

Silver Fork Novels, 1826–1841

(6 Volume Set)

Edited by
Marie Mulvey-Roberts



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Thomas Henry Lister,
Granby: A Novel (1826)

Edited by
Clare Bainbridge



ROUTLEDGE


SILVER FORK NOVELS, 1826–1841

Volume 1

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Where did the silver fork novel come from, and when did it begin? It seems likely that, as several recent critics have suggested, Byron's *Don Juan* (1818–24) was a powerful influence, especially its later cantos in which English society is subjected to comic but perceptive satire. The omnipresent figure of the dandy in these texts seems to owe something to Byron's persona, too. The influence of a rather different author, Jane Austen, has also been detected.¹ Originally known as fashionable novels, these works became quickly established in the mid 1820s and attracted a good deal of adverse criticism. Robert Montgomery's satire *The Puffiad*, published in 1828, is typical:

[D]uring the last few years, a new and titled order of novelists has arisen, and these patrician scribblers pretend to lash the follies and immoralities of high life – no! – What do they more than buzz around the temple of fashion, and now and then dart their little stings into some celebrated idol??²

Like many of the genre's opponents, Montgomery's satire rests on the assumption that fashionable novels were written by fashionable people – that the aristocrats themselves were satirising their friends and acquaintances. Certainly many of the earliest of the fashionable novels were deliberately marketed as being authored by members of the aristocracy. Henry Colburn, whose publishing house was responsible for a large number of these, managed to recruit some titled authors: Constantine Phipps, Lord Mulgrave (and later Marquis of Normanby) whose *Matilda: A Tale of the Day* was published by Colburn in 1825, as was his follow-up, *Yes and No* in 1828, and Lady Charlotte Bury, daughter of the Duke of Argyll, whose three-volume novel *Flirtation*

¹ For a discussion of the origins of the silver fork novel, see Matthew W. Rosa, *The Silver-Fork School* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936); Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824–1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 115–25; Alison Adburgham, *Silver Fork Society: Fashionable Life and Literature from 1814–1840* (London: Constable, 1983); Winifred Hughes, 'Silver-Fork Writers and Readers: Social Contexts of a Best Seller', *Novel: a Forum on Fiction*, 25:3 (1992), 328–47; April Nixon Kendra, 'Gendering the Silver Fork: Catherine Gore and the Society Novel', *Women's Writing*, 11:1 (2004), 25–38.

² Anon [Robert Montgomery], *The Puffiad: A Satire* (London: Samuel Maunders, 1828), p. 12.

Colburn published in 1827. If not actually written by aristocrats, the earliest of these novels were generally presented to the public as works which provided an insider's insight into the privileged world of high society. Some were published anonymously, like Marianne Spencer Hudson's *Almack's*, 3 vols (London: Saunders & Otley, 1827), for a brief period 'the grand object of attraction in the reading world'¹, which was the subject of numerous conjectures (Lady Westmorland was a contender, as was Lady Blessington's sister) based on the assumption of 'its author's having evidently witnessed and been a participator in the scenes which it describes' (ibid). In all these cases, it was the accuracy of the picture of fashionable life that provided the greatest selling point. The publishers' advertisements for *Almack's* quoted a puff from the *Monthly Review*: 'The author of this work has contrived to exhibit the most ample, the most animated, and, we suspect, the most accurate picture of what is called "High Life" in this country, which has ever yet met the public eye.'² At the same time, however, the reviewers generally seem to have accepted that such pictures should be viewed as corrective:

The value of a work of this kind is inestimable. Inasmuch as it exposes to the public gaze the puerile and inconsequential usages, the numerous follies and mean intrigues, which form the whole business of the 'Exclusives,' it may perhaps assist to reform and improve that order.³

This reviewer rather disingenuously asserted that readers of these novels would become more, rather than less, satisfied with their humbler station in life:

To those classes of society which are immediately below the 'Exclusives,' this work will afford an inexhaustible fund of consolation, and even of instruction. Living as they very generally do in domestic habits, employing their leisure hours in circles equally removed from dissipation and ennui, accustomed to intellectual intercourse, and to look upon the affairs of life with a calm and discerning eye, they will conclude, from a perusal of this work, that their condition is, perhaps of all others that society can present, really the most enviable.⁴

Clearly, then, readers of these novels could view them through many perspectives, which did not necessarily cancel each other out. The aristocratic writers could certainly be seen as celebrating the exclusivity of their spectacularly self-indulgent and privileged life of luxury and consumption. However, they could also be said to be both

¹ *La Belle Assemblée*, 3rd series, 5 (January 1827), p. 36.

² *Monthly Review*, n.s., 4 (January 1827), p. 100, quoted in *Morning Chronicle* (22 February 1827).

³ Review of *Almack's*, *Monthly Review*, n.s., 4 (January 1827), p. 101.

⁴ Ibid.

laying it bare for those aspiring social climbers who wished to emulate it and demonstrating its essential emptiness and the hypocrisy of its values. Their middle-class readers, meanwhile, occupied a similarly ambivalent position, aspiring to join a class they both envied and feared, or rejoicing in the follies of an aristocracy they despised. The novelists fed their fantasies while providing the promise of satire to collude with the mistrust of their readers.

In addition, the very need to celebrate such a frivolous existence so publicly suggests that the aristocratic authors felt themselves to be under threat from the middle class audience they were courting: what better mode of defusing such a threat could there be than that of taking a satirical stance? Certainly the aristocracy of England in the late 1820s and early 1830s had good reason to feel insecure. This was the era of parliamentary reform, and the middle classes were – or hoped they were – on the rise. In the politically dramatic years leading up to the passing of the Reform Act in 1832, it was the interests of the middle class that formed the primary focus. Supporters of the Act sought to change the existing electoral system, not only by ridding it of so-called rotten boroughs and of corrupt practices, but also by including the previously disenfranchised middle classes in the system of government. Some of the more idealistic Whig ministers undoubtedly believed that reform was desirable because it accorded with Whig principles, and were genuinely concerned to bring about a better balance between the distribution of seats and the wealth of the population. Others, both Whig and Tory, took a more pragmatic view, seeing the Act as a pre-emptive strategy, designed to prevent revolution by placating the middle classes and separating them from the lower classes, thereby strengthening the forces of order.

In fact the Reform Act, when it was finally passed, achieved very little in the way of real change. Nevertheless members of the bourgeoisie undoubtedly had their aspirations, and welcomed works of fiction that taught while they entertained – taught those indefinable manners and modes of exclusivity which, while they may have appeared forever out of reach, might perhaps be acquired by the assiduous student of the silver fork genre. And yet at the same time it seemed that the novels asserted the utter impossibility of ever attaining the goal of admission. By showing that rank, and taste, and *ton*, were either yours by virtue of your birth or never to be gained, perhaps the aristocratic authors were cocking a snook at the commercial and industrial classes who longed in vain to rise up the social scale.

All this may be true of the fashionable novels whose authors were genuinely members of the upper classes of society, but in fact the most interesting examples – including those included in this set – were written by authors who had originated from rather lower down the

social scale. Even Marguerite, Countess of Blessington, despite her title, was a middle-class Irish woman who had married well but was not accepted by London society owing to the scandal and rumour that surrounded her private life, and it would be over thirty years before Edward Bulwer was raised to the peerage as Lord Lytton of Knebworth. The first of Colburn's long run of fashionable novels was *Tremaine, or the Man of Refinement*, 3 vols (1825), whose author, Robert Plumer Ward, was not a member of the aristocracy, although he certainly lived luxuriously enough in his Hertfordshire country seat. And indeed, although his early fictions were short stories rather than full length novels, a strong contender for the role of founder of the silver fork genre is the editor of the *John Bull* newspaper, Theodore Hook (1788–1841). But Hook, despite his high Tory views, was far from being an aristocrat. He was the son of a London musician, and when he wrote his three-volume collection of stories *Sayings and Doings* (London: Colburn, 1824) was confined for debt in a London sponging-house. Hook's stories may have been, as an early twentieth-century critic put it, 'flimsy, vulgar and trivial',¹ but they were undoubtedly influential. They were also indirectly responsible for the introduction of the term 'silver fork', which came to be applied to these kind of fictions. William Hazlitt's review of the collection sneered at Hook's ignorance of the world he attempted to depict: 'these privileged persons are not surely thinking all the time and every day of their lives of that which Mr Theodore Hook has never forgotten since he first witnessed it, *viz.*, that *they eat their fish with a silver fork*'² and within a few years the term had been transferred to the texts themselves ('those contemptible productions of the silver fork school, which are called "fashionable novels"').³

Certainly in early 1826, when Thomas Henry Lister's *Granby* appeared, the genre had become well enough established for one reader to describe the novel as 'one of that very difficult class which aspires to describe the actual current of society; whose colours are so evanescent that it is difficult to fix them on the canvas'.⁴ By the time

¹ A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (eds), *Cambridge History of English Literature*, 18 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907–16), vol. xii, p. 251.

² William Hazlitt, 'The Dandy School' [1827], *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. by P. P. Howe, 21 vols (London: J. M. Dent, 1934), vol. xx, p. 146.

³ *The Times*, 15 December 1831.

⁴ *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by W. E. K. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 121.

Edward Bulwer's *Falkland* came out in 1827, reviewers were confidently classifying it as one of

the pretended fashionable novels, that have lately been manufactured – all symptoms of the odious love of private scandal which characterises the reading public of the present day.¹

But it was Bulwer's next novel, *Pelham; or The Adventures of a Gentleman* (3 vols, London: Colburn, 1828) that arguably created the greatest stir. Although the *Monthly Review* described it as 'the very best novel we have seen of the class to which it belongs',² Tory reviewers detected radical sentiments beneath its satirical and entertaining surface veneer. Walter Scott was worried by 'a *slang* tone of morality which is immoral and of policy void of every thing like sound wisdom',³ while Thomas Carlyle famously satirised the novel in his *Sartor Resartus* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1831). Two years after the publication of *Pelham* Bulwer was subjected to a violent attack by William Maginn in *Fraser's Magazine* for being of 'the same die' as the 'pseudo-fashionable class' of novelist, 'this degenerate spawn, engendered from the overflowings of that majestic Nile – hight romantic fiction'.⁴

Clearly by now these novels were no longer seen – if indeed they ever had been – simply as trifles to be quickly read and as quickly disregarded. They had taken on a political colouring. As Bulwer himself wrote in his collection of critical essays *England and the English* (1833):

In these works, even the lightest and most ephemeral, something of the moral spirit of the age betrayed itself. Novels of fashionable life illustrate feelings very deeply rooted, and productive of no common revolution ... the three-year run of fashionable novels was a shrewd sign of the times; straws they were, but they showed the upgathering of the storm ... Few writers ever produced so great an effect on the political spirit of their generation as some of these novelists, who, without any other merit, unconsciously exposed the falsehood, the hypocrisy, the arrogant and vulgar insolence of patrician life. Read by all classes, in every town, in every village, these works ... could not but engender a mingled indignation and disgust at the parade of frivolity, the ridiculous disdain of truth, nature, and mankind, the self-consequence and absurdity, which, falsely or truly, these novels exhibited as a picture of aristocratic society.⁵

¹ *Monthly Review*, n.s., 5 (June 1827), p. 262.

² *Monthly Review*, n.s., 9 (September 1828), p. 52.

³ Letter from Walter Scott to John Gibson Lockhart (20 November 1828), *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by H. J. C. Grierson; assisted by Davidson Cook, W. M. Parker, et al, 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932–7), vol. xi, p. 45.

⁴ Anon [William Maginn], 'Mr Edward Lytton Bulwer's Novels; and Remarks on Novel-Writing', *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, 5:1 (June 1830), p. 510.

⁵ Edward Bulwer Lytton, *England and the English*, ed. by Standish Meacham (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 287–8.

Although he is apparently disassociating himself from the genre, and writing as if the vogue for these works has already passed, Bulwer's comments here are shrewd, and bring into focus many of the issues that have remained the most interesting aspect of the silver fork novel.

From the time of their original publication up to the present day, much critical discussion has revolved around the question of how these texts should be read. For the radical critic and reviewer William Hazlitt, fashionable novels were shallow and narrow, written only to encourage in their readers 'the admiration of the folly, caprice, insolence and affectation of a certain class'. The danger, for him, seemed to be the fact that fashionable novels sowed the seeds of discontent and envy in their less privileged readers:

Literature, so far from supplying us with intellectual resources to counterbalance immediate privations, is made an instrument to add to our impatience and irritability under them, and to nourish our feverish, childish admiration of external show and grandeur. This rage for fashion and for fashionable writing seems becoming universal, and some stop must be put to it ...¹

For Bulwer, however, the opposite effect is produced: in his view, far from holding the aristocracy up for admiration, the purpose of these novels is to satirise 'the follies and vices of the great'.² These conflicting views provide a useful demonstration of what has interested many recent critics most about silver fork novels: Winifred Hughes has described this as their 'radical instability of tone'. By exhibiting the 'insolence' of the upper classes, she argues:

[w]hat the silver fork formula did was to allow both writers and readers to revel in that insolence and to partake of its power while simultaneously mocking or trivialising its aristocratic exponents. Even the most reform-minded reader could surrender himself or herself to its decadent titillations while preserving a sense of moral and class superiority.³

So much for the general background of the silver fork genre. However, the novels that are included in the present set do not appear to conform in many respects to the criteria that have been discussed so far. As far as their subject matter is concerned, none is as superficial as hostile criticism of the genre had suggested, nor do they conform to

¹ Hazlitt, 'The Dandy School' [1827], p. 148.

² *England and the English*, p. 288.

³ Winifred Hughes, 'Silver-fork Writers and Readers: Social Contexts of a Best Seller', *Novel: a forum on fiction*, 25:3 (1992), 328–47, p. 330.

the self-parodic ‘receipt’ for writing such a novel that Disraeli included in his *The Young Duke* (1831):

Take a pair of pistols and a pack of cards, a cookery book and a set of new quadrilles; mix them up with half an intrigue and a whole marriage, and divide them into three equal portions.¹

Equally, it would not be wholly accurate to describe any of them as ‘a sort of London Directory of fashionable tradespeople’, as one reviewer of Catherine Gore’s *Pin Money* (1831) put it,² though readers can undeniably discover from them a great deal about the shops, clothes, restaurants and hairstyles that were in vogue in Regency London. Yet there are certainly common threads running through all the works that make them very definitely classifiable as products of their particular age and genre. Certainly all the six novels in this collection deal with ‘high life’, and certainly all can be said to deal with it satirically. The virulence of the satire varies from novel to novel, and is undoubtedly affected by the particular agenda of each novelist.

Lister’s introduction to *Granby*, the earliest of the six, disclaims any agenda whatsoever:

I have no system to announce – no tale of authorship to relate, that can reasonably excite the least curiosity... It was my intention merely to try if I could frame a tale which, taking an unexaggerated view of the surface of society, and without deviation from the possible incidents of modern life, should excite an interest in its readers.³

As Clare Bainbridge points out in her introduction to the novel, however, *Granby* is considerably more politicised than Lister would have his readers believe. The work touches on issues that were in the forefront of discussion in the pre-Reform era, including rotten boroughs, political corruption and threats to the supremacy of the aristocracy. Class anxiety frequently rears its head, often in comic situations. Above all, perhaps, the novel is about discrimination. Minor characters are generally concerned with discriminating between various levels of social status, but for Henry Granby it is more a matter of working out for himself how to be a man, and indeed an aristocratic man, in a society which is in a state of social flux and turmoil. Both Granby and his beloved Caroline are forced to negotiate their way through the confusing pitfalls of silver fork society against a backdrop of country house-parties, the London season, visits to the opera, trips to the continent, sojourns in stately homes and nights in gambling dens. Both must learn to discriminate between true and false, genuine

¹ Benjamin Disraeli, *The Young Duke* (London: Peter Davies, 1926), p. 132.

² Review of *Pin Money*, *Westminster Review*, 15 (October 1831), p. 433.

³ *Granby*, Volume 1, pp. 000–000.

and hypocritical, as they encounter a bewildering series of characters who mostly seem bent on deception and self-interest. In this they typify what a recent critic has suggested is one of the chief characteristics of the genre:

the fundamental principle – and the scandal – of the silver-fork novel, as a specific type of the novel of manners, sentiment, and emulation, is that the intrinsic importance of the topic of discrimination matters less than the act of discrimination, the exercise of personal taste within a social discourse of discrimination and distinction.¹

In Landon's *Romance and Reality*, too, social gatherings – ballrooms, parties, dinner tables – are the backdrop against which the novel's plot and themes must be worked out. Landon herself was a middle class outsider, and felt distinctly anxious about having agreed to write about a fashionable society from which she was largely excluded² although her literary fame had enabled her to have some glimpses of it. Thus she writes from the perspective of a detached and frequently cynical observer, a viewpoint that shocked contemporary critics who expected something very different from the adored love poet 'L. E. L.', whose yearning verses had won her a crowd of admirers. While critics and readers could be forgiven for doubting Lister's didactic intentions, there could be no doubt in anyone's mind that *Romance and Reality* set out to expose the 'follies and vices' of the exclusive world it depicted. Indeed, as Cynthia Lawford points out in her introduction to the volume, the plot often appears secondary to the satirical authorial asides with which Landon peppered her text. Although not overtly political, the novel frequently touches on many of the hotly debated topics of its day: the politics of reform, ministerial corruption, social welfare and political economy, as well as the revolutions, wars and uprisings that were taking place around Europe. That Landon had more than a passing familiarity with these issues is unsurprising given that the period of writing the novel coincided with her close friendship with Edward Bulwer, who makes a brief and flattering appearance in the text. Landon wrote an article on his early life and works for the *New Monthly Magazine*,³ and could hardly have avoided a familiarity with his radical politics, though as a Tory she did not necessarily agree with all his views. She seems, in fact, to have based her hero Edward Lorraine's political aspirations on those of Bulwer,

¹ Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1739–1830* (Harrow: Longman, 1989), p. 225.

² Letitia Landon, Letter to Rosina Bulwer (February–March 1830), Ms., Folder I, Box 48, Collection 100, University of California at Los Angeles.

³ Anon [Letitia Landon], 'Living Literary Characters, No. V, Edward Lytton Bulwer', *New Monthly Magazine*, 31 (May 1831), 442–4.

whose first entry into parliament as Member for St Ives in Huntingdonshire would coincide with the publication of *Romance and Reality*.

Landon's references to, and covert use of, the character of one of her own close friends signals another feature of the novels of this genre: their penchant for the methods of the *roman à clef*. Most of the novels in the present collection contain elements at least of this tendency. Lister's *Granby* contains a character named Lady Harriett Duncan who is widely believed to be based on Lady Caroline Lamb, while his 'intellectual dandy' Trebeck has often been thought to be a representation of George 'Beau' Brummell. Bulwer's *Godolphin* also includes a number of characters who would have been immediately identifiable by those in the know. Most notably, not only did he tactlessly base the character of the eccentric peer Lord Saltream on that of John William Ward, 1st Earl of Dudley, who died in a private asylum in 1833, but his central female protagonist, Constance, Countess of Erpingham, was clearly modelled in many respects on his new and much admired friend Marguerite, Countess of Blessington. Indeed it is Constance's sceptical view of the aristocratic circles in which she is an unwilling participant – a view which has much in common with Blessington's own opinions, both private and public – that provide the basis for much of this novel's scathing critique of the modes and manners of 1830s society. If Lister and Landon introduced politics into their novels somewhat indirectly, the same cannot be said to be true of Bulwer. Written during its author's first heady months as a member of parliament, the novel recounts the events leading up to the final passing of the Reform Act almost blow by blow as they were actually occurring. Bulwer was at his most radical at this era, and in many places the novel seems less like a work of fiction than a pamphlet of political philosophy. Like Lister, Bulwer follows the mould set by early fashionable novels by including a dandy figure in the text, in this case the amoral and callous Augustus Saville, who seems in many ways to typify the worst failings of the world of the exclusives.

Marguerite Blessington did not respond to Bulwer's complimentary portrait of her in *Godolphin* by including him in *The Victims of Society*, which she published some three years later. In fact she had included a fulsome tribute to Bulwer and his wife Rosina in her earlier novel, *The Repealers*, 3 vols (London: Bentley, 1833), a novel which contains many thinly disguised portraits of living persons.¹ In the preface to *Victims* she went to some lengths to disclaim the new work's status as *roman à clef*:

¹ See 'Key to the Repealers', in R. R. Madden, *The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington*, 2 vols (New York: Harper, 1855), vol. i, p. 219.

Those who move in a highly artificial state of society acquire ... a kind of family resemblance: and every general description is susceptible of personal application ... It is not then a superfluous precaution seriously to declare, that the characters of this work are invented, not copied, as the representatives of a class, or agents of a moral ... (Volume 4, p. 000).

No doubt some readers may have felt she was protesting too much, but there is in fact little indication in the novel that her satire has any personal targets, or indeed that the virtuous characters are based on any real life models. Far from being a flaw, this fact merely demonstrates Blessington's purpose in this work, which is to lay bare the selfishness and hypocrisy of London society as a whole. There is not just one victim of society in this text: Blessington's plural 'Victims' should alert the reader to the fact that both the virtuous Augusta and the tarnished Caroline are meant here. False rumour destroys Augusta's reputation – a demonstration of the novel's main premise that society cares only for appearance, and never for the real facts of the case. But Caroline, who has been subjected at far too young an age to the dark underside that is society's true face, has succumbed to the immorality and vice that lie just below the glittering surface. Indeed, though not a *roman à clef*, the novel could be said to have a personal application of a rather different kind. Blessington herself was, after all, a victim of a society that rejected her on the grounds both of her past reputation as what she privately admitted to having been, 'that despised thing, a kept mistress' before her marriage, and of her continuing relationship with her son-in-law Alfred d'Orsay.¹ By creating these two divergent women characters – one falsely accused, the other corrupted by vicious associates – she could be said to be having it both ways: whichever truth one chose to believe about her own life, society was itself to blame.

If Blessington was making a general point about the corruption and hypocrisy in society as a whole, Rosina Bulwer had targets in view which were wholly specific. Primarily intended as a weapon in her continuing feud with her estranged husband Edward Bulwer, *Chevelley* managed to encompass character assassinations of just about everyone in his family and social circle. The accuracy of her thinly disguised and wickedly funny portraits is evident from the panicky letters written by Bulwer to John Forster at the time of the novel's

¹ 'Draft of a memorandum of a conversation between Dr Madden and Lady Blessington. Dated 1843', Alfred Morrison (ed.), *The Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents: The Blessington Papers*, (Printed for Private Circulation, 1895), p. 169. Blessington's relationship with Count d'Orsay has been much discussed. For the most recent assessment, including new evidence of the true nature of their relationship, see Nick Foulkes, *Last of the Dandies: The Scandalous Life and Escapades of Count d'Orsay* (London: Little Brown, 2003).

publication.¹ But although the novel is certainly a *roman à clef* writ large, and as such of enormous interest to anyone interested in the political and social history of the period, it has a great deal more to offer to today's readers. Rosina's feminism – inherited from her campaigning mother Anna Wheeler (1785–1848) – permeates the text through her heroine Julia's comments on women's oppression. Above all, the novel demonstrates the extraordinary breadth of Rosina's knowledge and the keenness of her intelligence. Although she was mocked by reviewers for the inaccuracy of some of her Latin and French quotations (quite likely to have been the fault of the compositor rather than the author) she demonstrates a remarkable grasp not only of languages (Greek, German and Italian also feature) but also of reading matter in those languages as well as in English. In an era which denied all but a minimal education to women, Rosina was clearly making a point by this display: attempting to prove herself, in other words, to be at least Bulwer's intellectual equal. How successfully she proved this may be a matter of dispute, but there is no doubt that she was more than his equal in one way – her wit. This quality, which was remarked on by all who met her in her early London days, is manifest in the novel's many entertaining character assassinations as well as in the author's asides. It is indeed noticeable that Bulwer's novels cease to be funny after his break-up with Rosina, so much so that it is tempting to think that the humour that has been so much admired in *Pelham* may have owed more to Rosina than to Edward.

Although Catherine Gore – perhaps the most celebrated practitioner of the fashionable novel – was not a member of the circle to which Bulwer, Landon, Blessington and Rosina belonged, she began a correspondence with Bulwer in July 1832 following a review in the *New Monthly Magazine* which she mistakenly supposed him to have written. The following year Bulwer paid a tribute to her 'lively novels' as giving 'a just and unexaggerated picture of the intrigues, the manoeuvres, the plotting and the counterplotting' of the English marriage market.² Their correspondence continued sporadically for the rest of her life and after she died he bundled her letters together with a note of his own:

She was a remarkably clever woman, and her novels have a merit that has never been sufficiently appreciated. She preceded Thackeray, and as she knew good society infinitely better than he did, her satire makes his look like caricature.³

¹ See Marie Mulvey-Roberts's introduction to *Cheveley*, Volume 5.

² *England and the English*, pp. 85–6

³ Quoted in Michael Sadleir, *Bulwer and His Wife: A Panorama 1803–1836* (London: Constable, 1931), p. 303.

April Nixon Kendra's recent essay on Gore suggests a subdivision of fashionable novels into two classes, male-authored dandy novels and female-authored society novels, with Gore's work being placed in the second category.¹ However, *Cecil*, and its sequel *Cecil: A Peer*, are self-evidently dandy novels written by a female author. Although they were written almost a decade after the Reform Act, around which most of the earlier novels had centred, they are equally politicised. By setting the action of *Cecil's* plot back some eighteen years, Gore was able to satirise the worst excesses of the Regency period while simultaneously mourning its decay. The London to which Cecil has returned after a protracted stay on the continent typifies the worst of Victorian Toryism, with the high hopes of the Whig aristocracy in the last throes of a sad decline. Anonymous publication, which caused much wild speculation among readers and reviewers and gave secret pleasure to its author, allowed her narrator to claim a friendship with Byron, who appears as a character in the text. This appearance is peculiarly fitting, of course, given that Byron has long been recognised as one of the major influences behind the silver fork novel: indeed, Colburn's advertisement for Disraeli's *Vivien Grey* (1826) had puffed the novel as 'a sort of Don Juan in prose'.² Gore's grasp of the historical moment of the mid-1820s is impressive, and allows her, among many other satirical asides, to take several swipes at Marguerite Blessington, whose travels in Italy with her husband and son-in-law/lover had fed London society's appetite for scandal, and whose *Conversations of Lord Byron* (1834) Cecil criticises for its lack of authenticity.

Although Gore continued to publish novels until the late 1850s, fashionable novels had by then become distinctly unfashionable. Relentless parodies throughout the 1830s and 40s certainly hastened their decline. Dickens was responsible for one of the most memorable:

'Cherizette,' said the Lady Flabella, inserting her mouse-like feet in the blue satin slippers, which had unwittingly occasioned the half-playful half-angry altercation between herself and the youthful Colonel Befillaire, in the Duke of Mincefenille's *salon de danse* on the previous night. 'Cherizette, ma chere, *donnez moi de l'eau de cologne, s'il vous plait, mon enfant.*'

'*Mercie* – thank you,' said the Lady Flabella, as the lively but devoted Cherizette plentifully besprinkled with the fragrant compound the Lady Flabella's *mouchoir* of finest cambric, edged with richest lace, and

¹ April Nixon Kendra, 'Gendering the Silver Fork: Catherine Gore and the Society Novel', *Women's Writing*, 11:1 (2004), 25–38.

² *New Monthly Magazine* (1 April 1832). For a discussion of the influence of Byron on the silver fork genre, see Andrew Elfenbein, 'Silver-Fork Byron and the Image of Regency England', in Frances Wilson (ed.), *Byromania: Portraits of the Artist in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 77–92.

emblazoned at the four corners with the Flabella crest, and gorgeous heraldic bearings of that noble family. 'Mercie – that will do.'

At this instant, while the Lady Flabella yet inhaled that delicious fragrance by holding the *mouchoir* to her exquisite, but thoughtfully-chiselled nose, the door of the *boudoir* (artfully concealed by rich hangings of silken damask, the hue of Italy's firmament) was thrown open...¹

Written just a year after the publication of *Victims of Society*, and a year or two before Dickens was introduced into the Blessington social circle,² this parody irresistibly recalls some of Blessington's less happy stylistic habits.

It is William Makepeace Thackeray, however, who is often credited with killing off the silver fork novel. His early burlesques, originally published in *Punch*, often return to the subject. The satire of the burlesque novel *Lords and Liveries, by the authoress of 'Dukes and Dejeuners', 'Hearts and Diamonds', 'Marchionesses and Milliners'*, with its relentless lists of meals, wines and London shops, and its plentiful sprinkling of foreign languages, not to mention its dandies and its duchesses, seems to be directed at Catherine Gore, while the eponymous 'fashionable authoress' Lady Fanny Flummery may owe something to Marguerite Blessington.³ But it is his major work, *Vanity Fair* (1847–8), which could be described as the ultimate self-parodying silver fork novel, that perhaps drove the final nail into the coffin of this already dying genre. In the preface, Thackeray objectifies the barriers of class hierarchy as:

doors so great and tall that the beloved reader and writer hereof may hope in vain to enter at them. Dear brethren, let us tremble before those august portals. I fancy them guarded by grooms of the chamber with flaming silver forks with which they prong all those who have not the right of the *entrée*.⁴

That even as late as 1848 Thackeray thought the silver fork novel had enough life left in it to be worth satirising testifies to its remarkable staying power. But for all their undoubted virtues, the world these novels depicted was one which was no longer relevant to readers of the Victorian period, who could by this time be immersing themselves

¹ Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 359.

² See Michael Sadleir, *Blessington-d'Orsay: A Masquerade* (London: Constable, 1933), p. 263.

³ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Miscellanies: Prose and Verse*, 3 vols (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1836), vol. iii, pp. 419–29, 463–76.

⁴ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 583.

in the more profound and socially conscious pleasures of Dickens, Gaskell and the Brontës.

Catherine Gore should perhaps be allowed to have the final word on the subject:

We have perhaps had more than enough of fashionable novels, but as the amber which serves to preserve the ephemeral modes and caprices of the passing day, they have their value. They will prove to a following generation what the comedies of Congreve, and Cibber, and Farquhar, have proved to ourselves ... A novel of fashionable life does not presuppose a tissue of puerile vulgarity.¹

¹ *Women as they Are* (1830) quoted in Alison Adburgham, *Silver Fork Society: Fashionable Life and Literature from 1814–1840* (London: Constable, 1983), pp. 170–1.

INTRODUCTION

'The fashionable novel was firmly established with Lister's *Granby* in 1826', according to Matthew Whiting Rosa,¹ but what is it about this novel in which 'there are absolutely no events, nobody runs away, goes mad, or dies'² to have encouraged a flood of imitators?

Thomas Henry Lister was, not, on the face of it, the most likely silver fork novelist. Sadleir claims that he was a Tory, a notion accepted by Rosa, who uses this supposed Toryism to account for Bulwer's dislike of Lister's work.³ This supposition cannot be correct, however. Lister was, as a young man, an inmate of that haunt of Whiggism, Holland House.⁴ Furthermore, he wrote reviews for the Whiggish *Edinburgh Review* one of his sisters married Lord John Russell, and he accepted preferment from Whig governments. He was born in 1800, the eldest son of a country gentleman with family connections among the aristocracy. He went to Westminster School and then to Cambridge, though he left without taking his degree. He held various government offices, including that of Registrar General for England and Wales (1836). He took part in Commissions set up to look at the state of education in Ireland (1834), and at religious education and provisions for worship in Scotland (1835). But he found time to write three silver fork novels: *Granby* (1826), *Herbert Lacy* (1828) and *Arlington* (1832), as well as a verse drama, *Epicharis*, presented at the Drury Lane Theatre on 14 October 1829 and published by Colburn and Bentley in the same year, and the biography of Clarendon (1838) discussed below. He also wrote a number of reviews of fiction, including an interesting early critique of Dickens, for the *Edinburgh Review*. Details of this and his other periodical writings are given in the List of Author's Works.

¹ Matthew Whiting Rosa, *The Silver-Fork School: Novels of Fashion Preceding Vanity Fair* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1964), p. 55.

² [Sydney Smith], Review of *Granby*, *Edinburgh Review*, 43 (February 1826), p. 396.

³ Rosa, *The Silver-Fork School*, p. 71.

⁴ If Alison Adburgham (*Silver Fork Society: Fashionable Life and Literature, 1814–1840* (London: Constable, 1983)) is right. She cites a letter from Creevey to Miss Ord, listing the young gentlemen supposed to be of the Holland House set, in which Lister's name appears (pp. 94–5). The name of the house has been erased.

It seems that the whole Lister family was involved in writing at one time or another. His father, Thomas, and his grandfather Nathaniel were both poets accomplished enough to receive mentions by Anna Seward, a neighbour in Staffordshire. One of his sisters, Harriet Cradock, wrote a novel, *Anne Grey*, which was published as 'edited by the Author of Granby'. Mary Berry thought highly enough of Lister's wife, Lady Maria Theresa Villiers, that she left her letters and journals to her and her father. Lady Maria Theresa published a well-regarded selection of these in 1865. She married the distinguished politician and writer Sir George Cornwall Lewis after Lister's death in 1842, and published in 1852 *The Lives of the Friends and Contemporaries of Lord Chancellor Clarendon*. Lister himself wrote a biography of Clarendon, Lord Chancellor and Chancellor of the Exchequer to Charles I and II, whose descendant through the female line was Lady Maria Theresa. This biography was well received by the *Edinburgh Review*, though it was attacked so energetically by Croker in the *Quarterly Review* that Lister felt called upon to publish a response. He was also goaded into replying, in the form of a preface to the 1836 edition of *Granby*, to the *Quarterly's* allegations of plagiarism in that novel.

The critical response to Lister's *Life of Clarendon* gives us an insight into the kind of political thinking which underlies *Granby*, and other silver fork novels. Written in a world in which aristocratic hegemony is challenged as never before, they turn back to the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to find justification for the control of the state by the upper classes. In the novels, this justification is used with some finesse, but in the writing (and the reception) of the biography of a figure as significant to the history of England as Clarendon, ideological thinking is made manifest. Thus, for example, the *Quarterly* takes issue with Lister after making its own position clear:

No writer and few statesmen have been subjected to more numerous, more virulent, and more insidious attacks than Lord Clarendon. All the enemies of the monarchical constitution of England have been, and still are, *his*. The rigid fanaticism of the presbyter, the unctuous bigotry of the Jesuit, and the fraudulent candour of the sceptic, suspend, for a moment, their mortal feuds, in a common enmity to CHURCH AND STATE, and to the Noble Historian whose immortal work – whether as a body of facts or as a code of principles – is the strongest bulwark of both that literature has ever erected.¹

For Croker, clearly, any revision of Clarendon's reputation is next door to blasphemy. Unsurprisingly, Sydney Smith, responding to Croker's attack in the *Edinburgh Review*, sees the situation very dif-

¹ [J. W. Croker] 'Lister's *Life of Lord Clarendon*.' *Quarterly Review* 62, (Oct 1838), p. 506.

ferently. He admires Lister's work as an attempt to 'place before us an honest portrait, with all its excellencies and defects'.¹ But for him too, the period of the Civil War, the Restoration and the Glorious Revolution is one in which objectivity is impossible. 'And, so enduring still are the interests and affections of that period, that a fair and reasonable estimate of these men was an event not much more improbable in the year 1674 ... than at the present day.'² Neither Croker nor Smith refers explicitly to the bitter and divisive debates on the British constitution which raged around the subject of Reform in the 1820s and 1830s, and yet it is clearly this political context which makes the (re)writing of Clarendon so contentious. As in the novels, there are key words in the review which alert the careful reader to the eighteenth-century political sub-text. 'He [Clarendon] was not educating for a *patriot*', claims Smith, and 'Clarendon had the honour ... of being hated by as many of his contemporaries as hated *liberty* and *virtue*' (my italics).³ It is this kind of sub-text, drawing on eighteenth-century political terms, that we can look for in *Granby* to discover the political and ideological work it discreetly performs. Not that discretion is always and inevitably necessary: Sir Thomas Jermyn 'could utter many undeniable truisms about "Church and King"', we are told,⁴ and this statement should be read in the context of Croker's furious capitals above.

But to grasp the context in which ideological terms such as 'Church and King' could be deployed, it is necessary to examine how the novel was received, and it must be said that if *Granby* is one of the novels which established the fashionable genre, it was not received critically with any great excitement.⁵ Reviewed in the *Quarterly Review* along with Robert Plumer Ward's *Tremaine* and Lord Normanby's *Matilda*, it is taken to task, as mentioned above, for being a mere copy of Normanby's work, an accusation denied in the preface to the reprinting of the novel in Colburn's 'Modern Novelists' series in 1836. The reviewer, William Stewart Rose, finds all three novels 'marked by a healthy tone of moral and religious feeling,'⁶ however, which in itself elevates them above the 'broad distaste' usually expressed both in the *Quarterly Review* and in the *Edinburgh Review* for what they categorised

¹ [Sydney Smith], Lister's *Life of Lord Clarendon*, *Edinburgh Review*, 68 (January 1839), p. 461.

² *Ibid.*, p. 460.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 462, 486.

⁴ *Granby*, vol. i, p. 22.

⁵ Although Sydney Smith found that it had the essential characteristics of a novel: it 'produces unpunctuality, makes the reader too late for dinner, impatient of contradiction, and inattentive', Smith, Review of *Granby*, p. 395.

⁶ [W. S. Rose], 'Novels of Fashionable Life', *Quarterly Review*, 33 (March 1826), 474–90.

as ‘the common “female” novel.’¹ Peter Garside notes the derogatory use of gendered language in the reviewing of the period, tending to identify the fashionable novel with women writers and women readers, despite the fact that the majority of silver fork novels, like *Granby*, concern themselves with the development of the male hero, not the female heroine.² But while Normanby’s story, like *Granby*, remains an enjoyable, witty tour of the fashionable world of 1826, Ward’s *Tremaine* is now only slightly more readable than his *De Vere*, accessible to only the most devoted scholar, its third volume grinding to a standstill under the burden of a prolonged discussion of the duties of an English gentleman.

Lister’s work is far closer to what modern readers expect of fiction. And it is ideologically engaging, for at the novel’s heart is the conflict between two different value systems, the Regency and the (proto) Victorian, played out through the two main male characters, Granby himself and his cousin Tyrrel, and to some extent in conversations between Granby and his young friend Courtenay, who is nearly ruined by the card-sharpers led by Tyrrel. Lister has a sharp ear for dialogue: the exchanges between the Brummell-like dandy and the artless heroine at their first meeting are fresh and funny, as is the lively nonsense of his Lady Harriet (drawn from Lady Caroline Lamb). He is a naive writer, of course: the portrait of Lady Harriet is no more than a *jeu d’esprit*; relationships between the characters are scarcely developed; time is often handled without any attempt at art, as it is at the beginning of chapter 7 in volume iii; and new characters are introduced without warning towards the end of the novel, in a manner which contributes nothing to its structural coherence.

If all this seems to amount to reasons for *not* reading *Granby*, there is a great deal to engage the reader, such as its sense of fun, and its – merciful – freedom from didacticism. But most of all, the particular literary failings of silver fork novels (and *Granby* is no exception in this) tend to expose the ideological work they perform. The literary scholar, then, so far from using the novels as a mine for social-historical study, must read them as dynamically engaged with the politics, economics, literary markets and gender tensions of their historical moment, both shaped by and shaping the society Britain was becoming. Thus, while noting that *Granby* contains overt reference to

¹ Peter Garside, ‘The English Novel in the Romantic Era’, in P. Garside, J. Raven, and R. Schöwerling (eds), *The English Novel 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), vol. ii, p. 17.

² Ward’s *Tremaine* (1826) and *De Vere* (1827), Bulwer’s *Pelham* (1828), Disraeli’s *Vivian Grey* (1826–7) and *The Young Duke* (1831) and Catherine Gore’s *Cecil* novels (1840), for example.

contemporary political debates – the Game Laws, Catholic Emancipation and so on – we need to be alert to the way political tensions are displaced onto (for example) representations of masculinity, or of architecture. Such a reading shifts the debate away from questions of quality and hierarchy – Is this a ‘good’ book? How ‘good’? Is it ‘important’? – towards questions of how it engages in a dialectic with other texts, other discourses, to produce the cultural world of the 1820s. Read like this, *Granby* appears at once to be deeply implicated with both politics and class, with the influence of fashion on these, and, most importantly, with the changing role of the English gentleman.

One would expect that no novel written in the turbulent years of the 1820s could feign ignorance of the political situation, and there are certain themes and tropes which make regular appearances in silver fork fiction: the corruption and apparently endemic futility of the whole governing apparatus of Britain, the rottenness of its boroughs, the venality of many of its politicians, the cynicism of its small electorate. So, too, does the threat to the aristocracy’s supremacy. Thrusting city men, gaudily dressed women with suspect vowels, girls pushed relentlessly into the limelight by mothers who know the Peerage by heart, vulgar travellers who are treated as lords overseas, all make claims to equality to which the upper classes cannot accede.

In *Granby*, the threat to aristocratic hegemony and homogeneity appear both directly and indirectly. Sir Thomas Jermyn, for instance, father to the novel’s heroine, is depicted as a nonentity of a rather dangerous sort. Though given a slightly more sophisticated character than some, his is a stock figure in silver fork fiction.¹ He is Member of Parliament for Rottentown, a name to rank with the Buyemall of Bulwer’s *Pelham* and the Eatanswill of Mr Pickwick. His strategy of voting with the government while speaking out against it demonstrates a lack of political principle by no means superseded in the modern world, while the description of his activities as a landowner drips with irony. Kind to all who do as he wishes, he is managed by his servants and his wife, and acts vigorously only to conceal the fact that Caroline cannot inherit his wealth. He is superbly confident of his own importance. His utter unfitness for government is not stated directly, but is made apparent in the ‘character’ sketch with which he is introduced, as well as through the stupidity and selfishness with which he acts.

Apart from such overt commentary, political messages also seep into the text obliquely. References to that (still) politically sensitive early eighteenth century abound. Granby’s letter to Caroline² is sent

¹ Mr Dormer, in Normanby’s *Yes and No* (1828), for instance.

² *Granby*, vol. i, p. 13.

under cover to Sir Thomas openly, and without the appurtenances of romance: 'he had bribed no Abigail,' we are told, and the alert reader will note that the term 'abigail' for a serving-maid sets up some resonance with Queen Anne's famously venal confidante Abigail Masham, a reference which connects Sir Thomas with the corruptions of the early eighteenth-century court. A further reference to that period occurs when Lady Harriet fondly believes a snuff-box in her possession to have been the property of Marlborough's distinguished colleague in defeating the French at Oudenarde and Blenheim. Such discreet references to post-1688 politics are particularly significant in the context of the novel's treatment of masculinity, examined below.

Class anxiety, though not the main theme of this novel as it is of *Herbert Lacy*, is clearly evident. As so often in silver fork fiction, this tension appears overtly as well as covertly. Thus, Lady Jermyn's speculations on the reasons for Lady Daventry's failure to invite them involve a complex reflection on the kind of hospitality offered to people of various classes: is a general invitation, a 'do come at any time', one of the warmest or the coolest sort? As Lady Jermyn puts it: 'there are the Joneses, and the Gibbises, and the Robinses, and the Barkers: you never meet them but you make a speech about seeing them, and yet we never have them but once in two years.'¹ The plebeian names in this list indicate the status of these lowly guests. Can it be that to Lady Daventry, the viscount's wife, Sir John and Lady Jermyn seem equally undistinguished? Granby, too, is made uncomfortable on his first appearance in London as Lord Malton: he reflects that 'he did not know his place half so well as those about him.'² Less direct hints at a state of uncomfortable social self-consciousness come in the scene in which Granby attends a party at a house where he is not known, and in a variant of that regular silver fork joke, the guest who mistakes his host for the butler (or vice versa). When Trebeck claims that the Duke of Ilminster will lose his 'right-hand man', Lady Jermyn imagines he means his valet, and Trebeck, in (pretended?) horror, instantly corrects her: it is Rigby, the factotum – and model for Disraeli's Rigby in *Coningsby* – who is meant.³

Rigby's ambivalent status is spelled out in Trebeck's ironic response to Lady Jermyn's misunderstanding of his use of the word 'gentleman'.⁴ 'He has a great deal of confidence, without a grain of pride; he

¹ *Granby*, vol. i, p. 27.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 332.

³ The origin of Disraeli's Rigby in Lister's was discovered by A. Griffiths, *Notes and Queries*, 1 (1954), p. 396, cited in Robert Lee Wolff, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction: a Bibliographical Catalogue*, 5 vols (New York: Garland, 1986), vol. iii, p. 44.

⁴ *Granby*, vol. i, p. 52.

has perfect subserviency, without any unnecessary formality; and he certainly possesses the art of flattering, without the least appearance of fawning; he has a bold, rough, honest style of toad-eating.' No gentleman, then, but an absolutely indispensable part of a contemporary Duke's entourage. The confusion generated by encouraging Lady Harriet to believe that among the 'provincial oddities'¹ Mrs Hawkins is as rare an eccentric as Lady Harriet herself also conveys a strong class message: a Lady Harriet may take great freedom for herself, while a Mrs Hawkins can never be anything other than a dull woman with no interests outside her home and family.

The acting-out of these political and social issues is displaced onto two opposed notions of masculinity. While Caroline, the book's heroine, has more to say for herself than the average silver fork young lady, she is not the main focus of the book's attention. This is the struggle between the hero Henry Granby and the villain Tyrrel, which encapsulates the changing notions of what it means to be a man – or at least an aristocratic man – at this period. Henry Granby appears to be a role model. At the novel's outset, Granby requests his uncle to allow him to train for some useful career. He has no expectation of wealth, and has no wish to be idle. He is religious: when his young friend Courtenay appears suicidal, when Tyrrel himself threatens to end his life, Granby's arguments are passionately Christian. Furthermore, Granby's responses to Tyrrel's outbursts are self-consciously religious: when almost unbearably insulted by Tyrrel, he feels ashamed not to issue a challenge, and yet 'He wrongs me in expecting it. This [Tyrrel's address which has been given him in the expectation that he will issue a challenge] shall assist me in performing a higher duty – a deed more worthy of a man and a Christian.'²

Granby is virtuous: he is disgusted by Tyrrel's suggestion that the lock of hair Granby preserves so religiously belongs to a mistress – 'some damsel, retired from the cares of the world, in a snug white house with venetian blinds, an easy mile or two out of town.'³ Domestic in his tastes, he is only briefly and superficially attracted to the witty and beautiful Miss Darrell, that season's society success. He is 'entertained, and perhaps dazzled' by her,⁴ but the narrator's assumption that 'the less dazzling, but more seductive sphere of her domestic circle'⁵ is where a woman's charms are seen most clearly, and Mr Duncan's comment that 'she [Miss Darrell] is one who would always

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 62.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 269.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 118.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 138

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 283.

enliven one's neighbour's party much more than one's own home – in one word, she is not domestic,'¹ appears to be Granby's view also.

Tyrrel, on the other hand, represents everything exciting and wicked about the Regency man-about-town. A gambler, a roué, a wastrel, he tries to insinuate himself into Caroline's favour for the sake of the fortune he believes she will inherit, and attempts to ruin Courtenay to revive his failed fortunes. After the death of Lord Malton, and the inevitable exposure of his own illegitimacy, he proposes to take himself off to the continent to live the life of a gentleman of fortune there. With an unmanageable temper, he quarrels bitterly with Granby, and finally commits suicide after the second of the book's two long dialogues on the subject. It seems curiously apt that the novel's classic plot should hinge on legitimacy: Granby's is indeed the model of manhood the Victorians would claim and by doing so make legitimate, Tyrrel's the one they would spurn and disinherit. It is important, though, not to exaggerate Granby's proto-Victorian aspects: like Tyrrel, for instance, he takes it for granted that denying repayment to the 'Jews' who have lent Tyrrel money against the inheritance he knows he will never have is perfectly acceptable, and the discovery that his cousin would have been bankrupted by the scale of his debts in any case relieves him: 'Granby, instead of robbing the son of his relation, was only rescuing a fine estate out of the hands of sharpers.'² Legitimacy, it seems, is a notion with a wider resonance than simply that of aristocratic immorality and family ambition, and one on which these two upper-class young men can at least partially agree.

Explorations of different models of masculinity run through many different aspects of the novel. Minor characters like the virtuous and peace-loving parson, Mr Thornton, have a genealogy the length of English literature. The gossiping squireen, Mr Edwards, is another stock figure. Neither of these is an appropriate role-model for a hero such as Granby. Closer to home, there are landowners and heads of households, good and bad. Sir Thomas Jermyn represents one extreme. But Granby also notes the difference between the genuine grief his virtuous uncle's servants express at their master's death and the pretence at it he finds in Lord Malton's household. In religion, in morals, in their attitude towards their family, General Granby and Lord Malton are opposites: it is General Granby who frustrates Malton's plan to pass off his illegitimate son as legitimate, and he does so not for his own benefit, but for the sake of his dead brother's son, and out of his own dislike of fraud. General Granby brings up Henry to

¹ *Granby*, vol. iii, p. 290.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 280.

become a thoughtful and considerate young man, while Malton encourages Tyrrel to become spoiled and selfish. General Granby lives quietly, out of the world and respected by his small circle, while Lord Malton is proud and disdainful of his less worldly relations.

Lord Malton's worldliness is representative of the world of fashion which, as so often in silver fork novels, is both the desired fantasy-world of the aspiring reader, the object of disapproval of the didactic novelist, and the ground on which contemporary social tensions are worked out. It has to be said that Lister is probably the least inclined to take a didactic anti-fashion stance of any silver fork novelist. Not for him the raddled face, showing its age at dawn as the party ends, the girls old before their time from hot rooms and too much rich food (except for those very minor figures, the Misses Clifton), the viscount who hesitates to pursue his dearest ambition of being promoted to an earldom because his sisters will demand larger dowries once they become 'ladies'.

However understated, fashion is at the heart of the novel: note the constellation of names dropped – all the Guccis of the 1820s – at the beginning of the country-house scene in which Caroline meets the world of the *beau monde* for the first time, and at Granby's arrival in Paris. In its depiction of Trebeck and of Tarleton, the novel revisits the question of desirable and undesirable forms of masculinity. And in its handling of reputation and celebrity it develops these issues from yet another perspective.

The dandy's fascination with clothes, of course, cuts right across the novel's representation of an ideal masculinity. To minimise the effect of this, dandyism is divided in two: 'the Hon. Mr Tarleton' has the merest walk-on part, but he serves, with his '*recherché* attire'¹ as a foil for the real dandy Trebeck, who 'sickened soon'² of the kind of dandyism Tarleton represents. Trebeck is not that kind of dandy at all: instead, he cultivates 'fashionable exclusiveness'.³ He pretends not to be aspiring: he is very specifically not trying to be noticed, while at the same time it is, of course, essential that he be noticed. His is in fact the sublime of aspiration, and a kind of Foucauldian internalisation of it: by expressing the social attitudes befitting a duke, he gives himself a duke's status. So effectively does he do this that he can speak of the Duchess of Ilminster as 'dear, good, civil, little woman,'⁴ without censure. Ironically, it was the Tarleton model of dandyism, not the

¹ *Granby*, vol. i, p. 32.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 42.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 51.

Brummell model on which Trebeck is closely based, which was current in the 1820s.¹

Dandyism, however, although adding spice to the novel, does not touch it nearly. Granby himself has no special interest in dress or fashion; Tyrrel is never described. The flashpoint for the conflict played out between these two men is not dress but that other fashionable curse, gambling. The suggestion that Tyrrel is a hardened gambler – ‘a choice union of the Palais Royale *roué* with the English blackleg’² is made early on, and Granby’s civil but determined refusal of a heavy betting session contrasts with the young Courtenay’s unfortunate fleecing by Tyrrel and his associates. The decency of Granby’s response to the invitation to gamble throws into relief the remarkably high incidence of speculations of various types throughout the book: indeed, his sense that an honest person earns a living sets him apart from almost all the other characters. Lady Jermyn, when she realises that the dull Lord Chesterton has added himself to Caroline’s list of suitors, imagines ‘a prospective coronet upon her daughter’s brow,’³ and Sir Thomas has himself forbidden Caroline to inform people that she will not be an heiress. Lord Malton runs huge risks to fraudulently establish an heir for himself. Estates, inheritances, heiresses; this is a dangerous world in which the young man as he grows up must learn to plot a safe course. He must avoid the kind of loss of reputation which has overtaken Tyrrel, as well as the heavy prosiness of Chesterton. His role-model cannot be either the gourmet Duke of Ilminster, the dandy Trebeck or the criminal Lord Malton; and yet the novel’s normative character, General Granby, is an old, and an old-fashioned man, at odds with the book’s pleasure in modernity.

This pleasure is evidenced in comments about the speed of modern travel, in Lady Harriet’s muddle-headed delight in various improbable uses of steam technology, and in its abundant intertextuality. It is often assumed that the Victorians were the first to comment on speed as a modern phenomenon. But silver fork novels already enjoy opposing the speed of the new macadamized roads and more efficient forms of stagecoach operation with the more leisurely methods of the past. As *Granby*’s narrator puts it: ‘the glories of the road are extinguished for ever’,⁴ an extinction produced by modern efficiency. The sense of living in a modern world is enhanced by Lady Harriet’s bluestocking

¹ Captain Jesse, Brummell’s biographer, claimed that Brummell recognised himself in Trebeck: ‘Lister must have know those who were intimate with me’ were his words. Jesse, *The Life of George Brummell, Esq.*, 2 vols. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1844, p. vii.)

² *Granby*, vol. i, p. 45.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 86.

hobby-horses: her conversation with Mrs Hawkins, for instance, is so funny precisely because no technological innovation seems impossible in 1826. Within this 'modern' world, however, the ideology of separate spheres, of domesticity for women and public life for men are safely naturalised. Caroline's (correct) understanding of her place in the scheme of things is conveyed quite subtly: at dinner at Hemingsworth, she looks around 'as much as was justifiable in her age and sex'.¹ Her astonishment at Lady Harriet, too, indicates her suitability for life as a peeress just as much as her faithfulness to Henry Granby. Lister's own views on women's participation in politics are made clear in his article on women's rights. Voting, he thinks, could never be possible for women: the 'ribaldry, calumny and intimidation' associated with the hustings would deter young single women, while 'we assume it is never contemplated that the right of voting should be claimed for married women during their husbands' lives; or for unmarried women living under the protection of their parents.'²

In the matter of product placement, Lister sets the tone for all future silver fork novels. Stultz the tailor, Maradon the milliner, Gunter the *traiteur*-in-chief for aristocratic party-givers, Colinet as the provider of music for these same parties all appear with the regularity of Happy Families cards in subsequent fashionable novels. So too do Pasta and Catalani the singers and Keen the actor. Note that all these figures provide the aristocracy with their London entertainment: there are no fashionable architects who might be employed about their country houses, apart from the two who figure so hilariously in Disraeli's *The Young Duke*. Can aristocratic life at this time really have been so wearisomely homogenised as *Granby* and others imply? Can there really have been no other caterers, musicians, florists, hat-shops? It seems unlikely. Rather, I think we should take the appearance of these stock figures, as we take the appearance of stock characters like Sir Thomas and Tyrrel, as markers for the novel's readers of the novel's quality. As branding, they have a kind of Marks & Spencer imprimatur which seems to imply high standards without any risk of (possibly dangerous) originality. To the well-bred reader, such references reassure: there are avid women out there desperate to know where to buy the right stuff. To the aspiring, they offer a reminder and an assurance of familiarity with the fashionable world.

But the greatest marker of modernity in *Granby* is its intertextuality. Terry Castle has commented on Ann Radcliffe's incorporation of

¹ *Granby*, vol. i, p. 34.

² T. H. Lister, 'Rights and Condition of Women', *Edinburgh Review*, 73 (April 1841), p. 203.

poetry into her fictions, suggesting that it ‘says a great deal about the new pre-eminence of the novel genre at the end of the eighteenth century.’¹ She notes the tendency of novelists throughout the early nineteenth century to follow Radcliffe’s example, and Lister is no exception in this. Each chapter is headed by a quotation, mainly drawn from the English and French classics, Spenser, Shakespeare, Jonson and Johnson, La Bruyère and Molière. But beyond this, the text itself is peppered with quotations and pseudo-quotations, as well as references to contemporary literature. ‘I hope you like nothing of Miss Edgeworth’s or Miss Austen’s’, observes Lady Harriet chattily, in what must be *Granby*’s only well-known sentence. ‘They are full of common-place people, that one recognizes at once.’² In the rapid *tour d’horizon* of the contemporary literary marketplace which follows, Lady Harriet puts Trebeck out of countenance for the first and only time with her accusation that he might have ‘put naughty things into the John Bull.’³ To be associated with a newspaper so famous for its excesses and its vulgarity (not to mention its origin in the Court’s desire to attack Queen Caroline during the crisis of 1820) leaves Trebeck speechless, much to Lady Harriet’s satisfaction. The constant borrowings of silver fork novelists from one another can be seen in the sketch of Lady Gabbleton,⁴ who perhaps influenced Bulwer’s Lady Babbleton in *Pelham*, just as the name Tyrrel recurs there as appropriate for a villain, though Bulwer may have been influenced rather by Godwin’s use of the name for the villain of *Caleb Williams*, a book he is known to have admired.⁵ The sense of the social and literary worlds as discontinuous, fragmented, and in a state of constant flux is of course emphasised in the jumbled and incoherent speeches of Lady Harriet.

This fragmentary nature extends to other areas of the cultural world. Architecture can work metonymically to reinforce the narrative’s ideological imperative. Hemingsworth, for instance, is a pastiche of the Gothic. Lord Daventry has turned it into ‘a baronial castle’. It appears to be ‘of formidable extent’, since the servants’ quarters are all crenellated too. Comedy is produced by Daventry’s determination to ‘cloak the most peaceful purposes under the most menacing exterior. The white cotton cap of his French cook, seen between the stanchions of a broad Gothic window, betrayed that one

¹ Terry Castle, ‘Introduction’ to Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford World’s Classics, 1998), p. xiii.

² *Granby*, vol. i, p. 56.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 56.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 45.

⁵ I am indebted to Harriet Devine Jump for this information, which reinforces the sense of profoundly self-conscious intertextuality in this period.

INTRODUCTION

massy wing contained a kitchen.¹ The absurdity of having a draw-bridge leading to a coal-hole is also highlighted. The implication here is of an aristocracy which has lost its way, which no longer remembers the public purpose of the great country house, which plays at feudalism. Country houses and parks ought to be *legible*, in the way that Granby reads Tedsworth's 'proud arched gateway', 'varied extent of park-like ground', and 'fat and lazy deer'² as forming the perfect setting for the peer he is about to become.

This ideologically sensitive overlay adds to the reader's sense that in *Granby* reality and illusion are curiously confounded. Fictional characters are drawn from 'real life'; they are also drawn from other fictional characters. The novel is the modern vehicle for writing about contemporary life; it also draws happily upon the most basic and hackneyed elements of romance (as *Granby* does in its plotting). Unstable, insecure, it reflects its historical moment back upon itself.

¹ *Granby*, vol. i, p. 30.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 260.



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LIST OF AUTHOR'S WORKS

NOVELS

- 1826 *Granby*, 3 vols (London: Colburn, 1826). 2nd and 3rd edns in the same year; also published in New York
- 1828 *Herbert Lacy*, 3 vols (London: Colburn, 1828)
- 1829 French translation of *Granby* published by Paquis in Paris, 5 vols, as 'from the English of Lord Normanby', a misunderstanding corrected in the Preface to the 1836 edition
- 1832 *Arlington*, 3 vols (London: Colburn, 1832)
- 1833 *Granby* appears as one of Colburn's Modern Novelists Series, actually reprints using Colburn's 'stock of unwanted sheets' according to Sadleir's *Nineteenth Century Literature*, 114.
- 1836 *Granby* reissued in Colburn's Modern Standard Novelists series, with a new preface denying that the book was a copy of Lord Normanby's *Matilda*

PLAYS

- 1829 Lister's tragedy *Epicharis* acted at the Drury Lane Theatre, 14 October. It was well-received and a repeat was planned. It was published in the same year. It deals with the conspiracy of the nobles against Nero, and uses much of the language of liberty identified with eighteenth-century political thought

NON-FICTION

- 1838 *The Life and Administration of Edward, First Earl of Clarendon; with Original Correspondence and Authentic Papers Never Before Published*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1837–8)

REVIEWS

- 1830 In the *Edinburgh Review*: 'Delavigne's *Marino Falieri*: Anglo-French Drama', 51 (April 1830), 225–46; 'Mrs Gore's *Women as they Are*', 51 (July 1830), 444–62; 'Tales of Military and Naval Life', 52 (October 1830), 119–38
- 1831 In the *Edinburgh Review*: 'Novels Descriptive of Irish Life', 52 (January 1831), 410–31; 'Reade's Poems', 53 (March 1831), 105–19; 'Southey's *Uneducated Poets*', 54 (September 1831), 69–84
- 1832 In the *Edinburgh Review*: '*The Waverley Novels*', 55 (April 1832), 61–79
In the *Foreign Quarterly Review*: 'American Poetry', 10 (August 1832), 121–38; 'Chateaubriand's *Works*', 10 (October 1832), 297–333
- 1833 In the *Edinburgh Review*: 'Affairs of Belgium and Holland', 56 (January 1833), 412–60; 'Mr. Sheridan Knowles's *Wife of Mantua*: State and Prospects of the Drama', 57 (July 1833), 281–312; 'Lady Morgan's *Dramatic Scenes*: Illustrations of the State of Ireland,' 58 (October 1833), 86–113
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- 1834 In the *Edinburgh Review*: 'Miss Aikin's *Memoirs of Charles the First*,' 58 (January 1834), 398–422; 'Cunningham's *Lives of the British Artists*: Progress and Prospects of British Art', 59 (April 1834), 48–73 and [probably], '*Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*', 73–86; 'Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde*', 60 (October 1834), 1–24
In the *Foreign Quarterly Review*: 'Madame de Staël', 14 (August 1834), 1–30. Lister writes here about de Staël's letters and political writings as well as her fiction
- 1835 In the *Edinburgh Review*: 'Appropriation of Church Property: Irish Catholic Clergy', 60 (January 1835), 483–522; 'State of the Irish Church', 61 (July 1835), 490–525
- 1836 In the *Edinburgh Review*: '*Ion*: a Tragedy', 63 (April 1836), 143–56. This review of Talfourd's drama includes some interesting general observations on the theatre
- 1838 In the *Edinburgh Review*: 'Dickens's *Tales*', 68 (October 1838), 75–97

LIST OF AUTHOR'S WORKS

- 1839 In the *Edinburgh Review*: 'Miss Martineau's *Deerbrook*', 69 (July 1839), 494–502
- 1839 'An Answer to the Misrepresentations Contained in an Article on the Life of Clarendon in No. CXXIV of the *Quarterly Review*', pamphlet (London, 1839), in which Lister answered Croker's attack
- 1841 In the *Edinburgh Review*, 'Rights and Condition of Women', *Edinburgh Review*, 73 (April 1841), 189–209



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CHRONOLOGY

- 1800 Lister born, the eldest son of Thomas Lister of Armitage Park, Staffordshire, and of his first wife, Harriett Anne Seale, of Mountboone, Devonshire.
- 1826 *Granby* is published. 2nd and 3rd editions appear in the same year.
- 1828 Thomas Lister dies.
Herbert Lacy is published.
- 1830 (November 30) Lister marries Lady Maria Theresa Villiers, sister of the Earl of Clarendon.
- 1832 Lister's only child, Thomas Villiers Lister, born.
Arlington is published.
- 1833 *Granby* appears as part of Colburn's Modern Novelists series.
- 1834 (4 June), Lister 'appointed a commissioner for inquiring with respect to the state of religious and other instruction then existing in Ireland' (*DNB*).
(19 July), Lister was appointed 'a commissioner for inquiring into religious education and provisions for worship in Scotland' (*DNB*).
Anne Grey, a Novel is published by Saunders and Otley, as 'edited by the author of *Granby*'. It was written by his sister Harriet Grove, afterwards Cradock.
- 1836 Lister appointed Registrar General for England and Wales.
Granby is reprinted in Colburn's Modern Novelists series, with a Preface.
- 1842 (5 June) Lister dies at the South Kensington home of his brother-in-law, the Earl of Morley.



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GRANBY.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1826.



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GRANBY.

CHAP. I

Wondrous it is to see in diverse mindes
How diversly love doth his pageants play,
And shews his power in variable kindes:
The baser wit whose idle thoughts alway
Are wont to cleave unto the lowly clay,
It stirreth up to sensual desire,
And in lewd slothe to waste the careless day;
But in brave sprite it kindles goodly fire,
That to all high desert and honour doth aspire.¹

SPENSER.

AT the close of a dull cold day, in the month of November, 182—, General Granby and his nephew were (to use a word strictly national) 'comfortably' established in a small plainly furnished dining-room, well warmed and cheerfully lighted, at a table furnished with plates and glasses, two half-filled decanters, and the remnants of a small dessert.

At the moment which we have chosen for intruding upon their privacy, the *tête-à-tête* wore no very promising aspect. The General, a mild and pleasing, but withered and infirm old man, whose face and figure showed signs of his having suffered from the fatigues of service and the vicissitudes of climate, was propped in an easy chair, regaling himself,^a with much deliberation, from a veteran snuff-box, and regarding, with an air of grave inquiry, his nephew, a handsome and intelligent-looking young man, of about two-and-twenty, who was cracking his last walnut with more seriousness than the operation seemed to warrant. This done, the latter^b was sinking into a state of deep abstraction, when the General, who had replaced his snuff-box, and, consequently, began to feel more acutely the want of a cheerful companion, broke abruptly upon his reverie.

'Come, Harry, pass the wine, — you can do that at least, if you can't talk. Here's to our absent friends,' said he, nodding to his nephew, as he filled his glass; 'I reckon you amongst the number.'

‘Sir?’ said the nephew starting, ‘I beg your pardon – what were you saying?’

‘Why, nothing worth repeating, luckily, for it seems if I had you would not have heard it. Come, man, don’t go to sleep, or if you *are* thinking, tell us what it’s all about.’

His nephew smiled, raised his eyebrows, and shook his head, as if he would fain have intimated that his thoughts were neither communicable, nor worth communicating.

‘Oh, come, don’t shake your head,’ said the General, ‘you know I never understand that; unless,’ he added, with a happy after thought, ‘you mean to indicate^a that there’s nothing in it;’ and the good man chuckled at his joke with as much glee as if it had been a new one, while his nephew chimed in with a short laugh of civility.

