' love stories into the ears o' poor gals. As for you scaramouch of a Lunnun butler, thou must'nt be after misusing on him, but God forbid I should see thy pretty sister Fanny, marry such as he, lad."

"But this beant no news," said the old man, who had

come in from the outskirts of the village to hear the news and carry it home to his wife Betsy. "T'assizes, be a comin on in a day or two, and I'll be bound Dame Harris when she was in Huntingdon to-day heerd summat worth tellin on, for I seed her stop at Dame Draper's as she came home to-night, and I'se warrant she didn't stop there for nought."

"Aye, t'assizes, sure enow do come on in a day or two; they say t'Judge came on yesterday, and be a stopping at lady Shepherd's 'till the opening day," said one of the company, "Dame; didn't hear ought 'bout t'assizes when thou was to Huntingdon to-day."

"Deed then, I did Feyther Hodges. I heer'd that forby the trial o'Tim Larkins for robbing farmer Daintree's hayricks, and stealing farmer Gidding's horse, and the trial o'Bill Stukely for murderin' the old woman in Brompton hollow, there be another mighty powerful trial a commin' on that'll bring some o'the best lawyer chaps from Lunnun, down till Huntingdonshire."

"And what be that, dame?" exclaimed half a dozen voices at once, "tell us, what be that?" "Aye, and take a horn o'yill afore thou tells us, for this smoke must make thy throat dry," said the old man, cunningly, in order to tempt the old woman to tell the news, for she had been slightly offended at so much of the conversation, being monopolized by others in her own house. Dame Harris took the horn of ale from the hands of the old man, and having drank it, she said:

"Well, then, lads, the trial that I speak of, be that of the Brampton Manor property. Some do say as these voalks that was down here some time ago; thou recollects when, beant the real owners of the property after all, and that other voalks ayont the seas be a comin' over to appear agin 'em, and other voalks say as how they do be comed over; but nobody knows where they be. They say they've been spirited away loike by the lawyer chaps as be engaged in the trial at the 'sises; and then agin, I heerd some voalk say as there beant no such persons, and that it be only a

trick of some 'cute Lunnun lawyers to keep the young voalks as was down here, out o' their rights. I don't know what to make on't for moy part; but there appears to be queer goings on 'mongst the gentle voalks, that circumvents poor voalk like we, altogether."

"And be the young gentleman and lady in Huntingdon now, dame?" asked one of the company.

"Aye, be they, lad, they coomed down from Lunnun on t'coach this morning. I seed 'em get out and go into the King's Arms hotel, and there was a mighty cunning lawyer chap along with 'em, as looked for all the world as though he could see through a body with his little, glittering black eyes. Mr. Barker, the post-master, tell't me as his name was Cheatem, and that he was a great Lunnun 'torney, who was to proceed in this trial; but, lads, mark old dame Harris' words. That lawyer chap be a rascal, if there be one on yarth, and they would-be gentle voalks, bean't no real gentle voalks, at all—set 'em up for gentle voalks, indeed! and never said so much as "How d'ye do, dame Harris!" when they was down here before, and squoire introduced me to 'em. It takes me to know real gentle voalks, as has lived gal and woman, at Lady Spatter's and at Lord Hinchinbroke's a matter of twenty years and more. Real gentle voalks never looks so mum and skeery at the tenantry when they bows and curt'sey's to 'em, as they voalks did; and now I think on't that same lawyer chap, or one very much like him, was down with 'em when they was here afore."

"Well, dame, all *I* hopes," said the old man, "be, that *some one or other* will get their right to the property settled, for it be a mighty fine estate, just, as a body may say, a goin' to ruin for want o' 'tention, and get it who may, it'll make work mighty plenty next year."

"Yes, feyther, as thou says, it will be a powerful good thing for laborin voalk; but some how or 'nother, I can't b'lieve as they be the rightful heirs."

"Perhaps t'others 'ill turn up afore the trial comes on."

"Aye, perhaps, they may, though there beant much time for 'em to come now, if so be as they beant a keepin' themsen quiet till the day o' trial."

"And was there no other news a stirin in town, dame?"

"Yes, there was the talk 'bout t'assize ball, and the ladies are all buying new dresses for it, and some voalks was a saying how the lord judge as was to preside at 'assizes, was a mighty severe man, and Stukely was sure to be hanged if so be as he be found guilty; but the main talk was this trial about the Brampton estates; and they all do say as the young voalks sent their cards to Lady Spatter and Lord Hinchinbroke as soon as they arrived at the hotel. Sen 'em up—indeed!—such as they to be sending their cards to real lords and ladies."

"Well, dame, I shall wish thou good even, and go home. My old woman, Bet, 'll grow skeery if I stay any longer. Be'st thou a going over to town to see t'judge open t'assizes."

"Yes, feyther, I think I shall go. It 'll be on post-day, thou knows."

"Well, then, I promised my old woman to take her to Huntington to buy a new gownd, and mayhap thou'll gin her a lift i' th' cart, and I'll walk by the side and lead the donkey."

"Aye, to be sure, feyther, and welcome."

"Thankee! dame. Good night," said the old man as he left the cottage.

Shortly afterwards the company dispersed and retired to their homes, chatting as they went over the news they had heard and of the assizes; for the assizes, held once in six months, and always opened by the Judge and the town officials with great form—the judge in his wig and ermine and scarlet robes proceeding to the court-house in a carriage drawn by four horses, followed by the county magistrates, and preceded by constables and a trumpeter on horseback—comprised the two great events of the year, in the opinion of the simple villagers.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*News from the Convent—The Confessor's advice and its results.*

IN a former chapter I spoke of the consternation of Gripe and Cheatem on having simultaneously received intelligence of the double release of Adolphus and Georgiana—the one from his imprisonment, as I may justly term it, on board the seventy-four, and the other from her incarceration under false and most cruel pretences in the convent of St. Euphemia. It was not to be expected that the Earl of Shropshire would long remain ignorant of these occurrences—the more especially as his own sister-in-law was Abbess of the Convent, and it was through false representations on his part that the poor victim of his persecutions had been received by the Superior.

The Countess de Tivoli, it will be recollected, had recommended, on permitting Georgiana to leave the convent under the protection of her brother and aunt, that for some time at least the affair should be kept secret, in order that, no suspicion being engendered, no plots might be hatched by the Countess de Paoli's accomplices again to obtain possession of the young woman, or at least subject her and her party to a very disagreeable surveillance, in a country where the Countess de Paoli and her friends possessed great influence and where the laws were administered with very little regard to justice; but as soon as the good abbess thought she had allowed them sufficient time to get beyond the borders of Italy, she could contain her indignation, at having been thus deceived and made the unwitting and unwilling party to a gross and cruel fraud, no longer. About the time,

therefore, that Mrs. Lyman and her party reached Paris, for they traveled leisurely, the Earl received a letter from his sister-in-law, which ran as follows:—

“Convent of St. Euphemia, near Turin, Italy.

“To the Right Honorable the Earl of Shropshire, K. G.

“*My Lord*.:—It is with mingled feelings of indignation and pity that I now address your lordship. I grieve that you, holding the lofty and honorable position of a British peer, and being a professed pillar and supporter of our Holy Mother Church, and the living representative of a long line of noble ancestors, whose fame is in England nearly coeval with the Norman conquest, and in France with the days of the high and chivalrous Charlemagne; and who, notwithstanding my vows which sever me from all earthly ties, I cannot forget, was the husband of my lamented sister, could have descended from your high estate, so low, as to be guilty of falsehood, meanness, and cruelty. I received a short time since an autograph letter from your lordship by the hands of a woman who stated her name to be Tirozzi, recommending to my care a young female, said to be of unsound mind, and the unconscious tool of wicked and designing men, who were plotting evil to my dear niece, Lady Mary Alton. My lord, believing your lordship to be the soul of honor, I gave credence to the statements you made in the letter, although I was led to mistrust the asseverations of the woman Tirozzi; and, although against the rules of the convent, I, in pity to the poor child, whom I believed to be misled, and through deficiency of intellect, not to be an accountable agent in the devices of evil minded persons calculated to injure my niece, consented to receive her into the convent of which I have the honor to be the superior, and placed her under my own immediate eye, in the hope (for I fancied I saw good traits in the child, notwithstanding what Tirozzi said and what was stated in your letter) that the quiet seclusion of the convent might alleviate her disorder, and that eventually she might recover the use of her reason, and either go forth



to perform a part of usefulness in the world, or devote herself to a religious life. My lord, my lord, how have I been deceived? I have learnt, by proof uncontrovertible, that not only were the statements of the woman Tirozzi false, but false likewise were the statements of your lordship's letter. My lord, I cannot mince my words, and—as is the way of people abroad in the world—speak equivocally, and in gilded phrases; I was sought to be implicated in this abominable conspiracy, the character of which, I have partially, yet not wholly learnt, and not *I* alone my lord, but through me, our Holy Church. My lord, it does not become *me*—a humble servant of Christ and of the Holy Church—to sit in judgment on the sins of others, who, alas! notwithstanding my seclusion from the vanities and frivolities of the world, have too many sins of commission and omission of my own to answer for and to weep over; nevertheless, I pray your lordship to consider seriously the heinous offence, not alone in the eye of God, but in the eye of man likewise, that your lordship has been guilty of, and to repent while yet there is time. My lord, let it not be said that one so esteemed by our Holy Church as is your lordship, and one who, from his high position, and has so much influence to promote the welfare or to brand with disgrace that Church, has been guilty of this deadly sin, unrepented of and unforgiven. My lord, I pray you make what reparation is in your power while yet there is time. Let not ambition—nay, let not the fear of worldly shame blind you to the necessity of reparation, or hinder you in the good work. Seek counsel, my lord, where it may best be found; seek it of the good Father Anselmo. He will not direct you astray, and I pray Heaven, through the Holy Virgin, that I may hear from your own hand that you have repented this misdeed.

And now, my lord, I wash my hands of this sad business. I feel that, though unwittingly, I have been led to aid in the furtherance of an evil action. May I be forgiven, as I pray for forgiveness for others. I have

made such reparation as it has been in my power to make. The innocent and unfortunate child has left the convent in the care of her friends, and I trust will have a happy journey to her native land. I can do no more to serve her.

With many and earnest hopes and prayers, I sign myself,

SISTER ANASTHASIA,  
Superior of the Convent of St. Euphemia."

Simultaneous with this letter, his lordship received another from Signora Tirozzi, informing him of the escape of Georgiana from the convent, and also that Adolphus had unaccountably received his discharge from the man-of-war, and (for this woman was at the head of an army of intriguers and spies) that the brother and sister, in company, with a party comprised of English and American travellers, had set out for England, via France. "They had already crossed the frontier of Italy," said Signora Tirozzi, "before I was aware of the escape, so secretly was it planned. Had it been otherwise, it would have gone hard but I would have found some means to arrest, or at least to delay their progress."

Good and evil news generally come in a sweeping avalanche; the same mail brought his lordship a letter from his sister, the Countess de Paoli, to the same effect as that of Signora Tirozzi, with the additional information, that the countess entertained suspicions of the recusance of Sister Maria, heretofore supposed to be a staunch and incorruptible adherent to the dictates of her Superiors, in the Order to which she had plighted her vows of obedience. The first blow falls the heaviest. It is said that the criminal broken alive upon the wheel is insensible to pain from the reiterated blows from the club of the executioner; the physical agony has been concentrated in the first blow; the rest fall unheeded upon the mangled body. If this be true with regard to physical torture, it is not less true with regard to mental suffering. The earl had received the first intimation of this unpleasant, perhaps

ruinous intelligence, from Gripes, who had been the first to obtain the letters from the foreign mail, and who had hurried to his lordship (who was then in committee in the House of Lords) with the intelligence. Finding his lordship was not at his mansion in Grosvenor Square, Gripes had thought the intelligence of sufficient gravity and importance, even to warrant the dispatch of an express messenger to the House to summon his lordship to Grosvenor Square; and when the earl arrived, and was informed by the lawyer of the mischances that had occurred, he felt almost paralysed by the thoughts of the evil that brooded over him. He sat silent in his chair, overwhelmed with the weight of the intelligence he had received, and neither he nor Gripes spoke; for though the latter had, as the reader is aware, already arranged upon the only plan that remained for him to follow, he dared not address his lordship, under present circumstances, until he was himself spoken to.

At this moment the earl's valet entered with the letters from the post-office, and his lordship immediately singled out those which bore the Italian post-mark, and without uttering a word, broke the seals and read them slowly from beginning to end.

Strange! but this corroboration of the unpleasant intelligence communicated by Gripes which had completely unnerved the earl, served to rouse his almost collapsed energies into action, and, greatly to the surprise and delight of Gripes, he calmly, and apparently without a particle of alarm or displeasure, inquired what course he now thought it advisable to pursue. The wily lawyer, who knew how deeply he himself was implicated, and who yet wished to complete the infamous job he had taken in hand, and so far successfully carried out, related to his lordship the conversation he had held with Cheatem that morning, and the determination they had jointly arrived at, viz.: that now matters had gone so far, they must be carried out to the end. It must be "sink or swim"—there was no intermediate course left. "Besides, my lord," said Gripes, "the trial comes on at

Huntingdon in a day or two, and perhaps, under present circumstances, it is just as well that the case is removed from the control of the Lord Chancellor, as the slow method of proceeding in the Court of Chancery, might oblige the suit to lay over from day to day ere it was decided, and thus waste a great deal of time, which to us now is everything. In coming before the court of Assize at a provincial town, we shall have this advantage, that, the contestants not being present when the case is called up, and not answering when called upon, the suit will be decided in our favor, and I have every hope that they may not arrive in time to appear. They may come after the decision as soon as they please. One thing I am sure of; they have not yet arrived in England from Paris, for I have agents at the various channel ports who would have given me information had such been the case."

And thus the lawyer quitted Grosvenor Square with the permission of his lordship still to prosecute the suit with vigor, notwithstanding the news he had received, and the earl felt his mind so relieved from the weight of what had at first been felt as a stunning blow, by the conversation with his lawyer, and the hopes he still entertained of bringing the case to a fortunate issue, that he actually returned to his duties at the House of Lords in a more easy frame of mind than he had been, not only before he had heard the unpleasant news, but for several weeks previously.

These letters, however, to the earl and to the two lawyers, were not the only ones directed to persons cognizant of this unhallowed affair, brought by this mail. There were also letters from the abbess to Father Anselmo, and to Lady Mary. The letter to her niece was enclosed by the abbess in that which was directed to the venerable father; for she, notwithstanding she lived in a convent, knew enough of the world to feel pretty well satisfied that any letters received by the present post from Italy, addressed to her niece in her (the abbess's) handwriting, would be intercepted by the earl. The

letters to Father Anselmo were always placed in a separate bag from those directed to the earl, or others of the members of the family or the residents at the castle, and consequently were sent on to him, direct to the castle, no matter where the earl might be residing. A few hours, therefore, after the above recorded conversation had taken place in Grosvenor Square, between the earl and his lawyer, Father Anselmo and Lady Mary were both intently perusing letters from the abbess at Alton castle.

The letter to Father Anselmo was brief, but the abbess conjured the venerable father to use his utmost efforts to dissuade the earl from pursuing any further his evil designs. The abbess stated that although she was necessarily ignorant of the real nature of this business, *he* in all probability knew more respecting it. She begged him, regardless of consequences, to seek a personal interview with the earl; and if need be, even to leave the castle sooner than by remaining, in the character of confessor and chaplain, to imply that the sanction of the Church had been given to a scheme so unholy, and *that* in a country where everything that could tend to weaken the influence of the Church of Rome was so eagerly seized upon by its implacable enemies. And above all she conjured the venerable father to dissuade her beloved niece from having anything to do with the matter; and if she were persecuted on that account, even to accompany her himself to Italy and place her in security within the sanctuary of the convent of Saint Euphemia.

The letter to Lady Mary ran as follows:

"\* \* \* I have but little time to spare, my beloved niece, as the courier must depart in a few minutes to Turin, with the mail bag, in order that it may reach Trieste in time for the steamer; and I have occupied the greater part of the day, to the neglect, I fear, of my spiritual duties, in writing to your father and to the venerable Father Anselmo, upon a matter which troubles me sorely (may Heaven forgive me for allowing my

mind to dwell so long on temporal matters). Seldom indeed do I write; and well may you be assured, dear Mary, that it is a matter of serious import which thus so deeply engages my attention. It relates indeed to you, my beloved niece—you whom I love perhaps to a degree that is sinful. Go then, dear Mary, immediately to your confessor, and read this hurried note. Should you be ignorant of the cause which has tempted me to devote so much of my time to epistolary correspondence, he will explain all to you. Be guided, my dear Mary, by his advice, even if it be contrary to that of your earthly parent and natural protector; and should matters come to the worst you will ever find a peaceful refuge in the convent of St. Euphemia, and a warm and heartfelt welcome from your aunt, its unworthy abbess. I can say no more. Pietro is waiting for the letter-bag, and I dare delay him no longer.

"Believe me, dear Mary, your affectionate aunt,  
"LAURA TIVOLI—SISTER ANATHASIA."

Having perused this brief epistle from one whom she regarded with feelings of undying affection, Lady Mary sat for some moments greatly agitated by a variety of conflicting emotions. "This disgraceful purpose of my father has become known abroad," she thought, "oh! where will it end; to what will this sad ambition drive him? If he has proceeded so far as this letter from my aunt would seem to imply, then indeed is it time for action. Dear aunt (kissing the letter) I will follow your advice, I will see and be guided by the advice of Father Anselmo, and if need be—oh! dreadful alternative—I will fly from the temptations that beset me—even from my father's house, and seek refuge and peace in the cloisters of St. Euphemia."

A few minutes afterwards Lady Mary tapped softly at the door of Father Anselmo's study, and the father in a mild benignant tone bade her enter.

"Ah! my beloved daughter, is it you who seeks me?" exclaimed Father Anselmo, as Lady Mary entered the

apartment. "I was just on the point of coming to *you*, *I*, and I presume *you* also have received a letter from the Countess de Tivoli, the worthy Abbess of St. Euphemia. My daughter, I feel it is on this subject that you seek counsel from me; but I have already marked out the course for you to pursue and now I repeat, as you value your future peace of mind, as you value the hope of eternal happiness hereafter, swerve not from that line of conduct. Earnestly did I seek counsel from Heaven, as to how I should reconcile, in this matter, my duty as a Christian priest, with my vows of obedience to the Superiors of my Order. The struggle in my mind was long and arduous; but Heaven answered me and at length I felt an inward assurance that it was my duty at all hazards to warn and advise you against any participation in a deadly sin. The intelligence I have received from the worthy Lady Abbess, your aunt, only seem to confirm me in this action of duty. My daughter, again write to your father and urge him to discontinue this business, and tell him in words of filial affection and yet with firmness, that he cannot mistake, that you cannot consent to obey him in this. I too, shall write, and even state plainly what I have heard from Italy, and then, this duty done, let us await the event with patience and prayer. My daughter, if it comes to the worst, *you* have still a refuge in the cloisters of St. Euphemia. I will guide you thither and then I shall return here. Let your father act as he may, goaded as he is by evil passions, I dare not seek peace and repose elsewhere while a duty remains to be done. That duty is to use, even to the last—while one ray of hope—one spark of life remains, all my influence, strengthened as I hope through my prayers to Heaven, for your noble parent's return to the path of rectitude, and then, my child, *you* must return to him. I could not bid you fly from him but to save yourself from sin and shame; but you must not forsake him. Whatever be your desire you must not now take the veil and hide yourself forever in the cloister. You will yet I hope return to rejoice

the latter days and to soothe the last hours of a repentant, a fond and a happy parent. Now go, my child, and write the letter and I will busy myself in the same way. Write earnestly but trustingly, and may Heaven prosper our cause."

Lady Mary quitted the room and retiring to her own apartment, wrote the letter as the priest had desired her, amidst many sobs and tears, and Father Anselmo having also written his, both letters were sent off by the post that evening for London.

They were received by the earl on the following day, just after he had held a long and strictly confidential interview with Gripes and Cheatem, and at a moment when the pair of scheming scoundrels had raised his hopes of speedy success to the highest pitch.

His lordship tore open the letters, glanced hastily at their contents, and with a frown that would have sent the blood curdling to the heart of his daughter had she been present, and with an oath expressive of bitter scorn, he threw them into the fire.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### *An unexpected arrival.*

A PACKET from Havre had just arrived at Southampton, and from that packet had landed the party of travellers who we last mentioned as being at Paris. It was not a regular passenger vessel, for very wisely, at the suggestion of Adolphus, Mrs. Lyman and her friends consented to make the few hours passage in a small trader that was laden with wine. It was not very agreeable; but they had a presentiment that should their arrival in England be made known to the persons who had so implacably pursued the brother and sister, these persons, who evidently possessed great capabilities of doing evil, and were over-ruled by no scruples of con-

science, would still manage to throw obstacles in their way. The spies, therefore, who had been engaged by Cheatem, had been completely thrown off their guard, and our hero and his friends put up for the night at a neat but small unpretending hotel in the town of Southampton without a suspicion being entertained of their arrival. They were not aware of the necessity that existed of their appearance in England just at this critical juncture or they would of course have made more haste than they had done, and not have spent so many days in the gratification of their curiosity and in visiting places of note in Paris and other parts of France. While, however, they were sitting in their room awaiting supper, Adolphus took up a newspaper and to his astonishment read that the trial of the suit in which he was so deeply interested was to come off at Huntingdon on the following Thursday.

Here was news indeed! and after a brief consultation with his aunt, it was resolved that he should that evening write and despatch letters to Mr. Hughes, informing him of his arrival with his sister in England.

This was done, and then the party made arrangements for proceeding to London on the following morning.

Mr. Hughes and I had some time before received the letters from Adolphus, announcing his release from the man of war, and also subsequently a letter, which had especially rejoiced the heart of Mrs. Hughes, relating, briefly, the particulars of Georgiana's release from the convent. None of us knew where to write to them, as they were moving from one spot to another day by day, and bitterly we lamented the impossibility of informing them of the absolute necessity of their hastening to England. Indeed the anxiety produced, by the knowledge of what *might* be effected were they present at the trial, and what *would* probably be the result were they not present, was almost unbearable. It seemed as though we had success at our very fingers' ends, yet could not grasp it.

It was, therefore, with feelings of great gladness that

we received the letters announcing their arrival in England, and that very evening we met them at the Southampton railroad terminus, in London.

