

ЭДВАРД БУЛЬВЕР-ЛИТТОН

**NIGHT AND
MORNING, VOLUME 3**

Эдвард Бульвер-Литтон

Night and Morning, Volume 3

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Содержание

Book III	5
CHAPTER I	5
CHAPTER II	11
CHAPTER III	15
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	20

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Night and Morning, Volume 3

Book III

CHAPTER I

*"The knight of arts and industry,
And his achievements fair."*

*THOMSON'S Castle of Indolence: Explanatory Verse to
Canto II.*

In a popular and respectable, but not very fashionable quartier in Paris, and in the tolerably broad and effective locale of the Rue —, there might be seen, at the time I now treat of, a curious-looking building, that jutted out semicircularly from the neighbouring shops, with plaster pilasters and compo ornaments. The *virtuosi* of the *quartier* had discovered that the building was constructed in imitation of an ancient temple in Rome; this erection, then fresh and new, reached only to the *entresol*. The pilasters were painted light green and gilded in the cornices, while, surmounting the architrave, were three little statues— one held a torch, another a bow, and a third a bag; they were therefore rumoured, I know not with what justice, to be the artistical representatives of Hymen, Cupid and Fortune.

On the door was neatly engraved, on a brass plate, the following inscription:

"MONSIEUR LOVE, ANGLAIS, A L'ENTRESOL."

And if you had crossed the threshold and mounted the stairs, and gained that mysterious story inhabited by Monsieur Love, you would have seen, upon another door to the right, another epigraph, informing those interested in the inquiry that the bureau, of M. Love was open daily from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon.

The office of M. Love—for office it was, and of a nature not unfrequently designated in the "*petites affiches*" of Paris—had been established about six months; and whether it was the popularity of the profession, or the shape of the shop, or the manners of M. Love himself, I cannot pretend to say, but certain it is that the Temple of Hymen—as M. Love classically termed it—had become exceedingly in vogue in the Faubourg St.—. It was rumoured that no less than nine marriages in the immediate neighbourhood had been manufactured at this fortunate office, and that they had all turned out happily except one, in which the bride being sixty, and the bridegroom twenty-four, there had been rumours of domestic dissension; but as the lady had been delivered,—I mean of her husband, who had drowned himself in the Seine, about a month after the ceremony, things had turned out in the long run better than might have been expected, and the widow was so little discouraged; that she had been seen to enter the office already—a circumstance that was greatly to the credit of Mr. Love.

Perhaps the secret of Mr. Love's success, and of the marked superiority of his establishment in rank and popularity over similar ones, consisted in the spirit and liberality with which the business was conducted. He seemed resolved to destroy all formality between parties who might desire to draw closer to each other, and he hit upon the lucky device of a *table d'hôte*, very well managed, and

held twice a-week, and often followed by a *soiree dansante*; so that, if they pleased, the aspirants to matrimonial happiness might become acquainted without *gene*. As he himself was a jolly, convivial fellow of much *savoir vivre*, it is astonishing how well he made these entertainments answer. Persons who had not seemed to take to each other in the first distant interview grew extremely enamoured when the corks of the champagne—an extra of course in the *abonnement*—bounced against the wall. Added to this, Mr. Love took great pains to know the tradesmen in his neighbourhood; and, what with his jokes, his appearance of easy circumstances, and the fluency with which he spoke the language, he became a universal favourite. Many persons who were uncommonly starched in general, and who professed to ridicule the bureau, saw nothing improper in dining at the *table d'hote*. To those who wished for secrecy he was said to be wonderfully discreet; but there were others who did not affect to conceal their discontent at the single state: for the rest, the entertainments were so contrived as never to shock the delicacy, while they always forwarded the suit.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and Mr. Love was still seated at dinner, or rather at dessert, with a party of guests. His apartments, though small, were somewhat gaudily painted and furnished, and his dining-room was decorated *a la Turque*. The party consisted—first, of a rich *epicier*, a widower, Monsieur Goupille by name, an eminent man in the Faubourg; he was in his grand climacteric, but still *belhomme*; wore a very well-made *peruque* of light auburn, with tight pantaloons, which contained a pair of very respectable calves; and his white neckcloth and his large gill were washed and got up with especial care. Next to Monsieur Goupille sat a very demure and very spare young lady of about two-and-thirty, who was said to have saved a fortune—Heaven knows how—in the family of a rich English *milord*, where she had officiated as governess; she called herself Mademoiselle Adele de Courval, and was very particular about the *de*, and very melancholy about her ancestors. Monsieur Goupille generally put his finger through his *peruque*, and fell away a little on his left pantaloons when he spoke to Mademoiselle de Courval, and Mademoiselle de Courval generally pecked at her bouquet when she answered Monsieur Goupille. On the other side of this young lady sat a fine-looking fair man—M. Sovolofski, a Pole, buttoned up to the chin, and rather threadbare, though uncommonly neat. He was flanked by a little fat lady, who had been very pretty, and who kept a boarding-house, or *pension*, for the English, she herself being English, though long established in Paris. Rumour said she had been gay in her youth, and dropped in Paris by a Russian nobleman, with a very pretty settlement, she and the settlement having equally expanded by time and season: she was called Madame Beavor. On the other side of the table was a red-headed Englishman, who spoke very little French; who had been told that French ladies were passionately fond of light hair; and who, having £2000. of his own, intended to quadruple that sum by a prudent marriage. Nobody knew what his family was, but his name was Higgins. His neighbour was an exceedingly tall, large-boned Frenchman, with a long nose and a red riband, who was much seen at Frascati's, and had served under Napoleon. Then came another lady, extremely pretty, very *piquante*, and very gay, but past the *premiere jeunesse*, who ogled Mr. Love more than she did any of his guests: she was called Rosalie Caumartin, and was at the head of a large *bon-bon* establishment; married, but her husband had gone four years ago to the Isle of France, and she was a little doubtful whether she might not be justly entitled to the privileges of a widow. Next to Mr. Love, in the place of honour, sat no less a person than the Vicomte de Vaudemont, a French gentleman, really well-born, but whose various excesses, added to his poverty, had not served to sustain that respect for his birth which he considered due to it. He had already been twice married; once to an Englishwoman, who had been decoyed by the title; by this lady, who died in childbed, he had one son; a fact which he sedulously concealed from the world of Paris by keeping the unhappy boy—who was now some eighteen or nineteen years old—a perpetual exile in England. Monsieur de Vaudemont did not wish to pass for more than thirty, and he considered that to produce a son of eighteen would be to make the lad a monster of ingratitude by giving the lie every hour to his own father! In spite of this precaution the Vicomte found great difficulty in getting a third wife—especially as he had no actual land and visible income; was, not

