GEORGE MEREDITH

EVAN HARRINGTON. COMPLETE

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Evan Harrington – Complete:

Содержание

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CHAPTER I. ABOVE BUTTONS

Long after the hours when tradesmen are in the habit of commencing business, the shutters of a certain shop in the town of Lymport-on-the-Sea remained significantly closed, and it became known that death had taken Mr. Melchisedec Harrington, and struck one off the list of living tailors. The demise of a respectable member of this class does not ordinarily create a profound sensation. He dies, and his equals debate who is to be his successor: while the rest of them who have come in contact with him, very probably hear nothing of his great launch and final adieu till the winding up of cash-accounts; on which occasions we may augur that he is not often blessed by one or other of the two great parties who subdivide this universe. In the case of Mr. Melchisedec it was otherwise. This had been a grand man, despite his calling, and in the teeth of opprobrious epithets against his craft. To be both generally blamed, and generally liked, evinces a peculiar construction of mortal. Mr. Melchisedec, whom people in private called the great Mel, had been at once the sad dog of Lymport, and the pride of the town. He was a tailor, and he kept horses; he was a tailor, and he had

gallant adventures; he was a tailor, and he shook hands with his customers. Finally, he was a tradesman, and he never was known to have sent in a bill. Such a personage comes but once in a generation, and, when he goes, men miss the man as well as their money.

That he was dead, there could be no doubt. Kilne, the publican opposite, had seen Sally, one of the domestic servants, come out of the house in the early morning and rush up the street to the doctor's, tossing her hands; and she, not disinclined to dilute her grief, had, on her return, related that her master was then at his last gasp, and had refused, in so many words, to swallow the doctor.

"'I won't swallow the doctor!" he says, "I won't swallow the doctor!'" Sally moaned. "'I never touched him," he says, "and I never will.'"

Kilne angrily declared, that in his opinion, a man who rejected medicine in extremity, ought to have it forced down his throat: and considering that the invalid was pretty deeply in Kilne's debt, it naturally assumed the form of a dishonest act on his part; but Sally scornfully dared any one to lay hand on her master, even for his own good. 'For,' said she, 'he's got his eyes awake, though he do lie so helpless. He marks ye!'

'Ah! ah!' Kilne sniffed the air. Sally then rushed back to her duties.

'Now, there 's a man!' Kilne stuck his hands in his pockets and began his meditation: which, however, was cut short by the

approach of his neighbour Barnes, the butcher, to whom he confided what he had heard, and who ejaculated professionally, 'Obstinate as a pig!' As they stood together they beheld Sally, a figure of telegraph, at one of the windows, implying that all was just over.

'Amen!' said Barnes, as to a matter-of-fact affair.

Some minutes after, the two were joined by Grossby, the confectioner, who listened to the news, and observed:

'Just like him! I'd have sworn he'd never take doctor's stuff'; and, nodding at Kilne, 'liked his medicine best, eh?'

'Had a-hem!—good lot of it,' muttered Kilne, with a suddenly serious brow.

'How does he stand on your books?' asked Barnes.

Kilne shouldered round, crying: 'Who the deuce is to know?'

'I don't,' Grossby sighed. 'In he comes with his "Good morning, Grossby, fine day for the hunt, Grossby," and a ten-pound note. "Have the kindness to put that down in my favour, Grossby." And just as I am going to say, "Look here,—this won't do," he has me by the collar, and there's one of the regiments going to give a supper party, which he's to order; or the Admiral's wife wants the receipt for that pie; or in comes my wife, and there's no talking of business then, though she may have been bothering about his account all the night beforehand. Something or other! and so we run on.'

'What I want to know,' said Barnes, the butcher, 'is where he got his tenners from?'

Kilne shook a sagacious head: 'No knowing!'

'I suppose we shall get something out of the fire?' Barnes suggested.

'That depends!' answered the emphatic Kilne.

'But, you know, if the widow carries on the business,' said Grossby, 'there's no reason why we shouldn't get it all, eh?'

'There ain't two that can make clothes for nothing, and make a profit out of it,' said Kilne.

'That young chap in Portugal,' added Barnes, 'he won't take to tailoring when he comes home. D' ye think he will?'

Kilne muttered: 'Can't say!' and Grossby, a kindly creature in his way, albeit a creditor, reverting to the first subject of their discourse, ejaculated, 'But what a one he was!—eh?'

'Fine!—to look on,' Kilne assented.

'Well, he was like a Marquis,' said Barnes.

Here the three regarded each other, and laughed, though not loudly. They instantly checked that unseemliness, and Kilne, as one who rises from the depths of a calculation with the sum in his head, spoke quite in a different voice:

'Well, what do you say, gentlemen? shall we adjourn? No use standing here.'

By the invitation to adjourn, it was well understood by the committee Kilne addressed, that they were invited to pass his threshold, and partake of a morning draught. Barnes, the butcher, had no objection whatever, and if Grossby, a man of milder make, entertained any, the occasion and common

interests to be discussed, advised him to waive them. In single file these mourners entered the publican's house, where Kilne, after summoning them from behind the bar, on the important question, what it should be? and receiving, first, perfect acquiescence in his views as to what it should be, and then feeble suggestions of the drink best befitting that early hour and the speaker's particular constitution, poured out a toothful to each, and one to himself.

'Here's to him, poor fellow!' said Kilne; and was deliberately echoed twice.

'Now, it wasn't that,' Kilne pursued, pointing to the bottle in the midst of a smacking of lips, 'that wasn't what got him into difficulties. It was expensive luckshries. It was being above his condition. Horses! What's a tradesman got to do with horses? Unless he's retired! Then he's a gentleman, and can do as he likes. It's no use trying to be a gentleman if you can't pay for it. It always ends bad. Why, there was he, consorting with gentlefolks —gay as a lark! Who has to pay for it?'

Kilne's fellow-victims maintained a rather doleful tributary silence.

'I'm not saying anything against him now,' the publican further observed. 'It 's too late. And there! I'm sorry he's gone, for one. He was as kind a hearted a man as ever breathed. And there! perhaps it was just as much my fault; I couldn't say "No" to him, —dash me, if I could!'

Lymport was a prosperous town, and in prosperity the much-

despised British tradesman is not a harsh, he is really a well-disposed, easy soul, and requires but management, manner, occasional instalments—just to freshen the account—and a surety that he who debits is on the spot, to be a right royal king of credit. Only the account must never drivel. 'Stare aut crescere' appears to be his feeling on that point, and the departed Mr. Melchisedec undoubtedly understood him there; for the running on of the account looked deplorable and extraordinary now that Mr. Melchisedec was no longer in a position to run on with it, and it was precisely his doing so which had prevented it from being brought to a summary close long before. Both Barnes, the butcher; and Grossby, the confectioner, confessed that they, too, found it hard ever to say 'No' to him, and, speaking broadly, never could.

'Except once,' said Barnes, 'when he wanted me to let him have a ox to roast whole out on the common, for the Battle of Waterloo. I stood out against him on that. "No, no," says I, "I'll joint him for ye, Mr. Harrington. You shall have him in joints, and eat him at home";-ha! ha!'

'Just like him!' said Grossby, with true enjoyment of the princely disposition that had dictated the patriotic order.

'Oh!—there!' Kilne emphasized, pushing out his arm across the bar, as much as to say, that in anything of such a kind, the great Mel never had a rival.

'That "Marquis" affair changed him a bit,' said Barnes.

'Perhaps it did, for a time,' said Kilne. 'What's in the grain,

you know. He couldn't change. He would be a gentleman, and nothing 'd stop him.'

'And I shouldn't wonder but what that young chap out in Portugal 'll want to be one, too; though he didn't bid fair to be so fine a man as his father.'

'More of a scholar,' remarked Kilne. 'That I call his worst fault—shilly-shallying about that young chap. I mean his.' Kilne stretched a finger toward the dead man's house. 'First, the young chap's to be sent into the Navy; then it's the Army; then he's to be a judge, and sit on criminals; then he goes out to his sister in Portugal; and now there's nothing but a tailor open to him, as I see, if we're to get our money.'

'Ah! and he hasn't got too much spirit to work to pay his father's debts,' added Barnes. 'There's a business there to make any man's fortune-properly directed, I say. But, I suppose, like father like son, he'll becoming the Marquis, too. He went to a gentleman's school, and he's had foreign training. I don't know what to think about it. His sisters over there—they were fine women.'

'Oh! a fine family, every one of 'em! and married well!' exclaimed the publican.

'I never had the exact rights of that "Marquis" affair,' said Grossby; and, remembering that he had previously laughed knowingly when it was alluded to, pursued: 'Of course I heard of it at the time, but how did he behave when he was blown upon?'

Barnes undertook to explain; but Kilne, who relished the

narrative quite as well, and was readier, said: 'Look here! I 'll tell you. I had it from his own mouth one night when he wasn't —not quite himself. He was coming down King William Street, where he stabled his horse, you know, and I met him. He'd been dining out-somewhere out over Fallow field, I think it was; and he sings out to me, "Ah! Kilne, my good fellow!" and I, wishing to be equal with him, says, "A fine night, my lord!" and he draws himself up—he smelt of good company—says he, "Kilne! I'm not a lord, as you know, and you have no excuse for mistaking me for one, sir!" So I pretended I had mistaken him, and then he tucked his arm under mine, and said, "You're no worse than your betters, Kilne. They took me for one at Squire Uplift's to-night, but a man who wishes to pass off for more than he is, Kilne, and impose upon people, he says, "he's contemptible, Kilne! contemptible!" So that, you know, set me thinking about "Bath" and the "Marquis," and I couldn't help smiling to myself, and just let slip a question whether he had enlightened them a bit. "Kilne," said he, "you're an honest man, and a neighbour, and I'll tell you what happened. The Squire," he says, "likes my company, and I like his table. Now the Squire 'd never do a dirty action, but the Squire's nephew, Mr. George Uplift, he can't forget that I earn my money, and once or twice I have had to correct him." And I'll wager Mel did it, too! Well, he goes on: "There was Admiral Sir Jackson Racial and his lady, at dinner, Squire Falco of Bursted, Lady Barrington, Admiral Combleman —our admiral, that was; 'Mr. This and That', I forget their names

—and other ladies and gentlemen whose acquaintance I was not honoured with." You know his way of talking. "And there was a goose on the table," he says; and, looking stern at me, "Don't laugh yet!" says he, like thunder. "Well, he goes on: Mr. George caught my eye across the table, and said, so as not to be heard by his uncle, 'If that bird was rampant, you would see your own arms, Marquis.'" And Mel replied, quietly for him to hear, 'And as that bird is couchant, Mr. George, you had better look to your sauce.' Couchant means squatting, you know. That's heraldry! Well, that wasn't bad sparring of Mel's. But, bless you! he was never taken aback, and the gentlefolks was glad enough to get him to sit down amongst 'em. So, says Mr. George, "I know you're a fire-eater, Marquis," and his dander was up, for he began marquising Mel, and doing the mock polite at such a rate, that, by-and-by, one of the ladies who didn't know Mel called him "my lord" and "his lordship." "And," says Mel, "I merely bowed to her, and took no notice." So that passed off: and there sits Mel telling his anecdotes, as grand as a king. And, by and-by, young Mr. George, who hadn't forgiven Mel, and had been pulling at the bottle pretty well, he sings out, "It 's Michaelmas! the death of the goose! and I should like to drink the Marquis's health!" and he drank it solemn. But, as far as I can make out, the women part of the company was a little in the dark. So Mel waited till there was a sort of a pause, and then speaks rather loud to the Admiral, "By the way, Sir Jackson, may I ask you, has the title of Marquis anything to do with tailoring?" Now Mel was a great

favourite with the Admiral, and with his lady, too, they say—and the Admiral played into his hands, you see, and, says he, "I 'm not aware that it has, Mr. Harrington." And he begged for to know why he asked the question—called him, "Mister," you understand. So Mel said, and I can see him now, right out from his chest he spoke, with his head up "When I was a younger man, I had the good taste to be fond of good society, and the bad taste to wish to appear different from what I was in it": that's Mel speaking; everybody was listening; so he goes on: "I was in the habit of going to Bath in the season, and consorting with the gentlemen I met there on terms of equality; and for some reason that I am quite guiltless of," says Mel, "the hotel people gave out that I was a Marquis in disguise; and, upon my honour, ladies and gentlemen—I was young then, and a fool—I could not help imagining I looked the thing. At all events, I took upon myself to act the part, and with some success, and considerable gratification; for, in my opinion," says Mel, "no real Marquis ever enjoyed his title so much as I did. One day I was in my shop —No. 193, Main Street, Lymport—and a gentleman came in to order his outfit. I received his directions, when suddenly he started back, stared at me, and exclaimed:

'My dear Marquis! I trust you will pardon me for having addressed you with so much familiarity.' I recognized in him one of my Bath acquaintances. That circumstance, ladies and gentlemen, has been a lesson to me. Since that time I have never allowed a false impression with regard to my position to

exist. I desire," says Mel, smiling, "to have my exact measure taken everywhere; and if the Michaelmas bird is to be associated with me, I am sure I have no objection; all I can say is, that I cannot justify it by letters patent of nobility." That's how Mel put it. Do you think they thought worse of him? I warrant you he came out of it in flying colours. Gentlefolks like straightforwardness in their inferiors—that's what they do. Ah!' said Kilne, meditatively, 'I see him now, walking across the street in the moonlight, after he 'd told me that. A fine figure of a man! and there ain't many Marquises to match him.'

To this Barnes and Grossby, not insensible to the merits of the recital they had just given ear to, agreed. And with a common voice of praise in the mouths of his creditors, the dead man's requiem was sounded.

CHAPTER II. THE HERITAGE OF THE SON

Toward evening, a carriage drove up to the door of the muted house, and the card of Lady Racial, bearing a hurried line in pencil, was handed to the widow.

It was when you looked upon her that you began to comprehend how great was the personal splendour of the husband who could eclipse such a woman. Mrs. Harrington was a tall and a stately dame. Dressed in the high waists of the matrons of that period, with a light shawl drawn close over her shoulders and bosom, she carried her head well; and her pale firm features, with the cast of immediate affliction on them, had much dignity: dignity of an unrelenting physical order, which need not express any remarkable pride of spirit. The family gossips who, on both sides, were vain of this rare couple, and would always descant on their beauty, even when they had occasion to slander their characters, said, to distinguish them, that Henrietta Maria had a Port, and Melchisedec a Presence: and that the union of a Port and a Presence, and such a Port and such a Presence, was so uncommon, that you might search England through and you would not find another, not even in the highest ranks of society. There lies some subtle distinction here; due to the minute perceptions which compel the gossips of a family to coin phrases

that shall express the nicest shades of a domestic difference. By a Port, one may understand them to indicate something unsympathetically impressive; whereas a Presence would seem to be a thing that directs the most affable appeal to our poor human weaknesses. His Majesty King George IV., for instance, possessed a Port: Beau Brummel wielded a Presence. Many, it is true, take a Presence to mean no more than a shirt-frill, and interpret a Port as the art of walking erect. But this is to look upon language too narrowly.

On a more intimate acquaintance with the couple, you acknowledge the aptness of the fine distinction. By birth Mrs. Harrington had claims to rank as a gentlewoman. That is, her father was a lawyer of Lymport. The lawyer, however, since we must descend the genealogical tree, was known to have married his cook, who was the lady's mother. Now Mr. Melchisedec was mysterious concerning his origin; and, in his cups, talked largely and wisely of a great Welsh family, issuing from a line of princes; and it is certain that he knew enough of their history to have instructed them on particular points of it. He never could think that his wife had done him any honour in espousing him; nor was she the woman to tell him so. She had married him for love, rejecting various suitors, Squire Uplift among them, in his favour. Subsequently she had committed the profound connubial error of transferring her affections, or her thoughts, from him to his business, which, indeed, was much in want of a mate; and while he squandered the guineas, she patiently picked up the pence.

They had not lived unhappily. He was constantly courteous to her. But to see the Port at that sordid work considerably ruffled the Presence—put, as it were, the peculiar division between them; and to behave toward her as the same woman who had attracted his youthful ardours was a task for his magnificent mind, and may have ranked with him as an indemnity for his general conduct, if his reflections ever stretched so far. The townspeople of Lymport were correct in saying that his wife, and his wife alone, had, as they termed it, kept him together. Nevertheless, now that he was dead, and could no longer be kept together, they entirely forgot their respect for her, in the outburst of their secret admiration for the popular man. Such is the constitution of the inhabitants of this dear Island of Britain, so falsely accused by the Great Napoleon of being a nation of shopkeepers. Here let any one proclaim himself Above Buttons, and act on the assumption, his fellows with one accord hoist him on their heads, and bear him aloft, sweating, and groaning, and cursing, but proud of him! And if he can contrive, or has any good wife at home to help him, to die without going to the dogs, they are, one may say, unanimous in crying out the same eulogistic funeral oration as that commenced by Kilne, the publican, when he was interrupted by Barnes, the butcher, 'Now, there's a man!—'

Mrs. Harrington was sitting in her parlour with one of her married nieces, Mrs. Fiske, and on reading Lady Racial's card she gave word for her to be shown up into the drawing-room. It

was customary among Mrs. Harrington's female relatives, who one and all abused and adored the great Mel, to attribute his shortcomings pointedly to the ladies; which was as much as if their jealous generous hearts had said that he was sinful, but that it was not his fault. Mrs. Fiske caught the card from her aunt, read the superscription, and exclaimed: 'The idea! At least she might have had the decency! She never set her foot in the house before —and right enough too! What can she want now? I decidedly would refuse to see her, aunt!'

The widow's reply was simply, 'Don't be a fool, Ann!'

Rising, she said: 'Here, take poor Jacko, and comfort him till I come back.'

Jacko was a middle-sized South American monkey, and had been a pet of her husband's. He was supposed to be mourning now with the rest of the family. Mrs. Fiske received him on a shrinking lap, and had found time to correct one of his indiscretions before she could sigh and say, in the rear of her aunt's retreating figure, 'I certainly never would let myself, down so'; but Mrs. Harrington took her own counsel, and Jacko was of her persuasion, for he quickly released himself from Mrs. Fiske's dispassionate embrace, and was slinging his body up the balusters after his mistress.

'Mrs. Harrington,' said Lady Racial, very sweetly swimming to meet her as she entered the room, 'I have intruded upon you, I fear, in venturing to call upon you at such a time?'

The widow bowed to her, and begged her to be seated.

Lady Racial was an exquisitely silken dame, in whose face a winning smile was cut, and she was still sufficiently youthful not to be accused of wearing a flower too artificial.

'It was so sudden! so sad!' she continued. 'We esteemed him so much. I thought you might be in need of sympathy, and hoped I might—Dear Mrs. Harrington! can you bear to speak of it?'

'I can tell you anything you wish to hear, my lady,' the widow replied. Lady Racial had expected to meet a woman much more like what she conceived a tradesman's wife would be: and the grave reception of her proffer of sympathy slightly confused her. She said:

'I should not have come, at least not so early, but Sir Jackson, my husband, thought, and indeed I imagined—You have a son, Mrs. Harrington? I think his name is—'

'Evan, my lady.'

'Evan. It was of him we have been speaking. I imagined that is, we thought, Sir Jackson might—you will be writing to him, and will let him know we will use our best efforts to assist him in obtaining some position worthy of his—superior to—something that will secure him from the harassing embarrassments of an uncongenial employment.'

The widow listened to this tender allusion to the shears without a smile of gratitude. She replied: 'I hope my son will return in time to bury his father, and he will thank you himself, my lady.'

'He has no taste for—a—for anything in the shape of trade,

has he, Mrs. Harrington?'

'I am afraid not, my lady.'

'Any position—a situation—that of a clerk even—would be so much better for him!'

The widow remained impassive.

'And many young gentlemen I know, who are clerks, and are enabled to live comfortably, and make a modest appearance in society; and your son, Mrs. Harrington, he would find it surely an improvement upon—many would think it a step for him.'

'I am bound to thank you for the interest you take in my son, my lady.'

'Does it not quite suit your views, Mrs. Harrington?' Lady Racial was surprised at the widow's manner.

'If my son had only to think of himself, my lady.'

'Oh! but of course,'—the lady understood her now—'of course! You cannot suppose, Mrs. Harrington, but that I should anticipate he would have you to live with him, and behave to you in every way as a dutiful son, surely?

'A clerk's income is not very large, my lady.'

'No; but enough, as I have said, and with the management you would bring, Mrs. Harrington, to produce a modest, respectable maintenance. My respect for your husband, Mrs. Harrington, makes me anxious to press my services upon you.' Lady Racial could not avoid feeling hurt at the widow's want of common gratitude.

'A clerk's income would not be more than L100 a year, my

lady.'

'To begin with—no; certainly not more.' The lady was growing brief.

'If my son puts by the half of that yearly, he can hardly support himself and his mother, my lady.'

'Half of that yearly, Mrs. Harrington?'

'He would have to do so, and be saddled till he dies, my lady.'

'I really cannot see why.'

Lady Racial had a notion of some excessive niggardly thrift in the widow, which was arousing symptoms of disgust.

Mrs. Harrington quietly said: 'There are his father's debts to pay, my lady.'

'His father's debts!'

'Under L5000, but above L4000, my lady.'

'Five thousand pounds! Mrs. Harrington!' The lady's delicately gloved hand gently rose and fell. 'And this poor young man—'she pursued.

'My son will have to pay it, my lady.'

For a moment the lady had not a word to instance. Presently she remarked: 'But, Mrs. Harrington, he is surely under no legal obligation?'

'He is only under the obligation not to cast disrespect on his father's memory, my lady; and to be honest, while he can.'

'But, Mrs. Harrington! surely! what can the poor young man do?'

'He will pay it, my lady.'

‘But how, Mrs. Harrington?’

‘There is his father’s business, my lady.’

His father’s business! Then must the young man become a tradesman in order to show respect for his father? Preposterous! That was the lady’s natural inward exclamation. She said, rather shrewdly, for one who knew nothing of such things: ‘But a business which produces debts so enormous, Mrs. Harrington!’

The widow replied: ‘My son will have to conduct it in a different way. It would be a very good business, conducted properly, my lady.’

‘But if he has no taste for it, Mrs. Harrington? If he is altogether superior to it?’

For the first time during the interview, the widow’s inflexible countenance was mildly moved, though not to any mild expression.

‘My son will have not to consult his tastes,’ she observed: and seeing the lady, after a short silence, quit her seat, she rose likewise, and touched the fingers of the hand held forth to her, bowing.

‘You will pardon the interest I take in your son,’ said Lady Racial. ‘I hope, indeed, that his relatives and friends will procure him the means of satisfying the demands made upon him.’

‘He would still have to pay them, my lady,’ was the widow’s answer.

‘Poor young man! indeed I pity him!’ sighed her visitor. ‘You have hitherto used no efforts to persuade him to take such a step,

—Mrs. Harrington?'

'I have written to Mr. Goren, who was my husband's fellow-apprentice in London, my lady; and he is willing to instruct him in cutting, and measuring, and keeping accounts.'

Certain words in this speech were obnoxious to the fine ear of Lady Racial, and she relinquished the subject.

'Your husband, Mrs. Harrington—I should so much have wished!—he did not pass away in—in pain!'

'He died very calmly, my lady.'

'It is so terrible, so disfiguring, sometimes. One dreads to see! —one can hardly distinguish! I have known cases where death was dreadful! But a peaceful death is very beautiful! There is nothing shocking to the mind. It suggests heaven! It seems a fulfilment of our prayers!'

'Would your ladyship like to look upon him?' said the widow.

Lady Racial betrayed a sudden gleam at having her desire thus intuitively fathomed.

'For one moment, Mrs. Harrington! We esteemed him so much! May I?'

The widow responded by opening the door, and leading her into the chamber where the dead man lay.

At that period, when threats of invasion had formerly stirred up the military fire of us Islanders, the great Mel, as if to show the great Napoleon what character of being a British shopkeeper really was, had, by remarkable favour, obtained a lieutenancy of militia dragoons: in the uniform of which he had revelled, and

perhaps, for the only time in his life, felt that circumstances had suited him with a perfect fit. However that may be, his solemn final commands to his wife, Henrietta Maria, on whom he could count for absolute obedience in such matters, had been, that as soon as the breath had left his body, he should be taken from his bed, washed, perfumed, powdered, and in that uniform dressed and laid out; with directions that he should be so buried at the expiration of three days, that havoc in his features might be hidden from men. In this array Lady Racial beheld him. The curtains of the bed were drawn aside. The beams of evening fell soft through the blinds of the room, and cast a subdued light on the figure of the vanquished warrior. The Presence, dumb now for evermore, was sadly illumined for its last exhibition. But one who looked closely might have seen that Time had somewhat spoiled that perfect fit which had aforetime been his pride; and now that the lofty spirit had departed, there had been extreme difficulty in persuading the sullen excess of clay to conform to the dimensions of those garments. The upper part of the chest alone would bear its buttons, and across one portion of the lower limbs an ancient seam had started; recalling an incident to them who had known him in his brief hour of glory. For one night, as he was riding home from Fallow field, and just entering the gates of the town, a mounted trooper spurred furiously past, and slashing out at him, gashed his thigh. Mrs. Melchisedec found him lying at his door in a not unwonted way; carried him up-stairs in her arms, as she had done many a time before, and did

not perceive his condition till she saw the blood on her gown. The cowardly assailant was never discovered; but Mel was both gallant and had, in his military career, the reputation of being a martinet. Hence, divers causes were suspected. The wound failed not to mend, the trousers were repaired: Peace about the same time was made, and the affair passed over.