It is needless to speak of the joyous evening that we spent together at Mr. Hughes' snug little villa at Clapham, or the delight of Mrs. Hughes on again meeting with Georgiana, for whom she had begun to feel almost a mother's affection. Suffice it to say, that we did spend a right merry evening for the time being, dismissing from our minds all care for the future.

However, there was a great deal of business to be done, and to be done secretly; for we determined, if possible, to keep our ruthless opponents ignorant of the arrival of the heirs until they actually appeared before them in court.

Adolphus, and Mr. Hughes and I, were therefore pretty busy during the following day or two, but by that time we had done everything that lay in our power to put the secret train in proper order.

It was now Saturday, and the following Thursday was to be the day—"the great, the important day, big with the fate of the Fitzherberts."

On Saturday morning, Mrs. Hughes informed her husband that, now his duties were for the present terminated, she had a request to make on the part of Miss Fitzherbert—which was, that he would allow her to carry out the wish of the kind Abbess of St. Euphemia, in visiting her niece Lady Mary secretly, and in company with her brother making herself known to her. The abbess had despatched a letter for Georgiana to Paris, after she had left the convent, enclosing a letter of introduction to her niece, and she besought her, as she valued her kindness while in the convent, and as she could assist to save her niece from the perils which surrounded her, to present it in person to Lady Mary. I should have mentioned that for a long time Mr. Hughes had been cognizant of the implication of the Earl of Shropshire in this infamous business, and he had also managed to discover that Lady Mary, who was intended to act a

principal character in the impending drama, had betrayed considerable unwillingness to play her part. All this however, he had kept secret from me until a day or two before the arrival of the Fitzherberts in England. He was, therefore, not at all averse to the introduction of his clients to the lady, feeling perfectly secure of her secrecy, in consequence of the request of her aunt to that effect, even if Lady Mary herself should be inclined to betray us.

It was resolved therefore, it being known that the earl was in London, to proceed to Shrewsbury that very afternoon; and at four o'clock Adolphus and his sister, and Mrs. Lyman, with Mr. Hughes and myself, were on our way to that place. We had determined to remain in the town until Tuesday, and then to retrace a portion of our way and to put up quietly at Huntingdon, so as to be in readiness for the events of Thursday.

We arrived at Shrewsbury on Sunday about noon, and the next morning despatched a letter to Lady Mary, who was at the castle, about six miles distant, enclosing the letter of the abbess. The letter was sent by a private messenger, who brought back an answer to the effect that Lady Mary Alton would be happy to meet Mr. and Miss Fitzherbert and their friends that afternoon, at their hotel in Shrewsbury. She would have received them at Alton Castle, with pleasure, but she feared that that would lead to exposure, which her aunt had explicitly desired her to avoid. She added that she would get out of her carriage at the entrance to the town, and desire the coachman to wait her return, and would then walk to the hotel, so as not to be recognized by the towns-folks.

At the appointed time Lady Mary arrived, and was introduced to the Fitzherberts. We had expected, from what we had heard of Lady Mary's character, to witness a great deal of hauteur mingled even with her condescension; but we were most agreeably surprised to find her unassuming to a remarkable degree. She looked sad and careworn, but she was still exceedingly handsome. There was evidence of a latent spirit beaming in

her eyes at times, which showed that when she chose she could display all the pride and hauteur for which the world had given her credit. Still those same dark piercing eyes were expressive of a depth of feeling that plainly told that Lady Mary Alton was one whom the world of fashion had heartlessly misjudged; and, at least now, no one could look upon her queenly and commanding form and classic features, *not soulless*, as the poet has said of such, but beaming with intellect and sentiment, without feeling interested in her—no one could witness the pensive melancholy that was engrafted on those features, without a feeling of sorrow, that one whose nature was evidently so susceptible should have been doomed to suffer the long corroding anxiety, which alone could have so plainly stamped that expression of melancholy on her features. Yet the feeling of almost painful interest did not descend to pity. One might have pitied a less queenly being, but as well might one profess pity for a goddess as for the queenly Lady Mary Alton, and Lady Mary would have shunned and scorned those who could have *pitied* her.

The meeting between the Fitzherberts and the daughter of the proud earl who was the primary cause of their own and their father's trouble was brief but cordial. Her ladyship started when first she saw Adolphus and exclaimed, involuntarily, "Good Heaven, how like poor Herbert." He evidently awakened in her mind some painful reminiscences, for her hand trembled as she extended it to him, and her cheek alternately paled and flushed as she addressed him. With Georgiana, of course, she was more at ease, and after staying about an hour she rose to depart. She had already wished us good day, and had reached the door of the apartment, when she turned back and taking the hand of Georgiana, she said, her voice trembling with emotion:—

"Dear Miss Fitzherbert, believe me, I feel for your past misfortunes, and I wish you well. You may imagine that *I have been* and *am* interested in your failure on Thursday. You see," she said, smiling archly, "I



know more than you give me credit for; but far from that, I never have been, never *could* be, inimical to the happiness of you and your brother. Perhaps some day I may tell you why. And now I shall wish and pray most sincerely for your success; and be assured whatever be the result, you will ever have a warm and steadfast friend in Mary Alton."

Mr. Hughes conducted her ladyship down stairs, and to the door of the hotel; and, after some conversation respecting the interview, we again set busily to work in order that nothing that we could conceive would avail us should be wanting to ensure our success on the coming Thursday.

### CHAPTER XXX.

*The county court—The trial and the verdict set aside—The earl's death.*

THERE was, as usual, an imposing array in the town of Huntingdon on the commission day of the autumn assizes of 184—. The high sheriff and county officers went to meet the judge, who had for some days previously been stopping at the seat of Lady Shepherd, as had been already mentioned; and the cortege having been arranged, they entered the county town, amidst the shrill clang of trumpets and all the accustomed dread and imposing paraphernalia of justice. Lord —, the presiding judge, was, as is the case with most English judges, a man of lofty intellect and of strict unswerving integrity; but as Dame Harris had already informed her group of auditors at the cottage at Hemingford, he rather inclined to severity. Nevertheless, he was a noble and high-minded man, and one upon whose broad shoulders the ermine rested with becoming dignity. The fifth day of the assizes was the day appointed for the hearing of the case, *Fitzherbert vs. Fitzherbert*. This delay was

very annoying to Mr. Gripes, as he was in momentary fear of the arrival of the true heirs Fitzherbert from the continent, but he had no remedy but patience. As to Mr. Hughes, he kept perfectly quiet, and had succeeded in keeping from the knowledge of his opponents the actual arrival of those they so much dreaded.

At length the day arrived, and the court-house was thronged to the uttermost. The assize commission is always a period of excitement, but this time it was more than usually so, in consequence of the trial of this case of such unprecedented local interest.

A dead silence prevailed in court when the judge entered and took his seat upon the bench on the eventful morning. There was no occasion for the Crier to call for order, for every one present held his breath—a pin might have been heard to drop in the court.

Nearly all the influential gentlemen in the country were present, as well as several ladies, who occupied seats in the rear of the bench.

The customary preliminaries having been gone through, the judge asked who appeared for the plaintiffs.

"Isaak Gripes and Archer Snap, Esquires," was the reply.

"And for the defendants?"

"Hughes H. Hughes and Joseph Green, Esquires."

In a few minutes the respective counsel having taken their seats, the attorneys, Messrs. Ferrit and Cheatem, being also seated near their counsel, the jury were sworn, and while this operation was going forward, all eyes were directed to a young gentleman and lady who entered the court, and were conducted to a seat by the deputy sheriff. It was soon whispered around that these were the plaintiffs Fitzherbert, and shortly afterwards the Earl of Shropshire entered and took a seat near them, having exchanged salutations, which, to those at a distance appeared to be kind and familiar, but which those near by remarked, were strangely condescending, and not unmixed with hauteur, on the part of his lordship.

"Is it not strange and extraordinary! the singular resemblance of those young people to Adolphus and Georgiana?" whispered Mr. Hughes aside to me, for I was seated near him.

"It is, indeed," I replied; "at this slight distance I could almost believe them to be the genuine, instead of the false, Fitzherberts." As I was speaking, Mr. Gripes arose, and in a low, distinct tone, said:

"May it please your lordship—gentlemen of the jury—as I have already stated, I have the honor to appear before you as counsel for the plaintiffs. Independently of the unusual interest which is excited by a trial, the result of which invokes such an immense amount of property, which I shall have to refer to hereafter; this is altogether a most singular case; I shall, therefore, as briefly as I can, endeavor to state its nature.

"The large estates now under litigation were, anterior to the Reformation, in the possession of the Church; but in the reign of Queen Elizabeth they were sequestered and held by the Crown. Through some omission in the act of sequestration, which it is not necessary to enter into, they were subsequently submitted to litigation, and during the reign of Charles the First, temporary possession was obtained by their former proprietors, who were again deprived of them during the protectorship of Oliver Cromwell. During this period of civil anarchy and discord, they were sacked and laid waste by the Puritan soldiers, and on the Restoration, they were chiefly used by Charles the Second as a hunting ground—having been covered with copse and low brushwood, which had sprung into growth from the roots of the charred trunks of the trees which had been burnt by the Roundheads.

"From that period, until the accession of George the First, they were held as Crown property, although little attention was paid to them. They were still a mere wilderness.

"At this date, however, some new claimant arose in the bishop and clergy of the diocese, who claimed the

property as having been transferred to the Protestant See, when the Catholics had been outlawed and exiled. From that time until the close of the reign of George the Second, they were the object of constant and vexatious litigation, and were still allowed to run to waste; but at that date the claims of the Church were declared null, and the property was fully recognized as belonging to the Crown.

"From this time they were cultivated as farm land, and yielded a large rental, which, with proper attention, however, might have doubled or trebled; but, strange to say, they never received the attention they merited. When his late Majesty, George the Fourth, had attained his majority—he being then Prince of Wales—letters patent were obtained by his father, George the Third, by which he was enabled to transfer the property from the Crown to the prince, individually, and the prince, in the multitude of his generosity upon a certain occasion (it is not necessary for me to allude to it further) presented the property, while he (the prince) was still living, to one Herbert Fitzherbert and his heirs, male and female, forever. Herbert Fitzherbert then being an infant (in law) of some six or eight years of age, the Right Hon. the Earl of Shropshire, was appointed his guardian until he attained his majority. From this period the estates have prospered, and yielded a rental of £15,000 per annum—the only drawback being that the landlord did not reside upon the property, and thus it was not rendered even then so productive to the owners, or so beneficial to the country, as it might have been.

"A short time before he attained his majority, the heir, Herbert Fitzherbert, went to America, and while he was absent, fresh and vexatious claims were made against the property, and it was stated, and in the opinion of the Earl of Shropshire and his legal advisers, correctly, that the title by which his Royal Highness, George Prince of Wales, held the property, did not allow him to make it over to another party, and that upon his

decease, or his ascending the throne of England, the said estates must again revert to the Crown. On the return of Herbert Fitzherbert to England, this was told him by his guardians, and he forthwith declined having any trouble with them, leaving the earl to contest his right should he be called upon to do so, and shortly after this he married, and again sailed with his wife to America. Nothing further was heard of him, and it was supposed he died there. For several years the Earl of Shropshire rested in the belief that the title deeds were invalid, but latterly he discovered that he had all along been under a misapprehension, and that they were as binding as it was possible for them to be. During this long period, including a series of years, the earl, as agent of the doubtful property, in the absence of the rightful owner, had drawn the yearly rentals, and funded them, not knowing whether the money of right belonged to Herbert Fitzherbert or his heirs, or whether it would not eventually be claimed by the Crown. However, on his lordship discovering his error, he immediately took measures to ascertain whether Herbert Fitzherbert or his heirs were living, and with this object an agent was sent to America, who, after much difficulty, succeeded in discovering a son and daughter named Adolphus and Georgiana Fitzherbert, whom he brought over to England with him, and whom, to the best of my belief, are now, my Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, seated in this court. (Great sensation; all eyes directed to the two young people representing themselves to be the rightful heirs.) The venerable and noble earl, who, I believe, is also present, was now in hopes that his, almost lifelong, difficulties and troubles respecting this property were at an end, and that he should soon have the satisfaction of seeing the heirs of his ward in possession, and of paying over to them the large amount of accumulated property, amounting, with interest, to between £200,000 and £300,000. (Great sensation in court; hands thrust into pockets, and coppers and keys heard jingling in all directions.) Such, my Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, was

not to be the case; the curse of litigation appears to have lingered on these estates for centuries; indeed, ever since they were confiscated from the Roman Church. Scarcely had the heirs of Herbert Fitzherbert arrived in England, when a rumor spread that some foul work was going forward in America, at the instigation of some pettifogging Yankee lawyer (I bristled up considerably when I heard this, while Mr. Hughes glanced at me and smiled archly), *at the instigation of some poor, unscrupulous, pettifogging Yankee lawyer*, I repeat the words, my Lord (and Gripes, who, by some means, had recognized me), and observed my annoyance, looked spitefully towards me), who, reading the advertisement in a Philadelphia newspaper, set his wits to work to see if he could not make a good speculation out of the job, and forthwith he proceeded to hunt up a young couple from the back settlements of the United States, or probably some idle and disreputable characters from Philadelphia or New York, and sought to palm them off as the real Simon Pures.

"With this object in view he wrote to a gentleman of eminence in the legal profession in London—who now appears as counsel for the defendant—and by a little skillful manœuvring, such as gentlemen of his class are perfectly capable of, actually managed to interest him deeply in the false cause of his proteges. I presume, my Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, that these false claimants will this day have the audacity, supported by their smart Sam Slick coadjutor, to present themselves in court as the son and daughter and veritable heirs of Herbert Fitzherbert. It now remains for me, my Lord, to bring forward the incontestible proofs of the identity of my clients, as furnished after much patient and careful investigation, by the indefatigable gentleman who has acted as attorney in this interesting case.

"I have here, my Lord (exhibiting a parcel of parchment documents), copies from the vestry books of Christ Church, Canterbury, of the registration of the birth of Herbert Fitzherbert, on the 4th day of February, 179—;

also of the marriage of the said Herbert Fitzherbert to Ellen Harcourt, which ceremony was performed and registered at the said church in the said city of Canterbury, on the 6th day of June 18—; and furthermore, I have here the affidavits of Adolphus and Georgiana Fitzherbert certifying that their father, the said Herbert Fitzherbert, died at Reading, Pennsylvania, United States of America, in November, 1830. These documents, all properly attested, can leave no doubt upon your minds, my Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, of the personal identity of the young people here present in court; but, my Lord, our neighbors over the water are proverbial for their keen dealing—(casting a bitter glance towards me). The advertisement which I have already alluded to, promised a rich field for harvest; and although utterly ignorant of the nature of the case beyond what was shadowed forth in the advertisement; utterly regardless of truth or consistency, or even of common decency; impelled only by the keen desire of gain, two persons, real or imaginary, purporting to be brother and sister, and to bear the same names as the rightful heritors of the estate in question, and to be the legitimate children of the same parent are brought forward in the hope—the feeble hope—that they may be enabled successfully to contest the title, and obtain a position to which, whether they *substantially* exist, or exist only in the *imagination* of the contestants, they have not the faintest shadow of right.

“My Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, I have emphasized the words *substantially* or only in the *imagination* of the contestants, because I am not in reality aware whether such parties as I speak of really exist, and I have my doubts whether the whole claim has not been trumped up with the object of obtaining money from Lord Alton, in order to purchase silence, under threats of trouble and annoyance. I do not believe, my Lord, that the opposite counsel or attorney can produce their clients before the court, nor say where they can be found.

“However, strong in the strength of truth, no bribes

have been offered the attorney in this case on the part of the Earl of Shropshire, and if this was the object of the contestants, they have been disappointed. I shall now, my Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, proceed to read aloud to the court, the documents I have in my possession, and to call in witnesses to testify that they were honestly obtained; also, that subsequently to our obtaining possession of them the attorney employed by the real or imaginary contestants did start from London to the city of Canterbury, and did visit the vestry of Christ Church, in the aforesaid city, and there endeavor to obtain from the clerk similar copies from the registers, and also sought to get them attested by the said clerk. The copies were of course obtained, but the clerk refused to attest that to the best of his belief the parties set forth by the contestants were the legitimate children of the said Herbert Fitzherbert, and of his wife the said Ellen Harcourt. He having already attested on behalf of the plaintiffs sworn to be such by their attorney.” (Mr. Gripes having read the documents copied from the register at Christ Church, Canterbury, thus continued).

“My Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, in the course of a long, and I may say with pride a pretty successful practice as a barrister, I do not know that I can recall to mind an instance in which a more detestable, a more base attempt at chicanery has been employed. In the first place, look at the absurdity of the pretensions of our opponents in bringing forward, or pretending to have it in their power to bring forward, a young man and woman, brother and sister, of the same name, and purporting to be the same parties, as those we had succeeded in discovering after a vast deal of trouble and anxiety, and at a considerable expense. What was the motive, my lord, of the right honorable earl, who was the guardian of these estates in the absence of his former ward, Herbert Fitzherbert, in seeking to discover whether he or his heirs were living, when once he had satisfied himself that the title to the estate, so long in abeyance, was still good, excepting that it was his desire to get honorably

quit of a most onerous charge, which has cost him years of trouble and anxiety, without affording him the slightest recompense, except the proud consciousness that he was doing his duty; for I am prepared to show that every farthing of the rental that, for many long years prior and subsequently to his ward, Herbert Fitzherbert, having attained his majority, his lordship has received, has been carefully invested in behalf of his ward or his heirs, male or female, together with the interest that has accumulated during those long and tedious years. My lord, is it not enough to make the very stones in the street blush crimson, when one thinks upon the obloquy sought to be cast upon the head of one of the noblest and most esteemed of England's peers? It may be pretended by the contestants that the right honorable earl has been deceived by his agents, in the parties whom, with much difficulty, have been hunted up from the obscurity into which they had fallen in the transatlantic States, whither their parents had emigrated; but, my lord, does this appear probable? will it for one moment bear consideration? Are not the reasons I have given for this flagrant, shameful and most barefaced attempt at imposition, far more plausible—far more likely to be correct? I solicit your lordship's consideration of the circumstances; I ask the consideration of an honest and intelligent jury? My lord, we seek right and justice, and nothing more. Let it be proven that we are wrong; that his lordship; the agents he has employed to discover the heirs; the attorneys who, with the most patient and praiseworthy diligence, have made the most minute investigations—have all been deceived, and that those parties whom we truly believe to be the lawfully begotten heirs of Herbert Fitzherbert, are not so in truth; let it be shown satisfactorily that they are impostors, and his lordship will naturally feel rejoiced in resigning his trust into the possession of the veritable heirs; but we shall want better proof than they, I doubt, are prepared to give; and your lordship has had too much experience on the bench, and the intelligent jury I see before me, have too much good

sense and good feeling to be led away by specious pretences. I shall say no more, as I have witnesses present who will swear to the truth of my statements respecting the copying of these documents, (handing them up to the judge and to the gentlemen of the jury, for their inspection,) and the gentleman who has the honor to be connected with me in this case, will now call them forward."

Mr. Snap arose and called—

"John Withers."

The witness stepped forward to the witness-box, and the customary oath was administered:

"You are the sexton of Christ Church, Canterbury?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the witness.

Mr. Snap smiled, and a suppressed titter ran round the court.

"You must not address me as 'my lord,' my good man," said he. "Just answer plainly 'yes' or 'no' to such questions as may be put to you. I ask you whether you are the sexton of Christ Church, in the city of Canterbury?"

"Yes, sir."

"And on the fifth of April last, the gentleman I am now pointing out, Mr. Cheatem, called at the vestry of the church and asked to see the register?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Hughes here interposed, saying—

"My lord, I object to these questions. Will your lordship please to direct the witness to state simply what occurred at that date, in Canterbury, between the gentleman spoken of and himself?"

"The witness will confine himself simply to a statement of what took place on the occasion alluded to," said the judge.

"I am perfectly willing that such be the case," said Mr. Snap, blandly. "I assure the gentleman opposite there is not the slightest occasion for us to put leading questions to the witnesses in this matter."

The witness continued—

On the 5th of April last, the gentleman sitting there (pointing to Mr. Cheatem) called at my house in Dover-street, Canterbury, and requested me to accompany him to the vestry of Christ Church, as he wished to examine the register."

"And you did so?" asked Mr. Snap.

"I did so."

"Was the gentleman alone?"

"No. He was accompanied by a young gentleman and lady."

"Should you recognise them again were you to see them?"

"I think I should."

"But you are not certain?" exclaimed Mr. Hughes.

"To the best of my belief, I *should* be able to recognise them."

Cast your eyes along the bench on which those gentlemen and ladies are seated, and say if they are seated among them," said Mr. Snap.

The old man carefully wiped the glasses of his spectacles, and having occupied some time with fixing them, peered earnestly in the direction pointed out to him.

"Do you see the gentleman or the lady there?" enquired Mr. Snap, after waiting for a minute or so.

"I do, sir; to the best of my belief they are sitting there," pointing his finger to the spot where the two parties who were personating the Fitzherberts were seated.

"Do you recollect the names of these persons?" interrupted Mr. Hughes.

"Really, my lord," interposed Mr. Gripes, "I must say this is altogether out of rule. The counsel has been two or three times interrupted with frivolous questions and objections, which can in no way affect the evidence of the witnesses or prejudice the case in the minds of the jury."

"It is no matter," said Mr. Snap to his senior, "let the witness reply. I will put the question, if the learned

counsel on the opposite side chooses. Do you recollect the names of the parties, Mr. Withers?"

"I am not good at recollecting names," replied the witness, "but I recollect these because they were out of the common, and because the surname was that of a gentleman and lady whom I knew well by sight, and who at one time lived near Canterbury. The gentleman and lady were introduced to me as Mr. and Miss Fitzherbert."

"What followed?" said Mr. Snap.

"The party went into the vestry, and after Mr. Cheatem had searched the register for some time, he left the vestry, and said he should call on the following day with a law clerk, and obtain copies of the registry of a birth and marriage."

"And did he call?"

"He did, and obtained fair and accurate copies of the registries."

"What followed?"