seamed, but ploughed up, with the small-pox; small of stature, and was considered more than *un peu bete*. He was, however, a prodigious dandy, and wore a lace frill and embroidered waistcoat. Mr. Love's vis-a-vis was Mr. Birnie, an Englishman, a sort of assistant in the establishment, with a hard, dry, parchment face, and a remarkable talent for silence. The host himself was a splendid animal; his vast chest seemed to occupy more space at the table than any four of his guests, yet he was not corpulent or unwieldy; he was dressed in black, wore a velvet stock very high, and four gold studs glittered in his shirt-front; he was bald to the crown, which made his forehead appear singularly lofty, and what hair he had left was a little greyish and curled; his face was shaved smoothly, except a close-clipped mustache; and his eyes, though small, were bright and piercing. Such was the party.

"These are the best *bon-bons* I ever ate," said Mr. Love, glancing at Madame Caumartin. "My fair friends, have compassion on the table of a poor bachelor."

"But you ought not to be a bachelor, Monsieur Lofe," replied the fair Rosalie, with an arch look; "you who make others marry, should set the example."

"All in good time," answered Mr. Love, nodding; "one serves one's customers to so much happiness that one has none left for one's self."

Here a loud explosion was heard. Monsieur Goupille had pulled one of the *bon-bon* crackers with Mademoiselle Adele.

"I've got the motto!—no—Monsieur has it: I'm always unlucky," said the gentle Adele.

The *epicier* solemnly unrolled the little slip of paper; the print was very small, and he longed to take out his spectacles, but he thought that would make him look old. However, he spelled through the motto with some difficulty:—

"Comme elle fait soumettre un coeur,
En refusant son doux hommage,
On peut traiter la coquette en vainqueur;
De la beauty modeste on cherit l'esclavage."

[The coquette, who subjugates a heart, yet refuses its tender homage, one may treat as a conqueror: of modest beauty we cherish the slavery.]

"I present it to Mademoiselle," said he, laying the motto solemnly in Adele's plate, upon a little mountain of chestnut-husks.

"It is very pretty," said she, looking down.

"It is very *a propos*," whispered the *epicier*, caressing the *peruque* a little too roughly in his emotion. Mr. Love gave him a kick under the table, and put his finger to his own bald head, and then to his nose, significantly. The intelligent *epicier* smoothed back the irritated *peruque*.

"Are you fond of *bon-bons*, Mademoiselle Adele? I have a very fine stock at home," said Monsieur Goupille. Mademoiselle Adele de Courval sighed: "*Helas!* they remind me of happier days, when I was a *petite* and my dear grandmamma took me in her lap and told me how she escaped the guillotine: she was an *emigree*, and you know her father was a marquis."

The *epicier* bowed and looked puzzled. He did not quite see the connection between the *bon-bons* and the guillotine. "You are *triste*, Monsieur," observed Madame Beavor, in rather a piqued tone, to the Pole, who had not said a word since the *roti*.

"Madame, an exile is always *triste*: I think of my *pauvre pays*."

"Bah!" cried Mr. Love. "Think that there is no exile by the side of a *belle dame*."

The Pole smiled mournfully.

"Pull it," said Madame Beavor, holding a cracker to the patriot, and turning away her face.

"Yes, madame; I wish it were a cannon in defence of *La Pologne*."

With this magniloquent aspiration, the gallant Sovolofski pulled lustily, and then rubbed his fingers, with a little grimace, observing that crackers were sometimes dangerous, and that the present combustible was *d'une force immense*.

"Helas! J'ai cru jusqu'a ce jour
Pouvoir triompher de l'amour,"

[Alas! I believed until to-day that I could triumph over love.]

said Madame Beavor, reading the motto. "What do you say to that?"

"Madame, there is no triumph for *La Pologne*!" Madame Beavor uttered a little peevish exclamation, and glanced in despair at her red-headed countryman. "Are you, too, a great politician, sir?" said she in English.

"No, mem!—I'm all for the ladies."

"What does he say?" asked Madame Caumartin.

"*Monsieur Higgins est tout pour les dames*."

"To be sure he is," cried Mr. Love; "all the English are, especially with that coloured hair; a lady who likes a passionate adorer should always marry a man with gold-coloured hair—always. What do *you* say, Mademoiselle Adele?"

"Oh, I like fair hair," said Mademoiselle, looking bashfully askew at Monsieur Goupille's peruke. "Grandmamma said her papa—the marquis—used yellow powder: it must have been very pretty."

"Rather *a la sucre d'orge*," remarked the *epicier*, smiling on the right side of his mouth, where his best teeth were. Mademoiselle de Courval looked displeased. "I fear you are a republican, Monsieur Goupille."

"I, Mademoiselle. No; I'm for the Restoration;" and again the *epicier* perplexed himself to discover the association of idea between republicanism and *sucre d'orge*.

"Another glass of wine. Come, another," said Mr. Love, stretching across the Vicomte to help Madame Canmartin.

"Sir," said the tall Frenchman with the riband, eying the *epicier* with great disdain, "you say you are for the Restoration—I am for the Empire —*Moi*!"

"No politics!" cried Mr. Love. "Let us adjourn to the salon."

The Vicomte, who had seemed supremely *ennuyé* during this dialogue, plucked Mr. Love by the sleeve as he rose, and whispered petulantly, "I do not see any one here to suit me, Monsieur Love—none of my rank."

"*Mon Dieu*!" answered Mr. Love: "*point d'argent point de Suisse*. I could introduce you to a duchess, but then the fee is high. There's Mademoiselle de Courval—she dates from the Carlovingsians."

