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THE
HEBER STEIN
COLLECTION



R. Richards.

Caer Ynwoch.

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN
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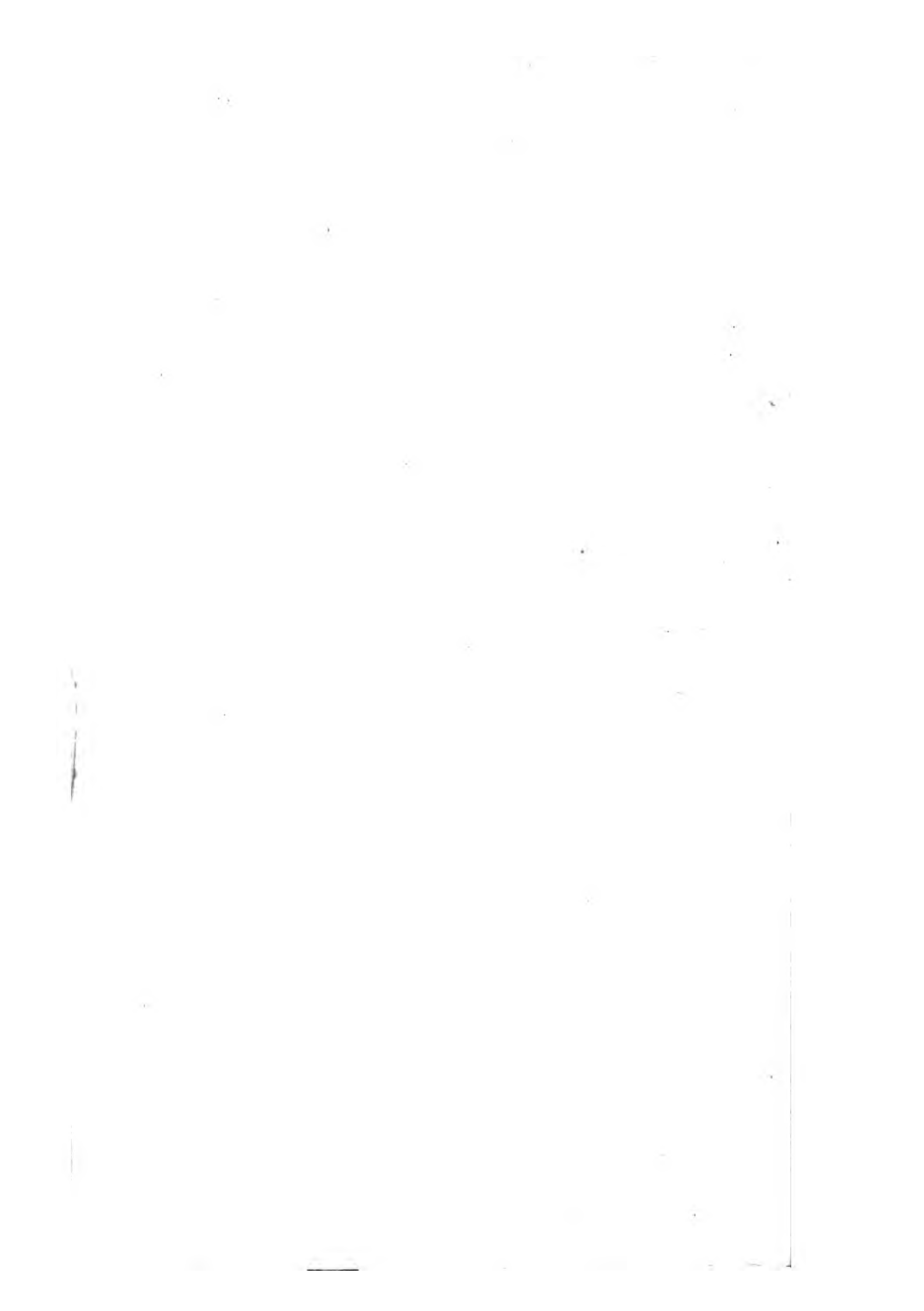


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THE GIPSY.

VOL. III.

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THE GIPSY;

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“RICHELIEU,” “MARY OF BURGUNDY,”

&c. &c.

“ Ah! what a tangled web we weave,
When first we venture to deceive.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

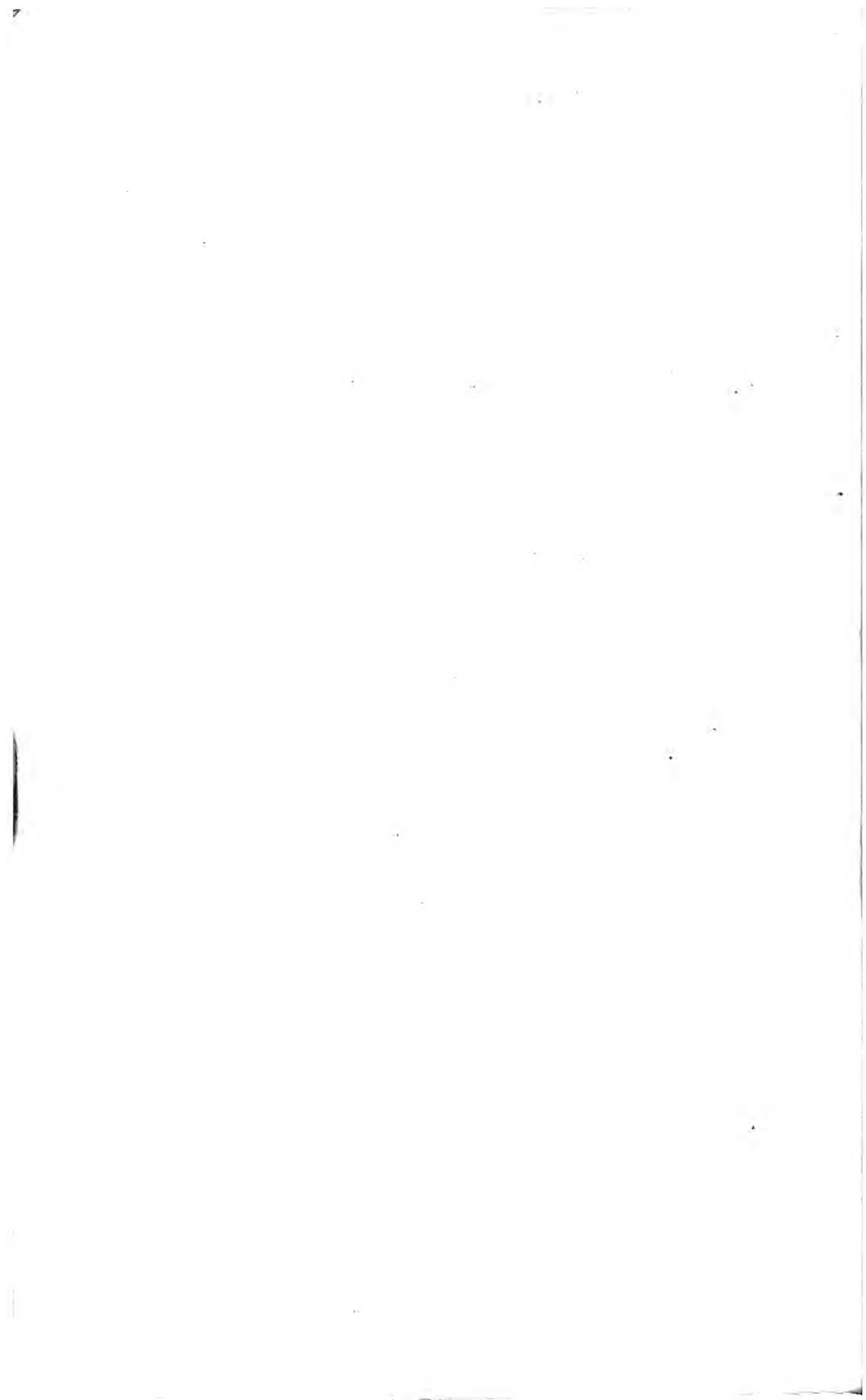
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THE GIPSY.

CHAPTER I.

“THIS is a strange business!” thought Manners, as he followed the gipsy into the road. “This is a strange business; and, on my part, not a very wise one, I believe. However, there seemed no other way to settle it; and having acted for the best, I must make the best of it; though, perhaps, I should have persisted in apprehending the fellow, where I had the means of doing so, at once.”

Such were the thoughts of the decided, energetic, acting Colonel Manners, who was known to the world at large as one of the most skilful and fortunate officers in his Majesty’s service; but the other Colonel Manners — the feeling, generous hearted, somewhat imaginative Colonel Manners, who was only known to himself, and a few very intimate friends, as a man both of the most gentlemanly mind and spirit, and of the

most liberal and kindly disposition — had other thoughts. I have tried to explain this union of separate characters in the same bosom already; and I think it may be understood, for it is certain that it existed.

The latter Colonel Manners — whose great principle was to keep out of sight; and who spoke so low that, though he generally, sooner or later, made himself obeyed, he was not always very distinctly heard at first, even by his fellow denizen of the same noble bosom — now revolved the whole business in which he was engaged in a different manner; and although he could not help acknowledging that it was very strange and very silly to yield to doubtful inferences, in opposition to positive facts, yet he felt a strong conviction that the gipsy whom he followed was not guilty of the crimes laid to his charge.

He wished much, also, that, by any other means than those of violence, he could obtain such evidence of Pharold's innocence, or at least such powerful motives for believing him innocent, as might justify, in the severer eyes of understanding, that course which was prompted by feeling and kindness. He saw no means of doing so, however, unless from the man's own lips he

could draw some explanation of the many suspicious circumstances which existed against him. Yet how to begin such a conversation as might lead to that result, or how to shape his inquiries so as to draw the gipsy on to the point in question, without alarming him at an interrogation of which he did not see the end? It required some thought, and yet there was little time for reflection.

Manners followed, therefore, in silence, for some way, while the gipsy, with a quick step, took the path towards the hill. At the turn of the lane, both Manners and Pharold looked back towards the gate of the garden, to see whether curiosity might not have tempted the gardener to follow; but though the light of day had now almost entirely left the sky, yet the distance was so short that the garden wall and the closed door were plainly to be seen without any other object. A little farther on stood a cottage, with the warm fire and the single candle within flashing faintly, through the dim small window, on the little bit of white railing before the door. Manners paused, and looked at his watch by the light; and then following the gipsy, he said, in a low and unconcerned

tone, "There is an air of comfort even in an English cottage!"