"An old lady was sent for by the gentleman, who had been many years before in the service of Captain and Mrs. Fitzherbert, and who had nursed Herbert Fitzherbert, the registry of whose birth was one of the documents copied. She had also been present at his wedding with Miss Harcourt, as was I. The old lady was confronted with the young gentleman and lady, and asked if they bore any resemblance to Herbert Fitzherbert. She at once recognised them, and shed tears of joy, for she had been very fond of the child she had nursed. She was asked if she would swear that, to the best of her belief, they were the children of Herbert Fitzherbert, and she willingly did so in my presence. I also took oath to the same effect, for I recollect Master Herbert from a boy, and the young gentleman, at least, is uncommonly like him."

"That will do for the present," said Mr. Snap. "You can stand down, witness. Let Jane Adams be called."

An old lady, whose age must have been near seventy



but whose countenance yet showed great vivacity and intelligence, made her way, with some difficulty to the witness-box. In consideration of her age, she was accommodated with a chair. The customary oath having been administered—

"Your name is Jane Adams?" said Mr. Snap.

"It is, sir."

"Will you have the kindness, Jane Adams, to state what occurred to you at Canterbury, when you were lately called upon to witness the fair copy from the register, of the date of the birth and the marriage of Herbert Fitzherbert?"

The old dame stated that she had been the nurse of Herbert when he was an infant; that she had loved him as one of her own children, for she had just lost a child of her own at this time, and that had made her take more kindly to the babe; that on the occasion of his marriage he had called upon her and made her go and witness the ceremony, and had also made her a handsome present; that the young gentleman and lady she lately saw at Canterbury were the very image of Herbert, and that she had sworn that to the best of her belief they were his children. This was the substance of the old lady's testimony, which was mingled with many expressions of fondness for the child she had nursed, and whom she believed to be their parent.

"Would you wish to ask this witness any questions?" said Mr. Snap, turning to the opposite counsel.

"No," replied both Mr. Hughes and Mr. Green, and the witness was told she might withdraw.

"Call the Right Honorable the Earl of Shropshire," said Mr. Snap.

His lordship stepped forward from the bench on which he was seated, and took his place in the witness-box, and was duly sworn.

"Your lordship has heard the statements of the senior counsel respecting your guardianship over the Brampton manor property. I wish to ask your lordship whether they are substantially correct?"

"They are," replied the earl.

"I do not wish to trouble your lordship further," said Mr. Snap; and the earl was about to retire, when Mr. Hughes said:

"I should wish to put one question to his lordship. I would ask if, on his lordship's oath, he believes the young gentleman and lady now in this court, are the real and legitimate offspring of his former ward, Herbert Fitzherbert?"

"I do," replied the earl.

"May I ask on what grounds, my lord?"

"I object to that question!" exclaimed Mr. Gripes.

Some discussion was about to arise relating to the question, which the earl prevented by stating his perfect willingness to reply.

"I believe them to be so," said he. "In the first place, because on my instituting a search for the heirs of my former ward in America, this young gentleman and lady were discovered with great difficulty by the agent I dispatched to the United States for that purpose. Secondly, in consequence of their having fully satisfied me by their replies to questions which have been put to them, which questions none but the children of Herbert Fitzherbert could have satisfactorily replied to; and thirdly, because of the great family resemblance they bear to my former ward, and to his mother, Eleanor Fitzherbert."

"I am satisfied," said Mr. Hughes, and the earl left the witness-box and returned to his seat on the bench.

Mr. Gripes rose:—

"I think, my lord," he said, "it is quite unnecessary to question any more witnesses. I have stated the case plainly and fairly. My statements have been corroborated as far as they possibly can be. Of course, in such a peculiar case as this, in which the plaintiffs and the defendants, if there be any in reality, are entirely ignorant of the nature of the proceedings beyond what they have heard from their counsel, and which rests solely upon the proofs adduced as to the identity of the parties. I

shall, therefore, rest the case on the part of the plaintiffs as it now stands."

The Court took a recess for the purpose of refreshment, and on its return, Mr. Hughes rose and opened the case for the defendants:

"My lord," said he, "I am well aware that the peculiar features of the civil action now before the court, permit of great advantages on the part of the plaintiffs. Mere circumstantial evidence can alone be adduced on either side to furnish proof of personal identity, and under such circumstances those who are first in the field must necessarily obtain great vantage ground. The case of the plaintiffs, as it has been laid before the court, rests upon the mere personal resemblance of the parties to their supposed parent; for as to the copies of the entries in the register at Christ's Church, Canterbury, any stranger could have obtained those copies, and had we been fortunate enough to have been first to seek out these registrations, we might also have obtained the like testimony in behalf of our clients, from the witness whom the counsel for the plaintiffs has brought forward—"

"Provided," interrupted Mr. Gripes, "provided your clients had been present and had borne so striking a resemblance to Herbert Fitzherbert."

"Exactly so," calmly continued Mr. Hughes. "The jury has therefore to decide simply, whether our clients or the plaintiffs are, according to the testimony, most likely to be the legitimate heirs of the deceased Herbert Fitzherbert. That there is gross deception somewhere is evident, although the principals, on both sides, may be ignorant of any participation in it, and are, therefore, more to be pitied than blamed. I am fully convinced, my Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, that *my* clients are the children of Herbert Fitzherbert, and are entitled to the rights and claims now contested and brought before this court for adjudication. Nevertheless, I am not prepared to say that the plaintiffs are aware of the false part they are acting. They may be deceived

—they may be but tools in the hands of subtle workmen, who are using them for their own purposes. If, my lord, the counsel for the plaintiffs are so certain, as they assume to be, of the justice of their cause, why was not the case openly and fairly brought into court? Why was it sought to make it a case wherein the Lord Chancellor had control as guardian of the heirs Fitzherbert, while the guardian appointed by the donor is still living? It was only through Mr. Ferret, the attorney employed by my clients, having discovered that the Earl of Shropshire was the appointed guardian of the contested property, that the case was referred from the Ecclesiastical to the Civil Courts. Why, my lord, has a system of flagrant persecution been carried on against my clients, from the first moment they were discovered, by mere chance, in New York, until the present time, if the counsel for the plaintiffs considered their case a fair and honest one? I have proof, my lord, that a most iniquitous system—"

"My Lord," interrupted Mr. Gripes, "I must beg your lordship to put a stop to the course of argument adopted by the counsel for the defendants. The court is open, my lord, for the trial of the case Fitzherbert *vs.* Fitzherbert, and it has not assembled for the purpose of listening to the details of an imaginary conspiracy, or to hear base insinuations against the character of a nobleman of high rank, and of the strictest honor and integrity."

"If the counsel for the plaintiffs object to the course pursued by the counsel for the defendants," said the judge, "I shall request him to adhere strictly to the circumstances of the case, as it stands before the court. His language certainly refers to matters foreign and irrelevant to the question now in court, otherwise I should have allowed him to proceed."

"In that case, my lord," said Mr. Hughes, "I at once proceed to call my witnesses."

I was the first witness called upon, and having taken

my place in the witness box, and had the oath administered, Mr. Hughes thus addressed me:

"Your name, sir, is —?"

I replied in the affirmative.

"You are a native of the United States of America?"

"I am; and by profession an attorney-at-law."

"And were acquainted with two parties in that country representing themselves to be Adolphus and Georgiana Fitzherbert, children of Herbert Fitzherbert, of England, who died in the State of Pennsylvania?"

"I was, and still am."

"My lord," interrupted Mr. Gripes, "I object to this method of putting leading questions to the witness. In doing this, I do but return the compliment of the counsel for the defendants, when the witnesses on behalf of the plaintiffs were called," added he, looking vindictively at Mr. Hughes.

"I am perfectly willing to put no questions to Mr. —," replied Mr. Hughes. "He can relate his own story."

"In which, I presume, he is pretty well posted up," said Mr. Gripes, sneeringly.

"My lord," said Mr. Hughes, "I claim the protection of the court; this is insulting."

His lordship sternly rebuked Mr. Gripes for his insulting language, and I proceeded to relate what I knew regarding the Fitzherberts—facts with which the reader is already acquainted. I had, however, scarcely commenced, when Mr. Cheatem whispered in the ear of Mr. Gripes, who rose, and in his turn, said something in a low voice to his senior.

"Yes," replied Mr. Gripes, aloud, to the observation of his junior counsel, and then addressing the judge, he said—

"I would wish, my lord, to put a question to the witness."

"You can do so, sir," said the judge.

"Pray, sir," said Mr. Gripes, addressing me, "where

are these persons representing themselves to be the heirs of Herbert Fitzherbert, of whom you are telling this *very plausible* story? We have produced our clients before the court, and would wish to be satisfied whether we are fighting with reality or a mere shadow—with poor persecuted shades," added he, smiling triumphantly at Snap and Cheatem, who appeared to share his humor.

"I must refer you to the counsel for the defendants," said I.

"Of course," replied he, and again the triumphant smile passed over his visage as he said, with peculiar emphasis:

"Can the learned counsel produce his clients before the court? I am sure it would be satisfactory to his lordship and to the gentlemen of the jury, as well as to our humble selves, to know that we are fighting real flesh and blood."

Mr. Hughes bowed, and whispered in the ear of Mr. Green, who rose and slipped out of the Court House. I went on with my testimony, and in a few minutes Mr. Green returned, leading in our clients, the veritable Adolphus and Georgiana Fitzherbert, accompanied by Mrs. Lyman.

A murmur of astonishment ran throughout the court, amidst which, half stifled exclamations were heard, of—

"Good Heavens! what a strong resemblance!"

"It would be hard to tell one from the other if the whole four stood side by side"—and so forth.

The judge could scarcely control his own astonishment, consistently with his dignity, and the various counsel seated around the table, did not attempt to do so.

Georgiana blushed deeply at finding herself the observed of all observers, and Adolphus was visibly discomposed; while their counterparts on the bench, beside the Earl of Shropshire, were evidently agitated and alarmed. As for the earl himself, he turned pale as death, and after asking an officer of the court for a

glass of water, which he drank off hastily, he rose and quitted the Court House. Blank astonishment and dismay was visible in the features of Messrs. Gripes, Snap and Cheatem, the latter of whom appeared to be especially disconcerted.

"Silence!" at length exclaimed the Crier of the court, for the murmuring whispers made it more resemble a meeting on 'Change than a solemn court, and silence having been restored, I completed my evidence, and retired from the witness box, taking my seat between Adolphus and Georgiana, both of whom appeared to be struck with the appearance of Cheatem, who kept his face turned from them as much as possible. Mrs. Lyman was called into the witness box by Mr. Hughes, and he directed her to state all she knew relating to the identity of his clients.

The lady mentioned the facts of her having recognized the portrait of her sister, in a miniature which had been worn by Adolphus since his birth, and stated, likewise, that that sister had married Herbert Fitzherbert, and with him emigrated to the United States; also, the meeting of the brother and sister in the convent of St. Euphemia, and their immediate recognition of each other. She added, that she was as certain in her own mind, as that she herself was living, that the defendants in the present case were her nephew and niece, and the children and heirs of Herbert Fitzherbert and her sister Ellen Harcourt.

The testimony of Mrs. Lyman, following directly upon that given by me, evidently produced considerable effect on the minds of the jury, and Mr. Hughes requested that the sexton of Christ Church and the witness Jane Adams might be recalled.

While the usher of the court was absent on this duty, Georgiana whispered to me that Mr. Cheatem, whom she pointed out, bore a strong resemblance to the man who had accompanied her to Southampton, and taken her on board the Italian brig; and Adolphus, hearing her remarks, and thus having his own attention directed to Cheatem, said that he had also an indistinct recollection

of seeing the same person on the night that he was taken on board the man-of-war.

"Can you positively assert that he is the man who carried you on board the brig?" said I to Miss Fitzherbert.

"I cannot do that," said she, "because that dreadful man's hair was white, and he looked older, but otherwise the resemblance is perfect."

In the course of a few minutes I had mentioned this to Mr. Hughes, who conversed with me on the subject for some minutes. Meanwhile, the witnesses who had already appeared on the part of the plaintiffs, re-entered, and were cross-examined by Mr. Green, who, pointing out to them, respectively, both our clients, asked if they could recognize them.

To the astonishment, I believe, of the whole court, they both promptly replied, they could not; while a smile of triumph again lit up the somewhat down-fallen visages of Messrs. Gripes, Snap and Cheatem.

I had noticed Mr. Snap slip out hurriedly when they entered the court, after listening to some whispered remark of Mr. Cheatem's, and now I had no doubt in my own mind what had been his object in so doing.

"Do you mean to say," continued Mr. Green, "that notwithstanding the extraordinary resemblance between the plaintiffs and the defendants, you could, after the lapse of upwards of twenty years, perceive a strong likeness to Herbert Fitzherbert in the plaintiffs, and none at all in the defendants?"

Both witnesses persisted that such was the case.

"Then all I have to say," interrupted Mr. Hughes, "is that this is another most extraordinary circumstance in this extraordinary case."

"Have you any more witnesses to examine, sir?" asked the judge.

"I have not, my lord," replied Mr. Hughes; "at least, no witnesses that I could bring forward could make the proofs plainer to me, and, in my opinion, to all disinterested and unprejudiced persons, of the personal

identity of my clients and the veritable heirs Fitzherbert; I would, however, ask your lordship permission to make one observation?"

"You can do so, sir," said the judge.

"What I am about to state is certainly irrelevant to the present case, my lord, yet it goes to confirm the testimony of the witnesses for the defendants as well as my own cognizance of the existence of a conspiracy to obtain possession of the persons of my clients, with the object of removing them from England, and thus placing every obstacle out of the way of the counsel for the plaintiffs. I am aware that in the present case my charge will be useless, but it may satisfy your lordship and the gentlemen of the jury, that I have strong grounds for believing that had we, on our side, had the opportunity afforded us of bringing the plaintiffs and their abettors and counsel to trial on a charge of fraud and conspiracy, they could never have been in a position to hasten on this civil action. I believe, my lord, that one of the parties in connection with the counsel, can be identified as having been a party in the forcible abduction of one of our clients—"

Mr. Gripes rose, and addressing the judge, said, in a hasty and agitated tone:

"My lord, this course, on the part of the learned counsel for the defendants, is altogether unwarrantable. I must beg your lordship to put a stop to it at once."

His lordship replied, addressing Mr. Hughes:

"Whatever may be my own private opinion regarding this matter, sir, I cannot listen to assertions such as that you have just made. You must be aware that they are entirely out of place and unjustifiable, and cannot in the least affect the verdict in the present case. Had I known the nature of the observations you were about to make, I should assuredly have refused your request. I am not here now to give an opinion upon the course you still have it in your power to pursue, but that course you know as well as I do. I shall permit of no further

irrelevant interruptions of this description. Let the case be proceeded with."

Mr. Gripes rose and briefly replied to the remarks which had fallen from the counsel for the defendants. He said that the facts of the case were as simple as they well could be, and all the attempts on the part of the opposite counsel to prejudice the cause of his clients, would, he felt, be disregarded by his lordship in summing up, and by the gentlemen of the jury in considering their verdict. "Why," said he, "have not these charges been urged before this?"

"You know that our clients could not be found, and we had not sufficient proof to furnish basis for a criminal action," interrupted Mr. Hughes.

"I must insist on no farther useless interruption," interposed the Judge, and Mr. Hughes sat down and appeared to resign himself to the unfortunate position of his clients' case.

Mr. Gripes proceeded:—

"Why, I repeat, was not all this urged before? It is a very easy matter when an action is going against a party, for the counsel of that party to make false charges, but they seldom have any effect with an intelligent jury, except it be rather to prejudice the cause of those who urge them; for who can be so blind as not to perceive that they are mere unmeaning assertions, made in desperation, and I am sorry to add, without regard to honesty and truth. The very fact of the personal resemblance between the plaintiffs and the defendants only goes to show how cunningly their scheme was laid. I do not blame the learned counsel for the defendants, whose position at the bar, and whose personal character, place him above suspicion; but I am certainly astonished that one who has deservedly acquired such reputation and distinction in his profession as has my learned brother, should so easily have become the dupe of a scheming (lawyer) as he calls himself, from the United States. The whole affair, my lord and gentlemen, is a transparent humbug, to use an expressive, if not a very elegant term,

and it had its origin in a land famous for such humbugs; but this attempt to palm off a couple of adventurers, picked up at some out of the way place in the United States, as the heirs of the Fitzherbert property, caps the climax of humbugging. It beats the woolly horse, and the mermaid, and the wooden nutmegs of Connecticut, that I have read of, completely hollow, for it has something grand in its aim, and had it succeeded, would have borne away the palm from all the rest.

"I will merely briefly advert to the testimony of one witness, which appeared for the moment to have some effect upon the minds of the jury. I allude to the discovery of a miniature belonging to a sailor boy. Truly a satisfactory manner of attempting to destroy the present identity of the heirs of property to such an amount as that which is claimed by my clients, and which is now in the care of their late father's guardian, the Earl of Shropshire! I have no doubt the lady really believes that she has discovered her lost relatives in the persons of the defendants; but is it a matter of very great surprise where so strong a resemblance exists between four young persons that the mothers of the brother and sister, on both sides, should likewise resemble each other? and while speaking of this family resemblance, and my Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury, you must often have observed it in persons who bore not the slightest relationship to each other, I must remind you that the instinct of the nurse, even after a long period of years, immediately recognized the children of him she had nursed as her own child, while her aged eyes could not see the *mere family resemblance* so perceptible to all others. This, my lord, is a beautiful trait of the instinct of natural affection, to which I beg particularly to call your attention, and also especially recommend it to the consideration of the gentlemen of the jury. I will detain the court no longer. Gentlemen of the jury, you have heard and seen the proofs of identity *we* bring, you have also heard and seen those brought against us, and I take my seat in perfect confidence that your good sense and correct

judgment will lead you to return a verdict in our favor."

Mr. Gripes resumed his seat and the Judge commenced summing up. His lordship told the jury that they must divest themselves of all prejudice either in favor of one party or the other, and only take into consideration the proofs that had been brought forward of the identity of the parties. They were bound in the first place to consider that the plaintiffs were the presumptive heirs to the property and estates under the guardianship of the Earl of Shropshire, and were by his lordship, acknowledged to be such. Also, that they had replied to questions (as stated by his lordship on oath) which could only have been correctly answered by the children of Herbert Fitzherbert, his ward, and for whose heirs he still held the estate in trust. They must consider that their descent in a direct line from Herbert Fitzherbert had been traced as perfectly, as, under the circumstances, it was possible that it could be; and taking all these facts into consideration, they must judge how comparatively easy it was for a party, having by surreptitious means learnt the nature of the case, to bring forward other and strange parties, for improper purposes, to contest the claims with the legitimate heirs. His lordship further said that with regard to the really astonishing resemblance between the plaintiffs and the defendants, in his opinion, it only went to show that there had been the most gross and outrageous chicanery and deceit used to supplant the lawful heirs. He would now dismiss them to consider their verdict, again warning them to efface from their minds all prejudices, and merely to consider the facts as presented to them that day.

It was now late in the evening, (about eight o'clock,) and both judge and jury retired. Great excitement prevailed in the town, and the court-house still remained crowded, while the street outside was also thronged with people anxious to hear the verdict.

Mr. Hughes and his junior counsel, and attorney, with myself were greatly cast down; for in our opinion there



could scarcely be a doubt in whose favor the verdict would be given; and although we were confident of the righteousness of our clients' cause, we could not do otherwise than acknowledge that the facts established as proofs of identity favored the fraudulent parties.

We bitterly lamented that no opportunity had been afforded us of bringing a criminal action against them in advance of the civil action; but we had not had proof sufficient, therefore it was useless to think of it.

With trembling anxiety, we awaited the return of the jury into court.

Nine o'clock—ten o'clock struck, and still the jury did not return. The Judge sent in to know if there was any probability of their agreeing upon their verdict, and the messenger returned and said there was not—five of the party were obstinate, and there was no sign of their agreeing that night.

The Judge said the court could wait no longer, and in that case the jury must remain locked up all night. His lordship then adjourned the court until ten o'clock the next morning, and the anxious spectators returned to their homes.

Just as Mr. Hughes and I were leaving the court-house, a servant in undress livery placed a letter in his hand. He read it by the light of a gas lamp, and immediately turned to the man who was waiting for a reply, and said:

"Tell his lordship I will wait upon him immediately."

The servant hurried away, and Mr. Hughes, saying to me, "The Earl of Shropshire is taken suddenly ill, and desires to see me immediately," shook me hurriedly by the hand, and followed the footman to his lordship's hotel.

He was shown up-stairs to the bed-chamber of the earl who had been seized with a fit of apoplexy, and after the lapse of some hours he had but just returned to a state of consciousness. He was lying in bed and three or four physicians were in the room in attendance upon him.

When Mr. Hughes was announced, his lordship opened his eyes, and beckoned him to the bedside, and whispered in a feeble voice that he wished the physicians and every person in the room but Mr. Hughes himself to withdraw for a few minutes.

Mr. Hughes mentioned his lordship's request; and was left alone with the prostrate nobleman, who, it was plain to perceive, although he had temporarily recovered his faculties of mind, was fast failing, and could not long survive.

Mr. Hughes expressed his regrets to see his lordship in such a sad condition.

The earl took his hand.

"It is—no time to—speak of regret," said he. "I—am dying—you are the counsel for the defendants—in—the—case—now before—the Court?"

"I am, my lord."

"The case—is—not yet decided?"

"The jury, my lord, are now locked up for the night; they cannot agree upon the verdict; but I have no doubt the verdict will be returned upon the opening of the Court in the morning."

"How—what—is—your opinion—you know what I would ask?" said the dying earl.

"The verdict, my lord, I have no hesitation in saying, will be adverse to my clients."

The earl sunk back on his pillow, and closed his eyes. Mr. Hughes thought that the last moment had come, and was upon the point of summoning the physicians, when the earl again revived, and looking at him for a few moments as though he did not recollect him, and was recalling his scattered senses, he said:

"Ah, yes—the verdict—it must not be. I cannot die with that guilt on my head—send for Father Anselmo—and my daughter. Where is Lady Mary?"

Mr. Hughes had been told on entering the hotel that messengers had been dispatched to Alton Castle to acquaint Lady Mary and the confessor, of the earl's dangerous illness; but there was little hope of their reach-

ing Huntingdon before his death. He therefore told his lordship that his daughter had been sent for, and Father Anselmo also; but that if he had anything to say that would affect the case before the Court, now only awaiting the verdict of the jury, he must say it quickly.

"Ah," said the earl, "yes, now I recollect. I have wronged—deeply, grievously wronged Herbert, and I have sought to wrong his children—and my poor child—my darling Mary—but what? Give me a glass of wine. I feel faint."