A pause ensued. The General’s attack had been ill-concerted. Jokes are unfavourable to the flow of conversation, when both parties are not equally disposed to be facetious. In such cases, the lesser wit, instead of replying to the pleasantness of the greater, employs the succedaneum² of a laugh. And so it was in this instance: Henry Granby having contributed his laugh, was inclined to think that this was enough, and, accordingly relapsed into his former silence. The General hemmed – looked at his nephew – at the candles, and at the fire, and saw, to his sorrow, that they stood in need neither of snuffing nor poking, drank off his wine, took out his snuff-box, drummed awhile upon the lid, and then commenced again in a lower key, with ‘Harry, are you tired after your journey?’

‘No, Sir, I thank you, not at all.’

‘Then my good fellow, if you are not, what makes you so silent? Here have you been away these three weeks, among old friends of mine, and have nothing to say about them now you are come back. You never used to be so chary of your information. You were always very communicative, and told me how they were, and what they did, and what they said, and all about them. How did you leave them all at Brackingsley?’

‘All well – quite well, Sir.’

‘Did they send any message to me?’

‘Their kind regards, Sir, nothing more.’

‘And what is my old friend Sir Thomas doing? He is just the same I’ll be bound – busy as ever, eh? bustle, bustle, all day long, and thinks he’s of all the use in the world to everybody. He is never so happy as when he can tell you he is hurried to death, and could not get a quiet moment if he would give his life for it.’

‘Just the same, Sir; you describe him exactly.’

‘Aye, I understand him pretty well; and so I ought, for I have known him almost from a boy. And who had you there all the time?’

‘A good many people coming and going, Sir – the Charltons, the Beaumonts, the Cleavers, and there were two or three odd, vulgar-looking persons, who came one day – constituents of Sir Thomas’s, I believe.’

‘Well, and how^a were Lady Jermyn and my god-daughter Caroline? Is she a handsome girl?’

‘I should think she would generally be considered so.’

‘Generally considered? humph! and pray do you consider her so?’

‘Yes, Sir, I meant to include myself,’ said the nephew, with a slight accession of colour as he spoke.

‘She has a right to be handsome,’ said the General. ‘Lady Jermyn was a fine looking girl some thirty years ago, and Sir Thomas was a well-favoured fellow in his time. He’s an old friend of mine, and a good friend of your’s too. I think you were always a favourite.’

‘Perhaps I was,’ observed Henry, in rather a grave and sorrowful tone.

‘Was? yes, and are now.’

‘Am I?’ said the nephew doubtfully.

‘Are you? yes, to be sure you are. Have not they always shown it? I’m sure they have been remarkably civil to you, and I don’t see why you should think the contrary. How have they offended you?’

‘I have nothing *particularly* to complain of,’ said the nephew; ‘but to tell you the truth, I *did* think, this last time, that I perceived a considerable alteration in their behaviour towards me. It was not uncivil – nay, it was quite as civil as ever – perhaps more so – but it was unpleasantly altered – it was formal – it was cold.’

‘Cold! fiddlestick! all fancy, I’ll be bound – Why should they be cold?’

‘That I do not know,’^b Sir; but it certainly was so.’

‘Pshaw! nonsense! I cannot believe it – besides, if their manner was altered, you ought to remember that you are not a boy now, and cannot expect to be treated in the same unceremonious style as when you used to go to them in town from Westminster³ on a Saturday.’

‘No, Sir, that I don’t expect – I make all those allowances.’

‘But you don’t make allowances enough, my good fellow. Besides, you say that they are as civil as ever, and perhaps more so. Why, then, what would you have? I’ll be bound they are only making what they think a proper distinction between the boy and the man.’

‘It is possible, Sir,’ said the nephew, in a tone which showed that he barely admitted the possibility, but was glad at any rate to dismiss the subject.

A silence ensued, which was first broken by the General.

‘I am very glad, Harry, that you stopped a day or two at Lord Malton’s in your way back, and that I wrote to tell him you would do so. Considering our near relationship – considering that his father and

mine were brothers, I think it right that you should see a little more of him and your cousin Tyrrel than you have hitherto. You cannot now plead either school or college, and you have no profession to take up your time. Besides, I think people would begin to notice your very slight acquaintance with your nearest relations; and they might suspect that there was some coolness between us; which you know, Harry, is not the case.'

'Certainly, Sir; and to tell you the truth, I have often thought it strange that so little communication should ever have taken place between ourselves and Lord Malton, though no unkindness appeared to exist, and he was always very ready to do what you asked him. I have frequently turned it in my mind; but as it was a delicate subject, I never liked to mention all I thought. Since my late visit, too, I can less account for his conduct than before, from his pointed inquiries after you, and very kind attention to myself. It is certainly singular that I should never have been at Tedsworth till the other day; and Lord Malton does not seem a retired man, but I should think, on the contrary, rather given to hospitality.'

'You are very right, so he is; I am glad to see that he has made a favourable impression.'

'Yes, Sir; in some respects he has. He showed no want of disposition to treat me with the kindness of a relation, and if he failed in making me quite like him, it is perhaps more my fault than his. I should think he was a man of variable spirits, and rather peculiar temper. He often began to talk to me cheerfully, when a sudden cloud would seem to pass over him, and all would be gloom and formality in an instant; but these fits were only momentary – he always rallied again directly.'

'He is^a a peculiar man,' said the General, after a short pause; 'but he has good points about him. He is rather reserved – it is a family failing. His father, the first Lord, had a great deal of reserve, and pride too.'

'If his was pride of family,' said the nephew, 'it must, I imagine, have cost him a pang to change his name from Granby to Tyrrel.'

'I have no doubt it did; although your great uncle would never have got his title, if it had not been for the fortune which old Tyrrel left him. But he plainly showed his love of his old family name, by the way in which he contrived that the peerage should descend. He certainly had an eye to the possibility of its being held some time or other by a Granby. There is a remainder, you know, as I have told you before, to the male representative of the younger branch, and that is yourself.'

'It is never likely to do me any good, Sir,' said the nephew;^b 'there is Mr. Tyrrel – I dare say he will marry – I wonder he has not already. Besides, I should not like to profit by the loss of a relation.'

The General returned no answer and remained for a few minutes lost in thought. 'How do like your cousin Tyrrel?' said he at length; 'you never saw him before, I think.'

'Never; – and it was by accident that I saw him then. He came home unexpectedly, a few hours after I reached Tedsworth, and as it appears, did not know that I was to be there. He seemed surprised, I thought, and hardly pleased, when first I was introduced to him. His manner struck me very much – it was very odd – I can scarcely describe it. He hardly spoke three words to me all the first evening, and resisted every attempt on my part to become acquainted with him. However, the next day he was quite another person. Nothing could be more kind, frank, and cordial. I like him extremely. You cannot think, Sir, how friendly he was.'

'It does him credit,' said the General, in a low serious tone. His nephew assented, but with a look of slight surprise at this marked commendation of conduct, which appeared to him so natural and proper.

'He is no longer in the army, I believe,' said the General, rousing himself from a short lethargy.^a

'No, he has just quitted the Guards, and does not, I believe, intend to enter any other regiment.' Then, after a short^b pause, with some hesitation and timidity of manner, he proceeded: 'Excuse what I am going to say, sir,^c for I am sure you have always acted from the kindest intentions in bringing me up without any profession; but considering the smallness of my means, the desirableness of employment, and the impossibility otherwise of getting on in the world, if you do not dislike it, sir, I should wish to do something for myself.'

The General stared at the request, looked uneasy, and remained for some time silent. 'Ay, ay, Harry,' said he, at length, with a sigh, 'I ought to be sensible that a poor old broken-down fellow, like me, is but indifferent company for a young one like yourself. You lead a moping life here, I know; and though you do go out among friends at a distance, you are only more sensible, on your return, of the dulness of home. If an old uncle is too stupid to live with, God forbid that I should, for my own sake, try to detain you!'

'My dear sir,' said the nephew, with great earnestness; 'you must not so misunderstand me. It hurts me to be thought capable of such a meaning. I cannot forget my great and deep obligations to you, and your many kindnesses, and constant indulgence. I must always remember that you have been a second father to an orphan, and a protector to one who had none else to look to. I should be acting most unworthily, if I had made this proposal under the motives which you attribute to me. I hope you cannot bear in mind your own great claims upon me, and still think me capable of such ingratitude.'

‘Well, well, Harry, I don’t – I don’t. I spoke foolishly. You never failed in gratitude an instant in your life – excuse my hastiness, and forget it.’

‘How can I do otherwise?’ said the nephew, with emotion. ‘I will say no more about a profession.’

‘Nay, nay,’ interposed the General, ‘don’t let me stop your mouth. What profession is it you fancy?’

‘No one particularly, sir; I only wished not to be quite idle.’

‘Oh! Then your plans are quite unformed. So much the better. But let us see what there is you can do. I do not like the army, though it is my own profession: it is a riotous, squabbling, drinking life.’

‘Formerly, perhaps,’ said the nephew; ‘but that description can hardly be applied to it at the present day. The rare occurrence of a duel proves that it is not a quarrelsome profession, and drinking is universally exploded. I believe, Sir, you would find that a mess-table, now, is quite as temperate as any other.’

‘So I have heard say; but be that as it may, we are at peace now, and likely to remain so – therefore think no more of army or navy.’

‘Well, Sir; then there is nothing left me but church and law.’

‘No – and how are you to get on in either of those? You have no chance on earth of a living: and as for law – I don’t mean to say that you are not a sharp fellow, or that you cannot stick to anything you have once taken in hand – but it is idle talking about professions: let us hear no more of them. You have done well enough hitherto without a profession, and I don’t see why you should want one now. Besides, I can’t do without you, Harry – I can’t, indeed. You must not think of it. If I had thought you would want a profession, I should have brought you up to one; but I never did, and for good reasons best known to myself – so there is an end of the matter.’

Though Henry Granby internally smiled at the weakness and vagueness of the arguments (if we must so call them) which the worthy and warm-hearted old man had brought forward in support of his wishes, he felt too much respect for those wishes, so strongly expressed, and therefore, evidently, so deeply felt, to offer any farther remonstrance; and magnanimously smothering a sigh, he relinquished with quiet acquiescence the project he had formed. After this, conversation was not resumed. The General, gratified by his successful remonstrance, soon yielded to the soothing influence of silence, an easy chair, and the sober twilight of two unsnuffed candles, and fell asleep; while the nephew, after a long but unsatisfactory reverie, endeavoured to console himself with the last number of the *Quarterly Review*.⁴

CHAP. II.

C'est le role d'un sot d'être importun; un habile homme sent s'il convient ou s'il ennuie.⁵

LA BRUYERE.

THE grandfather of Henry Granby was the younger brother of the first Lord Malton, who obtained that title subsequent to his succession to the property and name of Tyrrel. He possessed a fortune which, for a younger brother, was considerable, and which he transmitted undiminished to his son, but unhappily without communicating a sufficient portion of that prudence by which he himself had preserved it. Mr. Granby, the son, soon formed an alliance which apparently did anything but discredit to his taste and judgment, and on which his nearest friends were loud in their congratulations, but which was nevertheless the source of eventual unhappiness. He married a woman of great beauty, good temper, and considerable fortune, but who combined with good temper a compliancy amounting to weakness, and brought with her fortune a disposition for expense, which the extent of that fortune could by no means gratify. She died soon after giving birth to Henry; but not until she had greatly contributed to the derangement of her husband's affairs.

Needy and dispirited, Mr. Granby lent too willing an ear to the suggestions of an insidious speculator, and was induced by him to become his partner, together with others, in a bank. Always a man of pleasure, rather than of business, he naturally became the dupe of his designing associates. The bank failed, and he found himself reduced to the verge of ruin. His health and spirits sank under the blow, and he soon afterwards died, leaving his son, with a very small fortune, to the guardianship of his only brother, General Granby.

This important trust was executed by that worthy man, in a manner which did honour to his heart. The profits of his profession, added to a comfortable patrimony, had placed him in easy circumstances; and established in a small and quiet country residence, near the village of Ashton, he liberally shared with his nephew that little fortune of which he destined him to be the heir. He spared no expense in his education, and imposed few restrictions upon his pleasures. His liberality was even carried to an extent which gave occasional surprise to his more prudent neighbours; and his resolute refusal to bring up his

nephew to any profession, was confidently pronounced by more than one to be the best and surest way to ruin him.^a Those who will not go all lengths with these zealous prognosticators of evil, will still be agreed upon the impolicy of his system. The General himself had but a scanty store of cogent reasons; and the expression of his sentiments might generally be comprised in that royal sentence, '*tel est notre plaisir*;'⁶ the only argument which never fails to silence a debate.

Still, strange as it may appear, in spite of the ill-judged indulgence of the uncle, and the charms of idleness, and in defiance of the pre-ages of croaking friends, the young man was so little corrupted, even at the age of two and twenty, as to offer a sincere, though feeble remonstrance, to any further continuance in a life of inactivity. The feebleness of that remonstrance arose in some degree from his scrupulous fear of avowing the motives by which he was led to it; and as he was silent on that point, we must tell them for him.

He had from early boyhood been accustomed to spend a small portion of every year in the house of Sir Thomas Jermyn, and had always been the object of his peculiar favour. There were many reasons for this; Sir Thomas's old friendship with his father; his having no son of his own; the lively spirits and engaging manners of the boy; and perhaps, (for he was of a good family), his being in some degree, though distantly, related. He was also his godson; a feeble tie, but an useful motive, which persons sometimes like to assign, for a partiality for which they cannot in any other way so briefly account. Be this as it may, thus much is certain, — that he was a great favourite, and a frequent visitor.

Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn had an only daughter, about four years Henry's junior, and for whom he had always professed to feel a most brotherly regard. But 'brotherly regards' are feelings which are rarely fated to maintain their existence out of that narrow pale of close relationship to which they properly belong. Even between first cousins they will sometimes melt into a tenderer species of affection; and as the relationship becomes more distant, nothing short of mutual repulsiveness will preserve their respective feelings in that sober state of chastened communion. It was not, therefore probable that two young persons, amply endued with many loveable qualities, should afford an exception to the above-mentioned rule; and accordingly, they had by this time begun to entertain precisely those sentiments which were most natural to their relative situations.

But whatever they thought on this point, they kept very prudently to themselves. This was most commendable in the gentleman; for he was far the more^b enlightened of the two, as to the real nature of his feelings. He could not, however, refrain from betraying them a little before his last departure, by asking and obtaining a lock of the lady's

hair, which he volunteered a promise never to shew to any human being; intimating also that he would write to inform her of his safe arrival at home. He felt, however, and keenly felt, that the inequality of their fortunes would render presumptuous his addresses, and that the heiress of Brackingsley might aspire to an alliance much higher than he could offer. As he viewed the insignificance of his means, his mind also dwelt on the apparent hopelessness of their improvement, and he bitterly regretted the inglorious inactivity to which he had been doomed. He trusted, however, that this evil was not without a remedy. Distinction was the sure reward of merit and exertion, in any profession; and they were all open to his choice. He was young; quite young enough to succeed in any of them. In short, he was determined somehow or other to make a figure; and visions of glory, and of Caroline Jermyn, were brightly pictured in his warm imagination; Caroline's form being clearly traceable – the rest being grand,^a but rather indistinct.

With a mind full of these interesting topics, he rode out in the morning, at the request of the General, to call on a friend, and having succeeded much to his satisfaction in finding him not at home, was agreeably resuming the thread of his meditations, when he heard with horror, at a short distance behind him, the loud greeting of Mr. Edwards. This unwelcome companion was a gentleman of moderate independent property, who was called 'the Squire,' *par excellence*, by his own parishioners, but who, had he lived in Ireland, which is richer in distinctions, might have come under the denomination of a 'squireen.'⁷ He was a good humoured, troublesome, neighbourly man; a perfect burr to a chance companion, and for loudness and lengthiness, the most powerful talker in his district. He came trotting after Granby, gaining upon him rapidly, and repeating in stout hearty tones as he rose in his stirrups, 'Well met, Mr. Granby – well met – well overtaken, I ought to say. I am glad to see you once more. I did not know you were come back. So when I saw you just this minute, thinks I, that looks like – no it can't be – yes, it is though – but I was not sure till I came quite close; so I hope you will excuse my not having called, for I give you my honour I did not know you were in the country, or I should have made a point of it.'

'Pray^b do not apologise,' said Henry. 'I returned only yesterday, and as I knew that you were in the country, I suppose I ought to have called first.'

'Oh, I beg you would not mention it. Well, and how is the General? Better, I suppose – I am glad to hear it. Tell him not to stir out. The wind is in the east, and will be so until the moon changes. Mind if it is not. Bitter cold, is not it? Ah, you are looking at me riding without a great coat.^c It is not very prudent, to be sure, but I'll just tell you how

that happens. You see, I have two great coats^a at home, and neither of them the right thing; one is a thick box coat,^b and the other a mere frock,⁸ thin and short; terribly short. Tom Davis is always at me about that coat – but I tell him, that short as it is, it will be long enough before I have another. That is the way I answer him.’ (Granby good humouredly tried to laugh.) ‘But, it *is* cold,’ said Mr. Edwards, buttoning his coat still higher. ‘I might have put it on to-day – but we should not complain, for it is very seasonable; and Christmas will be coming soon; and we are not far from the shortest day, and it is excellent weather for farmers, as I have just been telling a tenant of mine. Things are looking up wonderfully, – turnips especially; and by the bye, talking of turnips, how many birds do you think I killed the other day in my Swedes? Four brace and a half. No bad sport so late in the season. I never knew a better year for birds in my life – coveys uncommonly large and strong; I saw two of fourteen, and one of sixteen, or thereabouts, as near as I can guess; but I won’t pretend to be exact to a pair^c or two, but I think the largest had sixteen, for I said to Tom Davis, (he was with me), says I, “Davis, I’ll lay any money,” says I, “there’s sixteen birds in that covey.” “Why yes,” says he, “I should think there might, as near as I can guess,” he said. But I have been out of luck of late, for I have lost my best dog, a liver and white one – you must know him – you have seen him out with me – well, I’ve lost him, and I’ll tell you how it was.’ And he told it, and then passed on to the state of the roads – new gravel – parish rates – appointment of a sexton – robbery of his poultry yard – commitment of a vagrant – suspected poachers – loss of a shoe in yesterday’s ride – and the history of two blank days with the fox hounds.^d

Henry Granby had one property, which was eminently serviceable at this crisis; he was a good listener; and however unskilled in the arts of ‘seeming wise’ where he was not, at least possessed the inferior faculty of seeming attentive. The General’s ‘prose,’ (for that worthy man, like Moliere’s ‘Bourgeois Gentil-homme,’⁹ uttered a good deal without knowing it), had greatly contributed to what physiologists would call the ‘development of this faculty;’ and this was heightened by the occasional aid of rencontres like the present.

Thus gifted, our hero, without quitting his own bright day-dreams, or suffering them to clash with the anti-romantic topics of his companion, mechanically but dexterously threw in his ‘indeed! – yes – ah! – no doubt – you don’t say so! – really! – certainly – of course,’ – in a tone so well suited to that of the narrator, that this communicative person was perfectly satisfied, and parted from our hero with the full conviction that he was a very agreeable, well informed, sensible young fellow.

On reaching home, Henry proceeded to embody the fruit of his long, though broken cogitations, in a letter to Caroline Jermyn.

He first opened a pocket-book, and took out of it, carefully folded up in silver paper, a small glossy lock of dark hair, upon which, with his head resting upon his hand, he seemed to ruminate as intensely, as if he were trying to conjure up the actual presence of the donor.

After adjusting pen, ink, and paper; after frequent startings up, and two or three turns round the table; after splitting the pen he had just mended, and attempting to re-mend it with the back of his pen-knife; after such, and sundry other delays, he wrote, sealed, and directed a tolerably long letter to Miss Jermyn.

We shall not abuse our privileges (which are great) so far as to disclose verbatim the contents of this epistle. We shall only premise that it was not a proposal of marriage, or even a declaration of love; that it contained no expression warmer than 'regard,' that it began with 'Dear Cousin,' (for they were cousins, thought distant ones) and ended with 'Very truly yours, H. Granby;' that it was not *crossed*, (lady correspondents will understand this term), nor even closely filled three sides;¹⁰ that it had no postscript; and that it described^a common-place topics in a common-place manner. It was, in short, (so at least the writer flattered himself,) as demure, cautious, and correct a letter, as full of innocent nothings, and well guarded dulness, as any foe to correspondents ever dreaded to receive. It was, he thought, admirably calculated for a safe introduction to a long series of epistolary intercourse, for it could give no offence to the lady, and excite no alarm in the parents. Thus prudent was he in the execution of a measure, of which imprudence was the primary feature.

The letter was sent, but by no secret messenger, no light-heeled, ready-witted page; he had bribed no Abigail, or trusty steward, to cram it through a key-hole, or deliver it at mid-night. He had read of such things in many romances; but he admired neither the principle nor the practice. He therefore enclosed it to the Father, put 'Free, M. P.'¹¹ at the bottom of his direction, and dispatched it boldly by the post.

CHAP. III.

Such is the weaknesse of all mortall hope;
So fickle is the state of earthly things,
That ere they come into their aimed scope
They fall so short of our frail reckonings,
And bring us bale and bitter sorrowings
Instead of comfort which we should embrace.
This is the state of Cæsars^a and of kings,
Let none therefore that is in meaner place
Too greatly grieve at his unlucky case.¹²

SPENSER.

HENRY had now nothing to do but dwell on the past, and live in daily hopes of a reply. He was accordingly visited every day with a great accession of restless anxiety about the arrival of the post, which was even perceptible to the eyes of the General. At length his happiness and anxiety were at their height, at the sight of letter to himself, franked by Sir. T. Jermyn.

‘From Brackingsley, eh?’ said the General, who saw it. ‘Come, don’t march off with it – open it here, can’t you, and let us know how they are, and all about them.’

His nephew reluctantly obeyed. – ‘Well, and which of them is it from? And what does it say?’

Henry, who had by this time opened his letter, stood aghast.

‘Hey! why! what now?’ said the General. ‘God bless my soul – I hope – No, it is a red seal – nothing of that sort, thank Heaven. But speak can’t you? What are you alarmed about?’

‘It is inconceivable,’ said Henry, ‘I cannot understand it.’

‘I am sure *I* cannot,’ said the General.

‘There, there, Sir,’ said he, handing the letter to his uncle. ‘Look – read – that she should – oh! I can hardly believe it – but it is too true.’

‘Why! what is all this? I am more puzzled than ever. Here is a letter *from* you, and not *to* you.’

‘Yes, my own letter returned – without a line – without one word of explanation – yes,’ said he, snatching up and examining the envelope, ‘actually without one word.’

‘Oh, oh! stay – I begin to understand. “Dear cousin,” humph! to Caroline, I see: “regret,” – um (muttering the contents half aloud) – “agreeable circle,” – um, um – “many happy days,” – um – “near relations,” um, um – “seeing you again,” – um, um – “absence,” – um –

“our last conversation,” – um – “best wishes always attend,” – um, um, um – eh! why, Harry I’m still in the dark – I don’t understand why she should send this letter back again.’

‘Nor I,’ said the other, faintly.

‘It seems to me.’ said the General, ‘to be a very correct, fair-spoken letter, with no offence in it, that I can make out.’

‘Whatever it may contain, Sir, I am sure I cannot conceive why it should be visited so heavily.’

‘Nor I, Harry – nor I, for the life of me. But, my good fellow, you have been very close and secret in your proceedings. Why did you not tell me you were going to write? How did you know that I had not some message to send to Brackingsley?’

‘I wish I had told you, with all my heart; indeed I bitterly regret that I wrote at all.’

‘Why, as it turns out, it seems that you had better have let it alone. But what puzzles me is, why they should send your letter back. Hey! no, by George! but think I understand them – ay, and so it is, as sure as fate. I see what they have got in their heads; and a strange idea it is too. They think you want to make up to Caroline. What whims good people have sometimes! I can tell you this, Harry, for your comfort, that I think they^a have used you very ill.’

‘I certainly feel myself rather ill-used,’ said Henry; ‘but if they acted from the persuasion which you mention, I cannot conscientiously say that they were altogether mistaken.’

‘What, then you had some thoughts of putting the question?’ said the General.

‘I am obliged to confess, Sir, that I had my hopes, my wishes, on that subject.’

‘Well said, my boy,’ replied his uncle, ‘a very proper notion of yours; and hang me if I see the harm of it.’

‘But surely, Sir, with my limited means, it would be the height of presumption to –’

‘Presumption! stuff! don’t talk to me of it. I tell you again, you have been very ill used. I know well enough what presumption is, and I say you are a very good match for the girl.’

‘My dear Sir!’

‘Why, you are not such a blockhead as to wish to contradict me! I say you are; and I ought to know. As for money, I have not much, God knows, to leave you; but if Sir Thomas knew all – pshaw – (as if suddenly checking himself) – I can tell Sir Thomas, I say, that the nephew of a very old friend, like me, is not to be treated in this sort of manner. Push the ink-stand nearer this way – I’ll tell him my mind, I promise him.’

'I hope you are not going to write,' said his nephew, whose sense of his wrongs began to cool in proportion to the rising warmth of the General; 'I had rather you would let the subject rest. Pray do not write to Sir Thomas Jermyn.'

'Not write to him! – Why not, I should be glad to know? I knew him before you were born, and the devil's in it if I am not to write a letter to him.'

So saying, he seized pen and paper which lay before him, and wrote as follows: –

'MY DEAR SIR THOMAS. – A circumstance has just occurred, which appears to me to want a little explanation; and as we are very old acquaintance, and have never stood much upon ceremony, there can be as little object to my asking it, as to your giving it. You know the whole of the case beyond a doubt, but it will be more satisfactory to state it again. The long and the short of it seems to be this. My nephew writes to your daughter a very sensible inoffensive letter, with no harm in it that I can see; and in a few days it is sent back without a single word to tell him why. Now you know very well, that among gentlemen, to send back a man's letter, is almost equivalent to knocking him down; and as nobody would think of sitting down tamely under such an affront, so, I think it proper on my nephew's account, more particularly as you are an old acquaintance, to desire an explanation of this affair. These are all the observations I shall make for the present. I have no doubt but that we perfectly understand each other; and least said is soonest mended. Trusting that everything will be easily and speedily accounted for, and with best regards to Lady Jermyn and Caroline,

I remain,

Ever yours, faithfully,

JOHN JAMES GRANBY.'

The reader, in perusing this document, enjoys a privilege which Henry did not. As the General was folding it up, his nephew entreated, on the plea of his interest in the subject, to be allowed to see what it contained, but was repulsed with a look of good-humoured positiveness.^a 'No, no, my boy, for once I'll be even with you; you never told me of your letter, and by George you shall not see mine:' so^b saying, the General precluded all further expostulation, by immediately sealing the letter.^c

It was sent, and the subject dropped for several hours; but the General was too much pleased with his letter,^d to abstain from resuming it: 'I wish you had seen my letter, Harry, after all – I think you would have approved of what I said – it was strongly put – I should like to be by when my old friend receives it – by George it will make him look

blue. But so much the better – it will do him good. What could he be thinking of, to use you so? If he did not approve of your writing to Caroline, he ought to have told you so before.’

‘I thought I had told you, Sir – though I am not certain – that neither he nor Lady Jermyn knew that I meant to write.’

‘The devil they didn’t! – That alters the question; – why, my good fellow, I never knew that.’

‘Did’nt you, indeed, Sir? I am sorry to hear it. Then since you wrote to Sir Thomas under a false impression, may not your letter have been expressed a little too warmly, and would it not be advisable to repair it by a second? You know, you told me yourself, just this minute, that some parts of it were strongly put.’

‘Not a bit too strongly; you need not alarm yourself; there was no warmth in it; all steady cool reasoning. I wish I had shown it you nevertheless. Lord bless you, we are too old friends to fall out; we understand one another perfectly.’

Three days did the General repose on this comfortable persuasion, and on the fourth received the following communication from his very old friend.

‘Sir T. Jermyn acknowledges the receipt of General Granby’s note of the 14th inst. and takes the liberty of saying in reply, that in the first place he does not consider himself called upon by the features of the case, and the situation of the parties, to offer any explanation of his own conduct in the affair in question. He perfectly agrees with General Granby in thinking, that to give such an explanation, is just as little objectionable, as it is to ask it; but that objection, *little* as it may appear in certain quarters, is sufficient to induce him to offer a decided negative to such a step. Convinced that their present mutual understanding will not be improved by an extended communication, and concurring with General Granby in his opinion, that what is most briefly expressed is most speedily rectified, he begs leave to decline any further discussion of the existing circumstances of the case at issue. He cannot, however, conclude without an unqualified expression of his astonishment, that the matured judgment of General Granby should have lent itself to the sanction of so dangerous, so unadvised, and so unprecedented a measure.’

‘I hope the answer is not unfavourable,’ said Henry, who gathered very scanty materials for hope from his uncle’s countenance. ‘Can you tell me the substance of what he^a says?’

‘No, hang me if I can, and I don’t believe he could himself. An old puppy!¹³ he ought to know better. My ‘note’ – ‘features of the case’ – Then the whole style of the thing! General Granby-ing me all the way through. There! look at it. – There’s a pretty, formal, flourishing, prig

of a letter for you! taken word for word, I verily believe, out of the 'Complete Letter Writer,' or some confounded book or other. By George, I think the fellow's crazy – to write in that manner to a man he has known these thirty years! I give him up; I've done with him; but I've a very good mind to give him a brush at parting, too.'

'I hope, Sir, you are not going to write again,' said the nephew, returning the letter to his uncle; 'there does not seem to be anything in this letter that you can easily take notice of.'

'Do you think so?' said the General. 'Well, I won't write to him. I believe, after all, nothing is so good as silent contempt. – No! I know what I'll do,' (and his eye twinkled as if he had seized a bright idea,) 'light me the taper – I am not going to write to him – you need not be alarmed – come! light me the taper – I'll pay him off in his own coin – by George I will. I'll send him his own choice letter back again;' and chuckling at the thought, he took the lighted taper from his nephew's hand, and Sir T. Jermyn's note was enclosed, sealed, and directed, in an instant.

It is not to be expected, after this, that any farther communication, at least, by letter, should take place between the parties. The General, by the hasty measure which seemed to him so able a dispensation of retributive justice, had entirely precluded any renewal on his own part, that did not partake of the nature of an apology; and it was far from probable that Sir T. Jermyn, whose brief and frosty address seemed expressly calculated to check all future correspondence, should a second time incur the risk of a similar indignity.

With the General, when the fever of resentment, and the elation of successful warfare had a little subsided, the estrangement of an old friend began to press heavily. But by Henry it was still more severely felt. He could not but reproach himself with being the original author of all the misunderstanding which had taken place. He was separated, and he thought, in his despair, irrevocably separated, not only from a family with whom he had long lived in habits of friendly communion, but from a being whose perfections seemed to expand before his eyes, through the mists of absence and distance, and to whom he scarcely knew the intensity of his attachment, till it was put thus cruelly to the test. And to add to his affliction, while thus sadly certain of his own feelings, he was left in melancholy doubt as to the nature of Caroline's. He knew not with what sentiments she had received his letter, nor how she^a had concurred in its dismissal. There was ample material for the most gloomy conjecture, and no favourable points in the recent occurrence whereon to ground a cheerful presage. Immediate circumstances wore an untoward and menacing aspect, and when he looked far back for consolation, he could only find his hopes upon slender equivocal symptoms of a growing partiality.

CHAP. IV.

This let me hope, that when in public view
I bring my pictures, men may feel them true;
'This is a likeness,' may they all declare,
'And I have seen him, but I know not where;
For I should mourn the mischief I had done
If as the likeness all should fix on one.'¹⁴

CRABBE.

CAROLINE JERMYN was worthy of all the love and admiration which she had inspired in our hero. Without possessing that faultless regularity of feature, the very blamelessness of which is sometimes insipid, she united the charm of interesting expression, to a face and figure which were sufficiently good to obtain an approval from the most fastidious eye. There was a sunny brightness in her smile, the charm of which could not be overlooked; and her cheerful and even spirits, and playful vivacity, were rendered still more attractive by her unvarying sweetness of temper. She also possessed considerable quickness of perception, mixed with a candour and good-nature, which made her ever ready to excuse those follies which she was so prompt in discovering. She was young, and had hitherto seen little of the world; and society on an extended scale was still almost new to her; but she brought with her an innate tact, the united result of good sense and good taste^a and powers of pleasing, of which she was always less aware than those who were in her company. She had a good deal of diffidence, and a sensitive delicacy of feeling, which gave to her manner an occasional shade of reserve; but it was reserve without coldness, and which did not even injure the artless sincerity of her address; it was a reserve which scarcely any who witnessed it could wish to see removed, — so well did it accord with the graceful softness of her character. She was totally free from affectation, and had a shrinking dread of display, which gave an intrinsic value to those captivating qualities which she unconsciously exhibited.

Caroline Jermyn felt a sincere and strong attachment to Henry Granby, whom she had now known for several years. She could remember to have liked him from the first period of their acquaintance; and that sentiment, which began in girlish admiration, ripened with her years into actual love. She, indeed, would not have given it that name; but how could one interpret otherwise her eagerness to insure his good opinion; her eye that watched his looks so timidly, yet

anxiously; her abstracted air when he was absent; her brightening countenance when he approached? She felt that she had derived, not only pleasure, but advantage, from his society. His correct taste had enabled him to enter judiciously into her pursuits; it was his pencil that first called forth the powers of her's; his love of music that chiefly urged her to excel. Her literary taste had also been in a great degree guided and encouraged by his; and her talents, which amply repaid their cultivation, had not been suffered to lie waste. She was generally, but not pedantically accomplished; and without being profoundly or scientifically learned, was well informed on most topics of elegant and useful knowledge, and such as give a value and a grace to the intercourse of polished society.

Lady Jermyn, her mother, was one of those common, unmarked characters, which like many simple words in every day use, are by far the most difficult to define. Her parents moved in the sphere of humble gentility. When young she was a beauty, and in marrying Sir Thomas Jermyn, made what her friends called an excellent match; while *his* friends reproached him behind his back, with having been caught by a pretty face. She was a person who had few tangible points in her character, and who had the good fortune never to be alluded to, by those who knew her, with any strong expression either of admiration or dislike.

She punctually fulfilled all the ostensible duties of her situation; was externally religious, and even charitable; and viewed with a pleasure which no one, I trust, would be so ungenerous as to envy, a long procession of charity-school children, neatly dressed in uniform attire, *nearly* the colour of the Jermyn livery, — the modest badge of her humble benevolence. She was not well read or highly accomplished, but she had plain, clear, mother wit, and a ready, though not finished address. Like most underbred persons who have risen in life, she had a considerable mania for fine people; a mania which was often too broadly displayed: but 'take her for all in all,' she was well calculated to go through the world with great respectability; for, as was happily observed by an elderly gentleman,^a in the next town, far gone in long whist¹⁵ and snuff-taking, 'she was a clever body at a pinch, and always played her cards well,' — Moreover, the Marchioness of D—, one of the *magnates* of her county, called her 'a nice obliging little woman;' the apothecary's wife said she was 'vastly civil, but rather *igh*;' the clergyman of the parish always allowed her to be 'a very correct person;' and the attorney has been known to observe with a wink, that 'she always minded her P's and her Q's.'^b

It is now fit that our readers should be introduced to Sir Thomas Jermyn, member for the borough of Rottentown, and one of his majesty's justices of the peace for the county of —. We mention these

offices, both because they are essential features in his character, and because he himself would be the last person to pardon our omission of them; and to the discharge of the duties of which, he brought as small a share of talent as was competent to fulfil them, added to as much zeal as could influence the most efficient. It was his chief ambition to be considered an able active man of business. Able he could not be, but activity was not only within his power, but seemed even necessary to his existence. He was a man of weak talents, but great vanity; fond of petty dictation and trifling interference; loving business for the importance which it seemed to communicate, and the temporary good which it afforded to a restless twaddling dread of the tedium of a leisure hour. He liked to exert his influence even over a parish officer, and to deal out admonition, if it was but to a vagrant. He was a stirring man in a grand jury room, and always carried things with a high hand at a turnpike meeting.¹⁶ He was the hero of the overseer of the poor of his parish, and the constables of the district swore by him. But these humble honours had latterly been superseded by others of a higher nature, for he was now in Parliament; a situation which had for some time been the object of his ambition.

He had long cast a wishful eye towards the representation of his own county; but that was already too well represented to admit of an attack, and the health of the members was as flourishing as their popularity. Therefore, after pensively ruminating for some time on this melancholy exception to the usual instability of human affairs, he began to consider that a snug little borough might answer his purpose; and accordingly, he was soon established at a moderate expence, in the representation of the ancient borough of Rottentown, where, instead of clamorous thousands, his constituents amounted to^a 'sweet fifteen, *not one vote more.*'¹⁷

Rottentown was a government borough, and, *therefore*, his politics were ministerial. In fact,^b his politics had long wavered; and though he thought it vastly more spirited to dissent, and nothing easier than the art of railing, yet, as most of his connections were on the ministerial side, and a comfortable borough was opportunely offered him from that quarter, saddled only with the obligation of uniformly voting for measures of which, after all, he could not see the great atrocity – under these circumstances he thought it as advisable as it was easy, to range himself under the banners of the administration. But though bound hand and foot by his political patrons, he still struggled for independence. The reality he disregarded, but he liked the name, and in order to obtain it, adopted a plan of proceeding, which many cleverer men might, in all probability, never have thought of. His vote was the minister's, but his voice was his own. It was his practice, therefore, after supporting Government over night, to balance the account

by sporting what are commonly called *liberal* sentiments the next morning. Some short-sighted persons may think this inconsistent, or even dishonest; but in the Baronet's opinion it was a line of conduct which happily blended the policy of a Machiavel with the integrity of a Cato.¹⁸

So much for the politics of Sir Thomas Jermyn. His religion was of a kind well calculated for worldly wear. Like the best coat of a London shopman, it made its appearance only on a Sunday, and was carefully laid by on the intervening week days. He was loyally orthodox, – could utter many undeniable truisms about 'Church and King'¹⁹ – and drank that toast even in tavern port, with seeming satisfaction. He thought religion was a good thing, and ought to be kept up, and that, like cheap soup, it was 'excellent for the poor.' He saw it made them orderly and respectful, punctual as tenants, and industrious as workmen. What it did for their betters he could not tell; but if it made his tenants pull off their hats and pay their rents, it was at any rate worth encouraging in *them*. But let it not be supposed that he was lax or careless. He had his scruples upon many points of church discipline. He objected to lay impropriations, – being a^a titheholder;²⁰ thought that clergymen should never shoot, – for he had a choice pheasant-cover near his rector's glebe; and was morally convinced that they ought not to be on^b the commission of the peace, – for, of two neighbouring clerical justices, the one had often presumed to differ in opinion from him, and the other had three times refused to convict his poachers.

In his relations of neighbour, landlord, master, husband, and father, he might also be viewed with considerable advantage. As a neighbour he shone. Nobody gave more or better dinners; and he uniformly included every one to whom it was worth his while to be civil. – As a landlord he had his bright points. He gave kind words and as much as they could eat, to all who came full-handed on his rent-day, and never distrained where there was very little stock. As a father, he was fond and indulgent, but had never bestowed on his child the slightest portion of attention or instruction. This, however, arose not so much from indifference, as because he thought the tuition of a girl quite out of his line. Had she been a boy, he would have questioned her in the Latin Grammar, and looked over the school accounts, and corrected the holiday task, (if he could) with a great deal of pleasure; but he was no modern linguist, nor had much taste for female accomplishments. In short, as long as she smiled and looked pretty, and was well dressed, he took it for granted that all went on well, and gave himself very little trouble about her. He was an easy master to the few old servants who 'knew his way;' and a dexterous old Swiss boasted, with truth, that he could manage him completely. This was a power

which Lady Jermyn also possessed in a very laudable degree, and which she exercised in a manner which did much credit to her skill. Like a good wife, she had made it her pride to understand her husband thoroughly. She knew all his weak points; and this, considering their number, was no small praise. But she made no silly display of her authority, and generally managed him without his knowing it. She seems to have had in view the advice of Pope, who commends a wife,

‘Who never answers till her husband cools,
‘And if she rules him, never shows she rules.’²¹

But this, as she had never read Pope, only proves that ‘great wits jump.’²²

Thanks to her good management, Sir Thomas and his lady went on as well together as any pair could naturally be expected to do, whose love did not long outlive the honey-moon.

Connected with his daughter, Sir Thomas had one subject of deep concern. She was his only child, and yet she could not inherit his fortune. In default of male issue, the Brackingsley estate, which formed almost the whole of his property, would go, on his death, to a distant relation. This circumstance was known only to Sir Thomas, Lady Jermyn, Caroline, the heir-at-law, and a trusty attorney, and was kept by the Baronet religiously secret, – a secrecy which was facilitated by the heir-at-law, who lived in a retired and distant part of the kingdom, being a humourist²³ and a recluse, and by no means likely to communicate the fact. The attorney had solid reasons for silence; and as no one ever thought of questioning the truth of so apparently self-evident a proposition, as that the daughter of Sir Thomas Jermyn should succeed to his estate, Caroline, as her parents desired, was universally looked upon as a very great heiress. She herself had not till lately been apprised of the truth. Her parents had long been of opinion that she had much better be kept in ignorance; but at length Lady Jermyn, in a lecture upon imprudent alliances, in order to impress upon her daughter’s mind that she could not afford to marry as she pleased, let out the direful secret. This she did, as Sir Thomas said, ‘with the best intentions in the world, no doubt, but rather unnecessarily, nevertheless;’ and sundry discussions took place in consequence. The information, however, came coupled with an injunction, which was repeated with double force by Sir Thomas, that on no account should she ever reveal it, until she came to be married, or had received permission to do so from them. She felt with pain that there was a dishonesty in this silence, but she could not remonstrate, and ventured not to disobey.

With the ambitious and mercenary feelings which prompted Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn to such a line of conduct, we cannot be surprised at that change of manner which struck such a chill to the heart of Henry Granby. It is indeed rather a matter for surprise that this change should have come so late, and that they should have been so long insensible to the natural consequence of the association which they permitted. It is, however, attributable to that infatuation with which people sometimes rest satisfied, that events which they have long predetermined to be inadmissible, can never presume to take^a place. They, however, flattered themselves that they had not been too tardy in crushing the growing evil, and, well pleased with the steps which they had latterly taken, were reposing in placid satisfaction upon the success of their manœuvres, when the dream of security was unpleasantly dissolved by Henry Granby's letter to Caroline.

The letter was received by Sir Thomas, in the presence of Lady Jermyn only; and, after opening the envelope, and observing that it was from Ashton, he gave the enclosure to the latter to deliver to her daughter. But Lady Jermyn, who knew the hand, immediately opened it; and although in some degree re-assured by the inoffensive nature of its contents, she found cause for considerable anxiety, on a patient re-perusal. It was, she thought, a very dangerous kind of letter, and exactly of that sort which would be most fatal to her plans. It was its very faultlessness she dreaded. Beyond the mere fact of writing, there was nothing reprehensible; not a word, not a sentiment, to which blame could be attached, and to which she could reply in terms of censure. Then, if delivered to Caroline, it could not fail to make an impression favorable to the writer; and this could never be allowed. How to reply to it she knew not, whether she did it in her own name or Caroline's. A reply would certainly bring on a remonstrance; and thus she should be involved in an epistolatory conference, of which she clearly foresaw the difficulty and danger. No: — silence was at once both easiest and safest; and after a conversation on the subject with her husband, who entered fully into all her ideas, she re-enclosed to its author this luckless epistle, and told Caroline that Mr. Granby (she used to call him Henry) had sent her so very improper a letter, that she did not chuse to let her see it, but had immediately sent it back, that being the only treatment of which she considered it deserving.

Caroline was much hurt at this intelligence, — more indeed than she was willing to show. She found much difficulty in imagining Henry really guilty of any great impropriety, and yet she knew not how to believe him innocent. Lady Jermyn had stopped her enquiries, by severely commenting on the indelicacy of seeking too minute an explanation; and this rebuke, coupled with her mysterious nod, her grave and studied^b censure of Henry's conduct, and the tone of her

intimation, in which more seemed meant than met the ear, all this conveyed to the unsophisticated mind of Caroline an almost awful impression of some dire and indefinable delinquency. Lady Jermyn also signified, but more by manner than by words, that the suppression of the letter, and her refusal to explain, were acts of tenderness towards the culprit.

But while Caroline was lamenting Granby's unworthiness, and deeply pondering upon the slight and unsatisfactory hints, which were all she was allowed to receive, Sir Thomas and his lady were beginning to subside into comfortable forgetfulness of this aggravated case, when they were roused afresh by the expostulation of General Granby. This both increased their irritation, and seemed to throw fresh light upon the subject. They now began to view the whole as a concerted scheme between the uncle and the nephew; and although the idea of the union of Henry and Caroline had never entered the mind of the former until the receipt of Sir Thomas's letter, they were soon able to enumerate many circumstances in his previous conduct, plainly indicative of such a design.

Such treacherous behaviour was, in their opinion, deserving of severe rebuke, and entirely cancelled all the obligations of former friendship. The Baronet, therefore, sat down, full of his wrongs, to the business of reply; and being fresh from the perusal of a parliamentary protest of the Upper House, which he justly regarded as an able specimen of the *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*,²⁴ he endeavoured to embody, in his brief remonstrance, the circumlocutory graces of the great original.

We have already witnessed the feelings which this letter excited, and the fate which it received. The rage of the Baronet on receiving it again, could be equalled only by his surprise; and he solemnly vowed that he would renounce all connection with a family, whom his interest prompted him to neglect, and who had laboured to accelerate a formal rupture, by so gross a complication of studied insults: and thus ended all communication between the houses of Brackingsley and Ashton.

CHAP. V.

How convenient it proves to be a rational animal, who knows how to find or invent a plausible pretext for whatever it has an inclination to do!²⁵ – FRANKLIN.

ABOUT a month after the disastrous close of the correspondence just alluded to, Lady Jermyn's eye, in glancing over the fashionable movements in the *Morning Post*,²⁶ rested upon a paragraph copied from a provincial paper, announcing that on such a day, 'the Duke and Duchess of Ilminster and suite passed through the town of — on a visit to Viscount Daventry, at his superb seat, Hemingsworth Castle, in the county of —.' Lord Daventry had married the only sister of Sir T. Jermyn, and lived at a distance which prevented any considerable frequency of intercourse. The Daventrys, it is true, might perhaps be suspected (from their superior rank, great fortune, and acknowledged station in the fashionable world,) of looking a little *de haut en bas*²⁷ upon their relations at Brackingsley; but they always maintained a very decent degree of cordiality and attention, said and wrote 'an elegant sufficiency'²⁸ of civil things, and appeared glad to see them whenever they met. Their intercourse, however, had at this time suffered a long interruption, and it struck Lady Jermyn, that the approaching visit of the Ducal party would afford a desirable opportunity of renewing it. She therefore opened the subject next morning at breakfast.

'I have been thinking for some time, Sir Thomas, that we have been using the Daventrys rather ill, and you cannot think how it lies upon my mind.'

'Using them ill! how so?' said the Baronet, raising his head from a cup of green tea, and the Report of the Game Committee.²⁹

'Why, you know how kind they have always been, and how fond they are of having us with them, and how long it is since they have been with us.'

'Yes — I know it is a long time; but whose fault was that? I'm sure we have asked them often enough.'

'True, true, Sir Thomas, so we have. Circumstances, you know, always prevented them. But what I was going to say was this — I really think we have not behaved quite well to them. Your sister Daventry, when we saw them at Leamington, said a great deal — a great deal indeed, about our meeting so seldom; and she seemed to allude to it again in her note, when she sent us those seeds and cuttings for the

green-house; and you know, Sir Thomas, you have had two letters from Lord Daventry, written expressly to ask you there.'

'No, no, my dear; not written expressly; no such thing. One was about an under gamekeeper, and the other was full of the Compton-Heath Inclosure Bill.³⁰ He said something, to be sure, in each of them, about seeing us at Hemingsworth; but he did not fix any day. They were mere general invitations.'

'Certainly, certainly, there were other subjects in both letters. You know, you gentlemen seldom write except upon business. But you are aware, yourself, that he has invited us twice; and after that, I really think it is now our turn to show some attention, and that we cannot do less than offer to go to them.'

'Go to them! oh! that is the attention you mean! Why I thought, Lady Jermyn, you were going to propose that we should ask them to come to us.'

'I should be truly happy, I'm sure, to see them here, as I always am, and ever have been: but you know, Sir Thomas, at this time of the year, they are constantly engaged with company at home; therefore, much as we may desire it, our seeing them here is out of the question. Besides, I think it would be quite unpardonable to take no notice of their invitation, after all that your sister has said, and Lord Daventry having written twice on the subject.'

'I don't know what my sister may have said, but as for Daventry's two letters, they were nothing, as I told you, but general invitations; and I always have said, and always shall say, that general invitations stand for nothing.'

'Now, really, Sir Thomas, I cannot agree with you. I know it is the fashion to abuse general invitations, but for my part, I always stand up for them. To be sure, they are often used to indifferent people that one doesn't care about, because, perhaps, one must ask them, and cannot exactly at the moment fix any time; but, surely, when friends and relations invite one in that way, they mean, that one shall at all times be equally welcome.'

'Equally welcome! – aye,^a very likely – that is to say, just as little at one time as another. No, no, my dear, I am no friend to general invitations. I have always said, and I always shall say, that a person who asks you to come 'at any time,' had much rather you never came at all.'

'Oh, Sir Thomas! You must not say that, because you are doing yourself a great injustice. You know, you often do that very thing to many excellent people, that I am sure we have a great regard for. There are the Joneses, and the Gibbises, and the Robinses, and the Barkers: you never meet them but you make a speech about seeing them, and yet^b we never have them but once in two years.'

‘Why, between ourselves, my dear,’ said the baronet,^a in a confidential tone, ‘towards a certain class of people that one must be civil to, a little management of this sort is very useful; and you may depend upon it, that Daventry pays off his scores in that coin as well as ourselves.’

‘I have not the least doubt of it – to certain people – but I cannot suppose that he does to us. Really, Sir Thomas we ought to go, if it is only to show that we do not place ourselves in that class. Your dear^b sister would feel it very much; and I am sure, Sir Thomas, that you, who are so generally civil to everybody, would never be guilty of an act of rudeness to your own near relations.’

‘Oh, I have no objection to go to them; only, I have a great deal of business of one sort or other; and I think I am rather wanted here at present.’

‘Ah, Sir Thomas! – as for that, you know you are always wanted in this neighbourhood. We could never leave home if that were an excuse. But they ought to be taught to do without you. A man in your situation is not to be made a drudge. He ought to take an opportunity of showing his independence.’

‘Yes, yes – no doubt – no doubt – well, do as you please – I say again, I have no objection to go to Hemingsworth.’

‘Very well. I could do nothing, you know, without your concurrence; but since you agree to go, I’ll write directly to your sister Daventry, and tell her we’ll come to them, if they can receive us, on Monday next. There will be ample time for an answer.’

A polite and carefully worded note was quickly dispatched to Lord^c Daventry, and received, as soon as the distance would permit, a very civil and favourable reply.

CHAP. VI.

This castle hath a pleasant seat: the air,
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.³¹ – MACBETH.

MONDAY came: it was a bright, clear, cheerful, frosty day – one of those which breathe peculiar exhilaration, and in which the smiling aspect of winter, like the ingratiating vivacity of green old age, charms the more because the less expected. The sun shone brightly through the thin silvery haze, and was gaily reflected by small twinkling drops upon every bough, and the dazzling rime upon the grass below. The stillness of the air allowed the car to catch, with more than usual ease, an enlivening medley of familiar sounds, denoting life, gaiety,^a and bustle; the rattle of the distant coach, the strong clear whistle of the light-hearted labourer, the busy hum of the neighbouring village, the distant clamour of foraging rooks, and, nearer at hand, the merry chattering of the redwing, and the brisk chirp of the plump-looking little birds which frisked about, apparently larger and gayer than ever.

On such a morning, when there was just a sufficient accession of cold to awaken 'the fair' to a becoming sense of the soft comforts of swansdown and chinchilla, and the 'lords of the creation' to the substantial merits of double-milled drab and lined beaver,³² did Sir Thomas Jermyn, his lady, and their daughter, step into their carriage, and depart for Hemingsworth. It is not to be expected, in this age of M'Adamized³³ roads, patent axles, anti-attrition,³⁴ and all the other luxurious aids of speedy conveyance, that a forty miles journey in one of Leader's³⁵ best carriages, drawn by four good horses, should afford many interesting casualties to embellish the narration. On the contrary, not a linchpin presumed to quit its post; and they rolled smoothly along, till, as the shades of night drew near, or, to speak in loftier and more befitting language, 'when the declining orb of day had tinged with his expiring beams the waxing glories of the western hemisphere,'³⁶ our party entered the park at Hemingsworth.

This was a level and rather uninteresting tract of ground, fringed with a thin belt of spiry poplars, and many a kidney formed clump of spruce looking trees, which had been browsed into more than their natural formality. Here and there, thinly scattered, was a solitary giant of the woods, which seemed to frown with disdain upon these

congregated upstarts, and which showed by its growth the antiquity of the demesne, and by its solitary situation the subsequent ravages of the destroying axe. It seemed as if an unfortunate effort had been lately made, to clothe afresh a half denuded place, which was now almost in the situation of a person who should put on a modern-made coat over the trunk hose and long-lapped waistcoat of his great grandfather.

A neat, well-kept road, which wriggled unmeaningly across a flat, conducted them to the mansion, which, from the humility of its situation, might with most propriety have exhibited the Palladian, Old English, or Abbey-Gothic styles of architecture, but which the taste of the noble owner had lately destined to assume the martial air of a baronial castle. It had frowning battlements, and well buttressed walls, with small arched windows, and round towers of a most imposing air of strength, pierced here and there with those narrow slits, from which the archer of other days could 'shoot his bolt' securely. What with bringing the offices into play, and here and there a supplementary dead wall, the castle exhibited a very formidable extent. The owner had also laboured to blend his outward bravery with inward convenience, and to cloak the most peaceful purposes under the most menacing exterior. The white cotton cap of his French cook, seen between the broad stanchions of a deep gothic window, betrayed that one massy wing contained a kitchen. The larder was a feudal guard-room; the dairy was a 'donjon keep';³⁷ and a drawbridge conducted to the coal-hole.

But while we are describing the appearance of the place, we are keeping the newly arrived guests waiting at the door, for what both themselves and the noble owners of the mansion would certainly have thought an unconscionable time. They were ushered through a spacious hall, and several rooms, of which the united effects of twilight and firelight only sufficed to inform them of the size; and they saw, in their short and rapid progress, few objects to arrest their attention. In one room were two young men in shooting jackets, playing or pretending to play at billiards; and in another, a person, they believed of the male sex, sitting by the fire, dressed in something red, most probably a hunting coat, apparently asleep in a deep armchair. They passed on – another door was opened – their names were announced – and they found winding towards them, through a mighty maze of tables, chairs, and ottomans, Lady Daventry and her eldest daughter; and several minutes were quickly passed in the cordial interchange of customary civilities.

Lady Daventry was as glad to see them as she seemed to be; for she was a remarkably good-natured woman, and was really fond both of her brother and her niece, and had no dislike to Lady Jermyn, whose

worldly sense she respected, and for whose little occasional want of refinement she was always ready to make more than requisite allowances, upon the consideration that, 'poor thing, she had few advantages in early life.' Lady Daventry was not clever, but pleasing and amiable; and she was single-hearted and guileless to a degree which Lady Jermyn thought quite incompatible with the worldly avocations of her station, and her long and high standing in fashionable circles.

Lord Daventry presently entered, and drew off^{fa} Sir Thomas Jermyn to another room, to show him, as well as the light would permit, a projected alteration from an adjoining window, and left the ladies to themselves. They talked long; and Lady Daventry at length began to speak of their present and expected guests. 'I am glad you happened to come to us now, for we have got the Duke and Duchess of Ilminster with us, and their daughter the unmarried one – delightful people you are sure to like them. They have made a long stay with us. Most of the party are gone that we asked here to meet them, but there are more arriving tomorrow. Lord Chesterton, and Mr. Duncan and Lady Harriet – Oh! and who do you think we have here now? Mr. Trebeck – *the* Trebeck – you know whom I mean – we take his visit as a great compliment,' said she, laughing. 'But it is really very fortunate, for we were disappointed in Lord and Lady Tenby, who were to have come to meet the Duke and Duchess; and Mr. Trebeck is the person of all others, for he is particularly intimate – quite in their set. Perhaps you don't know him, but of course you have heard him spoken of; – very fine, and every thing of that sort; but pleasant, remarkably pleasant where he is known. But I must not keep you here,' said she, warned of the time by seeing a servant enter to light the lamps; and they accordingly betook themselves to the pleasing labour of adornment.

When Caroline found herself alone with her mother, she could not forbear a question among others, concerning the Mr. Trebeck whom she had just heard spoken of.

'I do not know much about him, my dear,' said her mother, 'any farther than this, that he is what they call very fine.'

'Yes, mamma, so my aunt said; but in what way "fine?"'

'Oh, gives himself airs, and is very conceited, and a great dandy, and every thing of that sort.'

Caroline thought she comprehended; and was satisfied and silent, and repaired to her apartment, where she occupied her mind as much as the important business of the toilette would permit, in forming abstract ideas of a duke and duchess, and in endeavouring to divine what manner of man *the* Trebeck could possibly be.

On descending to the drawing-room with Lady Jermyn, after having undergone the maternal scrutiny, and been complacently

pronounced 'a presentable figure,' she found most of the party assembled, and among them the Duke and Duchess, and their daughter Lady Elizabeth Bellasys, to all of whom the Brackingsley party were severally and summarily introduced.

The Duke was a fat, jovial, good-humoured looking man, with a twinkling eye, and a chuckling laugh at his friend's remarks, which it did one's heart good to hear. – The Duchess seemed a quiet, commonplace woman, of gentle manners, with a countenance guiltless of much meaning, and in fact with no very distinguishing character about her. She fluently uttered some good-humoured every day civilities, – praising, among other things, the beauties of Brackingsley, for which it turned out that she had mistaken another place, and enquiring after a supposed near neighbour, whom Lady Jermyn had never seen. – Her daughter was an old young lady, whose celibacy might be considered as fixed. She was rather plain, but had a countenance that possessed all the intelligence which her mother's wanted; a keen quick eye, and a sarcastic turn of the mouth, which gave rather an ill-natured and unprepossessing expression to her face. Caroline was introduced to her by Lady Daventry, and received with a rapid, careless, but acute scrutiny, and an air, which though devoid of formality, was felt by the former to be chilling and repulsive.

There were no other ladies except the Misses Clifton. The rest of the gentlemen consisted of Mr. Clifton, and a sporting friend, Mr. William Charlecote; a tall, upright, smirking man in black, whose name was Bennett, and who was in orders,³⁸ and had newly entered into the situation of domestic tutor to the younger Cliftons; Mr. Rigby, a factotum of the Duke's, – a bluff, coarse, square-built person, with a steady step, and an ease of manner, which, though not obtrusive, was still not gentlemanly; and though last not least, the Hon. Mr. Tarleton, an effeminate looking young man, more particularly distinguished by a very 'recherché' attire, a profusion of chain work, several rings, a well curled head, and a highly scented handkerchief. His talk was as pretty as his appearance, and his acquirements corresponded. He had a correct taste in *bijouterie* and dress, took in the *Journal des Modes*,³⁹ could tell Lyons silk from English by the feel, and was not to be deceived (it was said) by paste diamonds at any distance. He was also well versed in foreign affairs – could always tell the private history of the new 'prima donna,' and knew long before any body else, from unquestionable authority, (and he would whisper it mysteriously), that the French government would not suffer the expected 'premier danseur'⁴⁰ to come to England.

The short time which precedes an English dinner party is universally stigmatised as the dullest period which is passed in society; and far be it from us rashly to endeavour to rescue from disgrace what the

sentence of the world so universally condemns. If it is libelled, it must look for other advocates, for we are bound to declare that the present party did not rescue it from the usual imputations. The ladies were talking of their morning's walk and drive; the gentlemen recounting the successes of their 'battue.'⁴¹ Sir Thomas Jermyn had already fastened upon the Duke, and was endeavouring to impress upon his mind the overwhelming weight of business which was the unavoidable lot of every member of the lower house, and was enumerating upon his fingers the committees he had been upon during the two last sessions, — when, to the relief of his Grace, the dinner was announced.

CHAP. VII.

‘Sir, your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affectation, audacious without impudence, and strange without heresy.’⁴² – LOVE’S LABOURS LOST.

CAROLINE, on being seated, found at her side a vacant chair, between herself and the Duchess, which as her eyes glanced round the table, she felt convinced was to be occupied by Mr. Trebeck. That gentleman, however, did not soon make his appearance; and she had taken her soup in tantalizing suspense, and had begun to form a resolute determination to attend to what was passing on the other side, when she was roused by Lord Daventry’s ‘Trebeck, shall I help you? – I am afraid it is cold;’ when she perceived the long expected person glide into his seat with an apologetic shrug, and ‘If you please, but I’ll first take some wine with the Duchess. – Cold, is it? oh! never mind;’ and half turning to Caroline, ‘even cold fish is a luxury to one who comes in resigned to see nothing but the cheese.’

She made no answer, and she believes^a stared at him, for he turned away again with a slight smile, and applied himself to his cold turbot and salad, between which, and a long story of the Duchess’s, he seemed very equally to divide his attention.

Caroline had now an opportunity of observing Mr. Trebeck, as much as was justifiable in her age and sex, and found that he was not exactly the sort of person she had pre-figured to herself. She had been rather misled by her mother’s word ‘dandy,’⁴³ and expected to view in him an excess of all the peculiarities of that numerous but decreasing tribe. She saw, therefore, with surprise, that he wore a dress in no respect distinguishable from that of ten thousand others; that he had neither rings nor chains, that his head was not fixed at any particular angle, and that the quiet and almost careless tie of his cravat, plainly shewed that he had neither studied ‘Neckclothiana,’ nor believed in the axiom that ‘Starch makes the man.’⁴⁴ Then there was nothing supercilious or affected in his manner, which was totally free from all peculiarity. As for his person, it was neither plain nor handsome, but there was an air of intelligence and subdued satire, and an intuitive quickness in his eye, in the short glance which he bestowed upon her, which rather restored him to her estimation. But altogether she was a little disappointed at finding him so much like other people, and could

not conceive why the honour of his visit should be so strongly felt by Lady Daventry.

These speculations beguiled a time which otherwise, from her constrained silence, she would have thought dull; but they were at length broken by her right hand neighbour, Mr. William Charlecote, a chubby, plain, good humoured young man, tightly cravated, who having answered a question across the table from Mr. Clifton about the hounds, turning abruptly to Caroline, asked her if she ever hunted. She answered in the negative, with a look of slight surprise at the oddity of the question. 'Oh! it does not signify,' said he, thinking she was ashamed of the avowal, 'everybody does not do it; but I thought, perhaps, you did. It seems to be quite the rage at present. Ever been in – shire? Do you know the Ditchleys? Mrs. John Ditchley is a famous horsewoman; hunts four times a week, and goes fifteen miles to cover; but I don't speak of that as any great thing; however, she does it; a fact, upon my honour. She rides better than her husband – leads him – actually leads him.'

'Leads her husband? – I hardly understand – what – with a rein?'

'Oh! no – I only meant she goes first, and makes him follow her.'

He then turned away to talk to one of the Miss Cliftons, and Caroline had an ample opportunity of extending her attention to all the audible conversation that passed around her, particularly to that of his Grace of Ilminster, who was expatiating with enthusiasm upon a Strasbourg paté, and 'a glorious matelote'⁴⁵ that he had tasted somewhere. From thence he digressed to his friend Lord A.'s cook, 'a man of a thousand' – 'decidedly the first artist of his day' – his 'risolles,' his 'vol-au-vents' were superb – did any body ever eat anything better than his 'rognons au bechamel,' his 'filets de sole,' his 'fricandeaux aux pointes d'asperge?' And then his soufflets!⁴⁶ his soufflets were unique. 'So light! so delicately flavoured! of such an exquisite consistency! the very eider-down of eatables,' said his Grace, growing eloquent in their praise. 'Oh, it was quite like eating air! – And then, his epigrammes:⁴⁷ there is nothing else in the world like them – they are quite the cleverest things known.'

He then drew a rapid but masterly sketch of the state of cookery at the present period; which, as the style of discourse was rather novel, was listened to by Caroline with amused attention, – an attention which, as it appeared, was not unobserved by her left-hand neighbour Mr. Trebeck, for she was presently roused from it by his asking her in a low tone if she had ever met the Duke before.

'I assure you' said he, 'that upon that subject he is well worth attending to. He is supposed to possess more true science than any amateur of his day. By the bye, what is the dish before you? It looks

well, and I see you are eating some of it. Let me recommend it to him upon your authority; I dare not upon my own.'

'Then pray do not use mine.'

'Yes, I will, with your permission; I'll tell him you thought by what dropt from him in conversation that it would exactly suit the genius of his taste. Shall I? Yes, Duke,' (raising his voice a little, and speaking across the table.)

'Oh, no! how can you?'

'Why not? – Duke,' (with a glance at Caroline) 'will you allow me to take wine with you?'

'I thought,' said she, relieved from her trepidation, and laughing slightly, 'you would never say any thing so very strange.'

'You have too good an opinion of me; I blush for my unworthiness. But confess, that in fact you were rather alarmed at the idea of being held up to such a critic as the recommender of a bad dish.'

'Oh no, I was not thinking of that; but I hardly know the Duke; and it would have seemed so odd; and perhaps he might have thought that I had really told you to say something of that kind.'

'Of course he would; but you must not suppose that he would have been at all surprised at it. I'm afraid you are not aware of the full extent of your privileges, and are not conscious how many things young ladies can, and may, and will do.'

'Indeed I am not – perhaps you will instruct me.'

'Ah, I never do that for any body. I like to see young ladies instruct themselves. It is better for them; and much more amusing to me. But, however, for once I will venture to tell you, that a very competent knowledge of the duties of women may, with proper attention, be picked up in a ball room.'

'Then I hope,' said she laughing, 'you will attribute my deficiency to my little experience of balls. I have only been at two.'

'Only two! and one of them I suppose a race ball.⁴⁸ Then you have not yet experienced any of the pleasures of a London season? Never had the dear delight of seeing and being seen, in a well of tall people at a rout, or passed a pleasant hour at a ball upon a staircase? I envy you. You have much to enjoy.'

'You do not mean that I really have?'