His purpose was to begin a conversation by any means, trusting to chance for the rest; but the gipsy did not seem disposed to render it a long one. "Holes for rats, and for mice, and for snakes, and for foxes!" he said; "God's nobler sky for God's nobler creatures! that is the best covering!"

He spoke harshly, but still he did speak, which was all that Manners wanted; and he replied, "Do you think, then, that God gave men talents, and skill, and power in many arts, without intending him to make use of them?"

"Not to build up molehills out of dust and ashes!" said the gipsy.

"But how is he to defend himself, then, against the storm and the tempest?" demanded Manners; "against the midday heat of summer or the chill wintry wind?"

"He needs no defence!" answered the gipsy. "Were he not the creature of luxury rather than of God, the changing seasons would be as beneficial to his body, as they are to those of the beasts of the field, and to the earth of which he and they are made. And as to storm and tempest, the searching blade of the blue lightning

will strike him in the palace, as surely as on the bare hill or the barren moor; and the hurricane that passes by the wanderer on the plain, will cast down their painted rubbish on the heads of the dwellers in cities."

Manners saw that, as the lines of their ideas set out from the same point in directions diametrically opposite, they might be projected to all eternity without meeting; and therefore he at once brought the conversation nearer to the real subject of his thoughts. "We differ," he said, "and of course must differ, on every subject connected with the manners and habits of mankind; but there is one point on which I trust we shall not differ."

"I know none," said the gipsy abruptly. "What is it?"

"It is, that the creatures of the same God," Manners exclaimed, "are bound to assist and comfort each other."

"If such be your thoughts," answered the gipsy, turning round upon him — "if such be your opinions, then, why do you seek to torture me? Or is it that you think a gipsy not a creature of the same God as yourself?"

"I seek not to torture you," answered Manners. "Were I to see any one torture you,

my hand would be the first raised to defend you. Nothing that you see of me now — nothing that you saw of me when last we met — should make you suppose that I would torture you, even if I had the power.”

“ I tell you,” answered the gipsy sternly, “ that, to live one day in the brightest saloon that the hands of folly ever decked for the abode of vice, would be torture to me! — What, then, would be a prison? ”

“ Whatever your own feelings might make it,” answered Manners; “ my purpose in seeking to place you in one, could only be to fulfil the laws of my country, and to bring the guilty to justice — but not to torture you. Nor, in this, can you accuse me of looking upon you not as a fellow creature; for, of whatever race the offender had been, you know I would have done the same under any circumstances; though your peculiar feeling respecting liberty might, indeed, make me more scrupulous in arresting you than I should be in regard to a person of another race.

“ And have you been so scrupulous, then? ” demanded the gipsy bitterly. “ Have you examined so carefully, whether you have any real right to suspect me of the charges brought

against me? Have you inquired whether those appearances, on which the charges were grounded, might not be all false and futile? Have you asked and searched out diligently, whether some of those men who witness against me, have not hatred and fear of me at their hearts? Have you done all this, before you sought to give me up to the hands of those whose enmity and whose prejudices would all forbid justice to be done me?"

"I am not the judge," answered Manners; "and a judge alone can make such inquiries."

"Are you, then, a tipstaff, or a bailiff, or a turnkey?" demanded the gipsy, "that you should pursue me, as if the warrant were placed in your hands for execution."

"I am neither of those persons you mention," Manners replied; "but every subject of this land is empowered and called upon to apprehend a person against whom a warrant on a charge of murder is known to have issued. But to return to what I was saying: in construing the power thus placed in my hands, I should always be more scrupulous to a person of your class — or nation, if you like the word better — because I know how galling the loss of liberty must be to one who spurns even the

common restraints of cities ; and could I have any positive proof that the warrant had issued against you on a false charge, I certainly should not attempt to execute it."

" On what charge did it issue ?" demanded the gipsy, turning for a moment to ask the question, ere he again strode on.

" You are aware that there are many charges against you," replied Manners ; " but the precise one to which you allude is, I believe, the having murdered my poor friend Edward de Vaux."

The gipsy laughed aloud. " Were that all," he said, " it were soon disproved. His blood is not upon my hand."

" Disprove it, then !" exclaimed Manners, who, from the whole tenour of the gipsy's conversation, felt more and more convinced of his companion's innocence at every step they took. " Disprove it, then ! Other charges have been brought since ; but I know nothing of them, except that one of them, as far as I can judge, is certainly false. Therefore, if you can but show me that the blood of my poor friend De Vaux does not stain your hand, I will leave you directly to follow what course you please ; but if you cannot do so, we are now upon the bare

hill side, where there is none to aid either you or me; and you shall go no further, if I can stop you."

A man may be a very clever man, and not able to calculate all the curious turns of another's character; and it so unfortunately happened that Manners, after having led the gipsy very nearly to the point he wished, overthrew at once every thing he had accomplished by the threat with which he concluded. He was sorry for it as soon as it had passed his lips, as he instantly felt it might do harm; but he did not at all calculate upon its producing so great effect as it did.

The gipsy took two steps forward, and then turning round, stood with Manners face to face. "Colonel Manners," he said, "not one drop of your friend's blood stains my hand!—I swear it by yon heaven, and by the God who made it. I could prove it, too; but I will not prove it for any man's threats. You say I shall not go, if you can stop me! I am not bound yet, thank God, with cords or chains. I am not laid in one of your dungeons. I am not shut in with bolts and bars. I will not tell you what I know! I will not give you proof of any kind, and I bid you take me if you can."

As he thus defied him, and announced his determination, Manners expected every moment to see Pharold turn to use the speed for which his limbs seemed formed; and although the gipsy was, as we have said, two paces in advance of him, he did not doubt that he should be able to seize him before he could effect his escape. The ground on which they were standing was a small flat space on the side of the hill, with the road, taking a steep ascent four or five paces beyond, and having a deep descent on one side, and a rapid acclivity on the other. Thus, if the gipsy attempted to fly along the road, Manners saw that he must necessarily turn to do so, and thus delay his flight; while, if he took any other way, he must come within reach. To Colonel Manners's surprise, however, the gipsy did not move from his place; but remained with his arms folded in an attitude of determination, which very plainly spoke the resolution of bringing the affair to a personal struggle. Manners smiled as he perceived his intention, very confident that his superior muscular strength would, at any time, enable him to overpower two such antagonists.

“ My good fellow,” he said, “ this is really very foolish; for even if you suppose yourself stronger than I am, I could disable you in a

moment, if I thought fit, with my sword. As you seem determined to resist, however, I will make myself even with you in point of arms, and lay aside my sword, which I cannot draw upon an unarmed man; but it must be remembered ——”

“ Keep your sword, Colonel Manners!” said the gipsy — “ keep your sword, and draw it! I am not so much unarmed as I look:” and as he spoke, he drew from beneath his long loose coat the weapon with which, as we have seen, he had provided himself in the morning.

Now there was not exactly, at that moment, what Sir Lucius O'Trigger calls very good small-sword light. The sun was down completely; and though the last grey gleam of parting daylight, that lingered still in the western extremity of the valley, and was reflected from the windings of the glassy stream, fell, with all the force it had left, upon the spot where Manners and his antagonist were standing — though two or three stars were early looking through the mottled clouds, and the coming moon threw some light before her; still his powers of vision must have been strong, who could see, as clearly as is desirable, the playing of an adversary's point round his sword-blade. Manners, however, did

not hesitate. He was becoming a little irritated at the tone of bitter and, in some degree, scornful defiance which the gipsy assumed; and although it was not in his nature to be very much moved by any thing of the kind, yet he went so far as to think, "Well! he shall soon find that a gipsy is not quite so all-accomplished a genius as he imagines. I have had a droll fate here certainly; to be called out by my friend's father, and to fight a duel with a gipsy!"—"The consequences be upon your own head, my good friend!" he added aloud, bringing round the hilt of his sword, and drawing it from the scabbard. "I do not wish to hurt you; but you force me to do so."

"Be it on my head!" said Pharold; and their blades crossed.

There are two sorts of brave men;—one which gets warm and impetuous in action and danger; and one which gets calm and cool. Manners was of the latter sort. Perhaps there never was, upon the face of the earth, a man whose heart applied to itself the idea of danger less than his; and, consequently, he acted as if he were a spectator, even where peril to himself was most imminent. In the present instance, he soon found that he had

much under-rated the skill of his opponent; for if he had not a very *theoretical*, Pharold had at least a very *practical*, knowledge of the use of his weapon; and his singular agility and pliancy of muscle, added many an advantage. Manners was sincerely sorry to find that such was the case: not that he imagined, for a moment, that all the gipsy's skill or activity would suffice to injure him; but he wished and designed to master his opponent without hurting him; and this he felt would be very difficult, if not impossible. He strove for it pertinaciously, however, for some time; and hazarded something himself in order to obtain that object. At length, however, he became weary of the contest, and saw that he must soon bring it to a termination somehow, although he still felt an invincible disinclination to risking such a lunge as might deprive his adversary of life. He determined, then, to play a game, hazardous to himself, though merciful to his opponent; and, aided by his superior strength and height, he pressed the gipsy back against the hill as vehemently as he could. In his haste, he barely parried a lunge, and the gipsy's sword went through the lappels of his coat: but the advantage was gained; and at once disarming his

adversary, he closed with him, cast him to the ground, and set his knee upon his chest.

The contest, in all, had continued for some time; but the last struggle was over in a moment; and ere Pharold well knew what had occurred, he found himself upon the ground, with the sword of the British officer at his throat. He lay there, however, calm, still, stern, without making even one of those instinctive efforts to shield his bosom from the weapon, from which a less determined spirit could not have refrained.

“ Now!” cried Manners — “ now, will you give me the explanation I seek?”

“ Never!” answered the gipsy in a low but firm voice — “ never!”

Manners hesitated for a moment; but then, withdrawing his knee from the gipsy's breast, he returned his sword into the scabbard. “ I will try other means!” he thought — “ I will try other means!”