Looking on the fine head and face, Lady Racial saw nothing of this. She had not looked long before she found covert employment for her handkerchief. The widow standing beside her did not weep, or reply to her whispered excuses at emotion; gazing down on his mortal length with a sort of benignant friendliness; aloof, as one whose duties to that form of flesh were well-nigh done. At the feet of his master, Jacko, the monkey, had jumped up, and was there squatted, with his legs crossed, very like a tailor! The imitative wretch had got a towel, and as often as Lady Racial's handkerchief travelled to her eyes, Jacko's peery face was hidden, and you saw his lithe skinny body doing grief's convulsions till, tired of this amusement, he obtained possession of the warrior's helmet, from a small round table on one side of the bed; a calque of the barbarous military-Georgian form, with a huge knob of horse-hair projecting over the peak; and under this, trying to adapt it to his rogue's head, the tricksy image of Death extinguished himself.

All was very silent in the room. Then the widow quietly disengaged Jacko, and taking him up, went to the door, and deposited him outside. During her momentary absence, Lady

Racial had time to touch the dead man's forehead with her lips, unseen.

CHAPTER III. THE DAUGHTERS OF THE SHEARS

Three daughters and a son were left to the world by Mr. Melchisedec. Love, well endowed, had already claimed to provide for the daughters: first in the shape of a lean Marine subaltern, whose days of obscuration had now passed, and who had come to be a major of that corps: secondly, presenting his addresses as a brewer of distinction: thirdly, and for a climax, as a Portuguese Count: no other than the Senor Silva Diaz, Conde de Saldar: and this match did seem a far more resplendent one than that of the two elder sisters with Major Strike and Mr. Andrew Cogglesby. But the rays of neither fell visibly on Lymport. These escaped Eurydices never reappeared, after being once fairly caught away from the gloomy realms of Dis, otherwise Trade. All three persons of singular beauty, a certain refinement, some Port, and some Presence, hereditarily combined, they feared the clutch of that fell king, and performed the widest possible circles around him. Not one of them ever approached the house of her parents. They were dutiful and loving children, and wrote frequently; but of course they had to consider their new position, and their husbands, and their husbands' families, and the world, and what it would say, if to it the dreaded rumour should penetrate! Lymport gossips, as numerous as in other parts, declared that the foreign

nobleman would rave in an extraordinary manner, and do things after the outlandish fashion of his country: for from him, there was no doubt, the shop had been most successfully veiled, and he knew not of Pluto's close relationship to his lovely spouse.

The marriages had happened in this way. Balls are given in country towns, where the graces of tradesmen's daughters may be witnessed and admired at leisure by other than tradesmen: by occasional country gentlemen of the neighbourhood, with light minds: and also by small officers: subalterns wishing to do tender execution upon man's fair enemy, and to find a distraction for their legs. The classes of our social fabric have, here and there, slight connecting links, and provincial public balls are one of these. They are dangerous, for Cupid is no respecter of class-prejudice; and if you are the son of a retired tea-merchant, or of a village doctor, or of a half-pay captain, or of anything superior, and visit one of them, you are as likely to receive his shot as any shopboy. Even masquerading lords at such places, have been known to be slain outright; and although Society allows to its highest and dearest to save the honour of their families, and heal their anguish, by indecorous compromise, you, if you are a trifle below that mark, must not expect it. You must absolutely give yourself for what you hope to get. Dreadful as it sounds to philosophic ears, you must marry. This, having danced with Caroline Harrington, the gallant Lieutenant Strike determined to do. Nor, when he became aware of her father's occupation, did he shrink from his resolve. After a month's hard courtship,

he married her straight out of her father's house. That he may have all the credit due to him, it must be admitted that he did not once compare, or possibly permit himself to reflect on, the dissimilarity in their respective ranks, and the step he had taken downward, till they were man and wife: and then not in any great degree, before Fortune had given him his majority; an advance the good soldier frankly told his wife he did not owe to her. If we may be permitted to suppose the colonel of a regiment on friendly terms with one of his corporals, we have an estimate of the domestic life of Major and Mrs. Strike. Among the garrison males, his comrades, he passed for a disgustingly jealous brute.

The ladies, in their pretty language, signalized him as a 'finick.'

Now, having achieved so capital a marriage, Caroline, worthy creature, was anxious that her sisters should not be less happy, and would have them to visit her, in spite of her husband's protests.

'There can be no danger,' she said, for she was in fresh quarters, far from the nest of contagion. The lieutenant himself ungrudgingly declared that, looking on the ladies, no one for an instant could suspect; and he saw many young fellows ready to be as great fools as he had been another voluntary confession he made to his wife; for the candour of which she thanked him, and pointed out that it seemed to run in the family; inasmuch as Mr. Andrew Cogglesby, his rich relative, had seen and had proposed for Harriet. The lieutenant flatly said he would never

allow it. In fact he had hitherto concealed the non-presentable portion of his folly very satisfactorily from all save the mess-room, and Mr. Andrew's passion was a severe dilemma to him. It need scarcely be told that his wife, fortified by the fervid brewer, defeated him utterly. What was more, she induced him to be an accomplice in deception. For though the lieutenant protested that he washed his hands of it, and that it was a fraud and a snare, he certainly did not avow the condition of his wife's parents to Mr. Andrew, but alluded to them in passing as 'the country people.' He supposed 'the country people' must be asked, he said. The brewer offered to go down to them. But the lieutenant drew an unpleasant picture of the country people, and his wife became so grave at the proposal, that Mr. Andrew said he wanted to marry the lady and not the 'country people,' and if she would have him, there he was. There he was, behaving with a particular and sagacious kindness to the raw lieutenant since Harriet's arrival. If the lieutenant sent her away, Mr. Andrew would infallibly pursue her, and light on a discovery. Twice cursed by Love, twice the victim of tailordom, our excellent Marine gave away Harriet Harrington in marriage to Mr. Andrew Cogglesby.

Thus Joy clapped hands a second time, and Horror deepened its shadows.

From higher ground it was natural that the remaining sister should take a bolder flight. Of the loves of the fair Louisa Harrington and the foreign Count, and how she first encountered him in the brewer's saloons, and how she, being a humorous

person, laughed at his 'loaf' for her, and wore the colours that pleased him, and kindled and soothed his jealousy, little is known beyond the fact that she espoused the Count, under the auspices of the affluent brewer, and engaged that her children should be brought up in the faith of the Catholic Church: which Lymport gossips called, paying the Devil for her pride.

The three sisters, gloriously rescued by their own charms, had now to think of their one young brother. How to make him a gentleman! That was their problem.

Preserve him from tailordom—from all contact with trade—they must; otherwise they would be perpetually linked to the horrid thing they hoped to outlive and bury. A cousin of Mr. Melchisedec's had risen to be an Admiral and a knight for valiant action in the old war, when men could rise. Him they besought to take charge of the youth, and make a distinguished seaman of him. He courteously declined. They then attacked the married Marine—Navy or Army being quite indifferent to them as long as they could win for their brother the badge of one Service, 'When he is a gentleman at once!' they said, like those who see the end of their labours. Strike basely pretended to second them. It would have been delightful to him, of course, to have the tailor's son messing at the same table, and claiming him when he pleased with a familiar 'Ah, brother!' and prating of their relationship everywhere. Strike had been a fool: in revenge for it he laid out for himself a masterly career of consequent wisdom. The brewer—uxorious Andrew Cogglesby—might and

would have bought the commission. Strike laughed at the idea of giving money for what could be got for nothing. He told them to wait.

In the meantime Evan, a lad of seventeen, spent the hours not devoted to his positive profession—that of gentleman—in the offices of the brewery, toying with big books and balances, which he despised with the combined zeal of the sucking soldier and emancipated tailor.

Two years passed in attendance on the astute brother-in-law, to whom Fortune now beckoned to come to her and gather his laurels from the pig-tails. About the same time the Countess sailed over from Lisbon on a visit to her sister Harriet (in reality, it was whispered in the Cogglesby saloons, on a diplomatic mission from the Court of Lisbon; but that could not be made ostensible). The Countess narrowly examined Evan, whose steady advance in his profession both her sisters praised.

'Yes,' said the Countess, in a languid alien accent. 'He has something of his father's carriage—something. Something of his delivery—his readiness.'

It was a remarkable thing that these ladies thought no man on earth like their father, and always cited him as the example of a perfect gentleman, and yet they buried him with one mind, and each mounted guard over his sepulchre, to secure his ghost from an airing.

'He can walk, my dears, certainly, and talk—a little. Tete-a-tete, I do not say. I should think there he would be—a stick! All

you English are. But what sort of a bow has he got, I ask you? How does he enter a room? And, then his smile! his laugh! He laughs like a horse—absolutely! There's no music in his smile. Oh! you should see a Portuguese nobleman smile. O mio Deus! honeyed, my dears! But Evan has it not. None of you English have. You go so.'

The Countess pressed a thumb and finger to the sides of her mouth, and set her sisters laughing.

'I assure you, no better! not a bit! I faint in your society. I ask myself—Where am I? Among what boors have I fallen? But Evan is no worse than the rest of you; I acknowledge that. If he knew how to dress his shoulders properly, and to direct his eyes—Oh! the eyes! you should see how a Portuguese nobleman can use his eyes! Soul! my dears, soul! Can any of you look the unutterable without being absurd! You look so.'

And the Countess hung her jaw under heavily vacuous orbits, something as a sheep might yawn.

'But I acknowledge that Evan is no worse than the rest of you,' she repeated. 'If he understood at all the management of his eyes and mouth! But that's what he cannot possibly learn in England —not possibly! As for your poor husband, Harriet! one really has to remember his excellent qualities to forgive him, poor man! And that stiff bandbox of a man of yours, Caroline!' addressing the wife of the Marine, 'he looks as if he were all angles and sections, and were taken to pieces every night and put together in the morning. He may be a good soldier—good anything you will

—but, Diacho! to be married to that! He is not civilized. None of you English are. You have no place in the drawing-room. You are like so many intrusive oxen—absolutely! One of your men trod on my toe the other night, and what do you think the creature did? Jerks back, then the half of him forward—I thought he was going to break in two—then grins, and grunts, "Oh! 'm sure, beg pardon, 'm sure!" I don't know whether he didn't say, MARM!'

The Countess lifted her hands, and fell away in laughing horror. When her humour, or her feelings generally, were a little excited, she spoke her vernacular as her sisters did, but immediately subsided into the deliberate delicately-syllabled drawl.

'Now that happened to me once at one of our great Balls,' she pursued. 'I had on one side of me the Duchesse Eugenia de Formosa de Fontandigua; on the other sat the Countess de Pel, a widow. And we were talking of the ices that evening. Eugenia, you must know, my dears, was in love with the Count Belmarana. I was her sole confidante. The Countess de Pel—a horrible creature! Oh! she was the Duchess's determined enemy-would have stabbed her for Belmarana, one of the most beautiful men! Adored by every woman! So we talked ices, Eugenic and myself, quite comfortably, and that horrible De Pel had no idea in life! Eugenia had just said, "This ice sickens me! I do not taste the flavour of the vanille." I answered, "It is here! It must—it cannot but be here! You love the flavour of the vanille?" With her exquisite smile, I see her now saying, "Too well! it is necessary

to me! I live on it!"—when up he came. In his eagerness, his foot just effleured my robe. Oh! I never shall forget! In an instant he was down on one knee it was so momentary that none saw it but we three, and done with ineffable grace. "Pardon!" he said, in his sweet Portuguese; "Pardon!" looking up—the handsomest man I ever beheld; and when I think of that odious wretch the other night, with his "Oh! 'm sure, beg pardon, 'm sure! 'pon my honour!" I could have kicked him—I could, indeed!'

Here the Countess laughed out, but relapsed into:

'Alas! that Belmarana should have betrayed that beautiful trusting creature to De Pel. Such scandal! a duel!—the Duke was wounded. For a whole year Eugenia did not dare to appear at Court, but had to remain immured in her country-house, where she heard that Belmarana had married De Pel! It was for her money, of course. Rich as Croesus, and as wicked as the black man below! as dear papa used to say. By the way, weren't we talking of Evan? Ah,—yes!'

And so forth. The Countess was immensely admired, and though her sisters said that she was 'foreignized' overmuch, they clung to her desperately. She seemed so entirely to have eclipsed tailordom, or 'Demogorgon,' as the Countess was pleased to call it. Who could suppose this grand-mannered lady, with her coroneted anecdotes and delicious breeding, the daughter of that thing? It was not possible to suppose it. It seemed to defy the fact itself.

They congratulated her on her complete escape from

Demogorgon. The Countess smiled on them with a lovely sorrow.

'Safe from the whisper, my dears; the ceaseless dread? If you knew what I have to endure! I sometimes envy you. 'Pon my honour, I sometimes wish I had married a fishmonger! Silva, indeed, is a most excellent husband. Polished! such polish as you know not of in England. He has a way—a wriggle with his shoulders in company—I cannot describe it to you; so slight! so elegant! and he is all that a woman could desire. But who could be safe in any part of the earth, my dears, while papa will go about so, and behave so extraordinarily? I was at dinner at your English embassy a month ago, and there was Admiral Combleman, then on the station off Lisbon, Sir Jackson Racial's friend, who was the Admiral at Lymport formerly. I knew him at once, and thought, oh! what shall I do! My heart was like a lump of lead. I would have given worlds that we might one of us have smothered the other! I had to sit beside him—it always happens! Thank heaven! he did not identify me. And then he told an anecdote of Papa. It was the dreadful old "Bath" story. I thought I should have died. I could not but fancy the Admiral suspected. Was it not natural? And what do you think I had the audacity to do? I asked him coolly, whether the Mr. Harrington he mentioned was not the son of Sir Abraham Harrington, of Torquay,—the gentleman who lost his yacht in the Lisbon waters last year? I brought it on myself. 'Gentleman, ma'am,—MA'AM!' says the horrid old creature, laughing, 'gentleman! he's a – I cannot speak it: I choke!' And then he began praising Papa. Diacho! what I

suffered. But, you know, I can keep my countenance, if I perish. I am a Harrington as much as any of us!'

And the Countess looked superb in the pride with which she said she was what she would have given her hand not to be. But few feelings are single on this globe, and junction of sentiments need not imply unity in our yeasty compositions.

'After it was over—my supplice,' continued the Countess, 'I was questioned by all the ladies—I mean our ladies—not your English. They wanted to know how I could be so civil to that intolerable man. I gained a deal of credit, my dears. I laid it all on—Diplomacy.' The Countess laughed bitterly. 'Diplomacy bears the burden of it all. I pretended that Combleman could be useful to Silva! Oh! what hypocrites we all are, mio Deus!'

The ladies listening could not gainsay this favourite claim of universal brotherhood among the select who wear masks instead of faces.

With regard to Evan, the Countess had far outstripped her sisters in her views. A gentleman she had discovered must have one of two things—a title or money. He might have all the breeding in the world; he might be as good as an angel; but without a title or money he was under eclipse almost total. On a gentleman the sun must shine. Now, Evan had no title, no money. The clouds were thick above the youth. To gain a title he would have to scale aged mountains. There was one break in his firmament through which the radiant luminary might be assisted to cast its beams on him still young. That divine portal

was matrimony. If he could but make a rich marriage he would blaze transfigured; all would be well! And why should not Evan marry an heiress, as well as another?

'I know a young creature who would exactly suit him,' said the Countess. 'She is related to the embassy, and is in Lisbon now. A charming child—just sixteen! Dios! how the men rave about her! and she isn't a beauty,—there's the wonder; and she is a little too gauche too English in her habits and ways of thinking; likes to be admired, of course, but doesn't know yet how to set about getting it. She rather scandalizes our ladies, but when you know her!—She will have, they say, a hundred 'thousand pounds in her own right! Rose Jocelyn, the daughter of Sir Franks, and that eccentric Lady Jocelyn. She is with her uncle, Melville, the celebrated diplomate though, to tell you the truth, we turn him round our fingers, and spin him as the boys used to do the cockchafers. I cannot forget our old Fallow field school-life, you see, my dears. Well, Rose Jocelyn would just suit Evan. She is just of an age to receive an impression. And I would take care she did. Instance me a case where I have failed?

'Or there is the Portuguese widow, the Rostral. She's thirty, certainly; but she possesses millions! Estates all over the kingdom, and the sweetest creature. But, no. Evan would be out of the way there, certainly. But—our women are very nice: they have the dearest, sweetest ways: but I would rather Evan did not marry one of them. And then there 's the religion!'

This was a sore of the Countess's own, and she dropped a tear

in coming across it.

'No, my dears, it shall be Rose Jocelyn!' she concluded: 'I will take Evan over with me, and see that he has opportunities. It shall be Rose, and then I can call her mine; for in verity I love the child.'

It is not my part to dispute the Countess's love for Miss Jocelyn; and I have only to add that Evan, unaware of the soft training he was to undergo, and the brilliant chance in store for him, offered no impediment to the proposition that he should journey to Portugal with his sister (whose subtlest flattery was to tell him that she should not be ashamed to own him there); and ultimately, furnished with cash for the trip by the remonstrating brewer, went.

So these Parcae, daughters of the shears, arranged and settled the young man's fate. His task was to learn the management of his mouth, how to dress his shoulders properly, and to direct his eyes —rare qualities in man or woman, I assure you; the management of the mouth being especially admirable, and correspondingly difficult. These achieved, he was to place his battery in position, and win the heart and hand of an heiress.

Our comedy opens with his return from Portugal, in company with Miss Rose, the heiress; the Honourable Melville Jocelyn, the diplomate; and the Count and Countess de Saldar, refugees out of that explosive little kingdom.

CHAPTER IV. ON BOARD THE JOCASTA

From the Tagus to the Thames the Government sloop-of-war, Jocasta, had made a prosperous voyage, bearing that precious freight, a removed diplomatist and his family; for whose uses let a sufficient vindication be found in the exercise he affords our crews in the science of seamanship. She entered our noble river somewhat early on a fine July morning. Early as it was, two young people, who had nothing to do with the trimming or guiding of the vessel, stood on deck, and watched the double-shore, beginning to embrace them more and more closely as they sailed onward. One, a young lady, very young in manner, wore a black felt hat with a floating scarlet feather, and was clad about the shoulders in a mantle of foreign style and pattern. The other you might have taken for a wandering Don, were such an object ever known; so simply he assumed the dusky sombrero and dangling cloak, of which one fold was flung across his breast and drooped behind him. The line of an adolescent dark moustache ran along his lip, and only at intervals could you see that his eyes were blue and of the land he was nearing. For the youth was meditative, and held his head much down. The young lady, on the contrary, permitted an open inspection of her countenance, and seemed, for the moment at least, to be neither caring nor thinking of what

kind of judgement would be passed on her. Her pretty nose was up, sniffing the still salt breeze with vivacious delight.

'Oh!' she cried, clapping her hands, 'there goes a dear old English gull! How I have wished to see him! I haven't seen one for two years and seven months. When I 'm at home, I 'll leave my window open all night, just to hear the rooks, when they wake in the morning. There goes another!'

She tossed up her nose again, exclaiming:

'I 'm sure I smell England nearer and nearer! I smell the fields, and the cows in them. I'd have given anything to be a dairy-maid for half an hour! I used to lie and pant in that stifling air among those stupid people, and wonder why anybody ever left England. Aren't you glad to come back?'

This time the fair speaker lent her eyes to the question, and shut her lips; sweet, cold, chaste lips she had: a mouth that had not yet dreamed of kisses, and most honest eyes.

The young man felt that they were not to be satisfied by his own, and after seeking to fill them with a doleful look, which was immediately succeeded by one of superhuman indifference, he answered:

'Yes! We shall soon have to part!' and commenced tapping with his foot the cheerful martyr's march.

Speech that has to be hauled from the depths usually betrays the effort. Listening an instant to catch the import of this cavernous gasp upon the brink of sound, the girl said:

'Part? what do you mean?'

Apparently it required a yet vaster effort to pronounce an explanation. The doleful look, the superhuman indifference, were repeated in due order: sound, a little more distinct, uttered the words:

'We cannot be as we have been, in England!' and then the cheerful martyr took a few steps farther.

'Why, you don't mean to say you're going to give me up, and not be friends with me, because we've come back to England?' cried the girl in a rapid breath, eyeing him seriously.

Most conscientiously he did not mean it! but he replied with the quietest negative.

'No?' she mimicked him. 'Why do you say "No" like that? Why are you so mysterious, Evan? Won't you promise me to come and stop with us for weeks? Haven't you said we would ride, and hunt, and fish together, and read books, and do all sorts of things?'

He replied with the quietest affirmative.

'Yes? What does "Yes!" mean?' She lifted her chest to shake out the dead-alive monosyllable, as he had done. 'Why are you so singular this morning, Evan? Have I offended you? You are so touchy!'

The slur on his reputation for sensitiveness induced the young man to attempt being more explicit.

'I mean,' he said, hesitating; 'why, we must part. We shall not see each other every day. Nothing more than that.' And away went the cheerful martyr in sublimest mood.

'Oh! and that makes you, sorry?' A shade of archness was in her voice.

The girl waited as if to collect something in her mind, and was now a patronizing woman.

'Why, you dear sentimental boy! You don't suppose we could see each other every day for ever?'

It was perhaps the cruelest question that could have been addressed to the sentimental boy from her mouth. But he was a cheerful martyr!

'You dear Don Doloroso!' she resumed. 'I declare if you are not just like those young Portugals this morning; and over there you were such a dear English fellow; and that's why I liked you so much! Do change! Do, please, be lively, and yourself again. Or mind; I'll call you Don Doloroso, and that shall be your name in England. See there!—that's—that's? what's the name of that place? Hoy! Mr. Skerne!' She hailed the boatswain, passing, 'Do tell me the name of that place.'

Mr. Skerne righted about to satisfy her minutely, and then coming up to Evan, he touched his hat, and said:

'I mayn't have another opportunity—we shall be busy up there—of thankin' you again, sir, for what you did for my poor drunken brother Bill, and you may take my word I won't forget it, sir, if he does; and I suppose he'll be drowning his memory just as he was near drowning himself.'

Evan muttered something, grimaced civilly, and turned away. The girl's observant brows were moved to a faintly critical frown,

and nodding intelligently to the boatswain's remark, that the young gentleman did not seem quite himself, now that he was nearing home, she went up to Evan, and said:

'I'm going to give you a lesson in manners, to be quits with you. Listen, sir. Why did you turn away so ungraciously from Mr. Skerne, while he was thanking you for having saved his brother's life? Now there's where you're too English. Can't you bear to be thanked?'

'I don't want to be thanked because I can swim,' said Evan.

'But it is not that. Oh, how you trifle!' she cried. 'There's nothing vexes me so much as that way you have. Wouldn't my eyes have sparkled if anybody had come up to me to thank me for such a thing? I would let them know how glad I was to have done such a thing! Doesn't it make them happier, dear Evan?'

'My dear Miss Jocelyn!'

'What?'

The honest grey eyes fixed on him, narrowed their enlarged lids. She gazed before her on the deck, saying:

'I'm sure I can't understand you. I suppose it's because I'm a girl, and I never shall till I'm a woman. Heigho!'

A youth who is engaged in the occupation of eating his heart, cannot shine to advantage, and is as much a burden to himself as he is an enigma to others. Evan felt this; but he could do nothing and say nothing; so he retired deeper into the folds of the Don, and remained picturesque and scarcely pleasant.

They were relieved by a summons to breakfast from below.

She brightened and laughed. 'Now, what will you wager me, Evan, that the Countess doesn't begin:

"Sweet child! how does she this morning? blooming?" when she kisses me?'

Her capital imitation of his sister's manner constrained him to join in her laugh, and he said:

'I'll back against that, I get three fingers from your uncle, and "Morrow, young sir!"'

Down they ran together, laughing; and, sure enough, the identical words of the respective greetings were employed, which they had to enjoy with all the discretion they could muster.

Rose went round the table to her little cousin Alec, aged seven, kissed his reluctant cheek, and sat beside him, announcing a sea appetite and great capabilities, while Evan silently broke bread. The Count de Saldar, a diminutive tawny man, just a head and neck above the tablecloth, sat sipping chocolate and fingering dry toast, which he would now and then dip in jelly, and suck with placidity, in the intervals of a curt exchange of French with the wife of the Hon. Melville, a ringleted English lady, or of Portuguese with the Countess; who likewise sipped chocolate and fingered dry toast, and was mournfully melodious. The Hon. Melville, as became a tall islander, carved beef, and ate of it, like a ruler of men. Beautiful to see was the compassionate sympathy of the Countess's face when Rose offered her plate for a portion of the world-subjugating viand, as who should say: 'Sweet child! thou knowest not yet of sorrows, thou canst ballast thy stomach

with beef!' In any other than an heiress, she would probably have thought: 'This is indeed a disgusting little animal, and most unfeminine conduct!'