'Yes – really. But let me give you a caution or two. Never dance with any man without first knowing his character and condition, on the word of two credible chaperons. At balls, too, consider what you come for – to dance of course, and not to converse; therefore, never talk yourself, nor encourage it in others.'

'I'm afraid I can only answer for myself.'

'Why, if foolish, well-meaning people will choose to be entertaining, I question if you have the power of frowning them down in a very forbidding manner: but I would give them no countenance nevertheless.'

'Your advice seems a little ironical.'

'Oh, you may either follow it or reverse it – that is its chief beauty. It is equally good taken either way.'

After a slight pause, he continued – 'I hope you do not sing or play, or draw, or do anything that every body else does.'

'I am obliged to confess that I do a little – very little – in each.'

'I understand your "very little;" I'm afraid you are accomplished.'

'You need have no fear of that. But why are you an enemy to all accomplishments?'

'All accomplishments? Nay, surely, you do not think me an enemy to all? What can you possibly take me for?'

'I do not know,' said she laughing slightly.

'Yes, I see you do not know exactly what to make of me, and are not without your apprehensions. I can perceive that, though you try to conceal them. But never mind, I am a safe person to sit near sometimes. I am to-day. This is one of my lucid intervals. I'm much better, thanks to my keeper. There he is, on the other side of the table – the tall man in black,' (pointing out Mr. Bennett) 'a highly respectable kind of person. I came with him here for change of air. How do you think I look at present?'

Caroline could not answer him for laughing.

'Nay,' said he, 'it is cruel to laugh on such a subject. It is very hard that you should do that, and misrepresent my meaning too.'

'Well then,' said Caroline, resuming a respectable portion of gravity; 'that I may not be guilty of that again, what accomplishments do you allow to be tolerable?'

'Let me see,' said he, with a look of consideration; 'you may play a waltz with one hand, and dance as little as you think convenient. You may draw caricatures of your intimate friends. You may *not* sing a note of Rossini; nor sketch gateposts and donkeys after nature. You may sit to a harp; but you need not play it. You must not paint miniatures nor copy Swiss costumes. But you may manufacture any thing – from a cap down to a pair of shoes – always remembering that the less useful your work the better. Can you remember all this?'

'I do not know,' said she, 'it comprehends so much; and I am rather puzzled between the 'mays' and 'must not's.' However, it seems, according to your code, that very little is to be required of me; for you have not mentioned anything that I positively *must* do.'

'Ah well, I can reduce all to a very small compass. You must be an archeress in the summer, and a skater in the winter, and play well at

billiards all the year: and if you do these extremely well, my admiration will have no bounds.'

'I believe I must forfeit all claim to your admiration then, for unfortunately I can do none of all these.^a

'Then you must place it to the account of your other gifts.'

'Certainly – when it comes.'

'Oh it is sure to come, as you well know: but, nevertheless, I like that incredulous look extremely.'

He then turned away, thinking probably that he had paid her the compliment of sufficient attention, and began a conversation with the Duchess, which was carried on in such a well regulated under tone, as to be perfectly inaudible to any but themselves.

Nothing worth notice ensued. The business of dining proceeded with dull decorum; and Mr. Trebeck, though he seemed to amuse the Duchess and her daughter, yet as he spoke of persons of whom Caroline knew nothing, appeared so uninteresting and unintelligible to her, that she saw with pleasure the circulating nod, which proposed to the ladies to repair to the drawing-room.

Thither, as it is not our fate to be of the softer sex, we may not follow them; nor can we presume to imagine the style of conversation which was likely to have taken place. Thus far only can we venture: if they are willing to believe that the sole topics of the absent gentlemen are not invariably field sports and politics, we will take upon ourselves, however rashly, to declare, that the eloquent tongues of the female coterie are not always exercised upon dress and scandal.

It was, we believe, rather a dull hour, and Caroline was not a little pleased when the opening doors admitted a reinforcement to break the regularity of their languid circle. Music soon lent its aid. One of the Miss Cliftons began to play some Swiss waltzes out of a marvelously small music book, wherein they seemed to have been written with a crow quill; and Mr. Trebeck attempted and executed with another of the sisters the difficult task of waltzing a figure of eight round two chairs.

Singing followed. Miss Clifton was the chief vocalist; and after a few solos engaged the assistance of Mr. Tarleton. She knew he could sing, she said, for 'he looked as if he could – he was fond of music – he had a sister that sung – he had just been at^b Italy – he was always at the opera – she had heard him hum' – and sundry other unanswerable reasons – all which at length induced him to confess his powers. With considerable exercise of neck and eyebrow, and at very little expense of voice, he murmured out a low husky 'second,' perfectly inoffensive, but not eminently useful. It excited no admiration, and very little remark. Mr. Bennett indeed, the new tutor, who was standing near Mr. Trebeck at the other end of the room, ventured to observe to him,

that 'singing *piano* was Mr. Tarleton's *forte*;' for which piece of wit he was rewarded with a look that ought to have annihilated him – a pun being in Mr. Trebeck's estimation, the lowest pitch of *mauvais ton*.^{49a}

Caroline contributed a few airs, but felt rather alarmed, and was glad to stop; and the occupations of the party took another turn. The Duke began to want his whist; Mr. Trebeck sat down to piquet with the Duchess; while Lady Elizabeth lay on a chaise-longue by them, over-looking her, and talking to him. Caroline soon found herself included in a pool at *Ecarté*,⁵⁰ where she was much more engaged in looking on than playing, and between the acts of which desultory game she might listen to discussions from the whist table on the odd trick, which ought to have been saved, low tantalizing laughter from the trio at piquet, an indistinct gabble in the next apartment, and the click of billiard balls two rooms off.

That we may not send the reader to sleep by minutely detailing the tame transactions of the evening, we will now take liberty with the whole of the party, and having supposed them to have slept, risen, and breakfasted will break abruptly into another day.

CHAP. VIII.

Il y a des gens qui gagnent à être extraordinaires; ils voguent, ils cinglent dans une mer ou les autres échouent et se brisent; ils parviennent, en blessant toutes les règles de parvenir.⁵¹ – LA BRUYERE.

CAROLINE, upon that dispersion of the gentlemen which generally ensued soon after breakfast, began to see a little more of her cousins, and underwent from them a long examination upon her likings and dislikings, occupations and accomplishments. The Miss Cliftons were good-humoured girls, not handsome, but of pleasing manners, and sufficiently clever to keep up the ball of conversation very agreeably for an occasional half-hour. They were always *au courant du jour*,⁵² and knew and saw the first of every thing – were in the earliest confidence of many a bride elect, and could frequently tell that a marriage was ‘off,’ long after it had been announced as ‘on the tapis,’ in the morning papers – always knew something of the new opera, or the new Scotch novel, before anybody else did – were the first who made fizzes,⁵³ or acted charades contrived to have private views of most exhibitions, and were supposed to have led the fashionable throng to the Caledonian chapel,^a Cross-street, Hatton Garden.⁵⁴ Their employments were like those of most other girls: they sang, played, drew, rode, read occasionally, spoiled much muslin, manufactured purses, handscreens, and reticules⁵⁵ for a repository, and transcribed a considerable quantity of music, out of large fair print into diminutive manuscript.

Miss Clifton was clever and accomplished; rather cold, but very conversible; collected seals, franks, and anecdotes of the day; and was a great retailer of the latter. Anne was odd and entertaining; was a formidable quizzer,⁵⁶ and no mean caricaturist; liked fun in most shapes; and next to making people laugh, had rather they stared at what she said. Maria was the echo of the other two; vouched for all Miss Clifton’s anecdotes, and led the laugh at Anne’s repartees. They were plain, and they knew it; and cared less about it than young ladies usually do. Their plainness, however, would have been less striking, but for that hard, pale, parboiled town look, that stamp of fashion, with which late hours and hot rooms generally endow the female face.

With these young ladies, in the course of the morning, Caroline had a good deal of that light, amusing, confidential chat, in which young

female friends so liberally indulge, and drew from them many a lively exposé of the characters of their guests, and among others of Mr. Trebeck; with which latter we shall take the liberty of troubling the reader in our own words.

Vincent Trebeck was the only son of a gentleman of good family, and handsome, though not large independent fortune, who had followed the example of a long series of respectable ancestors, in faithfully fulfilling the few and unobtrusive, but honourable and useful, duties of an English country gentleman. But the enterprising subject of our present narrative was early visited with higher aspirations, and soon learned to despise the undistinguishing praise of humble utility. He was sent at an early age to Eton, where he soon gained that precocious knowledge of the world which a public school will generally impart, even to the dullest comprehension, and where his vivacious talents, well-assured confidence, and ready address, always gave him a considerable ascendancy over his associates. From thence, with matured views of the art of advancement, he repaired to Oxford; and never did any one glide with more ease and rapidity from the blunt unceremonious 'hail-fellow-well-met' manner of the school-boy, into the formal nonchalance and measured cordiality of the manly collegian.

Nobody carried farther that fashionable exclusiveness which prescribes the narrow local limits of gentility, and denounces all as Vandal⁵⁷ beyond its bounds. He immediately *cut* an old school-fellow, because he had entered at a minor college; and discontinued visiting another, because he had asked him to meet two men of — Hall. He was a consummate tuft-hunter, with an air of the most daring independence, to the preservation of which he usually sacrificed a friend a term. He systematically violated the regulations of the collegiate authorities, and parried their penalties with contemptuous cajolery. He always ordered his horse at hall time; was author of more than half the squibs that appeared upon the screen; and turned a tame jackdaw into the quadrangle at — in a pair of bands⁵⁸ to parody the master.

To the gracefulness of indolence, Trebeck contrived to add the reputation of being able to do a great deal, if he would but condescend to set about it. He wrote one year for the Newdigate prize: it is true he was unsuccessful, but his copy was considered the second best; and it was even whispered among his friends, that he would have succeeded if he had but taken the trouble to count his verses.

The opening world now presented an ampler field for the development of his talents. Fortunately, at his outset he was taken up as a sort of pet by some fine people, of whom he had tact enough to make a convenient stepping-stone in his fashionable nonage, and not too

much gratitude to prevent him from neglecting them when he began to move in a higher sphere, and found it useful to assert his independence.

There are many roads to notoriety. Trebeck began with dress; but he soon relinquished that, as unworthy or untenable. He scorned to share his fame with his tailor, and was, moreover, seriously disgusted at seeing a well-fancied waistcoat, almost unique, before the expiration of its 'honey-moon,' adorning the person of a natty apprentice. He sickened soon of giving names to cloaks, hats, buggies,⁵⁹ and pantaloons; and panted for a higher pedestal than a coachmaker's show-room, or a tailor's shop-board. His coats and carriages were copied by others almost as soon as they were exhibited by him; and as it was his ambition to be inimitable, he found it much better to shun these outward peculiarities, and trust alone to the 'nameless grace of polished ease,'⁶⁰ which he really possessed in a remarkable degree.

He had great powers of entertainment, and a keen and lively turn for satire; and could talk down his superiors, whether in rank or talent, with very imposing confidence. He saw the advantages of being formidable, and observed with derision how those whose malignity he pampered with ridicule of others, vainly thought to purchase, by subserviency, exemption for themselves. He had sounded the gullibility of the world; knew the precise current value of pretension; and soon found himself the acknowledged umpire, the last appeal, of many discontented followers.

He seldom committed himself by praise or recommendation, but rather left his example and adoption to work its way. As for censure, he had both ample and witty store; but here too he often husbanded his remarks, and where it was needless or dangerous to define a fault, could check admiration by an incredulous smile, and depress pretensions of a season's standing by the raising of an eyebrow. He had a quick perception of the foibles of others, and a keen relish for bantering and exposing them. No keeper of a menagerie could better show off a monkey, than he could an 'original.' He could ingeniously cause the unconscious subject to place his own absurdities in the best point of view, and would cloak his derision under the blandest cajolery.

Imitators he loved much; but to baffle them – more. He loved to turn upon the luckless adopters of his last folly, and see them precipitately back out of the scrape into which himself had led them.

In the art of cutting he shone unrivalled: he knew the 'when,' the 'where,' and the 'how.' Without affecting useless short-sightedness, he could assume that calm but wandering gaze, which veers, as if unconsciously, round the proscribed individual; neither fixing, nor to be fixed; not looking on vacancy, nor on any one object; neither occupied,

nor abstracted; a look which perhaps excuses you to the person *cut*, and, at any rate, prevents him from accosting you.

Originality was his idol. He wished to astonish, even if he did not amuse; and had rather say a silly thing than a common-place one. He was led by this sometimes even to approach the verge of rudeness and vulgarity; but he had considerable tact, and a happy hardihood, which generally carried him through the difficulties into which his fearless love of originality brought him. Indeed, he well knew that what would, in the present condition of his reputation, be scouted in any body else, would pass current with the world in him.

Such was the far-famed and redoubtable Mr. Trebeck.

CHAPTER IX.

Je consens qu' une femme ait des clartés de tout;
Mais je ne lui veux point la passion eloquante
De se rendre savante afin d'être savante;
Et j' aime que souvent aux questions qu'on fait,
Elle sache ignorer les choses qu'elle sait;
De son etude enfin je veux qu'elle se cache,
Et qu'elle ait du savoir sans vouloir qu'on le sache,
Sans citer les auteurs, sans dire de grands mots,
Et donner de l'esprit à ses moindres propos.⁶¹ – MOLIERE.

A VIOLENT snow-storm having driven the gentlemen within doors, the dispersed party now began to reunite; the sound of the billiard-ball was again heard; and the baffled sportsmen began to intrude their rough incongruous shooting-dresses among silks and muslins.

Sir Thomas Jermyn was amused and kept quiet by the plans and estimates of *rejected* alterations in the house and grounds. Lady Jermyn was exercising her ingratiating tactics upon the Duchess, by setting herself to learn of her Grace a new and superior method of netting purses. Lady Elizabeth Bellasys was manufacturing some nick-nack at a table by herself. Mr. Trebeck seated himself near, pretending to help her, and they began a lively, but not invariably good-natured review, of several of their acquaintance; among whom they presently touched upon Mr. And Lady Harriett Duncan, who were that day expected at a Hemingsworth.

'I like Duncan,' said Mr. Trebeck, 'he is always a sensible fellow, and sometimes a pleasant one. He is oddly suited in a wife, though perhaps not altogether ill. Some people say he never did a more foolish thing than when he married Lady Harriett. I cannot say I think so. Nobody acts foolishly in pleasing themselves – and she is certainly an amusing piece of silliness.'

'Oh, I think', said Lady Elizabeth, 'she is absolutely charming – quite a grown up child, stopped short at the entertaining age – with her simplicity, and her romance, and her little enthusiastic fancies; and, above all, her bluestocking airs. The blue improves her wonderfully – there is not too much of it – it is such a delicate light ærial tint – just like that sky you are washing in, Miss Clifton.'

'You see her just as I do,' said Trebeck, 'I delight in her, and all that belongs to her, from Duncan down to her scrap-book and relic-box. She invariably asks me to contribute to both. She never could get me to

write anything, but I have contributed a relic or two: some of my own hair, (pray don't tell her) which she takes for Buonaparte's and kisses night and morning; and the lid of a snuff-box, (a discarded one of my great, great-grandfather) which she verily believes to have been Prince Eugene's.⁶² Nothing is so pleasant as a little enthusiasm – you can generally laugh at it, if you don't partake of it. By the bye, is it not rather amusing to see the quiet, complacent way in which Duncan helps to shew her off? He will always join with the best will imaginable, in any trick you may wish to play her. He is so used to amuse himself with her innocent foibles, that he does not see why others should not do the same.'

'That is certainly liberal,' said Lady Elizabeth, 'and I dare say *you* find it very convenient. Have you seen anything lately of his family, the Allertons?'

'I saw their Lordship and Ladyship last, on their way to Cheltenham, in the Autumn, for change of air; looking outrageously healthy, and both of them sadly *hipped* because they could not think so. I went there soon afterwards, but they were flown. I met there our friend the Daily Advertiser – you know whom I mean – Lady Gableton⁶³ – and her ancient ally, Mrs. Ingleton. I ought to tell you that Mrs. Ingleton positively opens her matrimonial bazaar with two new nieces and a cousin next season.'

'She is really inexhaustible,' said Lady Elizabeth, 'but I'm afraid the supply rather exceeds the demand. Did you see any thing of the new batch?'

'Quite enough, I assure you; and they make me admire her courage more than ever, and tremble not a little for her success.'

'What! even *her* success, who has succeeded so often? Then they must indeed be hopeless subjects; for I know you have a very high opinion of Mrs. Ingleton's ingenuity.'

'I had, but I retract it. She was playing off her old artillery upon two or three very impracticable men, Cecil; – Lord James Denbigh, and of all persons in the world, Mr. Tyrrell.'

'Lord Malton's son?'

'Yes, the same, late of the Guards – a fellow that could not marry, even if anybody would have him – almost as much a bankrupt in character as in purse – a choice union of the Palais Royale *roué* with the English blackleg.'⁶⁴

While saying this, it did not escape the quick eye of the speaker, that Caroline looked toward him with apparent attention. 'Do you know the gentleman?' said he to her.

'Very slightly,' was her answer, 'I have only seen him once – he is a sort of relation.'

'A distant one, I hope, for my own sake.'

‘Yes, quite distant.’

‘It is a relief to hear it. Then, with your permission, I will not retract a syllable. It is very inconvenient among the prudish many, of whom Miss Jermyn assures me by her smile that she is not one, to stumble upon relations of the present company. Poor Catton! I could not help laughing the other day at his sudden rebuff from Sir Henry Deerhurst. He was launching out in his best manner against Lord Windermere; Sir Henry grew stiff, and grave, and angry; and just as Catton was proving the noble Lord an ass, in the most satisfactory manner possible, drew up and said, “Perhaps you are not aware, Sir, that the person you are abusing is my wife’s brother-in-law’s half uncle?”’

‘I think it was a very just rebuke,’ said Miss Clifton, looking up from her drawing, ‘for confining his ridicule so unfairly to Lord Windermere, when he might have extended it to the whole of the family.’

‘I hope you except the all-accomplished daughters,’ said Trebeck.

‘On no account; I have no mercy upon female pedants; and they are insufferable pedants. They are so technical! so professional! I could very generously have pardoned their knowing a great deal more than myself, but their manner of showing it was quite oppressive. To hear them talk of music, for instance! You could not mention an air, but they either asked you or told you what key it was in. They’ll talk to you about the “chromatic colouring of an arpeggio passage.” and a “*motivo* in B flat major modulating into D.” Then, a drawing with them is always apropos of “depth,” and “breadth,” and “catching lights,” and “vanishing points;” and – oh, it’s dreadful – in one short – no, I beg their pardons – in one long week I was lectured out of as much love for the arts as I had laid up in the ten years preceding.’

‘You have really made out a very strong case of unmerited suffering. It almost deserves the attention of parliament. I think I shall call upon Lord Daventry to second my motion, ‘that female accomplishments have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished.’⁶⁵

Lord Daventry bowed *dissent*; and assuming a parliamentary tone, which was not widely different from his usual flourishing manner, said, he should move as an amendment, that the word ‘*not*’ be inserted after the word ‘*ought*.’

Lady Jermyn concurred with him in thinking that there was no excess. Accomplishments, she said, were expected in every young person; and therefore must be essential. Lady Daventry saw no harm in any pursuit, provided it did not injure the figure: she had, however, known that effect result from drawing.

Trebeck seemed much amused at the discussion. ‘Lady Daventry,’ he added, ‘what would you say, if I were to tell you of a case of deformity, solely produced by the use of a double-action harp?’⁶⁶

Lady Daventry looked as if she did not know what to say. Miss Clifton pressed him to name his instance. 'I could not think of it,' said he, 'charity forbids. But I oppose accomplishments upon higher grounds, if possible. The fact is, I have a great objection to works of supererogation; and female accomplishments are quite of this description. Miss Jermyn,' said he, turning to Caroline, who was nearest to him, 'I am a confident person – I am going to take it for granted that you agree with me.'

'I fear not,' said she, 'but I cannot be sure till I have heard your reasons for calling them so. Perhaps I may then become a convert.'

'Without a doubt – for my reason is this, – that you have all such a natural fund of agreeableness, that any attempt to increase it is a shameful expenditure of time and trouble, much to be reprehended in these economizing days. Now, are you of my opinion?'

'I did not know,' said Caroline, 'how treacherous you were, in asking me to agree with you beforehand. I was not prepared for such a compliment.'

'It is not worth having,' said Anne Clifton. 'Mr. Trebeck, you must be given to understand that we accept only individual compliments. Praise of the sex goes for nothing.'

'I solemnly assure you,' said Trebeck, 'that nothing was farther from my intention than a compliment. Compliments are *mauvais ton* – are not they, Lady Elizabeth? They are quite obsolete – went out with hoops and hair powder. Pray do not accuse me of wishing to revive them. I was merely stating the simple fact, that ladies spoil their natural gifts by loading them with artificial ones. Those who have many accomplishments, are seldom so pleasant as those who have few. They trust too much to what they can do, and too little to what they can say. I wish the thousand shining qualities, which of course no lady can ever be without, to appear at her tongue's end, and not at her finger's.'

'You wish her, I believe,' said Anne Clifton, 'to play upon her acquaintance, rather than her harp.'

Trebeck bowed assent.

'I am afraid,' observed Caroline, 'the result of such playing is not often harmony.'

'Perhaps not,' replied Trebeck, 'but you are aware, that discords in music are much in vogue. You cannot think with what additional effect a tart remark always comes from a female tongue. The effect, sometimes, is quite electrical. Now occupation, and cultivation, as they call it, tend to injure all this. Accomplishments, and reading, divert the attention sadly from passing events and the news of the day.'

‘That,’ said Miss Clifton, ‘is very bad. Nobody is anybody that is not quite “*au courant du jour*.”’

‘True,’ added Anne Clifton, ‘and the worst of the Blues⁶⁷, is, that they seldom condescend to scandal.’

‘Except scandal of the worst kind,’ said Trebeck; ‘such as ripping up old grievances, and speaking shamefully ill of the dead. I met a Blue the other day, who was discussing the Suffolk Letters,⁶⁸ and Walpole’s Memoirs,⁶⁹ and then went on to say paw-paw things of Lady Mary Wortley Montague.⁷⁰ Now, really, this is quite atrocious. To attack a modern reputation, is venial in comparison. Thank heaven! with all my faults, it cannot be said that I ever slandered anybody’s great, great-grandmother.’^a

‘I acquit you, for one,’ said Lady Elizabeth Bellasys, who had preserved a dignified silence ever since the others had joined in conversation, and who seldom addressed herself to any but Trebeck; ‘but I wonder how *you* should come in contact with a Blue. They are a sort of people one never sees. The only Blue of my acquaintance – and she is a Light Blue – is our odd little friend Lady Harriet Duncan.’

‘I believe,’ said Anne Clifton, looking out at the window, ‘our odd little friend is coming now.’

At this moment, a carriage was seen driving up the approach. Doubts began to be agitated about the colour of the livery, and the probability of their reaching Hemingsworth so early: but the question of identity was in a few minutes decided, by the announcement of the parties themselves, and Lady Harriet, a sickly, but rather pretty looking woman, followed by her husband, glided in, with a step half languid, half alert, between a walk and a run; greeted the Daventry family *en masse*; began to answer questions about herself, before they were asked; astonished the Duchess, by running up and kissing her on the forehead; called the Duke ‘a good creature,’ and set him laughing for ten minutes; nodded to Lady Elizabeth; held out her forefinger to the rest of the circle by way of shaking hands; told Mr. Trebeck that she should not speak to him till he had made his peace; and then remembering that she was tired, made the best of her way to a sofa, from which she frequently started up with childish eagerness, to ask if there were any letters for her. Three were brought to her, which she was in ecstasies at the sight of; tore open one of them, and throwing the others to Mr. Tarleton, desired him to open them for her, while she was reading the first.

‘And read them?’ he asked, meaning to be facetious.

‘No, no – take them out of the envelope – there – thanks – and give them to me.’

She then read them eagerly to herself, with perpetual half-whispered exclamations of joy, grief, surprise, and laughter; and

afterwards burst out in praise of her correspondents; and when tired of endowing them with 'every virtue under heaven,'⁷¹ got up, and began to tumble over the books upon the sofa-tables, asking at the same time an infinity of questions, addressed to nobody, about what they had or had not read, of the thousand charming things that came out 'the other day.' She then set a French clock playing upon the chimney-piece, and said, as she wound it up, looking round at Lady Daventry, 'If I spoil it, Tarleton can mend it for you: he has a genius for those things – he mended one at Lady Kidderminster's.' After exhausting the tunes of the musical clock, she rang to enquire if her bullfinch was brought in, 'for I want,' said she, 'to introduce him to you – he is such a dear love – you shall hear him sing the Ranz de^a Vaches.'⁷²

The bird was brought, and sung his air with variations, (considerable variations from the original) and was petted and praised to his admiring mistress's heart's content; though to most of the company, and especially to Caroline, his mistress herself gave much greater entertainment.

Caroline was much amused with Lady Harriet. She had never before seen anything like her; and though led by the previous conversation to look for a character widely differing from the rational generality, she was by no means prepared for that diverting breadth of singularity which she now witnessed in the little flighty *minauderies*⁷³ of this very original lady. Her surprise and amusement were still increased, when, on being introduced to Lady Harriet, she shook her warmly by both hands, saying, 'I think I shall like you – if I don't I'll tell you – you will like me, I know – new people always do.' She then began to talk to her with great seeming interest, and asked her in the course of conversation, (probably with a view of sounding her capacity,) a multitude of very uncommon and unconnected questions; 'Whether she believed in craniology?'⁷⁴ 'Whether she could *improvvisare*⁷⁵ in Italian?' 'Whether she had studied the theory of apparitions?' 'Whether she considered music to be "the food of love?"'⁷⁶ 'What perfume she was most partial to?' and, 'What was her opinion of Mr. Perkins's new invented steam engine?'⁷⁷

Amused as Caroline was with so singular a person, and engaged in a conversation which embraced so wide a circle of important subjects, it is not wonderful that she should have bestowed a very small portion of her attention upon Mr. Duncan. She could only perceive that he was a gentlemanly man, and had said nothing hitherto that was either odd enough to stare at, silly enough to smile at, or clever enough to be worth repeating. But as this is almost all you can ever say, after half an hour's acquaintance with ninety nine 'gentlemanly men' out of an hundred, the result, though not interesting, was perfectly satisfactory.

CHAP. X.

Vous voulez, Acis, me dire qu'il fait froid; que ne disiez vous il fait froid ... Est-ce un si grand mal d'être entendu quand on parle, et de parler comme tout le monde? Une chose vous manque; c'est l'esprit; ce n'est pa tout; il ya en vous une chose de trop, qui est, l'opinion d'en avoir plus que les autres; voila la cause de votre pompeux galimathias, de vos phrases embrouillies, et de vos grands mots qui ne signifient rien.⁷⁸

LA BRUYERE.

THE dinner-table this day received the farther addition of a personage who was, at any rate in his own opinion, a very important one. Lord Chesterton, son of the Earl of Banbury, was a solemn, heavy, pompous, formal, pedantic young man, deeply impressed with his own consequence, but not at all skilled in the art of impressing others with it. In society he was a long and frequent talker, and flattered himself that he was entertaining. He gave his opinions gravely, and authoritatively.

'As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my mouth, let no dog bark."⁷⁹

Periphrasis (next to Catachresis)⁸⁰ was his favourite figure of speech; but he did not indulge in fanciful circumlocution, or flowery metaphor. His was heavy amplification – down-right *circumbendibus* – the genuine eloquence of 'gentle dulness.' If he wanted to ask you, what news? he enquired, 'whether the paper of the day presented any article of more than ordinary interest and importance;' when he would enquire of a lady, if she were tired with her ride, he 'hoped she had experienced no very considerable accession of fatigue from the protracted length of her equestrian excursion;' when he wished to observe that it was finer to-day than it was yesterday, he said, 'a considerable amelioration had evidently taken place in the aspect of the weather, during the lapse of twenty-four hours.' – But enough, we are becoming infected ourselves: in one word, he was a proser; a character which, as it strengthens with our growth, and is more peculiarly the failing of age, is least tolerable in a young man.

This person very soon manifested a disposition to bestow much of his tediousness upon Miss Jermyn. Independent of the powerful attractions of youth, beauty, elegance, and good humour, she possessed, in his eyes, many negative recommendations to his notice. She

was not, like the Miss Cliftons, addicted to quizzing; he did not stand in awe of her, as he did of Lady Elizabeth Bellasys; and she was less talkative, more rational, and much more intelligible than Lady Harriet Duncan. Her youth gave her a preference to the more matronly part of the company; for Lord Chesterton, though not much versed in small talk, and ‘the little attentions,’ and though the style of his conversation was better suited to steady ladies, of a ‘certain age,’ yet he maintained as an axiom, that persons of the same age ought to associate, and thought it always incumbent upon young gentlemen, to render themselves agreeable in the eyes of young ladies. He therefore devoted himself to Caroline, with an assiduity which, though very gratifying to Lady Jermyn, was absolute penance to its unfortunate object. Caroline, in her simplicity, viewed him only as bore; Lady Jermyn, in her wisdom, viewed him only as Lord Chesterton, and smiled, and bridled, and tried to look grave, and indifferent, and ‘let things take their natural course,’ and peeped now and then out of the corners of her eyes, and turned away her head, and pretended not to overhear the honied words that dribbled from the lips of the prosy Lord; while poor Caroline sat, with a much enduring civility of face; sighing inwardly, and assenting outwardly to the pompous truisms which he so elaborately announced.^a

The next day witnessed the departure of the Duke and Duchess, and their daughter, – happily not until Lady Jermyn had finished her purse, and Sir Thomas had begun to excite the jealousy of Mr. Rigby, by his favour with the Duke; in fact, they had made such successful advances in the good opinion of the Duke and Duchess, that their Graces, who were perfectly good natured, and disposed to be pleased, expressed, with more than usual sincerity, their hope of seeing them when they came to town, and left Lady Jermyn consoled by this prospect, for her early loss of them, just as her acquaintance was beginning to ripen into perfect intimacy.

‘*Bon voyage,*’ said Mr. Trebeck, as the Ducal party disappeared from their view from the drawing-room windows; ‘upon my honour, I like that family; they relieve each other so admirably well; the Duchess and her daughter especially; they are a capital contrast – oil and vinegar; together with the substantial Duke, and the pungent Mr. Rigby, they would make up an excellent family salad. Don’t you adore the Duchess, Lady Harriet? – dear, good, civil, little woman! when one tells her the most abominable falsehoods, she thanks one so sweetly for *undeceiving* her! By the bye, I am sorry for the poor Duke; he loses his pocket handkerchief at Bath.’

‘What do you mean?’ said Lady Jermyn, who felt much interested in what^b concerned them.

‘His right-hand man,’ said Mr. Trebeck.

‘What, his valet? his gentleman?’

‘Gentleman! really Lady Jermyn you are too severe. God forbid I should so miscall him – No, I was speaking of Mr. Rigby.’

‘Dear! poor Mr. Rigby! why do you dislike him, Mr. Trebeck? He seems an excellent sort of man. The Duke says – he was telling Sir Thomas, only yesterday – was it yesterday? – yes, it was yesterday – he was telling Sir Thomas that he was quite a treasure; he should not know what to do without him.’

‘That I can easily believe,’ said Trebeck; ‘but you must not misunderstand me – I admire him exceedingly. I think he has many rare qualities – he has a great deal of confidence, without a grain of pride; he has perfect subserviency, without any unnecessary formality; and^a he certainly possesses the art of flattering, without the least appearance of fawning; he has a bold, rough, honest style of toad-eating, which I humbly conceive to be very near perfection;^b I like his blunt thorough-going manner of doing it. As Charles Temple said in his metaphorical way, “He is a man that butters his bread with a bill-hook.”’⁸¹

‘You are using one yourself, I think,’ said Mr. Duncan; ‘you have hacked him down manfully – and we are the more obliged to you for this *exposé*, as you don’t often stoop to such small deer.^c It is not every body, Trebeck, to whom you vouchsafe the honour^d of an attack; you are generally select, even in your enmities.’

‘Thank you for the compliment – I conclude it is meant for one, though I cannot exactly make out how; unless you allow me to take the converse, and say, that if I am select in my enmities, I am extensive in my friendships.’

‘You don’t expect me to grant that?’

‘Not exactly: nobody does grant it ; for in fact, nobody understands me; I am not a difficult person to please – I flatter myself that I mix well with people in general – If there is any thing I pique myself upon, it is upon having a little dash of the cosmopolite, being a sort of unsophisticated person, ready to join^e in with all the odd humours of every class, both high and low.’

‘Pardon me there,’ said Duncan,^f ‘you can humour oddities as well as any body, but I don’t think you are tolerant to the quiet generality – I think I have observed, that your list of supportable people is rather a contracted one.’

‘Why, of course,’ said Trebeck, ‘there *are* persons one wishes to avoid – a man, for instance, who commits a forgery, or a pun – or asks twice for soup – or goes to private halls in Town on a Wednesday.⁸² These are offenders one should be sorry to associate with; but as to the quiet, decent, orderly mass, who have no such crimes as these to answer for, nobody is more ready to exchange a nod, or a ‘how d’ye do,’ or give them two fingers to shake, than myself.’

'I am glad to hear you disclaim fastidiousness,' said Duncan, 'and I wish to Heaven you would try to explode it; in my opinion it is one of the most prominent blots in the manners of the day.'

'Oh, I agree with you perfectly. There certainly is a horrid deal of vile counterfeit finery afloat – a most disgusting affectation of hauteur and *uppishness*. Society is becoming one huge oyster-bed, everyone entrenched in his own stiff clumsy shell of coldness and consequence. If there is one thing on earth I hate more than another, it is to see your stupid, insignificant people, trying by dint of solemnity, to make themselves both clever and important; affecting to stand aloof from those who would only honour them too much by their society; creatures who don't condescend to be agreeable, because in fact they have nothing to say. In short, its quite the national characteristic.'

'It is perfectly true,' observed Mr. Tarleton. 'I am only just returned from Italy myself. We have a horrid bad character for pride, and finery, and all that. The two markers by which they tell an Englishman, are, white pantaloons, and a stiff neck.'

'It shews their discernment,' said Mr. Trebeck. 'It is impossible to doubt the fastidiousness of a being that wears a stiff black stock and a pair of white trowsers. But really,' said he, addressing himself to Mr. Duncan, 'if we are anywhere to give ourselves airs of exclusiveness, and step daintily and pick our way, it surely is abroad. I should advise a friend who was going abroad, to cut every countryman, right and left, and go well provided with introductions to foreigners.'

'That was Catton's plan,' said Mr. Duncan. 'Did you hear of his adventure at Florence? He went there with a letter of introduction to a Conte di – I really forget the name – but no matter. As soon as he got to Florence, he went, as a man of taste should, straight to the Gallery; and in going in, swinging his body, (you know his way) and flourishing his stick, as he always does, he rapped on the nose the poodle of an Italian gentleman who was coming out. Catton, instead of apologizing, bestowed a curse upon the dog. The Italian made use of 'cospetto' and 'bestia,'⁸³ which Catton very properly applied to himself, and demanded an explanation. Neither well understood the other – high words ensued – cards were exchanged – and the Italian turned out to be the Marchese di – something. Catton soon began to consider that he could not fight a duel without a second; he had not yet discovered any acquaintance, but he had his letter of introduction to the Count; and an Italian second, he thought, would do just as well as an English one. So he went to him, letter in hand, thinking, by the way, how he should bring in his request – made his bow, and was going to deliver it, – when he found he was addressing his foe the Marchese. The fact was, the Conte had lately changed his title. The thing was too ridiculous: the mistake put them both into perfect good humour, and they

finished the business by breakfasting together about the same time that they were to have fought.'

'Well done, Catton! He is an inexhaustible blunderer; one of the curious in *contretemps*; he seems to be wrong-headed by instinct, as Falstaff was valiant. – But,^a talking travelling, whom did you fall in with on your last trip.'

'I can give you a long list of names – but very few are worth mentioning. We met at Milan with two pleasant young men, – Mr. Courtenay, Lord Essenden's grandson, and his friend, a Mr. Granby, a relation, I believe, of Lord Malton's. But to balance the account, our friend Baron Crackendorf stuck to us like a leech, and did the honours of every thing visitable. He was no favourite of your's, Harriet.'

'I cannot say that he was. He was a heavy person,' said Lady Harriet, languidly, 'and has very little mind, and is an unmerciful talker. Oh, Mr. Trebeck, you cannot think what he made me suffer.'

'I think I can imagine it, as I have the misery of knowing him. He is considered the most powerful proser on the Continent.'

'They used to call him at Spa, the Westphalian Bore,' said Duncan.

'I hope, Sir, you endeavoured to *cure* him,' said Mr. Bennett, who had long stood ready to edge in a pun.

Mr. Duncan good-humouredly laughed. Trebeck seemed unconscious that anybody had spoken, and continued, 'and where did this being fasten himself upon you?'

'At Florence,' said Lady Harriet; 'and a tyrannical physician conspired to keep us within his clutches. He absolutely would not let me travel – talked of nervous debility, and I don't know what – forbad Rome – that was cruelest of all – said a great deal (I believe very well) about Malaria; but I was too much provoked to admire his lecture. I don't see what right physicians have to be so despotic. But Duncan supported him in all he said; so that I really thought we never should have got to the "eternal city." But when after all we did get there' –

'Your ladyship,' interrupted Mr. Bennett, who had been smirking and wriggling during the last half minute, in all the agonies of a pent-up joke; 'your ladyship, if I mistake not, was questioning the compulsory right and authority of the physician. Permit me to suggest, that doubtless he enjoys that right by *prescription*.'

Lady Harriet nodded and smiled, but looked as if she did not *take*: Trebeck *took*, but did not smile; Mr. Duncan did both.

'All this is a parenthesis,' said Trebeck; 'but when, after all, you did arrive, you were going to say that you were enraptured, I suppose?'

'No; disappointed – shockingly disappointed – every thing so new, and yet so old – you understand me? – I mean, every thing was so modern, and so like what one had been used to; and the people – very worthy, but not intellectual; and then they have no enterprise. I

wanted to set on foot an excavation, and not a soul would hear of it. Oh, they think of nothing but taking airings, and siestas, and eating ice; and they pestered you with their cards, as they might have done in town. The very second day, I found "Mrs. Somebody at home" upon my table. Only conceive! – "at home!" in Rome! I regretted nothing when I left it, but the Coliseum, and the dear Pope.'

'Where is your Italian sonnet, Harriet?' said Duncan.

'I have several, you know; which of them do you mean? that on the Pope's slipper, or the Malaria, or the unknown Statue, or the dead calf in the Campo Vaccino?'⁸⁴

'The first,' said he.

'I don't know – I believe I have mislaid it. Ah, Mr. Trebeck, I thought I should have written a great deal at Rome. I had just read *Corinna*^{85a} with intense interest, and was preparing to be inspired by the genius of the place. But I don't know how it was – I felt paralyzed. I believe it was owing to the unnatural contrast between the vestiges of antiquity and the realities of modern life. No – no – it did not interest me as it should have done. After all, I know but three truly touching spots; – Vaucluse, Ermenonville, and the burial ground of Père la Chaise.⁸⁶ Oh! That last was a sweet, sweet place; there is such a pensive prettiness about it. To me it was quite a moving scene; didn't you admire it? Didn't you *feel* it? And some of the inscriptions – oh! so lovely. There was one particularly – what could it be? – but never mind^b – I shall think of it presently. Do you know I was quite angry with Duncan. He did not like it, and he gave such odd reasons! He said it was in rather a frippery taste, and that he did not like the conversion of burial ground into a fashionable lounge. Wasn't it so?'

'I believe it was,' said Mr. Duncan, 'and I'm afraid if you were to ask me, I should say so again.'

'I'm sure I shall not ask you then; for I don't wish to hear you say anything so horrid. But I must look for the inscription – I have got it in my album. And now I think of it, do Mr. Trebeck, be a good creature, and write me something clever and original; see, here is a blank leaf left on purpose for you.'

'I can only assure you,' said Trebeck, 'that I would if I could; but really I have not yet discovered any genius for extempore effusions. However, I shall be happy to leave you an impromptu in my will, if you will not object to that mode of receiving it?'

'Oh, I shall like it ten times better; there will be something so new in a posthumous impromptu. Well now,' continued she, running on from one thing to another – 'what have you been reading lately? Are you fond of poetry? By the bye, do you know *Christabel*?'⁸⁷

'I never saw it – what is it about?'

‘About? oh! it’s about – I don’t know – I cannot exactly describe it – but do read it – it’s singularly original, and shews a delicate sense of the beauty of things. – Well – and do you like sonnets?’

‘Of all things. I wrote one once on a lady’s eye-brow – a fruitful theme you know with sonnetteers; and I can safely say that mine is the best extant on that subject.’

‘Now I hardly know whether you are joking or not. I think not – you look so serious. But do tell me your favourite novels. I hope you like nothing of Miss Edgeworth’s⁸⁸ or Miss Austen’s.⁸⁹ They are full of common-place people, that one recognizes at once. You cannot think how I was disappointed in *Northanger Abbey*, and *Castle Rack-rent*, for the titles did really promise something. Have you a taste for romance? You have? I am glad of it. Do you like *Melmoth*?⁹⁰ It is a harrowing book. Dear Mrs. Radcliffe’s⁹¹ were lovely things – but they are so old! But then there are “*Valperga*,”⁹² “*Pour et Contre*,”⁹³ dear “*Inesilla*,”⁹⁴ and – oh! there are many more – I have not near done yet’ – (Trebeck gave a side look of dismay.) ‘Do look at *Peter Schlemil* and *Le Renégat*,⁹⁵ and the *Devil’s Elixir*,⁹⁶ and *Helen de Tournon* – oh! I dote upon that last – “*et les voûtes de l’église repèterent, jamais,*”⁹⁷ –” solemnly casting up her eyes.

‘My dear Lady Harriet, what are you talking about?’ said Trebeck.

‘Oh! I forgot – perhaps you have not read it. It ends so. Well, and do you know German? You must learn it if you do not; and read Goëthe in the original. And now do tell me what you have ever written yourself. Are you sure you are not the “*Hermit in London*?” you are not? Nor the “*Hermit in the Country*?”⁹⁸ Well then, are you the “*Amateur of Fashion*”⁹⁹ who wrote those books from Long’s and Stevens’s?¹⁰⁰ Are you not really? Oh! I’m sure you have written something – you are so very satirical. Tell me – do tell me, and I’ll keep it such a secret! did you ever put naughty things into the *John Bull*?¹⁰¹

‘Upon my honour, Lady Harriet,’ said Trebeck, starting up, ‘you are a very dangerous person. This scrutiny is too much for me.’

‘Ah! guilty – guilty – you dare not answer my last question. I’m perfectly satisfied, and now don’t come near me, for I’m going to read.’

CHAP. XI.

He has so pestered me with flames and stuff, I think I sha'n't endure the sight of a fire this twelvemonth.¹⁰²

CONGREVE. — *The Old Bachelor*

THE hours rolled on, and Lord Chesterton continued his assiduities with such encreasing pertinacity, that before the end of another day Caroline had begun to reproach herself for entertaining a very unchristian feeling, as she really felt that she almost hated him; and his offences, considering their flattering and not unamiable cause, seemed scarcely to deserve such deep displeasure. She allowed within herself, that all he did and said was exceedingly well meant, and that she ought to be grateful for such unremitting attention; but perhaps this effort to feel obliged to him only made the matter worse. He certainly was provokingly persevering. At table, at the instrument, riding, walking, sitting, playing, he was always near, always assiduous, always tedious, always unwelcome. But so well did she dissemble her dislike, and suppress her yawns, and smoothe her brow, and look placid and pleasing, and consequently pleased, that nobody seemed at all conscious that the homage of her admirer was in the least degree unwelcome.

But there was one person, who, though he seemed as unconscious as the rest, not only accurately read every feeling of distaste which arose in her mind, but even interested himself in her situation, and diligently, though unobtrusively, laboured to alleviate and divert the little annoyances to which she was thus singularly exposed; and this person was one of all others the most unlikely so to act, for it was no other than Mr. Trebeck. That he, with his natural quickness, should have understood her feelings, was not at all surprising; but that he should have interested himself at all about her, or taken any trouble to alleviate her persecution, — this was indeed a subject for wonder, and this she felt at first some difficulty in believing. But her incredulity was soon dispelled, by a conversation which he took an opportunity of introducing the first time he found her alone; in which he gave her so exact a picture of her own sentiment and talked over her feelings and opinions on this delicate subject with so much discernment, frankness, and playful good-humour, that she could not either deny or conceal the truth of a single syllable he said; and

strange and awkward as was the topic for a young lady to discuss with a gentleman of whom she knew so little, yet there was such a mixture of plainness and delicacy, friendliness and intelligence, in his manner and language, that she knew not how to withhold the confidence which he exacted, or reject his offers of co-operation. Besides, she had been hitherto taught to hold him in such awe, she was so confounded by his unexpected language, and found him so thoroughly in possession of her thoughts, that she dared not utter a word of contradiction or demur, and considered herself too much at his mercy to have any course left but acquiescence.

Nor did she owe her conviction to words alone. She soon became sensible of many little expedients thrown ingeniously in her way, for saving her from the wearing fatigue of too much attention; amusements started, to supply her with an excuse for change of place and occupation; discussions entered into with Lord Chesterton, which a look from Trebeck would clearly inform her, were incurred solely on her account; and diversions thrown in his way, which but for the same silent, but expressive testimony, might have been considered as dictated by no other motive than civility to him.

These attentions were so delicate, so unobtrusive, so indirect, and at the same time so useful, that she could not but feel obliged to the person who paid them. Mr. Trebeck had from the first paid her very little outward attention, less perhaps, than to any other lady in company, and no difference was now perceptible. Though he contrived to make Caroline fully sensible that his thoughts were frequently occupied with her, nobody in their company ever suspected that he stooped from his height to bestow any but the most trivial notice. When he did address her, (and it was rarely that he did so) he trifled with the same condescending indifference, the same air of mock deference, and civil superiority.

Caroline was glad that it was so, and that his newly awakened interest was not accompanied with any change of manner; for sinking as she was under the oppressive notice of one admirer she would have been quite overwhelmed had she at the same time felt that she was the marked object of the more flattering attentions of Mr. Trebeck. Flattering they certainly were; as flattering as they seemed extraordinary. Mr. Trebeck! the fastidious, the indifferent, the self-sufficient, the all-courted, all-neglecting gentleman, whom she had hitherto looked upon with so strange a mixture of awe and curiosity – that he should glide at once into the attentive friend, the careful confidant! it was certainly more than she, in her modesty, could possibly account for by any merits of her own. She sometimes feared that his secret end was merely ridicule; but then she reflected that he must indeed be possessed with a strange love of laughing in his sleeve, if he could so

sedulously pursue so poor a joke, without any accomplice to share in the amusement. Besides, she could not perceive that any of his manœuvres could have other objects than her gratification; and he seemed at the same time particularly careful to attach no needless ridicule to Lord Chesterton. He gave her constant opportunities of admiring his address in devising mean for her deliverance, either by informing her of the motions of the enemy, or by throwing diversions in his way. Whenever she began to be tired of being talked to, Mr. Trebeck was always at hand, either to take the part of listener on himself, or to start something new to supersede the necessity.

The next morning, as Lord Chesterton was showing a strong disposition to be more than usually prolix, Trebeck, after first catching Caroline's eye, broke up the lecture by making his poodle perform some laughable tricks, and diverting the attention of the company to the beauty of his dog. 'Come here, Polisson,¹⁰³ come and shew yourself. Is not he magnificent? Look at these tufts. I had him shorn by the best *tondeuse*¹⁰⁴ in Paris. Lady Harriet, I'll give you her direction.'

'Oh! thank you. How handsome he is! He must be quite a treasure.'

'Oh, invaluable. When Polisson dies I shall steal for him Lord Byron's epitaph on his Newfoundland dog.¹⁰⁵ Then I shall say, with my hand on my heart, (speaking of my friends,) 'I never had but one, and there he lies,' pointing to the dog, who was stretched upon the hearth-rug.

'You shocking person!' said Lady Harriet. 'Those sweet lines! I know you are laughing at them. But you have no feeling.'

'I thought,' said he, 'I was showing a great deal.'

'Oh, no, no; you are quite incorrigible:' and then she went on to talk about sympathy, and sensibility, and standards of taste; and Lord Chesterton had resumed both his seat and his subject; and Trebeck, finding that some other attack became necessary, after a little confidential whispering with Lady Harriet, came up to him, saying, 'Chesterton – Miss Jermyn, – excuse the interruption. I am come from the sofa, on a special mission. Your Lordship is found guilty of being a poet.'

'I,' said his Lordship, 'upon my honour –'

'Oh, ay – I understand all that – 'your modesty's a candle to your merit – it shines itself, and shews your merit too'¹⁰⁶ – Don't disguise it. It is not your fault if 'the gods have made you poetical.'¹⁰⁷ Lady Harriet charges me, 'who am no orator, as *your Lordship* is,'¹⁰⁸ to say every thing^a that is proper and persuasive, and to inform you from her, that she has a blank leaf in her album which is dying to be filled – (Is that correctly worded, Lady Harriet?) – dying to be filled by an offering from your pen.'

Lord Chesterton bowed, and hemmed, and shrugged, and shook his head, and exhibited an interesting picture of amiable perplexity.

'My dear fellow,' said Trebeck, in a whisper, 'for God's sake don't refuse; if you do, she will come upon me. Give her some of your best nonsense – you can whip up an elegant trifle in no time. Anything will do for her: but I need not talk of that to *you*,^a who have good things always at your command.'

Caroline distinctly heard this whisper, though Lady Harriet did not, and she was not a little amused by the simple gullibility of his Lordship, who, after a tedious exhibition of become diffidence, retired to a bow-window, paper in hand, and began casting up his eyes, knitting his brows, and drumming upon his chin, with a golden pencil, in all the agonies of reluctant inspiration. Caroline was truly happy in seeing him so employed, and sincerely hoped that the unpropitious Muse might long detain him; while Trebeck, with a short glance of much meaning, plainly told her that he understood her thoughts, and that his principal object had been her deliverance.

Trebeck had now stayed a week at Hemingsworth – an honour which Lord and Lady Daventry had not anticipated when he first condescended to give them his company. This day, immediately after the receipt of his letters, he informed them, that as he was prevented by circumstances from visiting a friend to whom he had intended to go, he proposed, with their permission, to prolong his visit a few days more, and then go with Lord Chesterton to join a shooting party at the Duke of Ilminster's. They very gladly closed with the offer, for Trebeck was an entertaining inmate, and by remaining with them he was conferring a favour which he seldom allowed to any but a distinguished few; rightly judging, that the eclat of his character would be somewhat sullied, if he were often to expose it to the rude test of that familiar intimacy, which is nowhere so little avoidable as in the society of a country mansion.

Caroline was not vain enough to imagine that she was instrumental in influencing his stay; but she was rather glad to find that she should see more of him; for he was an useful ally, and an entertaining companion, and the little vanity which she did possess was gratified by his notice. Yet she did not like him, and often wondered by what fatality it should have come to pass that a sort of confidence should exist between them; as he was decidedly the last person to whom she would voluntarily entrust a secret, and whom she would dare to rely on as a friend. There was a heartlessness in his character, a spirit of gay misanthropy, a cynical, depreciating view of society, an absence of high-minded generous sentiment, a treacherous versatility, and deep powers of deceit, to which not all his agreeable qualities and fashionable fame could effectually blind her. She was also struck with some incon-

sistencies in his conduct; his affectation of independence, contrasted with his slavish method of appreciating persons according to their reception in certain *sets*; and his uncompromising arrogance, viewed together with those petty arts of flattery and finesse to which he daily had recourse. With his talent for playing with the foibles of others she had been much amused; but it was an amusement which, as she felt that it was connected with unamiable feelings, she generally reproached herself for enjoying. It was a talent which she saw him frequently display, and to which the visits of the neighbouring country families, who came occasionally for a single night, gave frequent opportunities. Most of these, if persons of elegance and information, in whom he could find out nothing to quiz, he merely treated with repulsive coldness; but if they exhibited any broad traits of coarseness, ignorance, and rusticity, he instantly assumed an air of cordiality, and did his best to draw them out.

CHAP. XII.

It is meat and drink to me to see a clown. By my troth, we that have good wits have much to answer for: we shall be flouting; we cannot hold.¹⁰⁹ – AS YOU LIKE IT.

‘WE are going to have two of our country neighbours to dine with us to-day, Mr. Trebeck,’ said Lady Daventry, one morning, in a soft and apologetic tone; ‘excellent people, I assure, you, though quite homely – not at all people of the world; but very passable, good creatures. We thought you would excuse it. They always dine here every year. One is obliged, you know, to do those things in one’s own immediate neighbourhood, that one should never think of doing in town.’

‘I cannot really allow you to apologize,’ said Trebeck. ‘You are doing me a favour. They are the very people I wish to meet. I want to fall in with a native or two; it improves one’s knowledge of natural history. “It is peculiarly advantageous”, as Chesterton would say, “to extend one’s familiarity with the productions of the soil.”’

‘You speak of them,’ said Anne Clifton, ‘as if they were vegetables.’

‘I beg their pardons,’ said Trebeck; ‘but I dare say they have vegetated long enough to deserve it. But, Lady Daventry, I hope they are originals. Are they vulgar? Do they talk broad —shire, and eat with their knives?’

‘I don’t know – I think not – though it almost two years since I have seen them. But they really are not particularly odd – they are excellent people, I assure you.’

‘Oh, I believe it every bit. But I had much rather they were odd.’

‘It is rather new,’ said Anne Clifton, ‘to see you patronize provincial oddities.’

‘Oh, you don’t know me – I like them exceedingly now and then. You may depend upon it, Lady Daventry, there is nothing so intolerable as well-bred dulness. Give me vulgarity – broad unsophisticated vulgarity – good homespun characters, with all their natural mould on, bristling all over with native rusticity.’

‘Well! I am sure I thought you would not have liked them,’ said Lady Daventry.

‘Then, I have the high satisfaction of undeceiving you; but what are their names?’

‘Hawkins – Mr. and Mrs. Hawkins.’

‘And what is he?’

‘Oh, why he is a – I hardly know – it is difficult to describe people – he is a country gentleman; I believe, too, he is a bit of an agriculturist.’

‘Ah, I think I understand the sort of person,’ said Trebeck; ‘curious in turnips, knows the points of a pig, and can set you right on the state of the markets. And what kind of woman is she?’

‘A quiet civil creature – rather dull, perhaps – but I do not at all dislike her. Lord Daventry calls her a “Becky.”¹¹⁰ I don’t know exactly what he means, but, I suppose, it is no compliment.’

‘Not a very high one. Pray, have the Duncans ever seen these people.’

‘I think not. They have never met them here I am sure,’

‘Nor Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn?’

‘No – never.’

‘Then pray don’t say anything about them to Lady Harriet, and ask Daventry, when you see him, to be equally silent.’

‘Well, I will. But what mischief are you going to do?’

‘Nothing that deserves so harsh a name; only the most benevolent experiment in the world. I want to cement an eternal friendship between Lady Harriet and Mrs. Hawkins.’

The Miss Cliftons burst into a loud laugh.

‘What an idea!’ said Lady Daventry: ‘Well! now I am sure you cannot be serious.’

‘Yes, I am – remember your promise, and leave me to manage the preliminaries.’

Lady Harriet soon afterwards entered the room. Trebeck immediately began to talk to her, and presently contrived to bring the conversation round to the Hawkins’s. ‘An interesting couple, Lady Harriet. He is quite another Sir Roger be Coverley; and she is what one so eternally looks for and seldom finds – a natural character – perfectly natural – and yet not one of those insipid specimens of which one seems to understand all the excellencies at once; but I think I may say, profoundly natural – without disguise, and yet requiring patient study in order to discover her bright points. Now this I call a desirable acquaintance.’

‘I long to see her,’ cried Lady Harriet, ‘when shall I see her?’

‘This evening.’

‘No! shall I? I’m quite delighted. My dear Lady Daventry, I am so much obliged to you for asking her to meet me!’

The Miss Cliftons scarcely suppressed a giggle. Trebeck looked at Lady Daventry, to prevent her from answering.

‘Do tell me more about her,’ said Lady Harriet. ‘Is she of a sportive turn?’

‘I really hardly know whether she shines most in displaying wit herself, or appreciating it in others. But her humour is of a grave kind.’

You probably may not at first discover it. The truest kind of wit, they say, is that which raises only a smile: now, her's is precisely of that description.'

'I care very little about her wit,' said Lady Harriet. 'Women have no business with wit or humour. It is not their province: it only spoils them.'

'I am perfectly of your opinion,' replied Trebeck, 'but you will not think she has too much. Perhaps, also, you will not discover that she is a little – a little too romantic. I am well aware of your penetration, but I do not think you will find it out.' And then followed a whimsical dispute: the lady assuring him that she should certainly convict Mrs. Hawkins of romance, and Trebeck with pretended earnestness maintaining the contrary.

Punctually at six did the Hawkins's arrive; she, a quiet, simple-looking woman, whom no description would enable our readers to distinguish from ten thousand other ordinary persons; he, a hale, blunt, artless soul, full of hearty good humour, but loud in speech and ungainly in deportment. At first he was rather stiff and silent, as if a little out of his element; but he soon became 'himself again'; compared his family repeater with the French clock in the saloon, and chuckled at the superior correctness of the former; began to inveigh with much spirit against the shameful state of a rutty cross road which they had to traverse in their way thither; and then got to farming, and gave due praise to Lord Daventry's bailiff, but told his lordship that he thought he did not keep stock enough.

'What is stock?' said Trebeck, with demure face of modest ignorance.

'What is stock?' said Mr. Hawkins promptly, desirous to inform his querist. 'Why I'll tell you as well as I can. Stock stands for many things in the way of farming. Stock stands for cattle – I don't mean horses though they call them cattle now and then. Oxen are stock – sheep are stock –'

'And pigs, Sir; are they stock?' said Trebeck, in a humble, hesitating tone.

'Pigs! why no – I don't know what to say of pigs; I have not much acquaintance with them.'

'Indeed!' said Trebeck, with an air of surprise. He then prepared to put fresh queries and draw out his companion further; but seeing in the faces of some of his audience strong symptoms of a disposition to laugh, and fearful lest his play should seem too broad, he prudently refrained for the present, and politely thanking Mr. Hawkins for his information, walked away to watch the success of his practices upon the romantic simplicity of Lady Harriet.

From the first entrance of Mrs. Hawkins, she had regarded her with great curiosity and interest; thought there was something *piquant* even in her want of polish; took her stupid placidity for the 'repose of talent;' thought it indicated 'depth of character,' and expected to discover under the 'impassive ice' of this lady's exterior, a glowing current of hidden fire. She took an early opportunity of entering into conversation with her, and after a little trivial introductory small talk, launched eagerly into a higher sphere; and taking up an Italian book which lay upon the table, asked her whether she believed that Petrarch's Laura¹¹¹ was a real personage.

Mrs. Hawkins had never heard of Petrarch's Laura, but as she did not wish to confess more ignorance than was necessary, she thought to compromise the matter, by pleading guilty to the minor offence, and therefore said that she had 'never *seen* her.'

'Never seen her!' thought Lady Harriet, 'she was not very likely to have seen a person who, if she ever did live, must have been dead these four hundred years.'

On second thoughts, however, she regarded the reply as a stroke of humour, and in this idea she was confirmed by Trebeck, who interposing, added, 'Seeing is believing, you know. Mrs. Hawkins means to convey, that so doubtful is she of the existence of Petrarch's Laura, that she could hardly credit it, unless she were to see her.'

'She lives in our hearts at any rate,' said Lady Harriet, with a sigh; 'but do you really think she lives no where else?'

'I don't know,' said Mrs. Hawkins; and she added, with an air of interest unusual in her, 'but I hope she does, if she is an acquaintance of your Ladyship's.'

'So,' thought her Ladyship, 'she is caustic and satirical; I begin to understand her character.' She then dropt Laura, and according to her custom of starting subjects in succession as dissimilar as possible, she presently asked her what she thought of the new method of incubation by steam.¹¹² If she had said 'hatching,' all would have been right; but when she had to choose between a scientific phrase and a common one, she almost invariably used the former. Now Mrs. Hawkins did not know the meaning of the word 'incubation;' and it so happened that the last apparatus connected with steam, which had come under her observation, was a patent steam kitchen. Her mind running instantly to this, she rather rashly concluded, that 'incubation' was only another term for 'cookery;' and promptly replied, that she believed it did not answer.

'Really! you surprise me; but how so?' said Lady Harriet.

'It does not do things well,' was the reply.

'Things! do you mean chickens?'

'Yes – chickens – or anything.'

'I thought,' said Lady Harriet, 'chickens had hitherto been the only things tried, though I believe there was an idea of making the experiment upon an Ostrich's^a egg.'

'Are those good to eat?' asked Mrs. Hawkins, with a stare.

'I really do not know. Perhaps they are. But you said, it did not do *do things well* – how not well?'

'It gives them a taste,' said Mrs. Hawkins.

'A taste! for what?'

Mrs. Hawkins stared, for she did not comprehend the question, and after a moment's hesitation, simply answered, 'I don't know; but it does not answer much better for vegetables.'

'Hatching vegetables!' said Lady Harriet half aloud, and looking puzzled in her turn.

'Steam quickens the growth of plants,' said Trebeck, aside; and then, fearful of a premature disclosure of Mrs. Hawkins's ignorance, he prevented further discussion, and mutual *eclaircissement*, by beginning to talk of something else.

Lady Harriet returned to her charge, though not to her subject, and wishing to elicit the sweet^b spark of romance which Trebeck had said would escape her penetration, she began to question Mrs. Hawkins whether *first loves* ought to be perpetual; and whether want of constancy to an early passion were more excusable in man or woman. 'Mrs. Hawkins,' said she, 'what is your opinion?'

Mrs. Hawkins shuffled about in her chair, and simpered and looked down, and at length said, she thought it was 'much of a *muchness*.'

Lady Harriet's countenance evidently shewed that she did not comprehend this phraseology, and Mrs. Hawkins, seeing that she was expected to elucidate, obligingly added, 'Some people say one thing, and some people say another, just according to their own fancies, but I think it is *all one*.'

'Mrs. Hawkins's style,' said Trebeck, with great politeness of manner, 'is very diplomatic: she does not commit herself:' and then turning away his face, so as to be seen only by Lady Harriet, he added in a low tone, with a grave mysterious expression, 'she has her reasons.'

'What reasons? how? why? tell me,' said Lady Harriet softly, but eagerly.

'Another time,' said Trebeck in a whisper; and Lady Harriet went to dinner, with the delightful idea that Mrs. Hawkins was the interesting object of an unfortunate attachment.

Meanwhile it was equally admirable to see how Trebeck had won upon the husband; and the tone of instruction, and air of dictation^c which the latter assumed, and the former encouraged. Poor Mr. Hawkins's totally mistaken view of the character of his companion, almost discomposed the gravity of many of the company, however

little it affected that of its ingenious contriver. Trebeck drew out his man upon several topics; played him up and down stream, as an angler does a trout; got him at last to town; had excellent sport in extracting his wild^a notions upon London life and manners; enjoyed his recommendation of snug places for lodging and dining, which he would not have approached within half-a-mile; was in raptures at dinner, when asked to drink wine, and good-humouredly desired to 'name his own liquor:' and his delight was at its height, when kindly pressed, before parting in the evening, to 'put up' at Sedgeley Hall, before he left the country, and 'eat a bit of mutton with him;' and by all means to call upon him, if they happened to be in town at the same time, and take a chop at the Salopian Coffee House.

Caroline's keen and lively sense of the ridiculous, was strongly at war with her better feelings of kindness and propriety, during the whole of this evening: but the latter happily so far prevailed, as to raise a conviction that Mr. Trebeck, however entertaining, was not a person in whom she could place the slightest confidence, or for whom she could feel the smallest portion of esteem. She also felt some little anxiety about the strange understanding which subsisted between them, and which she ardently desired if possible to terminate.

Circumstances which occurred the following evening, tended not a little to strengthen this wish. After dinner she sat down to the instrument, to play an air from memory; an open music book stood before her; in^b an instant the assiduous Lord Chesterton was at her side, and at the same moment Trebeck advanced and extended his arm, as if to turn over the leaf of her music book, and then suddenly drawing back and checking himself, resigned, with a bow, that place and office to Lord Chesterton, and coming round, leaned upon the piano-forte opposite to Caroline, fixing his eyes upon her with a look of peculiar meaning, which at first she did not comprehend. Somewhat abashed at being so gazed at, she cast down her eyes, and Lord Chesterton thinking that she had got to the bottom of the page, took the hint, and turned over the leaf. Caroline looked up for the purpose of undeceiving him, but in doing this her eye met the quick, penetrative^c glance of Trebeck, which so completely fixed and arrested her, that she felt quite unable at the instant to say what she intended, and looking down again, went on mechanically with her air; and presently another leaf was turned over. Caroline, though rather amused, did not quite like to be made a principal in this trick, innocent as it was, and again looked up, that she might release the young Lord from his superfluous office; but she was once more met by Trebeck's forbidding eye, and felt Anne Clifton's hand upon her arm, and was again persuaded by this double injunction to suffer his Lordship to depart, in the persuasion that he had gracefully rendered an acceptable service. Unluckily, at

this moment, she heard Lady Jermyn's voice behind her. 'Caroline! Caroline! Lord Chesterton is very good, I'm sure – how can you let him turn over those leaves for you? You are not playing out of that book, you know. She is so absent! Thank you my Lord, pray don't trouble yourself; it is only an air from memory.'

Lord Chesterton drew up and coloured; the Miss Cliftons could not restrain a laugh; Caroline was going to apologize, when Trebeck prevented her, by saying promptly, 'All my fault, I assure you, Lady Jermyn – Chesterton you saw through it all, I'm sure, and only shammed ignorance, to humbug me in my turn.'

Lord Chesterton was weak enough to fall into this trap, and admit that, in fact, he 'did entertain a considerable suspicion, almost amounting to certainty, of the little stratagem which was intended to be practised;' upon which Trebeck, with a satisfied smile directed to the rest of the company, took him by the arm, and led him off in a confidential manner into another room. What passed between them, Caroline could not tell, but they soon returned, his Lordship with unruffled brow, and Trebeck with his usual easy air of self-satisfaction. The latter soon entered into conversation, and appeared to exert himself to be entertaining more than he usually condescended to do; told many good things of 'my friend such-a-one;' ripped up a good deal of private history; followed an acquaintance to Paris; got to the French theatre; talked of their *petites comédies*,¹¹³ mentioned the old story of the Abbé de l'Epée and his dumb Elève,¹¹⁴ which was turned into an interesting little afterpiece; went from thence to Abbé^a Sicard, and the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb,¹¹⁵ and their mode of talking with their fingers; and then carelessly inquired, if any of the company could practice that method of conversation. 'Miss Clifton? Duncan? Lady Harriett? Chesterton? nobody skilled in this noble art? Oh! Miss Jermyn, perhaps you are?'