Through the whole of the events which had lately passed, Manners had been gradually gaining a deeper insight into the character of the gipsy, and had learned to appreciate him better than at first; but still there was much to be considered, much to be calculated; and

many a conflicting opinion, and many an opposite feeling, crossed Manners's bosom, in the short space of time that was allowed for thought. He did not forget the various circumstances which had led him to believe that his friend had been murdered by the gipsy, and all of which remained unexplained; but he remembered, also, how fallacious circumstantial evidence often is; and he set against those circumstances of suspicion, the positive fact, that the gipsy had saved the life of Isadore Falkland at the peril of his own, and had carried her to her mother's house at the imminent risk of being arrested. The high character which Mrs. Falkland said he had borne in the past, the regard which she had hinted that her deceased brother had felt towards him, all tended to show that he was a man of no ordinary qualities: and although, in the absence of such knowledge of his character, Manners might have judged his obstinate refusal of all explanation as a proof of his guilt; yet seeing that, in every thing else, his motives and his actions were different from those of ordinary men, he judged that it might be the same in this instance also. "I will try extraordinary means with him, too," thought Manners; "and, perhaps, I may

gain more by it, than by following the dictates of rigid duty to the letter."

"Why will you not explain?" he added aloud. It would save both you and me from many a painful occurrence.

"Because I will not be compelled to any act under the sun!" answered the gipsy, who had only taken advantage of the degree of freedom which he now possessed, to raise himself upon his arm.

"Then you shall not be compelled," answered Manners, to whom his answer had given the right key to his obduracy: "then you shall not be compelled! but you shall be persuaded. Stand up, Pharold, and listen to me, as to one who does not feel towards you, as you would make yourself believe that all our race do towards yours. You have seen my conduct — you see it now; and you must judge of me better than you lately did."

The gipsy hung his head. "You have kept your word with me," he answered. "You have brought me to a place where no odds could be found against me; and you have vanquished with your own weapons, at your own trade. What more?"

"I have spared you, when I might have

hurt you," replied Manners; "and now I let you go free, when I might make you a prisoner ——"

"You let me go free!" cried the gipsy, in a tone of astonishment; — "you let me go free! and without conditions, too?"

"Without any conditions," answered Manners, "but such as your own heart shall lay upon you, when you have heard all that I have to say to you."

"Then you, too, are one of the few noble hearts," answered the gipsy, rising; "and I have done you injustice."

"There are more noble hearts in the world," Manners rejoined, "than you know of, my friend. But listen to me, and let me see if yours be a noble heart too. Edward de Vaux is, or was, my friend and my companion in arms. We have stood by each other in battle; we have attended each other in sickness; we have delivered each other in danger; and, had he been my brother, I could not have loved him better. I find that, the night before last, he left his home when all the family were at rest; that he went to visit one with whom he had no known acquaintance or business; and that he never returned to those he most loved. Was it not

natural for me to search for him with all the rapidity in my power?"

"It was! it was!" answered the gipsy; "and I have judged you harshly."

"I did search for him," continued Manners; "and I found, by footmarks in the earth, that he had gone with the stranger whom he had visited, to a lonely quarry, and that from that spot his footsteps are not to be traced. This afforded some cause for suspicion and apprehension; but when the place where his steps disappeared was all stained and dabbled with blood, what was I to think? — what was I to do?"

"To think that he was murdered, and to pursue the murderer," answered Pharold boldly; "and I have done you wrong: but the habit of suffering injustice and indignity from your race irritates ours into believing that you are always unjust; and, in this instance, the consciousness of my own innocence, too, hid from my eyes one half of the appearances against me."

"You judge wisely, and you judge well," answered Manners. "There were strong appearances against you; and there were also many minor facts which swelled those appearances into proof so positive of my friend's death,

and of your guilt, that I should have been unworthy of the name of his friend — unworthy of the name of a man — if I had not pursued you as I have done.”

“ You would ! ” answered the gipsy.

“ And yet, notwithstanding all this, ” continued Manners, “ I tell you, honestly, that I believe you innocent. I may be foolish to do so — the prepossession may be false — the motives for such belief may be slight ; but yet that belief is strong. With powerful evidence against you, I felt convinced of your innocence ; and, with the power to take you, I let you go free. ”

Manners paused for a moment, and the gipsy, with his hands clasped and his eyes bent upon the ground, remained silent, buried, apparently, in deep thought. “ Now, ” continued Manners, after suffering him to revolve what he had said for a few moments ; “ now, I have spoken to your understanding, and I have shown you that my conduct in pursuing you has been fully justifiable, and that I am not one of those unjust and ignorant fools, who entertain a base prejudice against the whole of your race, which but serves to drive them on to acts of reckless evil. I have treated you generously — I have

not consulted even rigid duty; and leaving you free to act, I now speak to your heart."

"Speak on, speak on!" said the gipsy. "You speak language that I love to hear."

"I have told you," said Manners, "how I esteem Edward de Vaux; I have told you how intimate have been the bonds that united us — how dear the friendship that we felt; judge then of my feelings now, as I stand before you, not knowing whether he be dead or alive, well or ill, murdered or in safety. But hear me further.— There is every reason to believe him lost for ever; and in that belief, not only I, his friend, must remain — but all who loved him — all to whom he is bound by the dearest ties; and I leave you to conceive the agony of suspense which they now endure. Mrs. Falkland — her daughter, whose life you have so lately saved — De Vaux's father, Lord Dewry ——"

The gipsy started, clenched his white teeth, and shaking his hand furiously towards the sky, exclaimed, "May the vengeance of God fall like a thunderbolt on his head, and wither his heart to ashes!"

"Well, well!" said Manners, seeing that he had struck a wrong chord, "pass him by; for there are others more interested than he, than

I, than any of us. There is a young lady, fair, and gentle, and delicate, beloved by all who know her, blessed by the poor and the afflicted, the ornament of her house, the delight of her friends; and, to her own immediate family, the cherished, the beloved relic of a noble, a generous, a feeling parent early snatched away — of a parent, whom I have heard that you yourself esteemed and loved — of the late Lord Dewry, I mean; for the lady I refer to is Miss de Vaux ——”

“ What of her? what of her?” demanded the gipsy eagerly: “ but I guess! I guess!”

“ It is easy for you to imagine what she must feel,” said Manners. “ She has been, as probably you know, engaged to her cousin De Vaux for several years, and they have loved each other through life. Their affection has grown up with them from childhood, and has been strengthened by every tie, till at length their marriage, which was appointed to take place in a few weeks, was to have united them for ever. Judge, then — judge what must be her feelings now; but I will not attempt to tell you what those feelings are — I will only tell you in what situation she now is, and leave you to judge for yourself. This very evening,

the medical man who is attending her, assured me, that the anxiety and apprehension which she has suffered on account of her cousin, have already seriously impaired her health ; and that great fears, even for her life itself, are to be entertained, if this state of mental agony is not soon put an end to by certainty of some kind."

"That alters the whole," cried the gipsy — "that alters the whole ! But let me think a moment — let me think !"

"Yes !" said Manners ; " think of it,—and think well ! — think what must be the feelings of a young and affectionate heart, which, early deprived of the sweet relationships of parent and child, had fixed all its best and warmest affections upon one who well deserved its love, — had concentrated upon him alone all those feelings of tenderness and regard which are generally divided amongst a thousand other objects ; and which had so lately seen him return from scenes of danger and strife, to peace and quietness, and, as all fancied, to love and domestic happiness ;— think what must be the feelings of such a heart, when the object of all her thoughts and hopes is suddenly and strangely torn from her — when every trace of him is lost, but such as naturally and strongly

lead the mind to conclude that death of a bloody and violent nature is the cause of his prolonged and extraordinary absence.—Think—think well what must be the feelings of Miss de Vaux, his promised bride—think what must be my feelings, as his companion and friend; and, if your heart be other than of stone, sure I am that you will instantly afford the means—if you possess them — of removing all these cruel doubts and fears, and relieving our anxiety, at least by certainty of our friend's fate.”

“ You need say no more ! ” said the gipsy—
“ you need say no more ! I will remove your fears upon easy conditions. — I had not foreseen all this. — Like a fool, I had not remembered that events, which seemed to me all simple and clear, because I was an actor in them and saw them all, would produce such anxiety and fear to those who saw no more than the result; but I have been moved by many another feeling, and occupied by many another event. I have seen men bring ruin on their own heads and mine, by following their own wilful follies rather than my counsel and command; and I have seen a thoughtless and innocent boy entrapped into becoming the sacrifice for the guilty and the obstinate. I have been called upon to punish

the offenders, and to endeavour to rescue the innocent; and I have been hunted through this livelong day like a wild beast; — so that I may well have forgot that circumstances, very simple in themselves, might fill others that knew not all, with strange fears and suspicions; but besides that — besides that — I had other motives for not telling what I knew. — Those motives are now shaken by stronger ones; and for the sake of Marian de Vaux, I will say what I would not have said for the sake of my own life; but it must be on certain conditions.

“Name them,” said Manners; “and if they be not very hard to fulfil, doubt not that I will undertake them.”

The gipsy paused and thought for several minutes, and he then replied, “I will, as I have said, put you in the way of finding your friend, Edward de Vaux; and you will find him — if not well — at least in kindly hands. But now mark me. The person with whom he is, has lately come over from America with private views and purposes of his own, yet doubtful and unresolved whether he will proceed with them or not. Were his residence in England known to any one, it might force him either to execute the designs with which he

came sooner than he intended, or perhaps prevent him from changing those designs, though other circumstances may render such a change necessary, or still farther—”

“ In short,” said Manners, “ he is desirous of remaining concealed ; and, as far as I know, has every right to do so, without my enquiring at all into his motives. But you forget, my good friend, that there is as little chance of my knowing this person of whom you speak, as of my betraying him if I did.”

“ You are wrong,” said the gipsy ; “ there is every chance of your knowing him ; you have seen him I know, and esteem him I am sure ; and, what I have to require is this, if, by my means, you find Edward de Vaux, and recognise the person now kindly tending him, you shall not, upon any pretence, or to any person whatsoever, reveal his real name and character. You shall recognise him merely as the person that he chooses to call himself, and speak of him as none other.”