"She is very like a boiled sole," answered the Vicomte, with a wry face.

"Still-what dower *has* she?"

"Forty thousand francs, and sickly," replied Mr. Love; "but she likes a tall man, and Monsieur Goupille is—"

"Tall men are never well made," interrupted the Vicomte, angrily; and he drew himself aside as Mr. Love, gallantly advancing, gave his arm to Madame Beavor, because the Pole had, in rising, folded both his own arms across his breast.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said Mr. Love to Madame Beavor, as they adjourned to the salon, "I don't think you manage that brave man well."

"*Ma foi, comme il est ennuyeux avec sa Pologne*," replied Madame Beavor, shrugging her shoulders.

"True; but he is a very fine-shaped man; and it is a comfort to think that one will have no rival but his country. Trust me, and encourage him a little more; I think he would suit you to a T."

Here the attendant engaged for the evening announced Monsieur and Madame Giraud; whereupon there entered a little—little couple, very fair, very plump, and very like each other. This was Mr. Love's show couple—his decoy ducks—his last best example of match-making; they had been married two months out of the bureau, and were the admiration of the neighbourhood for their conjugal affection. As they were now united, they had ceased to frequent the table d'hôte; but Mr. Love often invited them after the dessert, *pour encourager les autres*.

"My dear friends," cried Mr. Love, shaking each by the hand, "I am ravished to see you. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Monsieur and Madame Giraud. the happiest couple in Christendom;—if I had done nothing else in my life but bring them together I should not have lived in vain!"

The company eyed the objects of this eulogium with great attention.

"Monsieur, my prayer is to deserve my *bonheur*," said Monsieur Giraud.

"*Cher ange!*" murmured Madame: and the happy pair seated themselves next to each other.

Mr. Love, who was all for those innocent pastimes which do away with conventional formality and reserve, now proposed a game at "Hunt the Slipper," which was welcomed by the whole party, except the Pole and the Vicomte; though Mademoiselle Adele looked prudish, and observed to the *epicier*, "that Monsieur Lofe was so droll, but she should not have liked her *pauvre grandmaman* to see her."

The Vicomte had stationed himself opposite to Mademoiselle de Courval, and kept his eyes fixed on her very tenderly.

"Mademoiselle, I see, does not approve of such *bourgeois* diversions," said he.

"No, monsieur," said the gentle Adele. "But I think we must sacrifice our own tastes to those of the company."

"It is a very amiable sentiment," said the *epicier*.

"It is one attributed to grandmamma's papa, the Marquis de Courval. It has become quite a hackneyed remark since," said Adele.

"Come, ladies," said the joyous Rosalie; "I volunteer my slipper."

"*Asseyez-vous donc*," said Madame Beavor to the Pole. Have you no games of this sort in Poland?"

"Madame, *La Pologne* is no more," said the Pole. "But with the swords of her brave—"

"No swords here, if you please," said Mr. Love, putting his vast hands on the Pole's shoulder, and sinking him forcibly down into the circle now formed.

The game proceeded with great vigour and much laughter from Rosalie, Mr. Love, and Madame Beavor, especially whenever the last thumped the Pole with the heel of the slipper. Monsieur Giraud was always sure that Madame Giraud had the slipper about her, which persuasion on his part gave rise to many little endearments, which are always so innocent among married people. The Vicomte and the *epicier* were equally certain the slipper was with Mademoiselle Adele, who defended herself with much more energy than might have been supposed in one so gentle. The *epicier*, however, grew jealous of the attentions of his noble rival, and told him that he *_gene'_d* mademoiselle; whereupon the Vicomte called him an *impertinent*; and the tall Frenchman, with the riband, sprang up and said:

"Can I be of any assistance, gentlemen?"

Therewith Mr. Love, the great peacemaker, interposed, and reconciling the rivals, proposed to change the game to *Colin Maillard-Anglice*, "Blind Man's Buff." Rosalie clapped her hands, and offered herself to be blindfolded. The tables and chairs were cleared away; and Madame Beaver pushed the Pole into Rosalie's arms, who, having felt him about the face for some moments, guessed him to be the tall Frenchman. During this time Monsieur and Madame Giraud hid themselves behind the window-curtain.

"Amuse yourself, men ami," said Madame Beaver, to the liberated Pole.

"Ah, madame," sighed Monsieur Sovolofski, "how can I be gay! All my property confiscated by the Emperor of Russia! Has *La Pologne* no Brutus?"

"I think you are in love," said the host, clapping him on the back.

"Are you quite sure," whispered the Pole to the matchmaker, that Madame Beavor has *vingt mille livres de rentes*?"

"Not a *sous* less."

The Pole mused, and, glancing at Madame Beavor, said, "And yet, madame, your charming gaiety consoles me amidst all my suffering;" upon which Madame Beavor called him "flatterer," and rapped his knuckles with her fan; the latter proceeding the brave Pole did not seem to like, for he immediately buried his hands in his trousers' pockets.

The game was now at its meridian. Rosalie was uncommonly active, and flew about here and there, much to the harassment of the Pole, who repeatedly wiped his forehead, and observed that it was warm work, and put him in mind of the last sad battle for *La Pologne*. Monsieur Goupille, who had lately taken lessons in dancing, and was vain of his agility—mounted the chairs and tables, as Rosalie approached—with great grace and gravity. It so happened that, in these saltations, he ascended a stool near the curtain behind which Monsieur and Madame Giraud were ensconced. Somewhat agitated by a slight flutter behind the folds, which made him fancy, on the sudden panic, that Rosalie was creeping that way, the *epicier* made an abrupt pirouette, and the hook on which the curtains were suspended caught his left coat-tail,

"The fatal vesture left the unguarded side;"

just as he turned to extricate the garment from that dilemma, Rosalie sprang upon him, and naturally lifting her hands to that height where she fancied the human face divine, took another extremity of Monsieur Goupille's graceful frame thus exposed, by surprise.

"I don't know who this is. *Quelle drôle de visage!*" muttered Rosalie.

"*Mais*, madame," faltered Monsieur Goupille, looking greatly disconcerted.

The gentle Adele, who did not seem to relish this adventure, came to the relief of her wooer, and pinched Rosalie very sharply in the arm.