Rose, unconscious of praise or blame, rivalled her uncle in enjoyment of the fare, and talked of her delight in seeing England again, and anything that belonged to her native land. Mrs. Melville perceived that it pained the refugee Countess, and gave her the glance intelligible; but the Countess never missed glances, or failed to interpret them. She said:

'Let her. I love to hear the sweet child's prattle.'

'It was fortunate' (she addressed the diplomatist) 'that we touched at Southampton and procured fresh provision!'

'Very lucky for US!' said he, glaring shrewdly between a mouthful.

The Count heard the word 'Southampton,' and wished to know how it was comprised. A passage of Portuguese ensued, and then the Countess said:

'Silva, you know, desired to relinquish the vessel at Southampton. He does not comprehend the word "expense," but' (she shook a dumb Alas!) 'I must think of that for him now!'

'Oh! always avoid expense,' said the Hon. Melville, accustomed to be paid for by his country.

'At what time shall we arrive, may I ask, do you think?' the Countess gently inquired.

The watch of a man who had his eye on Time was pulled out, and she was told it might be two hours before dark. Another

reckoning, keenly balanced, informed the company that the day's papers could be expected on board somewhere about three o'clock in the afternoon.

'And then,' said the Hon. Melville, nodding general gratulation, 'we shall know how the world wags.'

How it had been wagging the Countess's straining eyes under closed eyelids were eloquent of.

'Too late, I fear me, to wait upon Lord Livelyston to-night?' she suggested.

'To-night?' The Hon. Melville gazed blank astonishment at the notion. 'Oh! certainly, too late tonight. A-hum! I think, madam, you had better not be in too great a hurry to see him. Repose a little. Recover your fatigue.'

'Oh!' exclaimed the Countess, with a beam of utter confidence in him, 'I shall be too happy to place myself in your hands—believe me.'

This was scarcely more to the taste of the diplomatist. He put up his mouth, and said, blandly:

'I fear—you know, madam, I must warn you beforehand—I, personally, am but an insignificant unit over here, you know; I, personally, can't guarantee much assistance to you—not positive. What I can do—of course, very happy!' And he fell to again upon the beef.

'Not so very insignificant!' said the Countess, smiling, as at a softly radiant conception of him.

'Have to bob and bow like the rest of them over here,' he

added, proof against the flattery.

'But that you will not forsake Silva, I am convinced,' said the Countess; and, paying little heed to his brief 'Oh! what I can do,' continued: 'For over here, in England, we are almost friendless. My relations—such as are left of them—are not in high place.' She turned to Mrs. Melville, and renewed the confession with a proud humility. 'Truly, I have not a distant cousin in the Cabinet!'

Mrs. Melville met her sad smile, and returned it, as one who understood its entire import.

'My brother-in-law-my sister, I think, you know—married a —a brewer! He is rich; but, well! such was her taste! My brother-in-law is indeed in Parliament, and he—'

'Very little use, seeing he votes with the opposite party,' the diplomatist interrupted her.

'Ah! but he will not,' said the Countess, serenely. 'I can trust with confidence that, if it is for Silva's interest, he will assuredly so dispose of his influence as to suit the desiderations of his family, and not in any way oppose his opinions to the powers that would willingly stoop to serve us!'

It was impossible for the Hon. Melville to withhold a slight grimace at his beef, when he heard this extremely alienized idea of the nature of a member of the Parliament of Great Britain. He allowed her to enjoy her delusion, as she pursued:

'No. So much we could offer in repayment. It is little! But this, in verity, is a case. Silva's wrongs have only to be known in England, and I am most assured that the English people will

not permit it. In the days of his prosperity, Silva was a friend to England, and England should not—should not—forget it now. Had we money! But of that arm our enemies have deprived us: and, I fear, without it we cannot hope to have the justice of our cause pleaded in the English papers. Mr. Redner, you know, the correspondent in Lisbon, is a sworn foe to Silva. And why but because I would not procure him an invitation to Court! The man was so horridly vulgar; his gloves were never clean; I had to hold a bouquet to my nose when I talked to him. That, you say, was my fault! Truly so. But what woman can be civil to a low-bred, pretentious, offensive man?'

Mrs. Melville, again appealed to, smiled perfect sympathy, and said, to account for his character:

'Yes. He is the son of a small shopkeeper of some kind, in Southampton, I hear.'

'A very good fellow in his way,' said her husband.

'Oh! I can't bear that class of people,' Rose exclaimed. 'I always keep out of their way. You can always tell them.'

The Countess smiled considerate approbation of her exclusiveness and discernment. So sweet a smile!

'You were on deck early, my dear?' she asked Evan, rather abruptly.

Master Alec answered for him: 'Yes, he was, and so was Rose. They made an appointment, just as they used to do under the oranges.'

'Children!' the Countess smiled to Mrs. Melville.

'They always whisper when I'm by,' Alec appended.

'Children!' the Countess's sweetened visage entreated Mrs. Melville to re-echo; but that lady thought it best for the moment to direct Rose to look to her packing, now that she had done breakfast.

'And I will take a walk with my brother on deck,' said the Countess. 'Silva is too harassed for converse.'

The parties were thus divided. The silent Count was left to meditate on his wrongs in the saloon; and the diplomatist, alone with his lady, thought fit to say to her, shortly: 'Perhaps it would be as well to draw away from these people a little. We 've done as much as we could for them, in bringing them over here. They may be trying to compromise us. That woman's absurd. She 's ashamed of the brewer, and yet she wants to sell him—or wants us to buy him. Ha! I think she wants us to send a couple of frigates, and threaten bombardment of the capital, if they don't take her husband back, and receive him with honours.'

'Perhaps it would be as well,' said Mrs. Melville. 'Rose's invitation to him goes for nothing.'

'Rose? inviting the Count? down to Hampshire?' The diplomatist's brows were lifted.

'No, I mean the other,' said the diplomatist's wife.

'Oh! the young fellow! very good young fellow. Gentlemanly. No harm in him.'

'Perhaps not,' said the diplomatist's wife.

'You don't suppose he expects us to keep him on, or provide

for him over here—eh?'

The diplomatist's wife informed him that such was not her thought, that he did not understand, and that it did not matter; and as soon as the Hon. Melville saw that she was brooding something essentially feminine, and which had no relationship to the great game of public life, curiosity was extinguished in him.

On deck the Countess paced with Evan, and was for a time pleasantly diverted by the admiration she could, without looking, perceive that her sorrow-subdued graces had aroused in the breast of a susceptible naval lieutenant. At last she spoke:

'My dear! remember this. Your last word to Mr. Jocelyn will be: "I will do myself the honour to call upon my benefactor early." To Rose you will say: "Be assured, Miss Jocelyn 'Miss Jocelyn—' I shall not fail in hastening to pay my respects to your family in Hampshire." You will remember to do it, in the exact form I speak it.'

Evan laughed: 'What! call him benefactor to his face? I couldn't do it.'

'Ah! my child!'

'Besides, he isn't a benefactor at all. His private secretary died, and I stepped in to fill the post, because nobody else was handy.'

'And tell me of her who pushed you forward, Evan?'

'My dear sister, I'm sure I'm not ungrateful.'

'No; but headstrong: opinionated. Now these people will endeavour—Oh! I have seen it in a thousand little things—they wish to shake us off. Now, if you will but do as I indicate!

Put your faith in an older head, Evan. It is your only chance of society in England. For your brother-in-law—I ask you, what sort of people will you meet at the Cogglesbys? Now and then a nobleman, very much out of his element. In short, you have fed upon a diet which will make you to distinguish, and painfully to know the difference! Indeed! Yes, you are looking about for Rose. It depends upon your behaviour now, whether you are to see her at all in England. Do you forget? You wished once to inform her of your origin. Think of her words at the breakfast this morning!'

The Countess imagined she had produced an impression. Evan said: 'Yes, and I should have liked to have told her this morning that I'm myself nothing more than the son of a—'

'Stop! cried his sister, glancing about in horror. The admiring lieutenant met her eye. Blandishingly she smiled on him: 'Most beautiful weather for a welcome to dear England?' and passed with majesty.

'Boy!' she resumed, 'are you mad?'

'I hate being such a hypocrite, madam.'

'Then you do not love her, Evan?'

This may have been dubious logic, but it resulted from a clear sequence of ideas in the lady's head. Evan did not contest it.

'And assuredly you will lose her, Evan. Think of my troubles! I have to intrigue for Silva; I look to your future; I smile, Oh heaven! how do I not smile when things are spoken that pierce my heart! This morning at the breakfast!'

Evan took her hand, and patted it.

'What is your pity?' she sighed.

'If it had not been for you, my dear sister, I should never have held my tongue.'

'You are not a Harrington! You are a Dawley!' she exclaimed, indignantly.

Evan received the accusation of possessing more of his mother's spirit than his father's in silence.

'You would not have held your tongue,' she said, with fervid severity: 'and you would have betrayed yourself! and you would have said you were that! and you in that costume! Why, goodness gracious! could you bear to appear so ridiculous?'

The poor young man involuntarily surveyed his person. The pains of an impostor seized him. The deplorable image of the Don making confession became present to his mind. It was a clever stroke of this female intriguer. She saw him redden grievously, and blink his eyes; and not wishing to probe him so that he would feel intolerable disgust at his imprisonment in the Don, she continued:

'But you have the sense to see your duties, Evan. You have an excellent sense, in the main. No one would dream—to see you. You did not, I must say, you did not make enough of your gallantry. A Portuguese who had saved a man's life, Evan, would he have been so boorish? You behaved as if it was a matter of course that you should go overboard after anybody, in your clothes, on a dark night. So, then, the Jocelyns took

it. I barely heard one compliment to you. And Rose—what an effect it should have had on her! But, owing to your manner, I do believe the girl thinks it nothing but your ordinary business to go overboard after anybody, in your clothes, on a dark night. 'Pon my honour, I believe she expects to see you always dripping!' The Countess uttered a burst of hysterical humour. 'So you miss your credit. That inebriated sailor should really have been gold to you. Be not so young and thoughtless.'

The Countess then proceeded to tell him how foolishly he had let slip his great opportunity. A Portuguese would have fixed the young lady long before. By tender moonlight, in captivating language, beneath the umbrageous orange-groves, a Portuguese would have accurately calculated the effect of the perfume of the blossom on her sensitive nostrils, and know the exact moment when to kneel, and declare his passion sonorously.

'Yes,' said Evan, 'one of them did. She told me.'

'She told you? And you—what did you do?'

'Laughed at him with her, to be sure.'

'Laughed at him! She told you, and you helped her to laugh at love! Have you no perceptions? Why did she tell you?'

'Because she thought him such a fool, I suppose.'

'You never will know a woman,' said the Countess, with contempt.

Much of his worldly sister at a time was more than Evan could bear. Accustomed to the symptoms of restiveness, she finished her discourse, enjoyed a quiet parade up and down under the gaze

of the lieutenant, and could find leisure to note whether she at all struck the inferior seamen, even while her mind was absorbed by the multiform troubles and anxieties for which she took such innocent indemnification.

The appearance of the Hon. Melville Jocelyn on deck, and without his wife, recalled her to business. It is a peculiarity of female diplomatists that they fear none save their own sex. Men they regard as their natural prey: in women they see rival hunters using their own weapons. The Countess smiled a slowly-kindling smile up to him, set her brother adrift, and delicately linked herself to Evan's benefactor.

'I have been thinking,' she said, 'knowing your kind and most considerate attentions, that we may compromise you in England.'

He at once assured her he hoped not, he thought not at all.

'The idea is due to my brother,' she went on; 'for I—women know so little!—and most guiltlessly should we have done so. My brother perhaps does not think of us foremost; but his argument I can distinguish. I can see, that were you openly to plead Silva's cause, you might bring yourself into odium, Mr. Jocelyn; and heaven knows I would not that! May I then ask, that in England we may be simply upon the same footing of private friendship?'

The diplomatist looked into her uplifted visage, that had all the sugary sparkles of a crystallized preserved fruit of the Portugal clime, and observed, confidentially, that, with every willingness in the world to serve her, he did think it would possibly be better, for a time, to be upon that footing, apart from political

considerations.

'I was very sure my brother would apprehend your views,' said the Countess. 'He, poor boy! his career is closed. He must sink into a different sphere. He will greatly miss the intercourse with you and your sweet family.'

Further relieved, the diplomatist delivered a high opinion of the young gentleman, his abilities, and his conduct, and trusted he should see him frequently.

By an apparent sacrifice, the lady thus obtained what she wanted.

Near the hour speculated on by the diplomatist, the papers came on board, and he, unaware how he had been manoeuvred for lack of a wife at his elbow, was quickly engaged in appeasing the great British hunger for news; second only to that for beef, it seems, and equally acceptable salted when it cannot be had fresh.

Leaving the devotee of statecraft with his legs crossed, and his face wearing the cognizant air of one whose head is above the waters of events, to enjoy the mighty meal of fresh and salted at discretion, the Countess dived below.

Meantime the Jocasta, as smoothly as before she was ignorant of how the world wagged, slipped up the river with the tide; and the sun hung red behind the forest of masts, burnishing a broad length of the serpentine haven of the nations of the earth. A young Englishman returning home can hardly look on this scene without some pride of kinship. Evan stood at the fore part of the vessel. Rose, in quiet English attire, had escaped from her aunt to

join him, singing in his ears, to spur his senses: 'Isn't it beautiful? Isn't it beautiful? Dear old England!'

'What do you find so beautiful?' he asked.

'Oh, you dull fellow! Why the ships, and the houses, and the smoke, to be sure.'

'The ships? Why, I thought you despised trade, mademoiselle?'

'And so I do. That is, not trade, but tradesmen. Of course, I mean shopkeepers.'

'It's they who send the ships to and fro, and make the picture that pleases you, nevertheless.'

'Do they?' said she, indifferently, and then with a sort of fervour, 'Why do you always grow so cold to me whenever we get on this subject?'

'I cold?' Evan responded. The incessant fears of his diplomatic sister had succeeded in making him painfully jealous of this subject. He turned it off. 'Why, our feelings are just the same. Do you know what I was thinking when you came up? I was thinking that I hoped I might never disgrace the name of an Englishman.'

'Now, that's noble!' cried the girl. 'And I'm sure you never will. Of an English gentleman, Evan. I like that better.'

'Would your rather be called a true English lady than a true English woman, Rose?'

'Don't think I would, my dear,' she answered, pertly; 'but "gentleman" always means more than "man" to me.'

'And what's a gentleman, mademoiselle?'

'Can't tell you, Don Doloroso. Something you are, sir,' she added, surveying him.

Evan sucked the bitter and the sweet of her explanation. His sister in her anxiety to put him on his guard, had not beguiled him to forget his real state.

His sister, the diplomatist and his lady, the refugee Count, with ladies' maids, servants, and luggage, were now on the main-deck, and Master Alec, who was as good as a newspaper correspondent for private conversations, put an end to the colloquy of the young people. They were all assembled in a circle when the vessel came to her moorings. The diplomatist glutted with news, and thirsting for confirmations; the Count dumb, courteous, and quick-eyed; the honourable lady complacent in the consciousness of boxes well packed; the Countess breathing mellifluous long-drawn adieux that should provoke invitations. Evan and Rose regarded each other.

The boat to convey them on shore was being lowered, and they were preparing to move forward. Just then the vessel was boarded by a stranger.

'Is that one of the creatures of your Customs? I did imagine we were safe from them,' exclaimed the Countess.

The diplomatist laughingly requested her to save herself anxiety on that score, while under his wing. But she had drawn attention to the intruder, who was seen addressing one of the midshipmen. He was a man in a long brown coat and loose white neckcloth, spectacles on nose, which he wore considerably below

the bridge and peered over, as if their main use were to sight his eye; a beaver hat, with broadish brim, on his head. A man of no station, it was evident to the ladies at once, and they would have taken no further notice of him had he not been seen stepping toward them in the rear of the young midshipman.

The latter came to Evan, and said: 'A fellow of the name of Goren wants you. Says there's something the matter at home.'

Evan advanced, and bowed stiffly.

Mr. Goren held out his hand. 'You don't remember me, young man? I cut out your first suit for you when you were breeched, though! Yes-ah! Your poor father wouldn't put his hand to it. Goren!'

Embarrassed, and not quite alive to the chapter of facts this name should have opened to him, Evan bowed again.

'Goren!' continued the possessor of the name. He had a cracked voice, that when he spoke a word of two syllables, commenced with a lugubrious crow, and ended in what one might have taken for a curious question.

'It is a bad business brings me, young man. I 'm not the best messenger for such tidings. It's a black suit, young man! It's your father!'

The diplomatist and his lady gradually edged back but Rose remained beside the Countess, who breathed quick, and seemed to have lost her self-command.

Thinking he was apprehended, Mr. Goren said: 'I 'm going down to-night to take care of the shop. He 's to be buried in his

old uniform. You had better come with me by the night-coach, if you would see the last of him, young man.'

Breaking an odd pause that had fallen, the Countess cried aloud, suddenly:

'In his uniform!'

Mr. Goren felt his arm seized and his legs hurrying him some paces into isolation. 'Thanks! thanks!' was murmured in his ear. 'Not a word more. Evan cannot bear it. Oh! you are good to have come, and we are grateful. My father! my father!'

She had to tighten her hand and wrist against her bosom to keep herself up. She had to reckon in a glance how much Rose had heard, or divined. She had to mark whether the Count had understood a syllable. She had to whisper to Evan to hasten away with the horrible man.

She had to enliven his stunned senses, and calm her own. And with mournful images of her father in her brain, the female Spartan had to turn to Rose, and speculate on the girl's reflective brows, while she said, as over a distant relative, sadly, but without distraction: 'A death in the family!' and preserved herself from weeping her heart out, that none might guess the thing who did not positively know it. Evan touched the hand of Rose without meeting her eyes. He was soon cast off in Mr. Goren's boat. Then the Countess murmured final adieux; twilight under her lids, but yet a smile, stately, affectionate, almost genial. Rose, her sweet Rose, she must kiss. She could have slapped Rose for appearing so reserved and cold. She hugged Rose, as to hug oblivion of the

last few minutes into her. The girl leant her cheek, and bore the embrace, looking on her with a kind of wonder.

Only when alone with the Count, in the brewer's carriage awaiting her on shore, did the lady give a natural course to her grief; well knowing that her Silva would attribute it to the darkness of their common exile. She wept: but in the excess of her misery, two words of strangely opposite signification, pronounced by Mr. Goren; two words that were at once poison and antidote, sang in her brain; two words that painted her dead father from head to foot, his nature and his fortune: these were the Shop, and the Uniform.

Oh! what would she not have given to have-seen and bestowed on her beloved father one last kiss! Oh! how she hoped that her inspired echo of Uniform, on board the Jocasta, had drowned the memory, eclipsed the meaning, of that fatal utterance of Shop!

CHAPTER V. THE FAMILY AND THE FUNERAL

It was the evening of the second day since the arrival of the black letter in London from Lymport, and the wife of the brewer and the wife of the Major sat dropping tears into one another's laps, in expectation of their sister the Countess. Mr. Andrew Cogglesby had not yet returned from his office. The gallant Major had gone forth to dine with General Sir George Frebuter, the head of the Marines of his time. It would have been difficult for the Major, he informed his wife, to send in an excuse to the General for non-attendance, without entering into particulars; and that he should tell the General he could not dine with him, because of the sudden decease of a tailor, was, as he let his wife understand, and requested her to perceive, quite out of the question. So he dressed himself carefully, and though peremptory with his wife concerning his linen, and requiring natural services from her in the button department, and a casual expression of contentment as to his ultimate make-up, he left her that day without any final injunctions to occupy her mind, and she was at liberty to weep if she pleased, a privilege she did not enjoy undisturbed when he was present; for the warrior hated that weakness, and did not care to hide his contempt for it.

Of the three sisters, the wife of the Major was, oddly enough,

the one who was least inveterately solicitous of concealing the fact of her parentage. Reticence, of course, she had to study with the rest; the Major was a walking book of reticence and the observances; he professed, also, in company with herself alone, to have had much trouble in drilling her to mark and properly preserve them. She had no desire to speak of her birthplace. But, for some reason or other, she did not share her hero's rather petulant anxiety to keep the curtain nailed down on that part of her life which preceded her entry into the ranks of the Royal Marines. Some might have thought that those fair large blue eyes of hers wandered now and then in pleasant unambitious walks behind the curtain, and toyed with little flowers of palest memory. Utterly tasteless, totally wanting in discernment, not to say gratitude, the Major could not presume her to be; and yet his wits perceived that her answers and the conduct she shaped in accordance with his repeated protests and long-reaching apprehensions of what he called danger, betrayed acquiescent obedience more than the connubial sympathy due to him. Danger on the field the Major knew not of; he did not scruple to name the word in relation to his wife. For, as he told her, should he, some day, as in the chapter of accidents might occur, sally into the street a Knight Companion of the Bath and become known to men as Sir Maxwell Strike, it would be decidedly disagreeable for him to be blown upon by a wind from Lymport. Moreover she was the mother of a son. The Major pointed out to her the duty she owed her offspring. Certainly the

protecting aegis of his rank and title would be over the lad, but she might depend upon it any indiscretion of hers would damage him in his future career, the Major assured her. Young Maxwell must be considered.

For all this, the mother and wife, when the black letter found them in the morning at breakfast, had burst into a fit of grief, and faltered that she wept for a father. Mrs. Andrew, to whom the letter was addressed, had simply held the letter to her in a trembling hand. The Major compared their behaviour, with marked encomiums of Mrs. Andrew. Now this lady and her husband were in obverse relative positions. The brewer had no will but his Harriet's. His esteem for her combined the constitutional feelings of an insignificantly-built little man for a majestic woman, and those of a worthy soul for the wife of his bosom. Possessing, or possessed by her, the good brewer was perfectly happy. She, it might be thought, under these circumstances, would not have minded much his hearing what he might hear. It happened, however, that she was as jealous of the winds of Lymport as the Major himself; as vigilant in debarring them from access to the brewery as now the Countess could have been. We are not dissecting human nature suffice it, therefore, from a mere glance at the surface, to say, that just as moneyed men are careful of their coin, women who have all the advantages in a conjunction, are miserly in keeping them, and shudder to think that one thing remains hidden, which the world they move in might put down pityingly in favour of their

spouse, even though to the little man 'twere naught. She assumed that a revelation would diminish her moral stature; and certainly it would not increase that of her husband. So no good could come of it. Besides, Andrew knew, his whole conduct was a tacit admission, that she had condescended in giving him her hand. The features of their union might not be changed altogether by a revelation, but it would be a shock to her.

Consequently, Harriet tenderly rebuked Caroline, for her outcry at the breakfast-table; and Caroline, the elder sister, who had not since marriage grown in so free an air, excused herself humbly, and the two were weeping when the Countess joined them and related what she had just undergone.

Hearing of Caroline's misdemeanour, however, Louisa's eyes rolled aloft in a paroxysm of tribulation. It was nothing to Caroline; it was comparatively nothing to Harriet; but the Count knew not Louisa had a father: believed that her parents had long ago been wiped out. And the Count was by nature inquisitive: and if he once cherished a suspicion he was restless; he was pointed in his inquiries: he was pertinacious in following out a clue: there never would be peace with him! And then, as they were secure in their privacy, Louisa cried aloud for her father, her beloved father! Harriet wept silently. Caroline alone expressed regret that she had not set eyes on him from the day she became a wife.

'How could we, dear?' the Countess pathetically asked, under drowning lids.

'Papa did not wish it,' sobbed Mrs. Andrew.

'I never shall forgive myself!' said the wife of the Major, drying her cheeks. Perhaps it was not herself whom she felt she never could forgive.

Ah! the man their father was! Incomparable Melchisedec! he might well be called. So generous! so lordly! When the rain of tears would subside for a moment, one would relate an anecdote or childish reminiscence of him, and provoke a more violent outburst.

'Never, among the nobles of any land, never have I seen one like him!' exclaimed the Countess, and immediately requested Harriet to tell her how it would be possible to stop Andrew's tongue in Silva's presence.

'At present, you know, my dear, they may talk as much as they like—they can't understand one another one bit.'

Mrs. Cogglesby comforted her by the assurance that Andrew had received an intimation of her wish for silence everywhere and toward everybody; and that he might be reckoned upon to respect it, without demanding a reason for the restriction. In other days Caroline and Louisa had a little looked down on Harriet's alliance with a dumpy man—a brewer—and had always kind Christian compassion for him if his name were mentioned. They seemed now, by their silence, to have a happier estimate of Andrew's qualities.