Miss Jermyn was. She had told Miss Clifton so the morning before, and she thought within herself, that Mr. Trebeck might possibly have remembered it, for she believed she told it in his hearing.

'Oh!' said Trebeck, 'you are an adept in this silent mode of conversation. And which method is it your pleasure to use? the English, or the French?'

She said – 'The English.'

'The English one? ah – I knew them both once, and now I believe I can practice neither. I am afraid I scarcely know my letters. Miss Jermyn, will you act the governess, and see your pupil say his alphabet?' and then with a ludicrous imitation of the manner of a child who was going to say his lesson, he spelt upon his fingers the words, '*Do not ride to-morrow Chesterton joins the party to Hadley.*' 'Is that right?'

said he, when he had finished his sentence. Caroline only nodded assent.

'Your manual alphabet,' observed Miss Clifton, 'seems to consist of more than four and twenty letters.'

'Ah! — you forget the diphthongs,' said Trebeck.

'Diphthongs? what are there signs for them too? what are they?' pursued his troublesome querist.

Caroline knew there were no such signs, and trembled for Trebeck; but he with great readiness and unconcern immediately invented some; and took good care to direct the conversation very soon into a different channel.

Caroline was rather provoked at him for his conduct. She had, hitherto, felt obliged by his delicate and unobtrusive attention; but this evening gave her a double cause for displeasure. In the first place, she was angry with him for entrapping her into a scheme for amusing themselves at Lord Chesterton's expence; a scheme which she did not think quite in accordance with the retiring modesty which became her youthful character. She was also angry with herself for yielding; and part of this displeasure, as is usual in such cases, fell to the lot of her partner in the offence. Then, why have recourse, with such laborious ingenuity, to so circuitous a method of communicating what was of little consequence, and what he might so easily have told her, unobserved, in the course of the evening? Why bring himself unnecessarily into a dilemma, from which he could be extricated only by falsehood? Did the arrogant Mr. Trebeck, even for his amusement, stoop to equivocation? or did he perhaps think, that his adroitness sanctioned his deceit? She could not account for his behaviour, unless he was vain of such petty address, or perhaps, (and the thought glanced suddenly across her mind), he wished to ensnare her by a forced participation in secret stratagems, and make her feel that she was under his control, and effect a degree of confidential intimacy, from which she shrunk at the very thought. She had also blamed herself for allowing him to assume so much the air of a confidant, though in fact she knew not how she could have avoided it. However, she was now determined to resist, and as actions were more forcible indications of the intention than words, she resolved to despise his warning, and join the party on the morrow to Hadley, though she should thereby incur an additional portion of Lord Chesterton's society; and with this resolution she retired to rest.

But the best resolutions often fail. Her's was very excusably abandoned; for she rose next morning with a head-ache, and the heat of her displeasure towards Mr. Trebeck was so far abated, that she did not think it worth her while to brave on his account the rigours of a raw uncomfortable day: nay she even began to think that it would be

making him of too much consequence, to be influenced by him, either one way or the other; and would, therefore, maintain her independence by doing exactly as she felt inclined. She was, however, rather annoyed, on declining the excursion at breakfast, by the fear lest he should suppose that she had so acted in obedience to his injunctions; and was summoning a look which should convey all this, when she perceived that she might spare herself that trouble, as he did not seem to be thinking about her.

Though relieved from the pain of having her motives falsely estimated, she felt a little mortified, she scarcely knew why, at this instance of inattention. The party dispersed – Mr. Trebeck, she heard, was to join the riders – Lady Daventry and Lady Jermyn were gone to pay a morning call; and she, finding the saloon quiet and vacant, took a book, established herself in the warm corner of a sofa, and sat down with the pleasing prospect of an undisturbed morning, in all the comfortable self-indulgent languour of slight indisposition.

CHAP. XIII.

I am much sorry, Sir,
You put me to forget a Lady's manners
By being so verbal; and learn now, for all,
That I, which know my heart, do here pronounce
By the very truth of it, I care not for you.¹¹⁶

CYMBELINE.

CAROLINE had not been long in the saloon before somebody entered. It was Mr. Trebeck. 'I thought,' said she, laying her book down, 'you had gone out riding.'

'I changed my mind,' said he, rather significantly; 'but where are all the ladies?'

'Mamma and Lady Daventry are gone to Claverton; they were talking about it, if you remember, at breakfast; and Miss Clifton, and Anne, and Maria, are riding; and Lord Chesterton, and Mr. Duncan, with them; and Lady Harriet is gone to her room with a new novel; and now, I believe, I have told you all the arrangements for the morning.'

'Are you sure Lady Harriet is not in the music room?' said he, and going to it, shut the farther door which opened to the staircase, and returned, leaving the nearer one a-jar. Caroline was surprised at this precaution. 'I was mistaken,' said he, returning, 'and you are right – it is a disagreeable day, and I'm glad I did not join the riding party.'

'But the Miss Cliftons will not thank you for deserting them.'

'Oh – I shall make my peace with them. Besides, they have Duncan and Chesterton – poor Chesterton! he'll give them an edifying lecture on the picturesque. I dare say he has already quoted Price, Repton, Gilpin,¹¹⁷ and heaven knows what besides, to each of them – depend upon it, they can do very well without me. But I'm afraid the fact is that I *am* wanting in attention to ladies – I mean *generally*. I believe, if the truth were known, I am considered a sort of woman-hater.'

'You are not drawing an amiable picture of yourself, but still you might have said worse; for I believe that hatred is considered by our sex more pardonable than indifference.'

'Very true; but unfortunately, the word 'indifference' is much more applicable to my case. It is in fact, my fault – I *am* indifferent. Ay, you look incredulous; but so it is. I can talk, laugh, and philander, and keep up a little silly *persiflage*, with the thousand pretty nonentities that

one meets in society; but it is mere habit, or mere idleness; they excite no interest, and they seem to know it. And then the stuff! good heavens! the mere stuff they are flattered and amused with! I am sometimes quite out of the habit of talking sense; and why should I talk it, when they are contented with an easy substitute? In fact, I talk like a reasonable being only to those few who do excite some interest.'

'Excuse me,' said Caroline, 'as I am going to be very impertinent. I will not be so presumptuous as to set myself up as a defender of my sex; but I really cannot think that you were perfectly serious in what you have just been saying.'

'You may fairly suspect me; it is so seldom my case to be so. But I was serious; or if you cannot believe this, at any rate,' said he, seating himself by her, 'No, I will be. I have said that your sex in general does not interest me; but did I say that no one ever could? No I could not say that, for I cannot feel it. I am no rhapsodist; but I have formed in my mind a standard, which is but too seldom even approached; and that is the cause of my general indifference. But ask yourself, Miss Jermyn, whether there is no lady from whom my thoughts hardly ever wander; whose looks I can read; whose slightest wishes I can guess, and I flatter myself am not unsuccessful in trying to anticipate? Yes, there is one lady whom I have often endeavoured to protect from an annoyance of a very peculiar nature, but to which she of all others will ever be most liable, – the annoyance of unwelcome admiration. But, perhaps,' (added he, with a sigh) 'she is subject to it still, and I have only changed the tormentor, without removing the evil.'

'I will not,' said she, colouring, and speaking with forced composure, 'pretend to misunderstand you. You are alluding to Lord Chesterton. Certainly his attentions were unwelcome, and I ought, I suppose, to be obliged to you for your diversion of them. But you must be aware, that any such step on your part was utterly uncalled for and unexpected by me.'

'And is it laid to my charge as a crime, that I voluntarily lent my services in a case, where I knew, that however required, they never could be asked? Do you blame me for anticipating your wishes?'

'My wishes, Mr. Trebeck!'

'Excuse the word – call them what you will – your sentiments – your –'

'I beg your pardon – I only meant to say, that you are really taking for granted more than I ever expressed; and indeed you have somehow or other drawn me into a sort of understanding – a collusion – a confidence into which I think I ought not so readily to have fallen.'

'Do not blame yourself for what was unavoidable. We cannot always bestow our confidences when and where we choose. There are minds which think and feel alike, and will confide in each other in spite of

themselves. There is a sort of mental free-masonry, a secret sympathy between some people; and this I flatter myself has been our case.'

'I do not know,' said she, hastily, a little alarmed at the course the conversation was taking, and gaining a desperate courage at the same time, 'but allow me to say, that I think you were principally influenced by a love of ridicule, and the desire of amusing yourself at Lord Chesterton's expense.'

'Principally influenced!' said Trebeck with an air of astonishment, 'and by that! you must not so totally misunderstand my motives. Can you suppose that the paltry pleasure of teasing and thwarting that poor creature Chesterton, could have any weight with me one instant.^a My dear Miss Jermyn, you have only to reflect one little moment on your own charms and perfections, and you will be well aware, that there was an object more than worthy of all my labours.'

'I cannot,' said she, much confused and making a desperate effort to change the subject, 'I cannot much approve of personal ridicule; and I do not think it at all commendable to draw others into absurdities for the sake of exposing them.'

Trebeck gave a hasty glance at her agitated countenance, and prudently following her lead, calmly replied, 'Ridicule, you know, has been said, by many wise people, to be the test of truth; I do not know with what correctness; but, you see, at any rate, I have authority for using it; and as for bantering the unwary, – I assure you I always keep people in agreeable error, upon the most humane principles. But you think this is trifling, and I see you don't like it. I will be serious. Your observations have struck me; and I wish to know your sentiments more thoroughly, and to learn of what points of my character you chiefly disapprove; for I fear – nay, I am sure, that you do in fact disapprove of some.'

'I have no right, Mr. Trebeck, to make myself the judge of your conduct and character. It would be very presumptuous, and I really have no wish to assume such a privilege.'

'You do not assume it – it is I who give it you; and I give it with pleasure: surely I may bestow that power on whom I please. Ah! You will not speak – but I know what you think of me. You think me cold, and selfish, and frivolous, and worldly, and incapable of warm and constant attachment. You do – you do – you cannot deny it; – but you do not know me, and few, if any, do. I am not what I seem.'

'And why are you other than what you seem? Why do you disguise your real character, and act a part?'

'Why?' said Trebeck, with a significant smile; 'Miss Jermyn, allow me to be explicit, and say to you what I have never said to human being yet, and never, perhaps, may say again. What are the pretensions with which the proudest people in the land invest the humble

individual who addresses you? Ask any – all – of your exclusive aristocrats, whether my suffrage does not exalt their fashionable fame. Ask their Graces of Ilminster, if they would dare to shrink from an equality, or if even *their* rank would not tremble at a sarcasm from me. This may look vain and boastful, but it is the truth, and nothing more, and I wish to speak without disguise. Why am I courted by persons who, both in rank and fortune, are immeasurably my superiors? Is this eminence obtained without an effort? Certainly not; and this is my answer to your question; it is for this that I have acted a part; and why should we quarrel with the means, if they lead to success?

‘I think we *should* quarrel with them. I cannot think the end justifies the means. We should never do evil, even that good may come.’

‘A charming moral, and charmingly delivered. But my dear Miss Jermyn – nay, – do not draw back at that little harmless expression of regard; – I was going to observe, that even admitting what you say, still you have not proved the *evil*. I trust that no part of my career deserves to be designated by so strong a term. My errors, be they what they may, should be attributed partly to my associates. We adapt the bait to the palate for which it is intended; and if that with which I amuse the world, offends your judgment, it is only because the generality do not possess that delicate tact, that refined moral sense, which renders you (excuse my freedom in saying so) fastidious even to an injustice. Do not associate me with the silly, worldly characters around me. I laugh at them, while I laugh with them. They are mere steps in my ladder. I regard them as tools, and treat them accordingly. Do not think that I am really heartless. How can I show that I have a heart, while I live with people who have none? Our best and warmest feelings require reciprocity for their display. With the world at large, I see^a the tone which best suits it. To you I am addressing a different language. Towards you I have no disguise. I wish to unbosom myself completely. You already understand me better than your thousand keen sighted, thorough-paced people of the world and I wish that you should know me entirely.’

‘I thank you for the compliment; but surely people are not always best known from their own descriptions.’

‘Do you mean that I am insincere in what I have been saying? I am sure you cannot mean it. Does anything I have uttered carry with it the smallest indication of deceit? Is there any want of sincerity in my manner? Its very difference from my usual manner ought to prove the contrary.’

‘You are aware, it seems, of that difference; and I should have judged you more sincere if you were not. When a person is conscious of change in his manner, it rather seems to show that the change is assumed.’

'I will not dispute the principle, but you are too severe in applying it to myself. But I see that it is vain to look for anything but severity.'

'Nay, Mr. Trebeck, I trust I have given you no reason to say that.'

'I am but too well convinced of it, said he, in a desponding tone; 'your usual charitable feelings, I can plainly see, are not extended to myself.'

'I do not know why you should think so. I am sure what I said was not uncharitably meant.'

'I wish I could be persuaded of it; but I see that I have given you some deep offence. Heaven knows how! – I certainly have.'

'Oh, no, no – no *deep* offence.'

'To offend unknowingly,' continued he, not seeming to hear her, 'is hard indeed; but I have been too aspiring. I have thought too much of my own importance, and too little of your's;^a I have not bowed sufficiently low at the shrine of wealth; and I have used language which only high rank and fortune are permitted to address to the heiress of Brackingsley.'

'Mr. Trebeck, you astonish me by such imputations. I could not have supposed that you would have ventured to suggest them, or that you should have known me so little as to suppose them true. How can you think me influenced by such unjustifiable, sordid views? No, Sir, even if I were the heiress. I mean – I mean –' she stopped much confused. Hurried on by the eagerness of self-vindication she found herself on the point of discovering her secret; and her presence of mind so utterly failed her at this crisis, that she felt unable to give a different turn to the sentence.

'You mean,' said he, after a momentary pause, in a calm tone, which considerably reassured her, 'that were you heiress of ten Brackingsleys you never could entertain the unworthy feelings which I hastily imputed to you.'

She scorned to^b adopt a meaning that was not her own, and was silent.

'I ought,' he continued, 'to be convinced, and I am inclined to think that there are other reasons; by which your evident reluctance to admit my addresses may be more easily accounted for. Yes, Miss Jermyn, there are other reasons, which it is much more painful for me to admit, and to which, therefore, I have abstained hitherto from alluding. But the time for concealment is now past, and allude to them I must. Two words will explain your conduct.'

'And what are they?' said she, turning pale.

'Pre-engaged affections.'

She coloured violently, and her previous paleness only served to render her emotion more visible. She could not deny it; nor dare^c she look up and meet his eye, which she felt convinced was fixed upon her

in calm, acute, deliberate scrutiny. But indignation at his boldness came seasonably to her aid, you she said with warmth, 'Mr. Trebeck! you forget yourself. This behaviour is unwarrantable. You have no right to impute such sentiments; it is a liberty which, in justice to myself, I ought not to permit.'

'Pray forgive me. I am more deserving of your pity than your anger. The truth of the suggestion ought in some degree to excuse its boldness.'

'The truth, Sir!'

'You have not denied it.'

'Why should I be called upon to deny what you have no right to assume?'^a

'You shall never be called upon by me to make an avowal unpleasant to yourself; but permit me to say, (which I do with the most unfeigned sincerity and respect), that you have no friend to whom such an avowal might be made with more safety than to me; and let me assure you that your secret shall be religiously preserved, and that through me no part of this conversation shall ever transpire.'

'I make no claim upon your secrecy.'

'I know you do not. You would scorn to ask it. I can appreciate the dignity of your feelings, but I can also read your wishes; and I feel bound to a fidelity which is not less due than if you had solicited it. Time will come when this temporary displeasure will have passed away, and you will do me more justice than you can at present; but I cannot omit this opportunity of expressing my warm conviction, that there is no one to whom your happiness and welfare will ever be an object of more deep and lively interest, than it is to me.'

So saying, he pressed her hand between both his own, and bowing with an air of friendly respect, gravely left the room.^b

CHAP. XIV.

Benedict. Do you question me as an honest man should do for my simple true judgment? or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claudio. Nay, I pry'thee, speak in sober judgment.

Benedict. Why, i' faith, methinks she is too low for an high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise. Only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is she were unhandsome, and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.¹¹⁸

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

IT will appear evident, from the foregoing conversation, that Mr. Trebeck was not deeply in love, and that his happiness did not promise to be dangerously affected by the un auspicious^a result of his conference with the lady. But at the same time it is not to be imagined that his object in addressing her was merely mercenary. His motives, like those of most other people, were of a mixed character. He had no intention of ever making a sacrifice to wealth. Rank he disregarded, — flattering himself that the object of *his* choice would always be possessed of sufficient consideration in the world of fashion; and his natural extravagance, and the diminished state of his finances, did not admit of his uniting himself with a pennyless charmer. He, therefore, wisely resolved to combine, as far as was possible, all the requisites of rank, beauty, fortune, and fashion; and to please his eye and gratify his taste as well as he could, consistently with a prudent attention to that first great indispensable — money. In Caroline Jermyn he found a sufficient union of requisites to justify his choice. She was, he presumed, a considerable heiress, well-born, and well-connected. She had beauty which satisfied even his fastidious eye; sufficient accomplishments; manners which would pass muster in any circle; and, above all, a *naïveté*, a sort of intellectual verdure, which, to use a hackneyed expression, was perfectly 'refreshing'. The circumstances, too, under which their acquaintance had strengthened, seemed to invite his subsequent approaches. He saw her exposed, against her will, to the awkward and tedious attentions of one whom he had never failed, upon any fair opportunity, to make his butt. He could thus, in the pursuit of his ultimate object, gratify his malicious love of ridicule. He could at once establish himself in the intimacy of the lady, by appearing to enter into her feelings upon a subject on

which, if confidence is once seized by a *coup de main*,¹¹⁹ it is not easily withdrawn; and he could strengthen his hold upon her, by the flattering interest which he so unobtrusively betrayed, and the collusion into which he forced her, with his daily plans for protecting her from the petty annoyance of her unwelcome admirer.

He had also a rival to supplant; but of this he thought little; for he was not of sufficient consequence to add much to the piquancy of the pursuit. He was, however, aware that he had but slight grounds to proceed upon. He had not even her esteem; nay, he was not certain that she did not at heart dislike him. He trusted only to the trifling gratitude which his attentions might, and, as he thought, ought to have excited, and to the naturally flattered vanity of a youthful mind, on finding itself an object of admiration to the most fastidious fine gentleman of his day, and at once the constituted judge and ruling motive of his actions. He, therefore, wisely abstained from assuming a warmth which he was sure would not be met by anything like a corresponding feeling, and for the truth of which she probably would not give him credit; but rather brought into view his claims upon her gratitude, and his high standing in the fashionable world, and endeavoured to flatter her vanity by a laboured endeavour to justify his character in her eyes.

But Caroline had not sufficient vanity for his purpose, nor was she sufficiently conversant in the ways of the world; consequently, he could not impress her with an adequate notion of his real elevation, nor could she sufficiently appreciate the homage which rank and fortune submitted to pay to the magic influence of adroit audacity.

But, besides all this, her unguarded expressions concerning her inheritance, changed in an instant the course of his proceedings. The words were few and simple, and their sense incomplete; but, coupled with her hesitating, embarrassed manner, they were sufficient to inform a man of Trebeck's penetration, that her fortune, at best, was an uncertain one. His plan was therefore instantly changed, and as quickly acted upon, and, pretending to give another meaning to her words, he sought to secure a graceful retreat. With this view he struck the chord of pre-engaged affections; but was not prepared to find it answer so readily to his touch, and felt for a moment some apprehensions. However, concluding that he could securely pounce upon his quarry at any time, he determined to prosecute his enquiries concerning the nature of her expectations; and, in the meantime, he could quietly repose upon the safe basis of friendly intimacy.

Caroline was much surprised and agitated by the singular interview which she had undergone, and for which no part of his previous conduct, however remarkable, had in any degree prepared her. That he either would or could admire her, she, in her humility, had never

imagined for an instant; and she had always been inclined to regard his attentions as the mere result of a compassionate whim. As for a proposal, it was as unexpected as it was unwelcome. About her two secrets she felt some anxiety; for she feared, in spite of his protestations, that they were not in the safest hands. She had least apprehension about the inheritance; for he had given an opposite meaning to her words, and she could not imagine that the little which escaped could convey any definite idea. She was angry with herself for being so unguarded, and was also mortified at the necessity of such unworthy precautions. She longed to avow her situation at once. But this, she reflected, she had no right to do. The secret was entrusted to her by her parents, under the condition of her silence, and it was not for her to follow the dictates of her own feelings, in opposition to their positive injunctions.

That Mr. Trebeck should have discovered that she had an attachment, although he did not know to whom, was to her a subject of much greater uneasiness. She felt a considerable dread of meeting him again, and knew not where to turn her eyes when she found him seated directly opposite to her at dinner. She actually trembled, as she thought of encountering that look of his, which she seemed to view in imagination – so keen, so scrutinizing, with such an air of cruel meaning and malicious intelligence.

It was not long before she did encounter it – and what after all was the formidable look? Mild, calm, impenetrable, utterly devoid of significance or consciousness – a look that conveyed absolutely nothing – a look like that with which you meet the eye of a person you barely know to speak to. He soon afterwards addressed her; and his tone was as composed as his countenance. She was re-assured by this, and felt obliged to him for the delicacy of his behaviour. She also observed, with pleasure, that he paid this evening more than usual attention to her mother.

Trebeck did this in pursuance of his plan, of being upon friendly terms with the family during the course of his investigation; and though he had hitherto rather neglected Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn, he now began to think it advisable to win their favour by a little condescension. The lady wearied him most of the two; for in cajoling Sir Thomas he contrived to find some amusement.

‘What have you been doing with yourself, Trebeck?’ said Mr. Duncan the next morning.

‘You would not easily guess,’ said he; ‘I have been playing the sociable – keeping up the ball with Sir Thomas Jermyn. He is really a treat for a little time – but I believe’ (yawning) ‘I have had rather too much of him.’

‘You do look rather bored. What were your topics?’

'Politics, politics; I won his heart by calling him a Radical; and he brought out all his best common-places to prove that he was not. And I have been asking him for some half dozen franks, one-half of which I shall throw in the fire. I got them purely to oblige him. He likes, good man! to exercise his privilege.'

'I see you can tolerate a proser occasionally.'

'Why, there certainly is some pleasure in watching a machine that you have wound up and set a-going yourself. But when they presume to work on their own accord, then I grant you they are perfectly intolerable. In fact, Sir Thomas would not do for long.'

'You would not like him, I presume, for a father-in-law.'

'Oh, God forbid! – That is not to be thought of on any account.'

'Not on his perhaps, or his Lady's either; but surely the daughter is a charming girl.'

'Why! what the deuce! – do you want me to marry her?'

'Not unless you like – I was simply praising her.'

'Simply! – ha! – ha!'

'Why, what do you think of her?'

'I think her tolerable, all things considered; but she is quite an uninformed^a country girl; and as for beauty – she looks well enough here, where there is not a face, except Lady Harriet's, that does not serve as a foil to her own; but in town, you really would not look at her.'

'Well,' said Mr. Duncan, 'there is no accounting for tastes; but with all due deference to your judgment, I must say, I admire her extremely. She seems particularly amiable; she has great natural elegance of manner, and a good deal of pleasing accomplishment, which she certainly exhibits most unaffectedly; she seems to have very sufficient information, and considerable quickness and intelligence; and what I particularly like, – a quiet subdued turn for pleasantry; as much in fact, as a woman should have; for I positively hate a female wag. Then as for externals, she is sweetly pretty, in my opinion, particularly when she smiles.'

'Bravo! rapturous Sir! – I hope Lady Harriet is not within hearing.'

'Lady Harriet entirely concurs with me in this opinion – nay, more than that –'

What farther encomiums he was going to add, upon his wife's authority, we cannot say; for at this instant the door opened, and in came Mr. Bennett, with his usual placid, complacent^b look.

'I am come,' said he, 'on a special embassy, in quest of the Honourable Mr. Clifton. Perhaps you, Sir,' (addressing himself to Mr. Trebeck), 'can inform me where he is to be found?'

'I am truly sorry to say that I cannot; but perhaps the Honourable Mr. Duncan can.'

The Honourable Mr. Duncan professed inability, and the Rev. Mr. Bennett smirkingly withdrew.

‘A choice specimen of a clerical prig,’ said Trebeck, as the door closed.

‘A prig, if you will,’ said Duncan, ‘but don’t say ‘clerical,’ for I do not think *that*^a essential to the character. The man is a puppy, and happens to be in orders; but had he not been ordained, he would probably have been a greater puppy still.’

‘Well, well – I know you can be eloquent upon this subject, but I don’t mean to give you an opportunity; for, to cut the matter short, I perfectly agree with you in all you have said, and were about to say.’

‘I thank you for saying so at any rate – but what were we talking about when the tutor came in? – Miss Jermyn, was not it?’

‘I believe it was – but I’m sure you had gone through all her perfections, so I’ll trouble^b you to recapitulate. By the bye,’ said he, looking out of the window, ‘there is your charmer’s own sweet self, going down the walk with Lady Harriet. Suppose we join them?’

The party at Hemingsworth was now soon to be broken up. Trebeck and Lord Chesterton were going on the morrow, and the Jermyn family were to make their departure on the day following. Lord Chesterton, during the three last days of his stay, had been less an object of Caroline’s aversion than during the preceding part of it; and this, for a reason which, with persons in general, would have operated differently. He had considerably relaxed in his attentions; a change which Caroline thought observable since the circumstance of the music book. She was sorry that so trifling an offence should so seriously have displeased him, and though glad of the result, hoped that she might be mistaken in the cause. But she was not mistaken; for this slight circumstance, heightened by the ingenious misrepresentations of Trebeck, and the artful colouring which he contrived to give to it, effectually convinced Lord Chesterton that Miss Jermyn was one of those persons whom of all others he dreaded most, – a female quizzer; and that, mild and placid as she seemed to be, her only object, while admitting his attentions, was to find some opportunity of turning him into ridicule. Lord Chesterton, who was pride personified, easily took fire at this idea, and determined from that time to dedicate his dullness to those who could appreciate more worthily the honour of the offering.

The inauspicious result of this affair was a cruel blow to Lady Jermyn, for she was by this time far advanced in castle-building, and had fixed very firmly a prospective coronet upon her daughter’s brow. She watched his Lordship with mournful interest throughout the day preceding his departure, and saw with a sigh his last cold farewell-bow, as he passed her daughter in his way to his carriage. The rattle of its

wheels sounded in her ears like the dismal knell of departed greatness, and she grieved to think that a young man, who seemed so steady, should so little know his own mind.

Lady Daventry was not unmoved on this occasion; but her grief was of a decidedly less poignant character. In fact, it principally arose from regret at having committed herself with her friend, Lady Gableton, 'The Daily Advertiser,' by prematurely announcing the marriage of Lord Chesterton with her niece, Miss Jermyn, as 'a thing that was to be.'

As for Trebeck, he completely succeeded, before his departure, in gaining the favour of Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn, who warmly pressed him to visit them at Brackingsley, and declared when he was gone, that he had not half so much finery and nonsense about him as the world supposed, and was remarkably pleasant when you came to know him. Even Caroline felt considerably disposed in his favour, by his conduct during the two last days; though she still thought that she never could accept him, even if there were no such person in the world as Henry Granby.

And now the day and hour arrived when she was to quit this gay and amusing scene, which in so short a time had opened to her youthful mind so wide a field of new ideas. The carriage, with its ponderous trunks and towering imperials,¹²⁰ was actually at the door; adieus were thickly showered upon her, and clusters of hands extended to be shaken; the carriage was entered, the door closed, the vehicle in motion; and she kissed her hand for the last time, and bad farewell to Hemingsworth.

CHAP. XV.

Une paine dont personne ne vous parle, une paine qui n'éprouve pas le moindre changement, et n'est susceptible d'aucun événement, d'aucune vicissitude, fait encore plus de mal que la diversité des impressions douloureuses.¹²¹ – DE STAEL. *Corinna*.^a

FOUR months have now elapsed since we took our leave of Henry Granby. We then left him musing mournfully on his hopeless alienation from the Jermyns. We shall now find him still pursuing the same subject of meditation. His grief had a double cause. First and chief was the estrangement of Caroline. Next was regret at being opposed in his plan of entering a profession. He did not feel that 'ambition' would 'soon ease'^b him 'of love,'¹²² nor did he court employment for the purpose of diverting his thoughts from Caroline; for it was love of her which first roused him to exertion, and the generous ardour thus communicated had glowed steadily ever since. But though regretting the inactivity to which he was doomed, he did not suffer his energies to stagnate through despair; and though precluded from striking at once into any one road to eminence, he resolved to render himself more competent to the pursuit of any course which might be hereafter open to him. He therefore applied himself resolutely to the improvement of those talents with which he had been endowed in no sparing degree.

But the best resolutions often fail; and it was even so with Henry Granby. In his case, those very feelings that were his incentives to exertion, formed the bar which precluded it. Often, when labouring to confine his thoughts to the present object of speculation, Caroline's form would rise unbidden to his view; now with her soft sweet smile lapping him in temporary forgetfulness of all but his own delusive dream of bliss; now with the frown of displeasure chilling him into listless despair. Often would his eyes travel mechanically down the page, when, with a sudden start of recollection, he became conscious that he had long been reading mere words, whose sense had totally escaped him, while his mind was wandering to a dearer subject. He endeavoured sometimes to divert his thoughts, and rouse himself to gaiety, by moderately partaking of the pleasures of society, and the recreations of the season. But things which interested before, failed to interest him now. In all he did there was an evident want of animation; and the youthful buoyancy of spirit which characterized him once was gone.

In the General, this change in his nephew's deportment did not excite particular attention. He was not one of those who search very deeply into the recesses of the mind, or who are prone to attribute the fluctuations of the spirits to any but the temporary influence of the most obvious causes. He sometimes indeed noticed his nephew's occasional fits of abstraction, and would jocosely attack him upon that point, whenever they interfered with his own natural love of cheerful converse. But it would have been not a little difficult to persuade him, that the various instances of depression which were spread over the surface of four months, were all to be traced to one prevailing cause. At any rate, he would have acquitted Caroline; for as her name was never in his nephew's mouth, he thought her image was never in his mind.

'Harry,' said he one day, after receiving a letter with a Bath post-mark, 'I'm glad you have left off thinking about Caroline Jermyn.'

'Why so, Sir?' said the nephew, who was thinking of nothing else at that very moment.

'Why, I learn by this letter – it is from an old friend of mine, General Killerton – a fellow-campaigner – he is at Bath now for his health – he goes there every year – he's quite an invalid – had the gout these ten years – you have seen General Killerton? –'

'Oh yes, Sir – know him perfectly. But about the letter – you were going to say –'

'Oh, ay! – well – he says that Caroline is going to be married.'

'Married! impossible! –' said Henry, with a start that would have made the fortune of a theatrical debutant.

'Why impossible?' replied the General coolly. 'I don't see any impossibility.'

'N-no – perhaps not – of course, if you say so – that is – I mean – I suppose the letter gives its authority.'

'Oh, yes – it gives its authority – you may see it if you like – and very good authority too. Killerton had it from a friend of his, who heard it mentioned by Lady Gableton, who received the account in a letter from Lady Daventry, Caroline's aunt – and I hear the Jermyns have been staying some time at Hemingsworth – so, you see, there cannot be the smallest doubt of it.'

'None in the world, Sir,' said Henry, trying to be calm; 'and what may the gentleman's name be?'

'Why, the name is not very plain – but it is, a Lord somebody – Ches – Chesterton – here – your eyes are younger than mine – just look – is it Chesterton?'

'Yes, Sir – Lord Chesterton – he is Lord Banbury's eldest son.'

'Ha! a good match – I'm very glad to hear this, Harry. This is doing well for the girl – very well, indeed, I call it. Why! what the devil! – you don't seem pleased.'

'No – I don't think it is so well.'

'No! – why? – where's the objection? Do you know anything about this Lord Chesterton?'

'I do not know him myself, Sir, even by sight; but I have heard him spoken of by some friends of mine, as a stupid, formal, affected sort of person, and a fellow of whom they always made a laughing stock at Oxford – a sort of man, that I am sure, by what I have heard of him, it is quite impossible Miss Jermyn can like.'

'Oh, she'll like him – never fear. Why should you be so ready to suppose she will not? You don't consider that it's a very great match for her.'

'Certainly, Sir,' said the nephew, in a tone of pique, 'if a high connection is necessarily a good one. But I cannot say I think that follows. It is really what I did not expect – and upon so short an acquaintance too! They did not know him four months ago.'

'And what of that?' said the General. 'It shows they have made good use of their time.'

'Yes – that is the worst of it. There is something so indelicate in this violent haste.'

'But they think differently, you see.'

'Yes, Sir, I dare say they do. Their feelings on this subject are very different from mine. It is really too bad – a mere paltry match of ambition! – to be bartered for a coronet! – to be made a Smithfield bargain of!¹²³ Oh; Caroline! Caroline! – I never could have believed it. If there is any sort of marriage I do utterly despise and abhor, it is one of mere convenience and aggrandisement. It is such a compromise of female delicacy! – It never does any credit either to the promoter or the parties. And that *she* should fall a victim!

'Victim – nonsense! What makes you so warm about it? I'll be bound she is perfectly satisfied – and if she is, I'm sure I am.'

'But it is impossible, Sir, unless she is strangely altered. She cannot like the man; and there is the evil.'

'Ay! – well – I understand you – that *would* be an evil – if it were really the case. You would be quite satisfied – (that is your meaning, I suppose) – if you thought she married this Lord Chesterton, because she really was attached to him.'

This was an awkward alternative – Henry could bear the subject no longer, and turned away to conceal the agonized expression of his countenance, which he thought must be evident even to the General; feeling also no inclination to prolong the discussion of so painful a topic, with one who could so little enter into his real sentiments.

Upon calm consideration, however, he began to find materials for comfort, which had previously escaped his notice; for, in the first frenzy of disappointment, he had been perversely disposed to see every thing in the worst point of view – to conclude the marriage positively fixed, and Caroline irrevocably lost to him. But now, upon sifting probabilities, and remembering by how circuitous a course the intelligence had reached him, and that Lady Gableton was an arrant newsmonger, he came to the conclusion, that though the report must have some foundation, yet that no marriage was actually settled.

Henry hoped to be in town in the spring, where it was probable that the 'high contracting parties' –¹²⁴ if such they were – would shortly assemble. To follow them thither was therefore his immediate determination. The day of his journey was soon fixed, and accordingly about the last week of 'the month before the month of May,'¹²⁵ Henry Granby went up to town.

And now, did we live in happier times, how bright a field of interesting incident would open to our view! How rich a harvest might we freely glean from the perilous adventures of the road! Farewell those golden days when an hundred miles journey was an era in the life of him who undertook it; when the making of a will was the proper preface to a journey to London; and when a public vehicle, with a careful driver, was advertised a fortnight beforehand, like an outward bound packet, to set out from London (if its complement was full) and 'arrive (God willing) on the fourth day at Oxford.'

The happy annalist of those times was not compelled to dismiss his hero with a dry announcement of departure and arrival. Then it was chiefly at the outset of a journey that he plunged with him into the thickest medley of conflicting events – an inn became the hot-bed of incident – and fear and laughter dogged the wheels of the heavy vehicle which there deposited its load. Witness the rambles of a Jones;¹²⁶ the slow, but varied and eventful progress of a Roderick Random¹²⁷ in the stage-wagon; and the fortunes of the day that exposed an Andrews¹²⁸ to the tender mercies of a couple of footpads. Shades of Turpin and of Blueskin!¹²⁹ and ye other rival worthies whom abler pens than mine have heretofore commemorated! 'Twas your's to keep alive the stagnating spirit of adventure, to lighten the burden of the way-worn traveller, to throw a fearful interest over the heavy annals of an inland excursion, and with vigorous touches, peculiarly your own, to heighten the romance of real life. But the age of highwaymen is past; that of horse patrol and light coaches has succeeded; and the glories of the road are extinguished for ever.

But there is still food for observation and amusement. The annals of the road, though not now the source of high-wrought interest and perilous adventure, might still furnish subjects for sportive delineation,

and shine once more in the pages of our novelists, could pens be found, which like that of the ingenious annalist of "The Stout Gentleman,"¹³⁰ could throw an interest even over the tame adventure of a wet Sunday in a country inn. The modern mail-coach, with its motley complement of attendants, presents a scene as strictly national as any which this country can produce. The sturdy, thickset, waddling coachman; his purple face just visible between a broad-brimmed hat and a hill of drab cloth; his reduced edition, in the more active guard; the knowing, straight-haired, bustling helpers, with their bare heads and short jackets; the listless lookers on, with their comments on the 'cattle;' the vacant civility of mine host; all – down to the ruddy-faced chambermaid – all are true, genuine, downright English – all bear a deep-grained national stamp, which the members of scarcely any other class faithfully exhibit.

Nor must the passengers be forgotten. Few situations are more favourable to a display of character than that close, casual, unsought, unceremonious communion into which fellow-travellers are thrown in the course of a journey. The snug incognito, the levelling jumble of ranks and professions, the intimate contact of opposite character,^a the absence of adventitious elevation, the depression of real consequence, and the wide field for impudent pretension – all conduce to this one point; all tend to expose the character, while they conceal the circumstances. When is vanity more actively employed, in dilating the insignificant and brightening the obscure? or when is it cloaked under more ingenious disguises? How artfully sometimes is a little sly trait of importance carelessly dropt, as if inadvertently, with a well contrived look of absence, or followed perhaps by a bridling air of gravity, as if the *real* situation had been too much exposed! And what an excellent vehicle can modesty be rendered! How much may be done by an humble disclaimer! We remember a gentleman of this sort – a master in his way – who impressed us with a high opinion of his dignity, without sacrificing an iota of truth, or even making a single direct assumption. He was not, he assured us, at the last Levee,¹³¹ nor was he personally acquainted with one of the ministry who happened to be named. It was perfectly true, without a doubt; but what did his tone and manner imply? That it was almost the only Levee he had ever missed, and that all the rest of the cabinet were his intimate friends. We were also solemnly assured that he was *not* the author of an anonymous work, of some merit, that happened to be mentioned. We did not suspect him; but his manner denoted that he had frequently been taxed with it; and as it seemed a sore subject, we abstained from questions. Hence, however, we gathered, that though he was not the author of the book in question, he was thought very capable of having written it. Who could he be? A friend of the cabinet, at any rate, and a

reputed man of talent! Our veneration for him grew prodigiously, and we amused ourselves with working upon his imperfect hints, and investing him with proper dignity. But, alas! about a mile from Liverpool, our speculations and the coach were rudely arrested by a greasy footboy on the look-out, near a prim villa with green palisades; and our dignified companion shrunk at once into Mr. Stephen Wilcox, late Appraiser and Auctioneer.

CHAP. XVI.

Early in the morning he again set forth in pursuit of Sophia; and many a weary step he took to no better purpose than before.¹³²

TOM JONES.

WE may now safely suppose Granby to have arrived in London, and to be finally set down at one of those huge caravanseras, where so many daily come and go, and few, if any, wish to stay. We shall pass over the busy blank of the next twenty-four hours, at the expiration of which we shall find him established in Mount-street, actively engaged in the pleasing task of informing his friends of his life and presence.

His few first days passed heavily enough. His was the fate of many in London. Daily did he empty his cardcase at the doors of his acquaintance; and daily did he view upon his table, in return, similar indications of their remembrance of him. But by some fatality, they never met: and in truth, this fatality is easily accounted for, considering that everybody calls upon their friends just about the same hour, and, consequently, everybody is out at the usual hour of calling.

This is a tantalizing state of things; and, alas! is not peculiar to the commencement of the sojourn. Often, too often, with the best intentions, excellent friends will have passed the season without any memorial of each other's existence more satisfactory than the copper-plate impression of their respective names. An altar of friendship, with a pediment of pasteboard! The material certainly is slight; but it is a convenient vehicle of civil meanings to the many with whom five minutes chat is the utmost of one's intercourse, and with whom society, like a tontine,¹³³ requires little more than the periodical certificate of one's being still alive.

One of the first persons whom Henry Granby met in town, was his cousin, Mr. Tyrrel, who received him again with that same air or friendly interest, which created so pleasing an impression in his favour, during the latter part of his short stay at Tedsworth.

Thus greeted, and by one with whom, though so nearly connected, he had so lately become acquainted, he was eager to cultivate his society; and his intentions on this point were strongly supported by the recommendations of the General, who before his departure, had made it one of his last and most particular injunctions, to see as much as possible of his cousin Tyrrel, and, since he was favourably disposed towards him, to lose no opportunity of cementing their friendship.

This request, coming from one who, of course, must know a good deal about Tyrrel, and had probably not urged it without sufficient reasons, was necessarily of much weight. Henry himself knew no more of him than that he was Lord Malton's only son, and his own cousin; and he saw no more than that he was a lively, sociable, conversible man of the world, an entertaining, and, in all probability, an useful companion.

But the probable merits or demerits of Tyrrel, and all that he did and said, were, to Henry Granby, subjects of infinitely inferior interest to the grand question, whether the Jermyns actually were or were not at that time in town. A Morning Paper had rather perplexed him, by announcing among the fashionable arrivals, 'Sir J. and Lady *Jarmyn* and family.' He had no Baronetage to apply to – and, then, if he had, the person might not be a Baronet. Thanks to foreign orders, &c., 'Sir,' since the peace, had been almost as good a travelling name as 'Captain' heretofore. But still it might be meant for Sir T. Jermyn – papers were sometimes so inaccurate – and yet 'family' was an odd expression for an only daughter. A friend of his, who called soon afterwards, also helped to puzzle and provoke him; for, in discussing the comparative state of female beauty during the last and present season, he adverted to a new face which he had seen the night before at Lady Somebody's – 'rather striking,' he said, 'but not exactly one of your regular cried-up beauties – more pretty than handsome – but with a good deal of expression. A Miss St. Germain, I was told.'

'Jermyn, probably, without the St.' said Granby.

'No – I'm certain about the St.; I repeat the name exactly as I heard it. She is the daughter of a baronet – only daughter.'

'Exactly – so is my Miss Jermyn.'

'But you know,' said the other, 'there is a Miss St. Germain, only daughter of a baronet of that name.'

So there was. Provoking coincidence! Then it might perhaps be this lady after all. He was afterwards informed, by another friend, who was slightly acquainted with the Jermyn family, that he thought he had seen Miss Jermyn somewhere, or, at any rate, somebody very like her; but whether it was at Lady C.'s, or Cramer's Concert, or Almack's, or the British Gallery,¹³⁴ or riding in the Park, or eating ice at Gunter's,^{135a} he could not, for the life of him, recollect.

Thus foiled in various quarters, Granby repaired, as a last resource, to his aunt, Mrs. Dormer, whom, though he had already called upon, he had not yet seen. Mrs. Dormer was the elder and only sister of his mother, and, like her (for they were co-heiresses), inherited a considerable fortune, which she was induced to bestow, at an early age, upon Mr. Dormer, the younger son of a nobleman. But her husband had been dead some years; and she was now a wealthy widow, in a hand-

some town house, with numerous acquaintance, and the *entrée* of the best society.

It would be difficult to find a more pleasing example than Mrs. Dormer, of that much libelled class of elderly ladies of the world, who are presumed to be happy only at the card table; to grow in bitterness as they advance in years, and to haunt, like restless ghosts, those busy circles which they no longer either enliven or adorn. Such there may be; but of these she was not one. She was the frequenter of society, but not its slave. She had great natural benevolence of disposition; a friendly vivacity of manners, which endeared her to the young, and a steady good sense, which commanded the respect of her contemporaries; and many, who did not agree with her on particular points, were willing to allow that there was a good deal of reason in Mrs. Dormer's *prejudices*. She was, perhaps, a little blind to the faults of her friends; a defect of which the world could not cure her; but she was very kind to their virtues. She was fond of young people, and had an unimpaired gaiety about her, which seemed to expand in the contact with them; and she was anxious to promote, for their sake, even those amusements for which she had lost all taste herself. She was – but, after all, she will be best described by negatives. She was not a match-maker, or mischief-maker; nor did she plume herself upon her charity, in implicitly believing only just half of what the world says. She was no retailer of scandalous '*on dits*.'¹³⁶ She did not combat wrinkles with rouge; nor did she labour to render years less respected, by a miserable affectation of girlish fashions. She did not stickle for the inviolable exclusiveness of certain sets; nor was she afraid of being known to visit a friend in an unfashionable quarter of the town. She was no worshipper of mere rank. She did not patronize oddities; nor sanction those who delight in braving the rules of common decency. She did not evince her sense of propriety, by shaking hands with the recent defendant in a Crim. Con. cause;¹³⁷ nor exhale her devotion in Sunday routs.¹³⁸

At any rate she was an excellent person for our hero to apply to; for independent of her knowing the Jermyns, she was, in general, excellently acquainted with her neighbours' movements, – being an extensive correspondent, a great giver and receiver of visits, and one into whose obliging ear many loved to pour their tale of joy or woe. For once, however, she failed in giving the desired intelligence; and after a good deal of lively conversation about people for whom Henry cared comparatively little, and provision on her part for his future amusement, in the shape of cards for balls to be given by two of her friends, Lady Drayton and Mrs. Henley, – Henry Granby took his leave.

CHAP. XVII.

Oh! pardon that in crowds awhile
I waste one thought I owe to thee,
And, self-condemned, appear to smile,
Unfaithful to thy memory!
or^a deem that memory less dear,
That then I seem not to repine;
I would not fools should overhear
One sigh that should be wholly thine.¹³⁹

BYRON.

A CARD had been offered to Granby, the day before, for a ball that night at Mrs. Clotworthy's and having despatched his other engagements, about the 'witching hour of night,'¹⁴⁰ he repaired to that lady's well thronged mansion. He had heard that all the world were to be there; and it really seemed as if for once all the world had kept their word. The street was blocked up with a treble line of carriages extending above and below the house for a considerable distance. Frequent was the slashing of whips, and the wrangling of rival coachmen, while the strong harsh voices of the police officers were occasionally audible through the din, enforcing regulations. Ladies thinly and elegantly dressed, weary of the tedious process of gaining the door by regular approaches, were now and then seen tripping hastily along the flags, and gliding fearfully through the mob of idle spectators which lined the entrance upon this occasion.

But what a feeble foretaste was this of the crowd within – which gradually increased in density and consequence, from the liveried throng in the entrance hall, which barely afforded a lane for two, to the concentrated haut ton of the inner saloon, where standing room for one was not easily obtainable.

Granby got out at the first check to the advance of his vehicle, and soon made his way into the house; and his progress to the scene of action was then rapid and uninterrupted, until within a few steps of the lowest landing place. From thence upwards, the staircase was completely full; his progress seemed almost at an end; and the gaining a step in five minutes, appeared to be the rate of the most successful. But the difficulties though great, were not insupportable,^a and Granby with some patience, and the advantages of a slender form, got in due time to the envied summit, and added his quota to the many bows which Mrs. Clotworthy was there stationed to receive.

The poor woman seemed half dead with fatigue already, and we cannot venture to say whether the prospect of five hours more of this high wrought enjoyment tended much to brace her to the task. It was a brilliant sight, and an interesting one, if it could have been viewed from some fair vantage ground, with ample space, in coolness and in quiet. Rank, beauty, and splendour were richly blended. The gay attire; the glittering jewels; the more resplendent features they adorned, and too frequently the rouged cheek of the sexagenarian: the vigilant chaperon; the fair but languid form which she conducted; well curled heads, well propped with starch; well whiskered Guards-men; and here and there fat good-humoured elderly gentlemen, with stars upon their coats; – all these united in one close medley – a curious piece of living mosaic. Most of them came to see and to be seen; some of the most youthful professedly to dance; yet how could they? at any rate they tried – they stood as if they could, with their vis-à-vis facing them and sidled across and back again, and made one step, or two if there was room,^a to the right or left, and joined hands, and set perhaps, and turned their partners, or dispensed with it if necessary – and so on to the end of ‘La Finale;’ – and then comes a waltz for the few who choose it – and then another squeezey quadrille – and so on – and on, till the weary many ‘leave ample room and verge enough’¹⁴¹ for the persevering few to figure in with greater freedom.

But then they talk; oh! ay! true, we must not forget the charms of conversation. And what passes between nine-tenths of them? Remarks on the heat of the room; the state of the crowd; the impossibility of dancing, and the propriety nevertheless of attempting it; that on last Wednesday was a bad Almack’s, and on Thursday a worse Opera; that the new ballet is supposed to be good; mutual enquiries how they like Pasta, or Catalani,¹⁴² or whoever the syren of the day may be; whether they have been at Lady A.’s, and whether they are going to Mrs. B.’s; whether they think Miss Such-a-one handsome; and what is the name of the gentleman talking to her; whether Rossini’s music makes the best quadrilles, and whether Colinet’s band¹⁴³ are the best to play them. There are many who pay in better coin; but the small change is much of this description.

As for Granby, he amused himself with walking about, and picking out his various acquaintance. He soon found a friend upon a similar cruize,^b whom he had not seen in town before, and whom he had great pleasure in recognizing; a Mr. Courtenay, whom he had intimately known at College, and in whose company he had travelled abroad. He was about Granby’s age, and was a young man of lively talents and agreeable manners. He was the grandson and heir of an elderly peer, and his expectations were good. He had lived a great deal in town, and in the world; knew perfectly well, at least by sight and reputation, all

the prominent characters in high and gay life, was tolerably versed in secret history, and was a pretty keen guide to the leading foibles of all aspiring figurants.

'You are an acquaintance, I presume, of Mrs. Clotworthy's,' said he to Granby, after they had come from their own affairs to the subject of the ball.

'No,' said Granby, 'I certainly am not – though you might, I should think, have presumed the contrary, from finding me here.'

'Quite the reverse, I assure you,' said Courtenay. 'Mrs. Clotworthy has not ten friends in the house.'

'Not ten friends! – How do you mean?'

'Why she gave the ball under that condition. Besides, after all, it is not *her* ball.'

'Not her ball!'

'Lord bless you, no – it has as many patronesses as the Caledonian.¹⁴⁴ There is Lady A., and Lady T., and the Duchess of H., and Mrs. W., and many others that I could name. Mrs. Clotworthy only keeps the mill, and these ladies send the grist to it. She makes her's a reception-house for their acquaintance – in return for which, she is *taken up*, and introduced by them; bears the honours of the fête; sends her list, with a request to be puffed, to the Morning Post; gets the *eclat* of supposed intimacy with people who perhaps never spoke to her; and then, you know, from henceforth, she has them all on her visiting list, and they, perhaps, will have her on their's; but that is as it may be.'

'I did not know that Mrs. Clotworthy's was a ball of this description.'

'Oh, a most flagrant specimen, I assure you. There are many ways of *getting on*, and this is not a very uncommon one, and is pretty well understood by your *nouveaux riches*. It is not a very exalted way of getting into fashion, but people must creep before they can climb.'

'True,' said Granby; 'they gain acquaintance, and a sort of name; – in short, they are *heard of*. That is enough in the outset; and of the secret sneers of their new visitors they hear about as much as Mrs. C. does of our conversation.'

'About as much; – but '*parlons bas*,'¹⁴⁵ – she is drawing near. Poor little soul,' said he, looking compassionately at her, 'she creeps about without any body^a to speak to. Granby,' he added, after a short pause, 'take care of your heart, if you have got such a thing about you, for here comes Mrs. General Brankstone, with deep designs for the good of posterity upon every one that is disengaged.'

'She aims at higher marks than I;^b I'm safe, you may depend upon it.'

'Don't be too sure; you know you cannot be included in what she calls "that detrimental class, the Scorpions."¹⁴⁶

‘What do you mean?’

‘Why younger brothers – I thought you had been acquainted with the slang.’

‘No, quite a novice. But where is the lady?’

‘There, just opposite, sweeping across like a comet, with a long tail of ugly daughters.’

‘Oh, I see her – she is talking now to Count Kalydor,¹⁴⁷ alias Mr. Burrell Westby,’ said Granby, looking towards a handsome young man, dressed rather in the extreme, the chief fault of whose appearance was too much effeminacy and prettiness of air.

‘Oh, hang him,’ said Courtenay, ‘he is a walking essence bottle. His bill at Smith’s¹⁴⁸ was quite a curiosity; – twenty pounds more than mine at Stultze’s.¹⁴⁹ That’s the man (you must have heard) who sleeps with his whiskers en papillotte.’¹⁵⁰

‘I have heard it, but did not believe it.’

‘Oh, it is a fact. It transpired through his valet. By the bye – apropos of whiskers – did you ever see such a figure as our college friend Allerby has made of himself? There he is, fresh tipped and tufted, with his new pair of mustachios. Upon my honour, I hardly knew him. He was fond of *tufts*, if you remember, at Oxford.’

‘Who is that?’ said Granby, shortly afterwards, directing the attention of his companion to a young man, whose dress exhibited a studious selection of the chief peculiarities of the existing mode.

‘Don’t you know who that is?’ said Courtenay. ‘You really surprise me. “Not to know him argues yourself unknown.”¹⁵¹ That is Mr. Jones Briggs.’

‘Jones Briggs!’ said Granby, smiling; ‘and how came two such high-sounding names to fall to the lot of the same individual?’

‘Why, his original name was Jones; but upon succeeding to a large property, he assumed, in gratitude to the donor, the name and arms of Briggs.’

‘The arms! What can they be?’

‘God knows! – two puncheons *proper*, or three herrings *gules*, perhaps.’

‘Then the original Briggs made his fortune by trade, I suppose?’

‘Exactly so.’

‘And the heir is a gentleman of fashion?’

‘Um – fashion? – I hardly know what to say to that. A good many people will tell you he is. The fact is, he lives well, dresses well, drives – no, not well, but the best horses in town; is understood to have the best of every thing about him, and goes to the outside of all *proper* expence. Of course he derives his distinction through the medium of his trades-people; – a spurious kind of fashion, but it goes down with some people. In fact, fashion is not so aristocratic as many imagine; it

may be bought, like most other things. We, who had great^a grandfathers, ought to wish it were otherwise.'

At this moment a lady came up, who, after a short conversation with Courtenay, put a card into his hand, and passed on. 'That is Lady Maxtoke,' said he, – 'a very valuable person in her way. She is a sort of Fete Jackall, or Ball-giver's Provider; – the most useful body imaginable – a very convenient caterer, both for those who want to fill their rooms, and for those who wish to go and fill them. You see,' (showing the card), 'she wants me to assist in breaking down some friend's staircase. Before my time she was a great giver of parties herself; but she ran out a little, and consequently is now on the reduced list;¹⁵² so there is an end of her own fetes. And now she is a kind of dry nurse to young ball-givers; she helps to make out the cards for them, and perhaps carries off a third in her reticule to dispose of; undertakes to send to Colinet and speak to Gunter about the supper; decides the question of 'chalk or no chalk.' And then you may often see her standing by her pupils in the doorway. I noticed her at Mrs. Davenant's the other night, helping her to receive people – teaching her young ideas to courtesy – whispering "who's who," as they came up.'

'And pray, does she ever engage in any party-giving on her own account?'

'On her own account? – Why, really that is such an equivocal question, that I don't know exactly how to answer it. But I'll tell you what she does, that you may answer it for yourself. She opens her house once or twice every season, for some singer's benefit, if not for her own; she then expects you to take a ticket; and this, I can do her the justice to say, is the only tax she lays upon you.'

A short pause now ensued, which was first broken by Courtenay suddenly exclaiming, 'Ha! Here is royalty!'

'Where?' said Granby.

'Straight before you – the Crown Prince of Oonalaska¹⁵³ – Stare at him well, if you would not be singular.'

Granby saw before him, in the crowd, a short^b squab, copper-coloured man, with straight black hair, high cheeks, small pig-like eyes, and an uncouth carriage, who stared about him, as if ill at ease, with a pitiable vacancy of countenance.

'Look –^c there is a lion hunter, if there ever was one – old Mrs. Biddulph. She has fastened upon his Highness already. Do observe her, and him too – ha! ha! I will bet you a sovereign she has him at her rout on Friday. She^d never misses any thing that will raise a stare. Did you ever hear of Spencer Saltash going to her party dressed up and disguised in a wig and spectacles, and introduced as Dr. Gall? Saltash played his part admirably, but Mrs. Biddulph found him out. However, instead of exposing him at once, as ninety-nine persons out of a

hundred would have done, she very admirably kept up the deception, for the sake of hoaxing the rest of the company – Lady Harriet Duncan was one of them. She quite adored the doctor for his jargon.’

‘Oh! what our^a Florence friend, Lady Harriet? she’s a^b person I very much wish to meet. I was excessively amused with her. We had some good scenes, if you remember. Besides I want to revive my Italian recollections.’

‘I have been talking to her already.’^c

‘When do you mean? what here? to night?’^d

‘Here – to night – nay, she is not far from you at this moment. By all that is lucky, there she is – her own little eccentric self –^e talking, too, to Mrs. Biddulph – charming pair! With their leave I shall make a third. Come along,’ said he, taking hold of Granby’s arm; ‘we have stood in this corner long enough. Who are you staring at? Well, if you mean to grow to the dado, I don’t – so fare you well;’ and away he went, to speak to Lady Harriet, – leaving Granby apparently unconscious of his retreat.

The attention of Granby was at that moment totally absorbed, in watching the motions of two persons, who were retiring at some little distance into another room. He could not identify the elder lady, nor did he, indeed, give her much of his attention, but chiefly directed it to her youthful companion: and with some reason; for he thought, as he looked at her, that the neck and head could belong only to Caroline Jermyn.

But^f they went forward in an undeviating straight line, now lost, and now re-appearing in the same provoking uniformity of direction, till a closing group of tall people hid them entirely from his view. His first impulse was to follow them. They were going towards the staircase; probably to their carriage; in a few minutes they would have left the house: and he should sleep another night in ignorance – an ignorance which the prompt exertion of few minutes might remove. But after all the circumstances that had passed, a marked pursuit, a forced rencontre, when they perhaps were endeavouring to avoid him, was a mode of meeting repugnant to his feelings of pride and delicacy. But then, these might not be the Jermyns, and he wished not so much to accost them, as to satisfy his doubts.

All this passed across his mind much faster than he could have uttered it; so that he did not lose much time in mental debate. His last resolution, like his first, was to follow; and accordingly follow them he did. But this was not an easy task. He had lost sight of them, and they were more than a room’s length in advance; and a room’s length in a crowded party, is a distance not very speedily traversed. A side door, (the only short cut), was then in an impassable state of blockade; acquaintance whom he had not met before, sprung up provokingly in

his path; and these obstacles, if the parties pursued were bent on departure, rendered his chance of overtaking them almost hopeless. In short, like 'panting Time,' he toiled after *them* in vain.¹⁵⁴ That head and neck, were no where visible, and he was forced to conclude that its^a fair owner had left the house.

As a last sad chance of arriving at the desired intelligence, he asked the groom of the chambers,¹⁵⁵ who was at the bottom of the stairs, whether Lady Jermyn's carriage had been announced; but the gentleman could not 'charge his memory,' and would not take the trouble to inquire.

Thus foiled, and bethinking himself that it was not prudent to be very pointed in his inquiries, he immediately left the party, and returned disconsolately home. It was useless to him now to know whether the Jermyns had really been at Mrs. Clotworthy's; but his curiosity was not extinct, and he reflected, with much pleasure that one chance still remained – the list of the company in the Morning Post. And in this he was not disappointed; for on the second morning he read at breakfast the following article. '*Mrs. Clotworthy's First Grand Ball* – On Monday night, this new bright star in the hemisphere of fashion, opened her unique residence in — Street, to upwards of five hundred distinguished leaders of the "*haut ton*." The admiring crowd began to arrive about eleven o'clock and the carriages continued to set down until three in the morning. A splendid suite of rooms was thrown open, of which the blue drawing-room and the new saloon were appropriated to dancing. The matchless beauty of the latter room excited the most lively admiration. The style of its decorations is perfectly unrivalled, the whole having been executed under the direction of Messrs. Jenkins of the Strand. The recesses were filled with the choicest exotics; and a sumptuous banquet was set out in the suite of apartments on the ground floor, where the tables groaned under every delicacy in and out of season. Dancing commenced about half-past eleven – consisting of quadrilles and waltzes alternately; and was kept up with unwearied spirit by the fashionable votaries of Terpsichore,¹⁵⁶ till a late hour. The exotic plants were furnished by Messrs. Jenkins;¹⁵⁷ Gunter¹⁵⁸ prepared the supper; and the band was led by Colinet, in his highest style. Among the company we noticed Princes Jablanowsky, Mitchimikilikoff, &c. &c.'

The reader will perhaps dispense with the list, and let it suffice to say, that it extended in goodly array from Dukes, Duchesses, and so on, downwards in regular gradation, to Messieurs, Mistresses, and Misses; and that it contained two names which Granby noticed with even more satisfaction than he did his own; those of Lady and Miss Jermyn.

It was very provoking to have missed so fair an opportunity of getting through the embarrassments of a first meeting; but at any rate it was satisfactory that the point of uncertainty was now removed.

CHAP. XVIII.

Nothing more aggravates ill success, than the near approach to good. These kind of hair-breadth missings of happiness look like the insults of fortune, who may be considered as then playing tricks with us, and wantonly diverting herself at our expense.¹⁵⁹

– FIELDING.

GRANBY went that morning to call upon Mrs. Dormer. There was a lively good sense and playful good humour about this lady, which rendered her society always agreeable to him; and there were few, if any, of his young acquaintance, with whom he could pass an hour more pleasantly than in the company of his elderly aunt. After tattling^a of many other people, she fortunately proceeded to mention the Jermyns; a name which Henry longed to hear, but which, for reasons which we can easily understand, he scrupulously abstained from introducing.

It would perhaps have been fortunate for him had he been more open in his communications to Mrs. Dormer – had he told her the origin of the misunderstanding which existed between himself and the Jermyns, and the peculiar and ambiguous state of feeling under which they were again to meet. As reconciliation was undoubtedly an object which above all others he desired, he could not have put the affair into a better train for that purpose, than by submitting it to one who, like Mrs. Dormer, would have been a kind and active mediator, and was intimately acquainted with both parties. But Granby had in his composition a degree of reserve, a shrinking delicacy, which, though generally allied to many estimable qualities, is often productive of difficulties, which a more open disclosure might have prevented. In the present instance he encouraged himself in this propensity, by the reflection that he was but a sharer in the secret – that in the disclosure, should he make one, Caroline's name must mingle with his own. He remembered, too, that his worthy uncle was implicated in putting a finishing stroke to the quarrel; and that without the joint permission of these, he was perhaps not at liberty to disclose all he knew concerning it. Consequently he had never hitherto volunteered the slightest remark to Mrs. Dormer respecting any member of that family, but waited till they should be introduced by her in the regular course of conversation. On this occasion she informed him, that since

he last called upon her she had seen all the family, and that he would probably meet them on the morrow at Lady Drayton's.

The morrow came; and never was the mind of man more cruelly stretched on the rack of anticipation, than was Henry Granby's in the prospect of meeting the Jermyn family that night. It was a meeting in which the sweets and bitters would be curiously blended, and it were hard to say which would predominate. He was to meet for the first time under altered circumstances, circumstances to what extent altered he hardly knew, not only his early friends, but one whom he would gladly call by a dearer title. Happily he should meet them in a crowd, where the awkwardness would be less, and he should have a better chance of seeing and talking to Caroline separately, and this was a considerable consolation. He balanced probabilities and proprieties a thousand times; considered how they were likely to receive him; and, what was more important, how he ought to receive them. He tried and adopted by turns the distantly dignified, the modestly apologetic, the grave respectful, and the gay forgiving; made many proper speeches from them to himself, to which he furnished very neat and appropriate replies; in short, if they would but speak and act as he expected, he could play his part extremely well, and stand before them in a very dignified point of view.

So full were his thoughts of this subject, that at the dinner-party which he joined that evening, he was certainly not considered as an acquisition.^a The dinner-party was irksome to him, and he was not much better disposed towards 'a small evening party,' where he looked in on his way to Lady Drayton's, and at which he left rather more than two hundred 'distinguished fashionables.' He then got into a coach; found that he did not recollect Lady Drayton's number, but told the coachman that it was in Upper Grosvenor-street, and that he would be sure to know the house by the crowd and the lights; and to avoid delay directed to be set down at the end of the string of carriages.

He soon arrived; got into the house; gave his name, 'Mr. Granby,' as he thought very distinctly; heard it undergo the successive versions of 'Cranberry,' and 'Banbury,' in passing through the mouths of several quick-eared domestics, between the entrance-hall and the ball-room; just saw the head of the noble hostess turn abruptly, as it caught her ear; made his bow; read in her well-bred air of suppressed astonishment, a total ignorance as to who he was; advanced and uttered something about 'Mrs. Dormer,' and 'honour of her card;' saw that she was not much enlightened, and was going to correct the report of his name, when her attention was diverted by a fresh arrival, and his incipient explanation sunk under a thick shower of 'how do's,' from a large party of her intimate friends. He therefore resigned himself

quietly to the misrepresentation; and turned his thoughts to the pursuit of the Jermyns, who, he doubted not, were already in the house.

He edged his way about the rooms; looked through every quadrille for Caroline, and along every wall for Lady Jermyn; searched the supper room; stood on the staircase, watching the arrivals; penetrated to the boudoir; looked everywhere again and again: but alas! no Jermyns were to be seen.

There were many people at the ball whom he knew; and at length, the better to cover his chagrin, and control his impatience, he determined to dance; but, though his partner was well calculated to engage his attention, he was ever and anon considerably '*distract*.' At last, one of his reveries was broken, by the young lady with whom he was dancing asking him if he had been that night at Lady Drayton's.

'Lady Drayton's!' said Henry, with a look of surprise.

'Yes,' said his fair querist, 'she gives a ball to night – it is in this street, at the other end.'

'Oh!' said our hero, in a grave quiet tone; and however greatly he was surprised and disappointed, this was all he uttered on the occasion.

Now, the non-appearance of the Jermyns was sufficiently accounted for; and he had been passing three hours in a house, of which he did not know the owner's name! At this moment he saw Tyrrel at the other side of the room; and as soon as he had resigned his partner to her chaperon, forced his way through the crowd towards him. 'Come this way,' said he to Tyrrel, drawing him by the button to a less crowded corner; and then in a kind of whisper said, 'I am going to ask you an odd question – whose house am I in?'