“ Of course ! of course !” answered Manners ; “ he shall keep the incognito, for any thing that I may do to the contrary, as long and as strictly as he likes.”

“ But, one thing more,” said the gipsy,

“ one thing more, — you shall, on no account whatever, lead — or give such information as may lead — the father of Edward de Vaux to the place where his son is.”

“ That is somewhat extraordinary,” said Manners; “ but I suppose, of course, that this person to whom you allude is Lord Dewry’s enemy.”

“ He was once his friend,” said the gipsy, “ and, perhaps, now that Lord may speak of him as such, for there is no knowing by what terms his deep and crafty spirit may designate the people whom he most hates. Not a week ago he gave me gold, and would fain have made me think he loved me; but I knew him to the heart, and I saw the serpent in his eye.”

Whatever Manners might think of the evident hatred, strong and reciprocal, which existed between the peer and the singular person with whom he now stood, he did not judge it expedient to risk the advantages he had gained by defending Lord Dewry, especially as circumstances placed the power of dictating the conditions in the hands of the gipsy. “ My acquaintance with De Vaux’s father,” he said, “ has been too short to acquire any knowledge of his real character.”

“ It would require years, long years,” said the gipsy, “ to know his character as I know it — long, long years ! — or one of those lightning flashes of nature that sometimes, whether men will or not, burst from the darkness in which they shroud themselves, and show at once the deep secrets of their spirit.

“ At all events,” said Manners, “ common humanity leads me to wish much to inform the unhappy father of his son’s safety, and doubtless your conditions do not imply that I should refrain from such proceeding, as soon as I have, with my own eyes, seen my poor friend’s condition.”

“ In that respect, you shall be guided by him to whom I send you,” answered Pharold. “ It is sufficient for me to insure, that the confidence he has placed in me will be betrayed by no fault of mine — that compassion for a gentle and innocent girl does not lead me to risk defeating the plans of a man who trusts me. I know that when you have pledged your word, you will hold it sacred. Your actions have spoken for you ! Will you accept the conditions ?”

“ I will !” answered Manners ; “ and only

beg of you to conclude the matter as fast as possible."

"Well, then!" said the gipsy, pointing through the valley towards the line of the distant hills; "you see yon moon, just raising her golden round behind the thin trees upon the upland. When she has risen ten palms breadths upon the sky, you shall find me here again, and I will lead you to him you seek."

"Nay, but," said Manners, "I thought you were about to conduct me thither now."

"Doubt me not," said the gipsy sternly, discovering at once that suspicions, slight indeed, but newly awakened by the proposed delay, were coming over the mind of his companion. "Doubt me not. By the God that I worship, by the heavens his handiwork, by the life he gave me, by the liberty I value more, I will not fail you. You have spared me, when you might have thrust me into a dungeon, and I would not deceive you even by a thought."

"I believe you," answered Manners; "I believe you — only this, I am very anxious, ere I return to Morley House, to be enabled to give some account of him I seek; to be enabled, in short, to afford some comfort to Edward de

Vaux's family. Can we not proceed then at once?"

"No!" answered the gipsy. "I must think of my own race too! By the unhappy occurrences of last night, my people have been scattered, and have fled for concealment, while I remained to see whether I could find, or could deliver, the unfortunate prey, which those who laid the trap for us had found in the snare. My companions know not yet where I am; and I know not whether they are safe. Thus, ere I go farther, I must see what have been the events of this day, to those whom I am bound to protect and guide."

"Be it so then," answered Manners, "but, at all events, you will allow me to give De Vaux's family the assurance that he is living, and is safe."

"As far," said the gipsy, "as you dare to trust to my most solemn assurance, he is living, and safe also, if you mean by that word that he is free from restraint, and from any risk of injury; but that he is well, you must not say; for he is ill in body and sick at heart; and it may be long ere he is cured of either."

"That is bad enough, indeed," answered Manners; "but it is so much better than the

events, which we had reason to believe had occurred, that the bare fact of his being in a state of security will be an infinite relief to those who love him. I will trust to your word entirely; and both give the consolation which you have afforded, to those who will feel it most deeply, and be here at the time you name, though I am not very much accustomed to calculate hours by hands-breadths of the sky; and you must remember that, from Morley House, the moon is seen in a different position from that in which she appears here."

The gipsy smiled, with a slight touch of contempt at Manners's inexpertness in a mode of calculating the time, which was to him familiar. "Well, well," he said; "be here in just two hours, and you shall find me waiting you. In the meantime, rest at ease regarding your friend, and speak securely the words of hope and comfort to his family; and God be with you in your errand of peace. You have acted a noble part to-night, and there is one that blesses those who do so."

Thus saying, he sprang down the bank to the spot where the sword, which Manners's superior skill and strength had wrenched from his grasp, was lying under a low bush. Pharold snatched it up, and was about to return it to

the sheath ; but some sudden thought seemed to cross his mind, and holding it up, he gazed upon it for a moment or two in silence. “ Accursed be thou ! ” he cried at length, in a bitter tone. “ Accursed be thou, false friend and faithless servant ! to leave thy master’s hand at the moment of need ! ” and breaking the blade across his knee, he cast the fragments down the hill, and strode away, scarcely appearing to notice that Colonel Manners still stood gazing at his wild and vehement behaviour.

Manners smiled as he turned to retread his steps ; and perhaps that smile might be occasioned by seeing the gipsy wreak his indignation at the failure he had met with in their struggle upon the senseless object which his hand had not been able to retain. Perhaps, too, he might remark, how all uncultivated people resemble children ; but, at all events, the tidings that he had heard of his friend’s safety, and his conviction that those tidings were true, had certainly given him a much greater inclination to smile, than he had felt when he came to that spot.

As he thought, however, over all the circumstances, while bending his way back once more to Morley House ; he did not certainly find

that his situation was, in every respect, a very pleasant one. He had to remember that the gipsy, Pharold, was charged with two other crimes, besides the assumed death of Edward de Vaux. In regard to the first of these two, that of having been an accessory, or principal, in the murder of the late Lord Dewry, Manners had but Mrs. Falkland's opinion upon the subject to support his own doubts of the man's guilt. In regard to the second, that of having participated in the outrage at Dimden Park, and having fired the gun, by which Sir Roger Millington was wounded, Manners, after leaving the peer at Dimden, — as we shall almost immediately have occasion to show more particularly, — had visited the keeper who had been wounded in the affray, and from him had learned sufficient to satisfy his mind, that Pharold was guiltless of any share in that unfortunate transaction. On that point, therefore, his mind was satisfied; but, in regard to the other charge, he did not feel at all sure that he was not liable to severe animadversion for the lenity he had shown towards the gipsy.

“ I do not know the laws of the land,” he thought, with a half smile, “ quite well enough to be sure, whether they may not make me out

an accessory after the fact, if ever this Pharold should be found guilty of slaying his benefactor; but, at all events, if the good gossiping world were to get hold of my having taken two or three moonlight walks with him, and having let him escape when I had the power to apprehend him, it would make a pretty story of it." However Colonel Manners was a man, who had too much confidence in his own motives, and too much reliance on what he called his good fortune, though others named it his good judgment, to care much what the world said; and this was, probably, one of the reasons why that world was well satisfied to load him with praise and honour. He took his way back to Morley House, therefore, tolerably satisfied with what he had done, thinking, "I must now, however, try to soften down Mrs. Falkland's wrath and indignation at my persevering rudeness this evening; but, doubtless, the tidings I bring will prove no small propitiation."

To these thoughts he endeavoured to limit himself, though imagination strove hard to lead him into a thousand rambling fancies concerning the causes of De Vaux's disappearance. Manners, however, had a habit of keeping his thoughts under proper discipline, and always

prepared to repel whatever force might attack them. Thus, as he knew, or at least trusted, that a few hours would give him a thorough insight into the real situation of Edward de Vaux, he would not give way on that point, and tried to think of something else. But the light brigades of fancy are like a troop of Cossacks, and the moment they are beaten off at one spot, they wheel and attack another. When imagination found, then, that Manners would not be drawn from his entrenchments by the thoughts of De Vaux, she tried what she could do with the image of Isadore Falkland; but Manners was prepared there, too, and had reproached himself so bitterly with some slight beatings of his heart, which had occurred during his last meeting with that fair lady, that he resisted all thought upon the subject with the heroism of Leonidas.

Having thus reached Morley House in safety, Manners's first enquiry was for Mr. Arden; but the old butler, with a look of solemn importance, informed him that the magistrate had been gone about half an hour, leaving a message, however, for Colonel Manners, to the effect that, having some other business of much importance awaiting his return, he could not

have the honour of staying till Colonel Manners arrived, but would come back early the following morning.

“ That will do quite as well,” answered Manners; and seeing that the cloud of self-importance upon the old man’s brow had not as yet quite disgorged itself of its contents, he paused, in order to hear what next; and the butler proceeded, “ Please, Sir, Miss Marian — that is to say, Miss de Vaux, but we always call her Miss Marian, to distinguish from Miss Isadore — but Miss Marian sent her maid down just now to say, that when you come back she wishes very much to see you herself, for she desires to speak with you.”

The man spoke in as mysterious a tone as if he were communicating a state secret; but Manners, who hated nothing on earth so much as mystery, answered, rather sharply, “ Well, as you see I have returned, you had better call Miss de Vaux’s maid to take me to her mistress.”

“ Oh, Miss Marian, Sir, is in the little drawing-room,” replied the butler: “ she has been there these ten minutes, though Mrs. Falkland does not know it, because she is with Miss Isadore, who fell into the water, and wet

her clothes, and had nearly been drowned, they do say; but —— ”

Manners waited for no farther information on subjects with which he was already acquainted; but, walking up stairs, proceeded to what was called the little drawing-room, and opened the door. Marian de Vaux was sitting on a sofa, with her fair rounded cheek, grown many a shade paler since Manners last saw it, leaning on her hand, and her arm again resting on the table. Her head was slightly bent, and the hand on which it leaned curved round at the wrist, with the fingers dropping languidly under her cheek; and with weary hopeless anxiety in every line. Her eyes, when Manners entered, were cast down, with a drop like a diamond struggling through the long dark lashes; and the light, falling from above, threw the greater part of her beautiful face into shadow: but it fell clear and soft on her fair open forehead, and on her brown hair, which, to save the trouble of much dressing, was braided back behind her ears, but which still, by many a wavy line and struggling bend across her brow, showed its natural tendency to fall into ringlets round her face. An open book was on the table before her; but it looked not

as if she had been reading, for it was turned in such a way that her eye could not possibly have deciphered its contents.