While the three sisters sat mingling their sorrows and alarms, their young brother was making his way to the house. As he knocked at the door he heard his name pronounced behind him,

and had no difficulty in recognizing the worthy brewer.

'What, Van, my boy! how are you? Quite a foreigner! By George, what a hat!'

Mr. Andrew bounced back two or three steps to regard the dusky sombrero.

'How do you do, sir?' said Evan.

'Sir to you!' Mr. Andrew briskly replied. 'Don't they teach you to give your fist in Portugal, eh? I'll "sir" you. Wait till I'm Sir Andrew, and then "sir" away. You do speak English still, Van, eh? Quite jolly, my boy?'

Mr. Andrew rubbed his hands to express that state in himself. Suddenly he stopped, blinked queerly at Evan, grew pensive, and said, 'Bless my soul! I forgot.'

The door opened, Mr. Andrew took Evan's arm, murmured a 'hush!' and trod gently along the passage to his library.

'We're safe here,' he said. 'There—there's something the matter up-stairs. The women are upset about something. Harriet —' Mr. Andrew hesitated, and branched off: 'You 've heard we 've got a new baby?'

Evan congratulated him; but another inquiry was in Mr. Andrew's aspect, and Evan's calm, sad manner answered it.

'Yes,'—Mr. Andrew shook his head dolefully—'a splendid little chap! a rare little chap! a we can't help these things, Van! They will happen. Sit down, my boy.'

Mr. Andrew again interrogated Evan with his eyes.

'My father is dead,' said Evan.

'Yes!' Mr. Andrew nodded, and glanced quickly at the ceiling, as if to make sure that none listened overhead. 'My parliamentary duties will soon be over for the season,' he added, aloud; pursuing, in an under-breath:

'Going down to-night, Van?'

'He is to be buried to-morrow,' said Evan.

'Then, of course, you go. Yes: quite right. Love your father and mother! always love your father and mother! Old Tom and I never knew ours. Tom's quite well-same as ever. I'll,' he rang the bell, 'have my chop in here with you. You must try and eat a bit, Van. Here we are, and there we go. Old Tom's wandering for one of his weeks. You'll see him some day. He ain't like me. No dinner to-day, I suppose, Charles?'

This was addressed to the footman. He announced:

'Dinner to-day at half-past six, as usual, sir,' bowed, and retired.

Mr. Andrew pored on the floor, and rubbed his hair back on his head. 'An odd world!' was his remark.

Evan lifted up his face to sigh: 'I 'm almost sick of it!'

'Damn appearances!' cried Mr. Andrew, jumping on his legs.

The action cooled him.

'I 'm sorry I swore,' he said. 'Bad habit! The Major's here—you know that?' and he assumed the Major's voice, and strutted in imitation of the stalwart marine. 'Major—a—Strike! of the Royal Marines! returned from China! covered with glory!—a hero, Van! We can't expect him to be much of a mourner. And

we shan't have him to dine with us to-day—that's something.' He sank his voice: 'I hope the widow 'll bear it.'

'I hope to God my mother is well!' Evan groaned.

'That'll do,' said Mr. Andrew. 'Don't say any more.'

As he spoke, he clapped Evan kindly on the back.

A message was brought from the ladies, requiring Evan to wait on them. He returned after some minutes.

'How do you think Harriet's looking?' asked Mr. Andrew. And, not waiting for an answer, whispered,

'Are they going down to the funeral, my boy?'

Evan's brow was dark, as he replied: 'They are not decided.'

'Won't Harriet go?'

'She is not going—she thinks not.'

'And the Countess—Louisa's upstairs, eh?—will she go?'

'She cannot leave the Count—she thinks not.'

'Won't Caroline go? Caroline can go. She—he—I mean—Caroline can go?'

'The Major objects. She wishes to.'

Mr. Andrew struck out his arm, and uttered, 'the Major!'—a compromise for a loud anathema. But the compromise was vain, for he sinned again in an explosion against appearances.

'I'm a brewer, Van. Do you think I'm ashamed of it? Not while I brew good beer, my boy!—not while I brew good beer! They don't think worse of me in the House for it. It isn't ungentlemanly to brew good beer, Van. But what's the use of talking?'

Mr. Andrew sat down, and murmured, 'Poor girl! poor girl!'

The allusion was to his wife; for presently he said: 'I can't see why Harriet can't go. What's to prevent her?'

Evan gazed at him steadily. Death's levelling influence was in Evan's mind. He was ready to say why, and fully.

Mr. Andrew arrested him with a sharp 'Never mind! Harriet does as she likes. I'm accustomed to—hem! what she does is best, after all. She doesn't interfere with my business, nor I with hers. Man and wife.'

Pausing a moment or so, Mr. Andrew intimated that they had better be dressing for dinner. With his hand on the door, which he kept closed, he said, in a businesslike way, 'You know, Van, as for me, I should be very willing—only too happy—to go down and pay all the respect I could.' He became confused, and shot his head from side to side, looking anywhere but at Evan. 'Happy now and to-morrow, to do anything in my power, if Harriet—follow the funeral—one of the family—anything I could do: but—a—we 'd better be dressing for dinner.' And out the enigmatic little man went.

Evan partly divined him then. But at dinner his behaviour was perplexing. He was too cheerful. He pledged the Count. He would have the Portuguese for this and that, and make Anglican efforts to repeat it, and laugh at his failures. He would not see that there was a father dead. At a table of actors, Mr. Andrew overdid his part, and was the worst. His wife could not help thinking him a heartless little man.

The poor show had its term. The ladies fled to the boudoir

sacred to grief. Evan was whispered that he was to join them when he might, without seeming mysterious to the Count. Before he reached them, they had talked tearfully over the clothes he should wear at Lymport, agreeing that his present foreign apparel, being black, would be suitable, and would serve almost as disguise, to the inhabitants at large; and as Evan had no English wear, and there was no time to procure any for him, that was well. They arranged exactly how long he should stay at Lymport, whom he should visit, the manner he should adopt toward the different inhabitants. By all means he was to avoid the approach of the gentry. For hours Evan, in a trance, half stupefied, had to listen to the Countess's directions how he was to comport himself in Lymport.

'Show that you have descended among them, dear Van, but are not of them. Our beautiful noble English poet expresses it so. You have come to pay the last mortal duties, which they will respect, if they are not brutes, and attempt no familiarities. Allow none: gently, but firmly. Imitate Silva. You remember, at Dona Risbonda's ball? When he met the Comte de Dartigues, and knew he was to be in disgrace with his Court on the morrow? Oh! the exquisite shade of difference in Silva's behaviour towards the Comte. So finely, delicately perceptible to the Comte, and not a soul saw it but that wretched Frenchman! He came to me: "Madame," he said, "is a question permitted?" I replied, "As-many as you please, M. le Comte, but no answers promised." He said: "May I ask if the Courier has yet come in?"—"Nay,

M. le Comte," I replied, "this is diplomacy. Inquire of me, or better, give me an opinion on the new glace silk from Paris."—"Madame," said he, bowing, "I hope Paris may send me aught so good, or that I shall grace half so well." I smiled, "You shall not be single in your hopes, M. le Comte. The gift would be base that you did not embellish." He lifted his hands, French-fashion: "Madame, it is that I have received the gift."—"Indeed! M. le Comte."—"Even now from the Count de Saldar, your husband." I looked most innocently, "From my husband, M. le Comte?"—"From him, Madame. A portrait. An Ambassador without his coat! The portrait was a finished performance." I said: "And may one beg the permission to inspect it?"—"Mais," said he, laughing: "were it you alone, it would be a privilege to me." I had to check him. "Believe me, M. le Comte, that when I look upon it, my praise of the artist will be extinguished by my pity for the subject." He should have stopped there; but you cannot have the last word with a Frenchman—not even a woman. Fortunately the Queen just then made her entry into the saloon, and his mot on the charity of our sex was lost. We bowed mutually, and were separated.' (The Countess employed her handkerchief.) 'Yes, dear Van! that is how you should behave. Imply things. With dearest Mama, of course, you are the dutiful son. Alas! you must stand for son and daughters. Mama has so much sense! She will understand how sadly we are placed. But in a week I will come to her for a day, and bring you back.'

So much his sister Louisa. His sister Harriet offered him her

house for a home in London, thence to project his new career. His sister Caroline sought a word with him in private, but only to weep bitterly in his arms, and utter a faint moan of regret at marriages in general. He loved this beautiful creature the best of his three sisters (partly, it may be, because he despised her superior officer), and tried with a few smothered words to induce her to accompany him: but she only shook her fair locks and moaned afresh. Mr. Andrew, in the farewell squeeze of the hand at the street-door, asked him if he wanted anything. He negatived the requirement of anything whatever, with an air of careless decision, though he was aware that his purse barely contained more than would take him the distance, but the instincts of this amateur gentleman were very fine and sensitive on questions of money. His family had never known him beg for a shilling, or admit his necessity for a penny: nor could he be made to accept money unless it was thrust into his pocket. Somehow his sisters had forgotten this peculiarity of his. Harriet only remembered it when too late.

'But I dare say Andrew has supplied him,' she said.

Andrew being interrogated, informed her what had passed between them.

'And you think a Harrington would confess he wanted money!' was her scornful exclamation. 'Evan would walk—he would die rather. It was treating him like a mendicant.'

Andrew had to shrink in his brewer's skin.

By some fatality all who were doomed to sit and listen to

the Countess de Saldar, were sure to be behindhand in an appointment.

When the young man arrived at the coach-office, he was politely informed that the vehicle, in which a seat had been secured for him, was in close alliance with time and tide, and being under the same rigid laws, could not possibly have waited for him, albeit it had stretched a point to the extent of a pair of minutes, at the urgent solicitation of a passenger.

'A gentleman who speaks so, sir,' said a volunteer mimic of the office, crowing and questioning from his throat in Goren's manner. 'Yok! yok! That was how he spoke, sir.'

Evan reddened, for it brought the scene on board the Jocasta vividly to his mind. The heavier business obliterated it. He took counsel with the clerks of the office, and eventually the volunteer mimic conducted him to certain livery stables, where Evan, like one accustomed to command, ordered a chariot to pursue the coach, received a touch of the hat for a lordly fee, and was soon rolling out of London.

CHAPTER VI. MY GENTLEMAN ON THE ROAD

The postillion had every reason to believe that he carried a real gentleman behind him; in other words, a purse long and liberal. He judged by all the points he knew of: a firm voice, a brief commanding style, an apparent indifference to expense, and the inexplicable minor characteristics, such as polished boots, and a striking wristband, and so forth, which will show a creature accustomed to step over the heads of men. He had, therefore, no particular anxiety to part company, and jogged easily on the white highway, beneath a moon that walked high and small over marble clouds.

Evan reclined in the chariot, revolving his sensations. In another mood he would have called, them thoughts, perhaps, and marvelled at their immensity. The theme was Love and Death. One might have supposed, from his occasional mutterings at the pace regulated by the postillion, that he was burning with anxiety to catch the flying coach. He had forgotten it: forgotten that he was giving chase to anything. A pair of wondering feminine eyes pursued him, and made him fret for the miles to throw a thicker veil between him and them. The serious level brows of Rose haunted the poor youth; and reflecting whither he was tending, and to what sight, he had shadowy touches of the holiness there

is in death, from which came a conflict between the imaged phantoms of his father and of Rose, and he sided against his love with some bitterness. His sisters, weeping for their father and holding aloof from his ashes, Evan swept from his mind. He called up the man his father was: the kindliness, the readiness, the gallant gaiety of the great Mel. Youths are fascinated by the barbarian virtues; and to Evan, under present influences, his father was a pattern of manhood. He asked himself: Was it infamous to earn one's bread? and answered it very strongly in his father's favour. The great Mel's creditors were not by to show him another feature of the case.

Hitherto, in passive obedience to the indoctrination of the Countess, Evan had looked on tailors as the proscribed race of modern society. He had pitied his father as a man superior to his fate; but despite the fitfully honest promptings with Rose (tempting to him because of the wondrous chivalry they argued, and at bottom false probably as the hypocrisy they affected to combat), he had been by no means sorry that the world saw not the spot on himself. Other sensations beset him now. Since such a man was banned by the world, which was to be despised?

The clear result of Evan's solitary musing was to cast a sort of halo over Tailordom. Death stood over the pale dead man, his father, and dared the world to sneer at him. By a singular caprice of fancy, Evan had no sooner grasped this image, than it was suggested that he might as well inspect his purse, and see how much money he was master of.

Are you impatient with this young man? He has little character for the moment. Most youths are like Pope's women; they have no character at all. And indeed a character that does not wait for circumstances to shape it, is of small worth in the race that must be run. To be set too early, is to take the work out of the hands of the Sculptor who fashions men. Happily a youth is always at school, and if he was shut up and without mark two or three hours ago, he will have something to show you now: as I have seen blooming seaflowers and other graduated organisms, when left undisturbed to their own action. Where the Fates have designed that he shall present his figure in a story, this is sure to happen.

To the postillion Evan was indebted for one of his first lessons.

About an hour after midnight pastoral stillness and the moon begat in the postillion desire for a pipe. Daylight prohibits the dream of it to mounted postillions. At night the question is more human, and allows appeal. The moon smiles assentingly, and smokers know that she really lends herself to the enjoyment of tobacco.

The postillion could remember gentlemen who did not object: who had even given him cigars. Turning round to see if haply the present inmate of the chariot might be smoking, he observed a head extended from the window.

'How far are we?' was inquired.

The postillion numbered the milestones passed.

'Do you see anything of the coach?'

'Can't say as I do, sir.'

He was commanded to stop. Evan jumped out.

'I don't think I'll take you any farther,' he said.

The postillion laughed to scorn the notion of his caring how far he went. With a pipe in his mouth, he insinuatingly remarked, he could jog on all night, and throw sleep to the dogs. Fresh horses at Hillford; fresh at Fallow field: and the gentleman himself would reach Lymport fresh in the morning.

'No, no; I won't take you any farther,' Evan repeated.

'But what do it matter, sir?' urged the postillion.

'I'd rather go on as I am. I—a—made no arrangement to take you the whole way.'

'Oh!' cried the postillion, 'don't you go troublin' yourself about that, sir. Master knows it 's touch-and-go about catchin' the coach. I'm all right.'

So infatuated was the fellow in the belief that he was dealing with a perfect gentleman—an easy pocket!

Now you would not suppose that one who presumes he has sufficient, would find a difficulty in asking how much he has to pay. With an effort, indifferently masked, Evan blurted:

'By the way, tell me—how much—what is the charge for the distance we've come?'

There are gentlemen-screws: there are conscientious gentlemen. They calculate, and remonstrating or not, they pay. The postillion would rather have had to do with the gentleman royal, who is above base computation; but he knew the humanity in the class he served, and with his conception of Evan only

partially dimmed, he remarked:

'Oh-h-h! that won't hurt you, sir. Jump along in,—settle that by-and-by.'

But when my gentleman stood fast, and renewed the demand to know the exact charge for the distance already traversed, the postillion dismounted, glanced him over, and speculated with his fingers tipping up his hat. Meantime Evan drew out his purse, a long one, certainly, but limp. Out of this drowned-looking wretch the last spark of life was taken by the sum the postillion ventured to name; and if paying your utmost farthing without examination of the charge, and cheerfully stepping out to walk fifty miles, penniless, constituted a postillion's gentleman, Evan would have passed the test. The sight of poverty, however, provokes familiar feelings in poor men, if you have not had occasion to show them you possess particular qualities. The postillion's eye was more on the purse than on the sum it surrendered.

'There,' said Evan, 'I shall walk. Good night.' And he flung his cloak to step forward.

'Stop a bit, sir!' arrested him.

The postillion rallied up sideways, with an assumption of genial respect. 'I didn't calc'late myself in that there amount.'

Were these words, think you, of a character to strike a young man hard on the breast, send the blood to his head, and set up in his heart a derisive chorus? My gentleman could pay his money, and keep his footing gallantly; but to be asked for a penny beyond what he possessed; to be seen beggared, and to

be claimed a debtor-aleck! Pride was the one developed faculty of Evan's nature. The Fates who mould us, always work from the main-spring. I will not say that the postillion stripped off the mask for him, at that instant completely; but he gave him the first true glimpse of his condition. From the vague sense of being an impostor, Evan awoke to the clear fact that he was likewise a fool.

It was impossible for him to deny the man's claim, and he would not have done it, if he could. Acceding tacitly, he squeezed the ends of his purse in his pocket, and with a 'Let me see,' tried his waistcoat. Not too impetuously; for he was careful of betraying the horrid emptiness till he was certain that the powers who wait on gentlemen had utterly forsaken him. They had not. He discovered a small coin, under ordinary circumstances not contemptible; but he did not stay to reflect, and was guilty of the error of offering it to the postillion.

The latter peered at it in the centre of his palm; gazed queerly in the gentleman's face, and then lifting the spit of silver for the disdain of his mistress, the moon, he drew a long breath of regret at the original mistake he had committed, and said:

'That's what you're goin' to give me for my night's work?'

The powers who wait on gentlemen had only helped the pretending youth to try him. A rejection of the demand would have been infinitely wiser and better than this paltry compromise. The postillion would have fought it: he would not have despised his fare.

How much it cost the poor pretender to reply, 'It 's the last

farthing I have, my man,' the postillion could not know.

'A scabby sixpence?' The postillion continued his question.

'You heard what I said,' Evan remarked.

The postillion drew another deep breath, and holding out the coin at arm's length:

'Well, sir!' he observed, as one whom mental conflict has brought to the philosophy of the case, 'now, was we to change places, I couldn't a' done it! I couldn't a' done it!' he reiterated, pausing emphatically.

'Take it, sir!' he magnanimously resumed; 'take it! You rides when you can, and you walks when you must. Lord forbid I should rob such a gentleman as you!'

One who feels a death, is for the hour lifted above the satire of postillions. A good genius prompted Evan to avoid the silly squabble that might have ensued and made him ridiculous. He took the money, quietly saying, 'Thank you.'

Not to lose his vantage, the postillion, though a little staggered by the move, rejoined: 'Don't mention it.'

Evan then said: 'Good night, my man. I won't wish, for your sake, that we changed places. You would have to walk fifty miles to be in time for your father's funeral. Good night.'

'You are it to look at!' was the postillion's comment, seeing my gentleman depart with great strides. He did not speak offensively; rather, it seemed, to appease his conscience for the original mistake he had committed, for subsequently came, 'My oath on it, I don't get took in again by a squash hat in a hurry!'

Unaware of the ban he had, by a sixpenny stamp, put upon an unoffending class, Evan went ahead, hearing the wheels of the chariot still dragging the road in his rear. The postillion was in a dissatisfied state of mind. He had asked and received more than his due. But in the matter of his sweet self, he had been choused, as he termed it. And my gentleman had baffled him, he could not quite tell how; but he had been got the better of; his sarcasms had not stuck, and returned to rankle in the bosom of their author. As a Jew, therefore, may eye an erewhile bondsman who has paid the bill, but stands out against excess of interest on legal grounds, the postillion regarded Evan, of whom he was now abreast, eager for a controversy.

'Fine night,' said the postillion, to begin, and was answered by a short assent. 'Lateish for a poor man to be out—don't you think sir, eh?'

'I ought to think so,' said Evan, mastering the shrewd unpleasantness he felt in the colloquy forced on him.

'Oh, you! you're a gentleman!' the postillion ejaculated.

'You see I have no money.'

'Feel it, too, sir.'

'I am sorry you should be the victim.'

'Victim!' the postillion seized on an objectionable word. 'I ain't no victim, unless you was up to a joke with me, sir, just now. Was that the game?'

Evan informed him that he never played jokes with money, or on men.

'Cause it looks like it, sir, to go to offer a poor chap sixpence.' The postillion laughed hollow from the end of his lungs. 'Sixpence for a night's work! It is a joke, if you don't mean it for one. Why, do you know, sir, I could go—there, I don't care where it is!—I could go before any magistrate livin', and he'd make ye pay. It's a charge, as custom is, and he'd make ye pay. Or p'rhaps you're a goin' on my generosity, and 'll say, he gev back that sixpence! Well! I shouldn't a' thought a gentleman'd make that his defence before a magistrate. But there, my man! if it makes ye happy, keep it. But you take my advice, sir. When you hires a chariot, see you've got the shiners. And don't you go never again offerin' a sixpence to a poor man for a night's work. They don't like it. It hurts their feelin's. Don't you forget that, sir. Lay that up in your mind.'

Now the postillion having thus relieved himself, jeeringly asked permission to smoke a pipe. To which Evan said, 'Pray, smoke, if it pleases you.' And the postillion, hardly mollified, added, 'The baccy's paid for,' and smoked.

As will sometimes happen, the feelings of the man who had spoken out and behaved doubtfully, grew gentle and Christian, whereas those of the man whose bearing under the trial had been irreproachable were much the reverse. The postillion smoked—he was a lord on his horse; he beheld my gentleman trudging in the dust. Awhile he enjoyed the contrast, dividing his attention between the footfarer and moon. To have had the last word is always a great thing; and to have given my gentleman a lecture,

because he shunned a dispute, also counts. And then there was the poor young fellow trudging to his father's funeral! The postillion chose to remember that now. In reality, he allowed, he had not very much to complain of, and my gentleman's courteous avoidance of provocation (the apparent fact that he, the postillion, had humbled him and got the better of him, equally, it may be), acted on his fine English spirit. I should not like to leave out the tobacco in this good change that was wrought in him. However, he presently astonished Evan by pulling up his horses, and crying that he was on his way to Hillford to bait, and saw no reason why he should not take a lift that part of the road, at all events. Evan thanked him briefly, but declined, and paced on with his head bent.

'It won't cost you nothing-not a sixpence!' the postillion sang out, pursuing him. 'Come, sir! be a man! I ain't a hintin' at anything—jump in.'

Evan again declined, and looked out for a side path to escape the fellow, whose bounty was worse to him than his abuse, and whose mention of the sixpence was unlucky.

'Dash it!' cried the postillion, 'you're going down to a funeral —I think you said your father's, sir—you may as well try and get there respectable—as far as I go. It's one to me whether you're in or out; the horses won't feel it, and I do wish you'd take a lift and welcome. It's because you're too much of a gentleman to be beholden to a poor man, I suppose!'

Evan's young pride may have had a little of that base mixture

in it, and certainly he would have preferred that the invitation had not been made to him; but he was capable of appreciating what the rejection of a piece of friendliness involved, and as he saw that the man was sincere, he did violence to himself, and said: 'Very well; then I'll jump in.'

The postillion was off his horse in a twinkling, and trotted his bandy legs to undo the door, as to a gentleman who paid. This act of service Evan valued.

'Suppose I were to ask you to take the sixpence now?' he said, turning round, with one foot on the step.

'Well, sir,' the postillion sent his hat aside to answer. 'I don't want it—I'd rather not have it; but there! I'll take it—dash the sixpence! and we'll cry quits.'

Evan, surprised and pleased with him, dropped the bit of money in his hand, saying: 'It will fill a pipe for you. While you 're smoking it, think of me as in your debt. You're the only man I ever owed a penny to.'

The postillion put it in a side pocket apart, and observed: 'A sixpence kindly meant is worth any crown-piece that's grudged —that it is! In you jump, sir. It's a jolly night!'

Thus may one, not a conscious sage, play the right tune on this human nature of ours: by forbearance, put it in the wrong; and then, by not refusing the burden of an obligation, confer something better. The instrument is simpler than we are taught to fancy. But it was doubtless owing to a strong emotion in his soul, as well as to the stuff he was made of, that the youth behaved as

he did. We are now and then above our own actions; seldom on a level with them. Evan, I dare say, was long in learning to draw any gratification from the fact that he had achieved without money the unparalleled conquest of a man. Perhaps he never knew what immediate influence on his fortune this episode effected.

At Hillford they went their different ways. The postillion wished him good speed, and Evan shook his hand. He did so rather abruptly, for the postillion was fumbling at his pocket, and evidently rounding about a proposal in his mind.

My gentleman has now the road to himself. Money is the clothing of a gentleman: he may wear it well or ill. Some, you will mark, carry great quantities of it gracefully: some, with a stinted supply, present a decent appearance: very few, I imagine, will bear inspection, who are absolutely stripped of it. All, save the shameless, are toiling to escape that trial. My gentleman, treading the white highway across the solitary heaths, that swell far and wide to the moon, is, by the postillion, who has seen him, pronounced no sham. Nor do I think the opinion of any man worthless, who has had the postillion's authority for speaking. But it is, I am told, a finer test to embellish much gentleman-apparel, than to walk with dignity totally unadorned. This simply tries the soundness of our faculties: that tempts them in erratic directions. It is the difference between active and passive excellence. As there is hardly any situation, however, so interesting to reflect upon as that of a man without a penny in his pocket, and a gizzard full of pride, we will leave Mr. Evan

Harrington to what fresh adventures may befall him, walking toward the funeral plumes of the firs, under the soft midsummer flush, westward, where his father lies.