'What do you mean?' said Tyrrel, staring.

'I mean that I have been two or three hours in this house, thinking all the while I was at Lady Drayton's.'

'No! you hav'nt! Gad! that's capital! and you don't know whose it is after all?'

'Not the least – I want you to tell me.'

Tyrrel was excessively amused, and it was some time before Henry could learn from him that the name of their hostess was Lady Charleville.

'And now,' said Henry, 'I shall look for the lady, explain the mistake, and make my exit.'

'What are you talking of?' said Tyrrel, holding him by the arm. 'I did not think you had been half such a *green* one. Why my dear fellow, there is not the least occasion for any sort of apology. I'll bet you five to one, in anything you like, that there are fifty others in this room of whom she knows as little as she does of you. It is the commonest thing in the world to go to a ball without an invitation. I know one or two, (I

shall not mention names), that always go into the first lighted house they come to – they ask no question, and nobody asks them any. Besides, you had much better stay where you are, than go to Lady Drayton's. This is much the better ball, I give you my word – the other was thinning very fast when I came away.'

'Was there anybody there that I know?' said Henry.

'Yes, there were the Polesworths, and the two Lady Grafton's – tall thin girls, and just of a height – "number eleven," as somebody called them; and then there was Lady Jermyn, and her daughter. A fine girl the daughter is – she would really be perfect if she would but waltz. I saw them off, just before I came here – I was in hopes they were coming too.'

'Are you sure they are *not* coming?'

'Quite sure – I heard them say "home." Come, – stay where you are, and never think of explanations.'

Henry was not at all convinced that his case, however common, was one that required no apology. He, therefore, found out Lady Charleville, and explained the cause of his singular mistake. The Lady laughed good-humouredly at the circumstance; mentioned some instances of similar mistakes which had fallen within her knowledge; and concluded by saying, that if he would leave his address, she should be happy to send him a card for her second ball, on that day three weeks. Granby bowed his thanks, and soon afterwards left the house which had been the scene of so singular a mistake, and so cruel a disappointment.

This awful first meeting was still to come; and the opportunity was so good, and he felt so well prepared for the interview, that it was very provoking to have missed it. He should now meet them, doubtless, in some awkward, embarrassing way; perhaps, in the presence of a few strangers, or, what was worse, of a few observant inquisitive friends: and he straightway began to figure to himself all the disagreeable circumstances which might attend a first interview. One comfortable thought did enter his mind, – that it was fortunate they did not know, as doubtless they did not, that he was to be at Lady Drayton's, or perhaps Caroline might fancy that he wished to avoid her. This, to be sure, was not very probable, but singular to say, it was strictly the fact; for Caroline had been told by Mrs. Dormer that Granby was to be at Lady Drayton's, and that she had held out to him the prospect of meeting them there. We shall not enter into any explanation of the feelings with which, after this information, she looked forward to Lady Drayton's ball; we have described them already; they were an exact transcript of Henry Granby's.

CHAP. XIX.

Now am I in the region of delight!
Within the blessed compass of these walls
She is: the gay light of those blazing lamps
Doth shine upon her, and this painted floor
Is with her footsteps pressed.¹⁶⁰

BASIL. — *Joanna Baillie.*

TWICE already had the expected meeting been cruelly prevented by untoward chance, and Granby now could only feed upon the hope that fortune might favour him at Mrs. Henley's. Having dined in a party where Tyrrel was also present, whose destination for the evening was the same as his own, they went together to the ball. On their arrival, their names were announced, and they ascended the stairs, and saw few symptoms of a crowd till they came to the top. At this point there was a stoppage, and they were obliged to bow from a distance to the lady of the house, and remain stationary on the upper landing place.

Mrs. Henley was at that time standing in the entrance to the ball room, talking to a gentleman who was leaning with his back against the wall, his head inclined slightly forward with a graceful condescending bend, and with the air of one who was conferring a greater honour than he received. 'It is Trebeck,' said Tyrrel, 'do you know him?'

'Only by sight and reputation,' said Granby, 'and I do not expect to be honoured with a closer acquaintance.'

'Ay, he is cursedly fine — but a good fellow when you come to know him; I shall be glad to introduce you some time or other.'

Immediately after this, on seeing him look up, Tyrrel bowed, but Trebeck appeared not to see him, as he did not take the slightest notice. 'He's as blind as a beetle,' said Tyrrel, with a forced laugh.

An acquaintance of their's, a Mr. Selby, who was standing near them, smiled as he caught Granby's eye, and appeared to think that Trebeck's blindness was in this instance of a convenient nature. 'Tyrrel, I'll bet you a guinea,' said he, 'that he does not go beyond the door-way.'^a Tyrrel shook his head, and declined the bet. 'He never does,' pursued the other, 'but at some select houses. He stands at the entrance, and pays the compliment of a few minutes talk with the lady of the house, and does not commit himself by jostling within.'

'Horrid nonsense, all this,' said Tyrrel – 'I never knew a man in my life so much afraid of losing *caste*.'

'Well he may,' said Mr. Selby, 'for he has now got so high, he can scarce change his place without falling. He is quite of the *recherché* few – the pet of the exclusives.'

'He is a sad puppy, begging his pardon,' said Tyrrel, who was not a little piqued at being *cut*.

'But he is no shallow coxcomb,' said Mr. Selby. 'Trebeck is a clever fellow, you may depend upon it. He had his object, and he has gained it. No man has played his cards better. Only consider what his address has made him – what he would have been without it, had he gone to sleep at his country seat, and been the plain quiet person his father was.'

At this moment, two ladies who were behind evinced a wish to pass by them – 'I beg your pardon,' said Tyrrel, stepping over to the other side to make way for them, and then exclaiming in a lively tone of recognition, 'Ah! Lady Jermyn, I did not see it was you.'

'How do you do, Mr. Tyrrel? – long in town?' said Lady Jermyn.

'Not long,' and the ladies passed on.

Granby started at the voice and name, and turning, saw Caroline and her mother for the first time, not only near him, but so near that Lady Jermyn's silk dress rustled against him as she passed. Their faces were both turned towards Tyrrel, who was on the opposite side. Lady Jermyn must have seen him; Caroline, who was on the other side of her, certainly did not; but neither of them looked his way, or appeared to know that he was there, but went straight on towards Mrs. Henley.

'Granby, they *cut* you,' said Tyrrel, jokingly, as the ladies moved out of hearing. Granby coloured deeply, and stung, with the remark, – which had a keener effect than it was meant to have, – without returning an answer to Tyrrel, instantly followed them in a momentary fit of desperate feeling to the ball room, – determined if possible to break the ice, and know at once upon what terms they were henceforth to meet.

He came up to them at the moment when Lady Jermyn was bent upon saying something very gracious to Mr. Trebeck, and she was in the middle of her speech, when the apparition of Henry Granby, whom she flattered herself she had dexterously avoided, broke abruptly on her view. She stammered – hesitated – seemed to forget what she was saying – and made such a lame and impotent conclusion to the civil speech she was narrating^a so prettily, that Trebeck looked up to discover the cause. He saw Granby, with an eye wandering between Caroline and her mother; a step that knew not whether to advance or recede; a hand half extended half dropt;^b and a lip that moved, but

uttered nothing audible. Caroline visibly started on seeing him, and then, with heightened colour, and a countenance in which confusion glowed with mingled feelings of pain, pleasure, and surprise, gazed for an instant as if upon a statue, forgetful of returning his imperfect greeting; while Lady Jermyn with one of the coldest smiles that ever froze on mortal lips, slightly and stiffly bent her head, and quickly turned her face away.

The irritated feelings with which Granby had advanced towards them, had subsided as suddenly as they were roused. He meant to have accosted them with stubborn coolness; but his intended bravado was happily dispelled by Caroline's involuntary gesture of surprise, which at once convinced him, that she had not, as he at first imagined, affected ignorance of his presence. Then there was a glow of something on her cheek, which a liberal interpreter might construe into pleasure; and mixed as it was with great embarrassment, it instantly disarmed his angry pride, and he stood before her irresolute and confused. He did not address her – he knew not how – there was no form of words that did not seem either too trivial or too strong. A faint 'I am glad to meet you' died upon his tongue; so faint that no one heard it. She did not speak – at least, not audibly – but her lips moved, and her hand was half raised, – she knew not why. He saw it, stepped forward and touched it as it was about to be withdrawn, and then without another look, passed hastily by her into the thickest of the throng.

All this took place in a much shorter time than is occupied by the narration; and from the silence and brevity of the interview, was by no means likely to excite attention. But there was one standing near them, who already possessed a clue to Caroline's sentiments, and on whom the slightest indications were seldom lost. Trebeck's calm, keen, deliberate eye had accurately noted every thing that occurred; and with his usual skill in drawing inferences, he instantly detected the true state of their respective feelings. But he was not satisfied without surer grounds; and after a short pause, as soon as Granby was out of hearing, turning to Lady Jermyn, quietly asked her, 'Who is that?'

'A Mr. Granby,' she replied, looking uneasy at the question beyond all power of dissimulation, and shewing a wish to change her place.

Trebeck *forgot* to make way for her – 'A fine looking young man,' he observed, 'and pray who is he?'

'I believe he is a relation of the Malton family.'

'Then he is not a person you know much of?'

'We have seen very little of him lately,' was the answer; the indirectness of which was not unnoticed.

'Ay, ay, a comparative stranger – I understand – a mere dancing acquaintance of Miss Jermyn's,' fixing his eyes full upon Caroline with a disconcerting look.

She was not proof against this attack. She turned her eyes, she knew not where – nor cared she, provided they did not encounter those of Trebeck; while the 'eloquent blood'¹⁶¹ which mounted to her cheek, stoutly denied the truth of the supposition. Lady Jermyn hemmed, twitched her daughter's arm, and tried to talk of something else; but, driven out of her usual address, she could only complain of the heat of the room.

Trebeck made no attempt to resume his subject. He had both heard and seen sufficient. He therefore allowed them to pass, but remained near them, and presently found an opportunity of saying to Caroline in a low tone, 'Pray excuse my unlucky *contretemps*. Am not I a sad blunderer? But forgive me this once; speak my pardon or look it.'

Caroline did neither; and after a short silence, he added in the same under tone, 'I know it is your wish that our acquaintance should appear to be slight. It shall, since you desire it. I will endeavour to obey you, even in this. Do not think that I have forgotten my promise. It shall still be inviolable, though I now possess the name.' And here, with a melancholy and expressive look, and a half checked sigh, he left her.

There is an animating influence in a well filled ball-room, which soon breaks the current of anxious thought; and Granby, after parting with Jermyns, found himself engaged, in a few moments, in gay and careless conversation. The feverish excitement of his spirits had even given him a more than usual animation; and ten minutes after his agitating interview, the most intimate of his friends would probably have said, that some peculiarly pleasant circumstance had been the cause of his increased vivacity. He fell in with Mr. Duncan, and had been talking for some time cheerfully with him, when Trebeck gradually approached them, and taking advantage of a pause in the conversation, stepped forward, and asking a trivial question about somebody at the other side of the room, obliged Mr. Duncan to turn from his companion. Henry's attention was at the same time diverted by a lady who was near him; and Trebeck watching this opportunity, said to Duncan in a low voice, 'Introduce me to your friend Granby.'

'Certainly,' said Duncan, looking surprized, and with an enquiring face, that seemed to ask the motive of so unusual a request, from a person of such uncompromising fastidiousness in the admission of an acquaintance. Trebeck smiled at his air of astonishment, and seemed to understand his thoughts – 'His father, and, mine,' said he, 'were old friends.' In fact, their fathers were acquainted; but the supposition of their friendship was a licence of his own. However, the reason seemed

to pass current with Duncan, who, turning round, immediately executed the office required, to the no small astonishment of Granby, and then left him and his new acquaintance to a *tête-à-tête*.

Trebeck immediately entered into conversation, and began by speaking very handsomely of Mr. Duncan, and in a way which led Granby to conclude that he owed the unexpected honour of this introduction to the good offices of that gentleman. From thence he got, somehow or other, but very naturally, as it seemed at the time, to Lord and Lady Daventry.

'Lady Daventry,' he said, 'was a Miss Jermyn, a sister of Sir Thomas Jermyn – I have met him at Lord Daventry's – he is in parliament – member for Rottentown.'

'He is – I know,' said Granby.

'He has a place in —shire – Brackingsley, it is called.'

'It is – I have seen it.'

'Perhaps you know him?' pursued Trebeck.

'Yes, I do.'

'Oh! you do! What family has he?'

'Only one daughter.'

'Only the girl that is here to-night?'

'No other.'

'Then Brackingsley will be her's I suppose.'

'I suppose so, of course. – I never heard any thing to the contrary.'

'Nor I,' said Trebeck. 'Well! *tant mieux*¹⁶² – it is lucky for her that her face is not her only fortune. But perhaps you are one of those who think her handsome.'

'Certainly, I am,' said Granby.

'So you really admire her?' said Trebeck, perseveringly.

This was rather a home question, but Granby boldly answered, 'Yes.'

'A frank confession!' said Trebeck, with a smile.

'Confession! of what?' said Henry, alarmed, – 'I only said –'

'Only twice as much as you meant,' said Trebeck. 'As it is said *entre nous*,¹⁶³ I will note it at that. Had you been talking to a lady I should have thought you meant nothing.' And then, more effectually to quiet the apprehensions which his vigilant eye had clearly marked, he changed the topic, told him a ludicrous anecdote, and walked away before his laughter ceased; leaving in Granby's mind a pleasant impression of his companionable qualities.

Granby was soon joined by Tyrrel and Selby, the former of whom had been much surprised at seeing him talking to Trebeck. 'Why, Granby,' said he, 'I suppose I misunderstood you – but I certainly thought you told me just now that you knew Trebeck only by sight.'

'No more I did at the time I told you so.'

'You have made devilish good haste then in getting an introduction,' said Tyrrel, with an air of pique; 'but I suppose you were led to it by the complimentary things you heard us say of him.'

'The introduction was not of my seeking,' said Granby; 'I owed it, I believe, to a common friend, a Mr. Duncan. It was quite a matter of surprise to me.'

Tyrrel made some remark upon this, to which Granby did not attend; for he heard at that moment the words 'Chesterton how are you?' from a gentleman behind him, and 'How do you do, my Lord?' in various agreeable keys, from several silver-toned female voices; and he instantly turned to catch a glimpse of the person who was thus addressed. His curiosity will not excite surprise, when it is remembered that this was the person to whom fame, 'that incorrigible gossip,'¹⁶⁴ assigned the hand of Caroline.

'Now,' thought Granby, as he made himself acquainted with his Lordship's exterior, 'I shall probably have an opportunity of judging, from their manner of meeting, of the accuracy of that report.' With this view, he diligently observed his Lordship's movements, and was soon rewarded by seeing him approach Lady Jermyn and her daughter. He was fortunately so situated, that he could securely watch them unobserved. He saw Lord Chesterton slowly advance – make a cold and languid salutation, which was evidently his first greeting to them that night – say something, which it did not take half a minute to utter – and then with perfect indifference pass on; while Caroline saw him come and go with undisturbed serenity of countenance, and a faint smile of mere civility; and Lady Jermyn let him escape with easy unconcern, and a something of hauteur, which considering his Lordship's expectations, those who best know her would have been most surprised at.

It is difficult to describe the pleasure which this short scene conveyed to Granby. It was conclusive. The report of the engagement must have been erroneous, and Caroline was still unshackled. It was next to an impossibility, that such a meeting, so tame, so frigid, so indifferent, so utterly deficient even in common cordiality, should have taken place between persons who were soon to be united to each other. His heart was suddenly lightened of a load which had long pressed heavily upon it – a load which was rendered still more galling by the sense of uncertainty, which completely prevented him from seeking relief in the sure balm of patient endurance.

The removal of an evil of long continuance, is perhaps more delightful than the accession of many a positive good. Most of our readers must some time or other have revelled in the joyousness of a lightened spirit, suddenly relieved from the bondage of calamity; and all such will comprehend that state of unalloyed content, in which Henry

Granby remained long rapt after his fortunate discovery. He could think of nothing else, until he saw at a little distance Lady Jermyn and Caroline, going from the ball-room towards their carriage. His eyes, which were brightened with pleasure, met Caroline's as she passed near him. It was, in fact, the first time they had met that night. The expression of his was too catching to be resisted, and in this short interchange of looks, she smiled. The smile was seen but for an instant, and the face in which it shone turned hastily away; but fleeting as it was, it was full of eloquence to him. It revived a host of recollections, which he had long secretly, but fondly cherished. It spoke of many happy hours, of joyful days,^a of unrestrained communion, of scenes too precious to be lost. It put to flight all thoughts but of the present, and forgetful of the prudence which he had enjoined himself, and of the presence of Lady Jermyn, he was stepping forward to hand Caroline to the carriage, when a gentleman who was nearer to them interposed with the offer of his arm, and led her away.

Granby followed them with his eyes: and now, too full of happiness to be accessible to any feelings of jealousy or repining, after a short reverie of the purest satisfaction, he left the ball, and sallied out into the fresh cool air of a summer-morning – suddenly passing from the red glare of lamplight, to the clear sober brightness of returning day. He walked cheerfully onward, refreshed and exhilarated by the air of morning, and interested with the scene around him. It was broad daylight, and he viewed the town under an aspect in which it is alike presented to the late retiring votary of pleasure, and to the early rising sons of business. He stopped on the pavement of Oxford-street, to contemplate the effect. The whole extent of that long vista, unclouded by the mid-day smoke, was distinctly visible to his eye at once. The houses shrunk to half their span, while the few visible spires of the adjacent churches seemed to rise less distant than before, gaily tipped with early sunshine, and much diminished in apparent size, but heightened in distinctness and in beauty. Had it not been for the cool grey tint which slightly mingled with every object, the brightness was almost that of noon. But the life, the bustle, the busy din, the flowing tide of human existence, were all wanting to complete the similitude. All was hushed and silent; and this mighty receptacle of human beings, which a few short hours would wake into active energy and motion, seemed like a city of the dead.

There was little to break this solemn illusion. Around were the monuments of human exertion, but the hands which formed them were no longer there. Few, if any, were the symptoms of life. No sounds were heard but the heavy creaking of a solitary waggon; the twittering of an occasional sparrow; the monotonous tone of the drowsy watchman; and the distant rattle of the retiring carriage, fad-

ing on the ear till it melted into silence: and the eye that searched for living objects fell on nothing but the grim great-coated guardian of the night, muffled up into an appearance of doubtful character between bear and man, and scarcely distinguishable, by the colour of his dress, from the brown flags along which he sauntered.

Granby was in a frame of mind to be agreeably struck by the peculiarities of such a scene. The prosaic part of him lay dormant, and the more imaginative faculties of his mind had been called forth into vigorous activity by the excitement of recent circumstances. He gaily pursued his homeward course; reached his door just as the sun burst full upon it; and retired to rest with spirits lighter than it had lately fallen to his lot to possess.

CHAP. XX.

As thistles wear the softest down
To hide their prickles till they're grown,
And then declare themselves, and tear
Whatever ventures to come near;
So a smooth knave does greater feats
Than one that idly rails and threats. – BUTLER.¹⁶⁵

THE first visitor whom Granby saw on the morning after his meeting with Caroline, was his cousin Tyrrel, who called upon him while he was leisurely finishing his mid-day breakfast. Among his various associates, there was no one whom he saw more frequently, or with greater pleasure, or by whom he seemed more sought in return. After the first coldness had subsided, Tyrrel manifested towards him a warmth of friendship, which their close relationship and the contrast of his previous conduct, could not fail to render peculiarly gratifying. There was a frankness in Tyrrel's manner which invited familiarity; and the circumstance of his being nearly ten years older than Henry Granby, did not at all appear to check the unreserved freedom of their intercourse. Tyrrel was a cheerful entertaining companion. He knew the town and all its characters, and was an amusing Cicerone, either in the park or on the pavé, at opera or ball, – as he had generally something to say about 'the gentleman in the cabriolet, with the pyc-bald horse,' or 'the lady that is waltzing, with the diamond head-dress,' or 'that person in the pea-green coat, who is just turning into Bond-street,' or 'the fat man that is going to sleep in White's bow-window.'¹⁶⁶

It, therefore, needed not the force of the General's injunctions, to induce Henry to cultivate the society of such an associate, for whom he really began to feel considerable regard. He was not, however, blinded to his faults. He noticed and lamented an occasional laxity of principle, and an intimate acquaintance with the worst parts of a town life, which did not betoken any very scrupulous degree of purity.

But young men are not prone to suspicion; nor was Henry Granby disposed hastily to condemn his cousin. Gratitude for many kindnesses might perhaps ill qualify him for the office of censor. He was not, however, unconscious of one strong trait in his cousin's character: a love of play. But he did not think himself in much danger of acquiring that pernicious taste through this connection: for Tyrrel did not

appear to play much himself; nor did he press him violently to engage in it. He seldom proposed any game of chance, and seemed careless about it when they did play. He was however, very fond of betting, and took frequent opportunities of so doing, on any little doubtful point which might arise in conversation. But he always betted low, and not very judiciously; so that by the time Granby had won a tolerable number of half-sovereigns, he began to feel some inclination for this method of closing an argument.

Tyrrel spoke charitably and pleasantly of play and its votaries, but at the same time, calmly and temperately, and without any enthusiasm; describing it as a pleasing, and by no means a dangerous recreation; in which, in fact, everybody indulged in a more or less degree, and which was only injurious in its excess.

Then he had a few axioms which he frequently brought forward. Persons, he would say, could seldom be ruined who played systematically, and for the same stake. They could win in one night what they lost in another. There was less cheating in the world than people imagined. Sharpers were bugbears, that were much talked of and little seen. A regular *leg*¹⁶⁷ he declared to be the best person to bet with at a race; and, he said, Gambling^a houses were in general particularly correct, as they had a character to lose. He seemed knowing, but not eager, in every thing connected with the hazard table and the turf; but of his own proceedings he said little, so that Henry could not possibly judge to what extent he had engaged in either.

‘Granby,’ said Tyrrel to him, on the morning after the ball at Mrs. Henley’s, as he sat and saw him eat his breakfast, ‘what do you do with yourself this evening?’

‘Nothing – anything. I have no engagement but this ball,’ (pointing to a card) ‘to which I am very doubtful whether I shall go. I believe I shall fill up my time with the opera.’

‘Well, I’m just in the same situation. I wish you would come and dine with me.’

‘Very willingly – but where?’

‘Oh! *chez moi* – I hate your coffee-houses, and we don’t belong to the same club.’

The hour was named, and as little after it as could reasonably be expected, Henry was at Tyrrel’s lodgings, in Jermyn-street. He found there two other persons; a gentlemanly foreigner, a Viscomte de Labrosse, and a Mr. Althorp, a soft civil sleepy-looking^b man, with a gentle voice; an obsequious bend, a quiet stealthy gait, and a peculiar heaviness of eye and demureness of expression.

Granby was introduced to them by Tyrrel as a friend and relation, with a marked and flattering emphasis on the word ‘cousin.’ He was treated by them with great politeness and attention. Mr. Althorp, in

particular, shewed peculiar deference to his opinion; and such was the civility and liveliness of the party, that the hours glided pleasantly away. After wit and wine had long and freely circulated, Tyrrel began to think of some amusement. ‘There are just four of us,’ he observed; ‘Granby, you are a whist player – what say you to a game?’

‘With all my heart; but I thought you were going to the opera.’

‘Oh! damn the opera – opera and ballet are both as old as Adam, and it’s Thursday night; nobody will be there. Let us have some whist. Althorp – Labrosse – you both play.’

They could both play *a little*, by their own account; so the card-table was wheeled round, and down they sat to whist; and Henry had for his partner the Viscomte de Labrosse. The stake was not what would be called high, at any fashionable club, but it was higher than Granby was accustomed to play, and this he ventured to mention; but he was soon made to understand, that^a comparatively speaking, it was in reality so infamously low, that except in a private way, *pour passer le temps*,¹⁶⁸ nobody ‘that was any body’ would venture to play it; and he was therefore compelled to retract his observation.

They began to play, and Granby soon found reason to think that it was no false modesty which made the party, especially his opponents, declare they could play only a little. Game succeeded game, and he became a considerable winner; and this not always in consequence of his own good cards or skill in the game, but from the bad play of his opponents. His sleepy-looking friend, except during the time that he was Granby’s partner, appeared to play peculiarly ill, and yet there was a quiet adroitness in his manner of dealing, shuffling, and going through all the business of the card-table, which seemed to denote the practised player. Probably though unskilled in whist, he was in the habit of playing a good deal at other games. Tyrrel, rather unusually, as Granby thought, took very good care that none of his blunders should pass unobserved, and, as if out of humour, even blamed him without a cause, and accused him, to Granby’s surprise, of an awkward manner of dealing and shuffling. All this Mr. Althorp bore with the most laudable good humour – confessing that cards were not his province; and, as if hurried by a desire to do better than well, he became really awkward, dropped almost half the cards in shuffling, and made a missed deal when it came to his turn.

Meanwhile Granby’s winnings increased, and after he had four by honours in his own hand, it was proposed by Tyrrel, that the stake should be doubled. The Frenchman shrugged, and talked of the run of luck against him; but made no real opposition. Mr. Althorp, who was now Granby’s partner, closed readily with the proposal. Granby alone objected. Tyrrel looked surprised, and hardly seemed to think him in earnest.

'I had rather not play so high,' persisted Granby; 'it is a larger stake than I like to play for.'

'That is cautiously said for a winner like you. Why, with your cards – (for a run of luck almost invariably lasts the evening) – with your cards, I would venture to play for four times the stake.'

'But,' said Henry,^a 'I do not wish to win from others what I cannot afford to lose myself.'

'A liberal sentiment, undoubtedly – a very liberal one,' said Mr. Althorp – 'excellent in theory; but, between ourselves, unknown in practice. So now that we have applauded your sentiment, as it certainly deserves, I am sure you will indulge us in our little request.'

'I am sorry,' said Granby, 'to be obliged to say more; but I really was serious in my first refusal.'

'So, then, you have fleeced us to our last shilling,' said Tyrrel, in a tone of half-pique, 'and will not give us our revenge.'

'If you are so reduced,' said Granby, smiling, 'you have less reason for doubling the stake. But, as for giving you your revenge, if you want to win your money back again, I shall be happy' – (pulling out his watch) – 'to give you that opportunity for another hour; but at the same rate of play, if you please.'

'My dear fellow,' said Tyrrel, 'you really surprise me. To be so scrupulous! and a winner too! Now, what reason on earth can you possibly have for refusing to play, in small quiet party, at this very, very trifling stake – for it is trifling comparatively.'

'I have told you my reasons,' said Henry, 'and I am sorry you should wish me to repeat them. It is quite unnecessary, for they remain the same. Pray, let the discussion end. I will play on, as I told you, at the former stake: You can have no objection to that; and I *have* an objection to any increase. Surely, we had much better do that in which all the party can agree.'

There was a firmness, mixed with the good-humour of his refusal which effectually precluded all further attacks. Mr. Althorp smiled as obligingly as if, in following Granby's will, he had been secretly gratifying his own. Tyrrel, at first, was serious and silent; but soon roused himself, and was presently in higher spirits than before. The hour quickly rolled away; and Granby, much lightened of his previous winnings, took his leave of them for the evening.

He called upon Tyrrel the next day, and something being said about his new acquaintance, and particularly the obliging Mr. Althorp. 'Oh, ay – Althorp,' said Tyrrel, carelessly – 'what do you think of him? A quiet simple creature – isn't he? He'll never set the Thames on fire; but he is as good a fellow as ever breathed. Oh, you'll like him amazingly.'

‘Perhaps,’ said Granby, doubtingly, ‘I may upon farther^a acquaintance.’

‘What! don’t you like him already,’ said Tyrrel. ‘Gad! you surprise me. Everybody likes Jack Althorp.’

‘I dare say I am to blame,’ said Granby, ‘in not liking him more than I do. But you know my acquaintance with him has been very slight.’

‘True, so it has, and I hope you will improve it.’

‘Certainly; upon your recommendation.’

‘Oh, I don’t press you – remember that;^b I only thought you would like to know him.’

‘I shall be very glad, as a friend of yours. Perhaps, you can give me his address.’

‘I can,’ said Tyrrel, and immediately wrote it upon a card. ‘There’s^c his address – but – no – nothing – there it is. You need not call for a day or two.’

Granby observed his hesitation, and was rather surprised, but took no notice, and so they parted.

CHAP. XXI.

L'on confie son secret dans l'amitié; mais il échappe dans l'amour.¹⁶⁹

LA BRUYERE.

IT is not to be supposed, that since the meeting with Caroline at Mrs. Henley's, Granby's mind had not frequently dwelt upon that event. He often recounted to himself every circumstance, even the most trivial, by which her manner was then characterized; and he laboured to draw from these slender materials some judgment of the state of her feelings. He was deeply plunged in this interesting study, and was aiding his meditations with the long-treasured lock of her hair, which lay on the table before him, when Tyrrel's step was heard upon the stairs, and he had scarcely time to cram it hastily into his pocket, between the leaves of his pocket-book, before the door was thrown open, and his visitor entered.

After talking some little time about the other day's Levee, Eton Montem,¹⁷⁰ state of the odds for the Derby and Oaks,¹⁷¹ a trotting-match on the Richmond road, and sundry other topics of the day, he came to the real purport of his visit, and asked Granby if he had yet called upon Mr. Althorp. Granby had not.

'Then you need not; he is out of town. By the bye, I gave you a wrong address; will you give it me again?'

'I shall make no use of it, if it is a wrong one; but do you want the card again?'

'Yes – yes, give it me,' said Tyrrel, impatiently; 'where is it? Of course you can find it. I remember you put it into your pocket-book; just see if it is not there.'

Granby took out his pocket-book, opened it, found the card, and delivered it; and at that unlucky moment the lock of hair, which he had slid in, he did not know where, between the leaves, dropped out, and fell on the ground.

'A prize, by Jove!' said Tyrrel, seizing it; 'a lock of hair, and a woman's too; nay – keep off – as I have got it, I'll see it;' retreating all the while with the lock.

'Pshaw, nonsense! Tyrrel, what can you want with it! come, give it back.'

'Not till I've looked at it – I dare say the name is in the paper.'

'You will not find it.'

‘No more I can, so I’ll trouble you to tell it me.’

‘Tell you! not I.’

‘You won’t?’

‘Certainly not.’

‘Hem, hem – it is so, is it?’ said Tyrrel. ‘You are troubled with delicacies on that head? Come, I’ll guess, to break the ice. I think I know the sort of person; some damsel, retired from the cares of the world, in a snug white house, with venetian blinds, an easy mile or two out of town.’

Henry indignantly repelled the charge.

‘Aye, that’s right – look properly shocked; but you know, my fine fellow, honest people will make strange guesses, if gay Lotharios, like yourself, carry locks of hair in their pocket-books, and are so shy of accounting for them.’

‘I am not obliged to account for them to any one; but I’ll thank you, notwithstanding, to be less free in your reflections upon the lady whose hair it is.’

‘I humbly beg the incognito’s^a pardon, with all my heart and soul,’ said Tyrrel; ‘but since it is a modest flame, I think that, without any prejudice to your prospects, you might contrive to gratify my innocent wish for information. So, who is your fair friend?’

‘I don’t mean to tell you. Come, return it.’

‘Softly, Sir, another look. If you won’t tell me, I shall try to guess.’

‘It is to no purpose.’

‘Is it not? Let me see – I have it, Granby. Five to one I name the *winning* one. It is Miss Jermyn. Ha! I’m right! It is – it actually is; you have not the face to deny it.’

It was with some reason he said this; for his unexpectedly lucky guess seemed at once to electrify Granby, who hastily restored the hair in silence to the pocket-book, and did not attempt even the faintest denial; while Tyrrel rubbed his hands with triumphant glee, and freely indulged in long and loud laughter.

‘And pray, sweet Sir,’ continued he, ‘allow me to ask, how long have you carried this costly relic? and how was the rape of the lock contrived? – was it a free gift, or a case of lover’s larceny? and was it ‘stolen from the person,’ and ‘in a dwelling-house,’ or gratefully tendered in the open air, embowered with myrtle, in the presence of a conscious bed of heartease?’

‘You are asking an infinity of questions, not one of which will have any answer.’

‘Never mind, I can fancy it all. You first carried her work-box by storm, and secured the scissors; then you introduced the subject with a satire on hair-dressers, or said something *à propos*^b of ringlets; then talked of love-locks, and ‘absence,’ and ‘lasting memorials;’ and then

you made bold to insinuate your request – beating the devil’s tattoo all the while with your foot, and looking, I warrant you, any way but the right; and then, after reasonable delay, she cut off the lock with her own fair hands, and you received it on one knee, after the manner of the ancients, and she gave you the tip of her finger to kiss; and then –’

‘No more of this, for heaven’s sake; I cannot bear much more provocation, so quit the subject –’

‘– And the room, eh? Neither, by your leave,’ throwing himself into an arm-chair; ‘I have a deal of curiosity to satisfy, and I don’t mean to quit this chair ’till I have heard both the long and the short of this affair of yours. But, really, Granby, I had no suspicion of this at all: and yet, now I know it, I can call to mind some things that passed the other night, that I could not account for at the time. I remember you looked as if you could have stabbed me, when I only observed that the ladies had *cut* you. And then, Lady Jermyn – I remember her face; warm and friendly, wasn’t she? very ingratiating in her manner, eh?’

‘It is past now; it does not signify what she was.’

‘Oh no, not at all; but I think I begin to understand. The old she dragon guards the fruit a little too closely – eh? doesn’t she? Well, well, it is a nice little golden pippin, really, and well worth the watching, and the gathering too, my boy; and, if you are bent on a “lass wi’ a tocher,”¹⁷² I don’t see how you can choose much better.’

‘Your imagination is really very active; it is a pity to check such flights of fancy; but I must take the liberty to remind you, that you are making up a story that has not been supported by a single syllable from me.’

‘No, certainly, to do you justice, you have been confoundedly uncommunicative; you have said nothing, I verily believe, that might not be trumpeted at Charing-Cross. But you have denied nothing – remember that; and “silence gives consent,” you know; so spare yourself the trouble of explaining it away; my mind is made up; I see it all; and I’ll leave you at parting an old saw to work upon: “Faint heart never won fair lady.” So, my dear fellow,’ (slapping him on the shoulder) ‘as this is the crisis of your fate, be advised by a friend in need; adjust your thoughts and your hair, your speech^a and your cravat; and then^b rise, go forth, and propose yourself.’

‘Enough of this, in all conscience, Tyrrel,’ said Granby, impatiently.

‘Or if,’ continued the other, without noticing his manner, ‘you cannot pluck up courage, intrust it to me, and I’ll engage to propose for you.’

‘You had better propose on your own account,’ said Granby, in an ironical tone.

‘You advise me, do you?’

‘Oh, certainly; and set about it while you think of it.’

'Very well; adieu,' said Tyrrel, taking up his hat.

'Stay one, instant Tyrrel,' said Granby, who began to consider that as his companion was now in possession of the secret, it became desirable to treat with him for the safe custody. 'Stop one instant.'

'Why what's in the wind now?'

'I must request,' pursued Granby, seriously, 'that you will never mention to any person what has passed between us this morning.'

'Well!' said Tyrrel, shaking him heartily by the hand, 'I *will* promise truly and faithfully – subscribe to articles in writing – do anything in the world to comfort you. Will you have my promise under hand and seal?'

'No, of course not. Give me your word.'

'Well then; stay, let me rehearse. What have I engaged to do? To keep inviolably secret your possession of a lock of hair, once the property of Miss. Jermyn, and to conceal your unhappy attachment to the said Miss Jermyn, even, I suppose, from the lady herself.'

Granby smiled and nodded assent.

'But I do not see,' pursued Tyrrel, 'after all, why you are so anxious about it. If the world were to know of the gift, it might be supposed to have been received and kept by you without any serious meaning on either side.'

'I made a promise at the time,' said Granby, 'that it never should be seen or mentioned, and that is the reason I make such a point of exacting this secrecy.'

'That explains it perfectly,' said Tyrrel; 'and now, after all the nonsense that I have been talking, let me tell you plainly and simply before I go, that this discovery gives me great pleasure – that I congratulate you upon your situation – and that you have my best wishes for a happy arrangement.' Having said this with great friendship and sincerity of manner, he took up his hat and left him.

Granby was much mortified by this little discovery. His cousin's raillery had acted powerfully upon his galled feelings; and though much comforted by his promise of secrecy,^a and the softened tone with which he left him, the vexation long continued, and he frequently recurred to the untoward accident which revealed his secret. However, he bore the evil as well as he was able, and as he could not help what had happened, he resolved to think no more about it. His principal object was a second meeting with the Jermyns. The first, but for the parting smile of Caroline, would have left no feeling but disappointment; and even with that, it was barely consolatory. Besides, as no conversation had yet passed, he felt that the ice was scarcely broken, and the awkwardness of a first meeting by no means satisfactorily removed. Thus circumstanced, he evidently^b longed for a

second opportunity of seeing them, and internally resolved, that when such might occur, it should not pass like the first in silence.

But day succeeded day, and the wished-for opportunity never came; and for almost a fortnight did Henry Granby industriously frequent every likely place of public resort, without seeing the only face he cared to meet. He could not account for this. Perhaps she was unwell. Perhaps she was out of town. No, that was not probable. They had but lately come up; and he read in a morning paper, in the report of the debates, the gratifying assurance that^a 'Sir T. Jermyn supported the Bill, and expressed his entire concurrence with the sentiments of the last speaker;' it was therefore plain that he was still in town.

END OF VOL. I.



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GRANBY.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1826.



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GRANBY.

CHAP. I

Passions are likened best to floods and streams;
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb;
So when affections yield discourse, it seems
The bottom is but shallow whence they come.
They that are rich in words must needs discover
They are but poor in that which makes a lover.¹

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

AMONG other places of resort where it was probable he might meet the Jermyns, Granby went one morning to the Exhibition at Somerset-house.² He found there, as usual, a motley crowd of spectators; many of them listless and uninterested; some appearing to have no object in coming, except that blind, gregarious feeling which always prompts them to follow the crowd; others probably drawn thither by some such pressing motive as to look at Mrs. A's likeness, or the plaster cast of Mr. B; while here and there was an occasional connoisseur, who, by right of a recent walk in the Vatican, went 'pishing' and 'pshawing' his way through the room, in utter contempt of British art.

The sight of a large assemblage of pictures is a fatiguing pleasure, and cannot be enjoyed for a long time at once, with unabated zeal, even by the most ardent; and Granby soon began to feel that painful weariness which generally comes on after an hour's survey of an exhibition-room, and^a was just turning over for the last time the leaves of his catalogue, when his eye was caught by 'Portrait of Miss Jermyn, J. Jackson R. A.'³ – which picture he had somehow or other unaccountably missed.

Here was an object – an interesting one; and, forgetting his fatigue, he went in search of it, and was soon successful. The portrait was extremely like; preserving much of the simple grace of the original, and agreeably set off by the artist's somewhat peculiar, yet pleasing colouring. The expression was slightly smiling; her eyes, as he stood before it, seemed turned upon him, and the smile on her countenance forcibly recalled her last look at Mrs. Henley's. Debarred as he was

from the sight of the original, he could not refuse himself the pleasure of gazing on this attractive representation, and looking earnestly on features which in no other way could he now so freely contemplate. Wrapt in this pleasing meditation, he did not at first perceive that he was obstructing the view of two ladies who stood behind him. He turned round to quit his station, and afford them an opportunity of seeing, when he found, to his no small embarrassment and surprise, that the objects of his civility were no other than Lady Jermyn and her daughter.

Their surprise was as great as his own; for as his back was turned towards them, and their attention otherwise engaged, they had not recognised him until that moment. All the peculiarities of the rencontre rushed upon Granby's mind at once. He saw that they must have been witnesses of his fixed attention to the picture – that silent but eloquent indication of his feelings; and this thought at the moment tended rather to confuse than gratify.

The same thought occurred to Caroline, who drew back and blushed at this indirect homage, and after the^a bow of recognition, tried to gaze at the objects around her.

Lady Jermyn, to her credit be it spoken, conducted herself at this trying moment with equal judgment and address. She dexterously subdued her demonstrations of surprise, and contrived (which in such a case was of all things the most difficult,) to look neither pleased nor mortified at the meeting, but to mould her features into an expression of civil indifference. It also struck her, that the civility of moving from before her, though slight, and not paid personally to her, could not with propriety pass unnoticed; she was therefore the first to speak. A subject, though a dangerous one, was ready at hand in Caroline's picture, and with seeming unconcern she boldly adverted to it.

'A good picture, Mr. Granby,' said she.

'A very good picture,' was his reply.

'And like,' she added, in a steadier tone than, considering the subject and the person addressed, might have been expected.

A complimentary denial, and something about not doing justice, lay ready for utterance upon Granby's lips; but prudence and good taste suppressed this piece of idle gallantry, and substituted a quiet acquiescence in the truth of her remark. Lady Jermyn then made a slight movement, as if to pass onward, and put an end to the conversation; but Granby stopped her with an enquiry after Sir Thomas Jermyn.

'Quite well, I am obliged to you; he came with us here; but he has gone over the way to the stamp-office.'⁴

Granby ventured to say that he was sorry to have missed this opportunity of seeing him; but it was said not only faintly, but with coldness and restraint, and secured no other answer than a formal

inclination of the head. A lady, acquainted with Lady Jermyn, now came up and spoke to her; and Granby took this opportunity of addressing Caroline for the first time. No topic appeared so safe and obvious as the present scene, and a few common place^a questions and answers passed between them on the subject of the exhibition. But their minds were too full of other things to talk freely upon such a topic. It did not interest either of them, and they felt that it was introduced merely as an opening to other conversation; and after having forced themselves to utter a few trite remarks, they dropped it by mutual consent.

'I think,' said Granby, 'it was at Mrs. Henley's that I last had the pleasure of seeing you; it was a pleasant ball.'

'It was indeed,' said she, and blushed as soon as she had uttered it, for she recollected that it was there she first met him. She hastily added, 'that is – I mean – it was a good ball.' Granby would not appear to notice the correction, but added, 'You are no enemy^b to the gaieties of town.'

'Certainly not,' she said with a faint smile, and in a more assured tone. 'Indeed at present their novelty alone would make me like them.'

'I believe,' said Granby, 'novelty is their best friend; for I think we find, that^c upon the whole, society in the country is more agreeable.'

Caroline assented, but looked confused, and Granby's countenance soon presented in some degree the reflection of her own. Society in the country brought its separate associations to the minds of each. Caroline thought of the visit to Hemingsworth, and Granby of the last days he had passed in her company at Brackingsley. He therefore returned to society in London.

'You have hardly been out, I believe, since I had the pleasure of meeting you at the ball we were speaking of.'

'No, I have not indeed,' said she, 'but I should not have thought you would have observed it. – I mean,' she added, and again coloured slightly, fearing lest her meaning should be wrongly taken, – 'I mean to say, that in so extensive a place as London, the absence and presence of any one can be observed but by very few.'

'Except in some cases,' said Granby, with a smile. 'But you *have* been absent from society, you say? Not, I hope, on account of illness?'

He said this in a tone of livelier interest than he had yet hazarded in his short interview. It caught the quick ear of Lady Jermyn, who, not suffering Caroline to answer, interposed with, –

'A cold, Mr. Granby, merely a cold – colds have been very prevalent lately – everybody seems to have them. – By the bye, my dear, you had better move – you are standing now in a draft of air;' and, drawing her daughter's arm within her own, she walked away, with a bow to Granby, which civilly intimated that he was not to follow.

Thus ended the long-expected interview – the first in which they had actually conversed. He had long looked forward to it, as an event on which his fate depended, and which would decide the progress of his fortunes. It was now past, and it had decided – absolutely nothing. In fact, as he afterwards thought, how should it? and how was it likely that either party should plunge at once into embarrassing explanations? When all was over, he was angry at himself for having pre-imagined scenes and conversations which were never likely to take place, and for thereby preparing for himself a great deal of needless disappointment.

Still there were some points of negative import^a to be gathered from the recent scene, which were not totally without their value. There was no avoidance on the part of Lady Jermyn, and no displeasure on that of Caroline; but there was in its stead a good deal of embarrassment, which, if he pleased he might construe favourably.

These thoughts came across his mind, as he watched them quickly pursuing their way towards the staircase. Some young man accosted them as they were turning out of sight, and seemed to offer to accompany them to their carriage. He looked like Courtenay; but then Courtenay, as Granby thought, was not acquainted with them; and he stood puzzling about the identity, (every thing relating to them being to him a subject of interest) when Courtenay came up to him, and told him he had just parted from the Jermyns, with whom he had become acquainted at a dinner party the day before – called Lady Jermyn a good-natured woman – and added a long and acceptable enumeration of Caroline's attractive qualities.

Granby was glad to find that his friend had become acquainted with them, and that he seemed disposed to improve this acquaintance. Cut off from personal intercourse with the Jermyns, he wished to communicate with them through a friend, and he thought, with some reason, that he might find in Courtenay a zealous advocate, and perhaps an useful ally in the work of reconciliation. But the same reserve which had hitherto restrained him from betraying his sentiments to Mrs. Dormer, now induced him to guard them with equal secrecy from his friend Courtenay. He therefore assumed a tone of indifference in mentioning their names, and disguised, as well as he could, the interest with which he listened to Courtenay's remarks. In this line of conduct he so well succeeded, that Courtenay was not only kept in ignorance of his attachment to Miss Jermyn, but was even inclined to accuse him of a want of taste, in being so insensible to her many attractions.

CHAP. II.

Give me more love or more disdain;
The torrid or the frigid zone;
Bring equal ease unto my pain:
The temperate affords me none.
Either extreme of love or hate
Is sweeter than a calm estate.⁵

CAREW.

HENRY met Lady Jermyn and Caroline the night after his visit to Somerset-House, at Lady Charleville's where three weeks before he had missed seeing them, through the singular mistake which has already been mentioned. Whether or not Caroline entertained the notion that he had purposely avoided her on that night, Granby could not tell, but he intended, at all events, to explain the circumstance to her this evening.

He had not been long in the room before he saw Lady Jermyn and her daughter, at no great distance from him. They were not, however, within speaking distance; and he had leisure to compare his former agitation with his present composure, and to be agreeably sensible that the few words which had passed between them at the Exhibition, had considerably removed all former difficulties, and paved the way to a more unembarrassed and familiar intercourse. He felt as if he could now meet them with a pleasure less alloyed by anxiety and doubt. At this moment he caught their eyes, and bowed. The bow was graciously returned by both; but so unreasonable was he become already, that with this very graciousness he was inclined to quarrel. He thought there was too much forced civility in the inclination of Caroline's head; and besides, there was no emotion on seeing him – no rising colour – no indication of embarrassment; and though he had been congratulating himself on the increased calmness of his own feelings, he was not willing that she should share the same advantage.

But all these thoughts gave way to pleasure; for in a few minutes he saw them approaching – actually approaching, of their own accord. He had lately been suspecting them of wishing to avoid him. How unjust had he been! Here was, indeed an opening for reconciliation – an opening voluntarily offered by them. He felt much pleased, and was about to extend his hand to Lady Jermyn, who led the way, and to catch the first friendly glance of her eye, when he saw it fixed, not, alas! on him, but either on vacancy, or on some person immediately

behind him. Never did high hopes fall more suddenly! she sailed by him with cruel composure – seemed quite indifferent to his presence – and, as he fell back to let her pass, acknowledged the civility with another bend, and a cold ‘how d’ye do,’ and drew her daughter after her.

Caroline, meanwhile, quietly and composedly turned her face towards him, steadily uttered the usual greeting, bowed again, and slightly smiled. But, what a smile! cold, forced, insipid, unmeaning, and how different from her last! He was instantly struck by the contrast: her former heartfelt, beaming expression flashed across his recollection, as he viewed the present stiff and studied cast of her features; and, however well it might be intended, in all her present demeanor towards him, nothing pained him like that smile; it seemed to poison his recollections of the first, and with a momentary feeling of strong disappointment, he actually turned his face away. Many bitter thoughts crowded on his mind. He sadly contrasted her present cold civility with the natural emotion and conscious delicacy expressed in her manner on the preceding day; while, at the same time, he wondered at his own change of feeling, in being now so pained at a reception, from which, a fortnight thence,^a he would have drawn the happiest auguries.

On turning, after this mental soliloquy, he saw them still at a short distance from him; but he made no effort to approach. He was suddenly chilled into cautious reserve; and, instead of following them, he stood with an assumed air of unconcern, his eyes directed towards the dancers, beating time with his fingers on the breast of his coat, to a waltz which the band were then playing. He afterwards walked about the rooms, endeavouring to join in the gaiety around, but, in reality, in a state of comfortless apathy towards every object save one, and that object now a painful one; utterly at variance both with himself and the scene around him, yet under the influence of a sort of fascination which would not permit him to quit it.

He frequently passed Lady Jermyn and Caroline in the course of the evening; but as the first salutation was over, they generally allowed him to pass unnoticed; only once again did Lady Jermyn speak, and then her remark was a mere reiteration of the hackneyed comment on the fullness of the ball. With Caroline he had no conversation: she did not seem to wish it; her eye seldom met his, but when it did, it bore a dull, disheartening, lack-lustre expression, in which he could read nothing but indifference. He watched her countenance, as often as he could do so unobserved, while in conversation with her various partners; and many a pang did it cost him to perceive that the features, which stiffened into formality when met by his, could

brighten up into careless gaiety at the trivial address of the acquaintance of an hour.

‘Tis well,’ he muttered to himself, ‘I know my footing now at last, and the estimation in which I am held. The prating puppy, who has just made his first bow to her, is more acceptable than I am – is listened to with greater interest – is looked upon with greater pleasure. Fool that I was, to fancy I was anything to her! – to receive her girlish surprise as the index of real affection! No, I am an object of indifference to her; and she, if possible, must be the same to me.’

Caroline at this time was standing up in a quadrille, and talking and listening, with apparent interest, to the gentleman with whom she was dancing. Granby saw her, and drew near, probably with some design of putting her indifference to the test. The effect of his approach was marked and immediate: she did not look at him, or attempt to break off the conversation; but the smile with which she listened to her partner lost all its character of ease and gaiety, and became in an instant fixed and unnatural. The attitude of attention was still presented,^a but it was plain that, even if she heard the words, their sense at all events was lost. And yet she had not the air of absence; the countenance bore too restless an expression; she was intently occupied with something, but certainly not with the person who addressed her. This did not escape that gentleman’s observation – for, after a surprised and inquiring look, he ceased to speak.

Granby noted all that passed, and was brought back to the happy conviction, that Caroline had that evening assumed an indifference which she did not feel. He was satisfied with this conclusion, and having no farther object, left the house. A faint grey light through the window-blinds, indicating the fast approach of the unbewitching hour of morn, warned Lady Jermyn also to depart.

‘You have behaved admirably indeed, my love,’ said her Ladyship, after drawing up the glass of her carriage, on their way home; ‘you have been very attentive to what I said.’

Caroline answered only with a sigh.

‘Are you tired, Caroline?’ said her mother.

‘Not much,’ was her faint reply; and the rest of the drive was passed in silence.

Perhaps our readers may be curious to know what Lady Jermyn did say; and on this account, and in order to explain the conduct of Caroline, we will lay before them the following conversation, which had taken place in the course of the preceding morning.

‘You know, my love,’ said Lady Jermyn, ‘that, under all circumstances, considering General Granby’s behaviour to your father, and some other things that I could mention, though we should be very sorry, on account of their relationship, not to be upon speaking terms,

– yet a certain line must be drawn; and it really is a duty we owe to ourselves, to show in some degree, by our manner, that we were not quite pleased at what has happened. I only say this to you, my love, in order to explain to you (which I have never done sufficiently yet,) the sort of manner which it will be proper to adopt towards Mr. Granby, now that we are in the prospect of meeting him daily. I never would behave with the slightest incivility; we^a should never give offence if we can help it; but I need not say this to you, my love, who never give offence to any one. Therefore, with respect to Mr. Granby, I would not have you do anything to hurt him; but merely treat him as a common acquaintance, and keep out of his way as well as you can; and do not talk to him more than is necessary. You understand me, Caroline.’

‘Yes, Mamma, I understand what you mean, and I will try to act accordingly. I will endeavour to avoid him.’

‘True, my love, but understand me. I don’t wish you positively to *avoid* him. I would not go away, for instance, if I saw him coming, or even turn my head that I might not see him as he passed. That would be too *broad* and marked. People might notice it. It would look *particular*. We should never do any thing that looks *particular*. No, I would answer him civilly and composedly whenever he spoke to me, and then pass on, just as you might in the case of anybody else. But I leave all this to your own tact and discretion, of which nobody has more for her age. I am sure you can enter into all these niceties, and that my observations will not be lost upon you. And now, my love, let me mention another thing. You must get over that little embarrassment which I see you show whenever you meet him. It was very natural and excusable the first time, considering our long acquaintance with him and the General: but we must make our conduct conform to circumstances; so try to get the better of this little flutter; it does not look well, and might be observed. There is no quality more valuable in a young person than self-possession. So you must keep down these blushes,’ said she, patting her on the cheek, ‘or I believe I must rouge you; – though it would be a thousand pities, with the pretty natural colour you have. But you must remember what I have been saying. Be more composed in your behaviour. Try to adopt the manner which I do. It may be difficult; but you see I contrive it, and I have known Mr. Granby a great deal longer than you have, Caroline.’

‘Yes, Mamma, but –’

‘But what?’ said Lady Jermyn; ‘there is a difference in our ages, you mean. Certainly, my love, I can make those allowances. I do not expect the same degree of conduct from a young person as from those who are older. I am the more particular in these directions, because I should be sorry, and so would your father, to have the world suppose that there is any serious quarrel between ourselves and the Granbys. We

might in that case be obliged to enter into explanations, which had always better be avoided. No, my dear, let us preserve all proper decorum. And, besides, I am the more desirous of maintaining a guarded, distant manner, because, from our old acquaintance, and the regard we once felt for them, we should always wish to preserve some sort of intercourse; – and yet any renewal of former intimacy,' she added, with a significant nod, 'would lead^a to a positive rupture.'

This concluding observation had more weight in Caroline's mind than any which had gone before it; and she determined to school herself to a strict conformity with her mother's directions.

Lady Jermyn saw the effect of her last remark; and, like an able orator, forbore to weaken its impression by following it up with less cogent arguments. It was part of her policy, as the above conversation will in some degree have shown, to assume an ignorance of Caroline's feelings towards Granby, and to take it for granted that the attachment was entirely on his side, and that Caroline regarded him merely with that sentiment of sober friendship which is due to an old acquaintance. Under this veil she was able to say many things to her daughter, which, without the cloak of such convenient blindness, mutual consciousness would have rendered difficult. She was like a person, who in order to see the better, throws the shadow on his own face, while he turns the light to the object before him. Meanwhile she was as perfectly acquainted with all that passed in her daughter's mind, as the fullest confession could have made her; and it was part of her system, never to extort a confidence when she could learn the truth without it.

CHAP. III.

Come then the colours and the ground prepare,
Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air;
Choose a firm cloud before it falls, and in it
Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of the minute.⁶ – POPE.

GRANBY saw Lady Jermyn and Caroline, after this, on several successive nights, at various places. But there was no favourable alteration in their manner, from that which had given him so much uneasiness at Lady Charleville's. They neither sought nor avoided him; neither frowned nor smiled, nor even testified, by word, look, or action, that his presence conveyed to them the slightest portion either of pain or pleasure. Caroline had even learned to attend to what was said to her when he was near; and Granby found, to his mortification, that succeeding experiments of this nature did not answer so well as the first. Frequently did he writhe, in mental torment, under this treatment, which he now found to be, of all others, the most intolerable. To have been shunned and frowned upon had been happiness in comparison with the galling infliction of indifference and neglect. He had intended at Lady Charleville's to ask Caroline to dance; but her altered manner took from him the power, and even the wish, of making that request. Since that time he had meditated the same again; but a turbulent current of wayward feeling had borne down his half-formed purpose. He now sedulously stood apart whenever he saw her disengaged, and enjoyed a gloomy satisfaction in secret applause of his self-denying firmness. He would stand and view her joining in the dance with a light step, and a heart, for aught he knew, as light; her hand, perhaps the property of one whom a casual introduction had lately made known to her; while he, the early companion of her youth, devoted with an affection which was almost pledged, was debarred from privileges which the merest stranger claimed, and obtained without a scruple.

'But, I am a fool,' said he, 'to pursue these thoughts, and torment myself with vain regrets. Why cannot I bear a brow as calm, and a spirit as light as she does? Yes,' he said, with a bitter smile, 'I will learn to profit by her example. I too will be indifferent in my turn. She can receive with easy gaiety the attentions of others; and mine shall not needlessly be reserved for her. She shall see that there are sufficient attractions to engage them elsewhere.'

Thus in a jealous moment of pique did he form a plan of retaliation, and hastily resolved to dedicate his notice to other beauties. Nor had he long to seek for objects. An admirable ally presented herself, in the person of the fascinating, the fashionable, the all-observed, and much admired Miss Darrell; a lady, to whom admiration was considered a duty, and by whom a slight exercise of vanity might have suggested to our hero that he himself was distinguished in his turn.

Miss Darrell was not strictly a beauty. She had not, as was frequently observed by her female friends, and unwillingly admitted by her male admirers, a single truly good feature in her face. But who could quarrel with the *tout ensemble*? who but must be dazzled with the graceful animation with which those features were lighted up? Let critics hesitate to pronounce her beautiful: at any rate, they must allow her to be fascinating. Place a perfect stranger in a crowded assembly, and she would first attract his eye; correcter beauties would pass unnoticed, and his first attention would be rivetted^a by her. She was all brilliancy and effect; but it were hard to say she studied it; so little did her spontaneous, airy graces convey the impression of premeditated practice. She was a sparkling tissue of little affectations, which, however, appeared so interwoven with herself, that their seeming artlessness disarmed one's censure. Strip them away, and you destroyed at once the brilliant being that so much attracted you. It^b thus became difficult to condemn what you felt unable, and, indeed, unwilling to remove. With positive affectation, malevolence itself could rarely charge her; and prudish censure seldom exceeded the guarded limits of a dry remark, that Miss Darrell had 'a good deal of *manner*.'

Eclat she sought, and gained. Indeed, she was both formed to gain it, and disposed to desire it. But she required an extensive sphere. A ball-room was her true arena; for she waltzed '*à ravir*,'⁷ and could talk enchantingly about nothing. She was devoted to fashion, and all its fickleness, and went to the extreme whenever she could do so consistently with grace. But she aspired to be a leader as well as a follower; seldom, if ever, adopted a mode that was unbecoming to herself, and dressed to suit the genius of her face.

Miss Darrell had many imitators of her air and attire; many who sedulously strove to copy the turn of her head, the tone of her laugh, the fall of her ringlets, the pretty dangle of her arms, and her soft slipshod gliding step; nay, who were eager to adopt her judgment even in the fancy of a ribbon, and teased Mademoiselle Maradon⁸ to give their dresses the graceful, becoming *sit* of her's. But the imitations generally failed. They were either too broad or too faint. They gave a coarse, ungraceful caricature, or a resemblance so imperfect, that no one probably ever suspected it.

Failure is a fate which second-hand graces generally incur, and invariably deserve. But here the disgrace was less in the failure than in the attempt. It was no easy task to present a transcript of Miss Darrell. Her's were rainbow tints – bright, gay, evanescent – beautiful while they lasted, but ever flickering and changeable. She perplexed with elegant contrarities; and few of her would-be personators had skill to 'catch ere she changed the Cynthia of the minute.'

This flattery Miss Darrell amply repaid in warm commendations of her followers. Almost all her female acquaintance were 'loves,' 'dear creatures,' 'perfect angels.' She hated petty jealous detraction, and the depreciating spirit of many of her sex. With an air of fearless superiority, which seemed to laugh at the idea of rivalry, she poured forth an elegant current of eulogium. But art still lurked beneath this amiable burst of feeling. Frequently did she utter praises that were not meant to be cordially received; and recommended persons for precisely those qualities which were least discernible in them. She thereby secured to herself the credit of that amiable quick-sightedness which discovers merits imperceptible to others, while she enjoyed the incredulous looks of her hearers, and possessed the satisfaction of exciting the censure of those very rivals, whom, with such *well meaning* earnestness she affected to defend.

'How strikingly handsome Miss Jermyn is?'^a said she to Henry, one evening at Almack's. 'Don't you think so?'

Now, Caroline's style of beauty was rather of that description which comes under the term 'loveliness,' than of that regular and imposing kind to which the word 'handsome' is generally applied. Granby was disposed to be cautious on such a subject, and thought he might safely plead a slight difference of opinion.

'I think her very pretty,' said he, 'and she certainly has a remarkably pleasing expression.'

'No, no, no,' said Miss Darrell, with a^b playful positiveness. 'You shall not come off in that way – I know you want to pull her to pieces.'

'I thought I was praising her,' said Granby, with a smile.

'Oh yes – delightfully indeed! Calling her pretty – merely pretty! and then to say that she had 'a pleasing expression!' just what one says of good-humoured ugly people, that one cannot find any other way of praising. No, no, I'll not have you talk in that way of Miss Jermyn.'

'But I really do think that she is pretty, rather than handsome.'

'No, Mr. Granby, that will not do. Handsome, or nothing,' said Miss Darrell. 'I don't like the idea of prettiness – it sounds so inferior! I wonder you can apply it to her. But you are a sad depreciating person. Now, confess that you are. You must be aware that you are not doing poor Miss Jermyn proper justice.'

‘Of that I will not pretend to judge. But I think she can hardly fail to have justice done her, with such an eloquent advocate as yourself.’

‘I suspect that is only a civil way of saying that I do her more than justice. I believe, after all, if you would but allow it, you mean to say you think her plain.’

‘No, upon my honour.’

‘Now don’t say upon your honour, because if you do I shall not believe you. But do tell me your honest opinion. Is not she extremely clever? Don’t you think she has a very sensible, keen, acute look?’

‘Yes, sensible; but it does not strike me as keen or acute.’

‘Oh! there again. Poor Miss Jermyn! I know exactly what you mean. You think that she has very fair common sense, but none of an exalted kind.’

‘I did not make that distinction in my own mind. I think her very sensible.’

‘Oh, ay – sensible – that is to say, not quite a simpleton. Oh, I am sure by her countenance she must be clever. I could even fancy her blue – a beautiful light^a blue.’

‘No, no – she is not blue.’

‘I see you won’t allow her to be anything. You are as liberal to her mind as you were to her person, and you fine down her good qualities so dexterously – you are really quite a male Mrs. Candour.’⁹

Henry bowed and smiled, partly at the charge, and partly at the reflection that the character she applied to him was much more applicable to herself. He then broke off the conversation by asking her to waltz again.

‘No, not yet,’ said she, with a playful air of peevishness, ‘they are playing that odious stop waltz. I hate dancing without music. Ah – there – you are going to remonstrate; and a remonstrance is worse than a stop waltz; so I think I shall cut it short and comply.’

CHAP. IV.

Il semble que s'il y a un souçon injuste, bizarre, et sans fondement, qu'on ait une fois appelé jalousie, cette autre jalousie que est un sentiment juste, naturel, fondé en raison, et sur l'expérience, méritoit un autre nom.¹⁰

LA BRUYERE.

To the young lady introduced to the reader in our last chapter, Henry Granby now began to pay considerable attention. He waltzed with her frequently; talked to her with great gaiety and apparent interest; hovered about her seat, and edged himself into the corner that was honoured with her presence; and sometimes tried by conversation to withdraw her allegiance from her rightful partner for the time being. Never did they pass in a crowded party, though for the fiftieth time that night, but some remark, either sportive, or enigmatical to all but themselves, took place between them. Whether in the passing throng, or on the upper landing-place, or in the comparative retirement of the inner saloon, flirtation was equally active.

But with all this, there was no feeling in Granby's breast towards Miss Darrell, that ever approached the nature of love. He was entertained, and perhaps dazzled; and he thought it a favourable indication of his taste to admire one whom all admired, and was rather pleased to swell the train of a lady of such high fashionable pretensions. But these thoughts interfered not with his attachment to Caroline; they were mixed with no sentiments of disloyalty to her. There was such an essential difference in his eyes between her and Miss Darrell, that their images could never clash. He knew not how to make a comparison between them; and as to their contesting a place in his affections, the idea was far too strange and improbable to enter his mind for a single moment. He seemed, as it were, to be merely amusing himself with the evolutions of a showy divertisement, between the acts of an interesting opera.

There was also some excuse for his seeming apostacy, in the consideration that he was met by the attractions of warmth and animation, at the very time that he was deeply wounded by the coldness of another. Miss Darrell, who in fact cared very little for her admirers, probably preferred our hero to any of them. The inferiority in rank and wealth she did not take into her account. She was too volatile for mercenary, or even for ambitious views, and did not weigh her partner in the scales of an establishment-hunter. Fashion, agreeableness, and

a good exterior, were all she troubled her head about. She could vouch for Granby's possession of the two latter; and as for the former, though he was not one of the very select, yet he was sufficiently seen in good society to be at all times a creditable captive.

Granby had all along a hope that his devotion to Miss Darrell might kindle some spark of jealous love (if such still lurked in Caroline's bosom) which would be favourable to his cause, by rousing her from her present indifference. But he never imagined that his homage would attract the attention of any other person. In this he was soon to be undeceived.

'Granby, how does your suit prosper?' said Courtenay to him one evening in a half whisper, after he had been talking for some time to Miss Darrell with much animation.

'What suit?' said Granby, with unassumed surprise.

'What suit!' repeated Courtenay, 'how very innocent!'

'I really don't understand you,' persisted Granby.

'No? ha! ha! that's very good – you think I don't know that you are a warm suitor of Miss Darrell.'

Granby's confusion of this unexpected charge was heightened not a little, by perceiving that Caroline was standing immediately behind him; and must have heard what passed. Of her emotion he could form no judgment, for she immediately turned her face away.

'Courtenay!' said he, 'you are talking at random.'

'Random shots don't always miss,' replied Courtenay, with a significant smile, and precluded Granby's exculpations by passing on as soon as he had said it.

His remark left a mortifying impression in Granby's mind. His eyes were unexpectedly opened to the interpretation which his conduct admitted – an interpretation, which had he ever suspected, he would certainly have been eager to remove. It was no consolatory reflection that this remark was made to him in Caroline's hearing. She was the person by whom he least wished that impression to be entertained, and from whom he was least able to remove it. He found that he had gone too far, and what was worse, he hardly knew how to remedy the mischief he had been doing.