Mr. Hughes did as he requested, and after drinking it, his lordship lay for a few moments quiet, he then again motioned Mr. Hughes to raise him up, and proceeded to state more distinctly what he wished to say, for the wine had greatly revived him.

I will relate in a few words the substance of his statement, as subsequently told me by Mr. Hughes.

His lordship said that when he saw Adolphus and Georgiana enter the court, he had experienced a sensation as though the blood had rushed from his heart to his brain. The form of his deceased ward, Herbert, appeared to have risen from the tomb to reproach him for his perfidy. It was with difficulty he could so far control his feelings as to enable him to leave the court and return to his hotel. On reaching it, he had retired to his chamber, where he had been seized with a fit of apoplexy, from which he had just revived when he directed Mr. Hughes to be sent for.

He related to him briefly, and in disconnected sentences, that which the reader already knows, that a conspiracy had been formed with the aid of his lordship's legal advisers to defraud the legitimate heirs of Herbert Fitzherbert of their rights; but, now he felt his end was approaching and he could not die with that guilt upon his head. He asked Mr. Hughes what course he could pursue to rescue the victims of his avarice and ambition from the ruin which awaited them.

Mr. Hughes replied, that, now the trial was over, the

only thing remaining was for him to place the guardianship of the property immediately in the hands of the Lord Chancellor, who, in case of the earl's death before the decision of the trial, would be the legal guardian. The case would be then necessarily thrown into Chancery, and could only be decided by that court under whose control it had before been sought to place it *illegally*, as his lordship, the guardian and trustees of the estates, was still living and in the possession of his health and faculties. A deed now drawn out, before the verdict was pronounced, to the effect that his lordship's infirmities no longer allowed him to retain his trust, would, if properly signed and attested, at all events redeem the estates from the possession of the false claimants. To this suggestion his lordship gladly assented, and Mr. Hughes immediately drew out a deed, to which his lordship, with difficulty, affixed his seal and signature—for he was fast failing. The deed was attested by the medical gentlemen in attendance, who were called in for that purpose, and by the landlord of the hotel, also by Mr. Hughes himself.

This having been done, the dying man again motioned Mr. Hughes to come near him, and begged him to promise never to betray the guilty part he (his lordship) had acted in this matter. He murmured something that Mr. Hughes could not make out, excepting that he heard the word "daughter" mentioned once or twice, and then there was a rattling in the throat, a few brief struggles, and the proud earl fell back upon his pillow—dead.

Mr Hughes and one of the physicians looked at their watches. It was three o'clock; and in another hour the faint grey of morning began to steal over the darkness. Mr. Hughes took up the deed and left the hotel; he was too agitated with the anxieties of the day before, and the impressive and solemn scene of the night, to think of rest, and he strolled into the country until the hour of breakfast. Having partaken of a very slight repast, he hastened to the Court House, which, although the hour

for opening the court had not yet arrived, was already thronged with people.

At length the clang of trumpets announced the approach of the judge, who soon entered and took his seat on the bench. The crier of the court called for silence.

At this moment I entered the court-room, and seeing Mr. Hughes seated in his place, I sat myself down by his side. We exchanged greetings, and I fancied I saw an expression of subdued triumph, mingled with gravity and anxiety, in his countenance; but I had not time to ask him anything respecting his interview with the earl, although I had heard a rumor that I did not, however, give credit to, that his lordship had suddenly expired during the night. The judge asked if the jury had considered their verdict. He was informed that they had, and in a few minutes they entered the jury-box, looking sadly tired and half asleep.

Having answered to their names:—"Gentlemen of the jury," inquired the judge, "are you agreed upon your verdict? Do you find verdict for the plaintiffs or defendants?"

"For the plaintiffs, my lord," replied the foreman.

A smile of triumph lit up the features of Messrs. Gripes, Snap and Cheatem, who looked around at the bench beside the judge, as if expecting to see the earl seated there, ready to share in the triumph, and express his thanks for their arduous services in having brought it about.

The clerk of the court was proceeding with the necessary duties, when, to my astonishment, and equally to the astonishment of all in court, Mr. Hughes rose up, and taking a roll of papers from his pocket, said:

"My lord, I hold here a deed, properly signed and attested, which must necessarily set aside the verdict of the jury, and throw the settlement of this case into Chancery. The Earl of Shropshire, who was the guardian and trustee of the estates in litigation, is dead, and dying before the verdict of the jury was rendered,

the guardianship falls to the Lord Chancellor. It rests with the Court of Chancery now to decide to whom the estate belongs."

A dead silence prevailed in court for some moments. The judge and the members of the bar, and spectators, instinctively turned their eyes to the bench where they had seen his lordship seated in health, not twenty-four hours before.

At this moment a messenger was sent to Mr. Gripes, reporting the death of the earl. He turned pale, and appeared to find a difficulty in breathing; but at length he asked to see the deed Mr. Hughes held.

"I will pass it to his lordship," said he, pointedly, at the same time handing it to the judge. His lordship read it attentively, and returned it, giving his opinion of its perfect legality.

"Curse the jury," growled the discomfited Gripes; "why did they not deliver their verdict last night?"

"Do you think there is any mischief in the wind?" asked Cheatem.

"I can't say; but a pretty affair we've made of it."

The trio rose from their seats and left the court, and the other business on hand was proceeded with.

In the course of the day Lady Mary Alton and Father Anselmo arrived, the former to find her father and the latter his patron—dead; but I will for the present draw a veil over the grief of Lady Mary and the sorrowful regrets of the good Father Anselmo. I shall have to speak of them yet again.

Mr. Hughes, the Fitzherberts, Mrs. Lyman, and I, returned to London on the following day. We were pretty well satisfied now that some day the case would be decided in favor of the rightful heirs—but when? that was another question. Mr. Hughes determined to use every effort to forward the day of its decision, while, in the meantime, Adolphus expressed an earnest desire to do something that would enable him to support himself and his sister; for years might elapse before any further action was taken respecting the Brampton estates.

Mr. Hughes approved of his wish, and promised to see what he could do to assist him, and I, having, as I conceived, done all that duty required of me in this case, determined to make a short tour on the continent, and then to return to the United States, visiting London on my way home, to see how; by that time, my proteges were getting on.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

*The return home—Preparations for travel—A serious discussion—Cheatem preaches morality—A man of the world again in difficulty—Matrimony the last resource.*

OUR party returned to London, rather crest fallen, it must be acknowledged, although after all, we had great reason to congratulate ourselves; for, to tell the truth, Mr. Hughes had confessed to me that so narrow was the foundation on which he had built his hopes of success, that he had all along had a foreboding that the trial would go dead against us, and now, as matters had most unexpectedly turned out, he was perfectly satisfied that the decision in the Court of Chancery would be in favor of our clients. But when? Ah! that was a question difficult to answer. Probably he, myself, our youthful friends, aye, even their children might be mouldering in the grave before that decision was given, according to the disgraceful method of conducting suits in the Court of Chancery. Still the right and title of our young friends was not filched from them—irrevocably lost—as it would have been, but for the singular and totally unexpected train of circumstances which had led to the nullity of the verdict rendered by the jury.

We arrived in London, and proceeded immediately to Clapham, where Mrs. Hughes was anxiously and tremblingly awaiting the news. Good, kind-hearted, but timid woman! She had not dared to look at the

newspaper, or she would have seen how matters stood in the very edition of the London Times which was lying folded, and still damp, on the parlor table. If they had been her own children who were concerned in this case, she could not have been more anxious; but she and Mr. Hughes were childless. They had had two children, a boy and a girl, both of whom had died while infants, and with all a woman's yearning for some one to love who would look to her for advice and support—who would cling to *her* as she clung to the husband whom *she* looked to for protection and for support in the hour of trial, she had, as I have already observed, begun to regard Georgiana almost in the light of a darling child. She trembled like an aspen leaf as we entered the house, and for some moments, could not summon courage, so great was her agitation; to welcome us home, though, indeed, a welcome was apparent in every expression of her benevolent countenance.

Mr. Hughes noticed her agitation, as we none of us could help doing, and after he had bestowed upon her the usual conjugal kiss of affection (while poor Georgiana had thrown herself into her arms sobbing like a child, for, poor girl! Mrs. Hughes was the only woman she had met with in the course of her brief, but chequered life, who had acted towards her like a mother,) he said—

"So we have returned at last Jane, dear, much the same as we left"——

"Then the suit has been decided against you," interrupted she; "I dreaded as much; yet how anxiously I hoped and prayed it might be otherwise. There now," she added, suddenly brightening up, and a kind smile beaming on her countenance, "now I can listen to all the bad news you may have to tell me. It was only the suspense which overpowered me. So my pet Georgiana is not to be the fine lady I anticipated she was to be. Well, never mind. She can be just as happy; perhaps far happier in a humbler station. I suppose had things turned the other way she would have been too proud to

have remained the pleasant companion she has been to me."

"Never," replied Georgiana. "I never could have forgotten your kindness, nor that of my other friends," looking with swimming eyes at me, Mr. Hughes and Mrs. Lyman, "had I become mistress of the wealth of the Indies. How could you imagine such a thing?" she asked, looking appealingly at the kind old lady.

"I never did imagine any such thing," replied Mrs. Hughes, "I only said it in joke, dear; I did not mean to annoy you. I am a foolish old woman to have teased you," she added, seeing Georgiana ready to give way to a fresh flood of tears.

Mr. Hughes, seeing that things were tending to a "scene," as it is called—a sort of thing to which he had a most decided objection, and which, to tell the truth, is a very absurd affair to the lookers on—thought it was time to interfere; so he said to his wife, in a cheerful tone of voice—

"You are going too fast, my good little wife. If you had only looked at the newspaper which I see on the table there, you would have learnt that the affair, upon the success of which we had so set our hearts, has not turned out so badly as you seem to imagine. Nay, all circumstances considered, I don't know but we are better off than ever we were. At all events, if we have not gained the good we were seeking, we have not only distanced our competitors, but thrust them out of the field altogether. It is now merely a matter of patience and"—

"Then you have succeeded, and have just been telling me fibs to annoy me," interrupted she, gayly. "Is it not so?"

"Not exactly, my love; but I will tell you how matters stand, although, as I have said, had you looked at the paper, you would, ere this, have seen for yourself."

Mr. Hughes then briefly explained to his wife the particulars of the civil action, and the technicalities of

the law, which, although they had delayed indefinitely the settlement of the suit, had still rendered the ultimate success of his clients certain, and these explanations being over, we entered the breakfast-room—for it was early morning (we had travelled on the railroad all night), amply prepared, notwithstanding the anxieties of the past few days, to do justice to the tempting viands—the cold ham, hot beefsteaks and cutlets—the fresh eggs and steaming, fragrant coffee, which had been prepared in anticipation of our arrival.

The day was spent in the usual listless manner in which days are spent on the return home from a tedious, wearisome, and anxious journey. We retired for a short time to our bed-rooms, to recruit our strength by a few hours' sleep, and by the usual dinner hour, five o'clock, we were as fresh as ever. The evening passed away cheerfully; for notwithstanding our adventures were naturally uppermost in our thoughts, and Adolphus, with characteristic impulse, was anxious at once to fix on some plan for the future, Mr. Hughes would listen to nothing of the sort that evening; and after a tune or two had been played on the piano by Mrs. Hughes, who played well, and as she still had a pleasing voice, diversified the entertainment now and then with some pretty Scotch or English ballad, we forgot our cares, and even became almost uproarious in our mirth—Mr. Hughes declaring that he was so happy to get home again, and really so glad that things *had* turned out so well, that he must insist upon dancing a minuet with Mrs. Lyman. "It was a good old dance," he said, "that was quite the mode in his youthful days, but which had been banished by modern innovation, to make room for fantastic capers and insane ridiculous figures." He insisted that his wife should favor me with her hand in going through the same old, courtly dance, and when we old folks were tired out, we sat down and watched Adolphus and Georgiana waltzing. It was actually near midnight when we got to bed, and that night we slept soundly.

On the morrow I took my departure for Dover, hav-

ing made up my mind to commence my journeying on the continent by visiting Paris—a city I had for many years had a desire to see; and Mrs. Lyman accompanied me, with Georgiana and Adolphus, whom she wished should pay a short visit to Canterbury, where her relatives, and, as she believed, some of their own also, resided, and where Juliette and Robert had preceded her. They were only to remain away three weeks, and then were to return to Mr. Hughes. And, to tell the truth, I don't think Adolphus was at all sorry to have an opportunity of seeing his cousin again, and perhaps if all the truth were told, there was a young gentleman at Canterbury whom Georgiana was not altogether annoyed at the idea of meeting again, although the sly puss didn't say so—nevertheless, I saw it in her face.

I left them at Dover to pursue the remainder of their journey alone, they having only a few miles to travel; and the next day, having gratified my curiosity by a peep at Dover Castle, and at the celebrated cannon, known as "Queen Anne's pocket pistol," which, as the old adage says:

If you sponge it well and keep it clean,  
Will carry a ball to Calais Green."

And having walked on as far as Shakspeare's Cliff, and looked down from its dizzy height, where erstwhile "hung those who gathered samphire, dreadful trade," and having wondered how a man of Shakspeare's veracity could tell the world, in his immortal verse, that yon tall anchoring barks in the channel beneath were "diminished to their cocks—their cocks to buoys," and having held various conversations with several of the coast-guard and fishermen, and wondered at the Martello towers, and had a peep at the coast of France, in the distance, barely visible with the naked eye, through the spy-glass of a sturdy man-of-war's man, who was watching the manoeuvres of a little vessel off the coast, which had the appearance of a fishing craft, but which he inclined to think had some smuggling transaction on hand, I returned to the hotel at Dover, partook

of a hearty supper, and the next morning sailed in the packet for Boulogne *sur mer*, and having landed at that semi-English city, I thence commenced my continental tour.

In the meantime, let us see what other parties with whom the reader of this story has become acquainted with are doing.

Lady Mary Alton and Father Anselmo, as I have already mentioned, had arrived in Huntingdon; and sincere and heartfelt were the lamentations of the former over the dead body of her father—all the more painful because the sorrow was too deep and earnest to allow of any wild, outward manifestation of grief. It was as much as the good Father Anselmo could do to afford comfort to the bereaved lady; but earnestly and conscientiously he sat himself to the task, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing her become more composed; and, in a day or two, the inhabitants of the little town were witnesses of a funeral pageant surpassing anything that had ever been seen in it before. The hearse, with its four jet black horses; the coffin with its velvet pall, relieved by golden ornaments and plates indicating the rank, and telling of the virtues of the deceased; the black, heavy waving plumes; the trains of carriages belonging to the neighboring nobility and gentry; the solemn mutes and outriders; all the imposing paraphernalia of woe which follows the high and mighty to the tomb—where, even as the poorest and meanest, they must become food for the worms, which make no distinction in favor of the lofty and honored of the earth when once they are consigned to their final resting-place, until the grave shall give up their dead—all this was, in truth, a sight worth gazing upon, not only on account of its solemn grandeur, but because of the moral that it told of the mutability of all things earthly, and the vanity of human greatness. The remains of the earl were borne to the family vault at Alton Castle, and in a few weeks more a monument was erected in a conspicuous part of the park, on which was engraved a fulsome



epitaph, telling the passer by, as he stopped to gaze upon it, of the talents, and virtues, and integrity of the deceased statesman, and of the good deeds he had done in the course of his long life; but there was not one word mentioned of his misdeeds—and why should there have been? Is not the world uncharitable enough while men are living, to afford to bury all uncharitableness in the grave with the perishing body! The mercy of Heaven has been promised even at the eleventh hour to the repentant—what is man that he should deal forth judgment on his fellow man, when the best among mankind have justly so much to dread from the justice of the Creator, were they not told that that justice should be tempered with mercy.

The greatest of England's poets—the immortal bard of Avon—has said:

"The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interred with the bones."

And such is the case. Evil is less evanescent in its nature than good, in this world. Every evil deed committed is the cause of further evil over which the original perpetrator has no control; but his direlections from the path of virtue leave an impress on the earth which tempts others to follow in his footsteps, and thus the commission of every sin leads to its tenfold repetition. Then, when Nature proclaims unsparingly the evil deeds of man to future generations as a warning of the danger of the first false step, let weak man mourn and lament, but forbear to judge, for after death cometh his own judgment—that judgment which he who hath gone before him hath already met. Let him turn and gaze with awe and reverence on the marble tablet and monumental stone which marks the resting-place of the perishing body beneath and as he reads to the end, let him not criticise, but rather think that some day, and perhaps ere long, he will occupy the like small spot of earth, although now perhaps he thinks the world not wide enough to satisfy his ambitious aspirations; and when that day comes, he would wish, although then it will be of little consequence

to the poor crumbling dust, that the charity of the living may be extended to him; for no man would wish his memory to live only to be reviled by those he has left behind on earth. Let him pass on with reverence, and repeat with earnestness and sincerity, the last line of the epitaph—"*Requiescat in Pace.*"

The funeral pomp and display is over; the banner flies from the summit of the towers of Alton Castle, but it is shrouded in crape; never more shall that proud banner flaunting in the breeze, proclaim to the passers by, and to the residents of the neighborhood, that the proud Lord of Alton is at home, at his ancestral castle. A fragile female—the last of the long and distinguished line—now wears the honors that have been gained in the senate and on the battle field during the course of centuries, and in a few years more she will pass away from the world. The escutcheon of the noble house, with its numerous quarterings, will no more test the quaint skill of Heraldry to emblazon yet another crest within its crowded shield. The hatchment, covered with the insignia of woe, rests above the battlements of the frowning castle front, and tells the solemn tale of the death of the last male representative of a noble house; and Lady Mary is now Countess of Shropshire and Lady of Alton.

Father Anselmo and Lady Mary are busy, day after day, reading and signing papers; there is mystery stirring in the castle, and the servants and dependants, clad in funeral weeds, as they step to and fro, as though fearing to awaken the spirit of the dead from its long, last sleep, whisper strange stories to each other; but all are at fault; they may surmise, but they do not know in reality what all this mystery on the part of the reverend father and the lady of the castle tends to, but time will disclose it and that briefly.

Messrs. Gripes and Cheatem, and their coadjutor, Snap, hurried away to London as soon as they found that the overthrow of the verdict was likely to subvert all the effects of their villany, if it did not eventually lead them into serious difficulty. The death of the earl, however,

though it had upset their project just on the point of its consummation, was, they conceived, rather favorable to them, in one sense, as it was certainly preferable to having had the suit decided unfavorably from any other cause. His lordship no doubt would have been but little inclined to come down handsomely if the pet scheme of his life had failed; "but now," thought they, "we can make out our bill of costs at what rate we please, and the Countess of Shropshire will only be too glad to settle her father's accounts if we send in at once. A few threats of exposure will prevent any disputes, provided her ladyship's steward should be inclined to scrutinize the charge too closely, and thus we must manage to make the best out of a bad affair."

The bill was accordingly sent to the countess, who had expressly ordered that all accounts relating to the affairs of the late earl should be presented to her in the first instance, and then it was referred to the steward for settlement, by the advice of Father Anselmo, who was, however, aware that it was extortionate, as was the lady herself, but she knew the character of the base wretches she had to deal with, and in respect to the memory of her father, whose character they would not for a moment have hesitated to villify, had their scandalous charges been refused, she, with Father Anselmo, thought it advisable to get quit of the harpies at any cost, as soon as possible. These gentlemen received the money, Gripes of course taking the lion's share of the spoils, and the only thing that troubled them was, that since they had been paid so promptly, they had not made the overcharge even double what it was.

The two young persons who had personified the Fitzherberts, also returned to London with the late earl's legal advisers.

They had for some months, indeed since they had been introduced to Gripes and Cheatem by Mr. Harley, the earl's agent in the United States, been depending for support upon a liberal weekly stipend from Lord Alton, which had been paid by Gripes; this now failed them,

and the young man made application to the lawyer for assistance and advice as regarded the future action of himself and his sister. Gripes refused to see him for some time, but at length the young man sent him a brief epistle, in which he said that he was aware that he and his sister had been made use of merely as tools in the hands of designing knaves, and that he had nothing to lose, but everything to gain by making a public exposure of the whole transaction; this it was his intention to do, unless it were made worth his while to hold his tongue, and he concluded by informing the lawyer that he gave him only until the following day to decide.

Upon the receipt of this letter, Gripes immediately sent for Cheatem, and a consultation was held between them as to the best method of quieting the refractory youth.

"You perceive, Cheatem," said Gripes, after having read the note to him, "you perceive we shall be compelled to do something for the infernal scoundrel, for he has it in his power to do us great injury. Suppose, now, you take him into your office to assist Wilkins, and give him a guinea a week for the present. I will be at half the expense, and then you can manage to involve him in some way so as to get him under your thumb. In that case you know you can at once discard him, or perhaps it would be as well to get him into some scrape which will render him eligible for a free passage to the penal colonies. It's the only way I can think of at present to keep the fellow quiet."

"And what's to become of the girl?" asked Cheatem, who, by no means, relished the idea of paying a guinea a week out of his own pocket, for he had little faith in the promises of Gripes to be at half the expense, but who still perceived the necessity of doing something to keep the youth in good temper just then, while the trial of the civil action at the Huntingdon assizes was still fresh in the minds of newspaper readers.

"Ah, the girl! yes," replied Gripes, "it's a confounded nuisance, and one that we must seize the first oppor-

tunity of getting quit of; but at present there is no remedy. Suppose, Cheatem, you take the girl in as a kind of governess and companion to Miss Cheatem, until we can think of something better. Of course you will have to pay her a small salary, but then you will have the benefit of her services in the family."

"What!" exclaimed Cheatem, irritated beyond endurance at the cool impudence of Gripes. "Mr. Gripes, if you and I are scoundrels, it is no reason why I should train my daughter to evil. No, sir; the girl who could bear a part in the game of deceit we have lately been playing, is no eligible companion for my daughter."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Gripes—"Cheatem preaching family morality! Well, well, this is too amusing.—However," he continued, remembering that it would not do to affront his coadjutor just then, "I was only joking, Cheatem—only joking, upon my honor. We must take cheap lodgings for the precious pair, I suppose, and then put our wits to work, so that they may not trouble us longer than is absolutely necessary."

This was decided upon, and for the present time that fresh difficulty was got rid of.