CHAPTER VII. MOTHER AND SON

Rare as epic song is the man who is thorough in what he does. And happily so; for in life he subjugates us, and he makes us bondsmen to his ashes. It was in the order of things that the great Mel should be borne to his final resting-place by a troop of creditors. You have seen (since the occasion demands a pompous simile) clouds that all day cling about the sun, and, in seeking to obscure him, are compelled to blaze in his livery at fall of night they break from him illumined, hang mournfully above him, and wear his natural glories long after he is gone. Thus, then, these worthy fellows, faithful to him to the dust, fulfilled Mel's triumphant passage amongst them, and closed his career.

To regale them when they returned, Mrs. Mel, whose mind was not intent on greatness, was occupied in spreading meat and wine. Mrs. Fiske assisted her, as well as she could, seeing that one hand was entirely engaged by her handkerchief. She had already stumbled, and dropped a glass, which had brought on her sharp condemnation from her aunt, who bade her sit down, or go upstairs to have her cry out, and then return to be serviceable.

'Oh! I can't help it!' sobbed Mrs. Fiske. 'That he should be carried away, and none of his children to see him the last time! I can understand Louisa—and Harriet, too, perhaps? But why could not Caroline? And that they should be too fine ladies to let their brother come and bury his father. Oh! it does seem–'

Mrs. Fiske fell into a chair, and surrendered to grief.

'Where is the cold tongue?' said Mrs. Mel to Sally, the maid, in a brief under-voice.

'Please mum, Jacko–!'

'He must be whipped. You are a careless slut.'

'Please, I can't think of everybody and everything, and poor master–'

Sally plumped on a seat, and took sanctuary under her apron. Mrs. Mel glanced at the pair, continuing her labour.

'Oh, aunt, aunt!' cried Mrs. Fiske, 'why didn't you put it off for another day, to give Evan a chance?'

'Master 'd have kept another two days, he would!' whimpered Sally.

'Oh, aunt! to think!' cried Mrs. Fiske.

'And his coffin not bearin' of his spurs!' whimpered Sally.

Mrs. Mel interrupted them by commanding Sally to go to the drawing-room, and ask a lady there, of the name of Mrs. Wishaw, whether she would like to have some lunch sent up to her. Mrs. Fiske was requested to put towels in Evan's bedroom.

'Yes, aunt, if you're not infatuated!' said Mrs. Fiske, as she prepared to obey; while Sally, seeing that her public exhibition of sorrow and sympathy could be indulged but an instant longer, unwound herself for a violent paroxysm, blurting between stops:

'If he'd ony've gone to his last bed comfortable!… If he'd ony 've been that decent as not for to go to his last bed with his clothes on! … If he'd ony've had a comfortable sheet!… It makes

a woman feel cold to think of him full dressed there, as if he was goin' to be a soldier on the Day o' Judgement!'

To let people speak was a maxim of Mrs. Mel's, and a wise one for any form of society when emotions are very much on the surface. She continued her arrangements quietly, and, having counted the number of plates and glasses, and told off the guests on her fingers, she, sat down to await them.

The first one who entered the room was her son.

'You have come,' said Mrs. Mel, flushing slightly, but otherwise outwardly calm.

'You didn't suppose I should stay away from you, mother?'

Evan kissed her cheek.

'I knew you would not.'

Mrs. Mel examined him with those eyes of hers that compassed objects in a single glance. She drew her finger on each side of her upper lip, and half smiled, saying:

'That won't do here.'

'What?' asked Evan, and proceeded immediately to make inquiries about her health, which she satisfied with a nod.

'You saw him lowered, Van?'

'Yes, mother.'

'Then go and wash yourself, for you are dirty, and then come and take your place at the head of the table.'

'Must I sit here, mother?'

'Without a doubt—you must. You know your room. Quick!'

In this manner their first interview passed.

Mrs. Fiske rushed in to exclaim:

'So, you were right, aunt—he has come. I met him on the stairs. Oh! how like dear uncle Mel he looks, in the militia, with that moustache. I just remember him as a child; and, oh, what a gentleman he is!'

At the end of the sentence Mrs. Mel's face suddenly darkened: she said, in a deep voice:

'Don't dare to talk that nonsense before him, Ann.'

Mrs. Fiske looked astonished.

'What have I done, aunt?'

'He shan't be ruined by a parcel of fools,' said Mrs. Mel. 'There, go! Women have no place here.'

'How the wretches can force themselves to touch a morsel, after this morning!' Mrs. Fiske exclaimed, glancing at the table.

'Men must eat,' said Mrs. Mel.

The mourners were heard gathering outside the door. Mrs. Fiske escaped into the kitchen. Mrs. Mel admitted them into the parlour, bowing much above the level of many of the heads that passed her.

Assembled were Messrs. Barnes, Kilne, and Grossby, whom we know; Mr. Doubleday, the ironmonger; Mr. Joyce, the grocer; Mr. Perkins, commonly called Lawyer Perkins; Mr. Welbeck, the pier-master of Lymport; Bartholomew Fiske; Mr. Coxwell, a Fallow field maltster, brewer, and farmer; creditors of various dimensions, all of them. Mr. Goren coming last, behind his spectacles.

'My son will be with you directly, to preside,' said Mrs. Mel. 'Accept my thanks for the respect you have shown my husband. I wish you good morning.'

'Morning, ma'am,' answered several voices, and Mrs. Mel retired.

The mourners then set to work to relieve their hats of the appendages of crape. An undertaker's man took possession of the long black cloaks. The gloves were generally pocketed.

'That's my second black pair this year,' said Joyce.

'They'll last a time to come. I don't need to buy gloves while neighbours pop off.'

'Undertakers' gloves seem to me as if they're made for mutton fists,' remarked Welbeck; upon which Kilne nudged Barnes, the butcher, with a sharp 'Aha!' and Barnes observed:

'Oh! I never wear 'em—they does for my boys on Sundays. I smoke a pipe at home.'

The Fallow field farmer held his length of crape aloft and inquired: 'What shall do with this?'

'Oh, you keep it,' said one or two.

Coxwell rubbed his chin. 'Don't like to rob the widder.'

'What's left goes to the undertaker?' asked Grossby.

'To be sure,' said Barnes; and Kilne added: 'It's a job': Lawyer Perkins ejaculating confidently, 'Perquisites of office, gentlemen; perquisites of office!' which settled the dispute and appeased every conscience.

A survey of the table ensued. The mourners felt hunger, or else

thirst; but had not, it appeared, amalgamated the two appetites as yet. Thirst was the predominant declaration; and Grossby, after an examination of the decanters, unctuously deduced the fact, which he announced, that port and sherry were present.

'Try the port,' said Kilne.

'Good?' Barnes inquired.

A very intelligent 'I ought to know,' with a reserve of regret at the extension of his intimacy with the particular vintage under that roof, was winked by Kilne.

Lawyer Perkins touched the arm of a mourner about to be experimental on Kilne's port—

'I think we had better wait till young Mr. Harrington takes the table, don't you see?'

'Yes,-ah!' croaked Goren. 'The head of the family, as the saying goes!'

'I suppose we shan't go into business to-day?' Joyce carelessly observed.

Lawyer Perkins answered:

'No. You can't expect it. Mr. Harrington has led me to anticipate that he will appoint a day. Don't you see?'

'Oh! I see,' returned Joyce. 'I ain't in such a hurry. What's he doing?'

Doubleday, whose propensities were waggish, suggested 'shaving,' but half ashamed of it, since the joke missed, fell to as if he were soaping his face, and had some trouble to contract his jaw.

The delay in Evan's attendance on the guests of the house was caused by the fact that Mrs. Mel had lain in wait for him descending, to warn him that he must treat them with no supercilious civility, and to tell him partly the reason why. On hearing the potential relations in which they stood toward the estate of his father, Evan hastily and with the assurance of a son of fortune, said they should be paid.

'That's what they would like to hear,' said Mrs. Mel. 'You may just mention it when they're going to leave. Say you will fix a day to meet them.'

'Every farthing!' pursued Evan, on whom the tidings were beginning to operate. 'What! debts? my poor father!'

'And a thumping sum, Van. You will open your eyes wider.'

'But it shall be paid, mother,—it shall be paid. Debts? I hate them. I'd slave night and day to pay them.'

Mrs. Mel spoke in a more positive tense: 'And so will I, Van. Now, go.'

It mattered little to her what sort of effect on his demeanour her revelation produced, so long as the resolve she sought to bring him to was nailed in his mind; and she was a woman to knock and knock again, till it was firmly fixed there. With a strong purpose, and no plans, there were few who could resist what, in her circle, she willed; not even a youth who would gaily have marched to the scaffold rather than stand behind a counter. A purpose wedded to plans may easily suffer shipwreck; but an unfettered purpose that moulds circumstances as they arise, masters us, and

is terrible. Character melts to it, like metal in the steady furnace. The projector of plots is but a miserable gambler and votary of chances. Of a far higher quality is the will that can subdue itself to wait, and lay no petty traps for opportunity. Poets may fable of such a will, that it makes the very heavens conform to it; or, I may add, what is almost equal thereto, one who would be a gentleman, to consent to be a tailor. The only person who ever held in his course against Mrs. Mel, was Mel,—her husband; but, with him, she was under the physical fascination of her youth, and it never left her. In her heart she barely blamed him. What he did, she took among other inevitable matters.

The door closed upon Evan, and waiting at the foot, of the stairs a minute to hear how he was received, Mrs. Mel went to the kitchen and called the name of Dandy, which brought out an ill-built, low-browed, small man, in a baggy suit of black, who hopped up to her with a surly salute. Dandy was a bird Mrs. Mel had herself brought down, and she had for him something of a sportsman's regard for his victim. Dandy was the cleaner of boots and runner of errands in the household of Melchisedec, having originally entered it on a dark night by the cellar. Mrs. Mel, on that occasion, was sleeping in her dressing-gown, to be ready to give the gallant night-hawk, her husband, the service he might require on his return to the nest. Hearing a suspicious noise below, she rose, and deliberately loaded a pair of horse-pistols, weapons Mel had worn in his holsters in the heroic days gone; and with these she stepped downstairs straight to the cellar,

carrying a lantern at her girdle. She could not only load, but present and fire. Dandy was foremost in stating that she called him forth steadily, three times, before the pistol was discharged. He admitted that he was frightened, and incapable of speech, at the apparition of the tall, terrific woman. After the third time of asking he had the ball lodged in his leg and fell. Mrs. Mel was in the habit of bearing heavier weights than Dandy. She made no ado about lugging him to a chamber, where, with her own hands (for this woman had some slight knowledge of surgery, and was great in herbs and drugs) she dressed his wound, and put him to bed; crying contempt (ever present in Dandy's memory) at such a poor creature undertaking the work of housebreaker. Taught that he really was a poor creature for the work, Dandy, his nursing over, begged to be allowed to stop and wait on Mrs. Mel; and she who had, like many strong natures, a share of pity for the objects she despised, did not cast him out. A jerk in his gait, owing to the bit of lead Mrs. Mel had dropped into him, and a little, perhaps, to her self-satisfied essay in surgical science on his person, earned him the name he went by.

When her neighbours remonstrated with her for housing a reprobate, Mrs. Mel would say: 'Dandy is well-fed and well-physicked: there's no harm in Dandy'; by which she may have meant that the food won his gratitude, and the physic reduced his humours. She had observed human nature. At any rate, Dandy was her creature; and the great Mel himself rallied her about her squire.

'When were you drunk last?' was Mrs. Mel's address to Dandy, as he stood waiting for orders.

He replied to it in an altogether injured way:

'There, now; you've been and called me away from my dinner to ask me that. Why, when I had the last chance, to be sure.'

'And you were at dinner in your new black suit?'

'Well,' growled Dandy, 'I borrowed Sally's apron. Seems I can't please ye.'

Mrs. Mel neither enjoined nor cared for outward forms of respect, where she was sure of complete subserviency. If Dandy went beyond the limits, she gave him an extra dose. Up to the limits he might talk as he pleased, in accordance with Mrs. Mel's maxim, that it was a necessary relief to all talking creatures.

'Now, take off your apron,' she said, 'and wash your hands, dirty pig, and go and wait at table in there'; she pointed to the parlour-door: 'Come straight to me when everybody has left.'

'Well, there I am with the bottles again,' returned Dandy. 'It 's your fault this time, mind! I'll come as straight as I can.'

Dandy turned away to perform her bidding, and Mrs. Mel ascended to the drawing-room to sit with Mrs. Wishaw, who was, as she told all who chose to hear, an old flame of Mel's, and was besides, what Mrs. Mel thought more of, the wife of Mel's principal creditor, a wholesale dealer in cloth, resident in London.

The conviviality of the mourners did not disturb the house. Still, men who are not accustomed to see the colour of wine every

day, will sit and enjoy it, even upon solemn occasions, and the longer they sit the more they forget the matter that has brought them together. Pleading their wives and shops, however, they released Evan from his miserable office late in the afternoon.

His mother came down to him,—and saying, 'I see how you did the journey—you walked it,' told him to follow her.

'Yes, mother,' Evan yawned, 'I walked part of the way. I met a fellow in a gig about ten miles out of Fallow field, and he gave me a lift to Flatsham. I just reached Lymport in time, thank Heaven! I wouldn't have missed that! By the way, I've satisfied these men.'

'Oh!' said Mrs. Mel.

'They wanted—one or two of them—what a penance it is to have to sit among those people an hour!—they wanted to ask me about the business, but I silenced them. I told them to meet me here this day week.'

Mrs. Mel again said 'Oh!' and, pushing into one of the upper rooms, 'Here's your bedroom, Van, just as you left it.'

'Ah, so it is,' muttered Evan, eyeing a print. 'The Douglas and the Percy: "he took the dead man by the hand." What an age it seems since I last saw that. There's Sir Hugh Montgomery on horseback—he hasn't moved. Don't you remember my father calling it the Battle of Tit-for-Tat? Gallant Percy! I know he wished he had lived in those days of knights and battles.'

'It does not much signify whom one has to make clothes for,' observed Mrs. Mel. Her son happily did not mark her.

'I think we neither of us were made for the days of pence and

pounds,' he continued. 'Now, mother, sit down, and talk to me about him. Did he mention me? Did he give me his blessing? I hope he did not suffer. I'd have given anything to press his hand,' and looking wistfully at the Percy lifting the hand of Douglas dead, Evan's eyes filled with big tears.

'He suffered very little,' returned Mrs. Mel, 'and his last words were about you.'

'What were they?' Evan burst out.

'I will tell you another time. Now undress, and go to bed. When I talk to you, Van, I want a cool head to listen. You do nothing but yawn yard-measures.'

The mouth of the weary youth instinctively snapped short the abhorred emblem.

'Here, I will help you, Van.'

In spite of his remonstrances and petitions for talk, she took off his coat and waistcoat, contemptuously criticizing the cloth of foreign tailors and their absurd cut.

'Have you heard from Louisa?' asked Evan.

'Yes, yes—about your sisters by-and-by. Now, be good, and go to bed.'

She still treated him like a boy, whom she was going to force to the resolution of a man.

Dandy's sleeping-room was on the same floor as Evan's. Thither, when she had quitted her son, she directed her steps. She had heard Dandy tumble up-stairs the moment his duties were over, and knew what to expect when the bottles had been in

his way; for drink made Dandy savage, and a terror to himself. It was her command to him that, when he happened to come across liquor, he should immediately seek his bedroom and bolt the door, and Dandy had got the habit of obeying her. On this occasion he was vindictive against her, seeing that she had delivered him over to his enemy with malice prepense. A good deal of knocking, and summoning of Dandy by name, was required before she was admitted, and the sight of her did not delight him, as he testified.

'I 'm drunk!' he bawled. 'Will that do for ye?'

Mrs. Mel stood with her two hands crossed above her apron-string, noting his sullen lurking eye with the calm of a tamer of beasts.

'You go out of the room; I'm drunk!' Dandy repeated, and pitched forward on the bed-post, in the middle of an oath.

She understood that it was pure kindness on Dandy's part to bid her go and be out of his reach; and therefore, on his becoming so abusive as to be menacing, she, without a shade of anger, and in the most unruffled manner, administered to him the remedy she had reserved, in the shape of a smart box on the ear, which sent him flat to the floor. He rose, after two or three efforts, quite subdued.

'Now, Dandy, sit on the edge of the bed.'

Dandy sat on the extreme edge, and Mrs. Mel pursued:

'Now, Dandy, tell me what your master said at the table.'

'Talked at 'em like a lord, he did,' said Dandy, stupidly

consoling the boxed ear.

'What were his words?'

Dandy's peculiarity was, that he never remembered anything save when drunk, and Mrs. Mel's dose had rather sobered him. By degrees, scratching at his head haltingly, he gave the context.

'"Gentlemen, I hear for the first time, you've claims against my poor father. Nobody shall ever say he died, and any man was the worse for it. I'll meet you next week, and I'll bind myself by law. Here's Lawyer Perkins. No; Mr. Perkins. I'll pay off every penny. Gentlemen, look upon me as your debtor, and not my father."'

Delivering this with tolerable steadiness, Dandy asked, 'Will that do?'

'That will do,' said Mrs. Mel. 'I'll send you up some tea presently. Lie down, Dandy.'

The house was dark and silent when Evan, refreshed by his rest, descended to seek his mother. She was sitting alone in the parlour. With a tenderness which Mrs. Mel permitted rather than encouraged, Evan put his arm round her neck, and kissed her many times. One of the symptoms of heavy sorrow, a longing for the signs of love, made Evan fondle his mother, and bend over her yearningly. Mrs. Mel said once: 'Dear Van; good boy!' and quietly sat through his caresses.

'Sitting up for me, mother?' he whispered.

'Yes, Van; we may as well have our talk out.'

'Ah!' he took a chair close by her side, 'tell me my father's last words.'

'He said he hoped you would never be a tailor.'

Evan's forehead wrinkled up. 'There's not much fear of that, then!'

His mother turned her face on him, and examined him with a rigorous placidity; all her features seeming to bear down on him. Evan did not like the look.

'You object to trade, Van?'

'Yes, decidedly, mother-hate it; but that's not what I want to talk to you about. Didn't my father speak of me much?'

'He desired that you should wear his militia sword, if you got a commission.'

'I have rather given up hope of the Army,' said Evan.

Mrs. Mel requested him to tell her what a colonel's full pay amounted to; and again, the number of years it required, on a rough calculation, to attain that grade. In reply to his statement she observed: 'A tailor might realize twice the sum in a quarter of the time.'

'What if he does-double, or treble?' cried Evan, impetuously; and to avoid the theme, and cast off the bad impression it produced on him, he rubbed his hands, and said: 'I want to talk to you about my prospects, mother.'

'What are they?' Mrs. Mel inquired.

The severity of her mien and sceptical coldness of her speech caused him to inspect them suddenly, as if she had lent him her eyes. He put them by, till the gold should recover its natural shine, saying: 'By the way, mother, I 've written the half of a History

of Portugal.'

'Have you?' said Mrs. Mel. 'For Louisa?'

'No, mother, of course not: to sell it. Albuquerque! what a splendid fellow he was!'

Informing him that he knew she abominated foreign names, she said: 'And your prospects are, writing Histories of Portugal?'

'No, mother. I was going to tell you, I expect a Government appointment. Mr. Jocelyn likes my work—I think he likes me. You know, I was his private secretary for ten months.'

'You write a good hand,' his mother interposed.

'And I'm certain I was born for diplomacy.'

'For an easy chair, and an ink-dish before you, and lacqueys behind. What's to be your income, Van?'

Evan carelessly remarked that he must wait and see.

'A very proper thing to do,' said Mrs. Mel; for now that she had fixed him to some explanation of his prospects, she could condescend in her stiff way to banter.

Slightly touched by it, Evan pursued, half laughing, as men do who wish to propitiate common sense on behalf of what seems tolerably absurd: 'It 's not the immediate income, you know, mother: one thinks of one's future. In the diplomatic service, as Louisa says, you come to be known to Ministers gradually, I mean. That is, they hear of you; and if you show you have some capacity—Louisa wants me to throw it up in time, and stand for Parliament. Andrew, she thinks, would be glad to help me to his seat. Once in Parliament, and known to Ministers, you—your

career is open to you.'

In justice to Mr. Evan Harrington, it must be said, he built up this extraordinary card-castle to dazzle his mother's mind: he had lost his right grasp of her character for the moment, because of an undefined suspicion of something she intended, and which sent him himself to take refuge in those flimsy structures; while the very altitude he reached beguiled his imagination, and made him hope to impress hers.

Mrs. Mel dealt it one fillip. 'And in the meantime how are you to live, and pay the creditors?'

Though Evan answered cheerfully, 'Oh, they will wait, and I can live on anything,' he was nevertheless floundering on the ground amid the ruins of the superb edifice; and his mother, upright and rigid, continuing, 'You can live on anything, and they will wait, and call your father a rogue,' he started, grievously bitten by one of the serpents of earth.

'Good heaven, mother! what are you saying?'

'That they will call your father a rogue, and will have a right to,' said the relentless woman.

'Not while I live!' Evan exclaimed.

'You may stop one mouth with your fist, but you won't stop a dozen, Van.'

Evan jumped up and walked the room.

'What am I to do?' he cried. 'I will pay everything. I will bind myself to pay every farthing. What more can I possibly do?'

'Make the money,' said Mrs. Mel's deep voice.

Evan faced her: 'My dear mother, you are very unjust and inconsiderate. I have been working and doing my best. I promise —what do the debts amount to?'

'Something like L5000 in all, Van.'

'Very well.' Youth is not alarmed by the sound of big sums. 'Very well—I will pay it.'

Evan looked as proud as if he had just clapped down the full amount on the table.

'Out of the History of Portugal, half written, and the prospect of a Government appointment?'

Mrs. Mel raised her eyelids to him.

'In time-in time, mother!'

'Mention your proposal to the creditors when you meet them this day week,' she said.

Neither of them spoke for several minutes. Then Evan came close to her, saying:

'What is it you want of me, mother?'

'I want nothing, Van—I can support myself.'

'But what would you have me do, mother?'

'Be honest; do your duty, and don't be a fool about it.'

'I will try,' he rejoined. 'You tell me to make the money. Where and how can I make it? I am perfectly willing to work.'

'In this house,' said Mrs. Mel; and, as this was pretty clear speaking, she stood up to lend her figure to it.

'Here?' faltered Evan. 'What! be a –'

'Tailor!' The word did not sting her tongue.

'I? Oh, that's quite impossible!' said Evan. And visions of leprosy, and Rose shrinking her skirts from contact with him, shadowed out and away in his mind.

'Understand your choice!' Mrs. Mel imperiously spoke. 'What are brains given you for? To be played the fool with by idiots and women? You have L5000 to pay to save your father from being called a rogue. You can only make the money in one way, which is open to you. This business might produce a thousand pounds a-year and more. In seven or eight years you may clear your father's name, and live better all the time than many of your bankrupt gentlemen. You have told the creditors you will pay them. Do you think they're gaping fools, to be satisfied by a History of Portugal? If you refuse to take the business at once, they will sell me up, and quite right too. Understand your choice. There's Mr. Goren has promised to have you in London a couple of months, and teach you what he can. He is a kind friend. Would any of your gentlemen acquaintance do the like for you? Understand your choice. You will be a beggar—the son of a rogue—or an honest man who has cleared his father's name!'

During this strenuously uttered allocution, Mrs. Mel, though her chest heaved but faintly against her crossed hands, showed by the dilatation of her eyes, and the light in them, that she felt her words. There is that in the aspect of a fine frame breathing hard facts, which, to a youth who has been tumbled headlong from his card-castles and airy fabrics, is masterful, and like the pressure of a Fate. Evan drooped his head.

'Now,' said Mrs. Mel, 'you shall have some supper.'

Evan told her he could not eat.

'I insist upon your eating,' said Mrs. Mel; 'empty stomachs are foul counsellors.'

'Mother! do you want to drive me mad?' cried Evan.

She looked at him to see whether the string she held him by would bear the slight additional strain: decided not to press a small point.

'Then go to bed and sleep on it,' she said—sure of him—and gave her cheek for his kiss, for she never performed the operation, but kept her mouth, as she remarked, for food and speech, and not for slobbering mummeries.

Evan returned to his solitary room. He sat on the bed and tried to think, oppressed by horrible sensations of self-contempt, that caused whatever he touched to sicken him.

There were the Douglas and the Percy on the wall. It was a happy and a glorious time, was it not, when men lent each other blows that killed outright; when to be brave and cherish noble feelings brought honour; when strength of arm and steadiness of heart won fortune; when the fair stars of earth—sweet women—wakened and warmed the love of squires of low degree. This legacy of the dead man's hand! Evan would have paid it with his blood; but to be in bondage all his days to it; through it to lose all that was dear to him; to wear the length of a loathed existence!—we should pardon a young man's wretchedness at the prospect, for it was in a time before our joyful era of universal equality.

Yet he never cast a shade of blame upon his father.

The hours moved on, and he found himself staring at his small candle, which struggled more and more faintly with the morning light, like his own flickering ambition against the facts of life.