She did not hear the door open ; but Manners's first step in the room caught her attention, and she raised her eyes. " Oh, Colonel Manners," she said, as soon as she saw him, " I am very glad you have come, for I very much wished to speak with you — but I am afraid you are fatigued, and perhaps may not have time to spare."

" Not at all," answered Manners with a smile, which he intended to prepare the way for better tidings. " Indeed I think, Miss de Vaux, that if you had not sent me an invitation, I should have sent to petition one."

" The fact is, Colonel Manners," said Marian, " I wish to know the truth. My dear aunt, and my cousin, with the very kindest intentions, keep the truth from me—at least so I am led to believe by what my maid has told me. Now, indeed, it would do me less harm, though they do not think so, to tell me the whole at once ; and I am sure, Colonel Manners, that you will be kind enough to do so, when I assure you that I am far better able to

bear even the worst tidings, than this terrible, awful state of suspense."

Manners took her hand, and gazed in her face with a smile full of kindness and hope, for he feared to make the change from grief to joy too sudden, by speaking the happier news he now had to bear; but even that was too much, and Marian's heart, as she read his smile aright, beat with fearful violence; and, pale as ashes with emotion, she sunk down again on the sofa, from which she had partially risen to speak to him.

"I see that your fortitude is not half real," said Manners, seating himself near her; "but let me entreat you to hear me calmly, my dear Miss de Vaux."

"Oh, I will, I will indeed!" cried Marian. "But for Heaven's sake speak, Colonel Manners—you smile; and I know you would not smile on one so wretched, if you had not some hope to give! Is it not so?"

"It is!" answered Manners: "and delighted I am that now, for the very first time, I can give it. But, indeed, you must be calm, for the intelligence I have obtained, is not so entirely good as to warrant our indulging in

any very great joy, though it may do away our worst apprehensions."

"That is enough! that is enough!" cried Marian. "If they have not murdered him, I can bear almost anything else with fortitude: but, now, for Heaven's sake tell me all, for you see I can bear it with calmness and composure."

"First, let me defend Mrs. Falkland and your cousin," replied Manners, wishing, by a little delay, to give his fair hearer's mind time to habituate itself to a change of feeling; for neither her look, nor her manner, served at all to confirm the assurances of calmness and composure which she gave him. "Let me defend Mrs. Falkland and your cousin; they really could give you no precise information, for till within the last half hour none has been obtained."

"Oh, but they knew more than they let me know," cried Marian, "at least if my maid has told me true—but I trust it is not true—for I cannot believe that Edward can be safe, if she spoke correctly; she said you had found his footsteps, and blood, Colonel Manners, and the place where he must have fallen." As she spoke, her countenance filled with horror at

the ideas she recalled, and she clasped her hands over her eyes, as if to shut out some fearful sight.

Colonel Manners thought that the sooner such a lady's maid was discharged the better ; but, as he could not contradict the story the woman had so imprudently told, he left it as it was, and replied, " Do not, my dear young lady, call up such painful images, when I assure you that there is no foundation for the supposition that your cousin has suffered in the way our fears led us to imagine. My information, as yet, is scanty ; and, till to-morrow, you must not ask me even how I have obtained it ; but I have the most positive assurances that De Vaux is safe, though ill."

" Thank God, thank God, for his safety, at least," cried Marian ; " but, are you sure, Colonel Manners — are you quite sure ? I do not wish to put any questions that you may not like to answer ; but, only tell me if you yourself are quite sure of Edward's safety ?"

" I am perfectly and thoroughly convinced," answered Manners, " that, whatever may have been the accident which may have prevented his return home, he is both in security, and attended with care and kindness. Indeed,

my very telling you the fact should make you feel quite sure that my own conviction is firm ; for, indeed, Miss de Vaux, no inducement would make me hold out a hope to you, were I not sure of that hope having a good foundation."

" Thank you ! thank you ! " replied Marian ; and, with one of those sudden bursts of tenderness, which — springing from some secret action, either of memory or imagination, without one spoken word, or external circumstance to call them forth — sometimes overpower us when least we expect it, she gave way to a gushing flood of tears, and, for a moment or two, let the bright drops flow unrestrained. " You have not seen him then, Colonel Manners ? " she said at length, wiping her eyes, and looking up with a glance, in which apprehension still contended a little against joy.

" Not yet, " Manners answered ; " but, I have received a solemn promise that I shall be conducted to the place where he is, this very night. "

" Oh, let me go with you ! " cried Marian, starting up.

" Nay, nay, I am afraid that would not do, " answered Manners, smiling. " Think what the

world would say, my dear Miss de Vaux, if you were to go wandering about, no one knows whither, through a long autumn night, with no other escort than a colonel of dragoons."

Marian was won even to a smile, and, while it was yet playing round her lips, and sparkling in her eyes, Mrs. Falkland entered the room, not knowing by whom it was tenanted: "Marian! Colonel Manners!" she exclaimed; "and both laughing too! then some very happy change must have come over our affairs."

"Oh, most happy, my dear aunt," cried Marian. "Colonel Manners — and I know not how to thank him — has discovered where Edward is, and that he is safe."

"God be praised!" cried Mrs. Falkland; "but let me hear all about it, for this is news indeed."

"In the first place," said Manners, willing, if possible, to escape any very close cross-examination till he could speak with more security on the many points of De Vaux's situation, which were still doubtful, "in the first place, I have to apologise, my dear Madam, for some want of courtesy to-night when last we met; but you must remember that I am but a rude soldier, and accustomed to think far more of

what I consider my duty, than of what is polite ; and I am sure that my good news will gain me your forgiveness."

"If your perseverance have gained tidings of my poor nephew," answered Mrs. Falkland, "my forgiveness for much graver offences—could Colonel Manners commit them—would be but a poor recompense."

"I hope Miss Falkland has not suffered at all," continued Manners ; but Mrs. Falkland exclaimed with a smile, "Not at all, I trust ! But, Colonel Manners, I will not be put off without an answer. You shall not keep all your good news for Marian, and refuse to let me share. What have you discovered ?"

"Why, my dear madam," answered Manners, "I will tell you the candid truth. I have discovered very little beyond the bare fact, that De Vaux is in safety, though not well ; and you must ask me no more questions till I can give you satisfactory answers. I am to be conducted to him, however, this very night : and, within an hour of this time. Miss de Vaux wished to go with me, and we were smiling to think what sort of story the world would make of her taking a midnight walk over the moors and through the woods, with the

ugliest colonel of dragoons in his Majesty's service."

"But, are you obliged to go alone?" asked Mrs. Falkland.

"I rather think that is part of my compact," answered Manners; "and I believe it must be on foot too."

"And you were fatigued an hour ago;" replied Mrs. Falkland; "and though I, selfishly, cannot make up my mind to ask you to put off your expedition till to-morrow, yet I must prevail on you to take some refreshment." So saying, she rang the bell, and then went on; "I need not ask who was your informant; and I feel equally certain that the tidings are true, because you give them credit, and because you derived them from him."

"Now, I am in the dark," said Marian, "both in regard to this person you speak of, and to Isadore. What made you believe she had suffered from any accident, Colonel Manners, as you enquired of my aunt just now?"

"I am afraid that the whole story would be too long to tell you at this moment," answered Manners, while a footman appeared, and Mrs. Falkland ordered some refreshments to be brought immediately, "especially as you see I

have to sup before I go — nor will I deny that I need my supper, for, to tell the truth, I have not dined. But Mrs. Falkland will relate our whole story of this evening, when I am gone ; will tell you how your cousin escaped drowning by a miracle ; and how Colonel Manners behaved in a very rude and uncivil manner ; and how, at length, a compromise was entered into, which reflected more honour upon his obstinacy than upon his politeness.”

“ No, no, Colonel Manners, I will not tell her such stories,” answered Mrs. Falkland. “ I will tell her, perhaps, that Colonel Manners’s duty as an officer, and his feelings as a man, clashed with her aunt’s duty as a person of her word, and her feelings as a woman ; that her aunt did what she seldom does, lost her temper ; and that Colonel Manners ended the matter wisely and well, and by his perseverance obtained joyful tidings without a breach of faith.”

“ You are both speaking in mysteries to me,” said Marian rising ; “ so I will go and make Isadore tell me the whole in less enigmatical language. Where is she, my dear aunt ?”

“ She is in bed,” answered Mrs. Falkland, “ but not likely to go to sleep.”

“ In bed !” exclaimed Marian ; “ then, indeed, it is time that I should go and see her, for I do not ever remember Isadore having been in bed at nine o’clock before, and something must be the matter.”

Thus saying, she quitted the room ; and left Colonel Manners to take some refreshment, and to relate the while, to Mrs. Falkland, as much as he had time and inclination to tell of his adventure with the gipsy.

“ I fear no danger,” he concluded, when he had ascertained by his watch that the time appointed for his return was approaching ; “ I fear no danger, and have every confidence in the extraordinary man who is to be my guide ; but, at the same time, it is always well to be prepared ; and, therefore, I shall not only change these heavy riding boots for something more fit for walking, but I will take the liberty of adding a brace of pistols to back my sword in case of need.” He then took leave of Mrs. Falkland ; and, after making the alteration he proposed, once more sallied out like the knight of Lamancha, with a heart scarcely less chivalrous, though guided by a mind which happily had power to restrain and direct the operation of his feelings. Here, however, the thread of his

adventures must be broken off for a while, in order that we may leave no longer unfilled that void in his history which now exists between the moment at which we last left him in conversation with Lord Dewry, and that of his sudden re-appearance at Morley House.

CHAP. II.