Lord Henry Fitzherbert was placed in rather an awkward position by the death of the Earl of Shropshire and the overthrow of the verdict of the jury in the late civil action at law. He was, as I have already informed the reader, deeply, irrecoverably involved in debt, and it was not long before the unlucky reverse of his expectations came to the ears of old Jacob, the Jew money-lender, and the very next day his lordship received a note, very politely worded, enclosing a list of the obligations he owed to the usurer, (amounting to several thousands of pounds,) pressing, though in the most civil—even polite manner—for *immediate* payment. Of course this was utterly out of the question, and Lord Henry wrote a hurried reply, stating his inability to meet the demands immediately, but promising to make arrangements to settle up as soon as possible. The next

morning, just after he had breakfasted, and was listlessly lounging on the sofa in his sitting room, pondering on the best method of raising a supply of funds to meet the more immediate demands upon him, Anderson, his lordship's valet, entered the room and told his master that there was an ill-looking, shabbily dressed man, with a hooked nose, and a long beard, below, who insisted upon seeing him immediately.

"It is that infernal scoundrel Jacob," said his lordship. "Why the d—l, sirrah, did you not say I was not at home—gone in the country—gone to Paris—anywhere or any place that came into your head, so as to get the fellow out of the way?"

"I did say that you were not at home, may it please you, my lord," replied Anderson, "but the man said he would walk up stairs and wait till you came home. I said it would be quite uncertain when you would return, and that no one could be admitted into your lordship's apartments during your absence; to which he replied, my lord, suiting the action to the word, that he would sit down on the steps and wait your lordship's arrival, if you did not come till night. I let him sit down for some time, but his strange appearance attracted the attention of every gentleman who passed by him, as he asked them if they had seen Lord Fitzherbert, or if they knew where he was to be found, and he became quite annoying. At length, my lord, he turned to me, and with a cunning leer, asked if I had not better go up stairs and see whether your lordship had not come down the chimney while he had been waiting——"

"You scoundrel," exclaimed Lord Henry, "what do you mean by repeating such impertinence to me. Be off, sir, and ——"

What his lordship was about to add was cut short by the appearance of Jacob at the door of the apartment, and pushing by the valet, who endeavored to stop him from entering, he said:

"Vell, now, I thought his lordship vash at home all de while. I see it vash a small trifle of a mistake you

vash make. I am glad to shee your lordship; I have called about de leetle monish your lordship ish owe me."

"Leave the room, Anderson," said Lord Fitzherbert. "Take a seat, Jacob. Did you get my note yesterday?"

"Yesh," replied the money lender; "I got de note, my lord; but it ish de bank notes I vantsh; de advanshed monish. Does your lordship understand?"

"I believe I mentioned in the note, Jacob, that I should, as soon as possible, take measures to satisfy your demands; at present it is not exactly convenient, but you may rely upon having your money."

"Yesh, my lord; ven your lordship marries the Countess of Shropshire, and succeeds to the joint estates of Alton and Brampton Manor; but ash dat happy day is likely to be postponed until de day of judgment, ven dere will be a final reckoning, I should like to have my little account shettled first. So, my lord, pleash to name de day ven I shall have my monish."

"I have told you," said his lordship, somewhat fiercely, "that at present I have no means of immediate payment, but I pledge my honor you shall be paid to the uttermost farthing. Is not that sufficient?"

"Excuse me, my lord," said the money-lender; "but I should hope, in such a case, your lordship's honor would be more wort dan de securitish your lordship gave me; if not, it is wort but little."

"Do you dare insult a gentleman in his own apartments, sir?" exclaimed Lord Henry.

"I vant my monish, and my monish I must have," replied the Jew.

"And at present, I again say, I cannot find it convenient to pay you," returned his lordship.

"Then, my lord," said Jacob, rising from his seat and advancing a step or two; "then, your lordship ish a sheat—a villanous sheat, and I shall take my revenge—I shall arrest your lordship for my monish, my goot monish you have sheat me of. Your lordship's honor! Bah!—a Christian's honor—I spit upon it,"

he added, spitting upon the floor, and stamping his foot; "I spit and stamp upon it. You have sheat me—have rob me, and, by the God of my fathers, I will have my revenge!"

He was about to leave the room, when Lord Fitzherbert called him back.

"I have been too much excited, Jacob," he said, endeavoring to assume an appearance of composure. Let us talk together; it is not my intention to deceive you."

"You have desheaved me all along," replied Jacob. "De securitish I advanshed you de monish upon, vash no securitish at all. You have robbed me and I will have my revenge."

"But you are aware that your claims are usurious in their nature, and would not be legally acknowledged," replied Lord Fitzherbert.

"Ah!" exclaimed the Jew; "so dat ish your lordship's honor—your lordship is very honest and honorable, here ish another proof; but will your lordship be able to bear de exposure I shall make; de contempt of de vorld—of de Christian as well as de Jew? or are you so worthless as to care not even for that disgrace? But, suppose, my lord—my goot, honorable lord—suppose I charge only de monish I have advanshed, which I have your written receipt for, with what your lordship calls de *legal* interest. Ish your honorable lordship ready to pay that to the poor Jew rather than go to jail—eh, my lord?"

Lord Henry was completely at the money-lender's mercy, and he knew it well. His only hope of safety lay in staving off, for the future, the evils that beset him, and he felt that to anger the Jew would only be to hasten the day of his ruin and exposure to the world. A lucky thought seized him.

"Jacob," he said, "listen. I tell you honestly, I have no immediate means of paying you the money I owe you, and were you to fulfil your threats of arrest, of what avail would it be to you? You would obtain re-

venge, but you would lose your money for ever. With respect to the securities you so strenuously harp upon, I was deceived as well as you. The wealth I hoped to gain from the Brampton Manor estates is lost to me; but it is by no means certain that equal good fortune does not await me. Lady Mary Alton, who is all but my affianced wife, is the possessor of the Alton Castle property, which is fully equal to that of Brampton Manor; that may in a short time be mine. When Lady Mary is my wife, I will pay my debts to the uttermost farthing."

"Are you going to marry Lady Mary?" enquired the Jew. "Is this true—or are you seeking to cheat me again, my lord?"

"The death of the earl may have retarded the marriage, but it is by no means necessary that that unfortunate event should break off the engagement," was the calm reply.

"Well, then," said the Jew, "I will wait yet a little while longer for my monish; but when your lordship is married, I shall demand every farthing, interest and all; and if your lordship does not marry Lady Mary, and does not pay me my monish before this day six months—then, my lord, the Jew will have his revenge. My lord, I wish you good day!" and the money-lender having uttered these words, left the room.

Lord Fitzherbert sat for some moments on the sofa, absorbed in thought.

"Egad!" he said at length, "the idea is a good one; why not marry the Countess of Shropshire? I am a good looking fellow enough (stroking his moustache and viewing himself in the mirror opposite to him), why should she refuse me? It is true I have never shown myself a very ardent suitor; but it is never too late to begin. 'Faint heart never won fair lady.' Egad! Jew, you put a lucky idea into my head, and I will follow it up. I will start for Shrewsbury to-morrow, and call at Alton Castle to congratulate Lady Mary. Pooh! That's not the word. What is it? Ah! to

express my sympathy for the loss the heiress has sustained. Capital idea! It will seem so feeling and affectionate. By-the-bye, Stultz must furnish me with a full suit of mourning for the interesting occasion. Of course, I have gone into mourning in respect to the memory of the late lamented earl; my best and dearest friend, &c., &c.; ahem! That'll be the thing, decidedly; and then, if she won't marry me, after all—why, I must come down upon her feelings; borrow some money of her, and get quit of this millstone of debt about my neck. I will call Anderson, and make the necessary preparations for starting at the earliest moment," and his lordship summoned his valet, and in a few moments was engaged with him in an interesting and animated conversation. Poor Lord Henry! there are many in the world as vain, as void of honor, and as mean and contemptible as you; but surely your education, your rank and position in society, should have taught you that the honor you so often talk of, means something more than mere empty words.

Georgiana and Adolphus Fitzherbert remained three weeks at Canterbury, and at the expiration of that time came back to Clapham, accompanied by their cousin Robert, who was going to read law at the rooms of an eminent barrister, with the object of eventually being called to the bar himself. The gentleman under whom he was about to study, was a personal and particular friend of Mr. Hughes, and thus the young people were likely to be often in each other's society.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

*Private conversation between a brother and sister on matters of an interesting and delicate nature.*

A FEW days after their return from Canterbury, Adolphus, as he rose from the breakfast-table, whispered his sister to follow him into a private apartment, as he wished to speak with her alone. She did so, and he then told her that he wished to ask her advice as to his choice of some professional occupation, which should enable him to support her and himself, and eventually to repay the kindness of his friends. The brother and sister had been for some time engaged in conversation regarding their more immediate prospects. Georgiana seated by the fire-place in the dining-room and Adolphus standing opposite to her, his elbow resting on the mantel-piece. He had thus stood for some minutes absorbed in thought. At length he again spoke to his sister who was anxiously gazing at him.

"Then I shall make up my mind at once, Georgiana, and accept Mr. Hughes' kind offer. He only thus adds one more to the many obligations I have received from him, and if I live to repay one, why I must repay them altogether; yet the law is not a study I should choose, nor the legal profession the one I should really prefer."

"Then why study it, dear Adolphus, if as you say, Mr. Hughes has so kindly offered you your choice of others more agreeable to you?"

"Because, in making those offers, Georgiana, he has also given me such advice as he conceives I require; and I consider that his experience renders his advice valuable. He is confident that we shall eventually come

into the property that should rightfully have been inherited by our father, and therefore bid me choose without regard to the expenses which would attend my first outset in any profession. I have thought of them all. I am too old to enter the navy now, though I fancy that I should like the excitement that attends a sailor's life; and then again, even were I not too old, promotion in the service is so proverbially slow, unless the aspirant possesses Admiralty interest, that I should never, I fear, be in a position to support myself and you as I should wish to do, and to repay the many kindnesses of my friends, supposing that long years, perhaps a life-time were to elapse before the suit is decided in Chancery. The army is liable to similar objections; besides, I don't much fancy a military life; and then with regard to both these professions, I cannot forget though my parents were English, that I am an American by birth, and though I trust the two countries, England and America, will never again meet, except it be in friendly rivalry, I could not fancy entering into a foreign service and subjecting myself to the necessity, in case of war, of drawing my sword against my own countrymen. Mr. Hughes suggested the Church: but for that sacred profession, I feel that I am wholly unfitted, and I consider it wrong, decidedly wrong, for any one to enter it without he feels a positive predilection for its holy duties. 'Physic,' suggested Mr. Hughes. "Well, the medical profession is a very respectable one, but somehow or other, I have a natural repugnance to doctor's drugs, and a horror of the idea of walking the hospitals, and submitting myself to the more disgusting duties of an aspirant for medical honors, so I take Shakspeare's advice and 'throw physic to the dogs—I'll none of it.'"

"It appears to me, Adolphus," said Georgiana, laughingly, "that you are very particular in your choice. You say the law is not the profession you would choose of your own free will, and yet you reject all the others."

"Nay, not so fast, my dear sister," returned Adol



phus; "you know I always had a fancy for drawing ever since I was old enough to scratch a slate with a pencil, and also that I have had an idea that I am possessed of the peculiar talent which would enable me eventually to excel in literature. I therefore in the first place told Mr. Hughes, I should like to enter upon such a course of study as would fit me for the artistic profession; and, secondly, that I should like to devote myself to literature. He threw cold water on both these aspirations. He said it was pleasant to gather the flowers; but, as in plucking the rose, few can avoid the thorns that lie hidden beneath. As an artist, he said mediocrity was unendurable. It might be easily reached; but it reflected no honor and no profit upon its possessor. It placed him in an equivocal position in society; in his own opinion, exalted above the common herd—yet, in the opinion of the upper classes, and even of the recognized professions, placing him far below themselves—and little above even those whom the artist looked down upon. By a successful artist, he said, wealth and honor, and fame, all that man can hope for, may be obtained; but they must be the result of years of apparently unrequited toil. Then, as regards the profession of literature; he painted it in still more gloomy colors. To the successful, it certainly, said he, offers honor and emolument as great, and promise of future fame greater, than is offered by any other profession; but, how few are the successful—how hard the struggle, even to the most gifted, to reach the goal of their ambition: how many fancy themselves possessed of the requisite talent, who utterly fail: how many really possessed of it, are crushed by the severe mental toil that must be the portion even of the highest order of genius, if it would secure success. The profession is filled, he continued, with idlers who fancy they possess talent, and imagine the life of a literary man to be one of ease and comparative indolence; these are invariably disappointed, and they sink into the degradations of vice and intemperance, and bring disgrace upon the profession upon which, in reality, they

have no claim; but are only empty pretenders, to that of which they are as ignorant of, as is the poorest laborer, for they are often men who are without even common education. I do not deny that among men of letters, there is many an one who is an ornament to society—who is sought for and flattered by the highest—whose position might well create a feeling of ambition in the breast of the aspirant to literary honors; but these men have worked hard to reach the eminence on which they stand—they have distanced their competitors, some of whom were, perhaps, equally gifted, mentally, as themselves, but of feeblor physical frame, and consequently less capable of physical as well as mental endurance. It is a pleasing occupation, I will allow, to those whose tastes are adapted to it and who practice it for amusement as well as profit. As Sir Walter Scott has happily observed, 'Literature is a good staff, but a sorry crutch.' Be careful then, Adolphus," continued Mr. Hughes to me, "how you give up your mind to the illusions of a literary or artistic career, unless you feel that secret impulse within you, even now, after all that I have said, which whispers success, and promises to buoy you up under every difficulty; and recollect, too, that of all persons in the world, men of these professions, who really are what they profess to be, are more keenly alive to neglect and contumely than most other men, and yet, from the very nature of their profession, perhaps, more than any others, liable to be subjected to both. I have expressed my opinions freely, because I sincerely wish you well. Think well of what I have said." "Well," continued Adolphus, "I thanked my kind friend and mentor, and did *think*, all things considered, I had better embrace his offer to fit me for his own profession; and therefore Georgy, to-morrow morning will witness my commencement of the study of 'Coke upon Littleton,' and 'Blackstone's Commentaries,' and I don't know how many more works of a similar delightfully refreshing description. Enough of this, however

—now sister, mine, I have something else to say to you. You received a letter from town this morning?"

"I did," replied Georgiana.

"Good. It was from Robert Stanton?"

"It was," said Georgiana hesitatingly, and blushing just the least thing in the world.

"Will you allow me to read it?"

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed Georgiana, half mockingly, half petulantly, "what will you ask me next. Shall I show you the reply I intend to make, my most modest brother?"

"I wish you would, Georgiana. To tell you the truth, considering me your only guardian, Robert Stanton held some conversation with me a few evenings since, of which you, dear Georgy, were the interesting subject. I partially guess what the letter is about; but seriously, I should like to know what your reply will be."

"Of that you must for the present remain ignorant then," replied Georgiana.

"Georgiana," said her brother, "there should be no secrets between us, especially in our present circumstances. I do not ask you to let me see your reply against your will; but I acknowledge freely I wish at least to know its purport. Not to deceive you Georgiana, Robert, I am well aware, has been smitten with your charms, ever since the day you emerged, like a second Heloise, from your cell in the Convent of St. Euphemia. '*I frutti proibiti, i pia dolci*,' as our cicerone used to say in Italy, and almost in the light of '*I frutti proibiti*,' has Robert considered you, coming fresh into the world from that saintly yet drear abode. He told me that he intended to make you an offer of his hand, and asked my influence as regarded your favoring his suit. I told him I thought that at present it was inadvisable, for he was dependent upon his own exertions, aided by the kind assistance of a distant relative, for the means of attaining a position in which he could support a wife in comfort. I had no personal objection to him, I said, and I spoke truly, for I esteem Robert greatly,

and I esteemed him the more when he said he had refrained from telling his tale of love hitherto lest it might be thought it was the heiress Fitzherbert he was seeking to win, 'and not my pretty sister Georgiana for her own modest worth,'" added Adolphus, fondly patting his sister's shoulder. "I advised him, therefore, to wait for a year or two at least, until he saw into his future prospects more clearly, before he made any formal declaration; but he was not to be convinced—he said he should act in this matter as he thought fit, and should abide by your reply. I told him that in this matter, I should certainly advise but not attempt to coerce my sister's affections, and I should caution you not to pledge yourself to a sacred and irrevocable vow too hastily. However, I added, that your will, in this regard, shall be my law, and so far as I was concerned, I would, however reluctantly, give my consent. Now, Georgiana, I have told you the reasons of my apparently imprudent request."

For a few moments Georgiana sat silent, and then rising from her seat and kissing her brother, she said:

"Yes, Adolphus, you are the only natural guardian and protector I have ever known, and I feel it would be wrong to take any important step without your knowledge and acquiescence. However, in this respect you have only anticipated my answer, for I have written in reply to Robert's somewhat sudden and unexpected offer of his hand and heart, (as she spoke she blushed deeply,) and have made use of the very language you have uttered. You can read both letters if you will, Adolphus, (putting them into his hand.) I will confess I am *partial* to Robert; but, I think, under our present circumstances, we are both young and ought both to wait. And now" she archly continued, "my dear brother Adolphus, since I have satisfied you, and have come fully up to your ideas of propriety on this important subject, do you know that *I too* think there ought to be no secrets between brother and sister, situated as we are, alone, and all in all to each other in the world. You have acted father confessor to me to your heart's content—now, sir,

please to be equally truthful as I have been, and say how stands your heart affected towards a certain young lady, named Juliet Hawthorne. I hope there is no offer of premature marriage on the part of the young lady, which my most conscientious and calculating brother has considered it proper for the present to decline. Let me see—yes, this is leap-year, and the offer on the part of the young lady would be quite correct. I wait your reply, sir."

"Well," said Adolphus, smiling at the clever manner in which his sister had managed to turn the tables upon him, "I will confess honestly, and so act according to my teaching. Miss Juliet Hawthorne is a very lovely and a very amiable girl, and her gentleness and sprightliness and beauty have made considerable havoc with the heart of your brother Adolphus. Had the verdict in the late suit given to us our father's inheritance, I should ere this have made an offer of my hand to the fair Juliet. She has wealth in America, if not so great as that which would have been, and perhaps some day will yet be mine, at least sufficient for all the wants and comforts, even the luxuries of life, and I could not then have been considered as a fortune hunter; but now I will not marry until I have achieved at least a fair prospect of eventual success in my profession, or unless some happy turn in Fortune's scale should decide the balance in my favor sooner than I expect; for I will not listen to the romantic generosity of Juliet in asserting that the estate in Virginia belongs of right to me, because it was confiscated from my father. It was subsequently purchased by her father, and it is rightfully and legally her own. Nevertheless, I have pledged my faith to Juliet, and vowed not to wed another, but have left her free to the dictates of her future fancy. Is not that generosity, my fair sister?"

"Perfectly romantic, I declare," replied Georgiana; "but I presume," she continued, "you feel pretty sure of the constancy of the lady, when you thus leave her free as air to love as she lists. Recollect, Adolphus! re-

collect! there is a beau in Virginia that you have heard Juliet and Mrs. Lyman speak of. Beware of him, notwithstanding that Juliet laughs at him when her aunt's back is turned. Love is a capricious God, brother of mine, and the tide of affection may set against you."

"You are judging of woman's faith through your own intuitive knowledge of the fickleness of the sex, I presume," said Adolphus, smilingly. "Well, I will tell you the truth; I think Juliet is an exception, and am willing to trust to her words, without binding her by promises she may wish to break. So, you see, I have not made so great a sacrifice to magnanimity of soul after all, at least according to my own belief! but then, men are so confiding—and women so deceiving."

"Reverse that sentiment and it will be a true one," said Georgiana.

"No, I shall adhere to it, if only for the sake of its being an original one," replied Adolphus, "and now, Georgy—we have been so long closeted together that Mrs. Hughes will wonder what has become of us. I wonder she has not broken in upon our *tete a tete* ere this. I promised to accompany her in a drive to Richmond to day, and of course you go with us. This you know is to be my last idle day, for I don't know how long; so come along, Georgy," and the brother and sister left the room together.

I have particularly introduced Juliet to the reader already, but the pedigree of Robert Stanton is unknown to him, although he is not altogether a new acquaintance. I have called him a cousin of Georgiana's—but he can scarcely be considered as such as the relationship only exists through marriage. His mother was the cousin of Mrs. Lyman's sister, but she had never seen Robert until her return to England from the United States, when he had just finished his education and returned to Canterbury from Oxford College, at which place he had been studying for two years, after having left Westminster School, and he had seized the opportunity of her requiring an escort, to accompany her and Juliet in their

tour on the continent, where I first introduced him to the reader. For the rest—he was a lively, talented young man, passably good-looking, and full of fun and good humor; in fact, rather a dangerous *preux chevalier* to accompany a young lady on a tour of pleasure, and it is possible, had not Georgiana fallen into the water at Malta, and been rescued by a hero, who turned out so charmingly and romantically to be a long lost cousin, matters might have taken a different turn as regards the affections of her heart; and had not Robert found a second charmer after being thus unceremoniously shut out from the place he was beginning to occupy in her heart, there might have been a case of blighted affection, and I don't know what besides; but then the lady of the Convent of St. Euphemia came happily to the rescue, just in time to save Robert from despair, and thus all parties were happily suited, "*l'homme propose*," says the French proverb, *mais Dieu dispose*," and sometimes not altogether favorably to man's desires, but in this case the current of true love appeared to run smooth, and so here, for the present, I shall leave the young folks, and return to the fortunes of others of the *dramatis personæ* of my narrative.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

*A lady's soliloquy—An unexpected rencontre, and an equally unexpected offer and refusal.*

I INTRODUCE the reader again to Alton Castle. In the same favorite apartment in which I first introduced Lady Mary Alton to the reader, she is now seated, busily engaged in examining various papers, and writing letters. She is attired in deep mourning, and her face is pale, and a melancholy earnest expression rests upon her features; yet Lady Mary Alton, in the gayest hours of her girlhood, ere time had begun to cast his shadow upon her youth, never looked more beautiful; for even

now, although she was no longer young—nay, had passed the early stage of middle life—time, as I have already observed, had dealt gently with her. The jetty gloss of her raven hair was not marred by one silvery thread. Her large, dark grey eyes, shaded by long silky eyelashes and finely penciled black eyebrows, sparkled brightly as ever, and beamed with deeper feeling when, half shaded by her drooping eyelids, she gave way to the pensive melancholy which had long been stealing over her mind, and had now become part of her being. Her fair, broad brow was without a wrinkle; only slight, very slight lines of care and anxiety traced from the corners of her mouth could possibly have indicated to any but a most acute observer that she had numbered upwards of forty years.