"That's not fair. But I will know who this is," cried Rosalie, angrily; "you sha'n't escape!"

A sudden and universal burst of laughter roused her suspicions—she drew back—and exclaiming, "*Mais quelle mauvaise plaisanterie; c'est trop fort!*" applied her fair hand to the place in dispute, with so hearty a good-will, that Monsieur Goupille uttered a dolorous cry, and sprang from the chair leaving the coat-tail (the cause of all his woe) suspended upon the hook.

It was just at this moment, and in the midst of the excitement caused by Monsieur Goupille's misfortune, that the door opened, and the attendant reappeared, followed by a young man in a large cloak.

The new-comer paused at the threshold, and gazed around him in evident surprise.

"Diable!" said Mr. Love, approaching, and gazing hard at the stranger. "Is it possible?—You are come at last? Welcome!"

"But," said the stranger, apparently still bewildered, "there is some mistake; you are not—"

"Yes, I am Mr. Love!—Love all the world over. How is our friend Gregg?—told you to address yourself to Mr. Love,—eh?—Mum!—Ladies and gentlemen, an acquisition to our party. Fine fellow, eh?—Five feet eleven without his shoes,—and young enough to hope to be thrice married before he dies. When did you arrive?"

"To-day."

And thus, Philip Morton and Mr. William Gawtrety met once more.

CHAPTER II

*"Happy the man who, void of care and strife,
In silken or in leathern purse retains
A splendid shilling !"*

—The Splendid Shilling.

*"And wherefore should they take or care for thought,
The unreasoning vulgar willingly obey,
And leaving toil and poverty behind.
Run forth by different ways, the blissful boon to find."*

WEST'S Education.

"Poor, boy! your story interests me. The events are romantic, but the moral is practical, old, everlasting—life, boy, life. Poverty by itself is no such great curse; that is, if it stops short of starving. And passion by itself is a noble thing, sir; but poverty and passion together—poverty and feeling—poverty and pride—the poverty one is not born to,—but falls into;—and the man who ousts you out of your easy-chair, kicking you with every turn he takes, as he settles himself more comfortably—why there's no romance in that—hard every-day life, sir! Well, well:—so after your brother's letter you resigned yourself to that fellow Smith."

"No; I gave him my money, not my soul. I turned from his door, with a few shillings that he himself thrust into my hand, and walked on—I cared not whither—out of the town, into the fields—till night came; and then, just as I suddenly entered on the high-road, many miles away, the moon rose; and I saw, by the hedge-side, something that seemed like a corpse; it was an old beggar, in the last state of raggedness, disease, and famine. He had laid himself down to die. I shared with him what I had, and helped him to a little inn. As he crossed the threshold, he turned round and blessed me. Do you know, the moment I heard that blessing a stone seemed rolled away from my heart? I said to myself, 'What then! even I can be of use to some one; and I am better off than that old man, for I have youth and health.' As these thoughts stirred in me, my limbs, before heavy with fatigue, grew light; a strange kind of excitement seized me. I ran on gaily beneath the moonlight that smiled over the crisp, broad road. I felt as if no house, not even a palace, were large enough for me that night. And when, at last, wearied out, I crept into a wood, and laid myself down to sleep, I still murmured to myself, 'I have youth and health.' But, in the morning, when I rose, I stretched out my arms, and missed my brother! . . . In two or three days I found employment with a farmer; but we quarrelled after a few weeks; for once he wished to strike me; and somehow or other I could work, but not serve. Winter had begun when we parted.—Oh, such a winter!—Then—then I knew what it was to be houseless. How I lived for some months—if to live it can be called—it would pain you to hear, and humble me to tell. At last, I found myself again in London; and one evening, not many days since, I resolved at last—for nothing else seemed left, and I had not touched food for two days—to come to you."

"And why did that never occur to you before?"!

"Because," said Philip, with a deep blush,—"because I trembled at the power over my actions and my future life that I was to give to one, whom I was to bless as a benefactor, yet distrust as a guide."

"Well," said Love, or Gawtreay, with a singular mixture of irony and compassion in his voice; "and it was hunger, then, that terrified you at last even more than I?"

"Perhaps hunger—or perhaps rather the reasoning that comes from hunger. I had not, I say, touched food for two days; and I was standing on that bridge, from which on one side you see the palace of a head of the Church, on the other the towers of the Abbey, within which the men I have read of in history lie buried. It was a cold, frosty evening, and the river below looked bright with the lamps and stars. I leaned, weak and sickening, against the wall of the bridge; and in one of the arched recesses beside me a cripple held out his hat for pence. I envied him!— he had a livelihood; he was inured to it, perhaps bred to it; he had no shame. By a sudden impulse, I, too, turned abruptly round—held out my hand to the first passenger, and started at the shrillness of my own voice, as it cried 'Charity.'"

Gawtrety threw another log on the fire, looked complacently round the comfortable room, and rubbed his hands. The young man continued,—

"'You should be ashamed of yourself—I've a great mind to give you to the police,' was the answer, in a pert and sharp tone. I looked up, and saw the livery my father's menials had worn. I had been begging my bread from Robert Beaufort's lackey! I said nothing; the man went on his business on tiptoe, that the mud might not splash above the soles of his shoes. Then, thoughts so black that they seemed to blot out every star from the sky—thoughts I had often wrestled against, but to which I now gave myself up with a sort of mad joy—seized me: and I remembered you. I had still preserved the address you gave me; I went straight to the house. Your friend, on naming you, received me kindly, and without question placed food before me—pressed on me clothing and money— procured me a passport—gave me your address—and now I am beneath your roof. Gawtrety, I know nothing yet of the world but the dark side of it. I know not what to deem you—but as you alone have been kind to me, so it is to your kindness rather than your aid, that I now cling—your kind words and kind looks—yet—" he stopped short, and breathed hard.