His first measure was to undeceive Courtenay. He soon found him, and began to speak to him on the subject. 'Courtenay,' said he, with an air of earnestness, which he tried to temper with a gaiety of manner, 'I have a favour to ask of you. Don't repeat what you said to me lately.'

'And what did I say?' said Courtenay.

'You spoke as if you thought there was a serious engagement between Miss Darrell and myself.'

'No, no, pardon me there. I rise to explain. I did not say there was an engagement – I only thought there would be one.'

'There neither is, nor will be, I assure you.'

'Well – and what if there is not?'

'Why, I wish you would not talk about it, as if you thought there was.'

'! O Lord! make yourself easy; I'll be discretion itself, as you shall see. I was always famous for discretion. But pray, may I ask, is it on the lady's account, or your own, that you wish to have the report stopped?'

'On my own,' said Granby.

'Your own!' said Courtenay, with a laugh, 'and why should you wish it on your own account, unless you are engaged to some one else? But perhaps you are.'

'No,' said Granby.

'Then, my dear fellow, what can it signify? Gad! You are as coy about it as any girl of sixteen, just taxed with her first flirtation.'

'Well, well,' said Granby, 'that may be; but I have my reasons; so pray don't mention it again.'

'Certainly not; since you make such a point of it.'

'And if you should hear the same thing stated by others,' said Granby, 'I shall be obliged to you if you will contradict it.'

'Thank you – no – I'll hold my tongue. I don't like spreading false reports;' and so saying he left him.

This was not much gained; and he afterwards regretted that he had not been more urgent with Courtenay to contradict these surmises, and particularly to Miss Jermyn. But the last request he durst not utter; the less, perhaps, on account of certain feelings to which he could hardly at present give a name, arising from the increasing intimacy between Caroline and Courtenay. It was not exactly jealousy; nor did it even, at this time, amount to positive uneasiness; but he began to wonder why he should have been originally pleased at their acquaintance; and smiled a little at his former folly, in thinking that such an event could ever be productive of benefit to him.

This state of mind was not likely to be permanent. The seeds of distrust were already sown, and they must now either grow or wither. Unhappily they grew apace. A clue was furnished for the interpretation of many little trivial facts, which before had seemed to escape his notice, but which a memory that now appeared miraculously active, was continually conjuring up. He began to think that the former remark about Miss Darrell was purposely made in Caroline's hearing. Every look that passed between them now began to be intently watched. He would also gladly have listened to their conversation; but there was a meanness in this procedure to which he could not reconcile himself. He was therefore only the more industrious in studying the language of the eyes.

One evening, at a private concert, he saw in a distant part of the room Caroline seated on a sofa, while Courtenay leaned upon the back of it, intently occupied in talking to her. The crowd was thick through which he viewed them, and he had ample opportunity to inhale at leisure the subtle poison of jealousy. He saw the insinuating softness of Courtenay's manner; the pleasing smile of interest with which Caroline listened to what he said; and its still sweeter expression when she addressed him in her turn. All this he saw, and magnified, and his heart alternately burned and died within him at the sight. At length the conversation seemed to become more animated. They spoke and replied more quickly than before, and with a mingled air of gaiety and interest; – when all at once Caroline's manner showed confusion. He saw a blush deepen on her cheek, and her eyes withdrew themselves in conscious emotion. But still there was no evidence of displeasure, and Courtenay seemed to pursue his address without participating in the gentle embarrassment which he had excited. How could such signs be misinterpreted? Courtenay was evidently addressing her in the language of an avowed admirer, and his advances were not repulsed. It was too much for Granby to support. All his hitherto smothered feelings of tempestuous passion kindled at once. He turned pale with emotion; ground his teeth in a species of momentary frenzy; and crushed into the smallest possible compass a card of the performances, which he firmly, but unconsciously, grasped in his clenched hand. A moment's thought restored him to internal calmness; but it was the frightful calmness of despair. He forced himself, with a moody pleasure, to the penance of once more gazing on the unconscious pair, till the contemplation became too painful for endurance; and he then turned hastily round and left the room.

We shall now advert to the conversation which had caused an anguish so intense. Courtenay, after talking a good deal of lively nonsense, began to criticise the style of beauty of a lady whom Caroline happened to mention, and which, as they did not agree in their opinions, gave rise to a playful sort of argument. 'I think her very handsome,' said Caroline, at length, 'but it is not a feminine style of beauty. I think it is the sort of face that would look much better in a man.'

'So it would, I declare,' said Courtenay. 'It strikes me at once, now that you mention it. – And, by the bye, I will tell you who she is like – a friend of mine, whom I believe you know – Henry Granby. Don't you think so?'

This had not struck Caroline before, and by way of reply, she told him, 'No.'^a But her confusion at being detected in this indirect, unconscious commendation of Henry Granby's personal appearance, was beyond all power of concealment and control. Courtenay, owing to his

situation, and the direction of the light from a chandelier near him, did not discover that emotion which was so perceptible to the jealous eyes of Granby, and therefore quietly pursued the topic, with unaltered gaiety of manner. Such was the cause of Granby's uneasiness – such the infallible discernment of jealousy!

And what, meanwhile, was the state of Caroline's sentiments? She had long viewed with much pain, which with the passive calmness of female fortitude she struggled to conceal, Henry Granby's increasing devotion to Miss Darrell. She knew very little of that lady; but she had heard some traits, by which she was by no means prepossessed in her favour; and she fancied (though in this perhaps she was mistaken) it was a considerable aggravation of her misfortune, that Granby's affections should be transferred to one who was not worthy of his choice. Day after day did the strength of the impression of Granby's attachment to this new object, painfully increase. Courtenay's remark had opened new and fearful lights, and forcibly suggested an approaching marriage; and a fresh circumstance soon occurred that tended to confirm her in this idea.

CHAP. V.

Nous approfondirons, ainsi que la physique,
Grammaire, histoire, vers, morale, et politique.¹¹ – MOLIERE.

IT has already been mentioned that Granby was acquainted with the Duncans. On calling at their house one morning, a few days after his conversation with Courtenay on the subject of Miss Darrell, he found Lady Harriet at home. She was in her scientific vein; full of her friend Lady Wigly, and her philosophical *conversaziones*.

‘Oh, Mr. Granby,’ said she, ‘you *shall* go to Lady Wigly’s. I’ll get you a card for next Saturday. A charming woman is Lady Wigly. You’ll be much struck with her, I’m sure. She has such a powerful mind – quite of the higher order of intellect. Rather severe in her exterior – but what of that? I rather like what one may call an *angular* character – pointed, rugged, and full of asperities. And then Lady Wigly is an authoress. She has just written a pamphlet on Population – a very clever thing, I’m told, but I don’t pretend to understand the subject.’

‘And what sort of things,’ said Granby, trying to look as grave a possible, ‘are Lady Wigly’s evening parties?’

‘Delightful – delightful,’ exclaimed Lady Harriet; ‘and quite unique. There’s nothing else in London like them; not^a extensive – but very select – in a certain line. It is quite a private institution – a sort of conversational lecture.’

‘And what do you do there?’ said Granby.

‘Do? oh, a thousand things – walk about – talk – discuss – debate – criticize – experimentalize – inhale nitrous acid gas, and set potassium on fire with ice. Oh, I can’t tell you half our proceedings. Next Saturday she is to get^b up an artificial thunder-storm; and I have volunteered – (don’t tell Duncan) – I have volunteered to be struck with lightning.’

Granby complimented her upon her zeal and courage, but seriously recommended her not to attempt this kind of display of it.

‘No, no,’ said she, ‘you shall not dissuade me. If I do suffer, it is in the cause of science. There,’ said she, taking a letter out of her reticule, ‘as you have been very good, you shall read me that – the poetry only – not the prose. It is from a new correspondent. The lines are addressed to me. I have had it by me two or three days, but it seems such a shocking hand that I’ve not tried to read it yet.’

Granby contrived to puzzle it out, and was afterwards made to read it again with fluency and proper emphasis.

‘Thank you,’ said she; ‘charming – ar’nt they? Pray are you of a poetical turn?’ she added, with the air of asking the commonest question in the world.

Granby, with an assumption of similar simplicity, said that he believed he was.

‘Then I recommend this poem to you,’ said she, taking up a book that lay upon the table. ‘It is full of such lovely mystical passages – one seems to understand them, and yet one does not – and still one catches a sort of idea, which one cannot describe – one does not know why – and it comes, and goes, and comes again – and then one loses it; and – oh! it is genuine poetry – it leaves so much to the imagination. And then the metre! I do so admire it! It is not verse, and it is not prose but a charming mixture of the two. One might think it prose, if it were not for the printing. It does not go rolling steadily on, in the old heavy style, like Dryden¹² or Thomson,¹³ but seems to ebb and flow, and halt and fluctuate, just like the sentiments it conveys. The sound, you know, should always echo to the sense.’

Granby merely assented with a polite ‘yes,’ and she continued. ‘By the bye, have you seen this tragedy? You will adore the hero – he is such a grand, tempestuous character, – full of sublime energy, and a – I hardly know how to describe it – a sort of noble recklessness – and then “mysterious as a dream.” He positively hurries one away – and then there is such a majesty of guilt about him – it actually “awes one’s spirit,” as a clerical friend of mine observed. But he is not intended for a perfect character. He has his failings.’

‘Is murder one of them?’ asked Granby, seriously,^a

‘It is,’ said she.

‘And how many murders does this high-minded man commit?’

‘Three, I think – yes – three – his wife, his child, and his wife’s grandmother. But then you know it is for love of the heroine, and she is betrothed to his mortal enemy, and he tries to kill him too, and fails. – Oh, how I pitied him! Do read it – It is a noble sketch.’

A pause ensued, and Granby, not being in a talking humour, took up a volume which lay on the reading table, and was looking at the back of it. ‘Ah’ – exclaimed the lively little Blue, ‘Inesilla’ – the sweetest thing! – Did you never read it? – contains the prettiest portrait of – by the bye,’ said she, starting from one thing to another, in her wild way, ‘By the bye, talking of portraits, did I ever^b shew you one that I have of Louisa Darrell? She had it done for me at Florence. I told her I would wear it; you see,’ said she, producing it, ‘it is set so that it may be worn. I have never worn it – it is not the *mode* – but then, you know, I *might* wear it.’

She then gave it into Granby's hand, and in the transfer, a stone which formed part of the setting dropped out, and upon farther examination other parts appeared to be loose. Lady Harriet looked at it with dismay; made some severe remarks upon the slovenly Italian that had used her so ill; and decided at once to have it set afresh by an English jeweller. It also struck her (for she liked, as she said, to make men useful) that it would be a pretty commission for Henry Granby. 'Now do take it for me to Gray's,'¹⁴ said she, 'for I've a thousand other things to do; and tell them all about it, and direct them – do – and give them a little taste if you can.'

'I shall be very happy to take it,' said Granby, 'but as for directing, I am really the worst person in the world.'

'You know I never hear excuses,' said Lady Harriet, 'especially your modest ones; so – there – go – and be good, and do as I bid you.'

Granby no longer attempted to resist, but received the miniature, and took his leave with a promise faithfully to execute his commission; and as he had nothing else at the time to do, went straight from Mr. Duncan's to Gray's shop, and gave the necessary directions; and in reply to the inquiry, as to where it was to be sent, not recollecting the number of Duncan's^a house, he gave his own card, and left the shop.

Scarcely a minute after this, and before he had gone a hundred yards, a carriage stopt at the door, and two ladies got out. They were Lady Jermyn and her daughter. They soon became deeply immersed in jewellery; and happy would it have been for one of the party if she had continued to be so absorbed. But at length Caroline, weary of witnessing Lady Jermyn, balancing in hopeless uncertainty between the prettier thing and the cheaper one, looked round for other objects of amusement, and cast her eyes upon the miniature of Miss Darrell. The likeness was very good, and as circumstances of painful interest had lately made her very familiar with that lady's face, she recognised the resemblance instantly. However, to be more secure against mistake, she asked the shopman whose it was. He did not know the name of the lady, but told her that it had been left a few minutes since by a gentleman whose name was Granby. 'Granby?' said Caroline faintly. 'Yes, ma'am, a Mr. Granby, a youngish gentleman. He left this card,' said the man, producing it.

Caroline drew down her veil, and turned away, to hide the expression of deep emotion which she felt aware must, in spite of herself, be strongly pictured in her countenance.

Nothing further passed openly on the subject; for though Caroline was silent during the drive home, Lady Jermyn asked her no questions. In fact, there was no occasion for any; for while apparently intent upon her jewellery, she had seen the picture in her daughter's

hand, and had heard what passed. She therefore, with her usual caution, left Caroline to the full possession of her own thoughts, which were now of a very painful nature. That fact, the increasing probability of which had rapidly established itself in her mind, now seemed to receive a full and perfect confirmation. Blinded by her previous opinions, she was not sufficiently aware of the slender evidence which the present incident afforded. To her there appeared no reasonable doubt that the picture actually belonged to Granby; and if so, how would she regard it but as the gift of love to an accepted suitor? Upon this persuasion she was now to act. Circumstances, as regarding herself and Granby, were now considerably altered; and she must compel herself to look upon him in a very different point of view. Heretofore she had more than suspected his attachment to her; but she must now regard him as the betrothed of another. It struck her, that her own conduct would now require a corresponding change; for she felt, under these altered circumstances, no longer equal to the part she had hitherto been acting. Hitherto she had only been suppressing the display of a sentiment which she still thought it allowable in some degree to cherish, and in which, perhaps, at a future period, she might safely indulge. But she was now imperatively called upon to eradicate a hopeless passion, — a task which she considered as quite incompatible with the line of conduct she had lately adopted. Throughout her former assumption of indifference, she was supported by a hope which had now left her; and the additional painfulness of present circumstances greatly increased the difficulty of such a line of behaviour. She felt her weakness, and acknowledged that it was better to avoid him; and this, if possible, she now determined to do.

CHAP. VI.

My thoughts cannot propose a reason
Why I should fear or faint thus in my hopes
Of one so much endeared to my love;
Some spark it is, kindled within the soul,
Whose light yet breaks not to the outward sense,
That propagates this timorous respect.¹⁵

The Case is Altered. – BEN JONSON.

CAROLINE met Granby a few evenings afterwards, at Almack's. He was almost the first person she saw on coming up stairs as she was going to enter the ball-room. Lady Jermyn, in high good humour from her success in obtaining subscriptions for herself and daughter, and pleased with Granby for being also seen in so proper a place, very graciously accosted him, and they talked together for several minutes; during which time Caroline hung back, and turned away her head, as if to preclude the possibility of being addressed by him in her turn.

Granby remarked this, and was hurt at it. He thought it argued more than indifference: it was something very like aversion: and, with a fickleness which perhaps is not altogether unnatural, he wished to be again treated in the manner which he had thought lately so intolerable. This impression once received, and his mind in consequence actively alive to every point in her behaviour, he suffered nothing to escape him, watched her attentively throughout the evening, and saw and understood the reason of many of her little manœuvres. One instance of avoidance on her part he particularly noticed. He was standing under the music gallery, leaning against one of the pillars, in conversation with a lady who was sitting there, when Caroline came up conducted by Courtenay, who was looking about for a seat for her. There was a vacant chair not far from Granby, – whose face was partly concealed by the pillar, so that Caroline, in approaching, did not recognise him; and she was just going to accept it, when Granby, on hearing Courtenay's voice, turned his head, and she saw that she was on the very point of subjecting herself to that which she so scrupulously wished to avoid. She hesitated, and hung back, and turning to Courtenay, said that she had rather pass onwards, 'But you mentioned a seat, I thought,' said Courtenay, who was rather surprised at her now refusing what she seemed to wish a moment before, – 'if you wish one had not you better stay here?'

'Oh, no, not here,' said Caroline.

‘But why not here?’ said he, disappointed at finding that his chase for a chair was not yet to terminate.

‘I don’t like sitting^a under the gallery,’ said she, endeavouring to give the colour of a reason to her refusal.

‘Then we will move of course,’ said Courtenay; ‘but I’m afraid you will find there is not much choice of sitting room. Granby,’ he added, addressing him, ‘cannot you use your powerful influence in persuading Miss Jermyn to stay where she is?’

Granby’s only answer was a cold bow to Miss Jermyn, and a quick glance of displeasure at Courtenay.

‘That is really an elegant bow,’ said the latter, on whom the look had been totally lost; ‘but I’m afraid your dumb oratory will not succeed.’

‘I conclude *you* know what *will* succeed,’ said Granby, in a low deep tone, with a scornful smile upon his lips.

‘Do I?’ said Courtenay, quite unconscious of the real meaning of Granby’s words; and, was turning his head, with a smile on his countenance, to say something sportive to Miss Jermyn, when she eagerly interrupted him, by expressing a wish to join her party.

‘Do you see them?’ Courtenay enquired.

‘Not at this moment,’ said she.

‘Nor I,’ said Courtenay, looking round. ‘Granby,’ he added, appealing to him again with provoking pertinacity, ‘we know you for a quick-sighted person – we are sure you can tell us where Lady Jermyn is?’

‘I believe I *can* see some things,’ said Granby, not noticing the latter part of his sentence, and prudently discharging his rising indignation through the safety valve of sarcasm.

‘Some *things*?’ said Courtenay, with a careless laugh. ‘We want you to see some *persons* now – and we will kindly dispense with all the rest if you will only find out Lady Jermyn. Miss Jermyn, will you help me to bribe Granby to exert himself in your service, by some pretty compliment to his discernment?’

Caroline was excessively distressed at this unlucky speech. The colour mounted instantly to her temples, and she vainly endeavoured to conceal it with her fan. Granby, who stood keenly regarding them, with a stubborn air of indignant defiance, understood full well the cause. But Courtenay had no clue to guide him, and consequently received no other impression than that Miss Jermyn was suffering from the heat of the room.

‘I beg your pardon,’ said he, ‘for stopping here – I am sure you find this place too hot. Tell me where you would like to go.’

‘Anywhere for air – towards the door, or that open window,’ said she, in a faint voice; and she leaned languidly, (fondly, as it seemed to Granby,) upon Courtenay’s arm, as she moved away.

If a look could stab, Granby's at that moment had been fatal. A quick review of the past scene was almost too much for his endurance. Word passed^a on word, in his recollection, look on look, gesture on gesture, till he had hastily accumulated an aggravated map of injury, and his heart swelled at the retrospect, almost to bursting. To have the estranged object of his affections paraded before him, by the insulting rival whom he had once called friend; purposely detained to display her aversion, and gall him by her presence; and then, as if this were not enough, to be made the sport of his persecutor – to be gaily and triumphantly bantered with all the affection of friendly familiarity, and to be goaded into frenzy, by insidious words of double meaning! A fearful chaos of strong passions struggled in his breast for mastery; but he remembered the place in which he was, and the observation which would soon be attracted by the exhibition of feelings, so little consonant with the scene around him; and with a violent effort he suppressed all outward symptoms of emotion. He was externally calm: but the fire within only burned the fiercer, for this attempt to smother it in its rage; and he soon found, that next to the possession of such agonizing feelings, there is no torture equal to that which is produced by the necessity of concealing them.

Granby was in no humour to philosophise, or he might now have reflected how much the real enchantment of a scene is dependent upon the sentiments with which we view it. He was placed in the midst of one of the most brilliant, and captivating, to a youthful eye, that London could afford; and yet in his heart he would that moment have preferred the gloomiest desert. The present spectacle floated before him like a feverish half-waking dream, from which, in vain, he strove to rouse himself. Every object that was around him, all he saw, and all he heard, was shaded with a gloomy tint; the^b lively music was a senseless jingle; the brilliant light seemed cold and livid; the gaiety of the dance was impertinent and unfeeling; every look appeared directed towards him alone, with an air of scrutiny; every smile seemed pointed with derision; and the light gay laugh which caught his ear, rang only with the fancied tone of mockery and insult.

His situation was intolerable; and yet he felt, as it were, rooted to the spot, without the power of escaping from a scene that was so displeasing. All at once, however, the spell was broken, and he began to wonder at his folly, in condemning himself to an useless penance. He, therefore, prepared to quit the ball-room, and edged his way with all possible expedition towards the door. When he had almost reached it, he saw before him at a short distance, Caroline and Courtenay, who were pursuing the same course. At this moment, Caroline looked back and saw him – her head was turned away again in an instant, and he thought she appeared to quicken her pace. 'Does she think,' said he to

himself, 'that I am following her? no, the time for that is past – she shall soon be undeceived,' and he walked back again up the room, and forced his way into the midst of the circle surrounding a party of waltzers. He neither knew nor cared who were near him; nor did he even see the twirling couples at whom he appeared to be looking.

'Mr. Granby, don't you waltz?'¹⁶ was at length asked by a female voice that he thought he knew; and turning round to answer the question, he found Lady Jermyn at his elbow. His answer was, that he sometimes waltzed, but that he had no intention of doing so that night.

'It is a pretty, elegant dance,' said Lady Jermyn, 'particularly when they go round smoothly, and the gentlemen don't stick their elbows out. It is a pity there's no variety in it – I don't let Caroline waltz – indeed she does not wish it herself. Some people think it not correct – what is the opinion of you gentlemen? for you know you ought to be great authority in these cases.'

'I really hardly know how to hazard an opinion on a point so much disputed,' said Granby, successfully endeavouring to regain composure, and glad of an opportunity to divert his thoughts by conversing on a subject which had no possible connection with his late inquietude. 'It seems to me that no precise rule of correctness or incorrectness can be laid down, that shall equally apply to every person. It is very much a matter of feeling. Those who engage in it with their scruples still unsatisfied, act I think improperly; and I must confess that I never like waltzing with any lady that is prudish about it. If she is doubtful whether she does right in waltzing, she certainly ought not to waltz at all.'

'Certainly – Mr. Granby – certainly – your opinion coincides exactly with my own. That is just what I have always said. Waltz or not, I say to people, just as you please; I draw no line, I tell them; I never like to be censorious. But, by the bye, can you tell me where my daughter is?'

'I believe Miss Jermyn is somewhere near the door.'

'Dear – I dare say she is looking for me – Mr. Granby – you are not dancing – perhaps – might I take the liberty – perhaps you would have the goodness to step to her, and tell her where she may find me.'

The blood rushed into Granby's face at this unexpected request. He could give utterance to no reply, and only bowed his head partly in token of assent, and partly to conceal the surprise and embarrassment which he was sure must be perceptible. He did conceal it from Lady Jermyn, – whose attention was at that instant diverted to another person; a person by whom the embarrassment of Granby was not unobserved, but by whom, nevertheless, it was mistaken for the flush of pleasure. That other person was Mr. Trebeck. He was one of the waltzers, and had stopped designedly with his partner before the place where Granby and Lady Jermyn were standing, and had

overheard the few last words which passed between them. He turned half round to watch their effect, and saw what has already been described.

Lady Jermyn had throughout the evening been indefatigably labouring to regain her former intimacy with this fashionable personage, of whose high claims to her respect she had never been so fully sensible as now that she beheld him in his true arena. But, alas! these laudable endeavours had not been eminently successful. Once, when she found him standing near her, she had manœvered for the honour of his arm to conduct her through the crowd, and threw out many ingenious fears on the difficulty of reaching the other end of the room. But Trebeck had the skill to assume a perfect want of comprehension, whenever it suited him to do so. This he now performed so well, that she actually believed he did not understand her, and was just preparing to summon courage, and ask him boldly to be her escort, when he, who had anticipated what was coming, prevented her by a timely retreat. At another time, when Caroline was disengaged, she threw out to another lady, in Trebeck's hearing, many pertinent observations touching her daughter's love of dancing, — which, being addressed to a female auditor who had no sons of her own, could not appear like begging for a partner. Trebeck both heard and understood; but he was firm to his principles, and did not commit himself by an offer of his services; and was secretly amused at what he thought the ignorant presumption of Lady Jermyn's expectations. Here, in the very focus of fashion, so to condescend! It was impossible, he thought; and he was half inclined to teach her Ladyship a lesson of prudence and humility. But policy restrained him from exhibiting any marked neglect; and though in the midst of the ball-room at Almack's he could not conveniently be very intimate, yet mere civility was safe for him, and might be satisfactory to her, and to this he determined to confine himself.

But we must return to Henry Granby, who walked away on receiving his charge from Lady Jermyn, with feelings of no enviable kind. To be thus forced, through his own act, into that which he manœvered to avoid, was galling in the extreme; and the colour of shame and vexation which glowed in his cheek, did not very quickly leave it. The message, too, was trivial, and might be supposed to be self-sought, or even invented; and this was another mortifying thought. In short, he found that the more he considered it, the worse it seemed; and that if he gave much time for reflection, he should not be able to deliver it at all. He, therefore, sought out Caroline and Courtenay, caught sight of them, summoned all the coolness he was master of, and walked towards them in that quick, direct, decided manner, which should show at once that he had something to communicate.

Caroline's heart beat quick as he approached; for from the *empressement*¹⁷ of his manner, she anticipated the request of her hand for a dance, or at any rate a long conversation, which to her, under present circumstances, must necessarily be a painful one. She was, therefore, considerably surprised, when Granby, with a ghastly effort at composure, merely said, in his coldest, driest tone, 'Miss Jermyn, Lady Jermyn has desired me to tell you, that you will find her towards the middle of the room, on the right hand side, near the waltzers.' – So saying, he walked on, passed hastily through the doors, and in a few seconds was on the pavement of King-street.

He had indeed passed a painful evening. The only gratifying circumstance that presented itself in the retrospect, was the increased cordiality of manner which had been displayed by Lady Jermyn. Yet even this came coupled with a regret, that such a testimony of returning kindness should have appeared at a time when, through the estrangement of the daughter, he began to lose almost his only motive for desiring it. But had he known the real cause of this change of manner in Lady Jermyn, both the pleasure and regret would have been sensibly diminished.

Never were two apparently opposing facts more nearly connected, than Caroline's coldness and her mother's cordiality. The shrewd, observant eye of the latter, had seen with secret satisfaction the recent diversion of Henry's attentions, and the consequent effect upon her daughter's mind. She herself was half persuaded, especially after the adventure of the picture, that these attentions to Miss Darrell did mean something: but whether they did or not, at any rate Granby became no longer formidable, in the only point of view in which she had lately been accustomed to regard him. She therefore thought that it was now safe to pave the way, by little civilities, towards a resumption of their former footing. She had also additional reasons, of a minor description, for accosting him graciously at Almack's; for she was pleased to find a relation of the family on so good a footing in fashionable society; and she also found, to her mortification, that her own acquaintance in this select assemblage was rather limited; and being always possessed with a *besoin de parler*,¹⁸ she was glad to exchange a few words with a young man who appeared to be so well received.

CHAP. VII.

For whatsoever good by any said
Or done, she heard, she would straight-waies invent
How to deprave, or slanderously upbraid,
Or to misconstrue of a man's intent,
And turn to ill the thing that well was meant.
Therefore she used often to resort
To common haunts, and companies frequent,
To track what any one did good report,
To blot the same with blame, or wrest in wicked sort.
And if that any ill she heard of any,
She would it eke, and make it worse by telling,
And take great joy to publish it to many,
That every matter worse was for her melling.
Her name was hight Detraction.¹⁹ – SPENSER.

SINCE the first introduction at Mrs. Henley's, Granby had seen very little of Trebeck. That gentleman was not a person to be seen every where.^a No one knew better where and when he ought to shew himself; and he had a laudable horror of making himself cheap in the eyes of the world, by too frequent exhibitions of his distinguished self. Granby had therefore only been nodded to once or twice in public; and nothing had passed between them that deserved the name of conversation. He had paid him, however, the high compliment of a call: for one day, on Granby's return to dress, after having gone out earlier than usual, he found on his table a scrap torn off the back of a letter, with Trebeck's name and address in pencil, which his servant told him was left by a gentleman, who stopped at the door in a cabriolet,²⁰ and who found, upon search, that he had no card. The aforesaid scrap, as it could not serve to decorate his card-rack, (a destination which Trebeck doubtless, wished to avoid), Granby, after taking a note of the address, committed to the flames. He returned the visit the following day, but Trebeck was 'not at home;' and this is pretty nearly all that hitherto had passed between them.

Two days after the above scenes at Almack's, as Granby was loitering towards home, a shower of rain came on, and he was just quickening his pace, when a cabriolet, which was driving past him, drew up near the flags, and he heard himself called to by name. It was Mr. Trebeck.

‘Granby you’ll be wet,’ said Trebeck, ‘we seem to be going the same way – will you get in?’

Granby was gratified by the civility; but as it was very unexpected, hesitated about accepting it.

‘Come in – quick, will you – my horse won’t stand,’ said Trebeck, putting out his hand, and helping him hastily into the cabriolet; ‘and now let me ask you, where are you going?’

‘Home – to Mount-street,’ said Granby.

‘Are you in any hurry?’

‘Not in the least.’

‘Then perhaps you’ll excuse me, if I take you a little round – I have a few cards to leave here and there – I shall not get out – there will be little or no delay.’

On they drove – Trebeck talking all the while very gaily and amusingly, and entertaining his companion with a good deal of select scandal of the newest description. He then entered into much light pleasantry on matrimonial topics; ironically lamented the fashionable prevalence of celibacy; and mentioned a good many of his acquaintance, who decidedly were not marrying men. Among these he named Lord Chesterton.

‘I thought,’ said Granby, ‘there was a report that Lord Chesterton was going to be married.’

‘Oh!’ said Trebeck, smiling – ‘what, to Miss Jermyn? So there was – but there was nothing in that – at least nothing serious, I can assure you – I saw the whole of that affair – it certainly began in a promising manner – but there was no little trifling in the case.’

‘You think there was?’ said Granby enquiringly.

‘Undoubtedly – and it was very natural.’

‘But very unworthy,’ said Granby. ‘I should not have thought Lord Chesterton would have acted such a part.’

‘Lord Chesterton!’ said Trebeck. ‘It was not he – it was the lady that trifled.’

‘Indeed!’ said Granby, with undisguisable surprise. ‘But how can Miss Jermyn be accused of trifling, if she never gave Lord Chesterton any encouragement?’

‘If!’ said Trebeck – ‘Ay, I grant you – but suppose she did.’

Granby was about to express his doubts with considerable warmth, but prudence checked his tongue.

Trebeck carelessly proceeded. ‘Ay, there she did not judge amiss. Chesterton was worth encouragement. Old Banbury, the father, has thirty thousand a year at least. Mamma had probably drilled her a little – and I don’t know whether she might not have caught him, if she had gone on as prudently as she began; but she is not sufficiently practised yet.’

‘Do you think then,’ said Granby, with suppressed emotion, ‘that she is likely to become one of your mere establishment-seekers?’

‘Faith!’ said Trebeck, ‘that is more than I can tell – I have hardly seen enough of her to know. However, she seemed to me to promise fairly. But in fact,’ pursued he, in a more confidential tone, ‘Chesterton, though very desirable as a husband for those who are seeking for rank and fortune, is terribly heavy as a suitor – he brings up such a long battering train of clumsy, round-about speeches. He has none of your soft, sly, sentimental small shot. That is the attack the ladies prefer. They like to be pelted with sugar plums, as we used to do at Rome, in the Carnival.^a No – poor Chesterton! – ha-ha-ha – she really used him rather ill.’

‘How so?’ said Granby, as calmly as he could.

‘Why, girls will be girls. They like admiration, as you and I know; and this Miss Jermyn liked a little more, or rather, liked it better served up, than Chesterton, poor fellow, had the means to afford. She is a little bit of a monopolist into the bargain. She was not content at Hemingsworth without grasping at substance and shadow too.’

‘I don’t understand you exactly,’ said Granby.

‘Don’t you? Well then, Chesterton was the substance, and the shadow was – your humble servant.’

‘You?’ exclaimed Granby, utterly confounded at this unexpected piece of intelligence.

Trebeck marked his perplexity with a smile. ‘Even I,’ he added, with a humourous air of mock humility; ‘and I had excellent sport I assure you. There is nothing better than a little foolery, when one is shut up with a party in the country; and this Miss Jermyn was just the girl; and then she looked all the while so quiet and demure, that, faith! you would never have suspected it. That was what amused me most. I really had some excellent scenes. I was in the house with them for a week or more. It was a very passable entertainment.’

Granby strongly compressed his lips, as if to restrain the keen retort which burned for utterance on his tongue. ‘What!’ thought he, ‘had Caroline – his Caroline – been the sport, the toy of this heartless coxcomb!’ and he felt as if he almost longed to kick Trebeck out of the vehicle. However, mastering his indignant feelings, he calmly observed that he never could have suspected Miss Jermyn’s character such as Mr. Trebeck had described.

‘What! then you are acquainted with her!’ said Trebeck.

‘I have known the family for some time,’ replied Granby, half angry with himself as he said it, for having stooped to make so indirect an answer.

‘But she is so young,’ pursued Trebeck, ‘that you could hardly have known her but as a child. There is no telling what girls are, till they

are past the bread-and-butter age, and fairly *out*. They then pass at once into a completely different sort of life. It often makes an amazing change in them.'

Granby felt that all this might be very true, and he smothered a sigh and remained silent. Trebeck went on talking with the same gay, rattling, easy indifference, – steering his cabriolet very dexterously through the various obstacles of a crowded street, and seeming to think as much of his driving as of the subject on which he was talking.

'I believe,' said he, 'I should have had rather a dull week at Daventry House,^a if it had not been for Chesterton and his intended; though, really, it was rather a shame to use poor Chesterton as we did. You can have no idea of our little cabals and manœuvres, to avoid him and keep him at bay. I believe she thought he was rather too cold and indifferent, and that it might be useful to play off a rival.'

Granby here made a gesture of impatience.

'But however that might be,' pursued Trebeck, 'we soon arrived at an excellent mutual understanding. I never thought, at first, that she would have come to it so readily. We had such schemes and counter-schemes, and plot and confidences, and such charming little mysteries about nothing! and then we had our secret signals; for we ingeniously contrived, when we did not wish to be understood by the rest of the company, to carry on communication by signs. We found it the easiest thing in the world. She talks uncommonly well with her fingers.'

Granby knew that she did; for it was an art which formerly he had often for amusement practised with her. He was seriously grieved at this confirmation of the accuracy of Trebeck's statement.

'You cannot conceive,' pursued Trebeck, watching the workings of his companion's countenance, with much of that cool philosophic spirit with which the great Spallanzani²¹ humanely marked the progress of dissection in a live duck – 'You cannot conceive on what confidential terms we were. I believe she thought I meant something; but I hope she is undeceived by this time. You know it would never do, here in town, to be playing the fool with a country Miss.'

Every one of these words was a stab to Granby. 'Mr. Trebeck,' he exclaimed in a tone of indignation, which, though he contrived to moderate, he could not altogether repress – Mr. Trebeck! these imputations –' and here he checked himself, for he saw that it was in vain to question statements which he had no means of contradicting, and that his zeal in Caroline's cause was urging him beyond the bounds of prudence.

'Imputations!' said Trebeck, looking him full in the face, with a good-humoured air of astonishment. 'What *are* you talking about? Were you actually going to enter the lists in defence of this Miss Jermyn? Why what a Quixote you must be! You will find very few in

these degenerate days who are worthy even to be your Squire. Besides, you are choosing an unfortunate cause for your *coup d'essai*,²² for Miss Jermyn is no distressed damsel, I assure you, who requires the services of a volunteer knight, but one who can provide protectors for herself; ay, and a protector for life, if I am not mistaken.'

Granby could bear this no longer. 'I'll not trouble you to take me farther,' said he, as they drove into Berkeley-square.

'No trouble at all,' said Trebeck; 'I'm going up the Square, and by Mount-street. I'll take you on with a great deal of pleasure. But now as to these imputations, Granby, which somehow or other you seem to think so much about, – upon my honour, I never cast any imputations, or meant to do so. What did I say? Nothing, I'm sure, that meant any harm. Miss Jermyn is a very nice, good-humoured sort of girl, and has only that one little foible – a love of attracting and receiving attentions; and you know, Granby, we men are not often disposed to quarrel with *that*. Faith! I believe for my own part I liked her all the better for it. But for that little interesting weak point, she would have been rather a stupid sort of person. Every body has their *coté ridicule*,²³ if you can but find it out; and they are always pleasanter, to my mind, after you have discovered it: and so it was with this Miss Jermyn.'

Granby's forbearance was now exhausted; but it luckily happened that his drive terminated at the same instant. They were now at the beginning of Mount-street, and with a very brief and cold expression of his thanks, he desired to be set down. He received Trebeck's friendly shake of the hand, with somewhat of that shudder of abhorrence with which he would have stroked the back of a toad – leapt eagerly out of the cabriolet – and, without bestowing another look on it or its possessor, walked at a quick pace towards his lodgings; while Trebeck, after drawing on his glove, drove triumphantly up Davies-street.

It will probably be evident to our readers that the conduct of this gentleman, with regard to Granby, had in no respect been actuated either by good-nature or mere caprice. Those of his acquaintance who knew him best could safely say that he never acted without a motive; nor in this instance had he departed from his usual rule; for since his introduction to our hero, nothing that he had said or done, had been said or done without design. As he had not yet solved his doubts with respect to Miss Jermyn's future inheritance, so neither did he relinquish the plans of conquest which he had formed. Aware that he possessed no hold on her affections, it was his first object to keep all rivals at a distance, till he had satisfied himself whether she were really worth the winning. Of these rivals, the chief, perhaps the only one whose influence he had cause to fear, he firmly believed to be

Henry Granby. Under this impression he sought an introduction, in order that he might thereby have it in his power to examine more narrowly the terms they were upon, and step in, should occasion require, to widen the existing breach. From what he had at first seen, he flattered himself that Lady Jermyn would work so industriously against Granby, that there would be little occasion for his interference. In this persuasion he remained till a few nights back – when, while waltzing at Almack’s, he saw, to his dismay and surprise, Lady Jermyn and Henry Granby apparently engaged in close and friendly conversation. He came near them, as we have already mentioned, and heard with increased astonishment, Lady Jermyn dispatch Granby on a message to her daughter. It was plain, therefore, that Granby had in some way or other made his peace, and his own hopes of co-operation from her Ladyship were utterly at an end; and, consequently, it was time that he should now begin to depend on his own resources.

Under these new circumstances, it struck Trebeck, that in no way could he better effect his purpose, than by instilling jealousy and distrust into the mind of his rival. He was also conscious that, to the feelings of a lover, no faults are so little venial in the object of his affections, as fickleness of heart, and an overweening desire for the admiration of others. The accusations, too, which imply these faults, are generally of a vague description, and therefore less dangerous to the accuser. An artful misrepresentation of circumstances which had passed at Hemingsworth, would not only enable him to affix these stigmas, but even should Granby (which was very unlikely) repeat these calumnies to Caroline, it would be no very easy matter for her to clear herself in the eyes of her jealous and suspicious lover. With these views he went to obtain an interview with Granby, and was on his road to call upon him, when accident threw in his way an opportunity for a *tête-à-tête* – of which, as we have seen, he promptly availed himself.

CHAP. VIII.

I sometimes do believe, and sometimes do not,
As those that fear they hope, and know they fear.²⁴

AS YOU LIKE IT.

THE prevailing feeling with which Granby parted from Trebeck, was indignation against that personage. But this feeling gradually subsided, and was painfully succeeded by increasing distrust of the object of his calumnies. He tried to view in various lights the conduct of Trebeck, and recalled his looks and words with scrupulous fidelity. But in all these he saw no ground for suspecting the truth of his representations. Nothing arose that could aid him to repel them, but his previous confidence in Caroline – a confidence which now tottered. It seemed to him impossible that Trebeck should have spoken from design. What object could he have in view? And could he even be supposed to have an object, his air of frank unguarded ease would certainly have removed suspicion. Was it vanity that made him speak? This also was improbable. It was not likely that Trebeck should plume himself on having attracted the girlish admiration of one who, however charming, was so little known in fashionable circles. Did he bear ill-will to Caroline? By no means: – on the contrary, he seemed disposed to palliate her faults, and candidly acknowledged his own participation in her offence. And then, the specific fact he mentioned – the manual conversation – assuredly he would never dare to invent this; and it was plain that something of the kind had occurred, by his having known that she could practise it.

There was also, apparently, a sad confirmation of the truth of what Trebeck had hinted, in the recent behaviour of Caroline to himself. To what could her change be so easily attributed, as to fickleness and coquetry? The strength of the probability seemed to increase the longer he considered it; and he soon worked himself up to a melancholy persuasion of the correctness of his suspicions.

Happily it was now probable that these doubts would soon be solved. An opportunity was presented, such as he had never hitherto possessed; for he had received and accepted an invitation from Mrs. Dormer, to meet the Jermyns on the morrow at dinner.

With an anxious and a beating heart did Granby repair to Mrs. Dormer's. He half-wondered at himself for feeling so much on this occasion, after the embarrassments of an interview had been so

smoothed by frequent meetings. But he had never hitherto gone into society with such a positive certainty of encountering them; nor in the crowded parties in which he saw them, had he ever been thrown into such close communication as he must now necessarily expect. He thought too, with some uneasiness, of Mrs. Dormer's ignorance of the coolness that existed, and he dreaded some unlucky *contretemps*, which might throw confusion over all the party. Never, though not habitually a coxcomb, was he more solicitous about his appearance; and never felt more disposed to quarrel with his tailor's handywork, or his own adjustment of a cravat.

Arrived at Mrs. Dormer's, he found the Jermyn family already there; and now he felt that the trial was really come; especially as he met Sir Thomas Jermyn, in this instance, for the first time since their coolness. He had prepared himself for a cold reception; but was agreeably relieved from his fears, by seeing that gentleman step forward, and civilly and promptly shake him by the hand; while Lady Jermyn greeted him with the same gracious smile which she had ventured to bestow a few nights before.

He was gratified by these attentions, and his spirits were proportionably raised. Dinner was announced; and he then offered his arm to Caroline, and occupied a seat next to her – wondering at the same time not a little, at the situation in which he found himself. Placed by her, he exerted himself to entertain her, and behaving as if nothing *particular* had ever occurred, he talked cheerfully of their common acquaintance, the scenes in which they had lately met, and various topics of the day.

But in this strain he was not long able to proceed. Caroline gave him no encouragement to talk to her; heard what he said always with coldness, if not occasionally with an air of impatience; returned mere answers to his questions, and turned away whenever a pause permitted her, and addressed herself to an elderly gentleman on the other side, whose powers of entertainment Granby considered, and with justice, to be very inferior to his own.

Thus repulsed, he soon became silent, and as the insinuations of Trebeck were recalled to his mind, he was inclined to think that their truth was not altogether improbable. He then half formed an angry resolution, not to bestow upon her another word during the rest of that evening. But he soon recalled his purpose, and questioned himself in what respect he had ever given cause of offence sufficient to produce such marked aversion. Except the original ground of quarrel with the family, he could think only of his attentions to Miss Darrell, as likely to have produced so serious a change; and it sensibly soothed his ire to imagine that jealousy might be the cause. He therefore began to talk to her again, and brought round the conversation as

naturally as he could to Miss Darrell. At first the mention of that name evidently excited Caroline's attention; but as he proceeded to speak of her in a careless, though satirical manner, which was certainly well calculated to dispel all jealousy, the cold indifference returned, the eye even seemed to darken with displeasure, and an air of disdain was visible on her countenance.

Granby, heedless of these symptoms, proceeded with his topic, and while he spoke of Miss Darrell as better fitted for the meridian of a ballroom, than the quiet intercourse of domestic life – as one who was not a marriageable person, and of whose society he should soon be tired – he looked at Caroline to mark the effect of what he said, and he^a saw only, in the place of pleasure, a scornful smile of proud contempt. He instantly stopped short, stung with the idea that she doubted the sincerity of his expressions; and was still more provoked when she turned away her head, as if she had heard enough of^b that subject, and again entered into conversation with the gentleman on the other side.

But his curiosity was still alive, and considering that reflection might have pleaded for him in Caroline's breast, he, after a long protracted silence, again endeavoured to converse. But his success was now less flattering than before, and her disinclination to answer, or even listen to him, became so evident, that he resigned the attempt in anger and despair.

Meanwhile Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn had been very gracious in their manner, as if resolved to make up the deficiencies of favourable feeling exhibited by their daughter. After the ladies had retired, the former became exceedingly conversible^c – addressing himself particularly to Henry, enquiring kindly after many of his friends, and treating him, at last, with a full exposition of his political opinions.

'Egad, Sir,' said he, 'people may say what they please, but the country is in a bad state. People may talk of peace, Sir, and prosperity, and increasing manufactures, and commercial relations, and this, and that, and the other; but we are in a very ticklish condition. Why only look at our population – see how frightfully that is increasing – and what are we to do with the surplus? And look at the random schemes afloat – their loans, and their companies, and what not, and one thing or another. Sir, they actually don't care what they do with their money, now-a-days.'

'Then you don't regard a spirit of speculation as a sign of national prosperity?' said an old gentleman, who sat near him.

'I don't know whether it is a sign of national prosperity,' said the Baronet; 'but it is a sign of what I have often said, that many people are great fools.'

'A very just remark,' said the other, 'and a very comprehensive one.'

‘And, then,’ pursued the Baronet, ‘only consider the shoals of people who go and spend their money abroad – what a drain that must be upon the capital of the country? And then look at foreign nations – see how prosperous they are becoming. For my part, I don’t like to croak, but depend upon it they are growing too strong for us.’

‘As long as we remain at peace,’ said Granby, ‘I should think it were for the benefit of a commercial nation, like our own, to be surrounded by wealthy customers.’

‘Ah, Sir, you are young and sanguine,’ said the Baronet; ‘but, take my word for it, we are going wrong in many respects. – Only look at our great towns – uninhabitable from smoke, as I have been informed by a Member of our House. Reflect, too on the dreadful increase of poachers. Sir, within my memory, poaching has increased – I can hardly tell how much.’

‘Has it increased,’ said Granby, ‘in a greater proportion than game?’

‘Oh! God knows – but, whether or not, it is a shocking sign of the times. And, then, taxation, Gentlemen, taxation – think of that – think how they grind us – think of those assessed taxes. I spoke my mind, the other day, to a friend in office, Dick Darnley, brother of Sir Joseph. He has got a place in the treasury. We had a little talk on this very subject. “Why, Dick,” said I, “what are you folks in office thinking of, that you don’t come forward handsomely, and relieve us gentlemen, by taking off those cursed taxes?” Dick said something (I forget exactly what) about relief elsewhere, and promoting the interest of commerce. “Commerce!” said I, “never talk to me of commerce. Remember the saying of the great Wyndham – ‘Perish our consti—’ pshaw! what is it? ‘Perish our commerce, let our constitution live!’”²⁵

‘It is fortunate,’ said Granby, ‘we are not yet reduced to that terrible alternative.’

‘Egad, it is,’ said Sir Thomas. ‘Well, Sir, my friend Darnley had nothing to say in answer to this. He only nodded, and smiled – as if he would have said something if he could. “Dick,” said I, “assisting commerce in your way is all a hum.”²⁶ Depend upon it you will assist it much better by leaving gentlemen more to spend. It is the circulation, Dick,” said I, “it is the circulation that does the good. Why, only to give you myself as an instance – I vow to Heaven, if it was not for those confounded taxes, I should keep an extra carriage, another helper, and two more saddle horses.”’

‘Pray, Sir Thomas,’ said the old gentleman who had before spoken, ‘don’t you generally vote with Ministers?’

‘You are perfectly right – I do,’ said the Baronet; ‘and I will let you into my reason for doing so. I think the people that are *in* are every bit as good as those who are *out*. Besides, the hands of the Ministry must be strengthened – they must be strengthened, as I always say; but,

Sir, a sensible, straight-forward, clear-sighted man, is not on that account to shut his eyes to existing abuses.'

'Neither on that account, nor any other,' said the elderly gentleman. 'Far be it from me to advise it. But, by the bye, Sir Thomas, I think I can help you to a few more existing abuses, to which you have not yet alluded. What think you of rotten boroughs?'

The Baronet shuffled uneasily in his chair; for he thought of his own fifteen constituents.

'Perhaps,' pursued his tormentor, 'as you from personal experience are necessarily well acquainted with the subject, you will tell us what can be said in their favour.'

Sir Thomas, as his questioner expected, was not at that instant prepared for his^a defence, and looked rather blank at having the *onus probandi*²⁷ thrown so suddenly upon his shoulders.

'I see no great harm in them,' was his happy reply. 'Do you?' appealing to Granby.

'I see no great harm in them either,' said Granby; 'and I think we may discover in them at least this advantage, that they afford the means of entering Parliament to many valuable and able men, who have neither the fortune nor the inclination to incur the trouble and expense necessary for encountering a contest, and securing the representation of a free borough, or a populous county.'

It is very rare that an appellee can, by the same expressions, give equal satisfaction to both parties; but such was Granby's happy lot. Sir Thomas Jermyn never doubted but that he alone was in Granby's mind, when he spoke of 'valuable and able men;' while the eyes of his opponent, who seized the words in an ironical acceptance, twinkled bright with sarcastic glee.

'An excellent observation, Sir,' said Sir Thomas Jermyn, in that emphatic tone of approval, which happily blends a compliment to the person addressed, with an assertion of the dignity of him who pays it. In fact, by this little unintentional flattery of the Baronet's vanity, Granby had begun to rise so high in his esteem, that with much apparent interest Sir Thomas Jermyn commenced an enquiry into his mode of spending his time in London; regretted that he had seen so little of him; talked for a while, by way of preface, about the new town house which he had lately purchased; and concluded, as they walked up stairs from the dining-room to join the ladies, by actually giving him his address, and saying that he should be at all times happy to see him whenever he would do him the favour to call.

After so direct and flattering an overture, which set at rest all anxious fears on the subject of reconciliation, it was natural that Granby should enter the drawing-room with lightened spirits, and a diminished sense of Caroline's previous unkindness. This diffused an

animated gaiety over his countenance and manner, which however ingratiating in the eyes of most of the party present, had a contrary effect on the mind of Caroline, who regarded it as a proof of the slight influence upon his spirits which could now be produced by any exhibition of coldness in her.

Granby, piqued by her previous conduct, was half resolved to stand aloof. But he felt too happy in the returning friendship of her parents to retain this angry resolution long. He also was excited by no inconsiderable curiosity, to try the effect of his announcement of this new posture of affairs. But pride still fought within him; and instead of freely giving way to the natural expression of his pleasurable feelings, he assumed an air of unconcern, and after some trivial prefatory remarks about their recent change of residence, carelessly introduced, as if scarce worthy to be mentioned, the interesting fact of Sir Thomas Jermyn's invitation, and his own consequent intention of paying them an early visit.

In conveying this intelligence he was very attentive to the manner in which it was received by Caroline; and was instantly convinced, that at any rate it was not received with indifference. There was a slight start of surprize,^a a momentary blush, a sudden quiver of the lip, and a quick withdrawal of the eyes, which indicated strong emotion; but in all this there was no pleasure. The impression on the mind, however modified, was certainly of a painful nature; and this conviction was to Granby so depressing, that he felt no courage to prolong the conversation.

A long and embarrassing pause ensued – each being too much occupied with their own distressing speculations, to find it easy to recur to ordinary topics. Fortunately, at this moment Mrs. Dormer came up, with a request to Caroline, to try the instrument, and favour them with some music. Both felt internally grateful for this seasonable relief, and Caroline gladly and promptly complied, though her spirits were in a state little fitted for the enjoyment of such a recreation. Granby did not immediately follow her, but hovered about for some time, in a sort of moody listlessness, and at length approached the piano-forte.

Caroline after singing one of the national melodies, next selected the following beautiful French song: –

Dans un délire extrême,
On veut suivre^b ce qu'on aime:
On veut se venger;
On jure de changer;
On devient infidèle;
On court de belle en belle,

Mais on revient toujours,
A ses premiers amours.²⁸

It is not often that much attention is paid to the words of a song; particularly French or Italian ones; the greater part of which, indeed, would be found little worthy of that attention, even if we were disposed to pay it. In these the music is the object, while the words are only the insipid vehicle; and it must be confessed, that most amateur vocalists, whether ladies or gentlemen, considerably confine our attention to the former, by their absolutely unintelligible manner of pronouncing the latter.

Fully impressed with this prevailing notion, that the words of the song meant nothing, did Miss Jermyn begin to sing the romance above mentioned; and not till she had nearly arrived at the end of the first stanza, did she make the discovery, that it not only meant something, but a something which very closely and unpleasantly applied itself to the supposed defection of Henry Granby. And that she should sing it in his presence, and as he might probably suppose, with a view of reproaching him with his past conduct, was a reflection peculiarly distressing. The humiliation and indelicacy of such a step, were not to be incurred on any account. And then the flattering promise of returning love, contained in the two last lines! How could she venture to utter those? In truth she could not. The time was past when she could feelingly have adopted their sentiments as her own; and their present mockery was too severe. When she came to these, her voice faltered – she sang out of tune – blundered with the accompaniment – coloured, hesitated, and at last tried, with bad success, to carry off her confusion under a forced laugh, – declaring that the song was too high for her.

‘Had not you better try it, my love, in a lower key?’ said Lady Jermyn from the sofa, – never dreaming what the song was about.

All keys were alike to Caroline, who said she could not sing the song that night, and eagerly turned over the leaf in search of something less pointedly applicable. Granby, meanwhile, who had noticed with surprise the abrupt termination of the last performance, was vainly pondering upon the cause – doubtful whether it proceeded from mere inability in the performer to do what she considered proper justice to the song, or from any painful associations which it raised; but he had been attending only to the music, and, consequently, as he could not satisfy himself as to the nature of these associations, he was inclined to attribute it to the former cause.

Caroline now selected an Italian song, and having first assured herself that the words contained no embarrassing allusion, proceeded to sing it with increased confidence, and considerable taste and effect.

Granby advanced nearer, and was prepared to express his admiration; Lady Jermyn also came from the sofa to her daughter's side.

'My love,' said she, as soon as it was over, 'is not that the song which Mr. Courtenay said he admired so much?'

'Yes, it is, Mamma,' was Caroline's answer.

The half formed compliment died on Granby's lips, and he walked away towards the fire. But his evil stars prevailed against him; for Lady Jermyn faced about and pursued him thither, with the most unacceptable of all themes at that luckless moment – the praises of his friend Courtenay. Thus tormented, he meditated a departure, but Lady Jermyn was drawn off by Mrs. Dormer, and at the same instant, Sir Thomas Jermyn began to talk to him, and precluded the immediate possibility of escape.

Caroline had left her music, and seated herself at a table apart, where she was turning over books and trinkets, with the listless, uninterested manner of one who strives to escape from her own thoughts, and grasps the more at entertainment from surrounding objects, in proportion as she is less capable of receiving it.

Granby perceived this, and was again irresistibly tempted to engage her in conversation. There was a mystery in her behaviour, which he resolved if possible to fathom; and he was also bent upon obtaining either refutation or confirmation of the remarks thrown out by Trebeck. He therefore began by talking to her about that gentleman, and tried to draw from her some account of the visit to Hemingsworth, and his behaviour there. But Caroline was very reserved, and in the little she did say respecting Trebeck, was evidently ill at ease, and could not bring herself to mention his name as if he was an indifferent person.

Granby's suspicions now rapidly increased, and he persevered in prosecuting the topic. 'Trebeck,' said he at length, 'is a clever, entertaining person, and one whom it would always be agreeable to have on the footing of a common acquaintance; but intimacy would not be desirable. He is one whom I could not make my friend. He is one in whom I feel that I could never place reliance, and he is decidedly the last person in the world whom I should dare to treat as a confidant.'

These words were uttered without any peculiar emphasis or change of tone; but his eye was intently fixed on Caroline, to mark the effect which they produced. The effect was but too visible: she cast a quick and hurried glance of fear and suspicion towards Granby as he spoke; then hastily averted her eyes – turned slightly pale – and with a nervous gesture of haste, snatched up a miniature from the table, and pretended to be occupied in examining it; while her wandering eye, tremulous hand, and quickened breath, evinced her state of agitation,

and the complete abstraction of her mind from the object of her pretended contemplation.

Granby saw it all – saw too much for his own happiness. His worst suspicions were confirmed, and a melancholy conviction flashed upon his mind of the truth of what Trebeck had told him. Nay more, his imagination caught at ideas which Trebeck had never ventured to insinuate, and he half admitted the fearful thought, that her peace of mind might have been seriously affected by the insidious attentions of that mischievous and heartless person. If so, she might not be the vain coquet which Trebeck had represented; but her affections would be engaged, and she would be equally lost to him.

As these distressing thoughts occurred, he gazed upon her with melancholy interest. But she had now recovered her self-possession, and her features, though serious, were composed; till, as she raised her head, and encountered his grave and steadfast eye, they assumed a severe and to him inexplicable expression of indignant scorn. It was a scorn which arose from the sudden impression, that Granby had received intimations from Trebeck, of the suspected insecurity of her fortune, and that the decay of his former love (if such it now deserved to be called) had sprung from mercenary motives. Firm in conscious rectitude, she was also angry that he should have had the indelicacy to pursue his enquiries, in such a tone of scrutiny and suspicion.

To Granby, these causes of her scorn were necessarily unknown. But in default of them, he had formed others for himself; and had hastily and passionately imputed her disdainful glance, to a contemptuous comparison of his undistinguished self, with the far-famed, fashionable, talented Trebeck. It was too much: with such an impression rankling in his bosom, he could no longer endure her presence. He rose hastily, coldly wished her a good night, made his adieus to the rest of the circle, and retired.

On his return home, his eye fell on two cards for further engagement^a that night. But he was in no disposition to enter into fresh gaieties. During the next two hours he paced up and down his own apartment, talking sometimes half aloud, recalling all that recently occurred, and gloomily meditating on its import. Caroline's manner troubled and perplexed him. There was much that he could not understand; yet nothing that he could interpret favourably; and the pains of uncertainty were not in this instance alleviated by hope. It was mortifying to perceive that jealousy had no place among the angry feelings with which she regarded him. His abjuration of Miss Darrell had been coldly, nay, even contemptuously received, and no happy change of demeanour followed this disavowal of affection for another. The cause of her displeasure lay elsewhere, and he knew not how to fathom it. He had been belied, he doubted not. Calumny must have been at work

in throwing artful misrepresentations over his conduct. But what part of his conduct could it touch, unless it were his imprudent attentions to Miss Darrell? and it was plain that the evil lay not there.

The fickleness with which Caroline had been charged by Trebeck, might have disposed her more easily to cast aside the slight remains of that affection which he was confident she once bore him, and give a credulous ear to well-applied slander. That such had been employed he could not doubt, and it only remained for him to learn by whom. He thought of Courtenay – could it be by him? Previous jealousy suggested the idea. But then he reflected on Courtenay's frank and generous nature, his high-minded honourable feelings, and the former intimacy of their friendship. But again jealousy got the better of this generous confidence in his friend's integrity, and whispered that Courtenay was the treacherous offender. 'But I will know, and soon,' said Granby; 'I will unmask the slanderer, be he who he may, and trace detraction to its source. Intercourse is now permitted, and however painful, I will seek it. I will see more, hear more, and either gain fresh hope, or learn to extinguish it entirely. Armed with the favour of the parents, an accepted visitor at their house, no idle delicacy shall restrain me from gathering, even from her own lips, the secret cause of her aversion.'

This resolution, together with the hopes resulting from it, sensibly diminished the acuteness of his feelings. All might yet be unravelled and retrieved. Mutual explanations would ensue; mutual ardour would revive, – heightened by the successful termination of a lovers' quarrel; and sanctioned by the now approving parents, Caroline would be still his own.

At the bare thought of this, a glow of pleasure burst upon his mind, like the gay and cheering gleam of sunshine that follows the dispersion of a thunder-storm. He seemed to have passed the climax of his misery; and his present prospect was bright and animating. He should enter on the morrow upon a course of operations of which he doubted not the eventual success; and with this resolution he retired to rest, where sleep surprised him still pondering on the doubtful future.

CHAP. IX.

Il ne faut pas beaucoup se vanter de la siècle^a dans les attachemens du coeur; elle n'existe presque jamais que quand l'amour propre l'emporte sur l'affection.²⁹ CORINNA.^b

DURING the last three or four weeks, Granby had seen very little of Tyrrel, except occasionally at parties in the evening; and even then, though his address and manner had been as friendly as usual, his communications were more brief, and his account of his plans and proceedings less copious and unreserved. At first Granby saw him almost every day, and was less frequently the seeker than the sought. But for some time, since the evening of the whist party, and the subsequent discovery of the lock of hair, Tyrrel had gradually declined in his attentions. Granby did not, however, apprehend any serious diminution of their former friendship; for Tyrrel, upon meeting him, always evinced an equal pleasure. But he nevertheless was rather uneasy at the change, and the feeling of desolate loneliness,^c which now began to occupy his mind, was every day augmented by the forbidding aspect of affairs between himself and Miss Jermyn, and the increasing distaste which he conceived for the society of his friend Courtenay. He longed at length for some one to whom he might unburthen his griefs; and he considered that as Tyrrel had already become acquainted with much, there was but little objection to informing him of the remainder, and making him a sort of friendly confidant.

On the morning after the dinner party at Mrs. Dormer's, Tyrrel called upon Granby, who, according to his late resolution, threw off part of his reserve, and introduced the subject of the last night's party – mentioning among other things the unaccountable conduct of Caroline.

'It is not every girl of Miss Jermyn's age that knows her own mind,' said Tyrrel drily.

Granby was struck with the remark, from its exact accordance with the charges which had been thrown out by Trebeck. 'Yes,' said he with a sigh, 'it is very true – too true – and I do not know how otherwise I can account for her behaviour; for what cause of offence I can lately have given her, I cannot possibly conceive.'

'I do not think it necessary to conclude that you have given her any,' replied Tyrrel.

“Then you think that her behaviour may be accounted for in other ways?” said Granby.

‘I should think so if I were you,’ was Tyrrel’s reply.

Granby returned no answer, but sat in gloomy rumination.

‘Hitherto,’ pursued Tyrrel, ‘you have never seen her but in the country, in a domestic circle at her father’s house. You must not forget that this is her first season in town. She has probably been a good deal admired, and her head half-turned by this time.’

‘All this may be very true,’ said Granby; ‘but it does not account for her displeasure towards me.’

‘Then I do not know what does account for it,’ said Tyrrel; ‘but this I know, that were I in your situation, the first voluntary step towards a reconciliation should be made by her; and if she persisted in holding back, I would never trouble myself about her.’

‘That,’ said Granby, ‘is matter of feeling rather than of judgment, and every one must act according to his own suggestions.’

‘Of course – of course,’ replied Tyrrel, and seemed in an instant lost in thought; while Granby’s eyes were fixed upon his countenance, as if they would dive into the subject of his meditations.

‘Have you seen anything of Courtenay lately?’ said Tyrrel, in rather a marked, expressive tone – rousing himself from his reverie.

‘What made you think of Courtenay?’ said Granby, quickly.

‘One cannot always explain why one thinks of people,’ replied Tyrrel, with a forced laugh; ‘but my question was a very simple one; have you seen him lately?’

‘I have not,’ replied Granby, and he looked at Tyrrel, as if expecting that some communication was to follow; but nothing was said, and after a pause, Granby returned once more to Caroline, saying, with a brightening countenance, that he trusted he should in time be enabled to arrive at the source of her present altered sentiments; more especially as he should now be able to see more of her than he had hitherto done: and he then mentioned the increased civility of Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn, their overtures of peace, and his consequent determination to call upon them that very day.

Tyrrel listened to this account, at first with symptoms of surprise, then with a serious and darkened brow, which was succeeded by a contemptuous smile. ‘Excellent!’ said he at last – ‘well done Baronet, and well done my Lady! oh you are a pretty pair of politicians! nobody’s civilities are better timed. Granby, how highly flattered you ought to be! I wonder that you can contain yourself. It is vastly civil on their part really – only, (ha! ha! excuse my laughing) – only it strikes me, somehow or other, as one of those curious circumstances which happen once or twice in a century, that the coolness of the daughter and the civilities of the parents should have shown themselves so very

naturally at the same time. It is rather singular, is not it? Why, surely Granby, if you are the quick-sighted person I took you for, you can see through all this as well as I can.'

Granby made no answer, but his darkening countenance showed that he could have made one.^a

'Yes, yes,' pursued Tyrrel, 'it is plain enough; anybody can see through it; what^b was the origin of your disagreement? Simply this, as far as I understand it: her sharp-sighted ladyship fancied she perceived strong indications of a mutual *penchant* between you and Miss Jermyn, which she thought vastly inconvenient, and highly prejudicial to her views, – which are neither more or less, I suppose, than to tack her daughter, as soon as she can, to some rich booby of high rank; and as long as there was any danger of your interference, she prudently kept you at arm's length. Well – in the course of a little time, the inconvenient attachment totally ceases on one side, or rather, I suppose, has been transferred elsewhere, and consequently Mr. Granby is no longer a dangerous person. Under these circumstances, she and Sir Thomas begin to think, that for decency's sake, and to quiet their consciences, they may as well make the *amende honorable*,³⁰ in the shape of a little attention to Mr. Granby, who has not been particularly well used, as far as I may be allowed to judge. That is my view of the case precisely; and all I can say is this, that if you are pleased at their behaviour, you are much more easily satisfied than I am.'

'I am inclined to fear, that there may be a good deal of truth in what you say,' replied Granby; 'but as I can only be certain of the simple fact, that they have begun to show a friendly disposition towards me, I think it would be ungenerous to enquire too minutely into their motives for so doing, and subject their conduct to unfavourable constructions.'

'Ungenerous, would it?' said Tyrrel sneeringly; 'well, that is mere matter of feeling also, and I won't pretend to argue about it; but if you are prepared for a contest of generosity, I wish you joy with all my heart, for you are sure to obtain an easy victory. But in such a case as this, every one must judge for himself. Some persons are very sensitive – unfortunately so, perhaps – and shrink from the slightest suspicion of insult, even when couched in the form of a civility.'

'Surely, Tyrrel, you don't mean that Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn intend to insult me.'

'Oh! I don't tax them with anything of the kind. You must not take what I say so strongly. I'm sure I should be very sorry to put you out of conceit with them. Excuse my saying so much; but you know there is a certain quality called pride, which has always been pretty strongly inherent in our family; and perhaps it shows itself rather more

strongly than it should do now. But you are a near relation, Granby; and I cannot help identifying your case with my own, and telling you what I would do if I were placed in your situation. I know you will excuse my hasty zeal for the family honour.'

'I trust,' said Granby, rather proudly, 'that I am not altogether unmindful of what is due to the honour of my family, and I hope I incur no danger of disgracing it.'