She has risen from her seat and touched the bell. Annette, her ladyship's own waiting-maid, replies to the summons, and the lady places in her hand the last letter she has written.

"Thomas has not yet left the castle with the letters for the Shrewsbury post-office, Annette?" inquires Lady Mary.

"No, my lady."

"Then hasten to him with this letter—it must go by the London mail to-night; it is for Miss Fitzherbert, who is residing at Clapham, and I wish her to receive it by the early town delivery, to-morrow morning. The other letters—let me see, you can take this, and this—no, never mind; I shall perhaps require to add something to them yet. Go to Thomas with the letter I have given you, Annette."

The lady's maid left the room, and Lady Mary walked to the window and gazed long and pensively across the park and gardens of the castle.

"I have determined how to act," she soliloquized, after having stood silent and absorbed in thought for some minutes; "and when those letters are despatched my determination will be irrevocable; and yet it will grieve me—deeply grieve me, to bid an eternal farewell

to the home of my ancestors. How beautiful is the scenery from these windows, every portion of the landscape hallowed by some fond recollection, yet, alas! every recollection tinged with the sadness of my lonely, weary heart; but for one false step in early youth; but for the foolish gratification of the pride and coquetry that marked my girlhood, how different might have been my fate—with what different feelings might I have been, at this moment, gazing from these windows. I might not have been alone in the world. I might have had children grown up and around me ready to be the stay and comfort of the old age which, ere many more summers and winters have passed, must creep upon me. I might have had a husband whom I could love and respect, to support me amid all the trials of life which befall the wealthy and high-born, as well as the lowly and poor. I might have had around me those who loved me—those upon whom I could have lavished the current of affection which has been bound up within me without being able to find a healthy vent, until my heart has been wrung and well-nigh broken. Oh, what is the worth of wealth, honor, title, all that the world calls greatness, if the affections are stifled and dried up in the bosom. I would exchange my countess'—aye, a duchess' coronet, this very hour, to enjoy the domestic happiness I witnessed to-day in the abode of one of my poorest tenants; but it is useless to think of such matters now. I have suffered the punishment due to pride and vanity—sometimes I fancy I have been made to suffer too severely; but, no—to say this were blasphemy; does not the good Father Anselmo bid me take heart from these mental sufferings I am compelled to endure during this my weary, lonely, pilgrimage on earth, in the hope that they may be accepted as an atonement in Heaven. Still the human heart is weak, and before I bid forever farewell to the pomp and vanity and heartlessness of the world, I would fain disburthen to one of my own sex, one who can sympathize with me and feel for me, and to whom my fate may be a warning, the feelings

which have for years been secreted within my breast, unknown and undreamed of by any save Father Anselmo, and, good old man as he is, he cannot sympathize with me as my heart yearns for sympathy. Georgiana will receive my letter, I hope, to-morrow, and if, as I trust she will do, she immediately leaves London for Shrewsbury, she will arrive at the castle on the afternoon of the following day. That will be Thursday; I am glad I did not send these other letters off to-day; I would be undisturbed by business during the remainder of this week. A few days devoted to the natural sympathies of my sex—a few days spent in the society of the child of Herbert, and then—then the veil and the cloister; thenceforward, the proud heiress—the wealthy titled proprietress of Alton will, I hope and trust, forget her worldly honors and her worldly sorrows, in the duties pertaining to a religious life." As she ceased her soliloquy, Lady Mary's handkerchief slipped from her hand, and as she turned and stooped to pick it up from the floor, she was startled by hearing a step on the gravel walk which led to the glass door that opened on the lawn. In another moment the door was thrown open, and Lord Henry Fitzherbert, in travelling attire, stood before the astonished lady.

To tell the truth, Lord Henry was little less surprised than Lady Mary, at this unexpected and rather annoying *contre temps* on his part. He had met the castle-warden after alighting from the carriage, which had conveyed him from Shrewsbury to the castle; and this man, who knew his lordship well, had informed him that his lady had gone out in the carriage to make a morning call upon a family residing in the vicinity of the castle, which, in fact, was the truth. Lady Mary had gone out for that purpose some hours before, and had returned unknown to the warden—who had been occupied on some business which led him to a distant part of the extensive park—and his lordship not wishing to enter the castle until the lady was at home, had wandered over the grounds and among the preserves



and plantations for an hour or two, in hopes to catch sight of the carriage on its return to the castle, upon the road which passed over an eminence half a mile distant from the carriage entrance to the park—until feeling wearied with waiting, he had approached the castle by a back part of the grounds, to make further enquiries from the servants. It had not occurred to him that Lady Mary was not in mourning, or, rather, he had forgotten it—for, Lord Henry Fitzherbert was not gifted with the faculty of retaining many ideas in his mind at once, and catching a glimpse of a female form in a dark dress, he had taken her for Annette, the lady's maid, and had hastened towards the apartment, pushed open the glass door, and entered the room, before he was aware of his unlucky error; for to come thus upon Lady Mary, at this particular moment, when he had a special object in visiting her, dusty and travel-stained, was the last thing his lordship would have desired.

Lady Mary was both startled and alarmed; and, for once in his life, the fine gentleman of fashion and the roue, was thrown off the equipoise of conventional good breeding. His lordship stuttered and stammered, but could give utterance to no connected sentence. He had studied a fine speech for the occasion, which he had intended to have rehearsed in his dressing-room before being ushered into the presence of the lady of the castle; but now he was completely at fault—even could he have thought of one single word of what he had intended to have said, it would not have been exactly *com me il faut* to have commenced a love declaration in such an abrupt manner as this. It would have been too much like a puerile imitation of the way such things were effected in old feudal times, when gallant knights stormed the castles in which resided their ladye loves, and having knocked the fair damsel's father and brothers on the head, and hanged the seneschals and serving men, locked the doors, and poured their vows of love into the trembling and despairing lady's ear. The lady, as

is usually the case under similar circumstances, was the first to assume an appearance of composure, and politely, but coldly, addressed his lordship. She asked to what she was indebted for so sudden and unexpected a visit from Lord Henry Fitzherbert. The only reply that Lord Henry could give, was that he had come down to the castle from London to pay a visit of condolence on account of the sudden and lamented death of the late earl, her ladyship's father; and then he stated, as well as he could, the causes which led to his abrupt and unexpected appearance before her, and begged her permission to retire to a dressing-room and render himself presentable. This request, of course, was immediately granted; and a servant having been summoned, his lordship bowed, and left the apartment.

When he had gone, Lady Mary set herself to work to consider what could be the real cause of this visit from Lord Henry; for she was well aware that his avowed reason was a mere subterfuge. Nor was her woman's tact long in coming to a right conclusion; for she smiled half contemptuously, half compassionately, as she said aloud:

"Poor simpleton! Does he think I cannot see through the disguise he attempts to throw around his motives! *My husband*, under no circumstances—at no period of my life, could Henry Fitzherbert have been, and most assuredly he can never become so now. Money is the only object that ever could or ever will tempt Henry to marry, and it is my money, not my hand, he now seeks in reality. Poor fellow!" she continued; and yet there was as much of scorn and contempt as of pity in her tone; "he has been a vain, frivolous, childish spend-thrift all his days—the unrecognized child of royalty, and yet born in wedlock. In a false position of life, he has been trained by circumstances, to play a degraded part in life's drama—more than noble by birth, yet as a noble, scarcely acknowledged—with the right according to the laws of God, to claim the privileges of his birth-right—by the law of man he has been set aside and dis-



honored—without a mother's or a father's care to guide his mind aright in the days of his youth, he has been nursed, and trained up, and educated by base sycophants and flatterers. Can it be expected that he should have turned out other than he has done? Poor fellow! necessitated to maintain the appearance of a man of rank and fashion, he has, throughout his life, now past its meridian, been the victim of comparative penury; he is to be pitied rather than blamed. What is money to me now? I have more at my disposal than I well know what to do with. My poor father taught him to expect my hand, or rather my fortune, and it is but just that—led into expenses, as he may have been, in consequence of that expectation—I should repair, as far as I am able, the mischief my poor father has done. He shall have money, as delicately tendered as possible, though, as for that," and she smiled faintly as she spoke, "as for that, I doubt whether there is any fear of hurting his feelings, yet I would not insult him. I would not like to hear of any mishap befalling him, through faults for which my father was to blame, as much as he is; in fact, for which I am to blame for failing in the moral courage, which should have taught me at once, in discovering the plot that was going on, to put a stop to it; so far, at least, as I was concerned in it—and then, is he not the half brother of poor Herbert! He whom I loved in youth, and whom I spurned while still loving him—he whom I thought I had steeled my heart to hate, but whose image I could not efface from my mind, and whose memory I have now allowed myself to revere and love as the only solace left to me on earth. Yes, yes, Henry wants money, and money he shall have; would that all wants were as easily satisfied."

An hour elapsed, and Lord Henry Fitzherbert made his re-appearance attired in the very extremity of the fashion, according to Stultz's last pattern, for the costume to be worn in a *maison de deuil*. A black dress coat, ditto waistcoat and trowsers, with scarcely any or-

nament upon his person, except a diamond ring upon the third finger of his right hand, a black silk necktie, and a broad band of crape around a new hat of Christy's exquisite make, patent leather shoes, and black silk stockings, completed his attire; and although his lordship was now verging towards his fiftieth year, his features and figure were still handsome, and his deportment perfectly unexceptionable.

Not a word was said respecting the late blunder, for his lordship thought that to attempt any further apology was uncalled for, and still it was with something of an embarrassed air that the schooled gentleman of fashion sought to open upon the subject which had brought him from London. He might, perhaps, have even left without having attempted to accomplish his purpose, had not Anderson, who had accompanied his master, informed him before he left Shrewsbury that morning, that Jacob, the money-lender, had followed them to the county town, having, by some means, learnt that a visit to the castle was contemplated by his lordship, and being determined to judge for himself as to the probability of his being paid within the specified time, his demand of £25,000.

At length his lordship, after all, somewhat blunderingly adverted to the object of his visit:

"I am sorry, Lady Mary," he began, "that the stupidity of the counsel and attorneys employed by your late lamented father, should have lost the suit—to gain which was the main object of the late earl's ambition. Your father, madam, held many conversations with me on that interesting subject, and it is my firm belief that the venerable nobleman would sooner have gained that suit than have changed his earl's to a marquis's or even a ducal coronet. I need not remind your ladyship that the earl, your father, was equally desirous that a union should take place between ourselves. I should not have adverted to this, so soon after the earl's decease, and while you, his nearest relative, and I, perhaps his most esteemed friend, were still suffering the first pangs of grief, had not rumor already gone abroad, so

heartless in the world of fashionable life in which we move, that in consequence of the loss of this suit the anticipated union of Lady Mary Alton and Lord Henry Fitzherbert had been broken off. I wish, madam, to convince the heartless, hypocritical butterflies of fashion that all even of their own class are not tinctured with their ingratitude and heartlessness. A large addition of fortune is in all probability lost to the Alton estates; but I regard not that; Lady Mary Alton is the same in my eyes with or without the estates—the loss of which, in all probability, caused the attack which resulted in her father's death. Lady Mary, I have not been an ardent suitor for your hand and heart, because heretofore I felt that in pressing my suit I should have laid myself open to a suspicion of fortune hunting; now that suspicion can no longer exist, at least to the same extent, I have sought this interview with your ladyship, to pledge, I should say, to reiterate, my vows of unalterable love, and to solicit the honor of your hand at as early a day as possible, consistent with the decorum which nature and custom have alike established as necessary on such a mournful occasion as that we have both been so suddenly called upon to deplore."

This exemplary offer of his hand and heart had cost Lord Henry the greater part of a night's rest to compose, and had involved besides the loss of upwards of a quire of post-paper before any thing like what his lordship had considered a satisfactory result had been arrived at. When it was completed, Anderson had been called in to give his opinion upon it, for the valet was in all his lordship's secrets, and he had decided that it was a perfect gem in its way, and could not fail from the generosity and disinterestedness it implied, to enlist the sympathies of her ladyship. It had been conned over and over in the post-chaise during the progress of the journey from London to Shrewsbury, for short as it was, his lordship, who was not blessed with a very retentive memory, and had found considerable difficulty in getting it by heart, and it had been rehearsed in his lordship's dressing-room

at Alton Castle not half an hour before, Anderson sitting in a languishing and interesting attitude on a sofa, with a sheet wrapped about him and a night-cap on his head to represent the lady, and his lordship, sinking upon one knee as he came to the sentence, "I have sought this interview to pledge, I should say, to reiterate my vows, and to solicit the honor of your hand," (as he in fact did when he rehearsed it again in the drawing-room in the presence of the lady,) and Anderson again for the twentieth time assuring his master that it was a perfect piece of composition, so generous and feeling-like, that he felt confident no lady could stand up against it, "especially," continued Anderson, "when your lordship goes to take her hand and raise it to your lips, as you did mine just now. It'll go direct through to her heart, my lord, that kiss," added Anderson, "or else I'm no judge of women."

Lady Mary had been prepared, as I have already shown, for some such declaration as this on the part of Lord Henry; but knowing his weakness and vanity, as she did, she certainly was not prepared for such a piece of rhodomontade as she had just unwillingly and impatiently listened to, and when his lordship seized her hand, according to copy, and was proceeding to carry it to his lips, she rather angrily withdrew it. Her first feelings were those of irritation at his presumption, but she felt he was too contemptible justly to excite her anger, and scorn and contempt for the pitiable wretch ensued, mingled with a feeling of almost irresistible mirth at the absurdity of the whole affair. When his lordship had concluded, and had risen from his abject position and again seated himself, as though awaiting her reply, she could not refrain from saying, while an arch smile played upon her lips—

I fear your lordship is laboring under some mistake, and that your offer is not so disinterested as you deem it. You will, no doubt, sir, be extremely sorry when I recall to your recollection that which your late speech inclines me to believe you have forgotten, to wit: that I

am not left altogether a portionless orphan of forty-five, dependent on the generous nature of a wooer of at least the same age. It will be a sad blow to your generous sentimentality, my lord, but I must remind you that I am the Lady of Alton, with broad lands, and a revenue of £16,000 per annum, at my own disposal."

"That, madam," replied his lordship, "I have not—that is to say—I did not—that is, I should have mentioned—"

"That it was in the last despairing hope," interrupted her ladyship, "that your lordship might acquire the control of at least a portion of this property, that I am honored by this flattering proposal from your lordship. My lord, I tell you plainly and honestly, I never loved, never even esteemed you; but, sir, I did hope that one in your position would have possessed more manliness of character than to attempt to impose upon any one by such a palpable subterfuge—such a mean equivocal as this. My lord, I have long been aware of the nature of the suit which I rejoice to say, bitter, as in one respect, have been the consequences of its rejection to me, has been taken out of the hands of the base men who urged my poor father to prosecute a scheme so unworthy of him. I know full well, my lord, that provided this suit had been gained by the puppets put up to represent the rightful heirs, my father, on obtaining possession, would have sacrificed his daughter's happiness by bestowing her upon one whom she despised—aye, my lord, I say despised—in order to show to the world an apparent generosity in giving up the benefit of the estate, after his death, to a relative of the rightful heir, it having been the intention of the parties implicated in the disgraceful plot to have entered another false claim, which was to end in the resignation of the property by the poor tools by whose aid it was sought to be won. Thus, my lord—I grieve to say it, but you have forced me to express myself in strong terms—my poor father, by avarice and ambition misled, would have nearly doubled his wealth, and, consequently, his

influence, and, as he hoped, have obtained a marquissate, perhaps even a dukedom, and dying, would have recompensed his daughter, who was to bear the burden of all this complicated guilt, by leaving her a coronet interwoven with the strawberry leaves pertaining to ducal rank, to wear upon her aching brow. Thank God! that even at the dread cost of my father's life, this guilt has been averted. My poor father, I believe, died penitent. I trust and believe that he has met with pardon, and that his soul has fled where ambition and avarice shall warp his nobler sympathies no more. You see that I know more than you would have given me credit for, my lord; nay, do not interrupt me," she continued, waving her hand for silence, as Lord Henry appeared about to speak. "I know your object, my lord. It has been, at any risk, to obtain money. I know that your means have been hardly sufficient for your necessary expenditure, even had you exercised economy. I know, also, that building upon hopes which, believe me, sir, *never, under any circumstances, would have been realized*, you have been tempted, in order to gratify a love for display, to borrow sums of money which you have no means of paying. I consider my father, and perhaps myself, indirectly, in a great measure, to blame for this, and it was my intention on quitting England, and I am about to leave it forever, to have bequeathed to you, in such a manner as would have allowed you to use it immediately, such a sum of money as would have paid your debts, and enabled you to face the world like an honest man. Your conduct to-day has proved to me, my lord, that you have no delicate feelings that I can offend. Still, it is not my intention to change my mind further than in this much, I shall present your lordship, in the name of my late father, in consideration of the false hopes he contributed to raise, with £30,000, on condition that you herewith sign a paper, pledging me your word and honor that henceforward we are strangers to each other in word and deed, and that you will never publicly mention my name. I had intended to pursue a

different plan; but enough of this. Will your lordship do as I require you?"

Lord Henry, who had begun to fear that all his hopes and anticipations had miscarried, and who beheld himself, in fancy, already immured within the stone walls of a prison, disgraced and dishonored forever, was glad, mean-souled wretch that he was, to jump at the offer, and, with many thanks and promises of reformation, which Lady Mary almost sickened to listen to, he signed the paper, and after receiving a check on her ladyship's banker for the amount, departed for London, closely followed by Jacob, who the next day received his £25,000 of loaned money at forty per cent. interest, and his lordship, for once in his life, found himself out of debt, and the possessor of £5000.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### *Confidential disclosures.*

LADY MARY ALTON, on her father's decease, had succeeded to the honors and titles of the family; the estates having been entailed on male or female heirs, and the patent of nobility—some years before, when the earl had just begun to despair of leaving heirs male—having, through his influence with the sovereign, been rendered hereditary in the male or female line alike. I remarked in the foregoing chapter, that Lady Mary Alton, (I should say the Countess of Shropshire; but, as Lady Mary I first knew her, and introduced her to the reader—and as Lady Mary, I still choose to recollect her,) had dispatched a letter to Miss Fitzherbert, inviting her to visit Alton Castle, and informing her that her ladyship was about quitting England forever; therefore, she begged that Miss Fitzherbert would make no unnecessary delay. Georgiana duly received the letter, and having shown it to her brother—for he was included in the in-

visitation—it was settled that she should immediately start for Alton Castle, and that Adolphus should accompany her and remain for the day; and then return to London, in order to arrange the preliminaries relative to his intended law studies; also that he should return to Alton again at the period fixed for the termination of his sister's visit, in order to escort her back to London again.

On the day that Lady Mary had expected them, they arrived at the castle, and were received as old friends—or, rather, as junior relatives, whom her ladyship had known and loved from their childhood, upwards. To both, Lady Mary was affectionately kind; although, of course, she was less restrained with Georgiana. Lady Mary was not, certainly, a young woman; still she was sufficiently youthful in her appearance, and sufficiently prepossessing in feature, to render it necessary in order to avoid scandal, to refrain from the strong expressions of regard which she would willingly have bestowed upon the son of Herbert Fitzherbert. As had been arranged, Adolphus left Alton Castle for Shrewsbury, in the evening—so as to be ready for the departure of the early train for London, on the following morning; and the next day, Lady Mary and Miss Fitzherbert spent in each other's society, the former informing the latter lady of the reasons which had led her so anxiously to desire to see her before she, Lady Mary, left England.

"You will recollect, dear Miss Fitzherbert," she said, "that at the close of our last and only former interview, I told you that I was deeply interested in your success with regard to the late suit, although circumstances would have led you to imagine the contrary to be the case. I am now about to leave England forever. Whither I am going, is as yet known only to Father Anselmo, my poor father's chaplain, and one who was my instructor in childhood, and has been my guide and adviser, my only confidant during the latter period of my life; for even my dear aunt, the Countess de Tivoli, abbess of the Convent of St. Euphemia, has not yet been

fully advised of my determination. I thought I had been possessed of sufficient stoicism to have left all behind me without a sigh of regret, and to have buried forever in my own bosom, and in time to have forgotten in the prosecution of my new duties, the weaknesses and troubles of my worldly life; but as the hour of my departure from the home of my ancestors draws near, I find that it is harder than I thought to sever the ties that bind frail humanity to the vanities and follies of the world. Georgiana, to Father Anselmo, in the secrets of the confessional, have I alone as yet disclosed the devoted love which I once had for your father."

Georgiana started with surprise.

Lady Mary smiled, and gently laying her hand on the young girl's arm, she continued:

"I had thought to have hidden the story of this unhappy love forever from the knowledge of others; but when I saw you and your brother at the inn in Shrewsbury; where I started with surprise on seeing before me the very image of Herbert in his youthful days; when I traced in your features, as you stood anxiously and painfully, as it appeared, listening to some words that Mr. Hughes was saying relative to the coming trial, an expression so strongly resembling that of your father's face when I last saw him, as he stood listening almost incredulously, to some vain and cruel words I had let fall, on purpose to annoy him and prove the influence I had over him—an influence, alas! exerted once too often for my happiness—I determined then to ease my overburdened feelings by making you—one of my own sex—one who could sympathize with me—you the daughter of my poor lost Herbert—the confidant of the hopeless and weary sorrow of my blighted life."

The unhappy lady then related to Georgiana the history of her first love for Herbert Fitzherbert, and how it was broken off, the "love turned to hatred" which ensued, and the subsequent return of tender recollections, which the reader will recollect Lady Mary dwelt upon in her soliloquy when I first introduced her in her sitting

room at Alton Castle. "And now," she added, "I am about to bid farewell forever to all worldly thoughts, recollections and ambitions—a few weeks more, Miss Fitzherbert, will witness me a resident—I hope a contented and a happy one in the Convent of St. Euphemia in Italy, at which peaceful and in my mind, happy abode, the days of my early childhood were spent, for there I experienced happiness and content that have been since unknown to me."