CHAPTER VIII. INTRODUCES AN ECCENTRIC

At the Aurora—one of those rare antiquated taverns, smelling of comfortable time and solid English fare, that had sprung up in the great coffee days, when taverns were clubs, and had since subsisted on the attachment of steady bachelor Templars there had been dismay, and even sorrow, for a month. The most constant patron of the establishment—an old gentleman who had dined there for seven-and-twenty years, four days in the week, off dishes dedicated to the particular days, and had grown grey with the landlady, the cook, and the head-waiter—this old gentleman had abruptly withheld his presence. Though his name, his residence, his occupation, were things only to be speculated on at the Aurora, he was very well known there, and as men are best to be known: that is to say, by their habits. Some affection for him also was felt. The landlady looked on him as a part of the house. The cook and the waiter were accustomed to receive acceptable compliments from him monthly. His precise words, his regular ancient jokes, his pint of Madeira and after-pint of Port, his antique bow to the landlady, passing out and in, his method of spreading his table-napkin on his lap and looking up at the ceiling ere he fell to, and how he talked to himself during the repast, and indulged in short chuckles, and the one look of

perfect felicity that played over his features when he had taken his first sip of Port—these were matters it pained them at the Aurora to have to remember.

For three weeks the resolution not to regard him as of the past was general. The Aurora was the old gentleman's home. Men do not play truant from home at sixty years of age. He must, therefore, be seriously indisposed. The kind heart of the landlady fretted to think he might have no soul to nurse and care for him; but she kept his corner near the fire-place vacant, and took care that his pint of Madeira was there. The belief was gaining ground that he had gone, and that nothing but his ghost would ever sit there again. Still the melancholy ceremony continued: for the landlady was not without a secret hope, that in spite of his reserve and the mystery surrounding him, he would have sent her a last word. The cook and head-waiter, interrogated as to their dealings with the old gentleman, testified solemnly to the fact of their having performed their duty by him. They would not go against their interests so much as to forget one of his ways, they said-taking oath, as it were, by their lower nature, in order to be credited: an instinct men have of one another. The landlady could not contradict them, for the old gentleman had made no complaint; but then she called to memory that fifteen years back, in such and such a year, Wednesday's, dish had been, by shameful oversight, furnished him for Tuesday's, and he had eaten it quietly, but refused his Port; which pathetic event had caused alarm and

inquiry, when the error was discovered, and apologized for, the old gentleman merely saying, 'Don't let it happen again.' Next day he drank his Port, as usual, and the wheels of the Aurora went smoothly. The landlady was thus justified in averring that something had been done by somebody, albeit unable to point to anything specific. Women, who are almost as deeply bound to habit as old gentlemen, possess more of its spiritual element, and are warned by dreams, omens, creepings of the flesh, unwonted chills, suicide of china, and other shadowing signs, when a break is to be anticipated, or, has occurred. The landlady of the Aurora tavern was visited by none of these, and with that beautiful trust which habit gives, and which boastful love or vainer earthly qualities would fail in effecting, she ordered that the pint of Madeira should stand from six o'clock in the evening till seven—a small monument of confidence in him who was at one instant the 'poor old dear'; at another, the 'naughty old gad-about'; further, the 'faithless old-good-for-nothing'; and again, the 'blessed pet' of the landlady's parlour, alternately and indiscriminately apostrophized by herself, her sister, and daughter.

On the last day of the month a step was heard coming up the long alley which led from the riotous scrambling street to the plentiful cheerful heart of the Aurora. The landlady knew the step. She checked the natural flutterings of her ribbons, toned down the strong simper that was on her lips, rose, pushed aside her daughter, and, as the step approached, curtsied composedly.

Old Habit lifted his hat, and passed. With the same touching confidence in the Aurora that the Aurora had in him, he went straight to his corner, expressed no surprise at his welcome by the Madeira, and thereby apparently indicated that his appearance should enjoy a similar immunity.

As of old, he called 'Jonathan!' and was not to be disturbed till he did so. Seeing that Jonathan smirked and twiddled his napkin, the old gentleman added, 'Thursday!'

But Jonathan, a man, had not his mistress's keen intuition of the deportment necessitated by the case, or was incapable of putting the screw upon weak excited nature, for he continued to smirk, and was remarking how glad he was, he was sure, and something he had dared to think and almost to fear, when the old gentleman called to him, as if he were at the other end of the room, 'Will you order Thursday, or not, sir?' Whereat Jonathan flew, and two or three cosy diners glanced up from their plates, or the paper, smiled, and pursued their capital occupation.

'Glad to see me!' the old gentleman muttered, querulously. 'Of course, glad to see a customer! Why do you tell me that? Talk! tattle! might as well have a woman to wait—just!'

He wiped his forehead largely with his handkerchief; as one whom Calamity hunted a little too hard in summer weather.

'No tumbling-room for the wine, too!'

That was his next grievance. He changed the pint of Madeira from his left side to his right, and went under his handkerchief again, feverishly. The world was severe with this old gentleman.

‘Ah! clock wrong now!’

He leaned back like a man who can no longer carry his burdens, informing Jonathan, on his coming up to place the roll of bread and firm butter, that he was forty seconds too fast, as if it were a capital offence, and he deserved to step into Eternity for outstripping Time.

‘But, I daresay, you don’t understand the importance of a minute,’ said the old gentleman, bitterly. ‘Not you, or any of you. Better if we had run a little ahead of your minute, perhaps—and the rest of you! Do you think you can cancel the mischief that’s done in the world in that minute, sir, by hurrying ahead like that? Tell me!’

Rather at a loss, Jonathan scanned the clock seriously, and observed that it was not quite a minute too fast.

The old gentleman pulled out his watch. He grunted that a lying clock was hateful to him; subsequently sinking into contemplation of his thumbs,—a sign known to Jonathan as indicative of the old gentleman’s system having resolved, in spite of external outrages, to be fortified with calm to meet the repast.

It is not fair to go behind an eccentric; but the fact was, this old gentleman was slightly ashamed of his month’s vagrancy and cruel conduct, and cloaked his behaviour toward the Aurora, in all the charges he could muster against it. He was very human, albeit an odd form of the race.

Happily for his digestion of Thursday, the cook, warned by Jonathan, kept the old gentleman’s time, not the Aurora’s:

and the dinner was correct; the dinner was eaten in peace; he began to address his plate vigorously, poured out his Madeira, and chuckled, as the familiar ideas engendered by good wine were revived in him. Jonathan reported at the bar that the old gentleman was all right again.

One would like here to pause, while our worthy ancient feeds, and indulge in a short essay on Habit, to show what a sacred and admirable thing it is that makes flimsy Time substantial, and consolidates his triple life. It is proof that we have come to the end of dreams and Time's delusions, and are determined to sit down at Life's feast and carve for ourselves. Its day is the child of yesterday, and has a claim on to-morrow. Whereas those who have no such plan of existence and sum of their wisdom to show, the winds blow them as they list. Consider, then, mercifully the wrath of him on whom carelessness or forgetfulness has brought a snap in the links of Habit. You incline to scorn him because, his slippers misplaced, or asparagus not on his table the first day of a particular Spring month, he gazes blankly and sighs as one who saw the End. To you it may appear small. You call to him to be a man. He is: but he is also an immortal, and his confidence in unceasing orderly progression is rudely dashed.

But the old gentleman has finished his dinner and his Madeira, and says: 'Now, Jonathan, "thock" the Port!'—his joke when matters have gone well: meant to express the sound of the uncorking, probably. The habit of making good jokes is rare, as you know: old gentlemen have not yet attained to it: nevertheless

Jonathan enjoys this one, which has seen a generation in and out, for he knows its purport to be, 'My heart is open.'

And now is a great time with this old gentleman. He sips, and in his eyes the world grows rosy, and he exchanges mute or monosyllable salutes here and there. His habit is to avoid converse; but he will let a light remark season meditation.

He says to Jonathan: 'The bill for the month.'

'Yes, sir,' Jonathan replies. 'Would you not prefer, sir, to have the items added on to the month ensuing?'

'I asked you for the bill of the month,' said the old gentleman, with an irritated voice and a twinkle in his eye.

Jonathan bowed; but his aspect betrayed perplexity, and that perplexity was soon shared by the landlady for Jonathan said, he was convinced the old gentleman intended to pay for sixteen days, and the landlady could not bring her hand to charge him for more than two. Here was the dilemma foreseen by the old gentleman, and it added vastly to the flavour of the Port.

Pleasantly tickled, he sat gazing at his glass, and let the minutes fly. He knew the part he would act in his little farce. If charged for the whole month, he would peruse the bill deliberately, and perhaps cry out 'Hulloa?' and then snap at Jonathan for the interposition of a remark. But if charged for two days, he would wish to be told whether they were demented, those people outside, and scornfully return the bill to Jonathan.

A slap on the shoulder, and a voice: 'Found you at last, Tom!' violently shattered the excellent plot, and made the old gentleman

start. He beheld Mr. Andrew Cogglesby.

'Drinking Port, Tom?' said Mr. Andrew. 'I 'll join you': and he sat down opposite to him, rubbing his hands and pushing back his hair.

Jonathan entering briskly with the bill, fell back a step, in alarm. The old gentleman, whose inviolacy was thus rudely assailed, sat staring at the intruder, his mouth compressed, and three fingers round his glass, which it' was doubtful whether he was not going to hurl at him.

'Waiter!' Mr. Andrew carelessly hailed, 'a pint of this Port, if you please.'

Jonathan sought the countenance of the old gentleman.

'Do you hear, sir?' cried the latter, turning his wrath on him. 'Another pint!' He added: 'Take back the bill'; and away went Jonathan to relate fresh marvels to his mistress.

Mr. Andrew then addressed the old gentleman in the most audacious manner.

'Astonished to see me here, Tom? Dare say you are. I knew you came somewhere in this neighbourhood, and, as I wanted to speak to you very particularly, and you wouldn't be visible till Monday, why, I spied into two or three places, and here I am.'

You might see they were brothers. They had the same bushy eyebrows, the same healthy colour in their cheeks, the same thick shoulders, and brisk way of speaking, and clear, sharp, though kindly, eyes; only Tom was cast in larger proportions than Andrew, and had gotten the grey furniture of Time for his natural

wear. Perhaps, too, a cross in early life had a little twisted him, and set his mouth in a rueful bunch, out of which occasionally came biting things. Mr. Andrew carried his head up, and eyed every man living with the benevolence of a patriarch, dashed with the impudence of a London sparrow. Tom had a nagging air, and a trifle of acridity on his broad features. Still, any one at a glance could have sworn they were brothers, and Jonathan unhesitatingly proclaimed it at the Aurora bar.

Mr. Andrew's hands were working together, and at them, and at his face, the old gentleman continued to look with a firmly interrogating air.

'Want to know what brings me, Tom? I'll tell you presently. Hot,—isn't it?'

'What the deuce are you taking exercise for?' the old gentleman burst out, and having unlocked his mouth, he began to puff and alter his posture.

'There you are, thawed in a minute!' said Mr. Andrew. 'What's an eccentric? a child grown grey. It isn't mine; I read it somewhere. Ah, here's the Port! good, I'll warrant.'

Jonathan deferentially uncorked, excessive composure on his visage. He arranged the table-cloth to a nicety, fixed the bottle with exactness, and was only sent scudding by the old gentleman's muttering of: 'Eavesdropping pie!' followed by a short, 'Go!' and even then he must delay to sweep off a particular crumb.

'Good it is!' said Mr. Andrew, rolling the flavour on his lips, as he put down his glass. 'I follow you in Port, Tom. Elder brother!'

The old gentleman also drank, and was mollified enough to reply: 'Shan't follow you in Parliament.'

'Haven't forgiven that yet, Tom?'

'No great harm done when you're silent.'

'Capital Port!' said Mr. Andrew, replenishing the glasses. 'I ought to have inquired where they kept the best Port. I might have known you'd stick by it. By the way, talking of Parliament, there's talk of a new election for Fallow field. You have a vote there. Will you give it to Jocelyn? There's talk of his standing.

'If he'll wear petticoats, I'll give him my vote.'

'There you go, Tom!'

'I hate masquerades. You're penny trumpets of the women. That tattle comes from the bed-curtains. When a petticoat steps forward I give it my vote, or else I button it up in my pocket.'

This was probably one of the longest speeches he had ever delivered at the Aurora. There was extra Port in it. Jonathan, who from his place of observation noted the length of time it occupied, though he was unable to gather the context, glanced at Mr. Andrew with a sly satisfaction. Mr. Andrew, laughing, signalled for another pint.

'So you've come here for my vote, have you?' said Mr. Tom.

'Why, no; not exactly that,' Mr. Andrew answered, blinking and passing it by.

Jonathan brought the fresh pint, and Tom filled for himself, drank, and said emphatically, and with a confounding voice:

'Your women have been setting you on me, sir!'

Andrew protested that he was entirely mistaken.

'You're the puppet of your women!'

'Well, Tom, not in this instance. Here's to the bachelors, and brother Tom at their head!'

It seemed to be Andrew's object to help his companion to carry a certain quantity of Port, as if he knew a virtue it had to subdue him, and to have fixed on a particular measure that he should hold before he addressed him specially. Arrived at this, he said:

'Look here, Tom. I know your ways. I shouldn't have bothered you here; I never have before; but we couldn't very well talk it over in business hours; and besides you're never at the Brewery till Monday, and the matter's rather urgent.'

'Why don't you speak like that in Parliament?' the old man interposed.

'Because Parliament isn't my brother,' replied Mr. Andrew. 'You know, Tom, you never quite took to my wife's family.'

'I'm not a match for fine ladies, Nan.'

'Well, Harriet would have taken to you, Tom, and will now, if you 'll let her. Of course, it 's a pity if she 's ashamed of—hem! You found it out about the Lymport people, Tom, and, you've kept the secret and respected her feelings, and I thank you for it. Women are odd in those things, you know. She mustn't imagine I 've heard a whisper. I believe it would kill her.'

The old gentleman shook silently.

'Do you want me to travel over the kingdom, hawking her for

the daughter of a marquis?'

'Now, don't joke, Tom. I'm serious. Are you not a Radical at heart? Why do you make such a set against the poor women? What do we spring from?'

'I take off my hat, Nan, when I see a cobbler's stall.'

'And I, Tom, don't care a rush who knows it. Homo—something; but we never had much schooling. We 've thriven, and should help those we can. We've got on in the world…'

'Wife come back from Lymport?' sneered Tom.

Andrew hurriedly, and with some confusion, explained that she had not been able to go, on account of the child.

'Account of the child!' his brother repeated, working his chin contemptuously. 'Sisters gone?'

'They're stopping with us,' said Andrew, reddening.

'So the tailor was left to the kites and the crows. Ah! hum!' and Tom chuckled.

'You're angry with me, Tom, for coming here,' said Andrew. 'I see what it is. Thought how it would be! You're offended, old Tom.'

'Come where you like,' returned Tom, 'the place is open. It's a fool that hopes for peace anywhere. They sent a woman here to wait on me, this day month.'

'That's a shame!' said Mr. Andrew, propitiatingly. 'Well, never mind, Tom: the women are sometimes in the way.—Evan went down to bury his father. He's there now. You wouldn't see him when he was at the Brewery, Tom. He's—upon my honour! he's

a good young fellow.'

'A fine young gentleman, I've no doubt, Nan.'

'A really good lad, Tom. No nonsense. I've come here to speak to you about him.'

Mr. Andrew drew a letter from his pocket, pursuing: 'Just throw aside your prejudices, and read this. It's a letter I had from him this morning. But first I must tell you how the case stands.'

'Know more than you can tell me, Nan,' said Tom, turning over the flavour of a gulp of his wine.

'Well, then, just let me repeat it. He has been capitally educated; he has always been used to good society: well, we mustn't sneer at it: good society's better than bad, you'll allow. He has refined tastes: well, you wouldn't like to live among crossing-sweepers, Tom. He 's clever and accomplished, can speak and write in three languages: I wish I had his abilities. He has good manners: well, Tom, you know you like them as well as anybody. And now—but read for yourself.'

'Yah!' went old Tom. 'The women have been playing the fool with him since he was a baby. I read his rigmarole? No.'

Mr. Andrew shrugged his shoulders, and opened the letter, saying: 'Well, listen'; and then he coughed, and rapidly skimmed the introductory part. 'Excuses himself for addressing me formally—poor boy! Circumstances have altered his position towards the world found his father's affairs in a bad state: only chance of paying off father's debts to undertake management of business, and bind himself to so much a year. But there, Tom, if

you won't read it, you miss the poor young fellow's character. He says that he has forgotten his station: fancied he was superior to trade, but hates debt; and will not allow anybody to throw dirt at his father's name, while he can work to clear it; and will sacrifice his pride. Come, Tom, that's manly, isn't it? I call it touching, poor lad!'

Manly it may have been, but the touching part of it was a feature missed in Mr. Andrew's hands. At any rate, it did not appear favourably to impress Tom, whose chin had gathered its ominous puckers, as he inquired:

'What's the trade? he don't say.'

Andrew added, with a wave of the hand: 'Out of a sort of feeling for his sisters—I like him for it. Now what I want to ask you, Tom, is, whether we can't assist him in some way! Why couldn't we take him into our office, and fix him there, eh? If he works well—we're both getting old, and my brats are chicks—we might, by-and-by, give him a share.'

'Make a brewer of him? Ha! there'd be another mighty sacrifice for his pride!'

'Come, come, Tom,' said Andrew, 'he's my wife's brother, and I'm yours; and—there, you know what women are. They like to preserve appearances: we ought to consider them.'

'Preserve appearances!' echoed Tom: 'ha! who'll do that for them better than a tailor?'

Andrew was an impatient little man, fitter for a kind action than to plead a cause. Jeering jarred on him; and from the

moment his brother began it, he was of small service to Evan. He flung back against the partition of the compound, rattling it to the disturbance of many a quiet digestion.

'Tom,' he cried, 'I believe you're a screw!'

'Never said I wasn't,' rejoined Tom, as he finished his glass. 'I 'm a bachelor, and a person—you're married, and an object. I won't have the tailor's family at my coat-tails.'

Do you mean to say, Tom, you don't like the young fellow? The Countess says he's half engaged to an heiress; and he has a chance of appointments—of course, nothing may come of them. But do you mean to say, you don't like him for what he has done?'

Tom made his jaw disagreeably prominent. "Fraid I'm guilty of that crime.'

'And you that swear at people pretending to be above their station!' exclaimed Andrew. 'I shall get in a passion. I can't stand this. Here, waiter! what have I to pay?'

'Go,' cried the time-honoured guest of the Aurora to Jonathan advancing.

Andrew pressed the very roots of his hair back from his red forehead, and sat upright and resolute, glancing at Tom. And now ensued a curious scene of family blood. For no sooner did elderly Tom observe this bantam-like demeanour of his brother, than he ruffled his feathers likewise, and looked down on him, agitating his wig over a prodigious frown. Whereof came the following sharp colloquy; Andrew beginning:

I 'll pay off the debts out of my own pocket.'

'You can make a greater fool of yourself, then?'

'He shan't be a tailor!'

'He shan't be a brewer!'

'I say he shall live like a gentleman!'

'I say he shall squat like a Turk!'

Bang went Andrew's hand on the table: 'I 've pledged my word, mind!'

Tom made a counter demonstration: 'And I'll have my way!'

'Hang it! I can be as eccentric as you,' said Andrew.

'And I as much a donkey as you, if I try hard,' said Tom.

Something of the cobbler's stall followed this; till waxing furious, Tom sung out to Jonathan, hovering around them in watchful timidity, 'More Port!' and the words immediately fell oily on the wrath of the brothers; both commenced wiping their heads with their handkerchiefs the faces of both emerged and met, with a half-laugh: and, severally determined to keep to what they had spoken, there was a tacit accord between them to drop the subject.

Like sunshine after smart rain, the Port shone on these brothers. Like a voice from the pastures after the bellowing of the thunder, Andrew's voice asked: 'Got rid of that twinge of the gout, Tom? Did you rub in that ointment?' while Tom replied: 'Ay. How about that rheumatism of yours? Have you tried that Indy oil?' receiving a like assurance.

The remainder of the Port ebbed in meditation and chance remarks. The bit of storm had done them both good; and

Tom especially—the cynical, carping, grim old gentleman—was much improved by the nearer resemblance of his manner to Andrew's.

Behind this unaffected fraternal concord, however, the fact that they were pledged to a race in eccentricity, was present. They had been rivals before; and anterior to the date of his marriage, Andrew had done odd eclipsing things. But Andrew required prompting to it; he required to be put upon his mettle. Whereas, it was more nature with Tom: nature and the absence of a wife, gave him advantages over Andrew. Besides, he had his character to maintain. He had said the word: and the first vanity of your born eccentric is, that he shall be taken for infallible.

Presently Andrew ducked his head to mark the evening clouds flushing over the court-yard of the Aurora.

'Time to be off, Tom,' he said: 'wife at home.'

'Ah!' Tom answered. 'Well, I haven't got to go to bed so early.'

'What an old rogue you are, Tom!' Andrew pushed his elbows forward on the table amiably. 'Gad, we haven't drunk wine together since—by George! we'll have another pint.'

'Many as you like,' said Tom.

Over the succeeding pint, Andrew, in whose veins the Port was merry, favoured his brother with an imitation of Major Strike, and indicated his dislike to that officer. Tom informed him that Major Strike was speculating.

'The ass eats at my table, and treats me with contempt.'

'Just tell him that you're putting by the bones for him. He 'll

want 'em.'

Then Andrew with another glance at the clouds, now violet on a grey sky, said he must really be off. Upon which Tom observed: 'Don't come here again.'

'You old rascal, Tom!' cried Andrew, swinging over the table: 'it's quite jolly for us to be hob-a-nobbing together once more. 'Gad!—no, we won't though! I promised—Harriet. Eh? What say, Tom?'

'Nother pint, Nan?'

Tom shook his head in a roguishly-cosy, irresistible way. Andrew, from a shake of denial and resolve, fell into the same; and there sat the two brothers—a jolly picture.

The hour was ten, when Andrew Cogglesby, comforted by Tom's remark, that he, Tom, had a wig, and that he, Andrew, would have a wigging, left the Aurora; and he left it singing a song. Tom Cogglesby still sat at his table, holding before him Evan's letter, of which he had got possession; and knocking it round and round with a stroke of the forefinger, to the tune of, 'Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, 'pothecary, ploughboy, thief'; each profession being sounded as a corner presented itself to the point of his nail. After indulging in this species of incantation for some length of time, Tom Cogglesby read the letter from beginning to end, and called peremptorily for pen, ink, and paper.

CHAPTER IX. THE COUNTESS IN LOW SOCIETY

By dint of stratagems worthy of a Court intrigue, the Countess de Saldar contrived to traverse the streets of Lymport, and enter the house where she was born, unsuspected and unseen, under cover of a profusion of lace and veil and mantilla, which only her heroic resolve to keep her beauties hidden from the profane townspeople could have rendered endurable beneath the fervid summer sun. Dress in a foreign style she must, as without it she lost that sense of superiority, which was the only comfort to her in her tribulations. The period of her arrival was ten days subsequent to the burial of her father. She had come in the coach, like any common mortal, and the coachman, upon her request, had put her down at the Governor's house, and the guard had knocked at the door, and the servant had informed her that General Hucklebridge was not the governor of Lymport, nor did Admiral Combleman then reside in the town; which tidings, the coach then being out of sight, it did not disconcert the Countess to hear; and she reached her mother, having, at least, cut off communication with the object of conveyance.

The Countess kissed her mother, kissed Mrs. Fiske, and asked sharply for Evan. Mrs. Fiske let her know that Evan was in the house.

'Where?' inquired the Countess. 'I have news of the utmost importance for him. I must see him.'

'Where is he, aunt?' said Mrs. Fiske. 'In the shop, I think; I wonder he did not see you passing, Louisa.'

The Countess went bolt down into a chair.

'Go to him, Jane,' said Mrs. Mel. 'Tell him Louisa is here, and don't return.'

Mrs. Fiske departed, and the Countess smiled.

'Thank you, Mama! you know I never could bear that odious, vulgar little woman. Oh, the heat! You talk of Portugal! And, oh! poor dear Papa! what I have suffered!'

Flapping her laces for air, and wiping her eyes for sorrow, the Countess poured a flood of sympathy into her mother's ears and then said:

'But you have made a great mistake, Mama, in allowing Evan to put his foot into that place. He—beloved of an heiress! Why, if an enemy should hear of it, it would ruin him—positively blast him—for ever. And that she loves him I have proof positive. Yes; with all her frankness, the little thing cannot conceal that from me now. She loves him! And I desire you to guess, Mama, whether rivals will not abound? And what enemy so much to be dreaded as a rival? And what revelation so awful as that he has stood in a—in a—boutique?'

Mrs. Mel maintained her usual attitude for listening. It had occurred to her that it might do no good to tell the grand lady, her daughter; of Evan's resolution, so she simply said, 'It is discipline

for him,' and left her to speak a private word with the youth.