'Disgracing it! Lord help you, no. Who ever accused you? Come, come,' said he, laying his hand upon Granby's shoulder, 'I must not have you take offence; what are your plans for the morning?'

'I mean,' said Granby, 'to call upon Sir Thomas Jermyn. After that I am at your service.'

A shrug was Tyrrel's only reply.

'Ah!' said Granby, 'you are surprised that I should call. But now, only hear me. I agree with you entirely in a great deal that you have said; but still, I think, I ought to visit them. I may understand their motives; but there is no occasion for me to tell them so, while they are civil and friendly to me; and whatever my thoughts may be, I should^a not be backward in behaving the same to them. I may not, perhaps, give them my confidence; but they shall never have reason to accuse me of any breach of outward decorum. After what I have now said, I am sure you will no longer press me to give up my intention.'

'Press you! I? My dear fellow you must not suppose that I want to prevent you from visiting them, if you wish it. It is your affair, and not mine. It can be nothing to me, one way or another. A few odd thoughts just came across me, and I let them out, as I always do; but I see no great harm in it after all; and now I think of it, I owe the Jermyns a visit myself, and I shall be very happy to go there with you.'

Granby had nothing to object to this, and they were preparing to set out, when they discovered that it rained, and it was proposed that they should wait a little. They did so; but the sky assumed a dull, dark, unvaried gray;^b the rain pattered steadily down; the clank of a patten was now and then heard upon the flags below; and the increasing rattle of carriages shewed that many a hackney coach had been already put in requisition. In fact, there was nothing less in prospect than a thorough rainy afternoon. Granby and Tyrrel, therefore, resigned themselves to their fate, and tried to make the best of it; talked till their watches told them it was time to dress; and Tyrrel then retired to his own abode; while Granby, after dining at a friend's house, went rather late to the opera.

CHAP. X.

The spell is broke, the charm is gone!
Thus is it with life's fitful fever, –
We madly smile when we should groan; –
Delirium is our best deceiver.³¹

BYRON.

AMONG the persons whom Granby had lately added to his list of acquaintance, were Sir Godfrey and Lady St. Germain's and their daughter, – the casual occurrence of whose name had formerly perplexed and teized him, while in the prosecution of his enquiries respecting the arrival of the Jermyn family. They were agreeable people, good-humoured, lively, accessible, and disposed to shew civility to him. On the present evening, Lady St. Germain's offered him a place in her box; to which he came about the opening of the Ballet, and found there only her ladyship and her daughter. He in return could do no less than stay and attend them to their carriage.

The Ballet being concluded, they followed the crowd to the waiting-room, and were pioneered by Granby through the throng, towards the head of the steps that lead down to the eastern door of egress. Here they waited until they heard the welcome sound of 'Lady St. Germain's carriage,' stoutly vociferated from without; and the ladies, drawing their cloaks still closer around^a them, escorted by Granby, passed quickly down the staircase.

As they approached the colonade, on their way to the carriage, they could distinguish, through the complicated rattle which generally attends these crowded departures, sounds which indicated some furious struggle for precedency: the slashing of whips, the quick trampling and plunging of horses, and frequent loud and angry voices. The ladies, who were on either side of Granby, began to indicate their fears by a stronger pressure of his arm; but there was no time to be lost, and little distance to be traversed, and in a moment they were at the scene of action.

It was a spectacle of much confusion, which the dazzling glare of some of the lamps, and the flickering shadows cast by others, rendered it difficult at the first glance to understand. Foremost were police officers, striving to keep the passage clear against intruders, who were now pressing forward to the scene of contention. A carriage, apparently Lady St. Germain's, with one wheel almost on the

curb-stone, was resolutely striving to keep its place, and the coachman waging a war of whips and words with another, who, as it appeared, was cutting in from the second line. Lady St. Germain's footman now came up, indignantly exclaiming against this injustice; and Granby saw at once how the case stood. He therefore immediately stepped forward, and insisted on Lady St. Germain's carriage having its due turn.

'And what right have you, Sir, to insist?' exclaimed a gentleman behind him, who appeared to be the owner of the other carriage, and who was muffled up in a cloak, so that Granby did not distinguish his face.

'I have a right, and I will exert it,' said Granby, and stepped onward and extended his arm towards the horses' heads. His other arm was at this moment angrily grasped by his opponent, in whom he now recognized Sir Thomas Jermyn.

'Sir Thomas Jermyn!' exclaimed Granby.

'So, Sir!' said the baronet.

'Your carriage –' said Granby.

'My carriage,' interrupted Sir Thomas, 'is where it should be, and the other is not.'

'Nay, but hear me –'

'My carriage was called.'

'I beg your pardon.'

'You should not interfere – that is not your carriage.'

'The lady, Sir Thomas –'

'It does not signify talking, Sir,' pursued the angry Baronet; and here, in fact, he was right; for by this time the police officers had forced his carriage to recede – Lady St. Germain's carriage had drawn up – the door was opened – the step let down – and Lady St. Germain was calling upon Granby, to thank him for his successful exertions: he was forced to turn from Sir Thomas Jermyn, to perform the last duty of handing the lady into her carriage, and received and declined her civil entreaty to be allowed to take him on his way home.

On turning round, as she drove off, he just saw Sir Thomas Jermyn retiring with his party, after aⁿ fruitless anger, into the Opera House. His immediate impulse was to follow, and exonerate himself, by an explanation, from any rudeness, of which, in the hurry of the moment, he might have been guilty. With this view he was going in again, when his arm was caught by some person; and on looking round, he saw Tyrrel.

'So you have had a fracas?' was his first address. 'Who was it with?'

'Sir Thomas Jermyn.'

'And where now?'

'I want to see him, to explain.'

‘What can you be thinking of?’ (holding him back) – ‘Explain to a man in a passion!’

‘I must go – I must indeed.’

‘You had better not,’ said Tyrrel, still preventing him, ‘unless you have a mind for a *scene* in the waiting-room. You will only make the matter worse.’

‘Perhaps I may,’ said Granby considering: – ‘I believe you are right;’ and he turned back. ‘But I must explain the matter some time or other. I shall call upon him for that purpose to-morrow.’

‘Had you not better write?’ said Tyrrel. They had by this time passed on, and Tyrrel proposed, that as they were close to his lodgings, they should step in and talk the matter over, as Granby seemed so anxious about it. They accordingly did so, and Tyrrel urged what seemed to Granby such satisfactory reasons for writing instead of calling, that he sat down immediately, and wrote a note fully explaining all the circumstances. Having done so, he shewed Tyrrel what he had written, who highly approved of it all, and offered to send it by his own servant the next morning. It was therefore left with him for that purpose, and Granby took his leave, with a promise to his cousin, who seemed to take so kind an interest in his fate, to give him early information of the result.

Satisfied of the propriety of the step which he had taken, he found himself, on the following morning, in so pleasing a state of joyous contentment, as to be scarcely impatient for the arrival of an answer, and well assured, that whenever it should come, it must be favourable.

About noon he was informed that Mr. Tyrrel’s servant had brought a letter for him, but had not waited for any answer; and a wafered note was handed to him, which he eagerly opened, and read as follows: –

‘Sir Thomas Jermyn has received a note from Mr. Granby, concerning the affair of last night; and takes the liberty of saying, in reply, that he desires no further communication with Mr. Granby, on that or any other subject.’

Words can but feebly convey his grief, surprise, and indignation on the perusal of this laconic insult. He gazed bewildered on the paper, as if doubtful whether he read aright – then threw it from him on the table, and paced hastily across the room – then snatched it up again, and there were the hateful characters still staring him in the face. Once he was going to tear it into atoms – but he checked himself, and, with a quick revulsion of feeling, folded it up with scrupulous care, as if it were something dear and precious – smiling in bitter scorn as he did so. He then slowly and methodically unlocked a writing-desk, and carefully placed it in the innermost recess.

In doing so, his eye fell upon the long-treasured lock of hair, It was agony to view it *then*. It recalled, in all its former freshness, much that was once dear, and now must be forgotten. He took up the paper, pressed it to his lips, and hastily unclosed it. "Tis for the last time," said he; "but why at all? Why resign myself to the dangerous luxury of fruitless recollections?" and he replaced the treasured relic by the letter. There, at once, before his eyes, lay these two conflicting memorials. There was the gift that fed his hopes, and there beside it the hateful letter that destroyed them. They seemed to comprise a brief epitome of all that he had felt. They were types of his passion's birth and death.

He indulged awhile in this painful contemplation, and then removed the lock and letter from his sight. Scarcely had he done so, when Tyrrel's step was heard upon the stairs, and that gentleman entered the room. He appeared in high spirits, and cheerfully accosted Granby.

"My servant tells me you have received an answer from Sir Thomas Jermyn. All is cleared up of course. I suppose I may congratulate you on the result of your correspondence."

Granby shook his head in mournful silence.

"How! what?" said Tyrrel, with a look of astonishment. "Was not his answer a civil one?"

"Read it," said Granby, as he put the letter into Tyrrel's hand.

Tyrrel conned it over and over for some time, apparently in silent amazement, as if he scarcely credited the testimony of his own senses.

"It is conclusive at any rate," said he, at length, as he folded it up and returned it to Granby. "There is an end of your intercourse with the Jermyns. Now, tell me, was I mistaken when I warned you of the hollowness of their pretended friendship? See how readily they have seized upon this paltry pretext for a fresh quarrel. I conclude you will not think the note deserving of an answer?"

"Certainly not," said Granby. "Indeed, it refuses to receive any."

"Why, what the deuce! are you going to keep it?" said Tyrrel, seeing Granby restore it to its place in his escritoire. "A pleasant object to recur to! You must really be a dangerous person, if you treasure up your insults so."

Granby began to grow ashamed of the feeling which prompted him to preserve the letter. "You are right," said he. "It is neither wise nor pleasant to keep such things before one's eyes;" and so saying, he threw the letter into the fire.

"That is the fate it deserves," said Tyrrel, aiding it's destruction with the poker. "And now, my dear fellow, let us think no more about these people. Their insults are not worth remembering. Thank God! You

have many true friends left, and where a truer than myself?' and he shook Granby warmly by the hand.

With heartfelt satisfaction did Granby return the friendly pressure. Never are we more accessible to affectionate emotions, than when lately wounded by the hand of unkindness; and after the desolate loneliness of spirit with which he viewed his desertion by the Jermyns, it was with a returning glow of the most grateful fervour that he blessed Heaven for the possession of so firm and so kind a friend as Tyrrel.

CHAP. XI.

Physician. But yet some rumours great are stirring; and if Lorenzo should prove false (which none but the gods can tell), you then, perhaps, would find that – (*Whispers.*)

Bayes. Now he whispers.

Usher. Then, Sir, most certain 'twill in time appear
These are the seasons that have moved him to't.

First he –

Bayes. Now the other whispers.³² (*Whispers.*)

THE REHEARSAL.

TYRREL did indeed evince a most lively interest in the situation of Granby, and apparently a most affectionate solicitude to soothe his sorrows. Without dwelling needlessly on the past, and teasing his companion with hackneyed topics of consolation, he led his mind by the subdued cheerfulness of his conversation to wean itself insensibly from painful recollections. Without pressing him with coarse impatience to drown care, and assume an uncongenial mirth, he tried to throw amusement in his way, and lead him gently on to gaiety.

Accordingly it was proposed, and agreed to, that they should go to Vauxhall³³ together – first dining at the Clarendon,³⁴ where Granby was to go before and order the dinner – as Tyrrel pleaded an engagement elsewhere till seven.

At the next table to that at which Granby placed himself to wait for his friend, were two gentlemen, whose faces he had frequently seen, and he believed in company with the Jermyns, but with whose names he was unacquainted. They were so near, that although they spoke in an under-tone, the conversation was distinctly audible; but it was not interesting, and although he heard almost every syllable, Granby was for some time not sensible of the meaning of anything they said. They were talking about Epsom. Presently, however, he thought he heard the name of Tyrrel. It might be fancy – he could not be certain – but he was roused, in spite of himself, to a consciousness of what the parties were saying.

'He has made a good thing of the last meeting, I rather think,' said one of the gentlemen.

'He has been very lucky,' said the other; 'and luck has been everything with him. He has a monstrous random style of betting – takes up long odds against *dark* horses.'

‘Ay, dark to others, but not to him. No, no – he’s a deeper hand than you are aware of. He is always pretty well in the secret.’

‘It is easy to say so – but how can he?’

‘How? Oh, there are ways and means – there are such things as trials you know.’

‘I know there are; and I know, too, that none but the parties themselves can be present.’

‘Nobody else *ought* – but somebody *can*. Did you never hear of the man with the telescope? or about the mole catcher?’

‘No – what of him?’

‘Only a masquerading trick. It is not certain – only suspected. It is pretty well known, at any rate, that a certain person cleared a good deal by backing the horse that won the trial.’

‘Then you mean that he went disguised in this way to see them run.’

The other nodded assent.

‘But did not they send him away?’

‘Of course they did – but they could not swear to him. It might be he, or it might not. No – it was devilish well managed. And, then, on certain occasions he can disguise his horses as well as himself. Did you never hear of the aged horse that ran at — as a three-year old?’

‘Yes – well – and was he concerned?’

‘So it is supposed. But then^a the fact was never ascertained – mere suspicion. The horse died very suddenly, as you may have heard; and was buried very suddenly too. They say somebody dug to look at his mouth – but they found that the teeth were all knocked out.’

‘And do you really suppose,’ said the other, ‘that Tyr–’

‘Hush – don’t mention names.’

Granby felt almost certain that the name he was going to utter was ‘Tyrrel,’ but still he was not quite convinced.

‘These things,’ pursued the last speaker, ‘are not brought home – he is not blown yet – so I would not have you talk about it – but I can believe it every bit, for I take him to be as infernal a sharper as any one earth. They say his father and he have split.’

‘What? does Lord Malton know anything of this?’

‘Lord Malton!’ ejaculated Granby, almost audibly, ‘then it is Tyrrel!’

‘I don’t know,’ – said the last speaker, – ‘but’ – and then suddenly checking himself, he added, in a lower voice, ‘talk of the devil –’ At this, Granby turned his head, and saw Tyrrel entering. He immediately accosted the two speakers as Charlecote and Clifton, and introduced Granby to them as his relation. Granby civilly bowed to each. Clifton and Charlecote bent rather stiffly; did not seem to be perfectly at their ease; made awkward attempts to be cordial with Tyrrel; and cast each a suspicious glance at Granby, as if to inquire

whether he had overheard them. But Granby took care that neither his looks nor manner should give them any information. Dinner shortly made its appearance, and Tyrrel and Granby withdrew to a table apart, to discuss the good things that were set before them, and by which the attention of Granby might be supposed, from his resolute taciturnity, to be deeply engrossed.

But he was not thinking of his dinner, however well it seemed to occupy him; he was ruminating on the singular and alarming conversation of which he had been the accidental hearer. What frightful suspicions did it open! Tyrrel a sharper! deeply engaged in dishonest practices! It seemed impossible. And yet the undesigning manner in which it was mentioned – the respectability of the parties – acquaintance^a too: – these things recalled his fears. But the charges were merely surmised – not proved. They could not be true – and yet, if they were not, still it was shameful to be considered capable of such offences. Why should these imputations be fastened upon Tyrrel, unless he had in some way given cause for it? It was difficult to say – these were cruel doubts – and he longed, yet knew not how to end them.

These speculations engaged him long in spite of change of place and scene; nor could they even be dissipated by the gay varieties of the evening; and he was still thinking of the conversation, when he saw near him Clifton and Charlecote. He watched his opportunity; separated himself from Tyrrel; and finding Clifton apart from his companion, stepped up, and requested the favour of a few minutes conversation. Mr. Clifton stared, bowed, and prepared to listen.

‘Mr. Clifton,’ said Granby, ‘I feel that I owe you an explanation. Despising as I do the character of listener, I think myself bound in honour to inform you, that I^b unintentionally overheard the conversation which passed between yourself and Mr. Charlecote this evening, at the Clarendon, and that I know to whom it alluded.’

‘Well, Sir?’ said Mr. Clifton, settling his cravat, and looking puzzled as to what would follow, but ready at any rate to stand upon the defensive.

‘I trust,’ pursued Granby, ‘I may be assured, that as I had no intention of overhearing these charges, so neither had you, at the time of making them, any wish that I, the relation of Mr. Tyrrel, should hear what you were saying. You did not probably know who I was.’

‘Certainly I did not,’ said Mr. Clifton, ‘and therefore could not have been actuated by any hostile intentions towards yourself.’

‘Of that I am convinced,’ replied Granby. ‘It is a distressing thing, Sir,’ he continued, ‘as you must be aware, thus to become the hearer for the first time of charges which so deeply affect the character of a near relation.’

‘Is this, then, the first time that you have heard them?’ said Clifton, eyeing him sharply.

‘The very first I assure you.’

‘Indeed! but I can understand that – you are a near relation, and people would not like to tell you – besides, these things are known but to a few.’

‘I am glad to hear it,’ said Granby. ‘As for myself I have been in happy ignorance till the present evening; and having accidentally heard so much, I am naturally desirous to know more, and to learn from you upon what ground these charges rest.’

‘I cannot in honour give you my authorities,’ said Clifton; ‘but I will repeat, to you as circumstantially as I can, the facts which I have heard from them.’ And then he went over in a more detailed manner, though still imperfectly, the information which he had already given.

‘Now observe,’ said Clifton, ‘that these circumstances rest chiefly upon surmise – I do not tell them to you as proved – nay – even go to the original source, and you would perhaps find that they only spring from probable conjecture. But, notwithstanding that, I verily believe that some men’s minds are perfectly made up. Different persons are satisfied with different degrees of evidence. You, as a near relation, will of course receive none but the strongest; unless,’ he added significantly, ‘unless you bring the testimony of previous character to remove your doubts.’

‘I shall do so,’ said Granby, rather warmly. ‘I have such reliance on the honourable character of my relation, that I cannot allow myself to suppose for an instant that these imputations can have sprung from facts.’

‘Our thoughts are our own,’ said Mr. Clifton, with a bow of civil dissent. ‘I will not hurt your feelings by troubling you with mine.’

Some further conversation ensued, but as Granby found that he could learn from Clifton nothing more decisive than these vague surmises, he parted from him – having first, however, extracted a promise, that in the present state of his knowledge nothing more should transpire on the subject.

The thoughts and feelings of Granby now became most agitating and distressing; and peculiarly so at the present moment, when Tyrrel’s kindness had excited a warm interest in his favour, and recently rejected by other friends, Granby leaned with confidence on him.

Confidence, though ‘a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom,’³⁵ takes quick and vigorous root in the breast of youth; and Granby, in spite of these startling inuendoes, still felt no disposition to doubt the integrity of his cousin. The question now presented itself, whether he should or should not apprize him of these reflections on his character. The conclusion was that he should not. It might produce

unpleasant – nay, dangerous consequences. If the charges were unfounded, they would not long be credited, and the character of Tyrrel would soar superior and unharmed. If true (and he dreaded, even for the sake of argument, to admit the position) what would the communication avail? But Granby did not long remain in this state of doubt. A fresh circumstance soon occurred to press conviction on his mind.

CHAP. XII.

But he knows more than other people; he understands dexterity of hand; and would you have an ace, a size, or what throw you please, he will immediately give it you.³⁶ LIFE OF GUZMAN D'ALFARACHE.

THERE had been a good deal of conversation, during the last few days, about a successful attack which had been made by the Bow-street officers,³⁷ upon a noted gaming-house³⁸ in the vicinity of Pall Mall, in which they surprised a large party at play, and succeeded in securing a considerable number of them. Granby had read the accounts of the proceedings in the papers with some curiosity; and as he happened to breakfast in company with a friend who was equally interested, it was soon settled that they should go to Bow-street, to hear the result of the examination.

Arrived there, Granby had not long surveyed the motley scene around him, before his attention was attracted by the strong resemblance of a person present to his former partner at whist, and boon companion at Tyrrel's rooms, the obliging Mr. Althorp. The dress was different, and the hair was longer; but the face and figure were strikingly similar; and though there was rather more quickness in the eye, there was a good deal of that placid unconcern, that mild intelligence, which characterized the manner of the gentleman in question. From the situation in which he stood, it was doubtful whether he was a prisoner or spectator. 'If the former,' thought Granby, 'it cannot certainly be Althorp himself,' and he looked hard at him for sometime^a in the hope that he might catch his eye. At last he did so, and although he made an acknowledging nod, for the purpose of trying if it was really he, no sign of recognition followed, and the small grey eyes of the supposed Althorp wandered across him with such apparent unconsciousness, that Granby soon persuaded himself he had been deceived in his first belief of the identity of the person with his late associate. Meanwhile the business proceeded, and after various depositions had been heard respecting the share of one Wilkins in the late transaction – in which it was declared that he was found in the act of play, that he was one of the dealers at the rouge et noir table, and was supposed to have a share in the profits of the house – the magistrate turning as it appeared towards the person on whose appearance Granby had been speculating, said 'Now Mr. Wilkins, having heard

the depositions which are made respecting you, if you have any thing to say in your own behalf I am ready to attend to it.'

'You are very obliging,' said the supposed Althorp, with a civil sneer.

Granby started – it was the very voice, beyond all doubt, and it was a peculiar voice, which when once heard, could not easily be mistaken. The combined resemblance of face, figure, manner, and voice, rendered his identity no longer questionable; it was the man himself. But what a strange revolution of ideas! what a fearful change of preconceived opinions did this unexpected discovery effect! the gentle Mr. Althorp was in close league with ruffians and sharpers; the novice at whist, who professed that cards were not in his province, was found deeply engaged in midnight play – the suspected partner in a gambling house; and this cold blooded delinquent at the bar of justice, was the very man whom his near relation, his warm friend Tyrrel, had pressed him to visit, had recommended to his close acquaintance, and praised to him as 'the best fellow breathing.' And had he, indeed, been fluttering so near the flame? Had he been the object, the proposed victim of a deliberate plan to lead him to his ruin? Alas! he could no longer doubt it. A sudden light burst in upon him, and he clearly recollected many trifling acts and expressions, which occurred at Tyrrel's on that night, and which, though then too insignificant for notice, now seemed plain indications of such a purpose.

Granby was so much engrossed with this gloomy discovery, that for some time he paid little attention to the defence of Althorp, alias Wilkins, who cross-examined his witnesses with respect to the fact of dealing the cards, with considerable ingenuity, and challenged any one of them to prove that he was a sharer in the profits of the bank. When he had finished his defence, he looked with an unabashed and steady eye towards Granby, who told him with a glance that he was discovered. This glance he answered, with a slight motion of acknowledgement, while a malignant smile of cool effrontery settled on his countenance.

Disgusted at the conduct of the man, and caring little about his fate, Granby was now desirous to be gone, and as his friend had also heard enough, they extricated themselves from the throng, and left the office.

To Granby the past scene afforded matter for anxious thought, and raised many suspicions of a distressing nature: suspicions, alas! they could scarcely be termed: strengthened as they were by the recollection of all he had overheard at the Clarendon, they bore too much the air of certainty. Yet he refused entirely to admit the infamy of his relation, and struggled manfully against conviction. He considered it unjust to condemn him without a hearing, for the vices of a previous

associate. He also might have been deceived; the humble and mild exterior of the man, might well have blinded him to his real character.

But all this he was determined to discover. Doubt, in such a case, was not only painful, but dangerous. He, therefore, without loss of time repaired to Tyrrel's lodgings, to solve this alarming mystery at once. Tyrrel was not at home; he had gone out late to take his ride, and the servant said, might not be back for an hour or more. Granby, therefore, did not wait his return, as he had an engagement to dine at Mr. Duncan's, but determined on calling the next day. Arrived at Mr. Duncan's, he found there a small, but fashionable and pleasant party, and he quickly forgot all his doubts and fears, and gaily gave himself up to the present enjoyment of society.

Lady Harriet, with all her oddities, was a pleasant person in her own house; for she had a great deal of vivacity, and a thorough hatred of form; and though she never did the honours *en maîtresse de maison*,³⁹ and would have fainted at the very thought of sitting at the head of her own table, she was always alive to the amusement of her guests; liked people to do and say whatever they pleased; and wished to see every body in her house as much at home as she was herself.

During the course of the evening, conversation happening to turn upon the recent discomfiture of the gamblers, Duncan spoke of the prevalence of gambling abroad, and related a few circumstances connected with it, which had come within his own knowledge.

'While I was at Paris,' said he to Granby, 'discovery was made of a singular and ingenious trick with dice, which had been long practised by a couple of sharpers with great success. It had this advantage, that it might be done with any box or dice, and if dexterously performed, was almost secure against detection. Fortunately, however, it was difficult, and required long previous practice. One of the men confessed that he had laboured at it several hours a day for three months, before he ventured to put it in practice. I believe I can show you, in a bungling sort of way, how they did it; look,'^a said he, taking dice and dice-box out of a back-gammon board which lay on a table near him, 'we will suppose they want to make one of the dice turn up a six – they take it up so,' (exemplifying as he went on) 'between the thumb and middle finger, the right-hand die showing an ace uppermost. This they retain against the side of the box, with the middle finger, covering it with the first, while the other die is rattled against it in the box. On delivery, the die that was held against the box is turned up on the reversed face, and in this manner, one of the dice may always be thrown of whatever number the caster wishes. Happily,' said he to Granby, 'you are not, I believe, much given to play, and therefore are not liable to be exposed to such a trick; but should you ever, when

playing with any person, see him take up the dice in this way,' (showing the manner) 'remember what I have said, and watch him.'

Conversation then took a different turn; the company began to drop off; and Granby, who had an invitation to a ball given that night by the Duchess of Ilminster, soon afterwards took his leave.

CHAP XIII.

I see thy heart;
There is a frightful glitter in thine eye
Which doth betray thee. Inly-tortured man,
This is the revelry of drunken anguish.⁴⁰

REMORSE.

IT was a fine, warm, dry night, and Granby walked down towards the Duchess's house in St. James's-square. Thinking, however, by the way, that he should arrive too early at the ball, and remembering that Jermyn-street was in his road, he determined to take a relation's liberty with Tyrrel, and notwithstanding the unseasonableness of the hour, call and satisfy himself respecting Althorp. On being shown up, he found Tyrrel and Courtenay together, sitting at a table playing with dice, apparently at hazard. Several wine-glasses, and two long necked French bottles, stood near them. Courtenay's countenance was flushed, eager, and agitated. Tyrrel's bore the same calm, cool, imperturbable composure, the same look of indifference which was its usual characteristic, especially at play. He started, however, and appeared to colour slightly at the entrance of Granby – who apologized for his intrusion, and explained a part of his reasons for coming in; and then asked him what they were playing at.

'Only a little sequin hazard,'⁴¹ said Tyrrel; 'just a few throws *pour passer le temps*.'

Granby thought that Courtenay's countenance belied this assertion; he however, made no observation, and taking up the paper of the morning, tried to amuse himself with reading over again the 'Fashionable arrangements,'⁴² and advertisements for the sale of 'seasoned hunters,' and 'cabinet bijoux, the undoubted property of an eminent connoisseur, returned from the continent.'

Tired of this, he was going, by way of conversation, *apropos* of hazard, to mention, the circumstance which had been related to him that evening at Duncan's, when he was surprised and arrested by perceiving Tyrrel take up the dice in precisely the same manner which Duncan had shewn him, as practised by the Parisian gamblers. Thinking he might be deceived, he drew his chair behind Tyrrel, pretending again to be engaged with the paper, while he kept a watchful eye upon all his motions.

He saw that Tyrrel contrived, upon taking up the dice, that one of them should present an ace or deuce uppermost; and that the same dice, upon being thrown, never failed to come up a six or five; that he took them up with his thumb and middle finger, covering them at the same time adroitly with his first; and that at the time he did this, he generally addressed some short remark to Courtenay, for the purpose, probably, of diverting his attention. In short, after careful observation, Granby arrived at the sad conviction, that Tyrrel was winning unfairly. To what amount he was plundering his victim, Granby could not tell, and did not think proper again to enquire. The games were set down without reference to the stake. He had been told they were playing low; but the feverish agitation of Courtenay, and his occasional murmured ejaculations of desperation and dismay, plainly shewed that it was no slight loss which called them forth.

How to proceed was the next point, and it was one of painful consideration. He anticipated serious consequences from an immediate exposure, and thought it more advisable to take no notice at present, and allow the parties to proceed; trusting at the same time, that the apparent ruin which was gathering round Courtenay, would prove a reasonable and useful warning. He therefore took up his hat, and prepared to depart, — asking his companions if they were disposed to accompany him to the ball.

Tyrrel pleaded a head-ache in excuse; Courtenay said hastily that he would soon follow him; and Granby left the house. But with feelings how different from those with which he had lately entered it! Tyrrel, his near relation, the heir apparent of the head of his house, his intimate friend, his frequent companion, the man, who, whatever had been his failings, had ever hitherto appeared to Granby to evince for him the truest and warmest regard: this man had sunk at once into a detected cheat! And who was the victim of his acts? One for whom, till lately, Granby had ever entertained a sincere regard, and of which regard, pity for this situation now caused a considerable return, in spite of the suggestions of a jealousy, which, although he could not approve, he felt unable entirely to allay.

It was an agonizing conflict; and when he came within sight of the crowded carriages, and the gay lights which gleamed from the windows of the Duchess's house, and heard the enlivening note of the band within, the scene appeared such utter mockery of his harassed feelings, that he turned abruptly away, and made the circuit of the square, before he felt sufficiently composed to enter the house.

Never was splendour and gaiety more wasted than they were that night on Granby; never did beauty appear less attractive. He met many acquaintances, but felt no pleasure in seeing any of them; and

began to understand for once in his life the true meaning of solitude in a crowd.

This feeling, however, had scarcely taken possession of him, before his whole attention was arrested by the sight of Courtenay, who was leaning against the wall near one of the doorways; his eyes fixed and glaring; his cheeks pale, save only one deep hectic spot; his lips compressed, as if his teeth were clenched; and his whole countenance exhibiting a frightful picture of mental suffering, and a melancholy contrast with the gay scene by which he was surrounded.

Knowing, as Granby did, the cause of this emotion, he was so struck by the sight, that he continued for a short time gazing at him, quite unmindful of the enquiry of a female acquaintance, as to who that person was, who looked so like the statue in *Don Giovanni*?⁴³

When Granby turned his head again after answering this enquiry, Courtenay was no longer there; and his eye in vain wandered round the room in search of him. He, therefore, as soon as he was at liberty, walked about, endeavouring to find him; and after looking everywhere up stairs in vain, descended to the refreshment-room. There, at the corner of one of the long tables, wedged in by persons supping edge-ways, he beheld Courtenay, with a countenance no longer pale and ghastly, but flushed and wild, as if under the influence of intoxication. He had just drunk a large tumbler full of Champagne, and as Granby came up to him, was extending it for more.

‘Courtenay! – what are you doing?’ said Granby in a low voice, taking him by the arm.

‘What you had better do,’ said Courtenay, with a drunken smile. ‘Here – you – Gunter, a fresh bottle for a friend of mine.’

‘No – no – I want none,’ said Granby; ‘and I’m sure you do not.’

‘Don’t I? – we’ll see that,’ replied Courtenay wildly. ‘What the devil else did I come here for? It is all that is left me – so – here – another tumblerful.’

‘Don’t – pray don’t,’ reiterated Granby, ‘you will expose yourself.’

‘Expose myself! What! – you think I am light-headed? My head is not so light as my purse, my boy – so here goes to balance them.’

‘Courtenay!’ said Granby, in a low earnest tone, ‘let me intreat you to come away – your head is turned already.’

‘I shall waltz the better,’ cried Courtenay, ‘one glass more – and then, Granby, you dog! – I’ll be the life of the party above stairs.’

I’ll make those waltz who never waltzed before,
And those who always waltzed now waltz the more.⁴⁴

Am not I poetical? It is either from punch or poverty – devil take me if I know which. Nothing enlivens a man like ruin. So – another glass – and then a waltz. Who says I am not irresistible? I’ll bet you fifty

pounds more than I am worth in the world I make Miss Jermyn waltz with me, though she pretends to say she never does – with me, my boy, and me only. I am the person to make her say, “Yes.”

Granby withdrew the hand with which he held his companion's arm. The pang of jealousy returned, and he was momentarily tempted to leave his rival to his fate. But better feelings instantly prevailed; and principle recalled him to his duty. ‘Shame! shame!’ said he to himself. ‘Is a wretched half-bewildered being, frantic with wine and misery, a worthy object of my jealousy? No, I will save him, though for her;’ and with increased earnestness he pressed his entreaties upon Courtenay's unheeding ear.

Courtenay now had begun to attract attention by his conduct and expressions, and Granby, though afraid to look round and encounter the eyes that were directed towards him, could hear a few significant remarks, and could catch the words, ‘terribly *cut*,’ and ‘advisable to cut *him* for the present,’ from a knot of young Guardsmen; and ‘improper state,’ and ‘strange behaviour,’ from one or two elderly female voices.

Their unhappy subject heard them not, and still resisted the entreaties of Granby. ‘Here, more wine,’ he still exclaimed. ‘Granby, you are a good fellow, but a cursed croaker. You want to check my flow of spirits. But it won't do – they are proof, you dog! – proof spirits. Look at me; am not I a happy devil? I have nothing left to care about.’

‘Courtenay,’ said Granby, ‘do not forget yourself.’

‘I don't forget myself,’ said Courtenay, lowering his voice, with a fearful change of tone. ‘I wish I could. I had already, but for you. Go, leave me.’

‘I will not leave you,’ said Granby. ‘Only hear me; and if you value your happiness –’

‘I don't I don't,’ interrupted Courtenay, with fierce impatience. ‘Value it! it is gone – and let it go; I can do without it. I can laugh still, as well as any,’ and he uttered a wild discordant laugh, which Granby heard with an indescribable thrill of horror. But he did not relinquish his object in despair. The urgency of the case excited him to another effort, and grasping the arm of his unhappy friend, he said in a low stern tone, with a penetrating look, ‘Courtenay, follow me. I have a request that must be heard – your future fate depends upon it.’

Courtenay gazed for an instant upon Granby, and then bowed his head in token of acquiescence. He seemed to be sobered by the appeal, and followed in silence to an unoccupied corner of the hall. He then raised his face in expectation of Granby's address. His countenance had been suddenly and completely changed. The eye had lost its frantic glare, and the burning flush upon the cheek was rapidly succeeded by an ashy paleness.

‘Courtenay,’ said Granby, ‘I fear you have lost –’

‘All, all,’ said Courtenay, hastily. ‘Ask nothing – it is past – you see before you a degraded,^a beggared wretch – ruined, ruined past redemption – Heaven help me! I am both fool and scoundrel – lost – quite lost –’ and he wiped away with his burning hand the cold drops that started on his forehead.

Granby put his own arm within his, and led him from the house in silence. ‘Courtenay,’ said he, when they found themselves in the open air, ‘I am grieved for your situation; and I would fain assist you.’

‘You cannot, you cannot. Do not talk of it. I know you wish me well; but do not speak to me of assistance – it is beyond your power, Granby. It is cruel to deceive me with false hopes.’

‘It is not my intention,’ said Granby ‘to raise false hopes. I have, however, much to say to you; but not to-night. My communication must be deferred till to-morrow. But meanwhile give me a promise.’

‘A promise! oh, I’ll promise any thing,’ said he with returning wildness of manner. ‘My word is now as good as my bond. I could not have said that yesterday. See the advantages of ruin. Granby!’ he suddenly added with a ghastly smile, laying his hand upon his companion’s shoulder, ‘do you think a man in my condition may go to the expense of powder and ball?’

Granby shuddered at the horrible hint which this question had conveyed. ‘I will not leave you,’ said he, in a tone of determination, ‘till you have satisfied me that you will not make any rash attempt. Oh, Courtenay! miserable though you still may be, I entreat you by every –’

‘Fear nothing,’ said Courtenay, mournfully,^b ‘I was not in earnest. Had I any such horrible intention as you suppose, I should not have told it to you. No,’ he added, with a shudder, ‘bad as I am, I am not the wretch you take me for. But what is the promise you require?’

‘That you will see me early to-morrow morning, and none but me.’

‘Where is the use of that? Why should you ask it?’

‘I cannot now explain; but it is a small request. Promise to comply.’

‘Comply! ay, compliance has been my ruin – but – well – there – I promise it.’

‘You will see me then to-morrow?’

‘I will, I will,’ said Courtenay, in a low quick, hurried tone, and with his feverish hand he pressed that of Granby; then turning away, he set off running with furious speed along the flags, and in a few seconds was out of sight.

Granby stood fixed to the spot where Courtenay had left him, listening to the sounds of his steps till they were lost in silence. He recalled his thoughts, subdued his agitation, and tried to fortify his nerves for the approaching interview with Tyrrel. This, he felt, would be indeed a trial. Rudely as the veil had been torn aside, and cruel as was the revolution which circumstances has produced in his opinion,

yet of this change he hardly knew the terrible extent, till he came to apply it to the painful test of actual communication. Two days had not yet intervened since his hand was kindly pressed by Tyrrel, and he had viewed him as his warmest friend, and made him the depository of griefs and hopes which he had never trusted to any one else.

And this man he was now compelled to treat as a degraded being; to charge with crime, and load with infamy. Two days ago, he beheld in Tyrrel the attached relation – he must now regard him as the secret foe. Two days ago he shut his ears to insinuation, and firmly trusted in Tyrrel's honour – and where was that honour now?^a Gone for ever! And what was Tyrrel? A detected sharper. But he must not dwell on thoughts like these; he must steel his mind with principle and firmness, and advance with courage to the arduous task. He shortly reviewed his plan of proceeding, and walked on with a hasty, and decided step, towards Tyrrel's lodgings.

CHAP. XIV.

Montrose. See how weak
An ill cause is! You are already fallen:
What can you look for now?

Claremond. ————— Fool, use thy fortune:
And so he counsels thee, that if we had
Changed places, instantly would have cut thy throat,
Or digged thy heart out.

Montrose. ————— In requital of
That savage purpose I must pity you.⁴⁵

The Parliament of Love.

ARRIVED at the door, Granby stopped once more to collect his thoughts. Irresolution partially triumphed, and a slight tremor came over him as he raised his hand to the knocker. The half minute that elapsed before his 'clamorous appeal'⁴⁶ received its answer, appeared as we commonly say, 'an age;' and with burning impatience, and much withal of trepidation, did he listen to the shuffling and creaking of the footsteps within.

The door at length was half opened by a drowsy servant, with a candle in his hand, who, peeping at him, with a look of much surprise at the unreasonableness of the visit, told him that his master was still in his sitting-room. This was sufficient, and Granby hastily passed the servant, and without waiting to be announced, proceeded quietly but rapidly to the room. On opening the door, he saw Tyrrel, his head resting on one hand, while the other held a pencil. He was deeply^a intent on a paper before him, on which he appeared to have been writing figures; two^b candles, burnt almost to the socket, threw their dim light upon his face; and on the same table stood a wine glass, and a small phial containing laudanum, to the use of which pernicious drug Tyrrel had lately begun to habituate himself.

Tyrrel did not raise his eyes from the paper immediately upon Granby's entrance, thinking probably that it was the servant; but scarcely had he made two steps into the room when Tyrrel looked up, and on seeing him, started from his chair in seeming terror, and crumpling up the paper, threw it from him into the fire place.

'How now, Granby? here again!' said he; and then catching the stern expression of his countenance, he faintly added, 'For heaven's sake what *is* the matter?'

Granby carefully closed the door, before he returned him any answer. 'My errand,' said he, 'concerns Courtenay.'

'Courtenay! good God! what has happened to him?'

'Nothing but what you know already.'

'What I know! explain yourself.'

'I mean to do so – and briefly too. I come to demand that you renounce all claims upon him for money which he has lost to you, and that you refund –'

'Granby, are you mad?'^a

'Here me out – and that you refund what you have *unfairly* won this night.'

'Unfairly! 'sdeath! does the scoundrel presume to say –'

'Be calm if you can,' said Granby firmly, 'for violence is useless. He says nothing – he knows nothing; it is I who say it, and know it, and make this claim for him in consequence.'

'And by what authority, Sir,' exclaimed Tyrrel, in a lofty tone, 'by what authority do you dare to say this to me?'

'By the authority of a friend to both, and a relation to you.'

'Cant! – cursed cant! – Friend and relation! Is this your cloak for a scandalous charge? Do you think this will serve, Sir? No – give me proof of what you insinuate.'

'I *insinuate* nothing; my charge is a direct one, and will require a direct reply. As for proofs, you shall have them; and for this purpose I shall ask for the dice and dice-box that you used this night.'

'With all my heart,' said Tyrrel, 'and I would show them as freely to the whole world – There – take them – examine them well – but remember, Sir, you will do it at your peril; for if they are not proved deceptive,' said he, striking his clenched hand upon the table, 'then by heavens –'

'This threat is useless,' interrupted Granby 'for I shall not even examine them. But observe me for a moment –'

Tyrrel muttered something between his teeth, and turned away.

'Observe me, I say,' repeated Granby sternly; 'you asked for proofs, and I am prepared to give them,' and then, without uttering another word, he slowly exemplified with the dice the whole process of Tyrrel's fraudulent manœuvres.

A dead silence ensued; Tyrrel leaning in guilty confusion on the back of a chair, while Granby stood opposite, erect, and motionless, with his hands clasped, apparently lost in painful thought. He was balancing in his mind conflicting sentiments of justice and mercy, and meditating in what way to meet the probable contrition of his guilty relative; but he was not prepared to see him seek a refuge in effrontery, and started as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet when Tyrrel

stepped up, and with a coarse smile slapped him familiarly on the shoulder.

'Bravo, young one!' were his first words. 'Curse me, if I thought you so knowing! I see you understand a trick or two – you are training in a promising way – we shall have you down at the Hells⁴⁷ soon!'

'Tyrrel! Tyrrel! I did not expect this,' said Granby, turning from him with disgust.

'Then, what the devil did you expect? Did you think I should whine and cant about it, and fall on my knees like a blubbering school-boy to escape a whipping? Why, what a cursed long face you make – as if rooks and pigeons⁴⁸ were birds unheard of; pshaw – man – come – damn it – where can you have lived to look so serious about such a trifle? I thought you had been more of a man of the world. We jolly Greeks⁴⁹ are never down in the mouth about these things. Where was the harm, if the fellow chose to be a fool, to treat him with a taste of my art? Prejudice apart, where is the sin in a quiet bit of legerdemain? None on earth – and so you would think, if it was not for those rusty, old woman's notions, which I wonder how the devil you came by. I have done no more than many others.'

'Tyrrel,' said Granby, 'though you have a right to be heard in your defence, yet I almost blame myself, for having patiently listened so long to this monstrous attempt to palliate your crime.'

'Crime!' repeated Tyrrel, with a scornful laugh – 'by what statute? Crime, indeed! you talk it well, upon my soul; but learn, young man, to make distinctions – look at the dice – are they loaded? Look at the box – is it not a fair one? Did I fight with false weapons? No, Sir – the devil, himself, dare not say it. I met my man, and beat him down in a fair trial of address. I employed an art which I had been practising for months, and which I had surely acquired a right to profit by. I won by skill – sheer skill – skill which I had gained by my own exertions, and which I am therefore justified in using.'

'I will no longer listen to such paltry sophistry,' replied Granby; 'it cannot deceive me – you cannot even deceive yourself by it. My object, Tyrrel, in coming hither, was, not to hear your efforts at exculpation – for none that you can make will be sufficient – your offence is only aggravated by what you have already said – I come to enforce a demand – you have heard it, and I expect your answer.'

'You shall have it,' said Tyrrel, with a malignant scowl: and he went and opened a bureau, while Granby stood regarding him in silence. Tyrrel searched for something; at length he closed the bureau: what he had taken out of it, Granby knew not, for his back was towards him; till on turning round he displayed to his astonished eyes a brace of pistols, and a card.

'Here is my answer,' said he, holding up the pistols, 'and there,' throwing on the table an ace of clubs, shot through the middle, 'is my pledge for its proving satisfactory. You see my mark at twelve paces – a pretty fair certificate of a cool eye, and a steady hand. Be advised, young fellow,' he added, in an insulting tone – 'think twice before you drive to extremities a man who can split a ball upon a knife,⁵⁰ and shoot a couple through the same hole. You will find I am not to be trifled with.'

'And you will find,' said Granby, calmly, 'that it is not my intention to trifle with you. My object is fixed and serious – I come to insist on satisfaction for my friend.'

'Satisfaction!' said Tyrrel, with savage glee, 'have at you then – the sooner the better – name time and place – and I am your man.'

'Tyrrel, you mistake the satisfaction I require – it is not to shed the blood of a relation. If you mean to give me a challenge, understand distinctly that I will not accept it.'

'You *will* not?' retorted Tyrrel. 'Say you *dare* not.'

'I *will* not,' said Granby; 'and if you urge me, the world shall know my reason for refusing.'

'And what is that reason?' said Tyrrel, with a sneer.

'I shall tell them that the challenger is no longer worthy of the consideration due to a man of honour.'

'Insolent coward!' said Tyrrel through his clenched teeth.

'I shall not descend to bandy invectives,' replied Granby firmly. 'I repeat my demand for reparation.'

'Granby – Granby – have a care – be cautious how you goad a desperate man. Are you aware,' said Tyrrel, taking up the pistols, 'that one of these is loaded? You defy me, because you think that my reputation is in your power. Remember that your life is in mine.' And he retreated a few steps, and deliberately examined the priming of his pistol.

'Do you think so meanly of me,' said Granby, 'as to expect that I shall be terrified from my purpose by this impotent bravado?'

'I do,' said Tyrrel. 'Impotent bravado! Good sounding words, faith! but very little to the purpose. I would advise you to think of something better by way of a dying speech, and quickly too, for your time is but short. Now, Sir, death or recantation?' and he levelled the pistol at Granby's head.

Granby neither moved nor spoke, but looked steadily in Tyrrel's face. There was a deep silence, which was first broken by the click of the pistol. Tyrrel had cocked it. Granby heard the ominous sound, but his frame never trembled, nor did his cheek grow paler, nor his eye wander, but remained still sternly bent on Tyrrel in sad and resolute defiance.

'Tyrrel!' said he, in a solemn tone, 'I have no fear. You dare not be a murderer.'

Tyrrel returned no answer, but still presented the cocked pistol.

'You will never,' continued Granby, 'charge your conscience with such a crime.'

'My conscience!' said Tyrrel, with frightful irony, lowering his pistol as he spoke; 'how did you know I had a conscience?'

'You have – you must,' said Granby. 'I will not think you utterly depraved. You may stifle the voice of your conscience for a time, but be assured it will be heard. Tyrrel – there is a God that sees and judges you; and if you shed my blood, the hour of retribution will surely come:' and Granby, as he spoke, fixed his eyes with impressive solemnity upon Tyrrel's.

The latter could not encounter their appeal. His own fell beneath their glance. The hand that held the pistol trembled; and the countenance was convulsed with a sudden pang. He muttered something indistinctly, turned away, and deposited the pistols in their former place. 'I did it but to try you,' said he in a low voice. 'Heaven knows, that for the world's worth I could not be your murderer; but you had almost driven me past myself. Granby, you are too hard with me. Do not oppress a fallen man. Temper your justice with mercy. Circumstances have made you powerful; let them shew that you are generous. Remember whom you are about to sacrifice. Remember that it is a friend and a relation.'

'Tyrrel, I remember it but too well,' said Granby mournfully. 'It is a fact which I shall never forget, and deep will be the anguish it will cost me. Bitter as your own reflections must necessarily be, you can but feebly judge of what I feel, to find myself at once cut off from one who is still my relation, and whom a few short hours ago I vainly fancied I might call my friend. Tyrrel do not endeavour to deceive yourself. You have committed that, which if known, would render you an outcast from every reputable circle in which you have ever moved.'

'I know it all,' said Tyrrel impatiently, 'and feel it too. Why should you torture me with this repetition? Surely that punishment is enough.'

'No, Tyrrel, it is not enough. The world's scorn is slight to that which your own heart ought to inflict. Remember the victim of your arts – the ruin, the destruction which you would have entailed on him. Tyrrel – the person whom you have so deeply wronged, suppressed perhaps in your presence the dreadful agony of his mind; but had you lately seen, as I have done, the burning frenzy, the feverish effort to snatch a temporary forgetfulness of misery; his wild, frantic, intemperate mirth, and the horrid recklessness of his despair; had you seen all this, and said, as you needs must, "Twas I that caused it," you

would have cursed yourself for the misery you had produced; it would have been reflected doubly on yourself, and you would then have felt – ay, in its deepest bitterness – that real – that mental punishment to which the world’s scorn is as dust in the balance. You cannot have so hard a heart but from your very soul you would have pitied him.’

Tyrrel stood during this appeal with folded arms, downcast eyes, and head bent forward on his breast. Once or twice he tried to raise his head, but as his eye caught that of Granby, it sunk beneath the powerful gaze of conscious rectitude. At length some new idea appeared to strike him, and the rigid muscles of his face began to relax into an expression of sullen exultation. ‘Pity him!’ said he, ‘not I. I have little pity to bestow upon any one, and shall not waste it on unworthy objects. He suffers, does he? Well he may, and so he ought. Just retribution Granby, and no more. Has Courtenay caused no pain to others?’

‘I will not say that he has not,’ said Granby, starting at the bitter thought which this question had conjured up; ‘but if he has, it is not of *that* we are speaking now. He is injured, Tyrrel. It is in that light only I can now regard him. He is injured, and by you; and he must have redress. I am here, not to recall my own misfortunes, but to demand reparation for my friend.’

‘Your *friend!*’ said Tyrrel, in a mingled tone of scorn and compassion. ‘Poor credulous gull!^a are you still willing to think him so? Think on – think so still. Why should I disturb your dreams? It would be cruel to rouse you from such a satisfied state of ignorance. What if a certain lady does not smile on you as sweetly as she did? We need not think that he is the cause. What if she smile on others? what, if on him? We need not think he sought it, Granby. We need not think that to purchase those smiles he sacrificed an ancient friendship, and trampled on the character of a kind, credulous, confiding rival.’

‘Confiding? – nay, you wrong him, I never trusted him – I told him nothing.’

‘And why should you? – and if you did not, must he therefore needs be ignorant? Granby, there are other roads to a person’s sentiments than through his tongue – and a lover’s sentiments – pshaw! it is impossible but he must have known them. But do you think he would seem to know them? No, he is wiser. Pretended ignorance is his coat of mail. It excuses him both to you and her. It is a place of ambush, out of which he can slander you the more securely.’

‘Tyrrel,’ said Granby, trembling with anxiety, ‘tell me I entreat you by what means you are informed of this?’

‘By none but such as you may use. I employed my senses. I observed them well. I was not credulous as you are. My eyes were open. My ears were attentive. I was alive to much that you might have seen had you

been willing. And why were you not? Why let another be more keen sighted in that which so nearly concerned yourself? Beware, Granby – mark my words before it is too late – beware – beware of a false friend.’

‘I will,’ said Granby, ‘A false friend! Ay, Tyrrel! I had one who was false indeed; false to his kindred, to his character, to himself; false to every principle of worldly honour; one who has shamefully relinquished his fair fame and honourable bearing, and shrunk to a detected sharper. *This* is the friend that has deceived my hopes.’

‘Rail on, rail on,’ said Tyrrel. ‘Reproach me for my warning. I can bear it. Be blind if you will. Be not only blind, but ungrateful. Yes, I say again – ungrateful. You cannot, or you will not see what I have wrought in your behalf. To what purpose have I clipped the wings, and tamed the courage of this aspirer, if you, *you*, who of all persons should be least willing to support him, should actually lend your aid to forward his unworthy views? Granby, if you have still a hope of that which is dearest to your heart, be cautious ere you banish it for ever. Look at me. I not only can, but will assist you. I have the viper in my toils. I can check him – crush him – nay, I can track him in his course of slander – I can blight his villainous projects – I can baffle the insidious go-between: I, and I alone: and the gain and the triumph shall be yours – all through my means shall be cleared – Caroline shall learn to detest the creature who deceives her now, and you shall be restored, through me, to more than all her former love.’

Granby turned away his face, to conceal the powerful conflict of his feelings.

‘Dear Granby,’ pursued Tyrrel, ‘do not hesitate. Second my plans to aid your happiness. Leave this reptile to his fate. Show your firmness, and by one bold act confound a villain, and spare the errors of a misguided relation – misguided, Granby – I say it with sorrow – but one who still preserves that warm friendship which he felt for you in happier days.’

The struggle in Granby’s mind was evident; and Tyrrel greedily watched its workings. Once his resolution almost failed him; but principle resumed its force.

‘Peace, tempter! peace,’ he said – ‘Oh, God!’ he inwardly ejaculated, ‘forgive me if I wavered. Tyrrel, it is in vain you urge me – I have a duty to perform, and I trust in Heaven I shall not desert it. Speak no longer against Courtenay – I will suppose him all that is treacherous – but his vices, his follies, do not excuse your shameful practices. You have wronged him – ruined him – and he shall be redressed. I know not – I care not what he is – he may have loaded me with a thousand injuries, but he *was* my friend, and I will save him.’

Tyrrel bit his lip, and turned away. 'How will you save him?' said he tauntingly.

'By obtaining redress. Tyrrel, I am still firm to my purpose. I do not know to what extent you have plundered him; but, be it what it may, I here demand that through me you restore the whole.'

'And what if I refuse?' said Tyrrel.

'Public exposure will be the consequence. Before another day is past I shall publish your conduct to the world.'

'And who will believe you?'

'Many, Tyrrel, many. A week hence I should have thought that nobody would believe the tale; but I have since learned, and it was a painful hearing, that there are those who already suspect you of dishonest practices, and would eagerly receive such confirmations of their worst suspicions. Your character totters – a word of mine can destroy it, – and shall, unless you comply. To-day, Sir, this very day, I gained an insight which I little expected. Do you remember Althorp? – ay, Althorp, alias Wilkins?'

Tyrrel started, and a deep burning flush of guilt passed hastily across his countenance.

'I shall say no more of him,' said Granby. 'I only mention *him* to show that I at length know *you*. Deceit and evasion are now useless. Choose, therefore – redress, or public infamy.'

Tyrrel visibly trembled. 'One moment,' said he, and, approaching the table, poured a small quantity of laudanum from the phial. Granby looked at him with dread, as he raised the horrid beverage to his lips. Tyrrel remarked his look of horror. 'Do you think I am going to poison myself?' said he, with a ghastly smile of derision. 'I am not come to that yet. Your health,' he added, nodding to Granby, before he drank it, with an expression of countenance that made him shudder. He then paced several times across the room, as if endeavouring to regain composure. At length, in a calm and altered tone, he again addressed him.

'Granby, my father is the head of your house. In me you will dishonour the representative of your family. Do not, if you have still remaining any generous pride of ancestry, do not stain it with reproach. In me it has been grievously disgraced; but, oh, Granby! by all of great and noble that ever has adorned your name, do not aggravate the evil by giving publicity to my offence.'

'Tyrrel, it is useless to pursue these arguments. Dear to me as is the honour of my family, it cannot weigh against my duty; and if you compel me to reveal its shame, on your head be the infamy. My course is taken, and shall not be relinquished. I demand for Courtenay full restitution of all that you have won from him this night, and on that condition only will I be silent on all that has passed.'

‘And *will* you be silent on that condition?’ asked Tyrrel.

‘I will.’

‘Promise solemnly,’ said Tyrrel.

‘I do.’

‘Then you shall have what you require.’

He then went to the bureau from which he had taken the pistols, and searched for the guilty proofs of his success. Granby, meanwhile, afflicted and harassed with the recent conflict, sat down at the table, leaning forward, his face buried in his hands, painfully recalling the past scene of this eventful night.

Tyrrel now approached the table, and laid before him, in dogged silence, the evening’s spoil, consisting of cash, notes, drafts, and engagements, in Courtenay’s hand, to pay immense sums, specified on the paper, by *post obit* bonds⁵¹ on his grandfather’s estate. The magnitude of these sums struck Granby with astonishment and indignation; and he could not help suspecting that Courtenay had been maddened by intoxication before he could have been brought to put his hand to that which would render him for life a beggar.

‘Are these all?’ said Granby, laying his hand upon them.

‘Are you not satisfied?’ was the answer.

‘Not yet. I demand an acknowledgement, in your hand-writing, that you have no further claim to any sums yet unpaid, that may have been won by you from Courtenay.’

Tyrrel answered only by a glance of unutterable rage – wrote the required acknowledgement – and saw it also signed by Granby.

‘And now, kind cousin,’ he said, with a forced, ironical composure, ‘I must also be satisfied in my turn. I ask your promise, your written promise, Sir, that you will never reveal to human being, the – the’ – (passion and shame half choked his utterance) – ‘the history of this night.’

‘You shall have it,’ said Granby; and he wrote, and gave it. Tyrrel received it with an insulting smile. ‘Tis well,’ said he, ‘and now I laugh at future malice.’

‘Malice! Tyrrel,’ said Granby, ‘I bear you none. I acted in sorrow rather than in anger. I grieve for you – I pity you.’

‘I scorn your pity!’ cried Tyrrel, furiously. ‘Wretch! would you grind me to the dust, and see me writhe beneath the pity of such as you? I laugh at your forbearance. You have not my thanks – you have my curses for it. It is your mean groveling pride that saves me from exposure. You will not brand the head of your house. No, no! – ha ha!’ – (and he laughed wildly) – ‘who would have thought that my blood would have stood me in such good part? Hence! away! sweep from my sight that hellish trash for which I sold myself! It and you are poison to me. I hate you deeply – bitterly – eternally! Ha! do you disbelieve?’

'Tis true – true as there is a hell. Do you now know it for the first time? Then learn, blind fool! that you have deemed yourself the friend of one who could have stabbed you while he shook your hand. Know that you are, and ever have been, the object of my mortal hatred – that I loathe – I detest you – that my blood curdles at you with abhorrence!' and he foamed with frantic violence.

'Tyrrel, I never gave you cause,' said Granby, shocked and astounded at this dreadful ebullition of rage.

'No cause, did you say?' replied Tyrrel, grinding his teeth with an almost insane expression of fury. 'No cause! an eternal one! But you don't know it – and may you never. You are a viper! a loathsome pestilential viper, crawling ever in my path. You haunt my dreams; you poison even my daily pleasures. Do you remember the shudder of detestation with which I first cast my eyes upon you?'

'Surely, I had not harmed you then? Tyrrel, explain yourself.'

Tyrrel seemed to start, as if a sudden recollection crossed him. A marked change took place in his countenance, and anger appeared to be lost at once under the mastery of some more powerful passion.

'It was my presentiment,' said he, in an altered tone, while his features stiffened into rigid, gloomy ferocity. 'You have done your office, – go – leave me.'

Granby silently took the papers, and moved towards the door. His face was averted from his cousin, and his hand already on the lock. He was about to take a last, perhaps an eternal leave. Thoughts rushed fast upon him – thoughts that would have filled whole days were pressed into a second. He had indignation boiling at his heart: but the swell of grief was still more powerful, and old affection was not yet cold. Tears were rising in his eyes, and he drew his hand hastily across them. He stepped back towards Tyrrel – 'God forgive you!' were his last words; 'farewell – perhaps for ever;' and with one short, sorrowing look, he turned away, and the door closed after him.

CHAP. XV.

Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my injury
Do I take part; the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance.⁵² – THE TEMPEST.

GRANBY rose the next morning, after a short night of stupor rather than of sleep, fatigued in mind and body, and ill-prepared for the distressing interview with Courtenay, which he still had to undergo. The past scenes had not expended all the bitterness of his trying situation – much was still reserved. He was going, under the guise of friendship, to one whom in his heart he must now abhor. Rival is a hateful name – but a dark slanderous supplanter – an ancient friend still masking rivalry under the cloak of kindness! what reptile could be more abhorrent!

And yet with all these painful views there was mingled a sense of satisfaction, nay even of triumph, in thus being able to practice one of the most sublime and distinguishing precepts of the Christian faith, in nobly rendering good for evil. But he also felt that he but imperfectly executed this glorious injunction. His illustration, however bright, had more of semblance than of truth; for he was conscious that he did not in his heart forgive. But such, alas! is human nature, which still shows its weakness even in its most transcendent moments; for few indeed are those in whom the noblest acts of charity are not alloyed with imperfection.

And now an anxious question was suggested. Should he intimate the suspicion of his wrongs, and call on Courtenay for redress? Powerful as the temptation was, his generous heart revolted at the thought, and he internally and resolutely answered, no. He would never stoop to sully his present act of benevolence by casting charges in the teeth of him whom he affected to relieve. To employ the advantages which chance had given him – to make conditional the redemption of his character – to drive a bargain of recompense, and purchase exculpation at the price of his rival's deliverance from ruin – from acts like these he shrunk with abhorrence, – 'If he has wronged me,' said he, 'let his own self-accusing conscience work his punishment, and teach him to repair his fault: from me he shall never meet reproach.'

He then reflected on the mournful fatality by which the very circumstance of Courtenay's distress, however apparently unconnected

with the mysterious displeasure of Caroline, still conspired to debar him from arriving at a knowledge of the truth.

At the appointed hour, Granby set out to call upon Courtenay. On entering the room, he found him negligently dressed, with eyes sunk and heavy in token of a sleepless night, looking pale, haggard, and dispirited, his head resting on his hand, and a half-written letter lying on the table before him.

‘I am glad you are come – I thank you for this;’ said Courtenay, in a low sad tone, rising to receive Granby, and pressing his hand as he spoke.

Granby could not return the pressure – it was painful to receive it. ‘I do but fulfil my promise,’ said he gravely. ‘My visit is not one of mere condolence: it has another object – an important one; and when that is accomplished, it must end.’

‘An object! an important one!’ said Courtenay, trembling with fear and hope.

‘Yes, Courtenay; but I first demand a solemn promise, which may perhaps startle you, but on which, nevertheless, I shall firmly insist, before I explain the business upon which I come. I ask your promise to renounce from henceforth all communication with my cousin Tyrrel. I see you are surprised at this request; but understand that it is one upon the granting of which your future welfare must depend. It is my primary condition. Refuse me that, and I must withhold the happiness I have in store for you.’

Courtenay looked irresolute. ‘He has been indeed a dangerous acquaintance,’ said he, ‘but – to renounce entirely his acquaintance! May not I even speak to him?’

‘No, Courtenay – my condition upon that point is absolute. I have reasons for it, so powerful, that if you heard them you would not for an instant hesitate to comply. But those reasons I may not explain. Rest assured that I, the near relation of Tyrrel, would not insist upon these conditions, were I not influenced by circumstances of more than ordinary weight.’

A light seemed to break in upon Courtenay. ‘Say no more,’ said he, ‘I promise.’

‘Tis well,’ said Granby; ‘and now Courtenay I will relate the errand upon which I come. But first let me say, that if I do not also saddle you with a promise from henceforth to renounce play, it is because I trust that your present sufferings will sufficiently deter you from such a course, and the warning will not have been fruitless. And now,’ said he, producing the notes and papers, ‘look carefully over these, and tell me if they include all your losses of last night.’

Courtenay gazed at the papers, and at Granby, in mute astonishment, as if unable rightly to comprehend his meaning.

‘Examine them,’ repeated Granby, ‘examine them, and return your answer.’

The colour came and went on Courtenay’s cheek, as he complied with this demand, and his hand trembled as he turned over the papers. ‘They contain all I lost,’ said he, at length, ‘but why,’ he added, with a flush of shame, ‘why do you ask? – and why are they produced? It may be difficult to conceal it, but I could still wish to hide from you in its full extent my folly and its consequences.’

‘You will soon have reason to thank heaven that your wish was not granted. Courtenay, those notes and bonds are once more your’s. You are not ruined – your losses are remitted – and here, in Tyrrel’s writing, is an acknowledgement that he now considers you to owe him nothing.’

Courtenay heard with breathless attention. His countenance assumed an expression of emotion which it would be difficult to define; an ejaculation of gratitude half escaped him; and then his features quivered, and he sunk on a chair, and buried his face in his hands.

Granby regarded him in silence – heard a deep and stifled sob – and saw a tear trickle through his fingers. His own feelings, as he thus observed him, experienced frequent and violent changes. Now, he viewed him as the former friend, and now again as the suspected slanderer – one instant he would burn with deep and fiery indignation against the man who had blighted all his budding blossoms^a of happiness; and then a better feeling would return, and his heart warm towards the humbled, self-reproaching being whom his own hand had raised from ruin.

Courtenay, after the first burst of emotion had in some degree subsided, rose from his seat and fervently pressed Granby’s hand. He was the first to speak, though his labouring feelings half-denied an utterance to his words.

‘Granby,’ he said, ‘I cannot thank you as I ought. You have saved me from destruction. I never can repay the debt I owe you. I judge how my deliverance was effected; but I will ask nothing, nor will I ever utter what I think. Silence on that point is due to you, and ’tis a small part, Granby, of my debt. Do not think me cold or sparing in professions. – I feel too deeply what I owe you, to express fluently my sense of it. All that I would say to you seems inadequate. But you will understand me, Granby; you will not think the worse of an old friend, for want of words to tell his thanks.’

‘No,’ said Granby, in a grave tone, ‘I shall not think the worse of you for *that*. I did my duty and am satisfied. I do not want profuse thanks. I value deeds – not words.’

‘And by deeds my gratitude shall be shewn,’ said Courtenay. ‘Direct me as you will; point out the course, and I will take it. You have restored me to the power of acting, and it is fit you should govern my proceedings. Name your wish and I wish and I will do it.’

‘I make no terms,’ said Granby, coldly. ‘Probe your conscience, and that will best direct you, Courtenay;’ and as he said this, he cast upon him a keen look at once of scrutiny and scorn.

Courtenay did not steadily withstand it. His countenance fell, and he turned away with a deep sigh. ‘I do,’ said he at length, ‘and it accuses me as much, and more perhaps, than you can do. I am not blind to my own errors. I have shamefully yielded to an infatuation, which at its first approach I might have resisted. I have suffered myself to be hoodwinked by a – but no – no matter – he is your relation, and I will say no more. Some might try to screen their conduct under the name of folly, rather than of wickedness; but it *is* wickedness, and sorely has it been punished. Even to regain one’s losses is but a feeble recompense. There is no recompense for the anxious days, the sleepless nights, the fevered, racked, agitated spirits, strained to torture. And then those sudden, terrible alternations of hope and fear – at one moment, despair, that weighs one as it were to the earth, and then a short glimpse of triumph and joy – but, vile, moody, horrid joy – the joy of a devil rather than a man. Oh, Granby, I cannot describe what I have felt, nor can you understand it all – for you have never felt it – and may you never. But it is past, thank God – the misery is past, and with it the infatuation. I will look forward cheerfully; and if you, Granby, will still be my friend, I may yet be happy – happier than I deserve.’