"But my lady," exclaimed Georgiana who had the day before felt rather bashful in Lady Mary's company; but who had by this time been completely won over by her gentle manners and by her evident admiration of her father and fond recollections of his memory, evinced by her disinterested kindness to his children; "but, my lady, you, with everything around you to make you happy; in the possession of wealth which will enable you to do so much good in this world, and of a rank in life which will ensure you influence in the propagation of any good work; with numerous tenants looking up to you for advice and protection; for that your tenants love you I have had ample proof from the conversations I heard last night when I accompanied my brother to Shrewsbury in the carriage; Adolphus got into conversation with the coachman, and at my brother's suggestion, he took up two aged villagers who were going to the county town on some simple business of their own; oh, Lady Mary, had you only heard how kindly—how affectionately they spoke of the lady at the castle—how they regretted the death of the earl, who had always been a kind master and an indulgent landlord, although they said he had been too deeply engaged in Parliament matters to look so closely after the affairs at Alton as his tenants could have wished; and how, now that he was no more, they seemed to take it for granted that the good, kind-hearted Lady Mary, his daughter, would reside more among those who loved, and respected her as they did—if you had heard all this as I did, Lady Mary,



I am sure you never would think of quitting them and Alton Castle forever."

"Dear Miss Fitzherbert," replied Lady Mary, "I have for some years past cherished a desire to retire from the busy, frivolous world and to spend the remainder of my life in the peaceful seclusion of the convent; I thought a few months, aye, a few weeks ago, it would be easier than it really is to turn my back upon all worldly things; nevertheless, although the struggle is severe, my mind is no less determined. The tenants of Alton will find another landlord, one who will be to them all and more than was the Earl of Shropshire, or than Mary Alton can be."

"Who then takes possession of this beautiful castle and this noble estate?" inquired Georgiana, in astonishment.

"The Church," replied Lady Mary; "that is to say, the late earl's confessor, Father Anselmo, who is well acquainted with the wants and necessities of the tenantry, who has been much among them and studied well their character and the best methods of exercising a beneficial influence over them, will reside at the castle and superintend the management of the estates, which will be, in a few weeks more, in the possession of the Convent of St. Euphemia."

"And all this enormous property goes to the church then?" said Georgiana, abstractedly.

"Rather," replied Lady Mary, "it goes to the services of religion. Could it be used for a better purpose? Yet not all; I have reserved a considerable portion for secular purposes—for the purposes of private friendship and private duties. Annette and all my servants, as well as those of the late earl—indeed all the servants of the castle—are remembered, and when I have left they will find themselves in the possession of annuities which will render them comfortable for the remainder of their days. Then money has been freely expended in other ways that I need not mention. And, now, Miss Fitzherbert, I have yet one thing more to say;—you and your brother have

indirectedly suffered through my father's injustice, for had he not been tempted from the path of duty by avarice and ambition your father would have been the lord of broad lands, little less in value than those of Alton. My poor father died repentant, and, had he lived, would have sought to make reparation. This, at least, I please myself in believing. It remains, therefore, for me, his daughter, with the respect due to my father's memory, to complete that which, in consequence of his hasty summons into the mysteries of eternity, has been left undone. There is a small estate belonging to the Alton property, called Rosehill. It is but a little farm, laid out for the greater part of it in pleasure grounds, and comprises only a few acres of land, in the centre of which is a beautiful little cottage, built after the Tuscan style. It was a favorite residence of my father's in his younger days, when he went on a sporting excursion for a few days, with a party of friends: before many years, I feel confident that your brother Adolphus will come into possession of the late-contested property. If he is like Herbert was at his age—as like him in disposition as he is in person—he would refuse any offer, however just it might be, on my part, if it involved what the most fastidious sense of honor could construe into an obligation; he has talents which, in a few years, will render him independent by his own exertions, even if the chancery decision be delayed. I would not subject myself to the pain of a refusal by offering him assistance, for I feel his proud spirit would not accept it in the sense in which it would be offered. To you, then, Georgiana, I give this little farm of Rosehill, as a memento of Mary Alton when she has become forever secluded from the world, and may it long remain yours, when Mary Alton has been removed from all the world's perils and temptations. Nay," she continued, noticing that Georgiana was about to speak—"Nay, I will take no denial in this. It is no favor; it is but a small token of respect from me to *yourself*—mind, to *yourself*. So must your brother be led to consider it; and recollect that, if you do not receive it, it will only



go with the rest of the property into the possession of the convent. You *will*, then, oblige me in this—one of my last requests—Miss Fitzherbert?"

Georgiana knew not what to say—she knew not how her brother would consider it; but Lady Mary was so very earnest, that at length, with many thanks, she accepted the gift.

"This settled, let us take a stroll around the gardens contiguous to the castle," said Lady Mary. "I shall not wander among their paths many times more; come—let us walk."

The two ladies stepped out by the glass door into the lawn, and having reached the terrace, descended a flight of stone steps which led them to the entrance of the garden. It had been a rabbit warren, and comprised an area of several acres of uneven surface—here rising into an eminence, there forming a miniature valley, and in various places artificial ponds had been made, having the appearance of mimic lakes. The father of the late earl, and the grandfather of lady Mary, had possessed a great love for horticulture and for landscape gardening, and he had converted what once had been almost a desert wilderness, into the most romantic garden ground in the world. Owing to the peculiarities of the ground, it was full of abrupt turns, and consequently, except from an eminence, but a small portion of the garden could be seen at once, and each separate plot had been cultivated in a different style, here resembling a Swiss farm, with its romantic looking cottage and outhouses; there a flat spot was laid out as a Chinese garden; and further on, a more rugged and abrupt turn disclosed some miniature mountain scenery, resembling that of Wales. On an eminence, and embowered in trees, stood a small cottage, inhabited by a real Welsh harper, who was blind, and who had been domiciled here, a pensioner of Alton, for life. The peculiar characteristics of the soil in half the countries of Europe and Asia were imitated in different portions of this garden, and quaint Chinese temples in their appropriate position and Venetian gondolas on the

mimic Italian lakes, and other tiny structures emblematical of the country that was intended to be represented, were scattered throughout the grounds. Georgiana was highly delighted. She had witnessed nothing of the kind before, and to her it appeared as though she had suddenly been transported to fairy land.

"The more I see of this lovely place the greater is my astonishment that your ladyship can have arrived at the determination to quit it forever, and immure yourself for life within the limits of St. Euphemia," she said. "I have been in that convent, and though the lady abbess is kind, pardon me for saying so Lady Mary, it has little attraction in my eyes; nor do I believe that the happiness sought for in vain without, is always found within the walls of a convent."

Lady Mary smiled sadly.

"Few people view the same object in the same light," she rejoined, "the mental vision adds to the beauty or distorts the symmetry of the optical view. You and I, my dear Miss Fitzherbert, necessarily picture to our minds, as well as we see with our eyes, the seclusion of the cloister from a different point of view. I stand in the gloomy shade, and have wandered long in search of rest, and to me the convent offers the repose I seek. You are in the sunshine of life—your journey is yet before you—to you the convent appears dark and gloomy. You pant for liberty—for freedom—which years will teach you exist only as a chimera of the brain. All mankind are slaves, the wealthy and titled to the tyrannical heartlessness of conventional customs, which they dare not break through; the poor to the tyrant poverty, which crushes out from them all the aspirations of humanity, and, in the course of time, degrades God's image below the level of the brute creation. I hope it may never be the case; yet I fear, before many years, you will not think so highly of the pleasures of the world as you seem to think now. But what a misanthrope am I become," she added, smiling mournfully; "heed me not, Georgiana; I sincerely hope

you will always be happy, and that you may take warning from me, and avoid the shoal on which my happiness was wrecked."

For some minutes the two ladies walked on in silence: at length, Georgiana spoke.

"I should wish to ask your ladyship one question," she said, "and yet I am fearful it would offend you; you would think me too curious."

"By no means—I shall not be offended at anything you can say; neither shall I think you too inquisitive. What would you ask me?"

"Simply, whether the Father Anselmo, the priest of whom I have heard you speak, has advised your ladyship to this course?"

Lady Mary smiled:

"Has your mind so soon been prejudiced against the holy faith in which I and my ancestors, for centuries back, have been reared, and to which we have remained steadfast, despite of threats and persecutions?"

Georgiana blushed deeply, and Lady Mary, noticing her emotion, continued:

"No, dear Miss Fitzherbert, the world will ill-naturedly say that I have been tempted, ensnared into this renouncement of my birth-right and fortune, it will be cited as another instance of the greed of the Catholic Church and the influence of priestcraft. So far, however, from having advised me, Father Anselmo has ever gently dissuaded me from following my inclinations as regards this determination. Nor does any one but yourself and he yet know that my mind has become thus resolved."

"If you would then only alter your intentions, how glad I should be, and how glad Adolphus would be to aid in banishing from your mind the distressing recollections you have told me of. How glad I should be to think I had been the humble instrument of retaining you among your tenants, who seem so much attached to you."

"Ah! you little temptress," replied Lady Mary, "you

come in a fair guise, and perhaps had matters not proceeded so far; had I known you before my mind was fully made up, I might—but what am I talking of? This disinclination to follow the path of duty that conscience has pointed out, is growing upon me. How different are the anticipations of pain or pleasure in the performance of one's duty, from the reality; but here we are again at the terrace steps. Let us go into the castle. Ah! who can that be? Visitors! I did not expect any," suddenly exclaimed Lady Mary, as, gaining the terrace, two travelling carriages, with footmen in a foreign livery, were seen waiting at the grand entrance of the castle.

The visitors, who ever they were, had, it seemed, just alighted from the vehicles, and entered the castle, and Lady Mary, followed by Georgiana, hastened to reach a private pathway, by which she could reach the castle unseen, in order that she might learn from the domestics who it was who had thus unceremoniously intruded upon her privacy.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

*The arrival of a stranger alters the aspect of affairs—I return from my tour, and spend an evening with my friends.*

THE strangers alluded to in the last chapter, proved to be an Italian gentleman of military appearance, and Father Anselmo, who had been engaged at the late earl's mansion in Grosvenor-square, London, in settling his late patron's affairs, and who had been unexpectedly hurried back to Alton Castle, in consequence of the arrival in London from Italy, of the Count de Bellona (the strange gentleman alluded to), who was a distant relative of the Tivoli family, and who had come to England on a tour of pleasure. He had immediately called

at the earl's mansion, not having heard of his lordship's decease, and being the bearer of the unpleasant intelligence of the severe illness of the abbess of the convent of the Euphemia, who had been struck with paralysis; and although the symptoms of her disease were no longer dangerous, the nature of it was such as to incapacitate her for the onerous position she held in the convent. She had, consequently, resigned in favor of sister Margeretta, her late deputy. The count was a fine looking man, slightly past the meridian of life; but with a heart as fresh and youthful as it had been thirty years before, when he had first donned the uniform of an officer of the Pontifical Guards, in which regiment he was now a colonel. His hair was thickly strewn with grey, but his whiskers, and the heavy moustache that he wore, in virtue of his military rank, were black as jet, and the sallow complexion, too common among most of his countrymen after the first flush of youth is passed away, was relieved by a healthy tinge of red, created by the action of the weather and the sun; for the count, in the interval of his military duties, had been a great traveller. He possessed a fine military bearing, and was tall and robust, without the slightest approach to corpulency. In fact, to use a somewhat stereotyped phrase, he was the perfect beau ideal of a gallant soldier and an accomplished gentleman. He had, when a child, been the playmate and companion of Lady Mary, whenever she obtained permission from her aunt to visit the city of Turin, and at one time it had been a cherished fancy of the old earl's, that some day or other the marriage of the young count and his daughter might cement the union that already existed by marriage between the families of Alton and Bellona.

The young count had entertained a boyish affection for the youthful heiress of Alton, and it was with a sorrowful heart that at the age of sixteen, he bade her farewell on receiving the honor of a commission in the papal guards. The bustle of the camp and the new scenes to which he was introduced, had well nigh obliterated

all remembrance of his childhood's playmate, and ten years afterwards he married a young Roman lady of good family and considerable fortune, with whom he lived five years in a state of as perfect connubial felicity as man can well enjoy. In the meantime, she had borne him two children, both of whom had, however, died in infancy, and shortly after the death of her youngest, the lady herself, who had always had a tendency to pulmonary disease, died of a rapid decline. Since then the count had lived a widower, for a long period almost inconsolable for the loss of the wife and children he had so tenderly loved. It was subsequently to the death of his wife that he had indulged his inclination to travel, and time at length brought the solace that it usually brings to the afflicted. For some years past, he had been enabled to think of the loved ones he had lost, with a gentle melancholy, but without the pangs that every recollection of them had formerly called forth, and now he was delighted with the idea of again seeing the once loved companion of his youth. The recollections of his childhood came with renewed force into his mind as he landed on her native soil; and who shall say what other strange fancies flitted across the imagination of the gallant colonel, for he had heard in Italy that Lady Mary was still unmarried, and knowing little of her history for the last thirty years of her life, he had the vanity to entertain the idea that she had remained unwedded, owing to her love for him. It was with feelings of deep regret that he heard of the sudden death of her father, and he had urged the old priest to hasten with him in his own travelling carriage, immediately to the castle, in order that he might tender his condolence to the lady.

Lady Mary received her old playmate with surprise, but with a smile of pleasure, and for a moment the pleasing recollection of their youthful endearments passed across her mind, for before she had met with Herbert on her return from Italy to England, she had, in her girlish

fancy, sometimes thought how she should like Ludovico for a husband.

She was, however shocked to hear of the illness of her aunt, and determined instantly to visit her; therefore for the present, all further investigations into the condition of the late earl's affairs was left to Father Anselmo, and Lady Mary prepared at once to visit Italy, accepting the Count de Bellona as her escort and protector during the journey. By the time the preparations for travel were complete, Adolphus returned to Alton Castle for his sister, and bidding the young people for the present an affectionate farewell, Lady Mary and the Count de Bellona started on the following morning for the continent—Adolphus and Georgiana returning to London on the same day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Two years passed away, pleasantly enough on my part; for I spent that period traveling over the greater portion of Europe—not confining my tour to the customary, well-trodden route of fashionable tourists; but, after visiting France, Italy and Spain, I directed my steps northward, and passing through Germany and Prussia, I sailed up the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland, to Cronstadt, visited St. Petersburg—the city that owes its existence to the genius and sagacity of Peter the Great, that half savage, yet most wonderful genius—and having indulged myself with a lengthened investigation into the domestic and social habits of the Russians—a nation whose interior economy is but little known, and little heeded by the generality of travelers, although all the more interesting in consequence of its comparative novelty—I crossed the Gulf of Bothnia and visited the Swedish capital, Stockholm, and thence proceeded northward to the North Cape, for the purpose of witnessing the glorious sight of the sun at midnight. Thence, I returned through mountainous and barren Norway, stopping for weeks at the principal towns, and enjoying greatly the primitive manners of the honest, hardy, hospitable and unsophisticated Norwegians. This

tour occupied me a considerable time; and it was exactly two years from the day I had bid farewell to Adolphus and Georgiana, at the hotel at Dover, that I stepped from the pier of Christiansand, in Norway, on board the vessel which was to convey me to England, on my return to the United States. On reaching Hull, the port in England to which the vessel was bound, I made the best of my way to London, and immediately called on Mr. Hughes, at Clapham Common. I had seen so many strange sights since I left England, two years before, that it actually surprised me to find everything standing seemingly just as I had left it. As I walked up the gravel walk which led to the house, I struck my foot against the watering-pot, which was standing near a bed of hyacinths, and I recollected that the very day before I left Clapham, I had been amusing myself with watering that very bed of flowers, and had sat down the watering-pot in that place. I turned my head and saw the old gardener hoeing up some weeds, as I had last seen him engaged, and I could almost have sworn he wore the same garden dress he now had on. Everything seemed the same as when I had last seen it; the flower-beds, the little rustic garden chairs scattered hither and thither—even to the old cat who was sunning herself on the piazza, and who came towards me, purring and rubbing herself against my leg, as was her wont—that I felt quite bewildered and rubbed my hands across my eyes and forehead, to satisfy myself that I was awake, or rather that I had not just awakened from a dream of travel in distant lands. When I rung at the door bell and was admitted by the servant—the same old servant—who curtsied to me as unconcernedly, apparently, as though I had just returned from a visit to town or from a short walk, and who led the way to the parlor door, opening it and announcing Mr. —, my mind was scarcely more relieved of the strange feeling that comes over one after returning from an exciting voyage or course of travel; and finding everything we left behind unchanged, for, in the parlor were seated Mr. and Mrs.

Hughes, and Mr. and Miss Fitzherbert, (it was past five o'clock on a summer evening, and Mr. Hughes and Adolphus had returned from town,) awaiting the announcement that dinner was ready, and I almost fancied that they had really expected me, as had been my wont, to form one of the family circle, *sans ceremonie*, whenever my inclination led me to pay them a visit.

The outburst of surprise, joy and welcome, with which they received me, however, restored my half wandering senses, and the first congratulations on my safe return over, I was so overwhelmed with questions that I could not answer all at once and therefore could not answer at all, that it was quite a relief when dinner was announced, although I had dined on quitting the cars, before starting for Clapham.

Dinner over, we returned to the parlor, and spent of course a very pleasant evening; I, relating the history of my travels, and they, telling me all that had occurred during my absence that was likely to be interesting to me.

I found Georgiana and Adolphus but little altered, although the former had I thought acquired a roundness of outline which considerably enhanced her attractions, and the whiskers of the latter had evidently been cultivated with care, and overspread a considerable portion of his cheeks, imparting a more manly expression to his countenance. As to the old couple, they appeared just as I had left them—not the slightest alteration was perceptible.

In the course of the conversation I learned that "to make conviction stronger," Mrs. Lyman and her relatives had hunted up various documentary proofs of the validity of the claims of Adolphus and Georgiana, and that Mr. Hughes had taken care that they should be transmitted to the proper quarter. But the suit was still in chancery, and as yet no idea could be formed of the period when it would be decided.

Adolphus had made considerable progress in his law studies, and as soon as the necessary term of probation

had expired he was to be called to the bar, whether or not he and his sister had entered into possession of their father's property, as both he and Mr. Hughes thought, advisedly, that it would be perhaps an advantage, and at all events no detriment, for him to belong to an honorable and lucrative profession, even though he were not called upon to practise it for a livelihood.

Georgiana had improved herself greatly, through the kind consideration of Mr. Hughes, by studying various accomplishments, and such more material branches of education as she, of course, had not previously had an opportunity of acquiring, but which would be necessary to her in the position she would in all probability be called upon at some future period to occupy.

The little farm of Rosehill, which the reader will recollect Lady Mary had delicately forced upon the Fitzherberts, although Adolphus had long stood out against receiving it, yielded them an income of £200 per annum—a sum quite sufficient for their maintenance, and which relieved them from the disagreeable feeling of being indebted to the generosity of Mr. Hughes for their present support, although that worthy gentleman persisted in saying that it would be no obligation as far as they were concerned—it would rather be conferring an obligation on him, were they to permit him to allow them a certain annual sum for the present, for, as he said in a jocular manner, and yet half seriously, "I shall expect payment with interest by-and-bye, when you two young people come into possession of your rights, and also to have the direction of all matters connected with the property which require the services of a lawyer, so you see I am not altogether so unselfish as you pretend to think me." \* \* \* \* \*

The conversation by and bye took another turn:

"And how is poor Lady Mary?" I enquired. "I heard a rumor shortly after I left England that she had determined upon retiring to the convent of St. Euphemia and spending the remainder of her days in the austere seclusion of a religious life. Poor lady! She appeared



to be very unhappy. She was so unfortunate, as I have heard, to meet with a blight in her early affections, and in consequence led a life of great mental anxiety. Still I think she should not have allowed her feelings to gain such mastery over her. She was weak to give way to the private sorrow in which I have heard she indulged, even when she was supposed by most of her associates to be the reigning belle of fashionable life. It is a pity to think of the fine estate of Alton being given up to swell the revenues of a foreign convent, as, when I was in Rome, I was informed was to be the case. Poor lady! I suppose she has long 'ere this renounced all earthly ties and affections."

A quiet smile pervaded the countenances of the little party, as Mr. Hughes replied:—

"She has rather formed fresh ties and encouraged the growth of fresh affections, like a wise woman, as she turned out to be at last, after all her strange notions. Lady Mary Alton, my dear sir, is now Countess de Bellona, having married about twelve months ago the count of that name and title, with whom she is now living contentedly and happily in Tuscany. He escorted her ladyship to Italy when she went to see her aunt, who was suddenly struck with paralysis, shortly after you left England. Report says he was a boy-lover of hers, the date of the childish romaunt being antecedent to that of her ladyship's girlish, and I must acknowledge too, pretty constant affection for Herbert Fitzherbert—the father of our young friends here. She and the count went to Italy, leaving the venerable old priest, Father Anselmo, whom you will recollect, to arrange all that was necessary preparatory to delivering the estates of Alton over to the Church or rather to the Convent: but lo, and behold! when Father Anselmo had just got everything settled, he received a letter from her ladyship, desiring him to let things proceed as usual for the present, and to reside himself at the castle until he heard further from her. So matters rested for upwards of nine months, when one day I saw in the columns

of the *Morning Post*, among the "fashionable intelligence," a notice of the arrival at the King's Arms Hotel, Folkestone, of the Countess of Shropshire and the Count de Bellona, from Turin, via France. You may imagine I was somewhat astonished, but I laid the paper aside, and should perhaps have hardly thought of the circumstance again, in the multiplicity of my business matters, had I not, about a fortnight afterwards, received a note from the countess, requesting to see me at Morley's Hotel on business of importance. Of course I was punctual in attendance—I always am punctual in business matters—and I was closeted with her ladyship for a considerable time. She looked actually younger than ever, and you know when I first saw her she was not *really* young, though she looked so, and was in much more cheerful spirits than I had ever expected to see her. And what do you think was the business on which I was wanted? Nothing less than to arrange certain matters respecting some fiefs on the Alton Castle estates prior to her ladyship's marriage. She was very friendly, very chatty, and quite confidential. She told me that she had given up all idea of entering a convent since the death of her aunt, which had occurred shortly after her arrival at Turin; that she had consulted with the good, venerable Father Anselmo respecting the change in her situation, and he had, strange to say, (at least so it appeared to me,) encouraged her to follow the new bent of her inclinations. In fact, her ladyship blushed and simpered a little, and then told me she was engaged to be married to the Count de Bellona, and she concluded by asking me my opinion upon the matter, and whether I thought she was doing wrong or violating the constancy of her affection to the memory of her deceased boy-lover, Herbert. I told her ladyship plainly, that I thought she was about to act like a sensible woman, and that I considered she had brooded quite long enough over the memory of one who had for years been in the grave, and whose love when living had been given to another. About three months after this conversation, no little excitement was occasioned among the



London fashionables, by the appearance, in the columns of the *Morning Post*—that staid and venerable record of fashionable occurrences—headed—

MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE AT PARIS.—We learn from *Galignani's Messenger*, that a marriage took place at Paris, on Monday, the 10th inst., which will create some stir and no little astonishment in fashionable circles, not only in England, but throughout the Continent. On the day above mentioned was married at *l'Eglise de l'Assumption*, by the Archbishop of Paris, Mary, Countess of Shropshire, daughter and heiress of the late Earl of Shropshire, to Ludovico, Count de Bellona, and Colonel of the Papal Guards; both the fair bride and the happy bridegroom are in the wane of life, although both are still in the possession of perfect health, and the bride especially, still has the appearance of a young and beautiful woman. The noble and gallant count has been distinguished in his military career, and is a remarkably handsome man. He is said to possess large estates in Tuscany."