AT the end of the sixth chapter of the second volume, it may be remembered, that we left Lord Dewry sitting in the saloon of Dewry Hall, with Colonel Manners. Night had become morning before the messengers for whom he waited arrived from Dimden; and when they did so, they brought the tidings that his lordship's well laid scheme had failed; that no one had been taken by the keepers, but a gipsy boy; and, that Sir Roger Millington, as well as one of the keepers, had been wounded—the first, seriously; the second, but slightly. Manners had expected and believed, that the peer would both be disappointed and shocked; but a variety of emotions naturally sprang from such tidings in the situation in which Lord Dewry had placed himself which could not be understood or calculated by any one unacquainted with all the dreary secrets of his heart. He was disappointed, it is true, that Pharold had not been taken; but he trusted, that, with

all the means employed against him, the gipsy would not be able to escape.

Far from either shocked or sorry was he, however; that blood had been spilt in the affray between the keepers and the gipsies, or that death might ensue; for he saw that his grasp upon Pharold would thereby be strengthened, though he could have wished, certainly, that the shot which had been fired had found any other bosom than that of Sir Roger Millington, from whom much good service remained still to be derived. Such feelings, of course, produced some effect upon his behaviour, especially as Colonel Manners's cordial co-operation in his plans, without making him entirely forget the different principles upon which they acted, had, in some degree, thrown him off his guard, in regard to the minor points of demeanour. The effect, indeed, was not so striking as to lead Manners to suspect any thing like the truth: but it was sufficiently marked to call his attention, — to appear strange and unpleasant, — and to make him think, “ This is one of those pampered sons of luxury, who only feel where their own immediate comforts are concerned. He seems to care no more for the people who



have been wounded in his service than if they were things of wood."

After a few short comments on the means to be next employed, Manners retired to the chamber prepared for him, and lay down to rest. He rose betimes, however: but it was long ere the peer made his appearance; for, exhausted with activity, and watching, and contending passions — the most wearing of all the many assailants of life and strength — he fell into a deeper slumber than he had known for many years. At length, he came, and at a late hour set out with Colonel Manners for Dimden; but since the preceding night a change had come over his feelings towards his companion. Then, in agitation, and horror, and anxiety, he had clung to any one for the sake of society; and more especially to one whose character and reputation gave him confidence, and whose warm co-operation afforded support. Now, however, he was going to hear from his agents the progress of dark and subtle plans of which Colonel Manners knew nothing, to examine and speak with persons whom he had engaged in proceedings equally cunning and unjustifiable; and he could very well have dispensed with the presence of

one whose bold good sense was likely to search and see farther than might be at all convenient.

These feelings influenced his demeanour also ; and although he could not be absolutely rude to a person he had so lately courted, and who was so perfectly independent of him in every respect, yet his manners were, throughout the journey, sufficiently cold and repulsive to make Manners determine to bring their companionship to a close as speedily as possible. On their arrival at Dimden the gipsy lad was sent for, and a few casual questions asked him by the peer, which he repelled by either obdurate silence or sullen monosyllables. This, however, was what Lord Dewry for the present desired ; but Colonel Manners was resolved, if possible, to hear more, and he plied the prisoner with every question which he judged likely to elicit some information concerning his poor friend De Vaux. Little satisfactory news did he, indeed, obtain ; and, in fact, received no reply to the greater part of his interrogation. Still the impression upon his mind, from one or two occasional words which the lad was induced to speak, was strong, that he at least was ignorant that De Vaux had been murdered, and thence

arose in Manners's mind the first reasonable hope that his friend might still be living.

After the space of nearly an hour thus spent the youth was removed. The peer made no comment ; but after looking out of the window called some of the servants, and enquired after Sir Roger Millington. The reply was, that the knight suffered considerable agony, and that the surgeon was with him still.

“ Colonel Manners, you must excuse me for half an hour, while I visit my unfortunate friend,” said Lord Dewry, with a frigid bow. “ My poor son's death,” he added, while his quivering lip, at the very mention of his son's name, betrayed that on that subject, at least, his heart was painfully sensible, — “ my poor son's death, of course, weighs heavily upon me ; but I must not forget my wounded friend. I do not contemplate being detained longer than half an hour, and then I will have the honour of setting you down at Morley House as I drive home.”

“ Do not hurry yourself, my Lord,” answered Manners, calmly : “ I have some enquiries to make concerning my poor friend, and the means that have been taken to discover any thing of his fate ; and, therefore, as I sent my horse

over to Morley House this morning, I will walk thither. I wish you good day."

As it was not the peer's wish or intention to deprive himself altogether of Colonel Manners's influence and support in his farther measures against the gipsy — although he heartily desired his absence for the time — he changed his tone in some degree, and pressed Manners to stay; but took care, at the same time, to add such inducements as he knew were not very likely to have any weight with him, assuring him that the distance was fully five miles, and the road fatiguing and hilly.

Manners, however, as the peer expected, persisted in his design; and, taking leave, he walked out into the park, while Lord Dewry left the room, as if to proceed to the apartment of Sir Roger Millington. Before following him, however, it may be as well to say, that Manners did not direct his steps, in the first instance, to Morley House; but thinking, "His Lordship, in his concern for this Sir Roger Millington, seems entirely to have forgotten the poor keeper they talked of," he stopped at the gate, and enquired whither the wounded man had been carried. The old woman at the lodge gave him the necessary direction; and

proceeding to the cottage which she described, Manners entered with that sort of frank good feeling that stands on no ceremonies where the object is humane.

He found the wounded keeper still suffering considerably ; and he found also, as he had been inclined to suspect, that the attention of the surgeon having been hitherto occupied by the patient of higher rank, the keeper had been entirely neglected. He was consequently more ill and feverish than the nature of his wound would otherwise have accounted for ; and Manners knowing, from much experience in such occurrences, that if proper care were not taken a slight injury might have a fatal termination, instantly despatched a messenger for the surgeon who was attending Miss de Vaux, and kindly waited his arrival.

In conversation with the keeper, he learned that Pharold had not been present when the guns were fired, and from him, also, he heard the particulars of the affray in Dimden Park, the wound the man had received not having been sufficiently severe to deprive him of the power of observing every thing that occurred around him afterwards. By the whole of his narrative, the character of Pharold rose in Man-

ners's opinion, and his hopes of De Vaux's safety were strengthened: but still he determined to act as if such hopes did not exist; and accompanying the surgeon on his late return to the village near Morley House, he prepared to pursue the search for the gipsy as ardently as ever. What followed his arrival we have already seen.

In the mean while Lord Dewry proceeded through the long and somewhat dreary galleries of Dimden House to a distant apartment, but not to the chamber in which the participator in his dark schemes lay on a bed of agony and distress. The room he sought was solitary; and, ringing the bell, he ordered Harvey the head keeper to be sent to him. The man was already in the house, waiting his orders, and somewhat apprehensive of his Lord's displeasure at the failure of his plans. But as long as Pharold was alive and free there was a demon of fear in the bosom of Lord Dewry that cowed the more violent passions of his nature in the presence of those whom he used as his tools. The consciousness of the designs in which he employed them made him treat them gently, from vague but anxious surmises that, notwithstanding all his care, they might

suspect the motives of the plans they mingled with.

Although, then, in his heart, he could have felled the keeper to the earth for letting Pharoold escape him, he addressed him mildly when he presented himself. "Why how is this, Harvey?" he said: "you have let the game escape us. There must have been a fault somewhere."

"The fault was in the cursed cowardice of the fellows that were with me, my Lord," replied the keeper: "if they would but have followed me, we should have taken the black-faced villain any how. Two or three of us might have got wounded, but no matter for that; we should have had him safe here, if they would but have come on. But one fell back, and another fell back; so that when I had got them up against the wall there were but two with me, and two could do nothing against a good dozen."

"Let me hear how the whole business took place," said the peer: "remember that I have had no full account of it from any one; and we must try to remedy what has gone wrong."

The park-keeper was, of course, glad enough to tell his story in the way that best suited

him; and he related the events which we already know according to his own particular version. The first error, he declared, was, that several of the men whom he had hired for the purpose of capturing the gipsies were too late at the rendezvous, and several did not come at all. These disappointments, and the delay they occasioned, had prevented his taking advantage of the moment when the gipsies' guns were discharged after the slaughter of the deer, and as time lost is never regained, had caused the ultimate failure of his whole plan. He assured the peer, however, that Pharold had been one of the party engaged in the destruction of the game; and that he had been active in the affray wherein Sir Roger Millington and the keeper had been wounded. Some of the other men, he said, were not very clear about these facts, but he was ready to swear to it. He then related how the boy William had been seized by two of his party, who had been detached for that purpose; and he added a long account of the measures which he had taken in order to trace the gipsies in their flight.

“Is the keeper badly wounded?” demanded the peer, thoughtfully.

“ He did not seem bad at first, my Lord,” replied the man; “ but they say he is much worse this afternoon, and his wife is afraid he will die.”

The peer muttered something between his teeth which might be, “ So much the better;” but this sound reached Harvey’s ears but imperfectly, and Lord Dewry went on, in a louder tone, “ Poor fellow! have you seen him, Harvey?”

“ Not myself, my Lord,” answered the keeper; “ but his wife came up to see if the doctor could go down, and I spoke with her for a minute.”

“ Poor fellow!” said the peer; “ but we must take care that his murderer does not escape, Harvey. Have you thought of no way by which we can catch him?”

“ Why, he is a keen hand, that Pharold, my Lord,” replied the keeper; “ but I do think we can manage it, if your Lordship likes to try.”

“ Try!” said Lord Dewry: “ I will make him a rich and happy man, Harvey, who brings that villain to justice. But how do you think it can be managed?”

“ Why I scarcely know as yet, my Lord,” answered the keeper: “ I have had sure eyes

upon some of the gipsy folks, and think I can make out whereabouts they have gone to; but Pharold knows better than to go with them. Besides, he was in the park there, not many hours ago, in the broad daylight."

"Impudent villain!" cried the peer; "but what in the name of Heaven could bring him there? Are you sure it was he?"

"I saw him with my own eyes, my Lord," replied the keeper; "and had nearly caught him with my own hands; for we had him pinned in between seven and eight of us and the river: but without minding us more than if we had been rabbits, he took to the water like a hard run fox, and swam the river outright."

Lord Dewry paused; for there was something in the daring hardihood of the gipsy congenial to the bold and fearless spirit which had animated himself in early years; and he felt a sort of stern admiration which even hatred could not quell. At length, however, he repeated, "But what could bring him here? He could not be fool enough to come for the sole purpose of daring his pursuers."