Timidly the Countess inspected the furniture of the apartment, taking chills at the dingy articles she saw, in the midst of her heat. That she should have sprung from this! The thought was painful; still she could forgive Providence so much. But should it ever be known she had sprung from this! Alas! she felt she never could pardon such a dire betrayal. She had come in good spirits, but the mention of Evan's backsliding had troubled her extremely, and though she did not say to herself, What was the benefit resulting from her father's dying, if Evan would be so base-minded? she thought the thing indefinitely, and was forming the words on her mouth, One Harrington in a shop is equal to all! when Evan appeared alone.

'Why, goodness gracious! where's your moustache?' cried the Countess.

'Gone the way of hair!' said Evan, coldly stooping to her forehead.

'Such a distinction!' the Countess continued, reproachfully. 'Why, mon Dieu! one could hardly tell you; as you look now, from the very commonest tradesman—if you were not rather handsome and something of a figure. It's a disguise, Evan—do you know that?'

'And I 've parted with it—that 's all,' said Evan. 'No more disguises for me!'

The Countess immediately took his arm, and walked with him to a window. His face was certainly changed. Murmuring that

the air of Lymport was bad for him, and that he must leave it instantly, she bade him sit and attend to what she was about to say.

While you have been here, degenerating, Evan, day by day—as you always do out of my sight—degenerating! no less a word!—I have been slaving in your interests. Yes; I have forced the Jocelyns socially to acknowledge us. I have not slept; I have eaten bare morsels. Do abstinence and vigils clear the wits? I know not! but indeed they have enabled me to do more in a week than would suffice for a lifetime. Hark to me. I have discovered Rose's secret. Si! It is so! Rose loves you. You blush; you blush like a girl. She loves you, and you have let yourself be seen in a shop! Contrast me the two things. Oh! in verity, dreadful as it is, one could almost laugh. But the moment I lose sight of you, my instructions vanish as quickly as that hair on your superior lip, which took such time to perfect. Alas! you must grow it again immediately. Use any perfumer's contrivance. Rowland! I have great faith in Rowland. Without him, I believe, there would have been many bald women committing suicide! You remember the bottle I gave to the Count de Villa Flor? "Countess," he said to me, "you have saved this egg-shell from a crack by helping to cover it"—for so he called his head—the top, you know, was beginning to shine like an egg. And I do fear me he would have done it. Ah! you do not conceive what the dread of baldness is! To a woman death—death is preferable to baldness! Baldness is death! And a wig—a wig! Oh, horror! total extinction is better

than to rise again in a wig! But you are young, and play with hair. But I was saying, I went to see the Jocelyns. I was introduced to Sir Franks and his lady and the wealthy grandmother. And I have an invitation for you, Evan—you unmannered boy, that you do not bow! A gentle incline forward of the shoulders, and the eyes fixed softly, your upper lids drooping triflingly, as if you thanked with gentle sincerity, but were indifferent. Well, well, if you will not! An invitation for you to spend part of the autumn at Beckley Court, the ancestral domain, where there will be company the nobles of the land! Consider that. You say it was bold in me to face them after that horrible man committed us on board the vessel? A Harrington is anything but a coward. I did go and because I am devoted to your interests. That very morning, I saw announced in the paper, just beneath poor Andrew's hand, as he held it up at the breakfast-table, reading it, I saw among the deaths, Sir Abraham Harrington, of Torquay, Baronet, of quinsy! Twice that good man has come to my rescue! Oh! I welcomed him as a piece of Providence! I turned and said to Harriet, "I see they have put poor Papa in the paper." Harriet was staggered. I took the paper from Andrew, and pointed it to her. She has no readiness. She has had no foreign training. She could not comprehend, and Andrew stood on tiptoe, and peeped. He has a bad cough, and coughed himself black in the face. I attribute it to excessive bad manners and his cold feelings. He left the room. I reproached Harriet. But, oh! the singularity of the excellent fortune of such an event at such a time! It showed that

our Harrington-luck had not forsaken us. I hurried to the Jocelyns instantly. Of course, it cleared away any suspicions aroused in them by that horrible man on board the vessel. And the tears I wept for Sir Abraham, Evan, in verity they were tears of deep and sincere gratitude! What is your mouth knitting the corners at? Are you laughing?'

Evan hastily composed his visage to the melancholy that was no counterfeit in him just then.

'Yes,' continued the Countess, easily reassured, 'I shall ever feel a debt to Sir Abraham Harrington, of Torquay. I dare say we are related to him. At least he has done us more service than many a rich and titled relative. No one supposes he would acknowledge poor Papa. I can forgive him that, Evan!' The Countess pointed out her finger with mournful and impressive majesty, 'As we look down on that monkey, people of rank and consideration in society look on what poor dear Papa was.'

This was partly true, for Jacko sat on a chair, in his favourite attitude, copied accurately from the workmen of the establishment at their labour with needle and thread. Growing cognizant of the infamy of his posture, the Countess begged Evan to drive him out of her sight, and took a sniff at her smelling-bottle.

She went on: 'Now, dear Van, you would hear of your sweet Rose?'

'Not a word!' Evan hastily answered.

'Why, what does this indicate? Whims! Then you do love?'

'I tell you, Louisa, I don't want to hear a word of any of them,' said Evan, with an angry gleam in his eyes. 'They are nothing to me, nor I to them. I—my walk in life is not theirs.'

'Faint heart! faint heart!' the Countess lifted a proverbial forefinger.

'Thank heaven, I shall have the consolation of not going about, and bowing and smirking like an impostor!' Evan exclaimed.

There was a wider intelligence in the Countess's arrested gaze than she chose to fashion into speech.

'I knew,' she said, 'I knew how the air of this horrible Lymport would act on you. But while I live, Evan, you shall not sink in the sludge. You, with all the pains I have lavished on you! and with your presence!—for you have a presence, so rare among young men in this England! You, who have been to a Court, and interchanged bows with duchesses, and I know not what besides —nay, I do not accuse you; but if you had not been a mere boy, and an English boy-poor Eugenia herself confessed to me that you had a look—a tender cleaving of the underlids—that made her catch her hand to her heart sometimes: it reminded her so acutely of false Belmarafa. Could you have had a greater compliment than that? You shall not stop here another day!'

'True,' said Evan, 'for I'm going to London to-night.'

'Not to London,' the Countess returned, with a conquering glance, 'but to Beckley Court-and with me.'

'To London, Louisa, with Mr. Goren.'

Again the Countess eyed him largely; but took, as it were, a

side-path from her broad thought, saying: 'Yes, fortunes are made in London, if you would they should be rapid.'

She meditated. At that moment Dandy knocked at the door, and called outside: 'Please, master, Mr. Goren says there's a gentleman in the shop-wants to see you.'

'Very well,' replied Evan, moving. He was swung violently round.

The Countess had clutched him by the arm. A fearful expression was on her face.

'Whither do you go?' she said.

'To the shop, Louisa.'

Too late to arrest the villanous word, she pulled at him. 'Are you quite insane? Consent to be seen by a gentleman there? What has come to you? You must be lunatic! Are we all to be utterly ruined—disgraced?'

'Is my mother to starve?' said Evan.

'Absurd rejoinder! No! You should have sold everything here before this. She can live with Harriet—she—once out of this horrible element—she would not show it. But, Evan, you are getting away from me: you are not going?—speak!'

'I am going,' said Evan.

The Countess clung to him, exclaiming: 'Never, while I have the power to detain you!' but as he was firm and strong, she had recourse to her woman's aids, and burst into a storm of sobs on his shoulder—a scene of which Mrs. Mel was, for some seconds, a composed spectator.

'What 's the matter now?' said Mrs. Mel.

Evan impatiently explained the case. Mrs. Mel desired her daughter to avoid being ridiculous, and making two fools in her family; and at the same time that she told Evan there was no occasion for him to go, contrived, with a look, to make the advice a command. He, in that state of mind when one takes bitter delight in doing an abhorred duty, was hardly willing to be submissive; but the despair of the Countess reduced him, and for her sake he consented to forego the sacrifice of his pride which was now his sad, sole pleasure. Feeling him linger, the Countess relaxed her grasp. Hers were tears that dried as soon as they had served their end; and, to give him the full benefit of his conduct, she said: 'I knew Evan would be persuaded by me.'

Evan pitifully pressed her hand, and sighed.

'Tea is on the table down-stairs,' said Mrs. Mel. 'I have cooked something for you, Louisa. Do you sleep here to-night?'

'Can I tell you, Mama?' murmured the Countess. 'I am dependent on our Evan.'

'Oh! well, we will eat first,' said Mrs. Mel, and they went to the table below, the Countess begging her mother to drop titles in designating her to the servants, which caused Mrs. Mel to say:

'There is but one. I do the cooking'; and the Countess, ever disposed to flatter and be suave, even when stung by a fact or a phrase, added:

'And a beautiful cook you used to be, dear Mama!'

At the table, awaiting them, sat Mrs. Wishaw, Mrs. Fiske,

and Mr. Goren, who soon found themselves enveloped in the Countess's graciousness. Mr. Goren would talk of trade, and compare Lymport business with London, and the Countess, loftily interested in his remarks, drew him out to disgust her brother. Mrs. Wishaw, in whom the Countess at once discovered a frivolous pretentious woman of the moneyed trading class, she treated as one who was alive to society, and surveyed matters from a station in the world, leading her to think that she tolerated Mr. Goren, as a lady-Christian of the highest rank should tolerate the insects that toil for us. Mrs. Fiske was not so tractable, for Mrs. Fiske was hostile and armed. Mrs. Fiske adored the great Mel, and she had never loved Louisa. Hence, she scorned Louisa on account of her late behaviour toward her dead parent. The Countess saw through her, and laboured to be friendly with her, while she rendered her disagreeable in the eyes of Mrs. Wishaw, and let Mrs. Wishaw perceive that sympathy was possible between them; manoeuvring a trifle too delicate, perhaps, for the people present, but sufficient to blind its keen-witted author to the something that was being concealed from herself, of which something, nevertheless, her senses apprehensively warned her: and they might have spoken to her wits, but that mortals cannot, unaided, guess, or will not, unless struck in the face by the fact, credit, what is to their minds the last horror.

'I came down in the coach, quite accidental, with this gentleman,' said Mrs. Wishaw, fanning a cheek and nodding at

Mr. Goren. 'I'm an old flame of dear Mel's. I knew him when he was an apprentice in London. Now, wasn't it odd? Your mother —I suppose I must call you "my lady"?'

The Countess breathed a tender 'Spare me,' with a smile that added, 'among friends!'

Mrs. Wishaw resumed: 'Your mother was an old flame of this gentleman's, I found out. So there were two old flames, and I couldn't help thinking! But I was so glad to have seen dear Mel once more:

'Ah!' sighed the Countess.

'He was always a martial-looking man, and laid out, he was quite imposing. I declare, I cried so, as it reminded me of when I couldn't have him, for he had nothing but his legs and arms— and I married Wishaw. But it's a comfort to think I have been of some service to dear, dear Mel! for Wishaw 's a man of accounts and payments; and I knew Mel had cloth from him, and, the lady suggested bills delayed, with two or three nods, 'you know! and I'll do my best for his son.'

'You are kind,' said the Countess, smiling internally at the vulgar creature's misconception of Evan's requirements.

'Did he ever talk much about Mary Fence?' asked Mrs. Wishaw. '"Polly Fence," he used to say, "sweet Polly Fence!"'

'Oh! I think so. Frequently,' observed the Countess.

Mrs. Fiske primmed her mouth. She had never heard the great Mel allude to the name of Fence.

The Goren-croak was heard

‘Painters have painted out “Melchisedec” this afternoon. Yes,—ah! In and out-as the saying goes.’

Here was an opportunity to mortify the Countess.

Mrs. Fiske placidly remarked: ‘Have we the other put up in its stead? It ‘s shorter.’

A twinge of weakness had made Evan request that the name of Evan Harrington should not decorate the shopfront till he had turned his back on it, for a time. Mrs. Mel crushed her venomous niece.

‘What have you to do with such things? Shine in your own affairs first, Ann, before you meddle with others.’

Relieved at hearing that ‘Melchisedec’ was painted out, and unsuspicious of the announcement that should replace it, the Countess asked Mrs. Wishaw if she thought Evan like her dear Papa.

‘So like,’ returned the lady, ‘that I would not be alone with him yet, for worlds. I should expect him to be making love to me: for, you know, my dear—I must be familiar—Mel never could be alone with you, without! It was his nature. I speak of him before marriage. But, if I can trust myself with him, I shall take charge of Mr. Evan, and show him some London society.’

‘That is indeed kind,’ said the Countess, glad of a thick veil for the utterance of her contempt. ‘Evan, though—I fear—will be rather engaged. His friends, the Jocelyns of Beckley Court, will—I fear—hardly dispense with him and Lady Splenders—you know her? the Marchioness of Splenders? No?—by repute,

at least: a most beautiful and most fascinating woman; report of him alone has induced her to say that Evan must and shall form a part of her autumnal gathering at Splenders Castle. And how he is to get out of it, I cannot tell. But I am sure his multitudinous engagements will not prevent his paying due court to Mistress Wishaw.'

As the Countess intended, Mistress Wishaw's vanity was reproved, and her ambition excited: a pretty doublestroke, only possible to dexterous players.

The lady rejoined that she hoped so, she was sure; and forthwith (because she suddenly seemed to possess him more than his son), launched upon Mel's incomparable personal attractions. This caused the Countess to enlarge upon Evan's vast personal prospects. They talked across each other a little, till the Countess remembered her breeding, allowed Mrs. Wishaw to run to an end in hollow exclamations, and put a finish to the undeclared controversy, by a traverse of speech, as if she were taking up the most important subject of their late colloquy. 'But Evan is not in his own hands—he is in the hands of a lovely young woman, I must tell you. He belongs to her, and not to us. You have heard of Rose Jocelyn, the celebrated heiress?'

'Engaged?' Mrs. Wishaw whispered aloud.

The Countess, an adept in the lie implied—practised by her, that she might not subject herself to future punishment (in which she was so devout a believer, that she condemned whole hosts to it)—deeply smiled.

'Really!' said Mrs. Wishaw, and was about to inquire why Evan, with these brilliant expectations, could think of trade and tailoring, when the young man, whose forehead had been growing black, jumped up, and quitted them; thus breaking the harmony of the table; and as the Countess had said enough, she turned the conversation to the always welcome theme of low society. She broached death and corpses; and became extremely interesting, and very sympathetic: the only difference between the ghostly anecdotes she related, and those of the other ladies, being that her ghosts were all of them titled, and walked mostly under the burden of a coronet. For instance, there was the Portuguese Marquis de Col. He had married a Spanish wife, whose end was mysterious. Undressing, on the night of the anniversary of her death, and on the point of getting into bed, he beheld the dead woman lying on her back before him. All night long he had to sleep with this freezing phantom! Regularly, every fresh anniversary, he had to endure the same penance, no matter where he might be, or in what strange bed. On one occasion, when he took the live for the dead, a curious thing occurred, which the Countess scrupled less to relate than would men to hint at. Ghosts were the one childish enjoyment Mrs. Mel allowed herself, and she listened to her daughter intently, ready to cap any narrative; but Mrs. Fiske stopped the flood.

'You have improved on Peter Smithers, Louisa,' she said.

The Countess turned to her mildly.

'You are certainly thinking of Peter Smithers,' Mrs. Fiske

continued, bracing her shoulders. 'Surely, you remember poor Peter, Louisa? An old flame of your own! He was going to kill himself, but married a Devonshire woman, and they had disagreeables, and SHE died, and he was undressing, and saw her there in the bed, and wouldn't get into it, and had the mattress, and the curtains, and the counterpanes, and everything burnt. He told us it himself. You must remember it, Louisa?'

The Countess remembered nothing of the sort. No doubt could exist of its having been the Portuguese Marquis de Col, because he had confided to her the whole affair, and indeed come to her, as his habit was, to ask her what he could possibly do, under the circumstances. If Mrs. Fiske's friend, who married the Devonshire person, had seen the same thing, the coincidence was yet more extraordinary than the case. Mrs. Fiske said it assuredly was, and glanced at her aunt, who, as the Countess now rose, declaring she must speak to Evan, chid Mrs. Fiske, and wished her and Peter Smithers at the bottom of the sea.

'No, no, Mama,' said the Countess, laughing, 'that would hardly be proper,' and before Mrs. Fiske could reply, escaped to complain to Evan of the vulgarity of those women.

She was not prepared for the burst of wrath with which Evan met her. 'Louisa,' said he, taking her wrist sternly, 'you have done a thing I can't forgive. I find it hard to bear disgrace myself: I will not consent to bring it upon others. Why did you dare to couple Miss Jocelyn's name with mine?'

The Countess gave him out her arm's length. 'Speak on, Van,'

she said, admiring him with a bright gaze.

'Answer me, Louisa; and don't take me for a fool any more,' he pursued. 'You have coupled Miss Jocelyn's name with mine, in company, and I insist now upon your giving me your promise to abstain from doing it anywhere, before anybody.'

'If she saw you at this instant, Van,' returned the incorrigible Countess, 'would she desire it, think you? Oh! I must make you angry before her, I see that! You have your father's frown. You surpass him, for your delivery is more correct, and equally fluent. And if a woman is momentarily melted by softness in a man, she is for ever subdued by boldness and bravery of mien.'

Evan dropped her hand. 'Miss Jocelyn has done me the honour to call me her friend. That was in other days.' His lip quivered. 'I shall not see Miss Jocelyn again. Yes; I would lay down my life for her; but that's idle talk. No such chance will ever come to me. But I can save her from being spoken of in alliance with me, and what I am, and I tell you, Louisa, I will not have it.' Saying which, and while he looked harshly at her, wounded pride bled through his eyes.

She was touched. 'Sit down, dear; I must explain to you, and make you happy against your will,' she said, in another voice, and an English accent. 'The mischief is done, Van. If you do not want Rose Jocelyn to love you, you must undo it in your own way. I am not easily deceived. On the morning I went to her house in town, she took me aside, and spoke to me. Not a confession in words. The blood in her cheeks, when I mentioned you, did that for her.

Everything about you she must know—how you bore your grief, and all. And not in her usual free manner, but timidly, as if she feared a surprise, or feared to be wakened to the secret in her bosom she half suspects—"Tell him!" she said, "I hope he will not forget me.'"

The Countess was interrupted by a great sob; for the picture of frank Rose Jocelyn changed, and soft, and, as it were, shadowed under a veil of bashful regard for him, so filled the young man with sorrowful tenderness, that he trembled, and was as a child.

Marking the impression she had produced on him, and having worn off that which he had produced on her, the Countess resumed the art in her style of speech, easier to her than nature.

'So the sweetest of Roses may be yours, dear Van; and you have her in a gold setting, to wear on your heart. Are you not enviable? I will not—no, I will not tell you she is perfect. I must fashion the sweet young creature. Though I am very ready to admit that she is much improved by this—shall I call it, desired consummation?'

Evan could listen no more. Such a struggle was rising in his breast: the effort to quench what the Countess had so shrewdly kindled; passionate desire to look on Rose but for one lightning flash: desire to look on her, and muffled sense of shame twin-born with it: wild love and leaden misery mixed: dead hopelessness and vivid hope. Up to the neck in Purgatory, but his soul saturated with visions of Bliss! The fair orb of Love was all that was wanted to complete his planetary state, and aloft

it sprang, showing many faint, fair tracts to him, and piling huge darknesses.

As if in search of something, he suddenly went from the room.

'I have intoxicated the poor boy,' said the Countess, and consulted an attitude by the evening light in a mirror. Approving the result, she rang for her mother, and sat with her till dark; telling her she could not and would not leave her dear Mama that night. At the supper-table Evan did not appear, and Mr. Goren, after taking counsel of Mrs. Mel, dispersed the news that Evan was off to London. On the road again, with a purse just as ill-furnished, and in his breast the light that sometimes leads gentlemen, as well as ladies, astray.

CHAPTER X. MY GENTLEMAN ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Near a milestone, under the moonlight, crouched the figure of a woman, huddled with her head against her knees, and careless hair falling to the summer's dust. Evan came upon this sight within a few miles of Fallowfield. At first he was rather startled, for he had inherited superstitious emotions from his mother, and the road was lone, the moon full. He went up to her and spoke a gentle word, which provoked no reply. He ventured to put his hand on her shoulder, continuing softly to address her. She was flesh and blood. Evan stooped his head to catch a whisper from her mouth, but nothing save a heavier fall of the breath she took, as of one painfully waking, was heard.

A misery beyond our own is a wholesome picture for youth, and though we may not for the moment compare the deep with the lower deep, we, if we have a heart for outer sorrows, can forget ourselves in it. Evan had just been accusing the heavens of conspiracy to disgrace him. Those patient heavens had listened, as is their wont. They had viewed and had not been disordered by his mental frenzies. It is certainly hard that they do not come down to us, and condescend to tell us what they mean, and be dumb-foundered by the perspicuity of our arguments the argument, for instance, that they have not fashioned us for

the science of the shears, and do yet impel us to wield them. Nevertheless, they to whom mortal life has ceased to be a long matter perceive that our appeals for conviction are answered, now and then very closely upon the call. When we have cast off the scales of hope and fancy, and surrender our claims on mad chance, it is given us to see that some plan is working out: that the heavens, icy as they are to the pangs of our blood, have been throughout speaking to our souls; and, according to the strength there existing, we learn to comprehend them. But their language is an element of Time, whom primarily we have to know.

Evan Harrington was young. He wished not to clothe the generation. What was to the remainder of the exiled sons of Adam simply the brand of expulsion from Paradise, was to him hell. In his agony, anything less than an angel, soft-voiced in his path, would not have satisfied the poor boy, and here was this wretched outcast, and instead of being relieved, he was to act the reliever!

Striving to rouse the desolate creature, he shook her slightly. She now raised her head with a slow, gradual motion, like that of a wax-work, showing a white young face, tearless,-dreadfully drawn at the lips. After gazing at him, she turned her head mechanically to her shoulder, as to ask him why he touched her. He withdrew his hand, saying:

'Why are you here? Pardon me; I want, if possible, to help you.'

A light sprang in her eyes. She jumped from the stone, and

ran forward a step or two, with a gasp:

'Oh, my God! I want to go and drown myself.'

Evan lingered behind her till he saw her body sway, and in a fit of trembling she half fell on his outstretched arm. He led her to the stone, not knowing what on earth to do with her. There was no sign of a house near; they were quite solitary; to all his questions she gave an unintelligible moan. He had not the heart to leave her, so, taking a sharp seat on a heap of flints, thus possibly furnishing future occupation for one of his craftsmen, he waited, and amused himself by marking out diagrams with his stick in the thick dust.

His thoughts were far away, when he heard, faintly uttered:

'Why do you stop here?'

'To help you.'

'Please don't. Let me be. I can't be helped.'

'My good creature,' said Evan, 'it 's quite impossible that I should leave you in this state. Tell me where you were going when your illness seized you?'

'I was going,' she commenced vacantly, 'to the sea—the water,' she added, with a shivering lip.

The foolish youth asked her if she could be cold on such a night.

'No, I'm not cold,' she replied, drawing closer over her lap the ends of a shawl which would in that period have been thought rather gaudy for her station.

'You were going to Lymport?'

'Yes,—Lymport's nearest, I think.'

'And why were you out travelling at this hour?'

She dropped her head, and began rocking to right and left.

While they talked the noise of waggon-wheels was heard approaching. Evan went into the middle of the road, and beheld a covered waggon, and a fellow whom he advanced to meet, plodding a little to the rear of the horses. He proved kindly. He was a farmer's man, he said, and was at that moment employed in removing the furniture of the farmer's son, who had failed as a corn-chandler in Lymport, to Hillford, which he expected to reach about morn. He answered Evan's request that he would afford the young woman conveyance as far as Fallowfield:

'Tak' her in? That I will.

'She won't hurt the harses,' he pursued, pointing his whip at the vehicle: 'there's my mate, Gearge Stoakes, he's in there, snorin' his turn. Can't you hear 'n asnorin' thraugh the wheels? I can; I've been laughin'! He do snore that loud-Gearge do!'

Proceeding to inform Evan how George Stokes had snored in that characteristic manner from boyhood, ever since he and George had slept in a hayloft together; and how he, kept wakeful and driven to distraction by George Stokes' nose, had been occasionally compelled, in sheer self-defence, madly to start up and hold that pertinacious alarum in tight compression between thumb and forefinger; and how George Stokes, thus severely handled, had burst his hold with a tremendous snort, as big as a bull, and had invariably uttered the exclamation, 'Hulloa!—

same to you, my lad!' and rolled over to snore as fresh as ever;—all this with singular rustic comparisons, racy of the soil, and in raw Hampshire dialect, the waggoner came to a halt opposite the stone, and, while Evan strode to assist the girl, addressed himself to the great task of arousing the sturdy sleeper and quieting his trumpet, heard by all ears now that the accompaniment of the wheels was at an end.