‘I would be your friend,’ said Granby, ‘but not in mere appearance, Courtenay – not the mere convenient friend, to be worn with the best gloss on, and thrown aside like a cast off glove.’

‘Granby, I know I have much to answer for. I have neglected you; I know it; and if I repented it before, think how I must repent it now. But, Granby, hear the real fact: I durst not meet you – I confess it most humbly. My conscience accused me so bitterly, that I felt as if I could not see you with the same composure and confidence as before.’

Granby attentively regarded him, as if expecting a confession. But Courtenay relapsed into mournful silence, folded his arms, and sighed heavily. Granby moved towards the door, as if to depart, and Courtenay recovering from his fit of abstraction, stepped forward to prevent him. ‘Do not go yet,’ said he; ‘say first that I may still consider you my friend.’

‘Courtenay,’ replied Granby, in a severe tone, ‘if your own heart sincerely tells you that I have not shewn myself deficient in good offices towards you, and you have not made an ill return – if you are still

what once I thought you, you may consider me your friend. But my eyes have become more vigilant of late, and my feelings, too, perhaps more keen. I will not tamely be deceived. I will not be the friend of – slanderer and hypocrite were on his tongue, but he remembered his resolution, and suppressed the accusation.

‘A gambler, did you mean to say? Well, be it so – I am not worthy, I confess, that you should regard me as you once did. You cannot think more meanly of me than I do of myself. Your opinion of me may have been widely changed, and well it may; but I must ever preserve for you that grateful regard which I now feel.’

‘I cannot judge of your present feelings,’ said Granby.

‘Don’t you then think that I am not grateful, Granby? Say anything but that. I do not know whether I have expressed myself properly, but I thought at any rate you would supply what was deficient. I could have said more – much more; but I thought you did not seem to wish it.’

‘No, Courtenay, you have said enough; and now farewell,’ said he, extending his hand.

‘Say first,’ said Courtenay, grasping it, ‘that you believe me grateful.’

Granby covered his eyes with his hand, and a momentary struggle seemed to agitate his mind. ‘I do,’ he replied, ‘and now farewell. May you be happy and successful in every worthy endeavour; and if you sacrifice my friendship, it is a trivial sacrifice, and may you find others to replace it.’ Then looking at him steadily and mournfully, and with one more pressure of the hand, he left the room.

The impressions Granby received during this last interview, were gloomy and dispiriting. He was touched by the sense of Courtenay’s misery; and compassion struggled hard at times with jealousy and indignation. But there was in Courtenay’s manner a conscious acquiescence in the justness of his rebukes, which recalled his doubts, and might well appear to justify suspicion. Was Courtenay’s application of them to his gambling offences sincere and real? or was it but a cloak to account for the embarrassment which he could not conceal.^a These were questions which he laboured fruitlessly to decide.

Granby occupied himself the more with these speculations, because he felt that they rendered him less sensible of the desolate nature of his situation: for when he turned to look upon *that*, what a deserted being did he appear! And yet he half wondered why he felt so. In London, the centre of society and amusement, in possession of a large acquaintance, the loss of five, nay, three individuals, had made that busy world to him a wilderness. There was the Jermyn family; – they were lost to him. Of the parents he thought not much – but Caroline! that was indeed a blow. There was Courtenay – one whom he had long

and intimately known – whose character he had once esteemed – whose society was so agreeable him; – *he* was worse than lost – a thorn in his side – a rival – a foe under the mask of friendship; and though he had long dispensed with his society, the loss came heaviest on him now. Then there was Tyrrel – a case still more cruel – the near relation – the friend so earnest in profession – to whom he had begun to cling with a brother's love. Here the reverse was horrible: infamy in the place of honour – instead of a support, a blot – instead of friendship, deadly hate – hate rankling he knew not why – ever burning, and long concealed under the semblance of affection.

Each of these cases was sufficiently agitating; but the combination of them was desolating and oppressive, to a degree that seemed to shut out comfort. It is true, he had many other acquaintance whom he esteemed, and at other times was pleased to see; but in this present wayward state of gloom, they all alike seemed valueless. He had been cruelly deceived by those on whom he most relied; and why look for consolation in others, from whom he could have less expected it? He seemed a solitary being. London became hateful to him. Every favourite resort recalled past scenes of melancholy result. Recreation lost its zest; society became a blank; and town a sort of hateful prison, from which he was eager to escape. There was nothing to detain him; and accordingly, a few days after his last interview with Courtenay, he quitted London.

CHAP. XVI.

The world has been long amused by the mention of policy in public transactions, and of art in private affairs; they have been considered as the real effects of great qualities, and as unattainable by men of the common level. Yet I have not found many performances, either or art or policy, that required such stupendous efforts of intellect, as might not have been effected by falsehood and impudence, without the assistance of any other powers. — JOHNSON.⁵³

WE must now return to trace the dark and devious course of Tyrrel, with the real depravity of whose character past circumstances have already acquainted us. It will be remembered, that in a previous conversation between Granby and his uncle, on the subject of Tyrrel, it was stated by the former, that on his first introduction Tyrrel evinced considerable coldness, which was, however, afterwards exchanged for that friendly warmth of manner which in the end so effectually conciliated the affection of his cousin.

It must now be stated, that Tyrrel's first manner, however repulsive, was more praiseworthy than his subsequent conduct. The first was the natural expression of his true feelings; the second was the deliberate result of treacherous design. The feelings with which he met Granby for the first time, singular as it may appear, were those of the most determined hatred — a hatred which the unexpectedness of the rencontre did not allow him utterly to suppress. He had not at the moment considered the part he was to act; but a few hours of calm reflection enabled him to digest his plans, to smooth his brow, and call into exercise those pliant powers of dissimulation, with which few persons were more amply endowed.

The result of his deliberation was, a treacherous design to gain the friendship and confidence of his cousin, and by the seductive influence of play to lure him onward to his ruin. Granby, he knew, had not much to lose, nor were his expectations from his uncle by any means considerable. The qualifications for a pigeon, on the score of fortune, were not therefore very evident; and on this account it is probable that it was rather in Tyrrel's contemplation, to obtain an ascendancy over his victim, than to gain immediate advantage of a pecuniary nature. He saw with regret that Granby's mind was not strongly tinctured with a love of play, and that any violent exhibition of that passion in himself, would put his cousin on his guard, and probably induce him to dissolve that intimacy, which for so vile a purpose he laboured to cement.

He, therefore, cautiously kept out of sight the formidable extent of his own proceedings, and instead of alarming his companion by the abrupt display of hundreds, carelessly lost and won, he delicately strove to excite and cherish the dormant passion by the frequent application of trifling bets, which he artfully laid on the losing side.

This plan was partially successful; and Tyrrel, after joyfully observing the increased avidity with which these easy baits were taken, determined to commence the siege; and accordingly opened his first parallel with the whist party at his own rooms. The failure of this *coup d'essai* we have already witnessed. He had been too hasty in his measures. His destined victim was not ripe for plunder; and fearful of discovery, should he repeat the same attack, or what was almost as bad, suspicion, he cast about for other means, and resolved, if possible, to act through the medium of another person.

For this purpose he selected Courtenay; and there were many circumstances to confirm his choice. He had much to lose, was of an easy temper, fond of play, and the friend of Granby. Tyrrel could enrich himself with his spoils, and then, having got him completely in his power, would use him as a species of decoy to draw Granby into the same snare.

The apparent ruin in which he involved Courtenay, and the consequent despair to which he drove him, may seem to militate against this design. But Tyrrel did not intend that the ruin should be real, or the despair lasting. He fully intended on the following morning to have restored to Courtenay a considerable part of the losses of the preceding night; consisting of sums which he had not the present means of paying, and engagements for their discharge, which Tyrrel obtained not so much with a view of rendering them available in a pecuniary point of view, as for the purpose of terrifying his victim into a sense of absolute dependency. He then, with apparent generosity, would have remitted what was of no immediate use; thereby establishing, as he expected, a powerful hold on his companion's mind; and this he intended still to strengthen, by the loan of money to supply his immediate necessities. Then, by the assistance of certain accommodating Jews⁵⁴ of his acquaintance, he doubted not that he should soon be able to lead Courtenay into such a maze of embarrassment and vice, as should preclude escape from his trammels. He should then engage him to assist in the furtherance of his designs on Granby; and thus assailed by the two most intimate of his friends, Granby, he thought, would surely fall.

But there was one circumstance above all others, which appeared to Tyrrel to present a serious obstacle to the accomplishment of his designs on Granby; and this was, the attachment of his cousin to Miss Jermyn – an attachment by which his mind would be rendered less

accessible to the insidious fascinations of play. In order, therefore, that he might succeed, it was necessary that this attachment should be suppressed, and the hopes of an alliance quenched for ever in Granby's breast.

After the confirmation of his previous suspicions by the disclosure of the lock of hair, he seriously began to devise means for counteracting the dreaded union. It was desirable, in the first place, that he should establish himself as soon as possible on a familiar footing with the Jermyn family. This he found no difficulty in effecting; nor was it likely that he should. He was a sort of relation, and a relation whom though distant they were happy to acknowledge. He was also a man of rank and fortune, good address, and one who knew the world, and was much seen in society.

It had been whispered, indeed, that Tyrrel played; but so did many fashionable people. And if he did, what was that to them? Caroline remembered, too, the harsh remark on Tyrrel's character, made in her hearing by Trebeck at Hemingsworth. But Trebeck was so much in the habit of saying very severe things, of persons whom she had heard well spoken of in other quarters, that she was not inclined to place much reliance on his opinion.

Thus, therefore, in spite of all that the busy world had whispered to his disadvantage, Tyrrel ensured to himself an uniformly good reception from every member of the Jermyn family. Sir Thomas Jermyn liked him for lending such a patient ear to his oft-repeated interminable advice, to get, like him, a seat in parliament. Lady Jermyn liked him because he was *somebody*, and a good *partie*, and fashionable, and *all that*. And Caroline – she had her reason too: – she liked him because he was Granby's cousin.

The intimacy which Tyrrel thus established, he was careful to conceal from Granby, and seldom spoke to him unsolicited about the Jermyns, or talked much to them in his presence. He became, as Granby had with pain observed, less communicative respecting his engagements, and began to devote those mornings, which he used to pass with *him*, to the company of Courtenay, and an occasional hour with Lady Jermyn and her daughter.

In the presence of the latter, Tyrrel uniformly spoke of Granby with the kindness natural to such near relationship; hinted many trivial foibles, but always laughed good-humouredly, and seemed disposed to palliate them; and though he never gave an imposing picture of his cousin, he was always careful not to present them with an unamiable one. In short, from the tone of his conversation, a stranger would have gathered, that Granby was a good sort of youth, not overburdened with intellect, for whom Tyrrel could not help feeling a sort of liking, although at the same time he rather despised him.

We say a *stranger* would have gathered this impression from Tyrrel's remarks on Granby; because in fact they failed in conveying this idea to the mind of Caroline. Her previous opinion of Granby so fully occupied her mind, that she was quite unable to admit another so dissimilar. That Tyrrel should despise Granby, was to her so inconceivable, that she never gave room to the supposition; and, for her, Tyrrel's insidious, well-aimed blows at the dignity of his relation, fell pointless.

But there were other impressions respecting Granby, which Tyrrel laboured to convey, in which he was infinitely more successful, and to which her jealous love had made her feelingly alive. He represented Granby in all the various lights in which he could be viewed by the eye of love with most dissatisfaction. He described him as being, in scenes from which she was absent, gay, light-hearted, and eager for amusement; generally capricious in his taste, and obviously inconstant in his attachments. He made him a sort of male coquet: but in so doing took care to strip him of the more captivating features of that character. He drew him as the seeker, rather than the sought; not as one whose powers of pleasing had encouraged him in a pursuit where success was ever adding fresh fuel to his vanity, but as the heedless, restless flutterer, the nine days' captive of every new wonder; for ever the slave of successive loves at first-sight, and one whose vain and fleeting homage generally excited the ridicule even of her who was its temporary object.

All this it was distressing to hear; more so perhaps than more serious charges might have been. But distressing as it was, she durst not shew the grief she felt; nor if she had, could she have expected the sympathy of the narrator. What – should they lament that Henry Granby was gay, happy, and amused? No; while her heart throbbed, and her cheek grew pale with agitation, she must still force a sickly and unmeaning smile at Tyrrel's lively narrative.

Tyrrel recalled these painful thoughts with unmerciful assiduity. He knew that prudence did not permit his touches to be strong, and as he understood the force of repetition, he gave to them in frequency what they wanted in force and distinctness. Scarcely a beauty of the day was mentioned, but he backed his own commendations by the authority of his friend Granby; and ventured once to relate a story made up of misrepresented facts, describing Granby's ludicrous manœuvres to secure himself an introduction to some fashionable fair one, and his laughable misery till he succeeded.

In short, by frequent indirect strokes of this description, did Tyrrel labour to convey to Caroline the same species of impression, which by one able *coup de main*, Trebeck had implanted in Granby's mind. But the lady, to her credit be it spoken, was less credulous than her lover;

and though she could not impeach the veracity of Tyrrel, yet she was willing to think, that in his lively and superficial way of looking at his cousin's conduct, he might very easily be mistaken; especially as he had already shewn a defect of judgment, (in her opinion), in undervaluing Granby's talents.

In this warm, guileless confidence in a lover's truth, Caroline might long have continued firm, had not Granby, by his own conduct, impelled her to withdraw it. She knew what he once was, and in spite of all that could be said, she would fain believe him still the same. But when she saw him the infatuated follower of a vain, heartless coquette – the willing worshipper of Miss Darrell – she began to think that she it was who had been mistaken; and all that Tyrrel had ever dropped in conversation recurred to her with double force.

We know the line of conduct she pursued; we know how she laboured to affect an indifference which she did not feel; and we may guess what she suffered.

Caroline's outward indifference was observed by Tyrrel with satisfaction, but it was a satisfaction founded chiefly on delusion. He little knew the secret struggles of her wounded, yet still warm affections. He thought the feelings of the softer sex lay ever flickering on the surface, observable to every eye. He did not give them credit either for depth of feeling, or for the power of concealing it. He thought he had attained his end, and flattered himself that Granby was already an object of indifference to Caroline, and soon to be forgotten by her.

Having thus obtained one object, another soon presented itself. He had heard, or read the observation, that at no period are we more susceptible of attachment than after the subsiding of the first burst of disappointment, caused by the unprosperous termination of a former passion. This he thought was precisely the case with Miss Jermyn, and were he disposed to play the suitor, no time could be better than the present.

He also derived additional encouragement from her demeanour towards himself. It was frank, and almost affectionate. She met him evidently with pleasure, and talked to him with less reserve than to any other gentleman in whose company he had ever seen her. The cause of this was plain and simple. Caroline regarded Tyrrel only as the friend and relation of Granby. This was the principal point of view, under some modification, of which he never failed to appear to her; and hence all her ideas respecting him were insensibly derived. Springing as they did, from such a source, they could not fail to be agreeable. Between her and Tyrrel there seemed to arise a secret bond of union, in mutual regard for Granby. Hence her open friendliness of manner – hence her air of confidence. All the coquettish delicacies of love were banished utterly from her mind. She never thought of

treating Tyrrel as one who might become her suitor. He seemed, by his relationship to Granby, to be within that close-drawn pale which must preclude the very notion of a nearer connection.

All this did Caroline feel; but Tyrrel could not see it. He was a man of quickness and address, and no mean judge of character. Few were better qualified for the defensive warfare of society, or could with more acuteness penetrate deceit. But it was with the worst parts of human nature that Tyrrel was the best acquainted – its softer features frequently escaped him. With all his exterior refinement, he had an innate coarseness of sentiment, that prevented him from analysing the delicate mazes of a female heart. He viewed it with a cold, dull, generalizing eye. He understood, as well as most, the hackneyed tactics of gallantry; but a certain obtuseness of mental vision, concealed from him the finer springs of action with which a woman's breast is fraught. A heart like Caroline's was to him inscrutable. He could not penetrate the delicacy of its sentiments, and accordingly drew from her behaviour only these two unqualified facts – that she had ceased to care for Granby, and that his own society was agreeable to her.

It now also occurred to him, that she was very pretty and attractive, and therefore one with whom it was excusable to fall in love; and that she was heiress apparent to a considerable fortune, and therefore one whom it was desirable to marry. With a mind made up on these points, he began to increase the frequency of his morning visits, and endeavoured to glide quietly into the character of an '*ami de maison*.'⁵⁵ He now, too, began to direct his conversation rather more exclusively than heretofore to Caroline.

Lady Jermyn saw all this; but had no intention of interfering. It was exactly the sort of case in which she might safely gain some credit by forbearance, and make amends for past violence on her daughter's affections, by leaving her, in this instance, to do exactly as she liked.

CHAP. XVII.

I'll devise some honest slander
To stain my cousin with; one doth not know
How much an ill word may empouison liking.⁵⁶

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

ON the day previous to the dinner party at Mrs. Dormer's, where Granby met the Jermyns, Tyrrel called at Sir Thomas Jermyn's, and having ascertained from the servant, that Sir Thomas and Lady Jermyn were both of them from home, and that only Miss Jermyn was left within, contrary to custom in such cases, went in, and was shewn into the drawing-room, where he found Caroline sitting alone.

An opportunity so tempting was not to be resisted; and as Tyrrel had a great idea of the efficacy of a *coup de main*, after a few preliminary declarations of his high consideration, admiration, and love, and a few little encomiums on her manifold perfections, he made at once an offer of his hand.

Caroline listened to his proposal with an air of unqualified astonishment. Wonder was her prevailing sentiment. Tyrrel saw her perplexity, though he did not understand its cause – assured her he was serious – and repeated, with additional force, his protestations of unalterable love.

'Mr. Tyrrel!' said Caroline, still almost breathless with surprise and embarrassment, 'you do me great honour – but indeed – I was not prepared for this – I never regarded you in this light – I never even thought it probable –'

'But you will not,' interposed Tyrrel, eagerly, 'you will not suffer the unexpectedness of my proposal to be any bar to my future happiness? You shall have ample time to view me in this new light. I will not press for an immediate answer. I shall pass a painful period of suspense, it is true; but I shall make the sacrifice with pleasure, if it will be any satisfaction to your mind. Think further – think at your leisure, and alone, on all that I have had the boldness to say. I trust that time will aid my cause.' And so saying, he manifested an intention to depart.

'No, Mr. Tyrrel,' said Caroline, with recovered firmness and composure, 'you shall not go away with this impression. Surprised as I am, the longest deliberation could not enable me to return you a more

decisive answer than I can give at this moment. I must positively refuse your offer.'

'Dear Miss Jermyn! on what account?' said Tyrrel, with mingled surprise and disappointment.

'I am sorry that you should have asked me that question,' replied Caroline. 'I thought you must have understood, from the terms on which we always met, that nothing like attachment,' said she, blushing deeper at the word, 'could ever exist between us. We have been used to converse familiarly, and have maintained terms of perfect friendship; and I can say, with great sincerity, that I have never seen anything in your character that deserves to forfeit my esteem. But still I must tell you frankly, I do not feel towards you those sentiments which I must feel towards the man whom I can ever think of as my future husband.'

'Permit me to ask you, Miss Jermyn, if that is your only reason for refusing me?' said Tyrrel, in a dry, inquiring tone.

'At any rate, Sir, it is a sufficient one,' she replied.

'Perhaps,' pursued he, not choosing to attend to her reply, 'you have no general disinclination to the marriage state; and such a proposal might not have been unacceptable from another person?'

Caroline coloured deeply. 'I cannot, Sir,' replied she, indignantly, 'consider you justified in asking such a question; and on that account I shall refuse to answer it.'

'I will not presume to dispute that point,' said Tyrrel with a bow; 'but it is certainly not an irrelevant question, or an unimportant one. It is of no slight moment to the feelings of the rejected person.'

'I also have feelings,' said Caroline, 'which have some claim to consideration.'

Tyrrel returned no immediate answer. The whole truth presented itself to his mind. He saw that the love which he thought cold, was only smothered for a while. He saw, that if he was rejected, it was for Granby's sake alone, and that it was probably not so much his own merit, as the relationship with Granby, which had procured him her regard.

Wounded pride, mortified ambition, malice, revenge, and the hatred which he bore to Granby, now rose in quick succession in his mind. He walked once or twice across the room before he again addressed her.

'Miss Jermyn,' said he, at length, 'I *am* satisfied. I give you full credit for being explicit; but more I am not disposed to grant. I had heard that consistency was not a female virtue; but you had made me doubt it till now. Caprice may have its charms for some, and to such I leave it. You have deceived me, Miss Jermyn – I do not say *wilfully*, but you *have* deceived me nevertheless.'

'My sentiments,' said Caroline, 'have never been changed to your disadvantage. They have never been more favourable to you than they are now. But I will say no more,' said she, with emotion, – 'I am not required to defend myself against every assertion which you may choose to make.'

'No, Miss Jermyn,' replied Tyrrel, 'you are not bound to offer any explanation. Perhaps,' he added, with a malicious smile, 'it is I who rather ought to account for my behaviour; and, considering the displeasure which it appears to have excited, I cannot refrain from so doing. Indeed, I can again say, that I have been deceived. I have had wrong impressions given me by one who must have known you. Nay, I was even advised to propose to you – urged to it by a friend – one with whom you used to be tolerably well acquainted, – one, in fact, who was formerly an admirer, as he himself told me. There can be no harm in mentioning his name – I mean my cousin, Henry Granby.'

Caroline, though in some degree prepared by the preceding description, could not help starting when the name was uttered. 'Mr. Tyrrel, what are you saying?' said she, turning pale with agitation.

'I merely mean to say,' replied Tyrrel, with an air of calmness, 'that if I have been guilty of presumption in making this seemingly unexpected proposal – if I have ventured to think that you were easily to be won – more easily than to my sorrow I find – I may plead, as some excuse, that I was misled by the suggestions of another.'

'And do you mean to tell me that this person –'

'Yes, this person was my cousin Granby.'

'Oh, no, no, impossible!' exclaimed Caroline, in uncontrollable agony of mind.

'Impossible! why so, Miss Jermyn?'

'Oh! he would never speak of me so.'

'He *ought* not to have spoken so of you; that I admit, and the result proves it. Good as his intentions doubtless were, I cannot help feeling some displeasure at him myself, for having led me to entertain hopes that are now proved to be false.'

'But you must have misunderstood him,' said Caroline. 'Upon what grounds could he have said that I was likely to admit your addresses?'

'I am sorry that you should press the enquiry, because if you do I am afraid I shall be obliged to say that which may offend your delicacy. But since you desire it, I will tell you all. My cousin Granby never actually presumed to say, that you would accept me if I offered myself; but discovering the bent of my wishes, he at various times, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, threw in arguments to remove the diffidence I felt. I cannot mention the precise words he may have used; I only recollect their sense. This, however, I remember – that one day, when my cousin had been talking a great deal of

good-natured complimentary stuff, which I was fool enough to believe, about my expectations and so forth, and the propriety of my marrying soon and well, and mentioned you as the most proper object of my choice, (excuse my saying this, Miss Jermyn – remember that I tell it at your request) – he then went on to say – (I must beg your pardon beforehand for what I am going to repeat,) – he went on to say, that I should have very little trouble in gaining your consent, for that he knew from circumstances which had passed, relative to yourself and him, that you were of a very susceptible disposition – ‘susceptible’ was his word, and he smiled significantly as he said it.’

Caroline burst into tears.

‘Miss Jermyn,’ said Tyrrel, after a short pause, in a soothing apologetic tone, ‘I entreat your pardon most humbly, most sincerely, for having given you this pain. I did not mean to afflict you so. I never thought you would have felt it so keenly.’

‘Oh! it cannot be true,’ said Caroline, still weeping, ‘and if it is true, why is it told me?’

‘Nay, Miss Jermyn, was it not at your request?’

‘I never expected to have heard such calumny,’ said Caroline, without regarding him.

‘Calumny!’ repeated Tyrrel, turning pale at the word, but quickly recovering his composure. ‘Calumny is a strong word; and I must say, in justice to my cousin, that I do not think he had any intention of misrepresenting you wilfully.’

‘Oh, no, no; I am sure he had not. When I spoke of calumny, I did not mean calumny of myself, but of him. I am sure he must be falsely charged.’

‘Miss Jermyn!’ said Tyrrel, in a well assumed tone of surprise and indignation, ‘this is a serious imputation, but it is a hasty one, and I forgive it. Why should I wish to accuse my cousin Granby falsely? Good heavens! how could you suppose it? Besides, of what have I accused him? In what, after all, consists his crime? In a mere trifling error of judgment. No, Miss Jermyn, on his account it is but fair in me to say, that if there is a fault anywhere, it is not so much in his having carelessly said these idle things, as in my repeating them to you. It is I, not he, that deserve your anger. I am willing to bear the blame. I cannot suffer your displeasure to light unfairly upon an absent person. And furthermore allow me to say, that had I known I was to be called upon for proofs, I could easily have procured a pretty good memorial in confirmation of my words – a little love token that he shewed me, that perhaps you have by this time almost forgotten. It was a mere childish keep-sake, he told me – a thing that meant nothing – a little romantic whim of the time. I believe he said he asked you for it. It was of no consequence, but it only shewed, as he observed,

that you were easily wrought upon. Perhaps you may remember it – it was a lock of your own hair.’

Caroline, who had listened in breathless anxiety, almost screamed at the mention of the lock, and covered her face with her hands.

‘I am sorry I mentioned it,’ said Tyrrel, in a soft compassionate tone. ‘I see it distresses you, though I really do not know why it should. I am sure I imagined you would think as lightly of it as he does. He laughed and talked, and joked about it, and so I thought perhaps would you.’

‘And did you see it?’ said Caroline anxiously.

‘Certainly I did.’

‘And did he show it you?’ she added in the same hurried tone.

‘Certainly – how otherwise could I have seen it? Though I remember now, he mentioned something about a promise not to do so, but quite in a careless sportive way, so that I scarcely recollected it. I am sure, by his manner, that he did not regard it as a serious promise, of any moment; if he had, he certainly would have kept it. I can answer for it, Miss Jermyn, that my cousin is too much a man of honour to violate a promise which he considered to be binding. He must not forfeit your good opinion for such a slight offence as this. I am sure he looked upon the lock of hair, as a mere innocent girlish gift.’

‘I have heard too much of this, Sir,’ said Caroline; ‘say no more, I entreat you.’

‘You shall be no longer teased by further importunities from me,’ said Tyrrel, bowing and stepping back; ‘but say first that you forgive me for my boldness; – grant that one simple favour to a rejected man. And poor Granby – I shall be vexed, Miss Jermyn, if I have been the cause of rendering you displeased with him. Say that you forgive him too. Poor fellow, he has sorrows enough already, without being visited with your displeasure.’

‘Sorrows! what sorrows?’ said Caroline, eagerly.

‘Sorrows which I know how to pity. He is a rejected man, like me. That flirt, Miss Darrell, will not accept him. I knew how that affair would end.’

Caroline uttered a faint exclamation – turned away her face – and rose hastily to depart.

‘Pray, Miss Jermyn, do not repeat this,’ continued Tyrrel, ‘it would not be kind to Granby; – and besides, the fact is not generally known.’

Caroline returned no answer, and still removed towards the door.

‘Say that you forgive me before you go,’ said Tyrrel, stepping before her. ‘Your hand at parting – may not I?’ said Tyrrel.

She extended it towards him in token of forgiveness. Tyrrel attempted to kiss the proffered hand; upon which she hastily

withdrew it, and without another word or look, walked instantly out of the room.

Any comment on the feelings excited in Caroline by this scene, would be superfluous. Of the tendency of those feelings we can easily judge, though not of their acuteness; and we have already witnessed their unfortunate result, in her behaviour to Granby on the following day at Mrs. Dormer's.

Tyrrel, the guilty cause of her distress, after the first malicious glow of exultation at the success of his calumnious practices, began to feel a certain fear, lest Caroline in her indignation, should reproach Granby with his imputed sins, and thereby betray the slanderer, and mar his plans by an explanation. A consideration of Caroline's character and habits, frequently led him to admit, that such a circumstance was by no means probable; yet nevertheless he determined, if possible, to mar all intercourse between her and Granby. For this purpose he began to attach himself closely to the former, that he might be a constant spy upon his actions and intercourse, in case of danger.

The interview between Caroline and Granby, at Mrs. Dormer's, turned out exactly as Tyrrel wished; but the invitation of Sir Thomas Jermyn struck him with no slight dismay. If Granby should once become a visitor, detection would infallibly ensue. He made, as we have seen, ineffectual attempts to work upon his cousin's pride, and induce him to reject the proffered civility. He then endeavoured, and succeeded in postponing the visit to another day; but still his hopes were almost desperate; and it is probable that his purpose would have failed, but for the timely fracas at the Opera. This gave him an opportunity of putting the crown to his villainous duplicity towards Granby, by encouraging him to write to Sir Thomas Jermyn, in explanation of the circumstances just alluded to, and then taking charge of the letter, but in reality withholding it, and sending to Granby, as the supposed reply to it, that insulting note, which seemed necessarily to put an end to all future intercourse between the two families.

Such were the extensive and insidious plans of Tyrrel, to effect the ruin of his cousin Granby; an object which, according to the reader's present knowledge of the relative situation and prospects of the two parties, will seem scarcely adequate to the means employed in gaining it. But on this point, the course of our narrative will speedily open other views.

CHAP. XVIII.

What equal torment to the griefe of minde,
And pyning anguish hid in gentle heart,
That inly feeds itself with thoughts unkinde,
And nourisheth her own consuming smart?
What medicine can any leeches art
Yield such a sore, that doth her grievance hide,
And will to none her maladie impart?⁵⁷

SPENSER.

WE return once more to Henry Granby, whom we shall now find at the house of his uncle, sad and dispirited, brooding gloomily on the past, and hopelessly looking towards the future. He had gone up to town with high hopes, and miserably had they been disappointed. He had sought amusement – he had encountered care. He expected agreeably to extend his circle of acquaintance; and while gaining a few whom he little regarded, he had lost those whom he most valued. He fondly hoped to be gradually reinstated in his former intimacy with the Jermyns. But how was the prospect darkened here! He was irretrievably excluded from their society; and Caroline, even Caroline, was the least favourably disposed towards him; and it was an aggravation of the case, that he knew not the cause of her displeasure.

He frequently debated with himself, whether he should acquaint the General with all the painful circumstances that had befallen him in London. It would be a great comfort, to be able to communicate his sorrow to one so kind and liberal as his uncle. But this was a selfish consideration, to which he did not allow himself to yield. He had no right to give his uncle needless pain, and destroy the generous satisfaction which he seemed to feel in the idea that Henry had passed his time in town agreeably. In his letters to his uncle he had studied to be gay, and never communicated any but the bright and cheering side of every object; and in this well-intended plan he resolved still to persevere.

Accordingly, he said very little about the Jermyns, but told his uncle that they had made civil inquiries after him, and did not appear to have taken serious offence at the affair of the letter. Of the Opera-house squabble, and the subsequent note, he made no mention, – thinking that such a disclosure would only tend to exasperate his uncle, from whose interference in such a case he could not look for benefit.

He preserved the same silence with respect to Tyrrel, and his offence. Indeed he doubted whether he was not bound to this by his promise; as he had made no reservation in favour of the General. But though he kept from his uncle's sight his various subjects of uneasiness, and strove to speak on every topic that occurred, if not with gaiety, at least with contentment; yet were his efforts ineffectual, and vainly did he strive to assume in appearance the cheerfulness which he did not feel.

His depression did not escape the General's eye. He had hoped that society would not have been without its use, in awakening the energies of his nephew; and upon observing the recurrence of his former melancholy, began to be uneasy on his account. He frequently blamed himself for having thwarted his nephew's wish to enter a profession; the stimulus of which, he now thought, would probably have been effectual in counteracting the growing evil of depression. He almost doubted whether he had not judged amiss in not having even compelled him to embrace some active course of life. 'Heaven knows,' said he, 'I have acted as I thought for the best, — with good intentions, if not with wise ones. I have done all I could for the boy, and ever will, please God. He thinks perhaps that I ought not to have brought him up in idleness: but he cannot know my reasons for doing so, nor may I tell them to him yet; but the time will come, and soon perhaps.'

The old man sighed as he said this, and he^a took an early opportunity of sounding his nephew on the subject of entering a profession. But^b the incentive which before had proved so powerful in Henry's breast was now lost, and despondency had chilled and paralyzed his once keen spirit of exertion. He therefore replied with languid indifference to his uncle's inquiries, and professed with truth to have no disposition for any particular line of employment.

Satisfied on this point, the General's benevolent mind was soon at work to devise some other remedy that might prove suitable to his nephew's case. He remembered the delight with which Henry frequently recurred to his former tour on the continent; and cheerfully sacrificing the pleasure which he felt in his society, strongly urged him to go abroad.

Henry liked the idea of this as much as in his present state of mind he was disposed to like anything; but having been latterly so long separated from his uncle, he felt some scruples about leaving him. The General, however, made such a point of his travelling, that Henry eventually complied; and about a month after his return from London set out for the continent.

'*Voyager,*' says Madame de Stael, '*est, quoi qu'on puisse dire, un des plus tristes plaisirs de la vie;*⁵⁸ and so in truth it is, to those who use it as the means of flying from that unhappy, morbid self which they

must ever carry with them. To such as these, to travel is but 'to drag a lengthening chain,'⁵⁹ and the home-sick repining of the wearied tourist, is ever adding fresh fuel to his former malady. The separation from our friends, which travel necessarily induces, must throw some gloom across its pleasure; but its natural influence is cheering. Perhaps, of all amusements, it alone has the property of lengthening time to our perception, even when it makes it glide more smoothly. Our ideas are multiplied by change of scene, so that we seem to live a double existence, even in the midst of doubled pleasure. With good health and buoyant spirits, a journey will always be the object of present recreation and lively retrospect. In truth, our pleasures are what we make them. They spring less from external objects, than from our own internal sense of them. The eye of gloom sees only strangers, where the lively and curious mind regards the same as persons from whom it hopes to extract information or amusement. We hate,^a as heartily as Sterne could do, 'the man who travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds all barren.'⁶⁰

Such was not exactly Granby's case in his journey from Calais to Paris; for though his spirits were not gay, his mind was much alive to inquiry; and he looked about him with some degree of interest, though he did not recognise '*la belle France*' in the treeless, bare, interminable corn-fields, or '*la Grande Nation*,' and '*la gaieté Françoise*,' in the squalid mendicant population of the desolate villages through which he passed. He saw, however, a vast expanse of cultivated ground, which must necessarily diffuse its plenty somewhere; and though he looked in vain for the rich confusion of an English landscape, he might reflect that no space was lost in hedgerows, and think with the American⁶¹ that the country around him was 'finely cleared.'

In Granby's case, too, the journey teemed with old recollections, which were, many of them, pleasantly revived. It was agreeable to live over the past again, and to recognize in a foreign land, when all was expected to be new and strange, a motley host of old acquaintance, both living and inanimate. From the same window of the same hotel, he saw the very Diligence that he had admired before, and just the same, even to its dirt; — looking as if it had not been cleaned since; respectable in its dinginess; each dusty wheel creaking in well-known accents. And there was the very pig-tailed postilion, with his short blue jacket laced with red, shining black hat, with rim curved like a half moon, and boots that seemed his better half. And there was Monsieur le Conducteur, the counterpart of our mail coach guard; fat, like his fellow on our side of the water; but there the resemblance ceases — for Monsieur le Conducteur has a martial air about him, which not even the red coat could ever give to our English guard. Instead of the broad brimmed, low-crowned hat, a blue foraging cap is jauntily

cocked over the right temple; instead of the Belcher,⁶² he has a loose black handkerchief round his neck; chitterlings⁶³ up to his eyes; a long velveteen jacket without skirts; and a large military cloak to supply the place of an upper benjamin.⁶⁴

Reminiscences of this kind, in some degree compensate for the want of that eager, wondering interest, with which one traverses a foreign country for the first time. But Granby's wonder had not been all expended in the first tour; and he still felt an emotion of surprise, when, after crossing a very extensive common-field, scarcely occupied by a single house, he found himself at the gates of Paris.

There he found abundant materials for the business of amusement: as who can doubt that has seen Paris? and who, of the few that have not seen it, will refuse to believe? Much he had to see and hear – and much did he see, and much did he hear accordingly. Often did he pace the Louvre, – that 'gorgeous gallery of dainty devices,'⁶⁵ splendid still, though stripped of its worse than borrowed plumes; and ever, as he did so, did he lament that neglected state of many of its pictures, and let slip, sometimes, a hearty malediction on the evil deeds of the '*Restaurateurs*.'⁶⁶

There were many other sights to occupy his mornings. He pushed his way through the Exposition des Arts,⁶⁷ where he saw a considerable deal of laborious trifling tastefully displayed; and a very imposing exhibition of mis-directed ingenuity, mingled with much that was really admirable. He looked into the French Annual Exhibition,⁶⁸ and found that, as usual, it was crowded with many historical pieces of stiff affectation, from the formal followers of the school of David,⁶⁹ intermingled here and there with one of better promise. He strolled through the Palais Royal, that unique epitome of gaiety, luxury, and vice; entered some of the Cafés, and saw the French exquisites stow away the surplus of their sugar in their breeches pockets, to make '*eau sucrée*'^{a70} on the morrow; looked once more into that little room, stuck round with mirrors,⁷¹ which attracts, by its imposing name, so many of our countrymen, and disappoints them when they see it; smiled at the grave obsequious homage paid by her countrymen to the presiding goddess, '*une*^b *peu passée*,'⁷² that sits with the air of a princess, at a splendid table decked with flowers, gracefully dispensing copper change. He went now and then to the Academie Royale de Musique,⁷³ and reprobated their screaming singers, as strongly as he commended the Ballet. He visited the Theatre François,⁷⁴ and would certainly have gone to sleep there, had it not been for wonder at the animation which Talma⁷⁵ gave to his heavy, prosy, spiritless part; and barring certain clawings, and pawings, and shakings of the hand, that were neither natural nor graceful, thought him the finest actor he had ever seen. He enjoyed their comedies and farces; saw grace personified in

Mademoiselle Mars,⁷⁶ and genuine humour in the quiet drolleries of Potier and Perlet.⁷⁷ He admired again, as warmly as ever, some of their beautiful public buildings, and reprobated just as much their narrow, dirty, unsavoury^a streets; and in spite of that exculpatory phrase, could not approve^b *'la totalité de la rue.'*⁷⁸ He did *not* revisit the Salon des Etrangers;⁷⁹ it put him too much in mind of Tyrrel. Nor did he lose his way, as heretofore, in the Catacombs.⁸⁰ But excepting these, he once more made the tour of almost all that this far-famed capital offers to the curious.

Meanwhile he had not been unmindful of affording his uncle the frequent satisfaction of hearing from him;^c and he had received one letter in return. It contained a good deal of that quiet gossip, which is peculiarly acceptable from a correspondent at home, but which cannot be interesting to any but those whom it immediately concerns; nor would it probably have been very interesting to Granby, had it not come across the Channel. There was, however, one part of the letter, which excited his attention in a high degree, and surprised him not a little at the same time. The following is the part in question.

'You will be glad to hear that our misunderstanding with the Jermyns is in a fair way of being entirely made up, and I trust that we shall soon become as good friends as we ever were. I have received a letter from Sir Thomas Jermyn, which I wish you were here to see, for it is a very civil, friendly letter, and I think would give you pleasure, and do him credit in your mind. He enquires very kindly after my health, and says how happy it would make him and Lady Jermyn, to see me at Brackingsley. But that is quite out of the question. I suppose he does not know that I never go out anywhere. However, it was very well meant. He also mentions you, and regrets that he saw so little of you in town. He says, the last he saw of you was for a few minutes at the Opera, where he was in trouble about his carriage. I don't know what he alludes to. You never mentioned anything of the kind to me. He says he thought he should have met you again, but that probably you went out of town soon afterwards. A Mr. Smith, a friend of his, is going to stand for Bradley, in which I have a few houses, and consequently a vote, as perhaps you know. Sir Thomas Jermyn wishes me to support his friend. — I know nothing of him; but for Sir Thomas Jermyn's sake, (if I hear nothing meanwhile to his disadvantage), I shall be very glad to give him my vote.'

The latter part of this extract perfectly accounted for the civility described in its commencement; and Granby could hardly help smiling at the benevolent simplicity of his worthy uncle, while he almost envied the happy tranquil feeling which such guilelessness of heart promoted. But with the part relating to himself he was completely puzzled. What could Sir Thomas Jermyn mean, by saying that he

thought he should have met him again? as if it was Granby's fault that he did not, and as if he himself had not committed an act by which to render all farther intercourse impossible? Was it shame that led him to assume forgetfulness, and gloss over his former conduct? or was it sheer hypocrisy? To be sure, he could not tell how far electioneering views would lead the Baronet to cringe to those whom he had previously insulted, but that he should dare to use such language, when, for anything he knew to the contrary, General Granby was acquainted with the whole case, and might even have seen his very note, was perfectly inconceivable.

Granby knew not what to think. His mind fluctuated between satisfaction and displeasure. Sometimes he was pleased to think that former intercourse might be resumed, and all that had passed be forgotten; and then again doubt and suspicion, and disgust at Sir Thomas Jermyn's meanness, poisoned all his promised pleasure.

He debated long what course he should pursue. At length he resolved, in his answer to the General, to give a softened explanation of the disagreement which had taken place between himself and Sir Thomas Jermyn; tell his doubts; beg his uncle's assistance in removing them; and request an extract of that part of Sir Thomas Jermyn's letter which referred to him, in the precise words of the original.

Having dispatched a letter to this effect, he, as soon as the lapse of time would permit, began to look anxiously for a reply. But day succeeded day, and he expected one in vain. He became impatient – but what availed impatience here? He intended to have quitted Paris, and passed onward to the Rhine; but he now waited beyond the settled time at his old quarters, for fear of missing the expected letter.

CHAP. XVIII.

The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven.⁸¹ – YOUNG.

ONE morning on Granby's return to his hotel, from Galignani's reading-room,⁸² he was gratified with the intelligence, that there was a letter for him from England. On opening it, however, his joy was quickly changed into the deepest sorrow, at reading an account from his uncle's housekeeper, that her master had been suddenly seized with an illness which threatened to prove fatal.

Granby immediately resolved to set out for England that very day; and consequently much was to be done in the short time previous to his departure. Fortunately he had got his passport signed and counter-signed as many times as is deemed essential by the prudence of the French government, and had gone through all those troublesome forms, by which we are sometimes usefully reminded that there are countries which possess rather less freedom than our own.

A young single man always is, or ought to be, endued with the locomotive faculty in a high degree. By a prompt exertion of this power, Granby, in the course of a few hours, found himself beyond the barriers on his road to England. We will not accompany him in his rapid, but melancholy journey. Suffice it to say, with such expedition did he travel, that having left Paris on the Tuesday evening, on Friday about mid-day he drove into the village of Ashton, and stopped at the well remembered turn, where a bye-road led from the highway to his uncle's house. This was situated about a quarter of a mile from the public road; and Granby got out and walked to it.

It was a fine but melancholy day; one of those which this cloudy climate rarely affords, but which, when it comes, is apt to temper our admiration with a certain feeling of gentle sadness. Not a cloud was to be seen, to relieve and brighten by its contrast the monotonous expanse of dull, deep, greyish blue. Not a breeze was heard to rustle through the trees; scarce a sound disturbed the silence, except the sky-lark twittering on high, you knew not where, and the long drawn chirrup of the grasshopper. A thin haze which was spread over the landscape, gave a gloomy indistinctness to the distance, and deepened the flat solemnity of the dark green trees. There was a general, unrelieved, dull light; so that, unless when looking at your own shadow,

you might have almost questioned the reality of the sunshine; and you might have thought the landscape cold, were not your ideas otherwise diverted, by the enervating heat that poured down from the luminary above you.

The scene conveyed a sentiment of gloom to the mind of Granby, – who perhaps was predisposed, by the depressing object of his return, to seek food for melancholy. He walked on slowly, with his eyes on the ground, till on turning a well remembered corner the house appeared immediately before him, and he raised his head to look at it. The shutters had been closed to keep out the sunshine, – which gave it a deserted air. It looked to Granby like the mansion of death; and as he gazed upon the well known window of his uncle’s room, he shuddered to think how soon he might be told, that this room contained the corpse of one so justly dear to him.

He involuntarily stopped as the thought arose, and dreaded to advance and learn the worst; but after a brief internal struggle, he pressed onward with a quickened pace. Still he saw no face that he knew, and heard no sound familiar to him, till as he was almost at the door, an old favourite dog of his uncle’s came bounding round the corner with a loud angry bark, which on recognizing Granby, he instantly softened into a fondling whine, and writhed himself into many an expressive gesture of greeting.

Granby could not forbear, however occupied with other thoughts, from bestowing a short caress on his first welcomer, and then looking up, saw one of the shutters partially unclosed, and a female head appear through the chink. In an instant he was at the door with his hand on the bell, doubtful whether he should venture to ring. He removed his hand, for he heard the low pattering of feet in the hall within: the door was carefully opened; and behind it as he entered, was Mrs. Robins, the old house-keeper, with a face that struggled between pleasure at seeing him, and grief for the cause of his return.

‘Is my uncle alive?’ were Granby’s first words: they^a were uttered in a tremulous whisper.

‘Tis all we can say,’ replied Mrs. Robins; ‘but thank God, Mr. Henry, we *can* say that.’

‘I am anxious,’ said he, ‘to see him. Is he sensible? Does he expect me?’

‘Yes, Sir, he does, I am pretty sure, for I told him myself that you would be back soon; and he made signs, as if he understood me. But I think I had better prepare him for it, if you please, Sir. Will you just walk in here?’ and she opened the door of the room in which he and his uncle used to sit.

It was almost dark, the shutters being closed to exclude the sun. He half opened one of them, and as the light poured in, looked round^b

with mournful interest on the desolate apartment. Every thing in it reminded him of times that had been, and now, he feared, never would return. There was his uncle's chair in the spot in which he always sat, and another placed opposite, as if for himself, on the other side of the small Pembroke table. On that table lay the last newspaper that his uncle had been reading – perhaps the last he ever would read – marking by a day in advance the date of his first illness; and near it was an accumulation of unopened papers that had arrived since, and several sealed letters in well known hands. On the chimney-piece was a small old-fashioned clock, – the last appeal from all other clocks and watches in the house, – which his uncle, with scrupulous punctuality, always wound up with his own hand. It had now stopped – a mute predictor of the fate of him to whose daily care it owed its motion.

Each of these trifling features in the scene before him, conveyed to Granby its portion of sorrowful remembrance; and he continued sadly to dwell upon them, when the door was gently opened, and Mrs. Robins, with a few low words, intimated that she was ready to conduct him to his uncle's chamber. He followed her in silence, treading still softer and softer as he approached the room. She unclosed the door, and he entered; and as she told his name, he heard from the bed a faint inarticulate exclamation, which shocked him, from its utter want of resemblance to the usual tone of his uncle's voice.

The room was darkened by the window-curtains being drawn, and it was some minutes before Henry could distinctly see the altered being that lay stretched before him on the bed, – now the wreck even of that pale, decrepid person that he had seen a few weeks before. He feebly returned the pressure of his nephew's hand, and turned his glazed eyes upon him with a faint expression of glad recognition. He tried to speak, but could not express himself distinctly. Seeing that he failed in making himself understood, he motioned Henry to sit beside him.

Some time elapsed before the latter could speak, for his tears flowed fast, and would not be restrained. When he did speak, he could say little. Hope of recovery he durst not breathe, for he saw that the hand of death was upon his uncle. Things of this world were topics scarcely proper for such a time, and preparations for the next would be better enjoined from the pious and feeling lips of the excellent minister of the adjoining church. Granby therefore sent to request his presence and he administered, with affecting solemnity, the last consolations of religion to the aged and dying man.

After this, the sufferer sunk into a state of stupor, in which he continued for a considerable time. He seemed as if he were about to pass, by an easy transition, from insensibility to death; but he revived again, and was awakened to an increased anxiousness of what was

passing around him. A feeling of interest and anxiety seemed at one time to agitate his features. He pressed his nephew's hand as strongly as his feeble strength would permit, and earnestly uttered, at several successive times, expressions which were scarcely articulate, but in which Henry thought he distinguished the words 'open,' or 'oaken bureau.'

He thought these expressions were intended to refer to the place in which the will was kept; and by a look, and a few short words, he signified his comprehension of his uncle's meaning. The old man, upon this, seemed satisfied and resigned, and appeared once more to abstract himself from worldly thoughts, and prepare his spirit for its momentous flight.

The physician came again, but soon turned away with a saddened brow; and as Henry followed him from the room, and pressed his eager inquiries, whispered gently, that hope was past.

Night approached, and brought with it no amendment. The household had been fatigued with constant previous attendance, and therefore Henry, after snatching a short repose in the early part of the night, resolved to watch alone by his uncle's side until the following morning. He was left alone with him a little before midnight, and sat by his side with one hand grasped in his. The rest of the house was still as death, and no sound was audible within the chamber but the ticking of a watch, and the low perturbed breathings of the aged sufferer. This last sound became gradually less and less audible, and at times appeared to cease entirely; so that Granby hardly knew if life remained, and inclined his ear towards him, and touched the pulse with anxious dread, to ascertain its motion.

Midnight was past, and the hours rolled on slowly and solemnly towards the morning; when all at once the light in the chamber was extinguished, and Granby was left in darkness. He could not quit his situation, for his uncle still retained his hand. The pressure was for some time firm and unvaried; till at length he suddenly felt his hand squeezed more strongly, and afterwards the hold was gradually relaxed.

A faint light was now perceptible through the crevices of the shutter, which was seen by Granby with heartfelt satisfaction. It increased rapidly, and he longed to rise and admit still more, but feared to disengage himself. He could easily have done it now, for the grasp was dull and feeble, and the hand seemed rather to be closed upon his own than to retain it. He thought, with horror, that a clammy coldness was coming over it. He bent his ear forward to the bed; but no breathing was audible. With an indefinable feeling of dread, he then touched the cold wrist, but could distinguish no pulsation. He extricated his hand from the stiffened fingers that enclosed it, rose gently, went to the

window, unbarred a shutter, partially opened it, then turned his face, and as the cold grey light of morning fell upon the bed, saw at a glance that his best friend was gone for ever.

We will not dwell upon his feelings. Those who, like him, have lost the sole protector of their youth, can best imagine what he suffered. He gazed a while, in a sort of stupefaction, on the lifeless body of his kind relation; then approached, and knelt by the bed for some minutes in silent prayer; then with recovered firmness looked once more upon the corpse, and closed its glassy eyes, that seemed to gaze unmeaningly upon him. Afterwards, turning from it, he gently opened the window-shutters, with a careful and a noiseless hand, as if the sleep of death should still be respected, though it could not be broken.

It was a bright and joyous summer's morning. A clear light just tinged the edges of the hills, while a thin cool haze, like a silver gauze, was lightly thrown across the valleys. The air was mild and fresh, and innumerable dew-drops sparkled in the grass. The birds had began^a their early carol, and 'the cock's shrill clarion'⁸³ echoed in the distance. All told of renovated life – all spoke the voice of joy and promise.

It was a sight to cheer all hearts – all, save that of the desolate mourner, who looked out upon this fair scene from the silent chamber of death. To him it gave far other feelings. It added an impulse to his grief – it seemed as if Nature had unkindly withheld her sympathy. All without was bright and gay, and breathed of life and cheerfulness – all within was solemn as the grave. He turned his eyes from the death-bed of his benefactor, to the brilliant spectacle of reviving nature, and the cruel contrast deepened the gloom of his situation.

There still was silence within the house, and Granby almost feared to disturb it. He waited awhile. It seemed as if all slept but him. At length a sound was heard, and then softly unclosing the door, he stepped forth to communicate the melancholy tidings.

The sad event was soon known to the whole household, and deep was the affliction it caused; and Granby's tears flowed afresh on witnessing their's. They had, indeed, lost much – an ever kind and generous master. But Granby's loss was greater far: he had to mourn for one whose benevolent spirit had fostered him almost from infancy, and who in his worst of necessities, had been to him a second father; the heart was cold whose warmest affections had ever been for him alone; and stiff and motionless was the hand that reared his orphan childhood.

In cases of affliction, the necessity of occupation, even though the duties that engage us be of a melancholy kind, is ever found a stern, but useful corrector of our grief. It is fortunate for us, when, after the loss of a cherished friend, or near relation, we are instantly plunged into a current of business which demands our close and constant

attention. We are thereby prevented from indulging in that train of sad but unavailing thoughts, which such a circumstance will naturally induce.

Happily this was Granby's case. A whole day was before him, the wretchedness of which would have been almost insufferable, had it not been for the prompt exertions, and multifarious business by which that day must necessarily be occupied. The direction of every thing^a devolved upon him. He had to acquaint a long list of friends and relations with the sad event; to appoint the time and manner of the funeral; and finally, to examine the state and disposition of his uncle's affairs.

Among other directions for the funeral, a wish was expressed in the will, that Henry and Lord Malton should be the chief mourners; a request which the former immediately made known to his Lordship by letter, stating at the same time the day, and the place appointed.

This done, Granby could not help recurring to the words so earnestly expressed by his uncle, relative to some bureau. He thought he said, 'open,' or 'oaken,' – but could not tell which, so imperfectly were the words articulated. He recollected that there was a small old bureau of oak, standing in a back room, which was called, as such rooms often are, the study, but which was certainly little used for studious purposes, and was more than half filled with dusty moveables of various descriptions. He opened it, but found nothing of any moment, and was thence led to conclude, that it was not of this his uncle meant to speak.

CHAP. XIX.

Time as he courses onward still unrolls
The volume of concealment.

*Remorse.*⁸⁴

FOR several days Granby was closely occupied, either in superintending various arrangements, or in examining and destroying the various letters and papers, which the General, during a long life, had allowed (in some instances rather heedlessly)^a to accumulate. On the evening before the funeral, in turning over the leaves of a memorandum book, – to see if it contained any article of moment, the following words caught his eye – ‘Mem. To tell Harry that when I am gone, he will find the paper in a secret drawer of the oaken bureau, in the back study.’

He started from his chair as he read this. It explained, at once, his uncle’s meaning. It was to this bureau that he meant to direct him, and from the earnestness of his manner he could not doubt that the paper in question must be one of deep importance. With a strong feeling of curiosity and interest, in which hope and fear were very equally blended, he took a light and went to prosecute his search. He opened the bureau, and after a careful scrutiny discovered the secret drawer.

It contained a thick packet, sealed with his uncle’s seal, and directed in his hand-writing, ‘To my nephew, Harry^b Granby, to be *privately* opened by him after my death.’

He eagerly returned with it to his room, broke the seal, and tore off the envelope, which was found to contain several sheets closely written in the hand-writing of his uncle. By the many various shades of the ink, it appeared to have been written at several successive times. The date at the beginning was that of many years back, and there was another at the end, which was the 16th of the preceding November.

Granby could not help looking with a feeling of awe, on a paper which promised to disclose so much of interesting matter, and which might so materially influence his future prospects. He drew a candle towards him, sat down, and read as follows.

‘MY DEAR HARRY,

‘Before you read this I shall be no more, and you will have lost, if not an able director, at least a zealous and attached friend. It was my wish to be to you all that a father could have been, and you, I think, have been no less desirous to shew towards me all the affection and deference of a son. How far I have well and wisely executed my task, I

cannot say; but God knows that I ever acted as I thought for the best; and you, I am sure, will not be backward in doing justice to the integrity of my intentions. I have a long story to tell you, and one which nearly concerns yourself. I should have wished to have told it otherwise than thus; but I have been fettered by a solemn promise, and my honour has forbidden me to break it. By this promise I am bound not to disclose the circumstances which I shall now relate, except by a paper to be opened by my executor after my death, or if before my death, only in case of the previous decease of another person. That person is Lord Malton, and it is chiefly of him that I am going to speak.

‘We have never talked much upon family subjects, especially those which are in any degree connected with him; but, I believe, you are nevertheless informed, that in case of the failure of male heirs to Lord Malton, the title, and most of the landed property, would descend to the representative of the younger branch. This was a disposal which the present Lord Malton could not alter; but which, I am well persuaded, he would have altered had it been possible. Whether it was the secret cause of his disagreement with your father, or whether his quarrel with your father made him the more averse to this disposal of his property, I cannot say; but certain it is, that he and my brother were hardly ever on friendly terms, and were at one time in a state of actual hostility. But I will not dwell on these things; I will rather remember that he never failed to acknowledge your father’s good qualities, and was uniformly kind in his behaviour to me. Lord Malton, as you may have heard, married early. His first wife was a Miss Danvers; a very pleasing, amiable woman, who brought him a tolerable fortune. She did not live long, and left only one child, a son, who died shortly after her. Lord Malton was very much grieved at her death; the more, perhaps, on account of the double loss which he sustained, and the consequent disappointment of his hopes of a successor.

‘Within two years he married again. His second wife was Miss Stratford, sister to the late Sir James Stratford. My cousin seemed to be fortunate in his choice. I thought so, and so did many others, and there was reason for thinking so, for she was an excellent woman; so mild, and quiet, and compliant; and though not exactly handsome, she was very pleasing in her appearance. You know her picture, Harry – it is an excellent likeness of her – my cousin Malton gave it me.

‘Well – as I said, he seemed to be fortunate, and they ought to have been happy. But somehow or other they were not. I am afraid it was more his fault than her’s, – as you will see when I have told you all. But I must also say that she had one defect. I hardly like to call it even a defect; but it was unfortunate, and might have been in some degree the cause of their unhappiness. She was very diffident and reserved.

He fancied she was cold, and did not care for him. I know that she did – too much, poor soul, for her own happiness.

‘For the first three years they had no child; and this, to him, who was so desirous of an heir, was a very serious mortification. It perhaps contributed in no small degree to weaken his affection for her; and she, poor dear woman, grew pale, and thin, and low-spirited, and quite unlike her former self. I am sorry to say that I believe this change was brought about by his unkindness. Not that he ever quarreled with her, or used her violently ill; but his affection for her passed away, and she perceived it too plainly; and this to one who loved her husband, as I am sure she did, was worse to bear than any violence of temper. Then there were other distressing things, as you will see: – but I must not anticipate.

‘Well – at length there was a promise of a family, and she was delivered of a son. This gave great joy to my cousin Malton; but his joy was soon checked. Lady Malton was seized with what I believe they call a puerperal fever, and died in the first week of her confinement. Poor Malton! though I fear he did not love his wife, he certainly felt this blow severely. I believe his conscience reproached him for his past conduct to her – conduct that could not be recalled: and then, as I often heard him say, there seemed to be a sort of fatality which had attended his marriage prospects. It was indeed melancholy to have lost so soon a second wife, and in a way similar to that in which the first had died. And then it wounded him in the point on which his wishes harped, and endangered his hopes of an heir; for though the child had survived its mother, yet it was but a sickly infant, and probably might not live long.

‘I went to stay with him at Tedsworth about three weeks after poor Lady Malton’s death. He had written to me very dejectedly; and as we had always been familiar friends, and he used to be cheerful when I was with him, and I knew that a little quiet society was good for people in low spirits, I wrote to offer him my company. He accepted the offer very gratefully; and accordingly I went to see him. He seemed anxious about the child, which had become his only hope, and which was, as I have said, a poor little sickly thing. He did not mention it often, and was rather short in his answers to me whenever I enquired after it. Nevertheless, he evidently thought a good deal about it, saw it several times a day, and had frequent private conferences with the nurse that took care to it.

‘But notwithstanding his great anxiety, and the apparent illness of the child, he never sent for a medical man. This circumstance surprised me; for one was living not far off, whose skill was highly spoken of; and I took the liberty one day to hint to him my thoughts, and to point out this as a proper person. But he did not seem to take my

interference in good part; said that he was the properest judge; that I might be sure nothing needful was neglected; and that the person in question knew nothing about children. The subject was dropped, and as he seemed inclined to take offence, I never thought proper to resume it.

I must now mention a circumstance which took place a few days afterwards. Remember, Harry, that this was in the year ninety. I was then young and active, eager for amusement of any kind, and very fond of field sports. Tedsworth was to me a paradise, for it abounded in game and fish; and as my cousin did not care about them himself, their management, while I was there, and the direction of the keepers, seemed to be vested solely in me. I walked out one evening after dinner (it was in July, on the 14th), and went, attended by one of the keepers, to superintend the laying of some night-lines. It was a fine, still, summer's evening; and the lines being properly disposed of, I was tempted to prolong my walk. I strolled along the edge of the lake, and struck across from the upper end towards the western corner of the shrubbery.

I remember that evening, Harry, as if it was but yesterday. It was twilight, and about nine o'clock; and I sauntered quietly through the close walks of the shrubbery, enjoying the coolness of the evening, sometimes walking, sometimes standing for a few minutes, and watching the bats that flitted to and fro above my head. While I was standing thus, I heard the sound of soft, quick steps, as if some one was stealing gently, but rapidly, along the path towards me. I stood still, and presently there came round the corner a woman muffled up in a dark cloak, with a large bundle under it. On seeing me, which was not until she came quite close, she started, and stopped, and made a sudden exclamation, and I knew immediately by the voice that it was Mrs. Franklin, the nurse. She seemed exceedingly alarmed; and thinking that she did not know me, (for it was almost dark) and was alarmed on the account, I spoke to her, and asked her where she was going, and what she was carrying under her cloak. I remember her answer, and her manner of giving it. 'Nothing, Sir,' said she; and her voice trembled, and she tried to pass me; but the walk was narrow, and as I stood in the middle she could not get by — 'Nothing?' said I, 'it is a nothing^a that lies in no very small compass.' — Those, I believe, were my very words, and I put out my hand to touch the bundle; upon which she hastily drew back, and told me it was only some linen that she was taking to the head keeper's wife to be washed; and on saying this she brushed hastily by me, and passed on.

I stood considering for a few seconds. The woman's behaviour puzzled me; and I thought I saw strong ground to suspect that something was not right. She had a relation living near, and it struck me at once,

that she was robbing her master, and carrying things from the house to this relation. Besides, – I remembered that she was not going the nearest way to the keeper's; which made my suspicions stronger still. I therefore resolved at once to follow her. I hate the character of a spy; but I thought myself bound in duty to my cousin to protect him from abuse and fraud, and felt that I should almost become an accomplice, if I did not attempt to sift this suspicious circumstance. I followed the woman at a distance, losing sight of her at times, and then again faintly seeing her through the twilight. I soon saw that she was not going to the keeper's lodge; and I continued to watch her till she entered a lonely cottage by the edge of the park, where there lived a woman of the name of Wilson, who was her sister, and widow of a former keeper, who had been settled^a by Lord Malton rent-free in a cottage near the park. She had one daughter living with her – a beautiful blooming girl about nineteen.

'Poor Mary Wilson! I must tell you a little of her history, for she was deeply concerned in the events which I am going to relate. It was her misfortune to attract Lord Malton's eye. The interest excited by the death of her poor father, had led my cousin, from charitable motives, to call in his rides occasionally at the cottage; and Mary, whose beauty was certainly great, did not pass unobserved by him. He continued to call at the Wilsons' cottage, but not, as at first, from charitable intentions, Mary alone had become his object. I can make no excuse for him. He knew his advantages of situation, and he pursued them: but it was a most unworthy use to make of those advantages. She was naturally blinded by the admiration, guilty as it was, of one so greatly her superior. I cannot think that she was ill-disposed; but it was a sore temptation, and she yielded to it. A few days after Lady Malton's confinement, she was delivered of a son. I knew this proof of her guilt, and more than suspected its author.

'But I must return to the events of that evening. After seeing Franklin enter the cottage of her sister, I doubted whether I should not follow her thither. But I felt some repugnance at appearing personally in this affair, and thought it sufficient to rouse my cousin's vigilance, and leave to him the work of detection; and with this view I returned home, and resolved to acquaint him with all I had seen. "I have reason to fear," said I, when we were alone, (I repeat as nearly as possible what I remember to have said), "I have reason to fear that one of your servants has been acting dishonestly, and conveying things to which she has no right out of she house." He stared at me, and asked me whom I suspected. "Franklin, your little boy's nurse," said I. "I met her with a bundle under her cloak, coming through the shrubbery." He seemed to start when I named the person, and gave me a very keen look. I can almost fancy I see him before me as I write, his manner

made so great an impression. "And where did she go?" he asked. I told him, to Mrs. Wilson's cottage, and advised him to investigate the circumstance, and said that I did not like to see him pillaged without telling him all I knew. He smiled upon my saying this, thanked me for my vigilance, but said that my suspicions were groundless, and then told me, lowering his voice, that Franklin had gone by his orders to take such things as might be needful for the sick to Mary Wilson and her child; and he added that the child was very ill.

'After a short pause, I said rather abruptly, "If Franklin was taking these things by your order, how came she to say that she was carrying a bundle of linen?" I looked up in my cousin's face as I said this, and was quite astonished at the effect which my simple question seemed to have. He turned very pale, looked distressed, and asked me, angrily, why I expected him to account for all that the foolish woman chose to say. Then, after consideration, he added, that perhaps, under all the circumstances, she felt an awkwardness in alluding to the situation of her niece, Mary.

I pursued the subject no farther, but I thought about it a good deal, and did not feel satisfied that there was no^a some mystery at the bottom. I determined to learn more; and soon after breakfast on the following morning, I walked to Mrs. Wilson's cottage. On entering, I found her and Mary in great affliction; and was told by them that the child was dead. I said a few things to comfort them, and enquired from what cause it had died so suddenly. They described the cause and manner of its death; and I then asked them when it took place. Mary could not speak for weeping, but her mother told me, about one in the morning. Seeing them in deep distress, I forbore to allude to Franklin's visit on the preceding evening; and very soon came away. I think it was on my return that I met the nurse with the baby in her arms. I spoke to her, and asked her in a careless way, why she had been so much alarmed the evening before. She said it was late, and a lonely place, and she was startled at meeting me so unexpectedly; and did not at first know who it was; and she then told me that she had been taking food and medicine by Lord Malton's order to Mary Wilson. I asked her why she could not have told me so at the time; and she accounted for her behaviour in the same manner that Lord Malton had done before. "Perhaps, Sir," she added, "you may not have heard that poor Mary has lost her child – I found them last night in great affliction;" – and then she described their situation in very moving terms, and observed what a heartrending sight it was to see Mary sitting weeping with her dead child upon her knee. "Then the child was dead when you got there?" said I. Franklin said that it was. "And you were there between nine and ten?" She looked uneasy at the question,