"No, no, my Lord," answered Harvey. "He came after this boy that we caught, I dare say."

The boy may be a bit of a relation, or, at all events, a friend; and they did not know what had become of him, for he was taken apart. Now, my Lord, I was thinking—if, might be so bold—that one might, perhaps, turn this boy to some account, and get him—do you see, my Lord?”

The mind of the peer had been so long habituated to revolve dark and tortuous schemes, that it was apt and ready to comprehend the significant word, or half-spoken hint, which often forms the language of those who are afraid to give their purposes full utterance. Thus he gained an instant insight into the nature of the plan which the keeper had conceived, although he saw not the details; and he answered, “I do see, Harvey, I do see! That is to say, I see what you mean; but I do not see how it is to be managed. If the boy had any means of communicating with his own gang, he might, perhaps, lure the chief villain of the whole into our net; but we know not where they are, and he, in all probability, is still more ignorant.”

“I know well enough where a part of them are,” answered the keeper. “Some went down towards the water, and I cannot trace them; but some, for a certainty, went across the com-

mon to the Dingley wood, where they are still, I am sure; and I should not wonder if the others soon joined them, for it is uncommon what a fancy those gipsies have for sticking to each other, especially in misfortune; and I should not wonder if they were to hang about here till they hear what becomes of this lad. He may be Pharold's son, for any thing I know."

"Would that he were! would that he were!" cried the peer vehemently, the memory of his own son crossing the confused crowd of other thoughts that pressed upon his brain. "Would that he were! I would find the means to wring his heart. But still," he added, after pausing for some moments on the pleasant thoughts of revenge,— "but still the boy is cut off from all communication with them."

"But we can let him have some, if your Lordship pleases," said the keeper. "If your Lordship remembers, I told you of a man named Harry Saxon, who always has a good deal to do with poachers and such like, and who put these gipsies up to the deer-stealing. Now we could let him get speech of the boy; and if any one heard of it, we would say it was only to see whether he could swear to the

youth, and he would soon take any message to his people for him."

"But will he undertake the task? and can we depend upon him?" asked the peer.

"Why, ye—s, my Lord, I think we may," answered Harvey, thoughtfully. "He's a good sort of a man enough; and besides, I rather think I could send him across the water to Botany, if I liked, for something I saw him do one day, and he knows it too; and so he is always very civil and obliging to me."

"Well may he be so," replied the peer with a curling lip. "But can you get at him soon? There is no time to be lost in such a business."

"I can get at him in a minute," answered the keeper; "for he came up to my house about an hour ago; and he is in a bit of a fright about all this bad business of the shooting. So I told him to stay there till I had seen your Lordship; and I would tell him how things went when I came back."

"Go and bring him then," said the peer quickly, "go and bring him;—yet stay a moment, Harvey. Let me consider what is to be done when he does come. He is to be

admitted to speech of this gipsy lad; and what then?"

"Why, my Lord, I dare say the boy can be frightened into sending a message to Pharold to come down and help him out."

"No, no, no," said the peer, "it must be better arranged than that. Let me see. The windows of the strong room look out into the close wood, and any one from the outside could saw away the iron bars. Yes, that will do. But the lad himself must be tutored, in the first place. Quick, then, Harvey, go, and bring your friend; and in the mean time I will see the boy alone. Do not come in till you hear that I have sent for you."

The keeper retired, and the peer again rang the bell, to direct that the young gipsy should be brought before him once more. His orders were promptly obeyed; and two stout fellows appeared, with the prisoner between them.

"Leave him with me," said the peer, as soon as they had brought him two or three steps forward in the room. The men, who had calculated on enjoying all the pleasures of a cross-examination, and who had even in their hearts formed the aspiration that they hoped his Lordship would pump him well, stared with some

mortification at being excluded from witnessing the mental torture of their fellow-creature ; but Lord Dewry, who read something of the kind in their countenances, not only repeated his command, but bade them wait at the end of the adjoining passage till they were joined by Harvey, the head keeper. There was no resource ; and therefore they obeyed, shutting the door, and leaving the peer face to face with the captive.

The gipsy youth might be eighteen or nineteen years of age—that season of life when enjoyment is in its first freshness, when all the world is as bright, and as sweet, and as sparkling as a summer morning—when imagination and passion are setting out hand in hand upon the ardent race that soon wearies them, and when memory follows them quick, — gathering up the flowers that they pluck and cast away as they go, but not as yet burdened with any of the cares, or sorrows, or disappointments which they are destined to encounter in the end : he was, in fact, at that age when life is the sweetest. His form was full of nascent vigour, and his face was fine, but his whole countenance, though speaking, by its variety and play of feature, active imagination, and perhaps a degree of enterprise, betrayed a sort of

uncertain, undecided expression, which is never to be seen in the face of the firm and the determined. The peer gazed on him for a moment, seeing all, and calculating all, in order to work upon his prisoner's mind, by both his circumstances and his weaknesses.

“ You are very young,” he said at length, in a tone of stern gravity, — “ you are very young to be engaged in crimes like these. What is your age ?”

That sort of dogged sullenness, half shiness, half hatred, which a contemned and separate race are, from their infancy, taught by nature to display towards their oppressors, was the only source of resistance in the character of the young gipsy, whose powers of resolution were naturally small, and whose mind was unfortified by firm and vigorous principles of any kind. It was sufficient in the present instance, however, to keep him silent ; and he stood, with his dark eyes fixed upon the ground, and his arms hanging by his side, apparently as unmoved as if the peer had addressed him in a language that he did not comprehend.

“ You are very young,” repeated Lord Dewry, after waiting some time in vain for an answer, — “ you are very young to be engaged

in crimes like these. Life must be sweet to you: — there must be a thousand pleasures that you are just beginning to enjoy, a thousand hope of greater pleasures hereafter; — there must be many friends that you grieve to part with, — and some,” he added, seeing the youth’s lip quiver,—“ and some that doubtless you love beyond any thing on earth.”

A tear rolled over the rich brown cheek of the gipsy boy, and betrayed that he not only understood what was said to him, but felt every word at his heart’s core, as the peer, with barbarous skill, sought out every fresh wound in his bosom, and tearing them open one by one, poured in the rankling poison of insincere commiseration. “ Ah!” continued Lord Dewry, “ it is sad and terrible, indeed, to think of being — at the very moment when one is the happiest — at the very moment when one loves one’s friends the best — at the very moment, perhaps, when all our hopes are about to be fulfilled — to think of being cut off from them all, and to die a horrid and painful death! and yet such must be your fate, my poor boy — such must be inevitably your fate, as a punishment for the murder committed in my park last night.”

“ I murdered no one,” cried the youth, with a convulsive sob, that nearly rendered what he said unintelligible. “ I murdered no one.”

“ But your companions did,” answered the peer, glad to have forced him into breaking silence. “ You were not present, it is true ; but you trespassed on my park for evil purposes with those who did commit murder, and are therefore an accessory to the deed. Banish all hope, poor boy ; for to-morrow I must certainly commit you to the county gaol, from which you will only go to trial and to execution. I am sorry for you, I grieve for you, to think that you must never see again those you love—that you must be cut off in the prime of youth and happiness—I grieve for you, indeed.”

“ Then why do you not let me out ?” cried the lad. “ If you grieve for me, let me run away.”

“ That is impossible,” answered the peer ; “ but perhaps I may do something to make your fate less bitter. Death you must undergo ; but in the mean time I may soften the strictness of your imprisonment. Is there any one whom you would wish to see—any of your friends and companions who might comfort you by coming to visit you ? ”

“What is the use, if I must die?” said the gipsy, sullenly, dropping his tearful eyes to the ground, and clenching tighter his clasped hands together; but Lord Dewry saw that there was something more working in his mind, and warily held his peace. “There is none I should like to see but Lena,” said the gipsy, at length, with a deep sigh; “and Pharold would not let her come, even if I were to ask.”

“And why not?” demanded the peer, affecting as much unconcern as it was possible for him to assume when coming near the very subject of his wishes. “Why would any one prevent her from coming, if it would comfort you? He must be very cruel to deny you, when you have so short a time to live.”

“No, he is not cruel,” said the youth; “he is hard, but not cruel: but he would not let her come, do you see, because a year ago I was to have had Lena for my wife—at least so Mother Gray always told me; but then Pharold loved her; and though her own love did not lie that way, her mother, when she was dying herself, gave Lena to him, because he was better able to take care of her than any one else. And he does not love to see Lena speak to me, I know.”

“ So he took your bride from you,” said the peer, not a little delighted to hear tidings which promised so fairly for success,—“ he took your bride from you, and now he is jealous of you. Well, then, listen to me, and mark well what I am about to say. Your fate is in your own hands. You are left to choose between life and death!”

The youth gazed dully in his face, for a moment, as if he did not comprehend his words at first; but the next instant he burst forth, “ Life, life, life, then!” cried he, clasping his hands together and raising his eyes beaming with new hope,—“ Life, oh, I choose life!”

“ There is but one way, however,” replied the peer, “ by which you can obtain it. This Pharold — this very man who took away your bride — I have every reason to believe killed my brother and murdered my son.”

“ Then that is the way he gets money, no one knows how,” cried the youth.

“ Most probably it is,” answered Lord Dewry; “ but mark me, if you can contrive a means to get him into my power, you shall not only go free, but have a large reward. This is your only chance for life.”

The lad’s countenance fell in a moment. He

was young, and the better spirit was the first to act. "No, no," he cried, "I hate Pharold, but I will not betray him."

"Then you must die," said the peer, sternly.

The better spirit was still predominant: no image presented itself to the youth's mind but that of betraying the chief of his tribe. He thought not for the moment of the loveliness of life, he thought not of the horrors of death, he remembered not either love or hate, in the strong impression of a duty which had been fixed in his heart from childhood; and he answered in a low sad tone, "Then die I will."

"But think," said the peer, who had anticipated the first effect of his proposal; and reserved every stronger inducement, every palliating argument, to tempt and to excuse the unhappy youth, when the immediate impression was over. "Think what it is you choose — imprisonment in a close room by yourself for several days — then trial and condemnation — and then death upon a gibbet, with nobody to comfort you, nobody to speak to you; but you must go through the horror, and the agony, and the shame, all alone and unsupported." The boy shuddered, and the

peer proceeded, changing the picture, however : — “ This is what you choose. Now what is it you cast away ? — life, and happiness, and more wealth than ever you knew, and most probably the possession of the girl you love best upon the earth.”