"Yet you would know more of me. Faith, my boy, I cannot tell you more at this moment. I believe, to speak fairly, I don't live exactly within the pale of the law. But I'm not a villain! I never plundered my friend and called it play!—I never murdered my friend and called it honour!—I never seduced my friend's wife and called it gallantry!" As Gawtrety said this, he drew the words out, one by one, through his grinded teeth, paused and resumed more gaily: "I struggle with Fortune; *voilà tout*! I am not what you seem to suppose—not exactly a swindler, certainly not a robber! But, as I before told you, I am a charlatan, so is every man who strives to be richer or greater than he is.

"I, too, want kindness as much as you do. My bread and my cup are at your service. I will try and keep you unsullied, even by the clean dirt that now and then sticks to me. On the other hand, youth, my young friend, has no right to play the censor; and you must take me as you take the world, without being over-scrupulous and dainty. My present vocation pays well; in fact, I am beginning to lay by. My real name and past life are thoroughly unknown, and as yet unsuspected, in this quartier; for though I have seen much of Paris, my career hitherto has passed in other parts of the city;— and for the rest, own that I am well disguised! What a benevolent air this bald forehead gives me— eh? True," added Gawtrety, somewhat more seriously, "if I saw how you could support yourself in a broader path of life than that in which I pick out my own way, I might say to you, as a gay man of fashion might say to some sober stripling— nay, as many a dissolute father says (or ought to say) to his son, 'It is no reason you should be a sinner, because I am not a saint.' In a word, if you were well off in a respectable profession, you might have safer acquaintances than myself. But, as it is, upon my word as a plain man, I don't see what you can do better." Gawtrety made this speech with so much frankness and ease, that it seemed greatly to relieve the listener, and when he wound up with, "What say you? In fine, my life is that of a great schoolboy, getting into scrapes for the fun of it, and fighting his way out as he best can!—Will you see how you like it?" Philip, with a confiding and grateful impulse, put his hand into Gawtrety's. The host shook it cordially, and, without saying another word, showed his guest into a little cabinet where there was a sofa-bed, and they parted for the night. The

new life upon which Philip Morton entered was so odd, so grotesque, and so amusing, that at his age it was, perhaps, natural that he should not be clear-sighted as to its danger.

William Gawtreys was one of those men who are born to exert a certain influence and ascendancy wherever they may be thrown; his vast strength, his redundant health, had a power of themselves—a moral as well as physical power. He naturally possessed high animal spirits, beneath the surface of which, however, at times, there was visible a certain undercurrent of malignity and scorn. He had evidently received a superior education, and could command at will the manner of a man not unfamiliar with a politer class of society. From the first hour that Philip had seen him on the top of the coach on the R— road, this man had attracted his curiosity and interest; the conversation he had heard in the churchyard, the obligations he owed to Gawtreys in his escape from the officers of justice, the time afterwards passed in his society till they separated at the little inn, the rough and hearty kindliness Gawtreys had shown him at that period, and the hospitality extended to him now,—all contributed to excite his fancy, and in much, indeed very much, entitled this singular person to his gratitude. Morton, in a word, was fascinated; this man was the only friend he had made. I have not thought it necessary to detail to the reader the conversations that had taken place between them, during that passage of Morton's life when he was before for some days Gawtreys's companion; yet those conversations had sunk deep in his mind. He was struck, and almost awed, by the profound gloom which lurked under Gawtreys's broad humour—a gloom, not of temperament, but of knowledge. His views of life, of human justice and human virtue, were (as, to be sure, is commonly the case with men who have had reason to quarrel with the world) dreary and despairing; and Morton's own experience had been so sad, that these opinions were more influential than they could ever have been with the happy. However in this, their second reunion, there was a greater gaiety than in their first; and under his host's roof Morton insensibly, but rapidly, recovered something of the early and natural tone of his impetuous and ardent spirits. Gawtreys himself was generally a boon companion; their society, if not select, was merry. When their evenings were disengaged, Gawtreys was fond of haunting cafes and theatres, and Morton was his companion; Birnie (Mr. Gawtreys's partner) never accompanied them. Refreshed by this change of life, the very person of this young man regained its bloom and vigour, as a plant, removed from some choked atmosphere and unwholesome soil, where it had struggled for light and air, expands on transplanting; the graceful leaves burst from the long- drooping boughs, and the elastic crest springs upward to the sun in the glory of its young prime. If there was still a certain fiery sternness in his aspect, it had ceased, at least, to be haggard and savage, it even suited the character of his dark and expressive features. He might not have lost the something of the tiger in his fierce temper, but in the sleek hues and the sinewy symmetry of the frame he began to put forth also something of the tiger's beauty.

Mr. Birnie did not sleep in the house, he went home nightly to a lodging at some little distance. We have said but little about this man, for, to all appearance, there was little enough to say; he rarely opened his own mouth except to Gawtreys, with whom Philip often observed him engaged in whispered conferences, to which he was not admitted. His eye, however, was less idle than his lips; it was not a bright eye: on the contrary, it was dull, and, to the unobservant, lifeless, of a pale blue, with a dim film over it—the eye of a vulture; but it had in it a calm, heavy, stealthy watchfulness, which inspired Morton with great distrust and aversion. Mr. Birnie not only spoke French like a native, but all his habits, his gestures, his tricks of manner, were, French; not the French of good society, but more idiomatic, as it were, and popular. He was not exactly a vulgar person, he was too silent for that, but he was evidently of low extraction and coarse breeding; his accomplishments were of a mechanical nature; he was an extraordinary arithmetician, he was a very skilful chemist, and kept a laboratory at his lodgings—he mended his own clothes and linen with incomparable neatness. Philip suspected him of blacking his own shoes, but that was prejudice. Once he found Morton sketching horses' heads—*pour se desennuyer*; and he made some short criticisms on the drawings, which showed

him well acquainted with the art. Philip, surprised, sought to draw him into conversation; but Birnie eluded the attempt, and observed that he had once been an engraver.

Gawtreys himself did not seem to know much of the early life of this person, or at least he did not seem to like much to talk of him. The footstep of Mr. Birnie was gliding, noiseless, and catlike; he had no sociality in him—enjoyed nothing—drank hard—but was never drunk. Somehow or other, he had evidently over Gawtreys an influence little less than that which Gawtreys had over Morton, but it was of a different nature: Morton had conceived an extraordinary affection for his friend, while Gawtreys seemed secretly to dislike Birnie, and to be glad whenever he quitted his presence. It was, in truth, Gawtreys's custom when Birnie retired for the night, to rub his hands, bring out the punchbowl, squeeze the lemons, and while Philip, stretched on the sofa, listened to him, between sleep and waking, to talk on for the hour together, often till daybreak, with that bizarre mixture of knavery and feeling, drollery and sentiment, which made the dangerous charm of his society.