George, violently awakened, complained that it was before his time, to which he was true; and was for going off again with exalted contentment, though his heels had been tugged, and were dangling some length out of the machine; but his comrade, with a determined blow of the lungs, gave another valiant pull, and George Stokes was on his legs, marvelling at the world and man. Evan had less difficulty with the girl. She rose to meet him, put up her arms for him to clasp her waist, whispering sharply in an inward breath: 'What are you going to do with me?' and indifferent to his verbal response, trustingly yielded her limbs to his guidance. He could see blood on her bitten underlip; as, with the help of the waggoner, he lifted her on the mattress, backed by a portly bundle, which the sagacity of Mr. Stokes had selected for his couch.

The waggoner cracked his whip, laughing at George Stokes, who yawned and settled into a composed ploughswing, without asking questions; apparently resolved to finish his nap on his legs.

'Warn't he like that Myzepper chap, I see at the circus, bound athert gray mare!' chuckled the waggoner. 'So he 'd 'a gone on,

had ye 'a let 'n. No wulves waddn't wake Gearge till he 'd slept it out. Then he 'd say, "marnin'!" to 'm. Are ye 'wake now, Gearge?'

The admirable sleeper preferred to be a quiet butt, and the waggoner leisurely exhausted the fun that was to be had out of him; returning to it with a persistency that evinced more concentration than variety in his mind. At last Evan said: 'Your pace is rather slow. They'll be shut up in Fallowfield. I 'll go on ahead. You'll find me at one of the inns-the Green Dragon.'

In return for this speech, the waggoner favoured him with a stare, followed by the exclamation:

'Oh, no! dang that!'

'Why, what's the matter?' quoth Evan.

'You en't goin' to be off, for to leave me and Gearge in the lurch there, with that ther' young woman, in that ther' pickle!' returned the waggoner.

Evan made an appeal to his reason, but finding that impregnable, he pulled out his scanty purse to guarantee his sincerity with an offer of pledgemoney. The waggoner waved it aside. He wanted no money, he said.

'Look heer,' he went on; 'if you're for a start, I tells ye plain, I chucks that ther' young woman int' the road.'

Evan bade him not to be a brute.

'Nark and crop!' the waggoner doggedly ejaculated.

Very much surprised that a fellow who appeared sound at heart, should threaten to behave so basely, Evan asked an explanation: upon which the waggoner demanded to know what

he had eyes for: and as this query failed to enlighten the youth, he let him understand that he was a man of family experience, and that it was easy to tell at a glance that the complaint the young woman laboured under was one common to the daughters of Eve. He added that, should an emergency arise, he, though a family man, would be useless: that he always vacated the premises while those incidental scenes were being enacted at home; and that for him and George Stokes to be left alone with the young woman, why they would be of no more service to her than a couple of babies newborn themselves. He, for his part, he assured Evan, should take to his heels, and relinquish waggon, and horses, and all; while George probably would stand and gape; and the end of it would be, they would all be had up for murder. He diverged from the alarming prospect, by a renewal of the foregoing alternative to the gentleman who had constituted himself the young woman's protector. If he parted company with them, they would immediately part company with the young woman, whose condition was evident.

'Why, couldn't you tall that?' said the waggoner, as Evan, tingling at the ears, remained silent.

'I know nothing of such things,' he answered, hastily, like one hurt.

I have to repeat the statement, that he was a youth, and a modest one. He felt unaccountably, unreasonably, but horridly, ashamed. The thought of his actual position swamped the sickening disgust at tailordom. Worse, then, might happen to

us in this extraordinary world! There was something more abhorrent than sitting with one's legs crossed, publicly stitching, and scoffed at! He called vehemently to the waggoner to whip the horses, and hurry ahead into Fallowfield; but that worthy, whatever might be his dire alarms, had a regular pace, that was conscious of no spur: the reply of 'All right!' satisfied him at least; and Evan's chaste sighs for the appearance of an assistant petticoat round a turn of the road, were offered up duly, to the measure of the waggoner's steps.

Suddenly the waggoner came to a halt, and said 'Blest if that Gearge bain't a snorin' on his pins!'

Evan lingered by him with some curiosity, while the waggoner thumped his thigh to, 'Yes he be! no he bain't!' several times, in eager hesitation.

'It's a fellow calling from the downs,' said Evan.

'Ay, so!' responded the waggoner. 'Dang'd if I didn't think 'twere that Gearge of our'n. Hark awhile.'

At a repetition of the call, the waggoner stopped his team. After a few minutes, a man appeared panting on the bank above them, down which he ran precipitately, knocked against Evan, apologized with the little breath that remained to him, and then held his hand as to entreat a hearing. Evan thought him half-mad; the waggoner was about to imagine him the victim of a midnight assault. He undeceived them by requesting, in rather flowery terms, conveyance on the road and rest for his limbs. It being explained to him that the waggon was already occupied, he

comforted himself aloud with the reflection that it was something to be on the road again for one who had been belated, lost, and wandering over the downs for the last six hours.

'Walcome to git in, when young woman gits out,' said the waggoner. 'I'll gi' ye my sleep on t' Hillford.'

'Thanks, worthy friend,' returned the new comer. 'The state of the case is this—I'm happy to take from humankind whatsoever I can get. If this gentleman will accept of my company, and my legs hold out, all will yet be well.'

Though he did not wear a petticoat, Evan was not sorry to have him. Next to the interposition of the Gods, we pray for human fellowship when we are in a mess. So he mumbled politely, dropped with him a little to the rear, and they all stepped out to the crack of the waggoner's whip.

'Rather a slow pace,' said Evan, feeling bound to converse.

'Six hours on the downs makes it extremely suitable to me,' rejoined the stranger.

'You lost your way?'

'I did, sir. Yes; one does not court those desolate regions wittingly. I am for life and society. The embraces of Diana do not agree with my constitution. If classics there be who differ from me, I beg them to take six hours on the downs alone with the moon, and the last prospect of bread and cheese, and a chaste bed, seemingly utterly extinguished. I am cured of my romance. Of course, when I say bread and cheese, I speak figuratively. Food is implied.'

Evan stole a glance at his companion.

'Besides,' the other continued, with an inflexion of grandeur, 'for a man accustomed to his hunters, it is, you will confess, unpleasant—I speak' hypothetically—to be reduced to his legs to that extent that it strikes him shrewdly he will run them into stumps.'

The stranger laughed.

The fair lady of the night illumined his face, like one who recognized a subject. Evan thought he knew the voice. A curious struggle therein between native facetiousness and an attempt at dignity, appeared to Evan not unfamiliar; and the egregious failure of ambition and triumph of the instinct, helped him to join, the stranger in his mirth.

'Jack Raikes?' he said: 'surely?'

'The man!' it was answered to him. 'But you? and near our old school—Viscount Harrington? These marvels occur, you see—we meet again by night.'

Evan, with little gratification at the meeting, fell into their former comradeship; tickled by a recollection of his old schoolfellow's India-rubber mind.

Mr. Raikes stood about a head under him. He had extremely mobile features; thick, flexible eyebrows; a loose, voluble mouth; a ridiculous figure on a dandified foot. He represented to you one who was rehearsing a part he wished to act before the world, and was not aware that he took the world into his confidence.

How he had come there his elastic tongue explained in tropes

and puns and lines of dramatic verse. His patrimony spent, he at once believed himself an actor, and he was hissed off the stage of a provincial theatre.

'Ruined, the last ignominy endured, I fled from the gay vistas of the Bench—for they live who would thither lead me! and determined, the day before the yesterday—what think'st thou? why to go boldly, and offer myself as Adlatus to blessed old Cudford! Yes! a little Latin is all that remains to me, and I resolved, like the man I am, to turn, hic, hac, hoc, into bread and cheese, and beer: Impute nought foreign to me, in the matter of pride.'

'Usher in our old school—poor old Jack!' exclaimed Evan.

'Lieutenant in the Cudford Academy!' the latter rejoined. 'I walked the distance from London. I had my interview with the respected principal. He gave me of mutton nearest the bone, which, they say, is sweetest; and on sweet things you should not regale in excess. Endymion watched the sheep that bred that mutton! He gave me the thin beer of our boyhood, that I might the more soberly state my mission. That beer, my friend, was brewed by one who wished to form a study for pantomimic masks. He listened with the gravity which is all his own to the recital of my career; he pleasantly compared me to Phaethon, congratulated the river Thames at my not setting it on fire in my rapid descent, and extended to me the three fingers of affectionate farewell. "You an usher, a rearer of youth, Mr. Raikes? Oh, no! Oh, no!" That was all I could get out of him.

'Gad! he might have seen that I didn't joke with the mutton-bone. If I winced at the beer it was imperceptible. Now a man who can do that is what I call a man in earnest.'

'You've just come from Cudford?' said Evan.

'Short is the tale, though long the way, friend Harrington. From Bodley is ten miles to Beckley. I walked them. From Beckley is fifteen miles to Fallowfield. Them I was traversing, when, lo! near sweet eventide a fair horsewoman riding with her groom at her horse's heels. "Lady," says I, addressing her, as much out of the style of the needy as possible, "will you condescend to direct me to Fallowfield?"—"Are you going to the match?" says she. I answered boldly that I was. "Beckley's in," says she, "and you'll be in time to see them out, if you cut across the downs there." I lifted my hat—a desperate measure, for the brim won't bear much—but honour to women though we perish. She bowed: I cut across the downs. In fine, Harrington, old boy, I've been wandering among those downs for the last seven or eight hours. I was on the point of turning my back on the road for the twentieth time, I believe when I heard your welcome vehicular music, and hailed you; and I ask you, isn't it luck for a fellow who hasn't got a penny in his pocket, and is as hungry as five hundred hunters, to drop on an old friend like this?'

Evan answered with the question:

'Where was it you said you met the young lady?'

'In the first place, O Amadis! I never said she was young. You're on the scent, I see.'

Nursing the fresh image of his darling in his heart's recesses, Evan, as they entered Fallowfield, laid the state of his purse before Jack, and earned anew the epithet of Amadis, when it came to be told that the occupant of the waggon was likewise one of its pensioners.

Sleep had long held its reign in Fallowfield. Nevertheless, Mr. Raikes, though blind windows alone looked on him, and nought foreign was to be imputed to him in the matter of pride, had become exceedingly solicitous concerning his presentation to the inhabitants of that quiet little country town; and while Evan and —the waggoner consulted the former with regard to the chances of procuring beds and supper, the latter as to his prospect of beer and a comfortable riddance of the feminine burden weighing on them all—Mr. Raikes was engaged in persuading his hat to assume something of the gentlemanly polish of its youth, and might have been observed now and then furtively catching up a leg to be dusted. Ere the wheels of the waggon stopped he had gained that ease of mind which the knowledge that you have done all a man may do and circumstances warrant, establishes. Capacities conscious of their limits may repose even proudly when they reach them; and, if Mr. Raikes had not quite the air of one come out of a bandbox, he at least proved to the discerning intelligence that he knew what sort of manner befitted that happy occasion, and was enabled by the pains he had taken to glance with a challenge at the sign of the hostelry, under which they were now ranked, and from which, though the hour was late, and

Fallowfield a singularly somnolent little town, there issued signs of life approaching to festivity.

CHAPTER XI. DOINGS AT AN INN

What every traveller sighs to find, was palatably furnished by the Green Dragon of Fallowfield—a famous inn, and a constellation for wandering coachmen. There pleasant smiles seasoned plenty, and the bill was gilded in a manner unknown to our days. Whoso drank of the ale of the Green Dragon kept in his memory a place apart for it. The secret, that to give a warm welcome is the breath of life to an inn, was one the Green Dragon boasted, even then, not to share with many Red Lions, or Cocks of the Morning, or Kings' Heads, or other fabulous monsters; and as if to show that when you are in the right track you are sure to be seconded, there was a friend of the Green Dragon, who, on a particular night of the year, caused its renown to enlarge to the dimensions of a miracle. But that, for the moment, is my secret.

Evan and Jack were met in the passage by a chambermaid. Before either of them could speak, she had turned and fled, with the words:

'More coming!' which, with the addition of 'My goodness me!' were echoed by the hostess in her recess. Hurried directions seemed to be consequent, and then the hostess sallied out, and said, with a curtsey:

'Please to step in, gentlemen. This is the room, tonight.'

Evan lifted his hat; and bowing, requested to know whether they could have a supper and beds.

‘Beds, Sir!’ cried the hostess. ‘What am I to do for beds! Yes, beds indeed you may have, but bed-rooms—if you ask for them, it really is more than I can supply you with. I have given up my own. I sleep with my maid Jane to-night.’

‘Anything will do for us, madam,’ replied Evan, renewing his foreign courtesy. ‘But there is a poor young woman outside.’

‘Another!’ The hostess instantly smiled down her inhospitable outcry.

‘She,’ said Evan, ‘must have a room to herself. She is ill.’

‘Must is must, sir,’ returned the gracious hostess. ‘But I really haven’t the means.’

‘You have bed-rooms, madam?’

‘Every one of them engaged, sir.’

‘By ladies, madam?’

‘Lord forbid, Sir!’ she exclaimed with the honest energy of a woman who knew her sex.

Evan bade Jack go and assist the waggoner to bring in the girl. Jack, who had been all the time pulling at his wristbands, and settling his coat-collar by the dim reflection of a window of the bar, departed, after, on his own authority, assuring the hostess that fever was not the young woman’s malady, as she protested against admitting fever into her house, seeing that she had to consider her guests.

‘We’re open to all the world to-night, except fever,’ said the hostess. ‘Yes,’ she rejoined to Evan’s order that the waggoner and his mate should be supplied with ale, ‘they shall have as much

as they can drink,' which is not a speech usual at inns, when one man gives an order for others, but Evan passed it by, and politely begged to be shown in to one of the gentlemen who had engaged bedrooms.

'Oh! if you can persuade any of them, sir, I'm sure I've nothing to say,' observed the hostess. 'Pray, don't ask me to stand by and back it, that's all.'

Had Evan been familiar with the Green Dragon, he would have noticed that the landlady, its presiding genius, was stiffer than usual; the rosy smile was more constrained, as if a great host had to be embraced, and were trying it to the utmost stretch. There was, however, no asperity about her, and when she had led him to the door he was to enter to prefer his suit, and she had asked whether the young woman was quite common, and he had replied that he had picked her up on the road, and that she was certainly poor, the hostess said:

'I 'm sure you're a very good gentleman, sir, and if I could spare your asking at all, I would.'

With that she went back to encounter Mr. Raikes and his charge, and prime the waggoner and his mate.

A noise of laughter and talk was stilled gradually, as Evan made his bow into a spacious room, wherein, as the tops of pines are seen swimming on the morning mist, about a couple of dozen guests of divers conditions sat partially revealed through wavy clouds of tobacco-smoke. By their postures, which Evan's appearance by no means disconcerted, you read in a glance men

who had been at ease for so many hours that they had no troubles in the world save the two ultimate perplexities of the British Sybarite, whose bed of roses is harassed by the pair of problems: first, what to do with his legs; secondly, how to imbibe liquor with the slightest possible derangement of those members subordinate to his upper structure. Of old the Sybarite complained. Not so our self-helpful islanders. Since they could not, now that work was done and jollity the game, take off their legs, they got away from them as far as they might, in fashions original or imitative: some by thrusting them out at full length; some by cramping them under their chairs: while some, taking refuge in a mental effort, forgot them, a process to be recommended if it did not involve occasional pangs of consciousness to the legs of their neighbours. We see in our cousins West of the great water, who are said to exaggerate our peculiarities, beings labouring under the same difficulty, and intent on its solution. As to the second problem: that of drinking without discomposure to the subservient limbs: the company present worked out this republican principle ingeniously, but in a manner beneath the attention of the Muse. Let Clio record that mugs and glasses, tobacco and pipes, were strewn upon the table. But if the guests had arrived at that stage when to reach the arm, or arrange the person, for a sip of good stuff, causes moral debates, and presents to the mind impediments equal to what would be raised in active men by the prospect of a great excursion, it is not to be wondered at that the presence of a stranger produced no

immediate commotion. Two or three heads were half turned; such as faced him imperceptibly lifted their eyelids.

'Good evening, sir,' said one who sat as chairman, with a decisive nod.

'Good night, ain't it?' a jolly-looking old fellow queried of the speaker, in an under-voice.

'Gad, you don't expect me to be wishing the gentleman good-bye, do you?' retorted the former.

'Ha! ha! No, to be sure,' answered the old boy; and the remark was variously uttered, that 'Good night,' by a caprice of our language, did sound like it.

'Good evening's "How d' ye do?"—"How are ye?" Good night's "Be off, and be blowed to you,"' observed an interpreter with a positive mind; and another, whose intelligence was not so clear, but whose perceptions had seized the point, exclaimed: 'I never says it when I hails a chap; but, dash my buttons, if I mightn't 'a done, one day or another! Queer!'

The chairman, warmed by his joke, added, with a sharp wink: 'Ay; it would be queer, if you hailed "Good night" in the middle of the day!' and this among a company soaked in ripe ale, could not fail to run the electric circle, and persuaded several to change their positions; in the rumble of which, Evan's reply, if he had made any, was lost. Few, however, were there who could think of him, and ponder on that glimpse of fun, at the same time; and he would have been passed over, had not the chairman said: 'Take a seat, sir; make yourself comfortable.'

'Before I have that pleasure,' replied Evan, 'I—'

'I see where 'tis,' burst out the old boy who had previously superinduced a diversion: 'he's going to ax if he can't have a bed!'

A roar of laughter, and 'Don't you remember this day last year?' followed the cunning guess. For awhile explication was impossible; and Evan coloured, and smiled, and waited for them.

'I was going to ask—'

'Said so!' shouted the old boy, gleefully.

'—one of the gentlemen who has engaged a bed-room to do me the extreme favour to step aside with me, and allow me a moment's speech with him.'

Long faces were drawn, and odd stares were directed toward him, in reply.

'I see where 'tis'; the old boy thumped his knee. 'Ain't it now? Speak up, sir! There's a lady in the case?'

'I may tell you thus much,' answered Evan, 'that it is an unfortunate young woman, very ill, who needs rest and quiet.'

'Didn't I say so?' shouted the old boy.

But this time, though his jolly red jowl turned all round to demand a confirmation, it was not generally considered that he had divined so correctly. Between a lady and an unfortunate young woman, there seemed to be a strong distinction, in the minds of the company.

The chairman was the most affected by the communication. His bushy eyebrows frowned at Evan, and he began tugging at the brass buttons of his coat, like one preparing to arm for a conflict.

'Speak out, sir, if you please,' he said. 'Above board—no asides—no taking advantages. You want me to give up my bedroom for the use of your young woman, sir?'

Evan replied quietly: 'She is a stranger to me; and if you could see her, sir, and know her situation, I think she would move your pity.'

'I don't doubt it, sir—I don't doubt it,' returned the chairman. 'They all move our pity. That's how they get over us. She has diddled you, and she would diddle me, and diddle us all-diddle the devil, I dare say, when her time comes. I don't doubt it, sir.'

To confront a vehement old gentleman, sitting as president in an assembly of satellites, requires command of countenance, and Evan was not browbeaten: he held him, and the whole room, from where he stood, under a serene and serious eye, for his feelings were too deeply stirred on behalf of the girl to let him think of himself. That question of hers, 'What are you going to do with me?' implying such helplessness and trust, was still sharp on his nerves.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I humbly beg your pardon for disturbing you as I do.'

But with a sudden idea that a general address on behalf of a particular demand must necessarily fail, he let his eyes rest on one there, whose face was neither stupid nor repellent, and who, though he did not look up, had an attentive, thoughtful cast about the mouth.

'May I entreat a word apart with you, sir?'

Evan was not mistaken in the index he had perused. The gentleman seemed to feel that he was selected from the company, and slightly raising his head, carelessly replied: 'My bed is entirely at your disposal,' resuming his contemplative pose.

On the point of thanking him, Evan advanced a step, when up started the irascible chairman.

'I don't permit it! I won't allow it!' And before Evan could ask his reasons, he had rung the bell, muttering: 'They follow us to our inns, now, the baggages! They must harry us at our inns! We can't have peace and quiet at our inns!—'

In a state of combustion, he cried out to the waiter:

'Here, Mark, this gentleman has brought in a dirty wench: pack her up to my bed-room, and lock her in lock her in, and bring down the key.'

Agreeably deceived in the old gentleman's intentions, Evan could not refrain from joining the murmured hilarity created by the conclusion of his order. The latter glared at him, and added: 'Now, sir, you've done your worst. Sit down, and be merry.'

Replying that he had a friend outside, and would not fail to accept the invitation, Evan retired. He was met by the hostess with the reproachful declaration on her lips, that she was a widow woman, wise in appearances, and that he had brought into her house that night work she did not expect, or bargain for. Rather (since I must speak truth of my gentleman) to silence her on the subject, and save his ears, than to propitiate her favour towards the girl, Evan drew out his constitutionally lean purse,

and dropped it in her hand, praying her to put every expense incurred to his charge. She exclaimed:

'If Dr. Pillie has his full sleep this night, I shall be astonished'; and Evan hastily led Jack into the passage to impart to him, that the extent of his resources was reduced to the smallest of sums in shillings.

'I can beat my friend at that reckoning,' said Mr. Raikes; and they entered the room.

Eyes were on him. This had ever the effect of causing him to swell to monstrous proportions in the histrionic line. Asking the waiter carelessly for some light supper dish, he suggested the various French, with 'not that?' and the affable naming of another. 'Nor that? Dear me, we shall have to sup on chops, I believe!'

Evan saw the chairman scrutinizing Raikes, much as he himself might have done, and he said: 'Bread and cheese for me.'

Raikes exclaimed: 'Really? Well, my lord, you lead, and your taste is mine!'

A second waiter scudded past, and stopped before the chairman to say: 'If you please, sir, the gentlemen upstairs send their compliments, and will be happy to accept.'

'Ha!' was the answer. 'Thought better of it, have they! Lay for three more, then. Five more, I guess.' He glanced at the pair of intruders.

Among a portion of the guests there had been a return to common talk, and one had observed that he could not get

that 'Good Evening,' and 'Good Night,' out of his head which had caused a friend to explain the meaning of these terms of salutation to him: while another, of a philosophic turn, pursued the theme: 'You see, when we meets, we makes a night of it. So, when we parts, it's Good Night—natural! ain't it?' A proposition assented to, and considerably dilated on; but whether he was laughing at that, or what had aroused the fit, the chairman did not say.

Gentle chuckles had succeeded his laughter by the time the bread and cheese appeared.

In the rear of the provision came three young gentlemen, of whom the foremost lumped in, singing to one behind him, 'And you shall have little Rosey!'

They were clad in cricketing costume, and exhibited the health and manners of youthful Englishmen of station. Frolicsome young bulls bursting on an assemblage of sheep, they might be compared to. The chairman welcomed them a trifle snubbingly. The colour mounted to the cheeks of Mr. Raikes as he made incision in the cheese, under their eyes, knitting his brows fearfully, as if at hard work.

The chairman entreated Evan to desist from the cheese; and, pulling out his watch, thundered: 'Time!'

The company generally jumped on their legs; and, in the midst of a hum of talk and laughter, he informed Evan and Jack, that he invited them cordially to a supper up-stairs, and would be pleased if they would partake of it, and in a great rage if they would not.

Raikes was for condescending to accept.

Evan sprang up and cried: 'Gladly, sir,' and gladly would he have cast his cockney schoolmate to the winds, in the presence of these young cricketers; for he had a prognostication.

The door was open, and the company of jolly yeomen, tradesmen, farmers, and the like, had become intent on observing all the ceremonies of precedence: not one would broaden his back on the other; and there was bowing, and scraping, and grimacing, till Farmer Broadmead was hailed aloud, and the old boy stepped forth, and was summarily pushed through: the chairman calling from the rear, 'Hulloa! no names to-night!' to which was answered lustily: 'All right, Mr. Tom!' and the speaker was reproved with, 'There you go! at it again!' and out and up they hustled.

The chairman said quietly to Evan, as they were ascending the stairs: 'We don't have names to-night; may as well drop titles.' Which presented no peculiar meaning to Evan's mind, and he smiled the usual smile.

To Raikes, at the door of the supper-room, the chairman repeated the same; and with extreme affability and alacrity of abnegation, the other rejoined, 'Oh, certainly!'

No wonder that he rubbed his hands with more delight than aristocrats and people with gentlemanly connections are in the habit of betraying at the prospect of refection, for the release from bread and cheese was rendered overpoweringly glorious, in his eyes, by the bountiful contrast exhibited on the board before

him.

CHAPTER XII. IN WHICH ALE IS SHOWN TO HAVE ONE QUALITY OF WINE

To proclaim that yon ribs of beef and yonder ruddy Britons have met, is to furnish matter for an hour's comfortable meditation.

Digest the fact. Here the Fates have put their seal to something Nature clearly devised. It was intended; and it has come to pass. A thing has come to pass which we feel to be right! The machinery of the world, then, is not entirely dislocated: there is harmony, on one point, among the mysterious powers who have to do with us.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.