Then followed a description of the dress worn by the bride on the interesting occasion, and a great deal of stuff which I don't recollect; indeed, I don't know that the paragraph ran exactly as I have worded it, but it was something to the same purpose, and it ended by saying that the happy pair had left Paris for Florence immediately after the nuptial knot was tied.

"And has the countess completely forgotten Alton Castle?" I asked.

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Hughes, "she was there with her husband about three months since, and Georgiana was down at the castle on a visit."

"Well, there are singular romances in real life," was my rejoinder.

"Strange, indeed," replied Mr. Hughes. "I believe it is their intention," he added, "to reside a portion of the year in Tuscany and a portion in England."

"And what is Lord Fitzherbert doing?" I asked.

"Lounging about town, as usual. Dozing away his leisure hours at his rooms in the Albany, and appearing upon parade with his regiment when he is obliged to do so. Over head and ears in debt, and still fancying himself a young man and an Adonis, although he must be close bordering on fifty years of age."

"And our worthy opponents, Messrs. Gripes and Cheatem, what has become of them?"

"Gripes is still living in London, and practising his profession. I learnt enough, after you were gone abroad, to have sent him and his scoundrelly coadjutor to a penal settlement for life, but my promise to the earl on his death-bed, and a fear of hurting the feelings of poor Lady Mary, who was really innocent of any participation in their schemes, and truly noble in her conduct, kept me from taking any action in the matter, the more especially as I was sure they could not have it in their power to inflict further injury on my clients here. As to Cheatem, I suppose Gripes got frightened at the idea of allowing him to remain in England after what had occurred; and he knew quite enough of Cheatem, and had him quite enough in his power to compel him to quit the country when he pleased; so he procured him some inferior government situation in Australia, and there he is now—the scoundrel. He ought to be there, it is true; but it should be in chains, as a convict, instead of holding an official position, however humble."

"And those shadows of our young friends here, the *soi-disant* Fitzherberts, where are they? Singular resemblance! was it not?"

"Yes; but I have been told there was some reason for it. They are said to be the illegitimate children of Lord Henry Fitzherbert, and their mother is reported to have been a strolling player. It is said that Lord Henry bore a strong resemblance to his half-brother, Herbert, when he was a young man. So you see they were, after all, really entitled to the name of Fitzher-

bert, at least in a certain sense. The young man became so importunate that he alarmed Gripes, who at length furnished him with funds, and sent him to the United States, compelling him to sign a paper, resigning forever the name of Fitzherbert on the part of himself and his sister, and disclaiming any knowledge of the transaction in which they bore so prominent a part. Poor things! they were not so much to blame, after all; and I hear they are doing well in America."

In such conversation as this, the evening passed rapidly away, and, having remained a few days with my friends, I bid them farewell, and left London for Liverpool, whence I took passage to New York, and arrived there in safety some three weeks afterwards. What further relates to the young people in whom I took so great an interest, I learnt from themselves and Mr. Hughes by letter; and I am happy to say that in the following and concluding chapter of my narrative, the reader who has followed me through the story will learn that eventually the young people succeeded to the property that should have been inherited by their father.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### *Conclusion.*

As I intimated in the foregoing chapter, I heard very often from my English friends, who, among them, kept me thoroughly posted up in all that was going forward within the limits of their little circle.

In due time, Adolphus completed his term of legal study, and was called to the bar. This occurred about three years after I returned from England, and through the influence of Mr. Hughes with Mr. Ferrit, and other eminent solicitors, he soon got out of the category of "briefless barristers," and obtained a respectable and amply remunerative, if not a very lucrative practice.

His letters to me were earnest in expressions of gratitude for my kindness and for the interest I had taken in himself and his sister when they were friendless and unknown in the United States, but he seldom alluded to the case in Chancery, and when he did so, he seemed to view the prospect of eventually obtaining possession of the estates, much in the light of a lottery. If he gained the prize, so much the better; if not, he trusted that by his own talents and exertions he would, in course of time, work his own way to eminence and wealth. I heard from Mr. Hughes that he studied intensely, and that there was certainly every rational prospect to believe that in due season he would reap the reward of his unwearied and indefatigable application; but Mr. Hughes also told me that, although he rarely mentioned the subject to Adolphus or his sister, he felt confident that the time was drawing near when the decision of the Court of Chancery would be given in their favor. He (Mr. Hughes) was most earnest and unfaltering in his endeavors in their behalf, so much so, that the Masters in Chancery were growing wearied with his incessant applications to them, and for the sake of peace and quietness, every officer of that quiet-loving, indolent court would be most happy to get quit of the suit as soon as possible.

In my letters to Adolphus, I frequently made jocular allusions regarding his approaching marriage with his cousin Juliet, but he generally replied, that he must secure the means of independence before he thought of marriage.

Robert Stanton, who had commenced his study of the law at the same time with Adolphus, was also called to the bar very shortly after young Fitzherbert donned the wig and gown, and having a good connection, he likewise was, in a very short time, doing well. Mr. Hughes wrote me, in one of his letters, that Robert had made £400 in the first year of his practice, and as his prospects were still more flattering for the ensuing year, he had urged upon Georgiana the fulfillment of her promise,

that with her brother's consent, as soon as Robert was well started on the road to fame and fortune, she would give him her hand—her heart had long been given—and become the partner of his joys and sorrows throughout life. No objection could be made by Adolphus, and shortly afterwards Robert Stanton and Georgiana were married. In writing me the particulars of the marriage of Georgiana, Mr. Hughes spoke of the matrimonial prospects of Adolphus. He and his cousin Juliet were formally engaged, but the period at which their union was to be solemnized had not been fixed. Had it not been that Juliet was the possessor of an independent fortune, Mr. Hughes said he believed that Adolphus would have urged his cousin to name the happy day as soon as, after having entered upon the practice of his profession, he saw a prospect of gaining a respectable livelihood from it; but the high-toned pride of Adolphus was so strong a trait in his character, that he could not endure the idea of marrying a wife who was the possessor of an independent fortune, while he was dependent for his own livelihood upon the exercise of his industry and talents, and this feeling was increased rather than diminished, in consequence of the continued assertions of Juliet, that she should always consider that she only held the estates she possessed in Virginia in trust, and that she considered he was the rightful heir. The lovers always had a pretty little quarrel whenever they discussed this subject, which, however, was usually made up the same evening, before they parted from each other.

About eighteen months after Adolphus had commenced his career as a barrister, Juliet returned to the United States with her aunt, and she had not reached her Virginia home more than a week before her cousin George made her a formal offer of marriage, but she politely refused his suit, greatly to his astonishment, as well as that of his father, for the old gentleman had considered the ultimate union of his son and his ward as a matter of certainty. They were both a little chag-

rined at first, and George talked of going to sea in a whaler, and getting drowned, or swallowed by a whale, or else of joining some desperate expedition against the Indians in Texas, in which he was sure to get scalped; but, in the course of a few weeks, he recovered his composure, and six months afterwards married a young lady from New England, who had gone on a visit to the South, and he is now a very contented and happy husband, and the father of a fine little fellow of two years old, whom his mother declares to be the very image of his father, and so George appears to think himself, for he always introduces his visitors to his hopeful heir, with the remark that he can himself see the strong resemblance between his own hazel eyes and his son's blue ones; and he has no doubt, in time, that the little *nez retroussé* will get a bridge upon it as aquiline in form as his own decidedly Roman nose; and as to his boy's hair, which is of a light flaxen color, he says that his mother has a lock of his own hair, which was clipped off when he was about his son's age, which is as yellow as gold, although now his hair is nearly black.

Four years more passed away without anything having occurred, during that long period to look forward to, but short period of retrospect, excepting that during those years Georgiana had presented her husband with a son and a daughter; and Adolphus, who was extremely fond of his little nephew and niece, and was never weary of fondling and romping with them during his leisure hours, at length began to think that it would be still more agreeable if he had a little household pet or two of his own to toss and tumble about, and to pull his hair, and smear his clothes with bread and butter and candy. He began to find his bachelor apartments extremely lonesome, for, of course, on commencing business, he had taken a bachelor's establishment of his own. He thought a wife would make and pour out the tea a good deal nicer than a cross old housekeeper, and that the solitary chamber where he sat of an evening would be much more cheerful if the spark-

ling black eyes of his cousin Juliet were gazing upon him, instead of the upturned green ones of the old gray cat, which lay purring at his feet; and that the music of her voice, and of her clear, ringing, silvery laugh, would be far more agreeable than the incessant tick, tick, of the French clock on the mantel-piece, varied only by the shrill tone of the hammer as it struck the hour.

He began to consider whether, after all, he was not a great fool to stand on such a ridiculous punctilio in a matter which affected his life's happiness, as the question of a few pounds more or less per annum, and almost wondered at the constancy of his fair cousin in remaining so true and unwavering in her attachment. He mentally cast up the probable amount of his professional income that year, and found that it was likely to be full £800, add to this the hundred pounds he received as his share of the Rosehill rents, and there was a clear £900, and then he came to the conclusion at once to write to his cousin—to confess that he had been a proud, conceited, stupid fellow, for delaying his happiness so long, and to beg her as soon as possible to put an end to his Robinson Crusoe-sort of existence, by becoming a shareholder with him in the sovereignty "of all he surveyed," for he believed it would be more exciting and pleasurable if there *was* some one near him occasionally "his right to dispute." So he set to work the very evening he had formed this determination, and wrote and dispatched his letter, only making one promise in his own mind as a salvo to his wounded conscience, viz.: that every penny of the rental of the Virginia estates should be settled on his cousin when she became his wife. By the mail which brought the letter to Miss Hawthorne, there arrived one from Adolphus to me, informing me of the desperate resolution at which he had arrived at last, and begging me to meet his aunt and cousin at New York, (for he had asked his aunt to accompany Juliet to England on the interesting occasion,) and to render them any aid that might be necessary, such as engaging

their passage in the steamer, seeing them safely on board, and so forth. A postscript informed that the writer was somewhat doubtful whether he had managed matters properly, and whether his cousin and aunt would accept the invitation. "Indeed," he added, "he was not sure that it was quite correct, after so long a courtship, to ask his cousin to come to England for the purpose of being married, and he had a strong suspicion that it would have been more advisable, if he could have visited the United States on the auspicious occasion, and there got the indissoluble knot properly fastened; considering his position, however, as a young barrister who had still to make his way in the world, this was impossible, as it would in fact be suicidal to his future professional prospects. This he had explained to his aunt and cousin, and he hoped that when they came to take matters into consideration, they would see at once, and acknowledge the policy of his conclusions."

By the following mail, however, a batch of letters arrived from Mr. Hughes, Adolphus, Georgiana and her husband, which put altogether another complexion on the prospects of Adolphus. The long vexed chancery suit had at length been suddenly, and as is usual in such cases, quite at an unexpected moment, decided in favor of the Fitzherberts, and Adolphus and his sister were in possession of the wealth and estates which were their birthright.

The letter from Adolphus was written in rather an excited tone. It appeared that after he had set his mind upon at once putting a termination to his protracted courtship, by running his neck into the noose of matrimony, the usual doubts and fears common upon such occasions, which had never troubled his mind before, had seized upon his imagination. The more he had reflected upon it, the more fearful he had become of offending his cousin by asking her to visit England for the purpose of being married, and he got into quite a fever of anxiety regarding it.

However, a few days after he had sent his letter, he

heard the good news of the decision of the chancery case, and he had immediately written me a sensible letter, begging me to see his cousin, and if any demur should arise about the propriety of her obeying his wishes, to tell her that in the course of another month; as soon as ever, in the present position of his affairs, he could possibly leave England, he would come to the United States *in propria personæ*, and marry her, and take her back to England as his wife.

Mrs. Lyman and Juliet were in New-York when I received the last batch of letters, for they had immediately left their residence in Virginia on receipt of Adolphus' first letter. Mrs. Lyman was glad enough of another opportunity of again visiting her native land; and Juliet—I won't say whether *she* was glad or not—although I have my own ideas regarding that matter; but although she professed to be a little offended at the dilatoriness of her lover, and put on a few maidenly airs, on being requested in this sultanlike manner to come and throw herself at the feet of her lord and master, as soon as he thought proper to call upon her to do so, she was a girl of sterling good sense as well as of high spirit, and she secretly acknowledged that he ought not to quit his practice, and therefore as he could not come to America to marry her, she determined to fulfil his desires and go to England to marry him. Besides, she loved him very much, and true love is willing to make all manner of excuses in favor of the object of its affections.

The ladies, therefore, as I have said, being in New York at the moment, and only waiting the sailing of the English steamer, I showed them the letter written by Adolphus. Of course they were very glad to hear of his good fortune, although I don't think it made a bit of difference in the feelings of Juliet. If anything, I think she would rather they had been married before this last stroke of good fortune had arrived. In fact, at first, on perusing Adolphus' letter, I fancied that Miss Hawthorne seemed half inclined to mount the same stilts that had so long deferred the marriage on the part of Adolphus,

and in her turn to put obstacles in the way, now that he was placed in so superior a position to herself with regard to worldly wealth; but women are always more sensible than men in these matters, and therefore she soon smiled at her own absurdity, and the two ladies having laughed together over the perturbation of the writer's mind, evident in the tone and wording of the letter, determined not to alter their arrangements, but to proceed at once to England, and set the hoping, doubting, fearing lover's heart at rest.

A day or two after the receipt of these letters, they sailed, and after the usual passage, arrived in England, and met Adolphus at Liverpool, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the steamer, for half hoping still, amidst his doubts and fears that his cousin and aunt would be on board, he had torn himself away from the multiplicity of business matters relative to the estates which had devolved upon him, telling Mr. Hughes that he must positively take the management of everything into his own hands, at least until he had seen or heard from his cousin.

Of course the meeting at Liverpool was a very pleasing and joyous one on all hands, and the happy party hurried up to London, where, a fortnight after, Adolphus and Juliet were married at Saint Pancras church.

But little more remains to be told. Shortly after the marriage of Adolphus, he and his sister, with Mr. Hughes, visited the property together, leaving Juliet under the care of Mr. Stanton, in order to make such arrangements for the future as were necessary and advisable; it was decided to erect a handsome manor house upon the most eligible site on the estates, Adolphus having determined to make Huntingdonshire his country residence, and indeed his chief place of abode. It was the first time that the brother and sister had seen the estates; for while they were not sure that they would ever legally belong to them, they had thought it advisable not to build up hopes that might never be realized by viewing and coveting the possession of the property.



It was on the occasion of this visit that they were first introduced to the reader in the preface to this narrative, although the reporters, as is too often the case with the gentlemen of the press when anxious to make the most of an item, made two or three grave errors; for instance, when Adolphus and his sister visited Hemingford, they were not visiting in the character of "new contestants," but as the owners of the property, and as to their having "taken their departure very mysteriously," the mystery existed only in the lively imagination of the reporter. And as the most beautiful portion of the estates, and the ground most adapted for the site of the proposed mansion house, was in the vicinity of the village of Hemingford Abbots, their visit was made the occasion of great rejoicing on the part of the simple and honest villagers; the church bells were rung merrily, and bonfires were lighted in the village, and when the party arrived, they found a large number of the village lads and lasses arrayed in their holiday clothing, accompanied by a great many of the village elders, marshalled in the road, who greeted them with repeated cheers and huzzas, and while the young folks scattered flowers and green branches before the carriage, the elders pressed forward in the hope of getting a smile or a nod, or word of kind acknowledgment from the new squire and his sister. I need not say that they succeeded. Adolphus and his sister were only too happy to thank the kindhearted villagers for this spontaneous and genial welcome, and they secretly determined that they, on their part, would do all in their power to render them happy, and to improve their condition. I don't know how many benevolent projects were talked of that evening after they had returned to the hotel in Huntingdon. Adolphus was to obtain the services of a first-rate model farmer from Scotland, in order to afford his tenants every means of improving the land by the practice of the most scientific and productive methods of farming; and schools, for both adults and children, were to be established immediately under the especial superintendence of Georgiana,

and I don't know what was to be done besides; while good Mr. Hughes entered heartily into all their projects. At all events, if the place had heretofore, in consequence of the heterogeneous method of its cultivation, borne more the aspect of a wilderness than that of a rich range of farms in a highly fertile county, they determined that henceforward

"The wilderness should be made to smile."

There was the usual assemblage of village gossippers in Dame Harris's cottage at Hemingford, that evening, and loud were the praises of a new squire and lady.

"They be the true gentlevoalks, at last, I reckon," said a sturdy villager. "What say'st thou, Dame Harris?"

"Eh, lad!" replied she who had been addressed, "I know'd that as soon as I clapped eyes upon 'em. There warn't no stuck up airs about them, like in yon other voalks, as was down here ayant, o' years gone by. Didst see how kind t' lady smiled and nodded her head to t' old voalks when they pressed up to t' carriage to wish 'em joy and welcome? and they do say as how they be a-going to build a foine house and live down here, i' these parts. I'm roight glad that my old eyes has seen 'em; for I be a getting old now, and that be the truth."

Such conversation as this was going on in the village; while in the hotel in the town, those whose praises the villagers were singing were, on their part, already studying what they could do to benefit the tenantry among whom they chiefly intended to reside, in future. It was a foreshadowing of mutual good feeling on the part of landlord and tenant, and of a mutual consideration of each other's interests, which, if it were more universal, would forever do away with all we hear of bitter feeling between the wealthier and the poorer classes. The world can never be equalized; such an idea is contrary to every law of nature, animate or inanimate—contrary



to the will of Heaven, hereafter; for there all are not, and will not be equal. "In my father's house are *many mansions*, I go to prepare a place for you," said our Saviour when on earth; thereby intimating that the place prepared for each would be suited to their condition there. Equality, therefore, cannot be essential to, but rather detrimental to happiness, for all will be happy in Heaven, although some will enjoy the higher favor of a place at God's right hand.

How monotonous would be the events of this earth! to what a condition of inanity should we speedily be reduced, were everything in nature equalized?—every spur to industry, every incentive to achieve honorable distinction, would speedily become dormant; but, thorough equality cannot be—the wealthy and the poor should each study the interests of the other, yet there should be no impassable social barrier—all should acknowledge their mutual dependence, and then, were this the case, mankind would cease to lament the unequal distribution of this world's goods. \* \* \*

Mr. Fitzherbert and Mrs. Stanton returned to London with Mr. Hughes in the course of a few days, having previously arranged that the contemplated improvements of the property should immediately go into operation, and there I shall leave them, wishing them, henceforward, all the happiness and prosperity they deserve.

A clause in the deed of gift provided that each and all of the children of Herbert Fitzherbert should share in the property to an equal degree, after his decease, and it was on account of this clause that it was necessary that Adolphus and his sister should jointly sue for the possession.

Thus, Mrs. Stanton and Mr. Fitzherbert found themselves the possessors of ample fortunes, that of Adolphus being still further increased by the American property, which had been the inheritance of Juliet. Of course they both gave up the practice of the law,

although neither regretted having studied the profession.

Mr. Hughes was formally installed as the law agent of both gentlemen, and the post, as he had formerly jocularly asserted, was a very lucrative one, and added considerably to his already ample and honorably earned income.

I have only, in concluding my narrative, to add a few words relative to one or two other individuals who have figured in it, and my task is ended.

Sister Maria, who had acted so generously to Georgiana, was sadly persecuted on account of the part she had played in effecting her escape, which, somehow or other, became known to her superiors, and at length, on hearing of the good fortune of the brother and sister, she fled to England. She had some time before abjured the Catholic faith, and was immediately installed as housekeeper in Mr. Stanton's family.

The Countess of Tivoli—late Abbess of St. Euphemia, as I have heretofore stated—died shortly after the paralytic seizure I have spoken of. Her last moments were soothed by her beloved niece, Lady Mary, now Countess of Bellona. Lady Mary still passes a great deal of her time in England, and her friendship for Georgiana continues unabated.

Jacob, I believe, still continues to lend money to Christians in distress, but is more than ever careful of the "securitish." As to old Mordecai, he died in his office, seated in the very spot where he has more than once been introduced to the reader. He had become fairly worn out with old age; driveling in second childhood, and lending money on security, in imagination, to the very last hour of his long spun out and sordid life.

Father Anselmo is now very aged and infirm, but the good old man still remains at Alton Castle, strict in the performance of his religious duties, and he is loved and respected by everybody in the neighborhood. Mr. Harley, the agent who acted for Gripes and Cheatem in Philadelphia, as recorded at the commencement of this

narrative, was recently convicted of forgery and transported for life. Poor Wilkins, the man of all work for the rascal Cheatem, was taken in hand by Mr. Hughes, after Cheatem had left England, he studied for an attorney, and succeeded to all Cheatem's honest legal practice, and a good deal more besides, while he refused to hold any further communication with Gripes. He is doing well, and only laments, poor fellow! that his wife is not living to share in his prosperity as she did in his adversity. Gripes died of apoplexy about two years ago. He had accumulated a large fortune, and despite his evil life, the tombstone erected over his remains tells the passer by of the many virtues of him whose bones lie mouldering beneath. Perhaps it is all the worse for him that his evil deeds were not visited with just punishment in this life; but as I have said, we should not judge our fellow man after death, and I will, therefore, forbear to do so.

And now, my readers, you who have followed me patiently through from the commencement of my narrative, to the end, I bid you, one and all, farewell, trusting that you will look with a lenient eye upon the many blemishes and demerits of my tale, and still hoping that you have received as much pleasure in reading as I have in inditing **THE LAWYER'S STORY.**

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