One evening as they thus sat together, Morton, after listening for some time to his companion's comments on men and things, said abruptly,—

"Gawtreys! there is so much in you that puzzles me, so much which I find it difficult to reconcile with your present pursuits, that, if I ask no indiscreet confidence, I should like greatly to hear some account of your early life. It would please me to compare it with my own; when I am your age, I will then look back and see what I owed to your example."

"My early life! well—you shall hear it. It will put you on your guard, I hope, betimes against the two rocks of youth—love and friendship." Then, while squeezing the lemon into his favourite beverage, which Morton observed he made stronger than usual, Gawtreys thus commenced:

THE HISTORY OF A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING

CHAPTER III

*"All his success must on himself depend,
He had no money, counsel, guide, or friend;
With spirit high John learned the world to brave,
And in both senses was a ready knave."*

—CRABBE.

"My grandfather sold walking-sticks and umbrellas in the little passage by Exeter 'Change; he was a man of genius and speculation. As soon as he had scraped together a little money, he lent it to some poor devil with a hard landlord, at twenty per cent., and made him take half the loan in umbrellas or bamboos. By these means he got his foot into the ladder, and climbed upward and upward, till, at the age of forty, he had amassed L5,000. He then looked about for a wife. An honest trader in the Strand, who dealt largely in cotton prints, possessed an only daughter; this young lady had a legacy, from a great-aunt, of L3,220., with a small street in St. Giles's, where the tenants paid weekly (all thieves or rogues-all, so their rents were sure). Now my grandfather conceived a great friendship for the father of this young lady; gave him a hint as to a new pattern in spotted cottons; enticed him to take out a patent, and lent him L700. for the speculation; applied for the money at the very moment cottons were at their worst, and got the daughter instead of the money,—by which exchange, you see, he won L2,520., to say nothing of the young lady. My grandfather then entered into partnership with the worthy trader, carried on the patent with spirit, and begat two sons. As he grew older, ambition seized him; his sons should be gentlemen—one was sent to College, the other put into a marching regiment. My grandfather meant to die worth a plum; but a fever he caught in visiting his tenants in St. Giles's prevented him, and he only left L20,000. equally divided between the sons. My father, the College man" (here Gawtreys paused a moment, took a large draught of the punch, and resumed with a visible effort)—"my father, the College man, was a person of rigid principles— bore an excellent character—had a great regard for the world. He married early and respectably. I am the sole fruit of that union; he lived soberly, his temper was harsh and morose, his home gloomy; he was a very severe father, and my mother died before I was ten years old. When I was fourteen, a little old Frenchman came to lodge with us; he had been persecuted under the old *regime* for being a philosopher; he filled my head with odd crotchets which, more or less, have stuck there ever since. At eighteen I was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge. My father was rich enough to have let me go up in the higher rank of a pensioner, but he had lately grown avaricious; he thought that I was extravagant; he made me a sizar, perhaps to spite me. Then, for the first time, those inequalities in life which the Frenchman had dinned into my ears met me practically. A sizar! another name for a dog! I had such strength, health, and spirits, that I had more life in my little finger than half the fellow-commoners—genteel, spindle-shanked striplings, who might have passed for a collection of my grandfather's walking-canes—bad in their whole bodies. And I often think," continued Gawtreys, "that health and spirits have a great deal to answer for! When we are young we so far resemble savages who are Nature's young people—that we attach prodigious value to physical advantages. My feats of strength and activity—the clods I thrashed—and the railings I leaped—and the boat-races I won—are they not written in the chronicle of St. John's? These achievements inspired me with an extravagant sense of my own superiority; I could not but despise the rich fellows whom I could have blown down with a sneeze. Nevertheless, there was an impassable barrier between me and them—a sizar was not a proper associate for the favourites of fortune! But there was one young man, a year younger myself, of high birth, and the heir to considerable wealth, who did not regard me with the same supercilious insolence as the rest; his very rank, perhaps, made him indifferent to the little conventional formalities which influence persons

who cannot play at football with this round world; he was the wildest youngster in the university—lamp-breaker—tandem-driver—mob-fighter—a very devil in short—clever, but not in the reading line—small and slight, but brave as a lion. Congenial habits made us intimate, and I loved him like a brother—better than a brother—as a dog loves his master. In all our rows I covered him with my body. He had but to say to me, 'Leap into the water,' and I would not have stopped to pull off my coat. In short, I loved him as a proud man loves one who stands betwixt him and contempt,—as an affectionate man loves one who stands between him and solitude. To cut short a long story: my friend, one dark night, committed an outrage against discipline, of the most unpardonable character. There was a sanctimonious, grave old fellow of the College, crawling home from a tea-party; my friend and another of his set seized, blindfolded, and handcuffed this poor wretch, carried him, *vi et armis*, back to the house of an old maid whom he had been courting for the last ten years, fastened his pigtail (he wore a long one) to the knocker, and so left him. You may imagine the infernal hubbub which his attempts to extricate himself caused in the whole street; the old maid's old maidservant, after emptying on his head all the vessels of wrath she could lay her hand to, screamed, 'Rape and murder!' The proctor and his bull-dogs came up, released the prisoner, and gave chase to the delinquents, who had incautiously remained near to enjoy the sport. The night was dark and they reached the College in safety, but they had been tracked to the gates. For this offence I was expelled."

"Why, you were not concerned in it?" said Philip.

"No; but I was suspected and accused. I could have got off by betraying the true culprits, but my friend's father was in public life—a stern, haughty old statesman; my friend was mortally afraid of him—the only person he was afraid of. If I had too much insisted on my innocence, I might have set inquiry on the right track. In fine, I was happy to prove my friendship for him. He shook me most tenderly by the hand on parting, and promised never to forget my generous devotion. I went home in disgrace: I need not tell you what my father said to me: I do not think he ever loved me from that hour. Shortly after this my uncle, George Gawtreys, the captain, returned from abroad; he took a great fancy to me, and I left my father's house (which had grown insufferable) to live with him. He had been a very handsome man—a gay spendthrift; he had got through his fortune, and now lived on his wits—he was a professed gambler. His easy temper, his lively humour, fascinated me; he knew the world well; and, like all gamblers, was generous when the dice were lucky,—which, to tell you the truth, they generally were, with a man who had no scruples. Though his practices were a little suspected, they had never been discovered. We lived in an elegant apartment, mixed familiarly with men of various ranks, and enjoyed life extremely. I brushed off my college rust, and conceived a taste for expense: I knew not why it was, but in my new existence every one was kind to me; and I had spirits that made me welcome everywhere. I was a scamp—but a frolicsome scamp—and that is always a popular character. As yet I was not dishonest, but saw dishonesty round me, and it seemed a very pleasant, jolly mode of making money; and now I again fell into contact with the young heir. My college friend was as wild in London as he had been at Cambridge; but the boy-ruffian, though not then twenty years of age, had grown into the man-villain."

Here Gawtreys paused, and frowned darkly.

"He had great natural parts, this young man—much wit, readiness, and cunning, and he became very intimate with my uncle. He learned of him how to play the dice, and a pack the cards—he paid him £1,000. for the knowledge!"

"How! a cheat? You said he was rich."

"His father was very rich, and he had a liberal allowance, but he was very extravagant; and rich men love gain as well as poor men do! He had no excuse but the grand excuse of all vice—SELFISHNESS. Young as he was he became the fashion, and he fattened upon the plunder of his equals, who desired the honour of his acquaintance. Now, I had seen my uncle cheat, but I had never imitated his example; when the man of fashion cheated, and made a jest of his earnings and my scruples—when I saw him courted, flattered, honoured, and his acts unsuspected, because his

connections embraced half the peerage, the temptation grew strong, but I still resisted it. However, my father always said I was born to be a good-for-nothing, and I could not escape my destiny. And now I suddenly fell in love—you don't know what that is yet—so much the better for you. The girl was beautiful, and I thought she loved me—perhaps she did—but I was too poor, so her friends said, for marriage. We courted, as the saying is, in the meanwhile. It was my love for her, my wish to deserve her, that made me iron against my friend's example. I was fool enough to speak to him of Mary—to present him to her—this ended in her seduction." (Again Gawtrety paused, and breathed hard.) "I discovered the treachery—I called out the seducer—he sneered, and refused to fight the low-born adventurer. I struck him to the earth—and then we fought. I was satisfied by a ball through my side! but he," added Gawtrety, rubbing his hands, and with a vindictive chuckle,—“He was a cripple for life! When I recovered I found that my foe, whose sick-chamber was crowded with friends and comforters, had taken advantage of my illness to ruin my reputation. He, the swindler, accused me of his own crime: the equivocal character of my uncle confirmed the charge. Him, his own high-born pupil was enabled to unmask, and his disgrace was visited on me. I left my bed to find my uncle (all disguise over) an avowed partner in a hell, and myself blasted alike in name, love, past, and future. And then, Philip—then I commenced that career which I have trodden since—the prince of good-fellows and good-for-nothings, with ten thousand aliases, and as many strings to my bow. Society cast me off when I was innocent. Egad, I have had my revenge on society since!—Ho! ho! ho!"

The laugh of this man had in it a moral infection. There was a sort of glorying in its deep tone; it was not the hollow hysteric of shame and despair—it spoke a sanguine joyousness! William Gawtrety was a man whose animal constitution had led him to take animal pleasure in all things: he had enjoyed the poisons he had lived on.

"But your father—surely your father—"

"My father," interrupted Gawtrety, "refused me the money (but a small sum) that, once struck with the strong impulse of a sincere penitence, I begged of him, to enable me to get an honest living in a humble trade. His refusal soured the penitence—it gave me an excuse for my career and conscience grapples to an excuse as a drowning wretch to a straw. And yet this hard father—this cautious, moral, money-loving man, three months afterwards, suffered a rogue—almost a stranger—to decoy him into a speculation that promised to bring him fifty per cent. He invested in the traffic of usury what had sufficed to save a hundred such as I am from perdition, and he lost it all. It was nearly his whole fortune; but he lives and has his luxuries still: he cannot speculate, but he can save: he cared not if I starved, for he finds an hourly happiness in starving himself."

"And your friend," said Philip, after a pause in which his young sympathies went dangerously with the excuses for his benefactor; "what has become of him, and the poor girl?"

"My friend became a great man; he succeeded to his father's peerage—a very ancient one—and to a splendid income. He is living still. Well, you shall hear about the poor girl! We are told of victims of seduction dying in a workhouse or on a dunghill, penitent, broken-hearted, and uncommonly ragged and sentimental. It may be a frequent case, but it is not the worst. It is worse, I think, when the fair, penitent, innocent, credulous dupe becomes in her turn the deceiver—when she catches vice from the breath upon which she has hung—when she ripens, and mellows, and rots away into painted, blazing, staring, wholesale harlotry—when, in her turn, she ruins warm youth with false smiles and long bills—and when worse—worse than all—when she has children, daughters perhaps, brought up to the same trade, cooped, plumper, for some hoary lecher, without a heart in their bosoms, unless a balance for weighing money may be called a heart. Mary became this; and I wish to Heaven she had rather died in an hospital! Her lover polluted her soul as well as her beauty: he found her another lover when he was tired of her. When she was at the age of thirty-six I met her in Paris, with a daughter of sixteen. I was then flush with money, frequenting salons, and playing the part of a fine gentleman. She did not know me at first; and she sought my acquaintance. For you must know, my young friend," said Gawtrety, abruptly breaking off the thread of his narrative, "that I am not altogether the low

dog you might suppose in seeing me here. At Paris—ah! you don't know Paris— there is a glorious ferment in society in which the dregs are often uppermost! I came here at the Peace, and here have I resided the greater part of each year ever since. The vast masses of energy and life, broken up by the great thaw of the Imperial system, floating along the tide, are terrible icebergs for the vessel of the state. Some think Napoleonism over—its effects are only begun. Society is shattered from one end to the other, and I laugh at the little rivets by which they think to keep it together.

[This passage was written at a period when the dynasty of Louis Philippe seemed the most assured, and Napoleonism was indeed considered extinct.]

"But to return. Paris, I say, is the atmosphere for adventurers—new faces and new men are so common here that they excite no impertinent inquiry, it is so usual to see fortunes made in a day and spent in a month; except in certain circles, there is no walking round a man's character to spy out where it wants piercing! Some lean Greek poet put lead in his pockets to prevent being blown away;—put gold in your pockets, and at Paris you may defy the sharpest wind in the world,—yea, even the breath of that old AEolus—Scandal! Well, then, I had money—no matter how I came by it—and health, and gaiety; and I was well received in the coteries that exist in all capitals, but mostly in France, where pleasure is the cement that joins many discordant atoms. Here, I say, I met Mary and her daughter, by my old friend—the daughter, still innocent, but, sacra! in what an element of vice! We knew each other's secrets, Mary and I, and kept them: she thought me a greater knave than I was, and she intrusted to me her intention of selling her child to a rich English marquis. On the other hand, the poor girl confided to me her horror of the scenes she witnessed and the snares that surrounded her. What do you think preserved her pure from all danger? Bah! you will never guess! It was partly because, if example corrupts, it as often deters, but principally because she loved. A girl who loves one man purely has about her an amulet which defies the advances of the profligate. There was a handsome young Italian, an artist, who frequented the house—he was the man. I had to choose, then, between mother and daughter: I chose the last."

Philip seized hold of Gawtreys hand, grasped it warmly, and the good-for-nothing continued—

"Do you know, that I loved that girl as well as I had ever loved the mother, though in another way; she was what I fancied the mother to be; still more fair, more graceful, more winning, with a heart as full of love as her mother's had been of vanity. I loved that child as if she had been my own daughter. I induced her to leave her mother's house—I secreted her—I saw her married to the man she loved—I gave her away, and saw no more of her for several months."

"Why?"

"Because I spent them in prison! The young people could not live upon air; I gave them what I had, and in order to do more I did something which displeased the police; I narrowly escaped that time; but I am popular—very popular, and with plenty of witnesses, not over-scrupulous, I got off! When I was released, I would not go to see them, for my clothes were ragged: the police still watched me, and I would not do them harm in the world! Ay, poor wretches! they struggled so hard: he could get very little by his art, though, I believe, he was a cleverish fellow at it, and the money I had given them could not last for ever. They lived near the Champs Elysees, and at night I used to steal out and look at them through the window. They seemed so happy, and so handsome, and so good; but he looked sickly, and I saw that, like all Italians, he languished for his own warm climate. But man is born to act as well as to contemplate," pursued Gawtreys, changing his tone into the allegro; "and I was soon driven into my old ways, though in a lower line. I went to London, just to give my reputation an airing, and when I returned, pretty flush again, the poor Italian was dead, and Fanny was a widow, with one boy, and enceinte with a second child. So then I sought her again, for her mother had found her out, and was at her with her devilish kindness; but Heaven was merciful, and took her away from both of us: she died in giving birth to a girl, and her last words were uttered to me, imploring me—the adventurer—the charlatan—the good-for-nothing—to keep her child from the clutches of her

own mother. Well, sir, I did what I could for both the children; but the boy was consumptive, like his father, and sleeps at Pere-la-Chaise. The girl is here—you shall see her some day. Poor Fanny! if ever the devil will let me, I shall reform for her sake. Meanwhile, for her sake I must get grist for the mill. My story is concluded, for I need not tell you all of my pranks—of all the parts I have played in life. I have never been a murderer, or a burglar, or a highway robber, or what the law calls a thief. I can only say, as I said before, I have lived upon my wits, and they have been a tolerable capital on the whole. I have been an actor, a money-lender, a physician, a professor of animal magnetism (that was lucrative till it went out of fashion, perhaps it will come in again); I have been a lawyer, a house-agent, a dealer in curiosities and china; I have kept a hotel; I have set up a weekly newspaper; I have seen almost every city in Europe, and made acquaintance with some of its gaols; but a man who has plenty of brains generally falls on his legs."

"And your father?" said Philip; and here he spoke to Gawtrety of the conversation he had overheard in the churchyard, but on which a scruple of natural delicacy had hitherto kept him silent.

"Well, now," said his host, while a slight blush rose to his cheeks, "I will tell you, that though to my father's sternness and avarice I attribute many of my faults, I yet always had a sort of love for him; and when in London I accidentally heard that he was growing blind, and living with an artful old jade of a housekeeper, who might send him to rest with a dose of magnesia the night after she had coaxed him to make a will in her favour. I sought him out—and—but you say you heard what passed."

"Yes; and I heard him also call you by name, when it was too late, and I saw the tears on his cheeks."

"Did you? Will you swear to that?" exclaimed Gawtrety, with vehemence: then, shading his brow with his band, he fell into a reverie that lasted some moments.

"If anything happen to me, Philip," he said, abruptly, "perhaps he may yet be a father to poor Fanny; and if he takes to her, she will repay him for whatever pain I may, perhaps, have cost him. Stop! now I think of it, I will write down his address for you—never forget it—there! It is time to go to bed."

Gawtrety's tale made a deep impression on Philip. He was too young, too inexperienced, too much borne away by the passion of the narrator, to see that Gawtrety had less cause to blame Fate than himself. True, he had been unjustly implicated in the disgrace of an unworthy uncle, but he had lived with that uncle, though he knew him to be a common cheat; true, he had been betrayed by a friend, but he had before known that friend to be a man without principle or honour. But what wonder that an ardent boy saw nothing of this—saw only the good heart that had saved a poor girl from vice, and sighed to relieve a harsh and avaricious parent? Even the hints that Gawtrety unawares let fall of practices scarcely covered by the jovial phrase of "a great schoolboy's scrapes," either escaped the notice of Philip, or were charitably construed by him, in the compassion and the ignorance of a young, hasty, and grateful heart.

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