The peer was experienced in temptations ; for he had undergone and yielded to them himself, and he knew, by the dark histories of his own heart, all the wiles and artifices by which the fiend lures on successfully, even the firm and the determined, to acts at which they have shuddered in their days of innocence.

The young gipsy listened, and hesitated, and felt all his resolutions give way ; but so fearful was the struggle in his bosom, that his limbs trembled and his teeth chattered as if he had been shaken by an ague. The keen eye that was upon him, however, did not fail to mark and understand his emotion ; and Lord Dewry proceeded, — “ Well may Lena think you love her but little, when you scruple by a few words, to break the hateful bonds that tie her to this murderer Pharold, and when you have the power to make her your own, yet refuse to use it.”

“ But I tell you,” cried the boy vehe-

mently, "that Lena would never consent — that even if she were to know that I had done such a thing she would hate me and curse me — that I should be driven forth from my people, and never see her more."

"But neither she nor any one else," replied the peer, "need ever know one circumstance about it. If you will undertake to do what I wish, I will tell you a plan by which it may be accomplished, without any being on the earth knowing it but you and I."

"But if Pharold should be innocent," said the youth, "the guiltless blood would be upon my hand, and it would curse me."

"But if Pharold be innocent his blood shall not be shed," replied the peer: "let him prove his innocence, and he shall go as free as you; but he cannot prove his innocence, for he is guilty; and you, in delivering him up, do but what is right and good — you do but avenge the innocent blood he has shed, though at the same time you gain for yourself life, and liberty, and happiness, and the girl that you love."

"Well, well, well," cried the boy, "tell me what it is I am to do."

“ Will you undertake it?” demanded the peer, eagerly.

“ If—” answered the gipsy, — for probably there was never yet a crime committed, in regard to which the criminal did not propose some palliating motive, in order to deceive his own heart at the time, and to calm the anticipated reproaches of his conscience thereafter, — “ if you will promise, by God and the heavens, that, if Pharold is innocent, you will let him go free.”

Lord Dewry paused for an instant. It is strange, but no less true than strange, that the mind not only habituates itself to evil, but habituates itself to a particular course of evil, and the same person who will boldly reiterate a crime to which he is accustomed will start at a much less heinous offence, if it be new to his habits. Thus Lord Dewry paused for an instant ere he swore to a promise which he intended to evade; but he soon remembered that, in the course which he was pursuing, there was no halting at so airy a thing as an oath, and he replied, “ By all that is sacred he shall go free, if he proves himself innocent.”

“ Well, then,” said the youth, “ I will

do what you wish, — but, oh, if you deceive me !”

“ Deceive you in what ?” demanded the peer : “ I have promised that if he prove himself innocent he shall of course go free — it is but just.”

“ But it was not of that I spoke,” said the gipsy : “ I thought if you were to deceive me into trapping Pharold, and then not to let me go myself !”

“ On my honour ! on my soul !” cried the peer, with a ready vehemence, which convinced the youth more easily than would have been possible, if he had known how often men pledge their honour and their soul when the real jewels are no longer theirs — when their true honour has been lost for years, and their soul pawned deeply to an eternal foe.

“ Well, well,” he answered, “ I will do it. Tell me how it is to be done.”

“ Tell me first,” said the peer : “ this Pharold — he is jealous of you it seems ?” The boy smiled faintly. “ Will he then take sufficient interest in your fate to attempt to rescue you, if he thinks there is a probability of success ?”

“ That he will,” answered the youth ; “ be-

sides, if I could get at Lena she would persuade him. But how can I get at her? she will not come here, and I cannot go to her."

"But do you think that if you were to send a message to her," demanded Lord Dewry, "that she would try to persuade him to attempt your rescue; and that she has influence enough to work him to her purpose?"

"That she has, that she has," answered the gipsy: "Pharold often gives her a cross word; but when she likes to try, she can always get her own way, for all that. But how can I send a message to her? I know not where she is, nor where Pharold is; though once, as I looked out through the bars of the window this morning, I thought I saw him through the grey mist, standing under the distant trees, and watching the house. But they may have gone far before this time; yet if you were to let me out for a few hours I would soon find them."

"We will seek a better way," answered the peer, without taking any farther notice of the simple cunning with which the youth spoke. "I hear from my gamekeepers that a man from one of the neighbouring villages has been enquiring for you; and most likely he knows where your friends and companions are. Now as

you promise to do what I ask, he shall be admitted to see you, and you must send to Lena whatever message you think will induce her to persuade Pharold to come to your rescue."

"Yes," said the boy; "but I must first know how he can rescue me, for Pharold will never come unless he thinks it likely. Ay, and the story must be a clever one, too; for he is as cunning as a sentinel crow, and smells powder at a mile's distance."

"I must leave you to frame the story as you think best," replied the peer; "but you can tell your fair Lena that if Pharold will come to your prison window with a sharp file or a sledge hammer, he can easily set you free by breaking the bars of iron that cross the opening. You may add that there is never any one on that side of the house all night, and so that he will be perfectly safe."

The lad hung down his head; and the hot blood of shame, as he thought of what he was undertaking, rushed from his heart to his cheeks. There was again a momentary struggle, but the good had been conquered once already; and the thought of life, and Lena, and happiness, and freedom from the oppressive terror that weighed down his heart in his prison, got the

better of every thing besides, and he replied, "But what shall I do if they thrust the file and the sledge hammer through the bars to me, and bid me work for myself?"

Lord Dewry instantly saw the validity of the youth's objection, and the probability that Pharold, instead of coming himself, would send some woman or some child with the implements which might be necessary for setting the prisoner at liberty. "You must tell them," he said, after some minutes' thought, "that you are so tied that you cannot cut through the bars for yourself."

"But the man who gives them the message will see that I am not tied," replied the youth; and after pausing for a few moments he added, "No, no, I have thought of a better way. I will not trust him with any particulars: I will bid him ask Lena and Mother Gray to work Pharold to get me out; but at all events for some one of them to come down and speak with me through the bars to-night, and then I can make them do what I want. But you must let them go, remember," he exclaimed. "You must not stop the women if they come."

"I shall certainly stop none but Pharold," answered the peer: "the rest may come and

go as they like. But only do not you trifle with me ; for be you sure that you shall not only not have your liberty, but that, if Pharold be not in my power before to-morrow night is over, you shall be sent to the county gaol for instant trial."

" And how," said the youth, whose shiness was fast wearing away,—“ and how am I to get my liberty when Pharold is in your power ?”

" The door shall be set open," answered the peer, " and you shall go out freely."

" But how can I be sure of that ?" he demanded again. " You may keep us both, for aught I know: will you write it down ? for I have heard that you Englishmen are more bound by what is written than by what is said."

Lord Dewry again paused for a moment, somewhat embarrassed ; but after revolving the probable consequences in his mind for some time, he replied, " I will write it down if you require it."

" Do, do, then," said the youth ; and the peer, ringing the bell, ordered writing materials to be brought. As soon as they arrived, he sat down and drew up a promise, artfully couched in such terms as he felt sure could not, in the

slightest degree, implicate his character or betray his real views, if ever it should be produced against him.

“ As the prisoner,” so the writing ran, “ now in custody at Dimden, is apparently only an accessory, and not a principal, in the crime lately committed at this place, I hereby promise him, on condition of his placing in the hands of justice the notorious felon Pharold, against whom various warrants have issued, at present unsuccessfully, that he shall be immediately set at liberty, as soon as he has accomplished the same. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand, this — day of — ,” &c. &c.

The youth’s eyes sparkled as he read ; and the prospect of liberty and safety, which opened before him, blotted out at once from memory the dark and villanous step which he must take to reach them. “ I will do it, I will do it !” he cried : “ but you must let me do it my own way ; for, I must not let any one in the whole world know that it is my doing. It must seem that he is taken by accident, while helping me, and that I have made my escape in the mean time ; and then I shall be free, and Lena will be mine !” and the youth clapped his hands in the vehemence of re-awakened hope.

“ Well, well,” said the peer, his anxiety for his ultimate object coming eagerly upon him as soon as his immediate purpose was accomplished, —“ well, well, the man I spoke of shall have admittance to you immediately. But, remember, you must lose no time ; for the longest space I can afford you is this night and to-morrow night.”

“ Some of the women will come to me to-night,” answered the youth ; “ and to-morrow night, fear not, Pharold shall stand under the window of the prison room, some time between the rising of the moon and the sun. So watch well, and if you take him not it is your own fault.”

“ So be it, then,” said the peer ; “ and now you must return to speak with the person I mentioned, who shall soon be sent to you.” Thus saying, Lord Dewry called back the two men who had brought the young gipsy thither ; and, after bidding them take him back to the strong room, told them, in his hearing, as an earnest of his good will, to let him have every thing that could render him comfortable in strict imprisonment. As soon as the men appeared, the boy resumed his look of sullen

shiness; and hanging his head, followed them in silence from the room.

The moment he had departed, the peer sent to enquire for the keeper, who had not yet returned, however; and Lord Dewry was kept for a short time under the irritation of his own impatient spirit. At length Harvey appeared, followed by his confederate, Harry Saxon; and it would have given sincere pleasure to a disciple of Lavater to see how well this worthy's countenance corresponded with his actions.

He was a man of about five-and-forty, and what many people would call a good-looking man; that is to say, he had a fresh country complexion, a high large nose, with small nostrils, a capacious mouth, furnished with white and regular teeth, a small keen black eye, under a very overhanging and observing brow, a forehead low, but broad, and surmounted with a layer of fine jet black hair, smoothed down, and polished with the most careful and scrupulous precision. His dress, without being exactly that of a gamekeeper, had a sufficient portion of the style usually attributed to that class to show his hankering after the beasts of the field. His coat was green, and on the but-

tons thereof appeared, not alone the fox, that most sagacious animal, but a variety of other birds and beasts, so comprehensive in their number, and so limited in their kind, that his garment formed a very excellent hieroglyphical abstract of the game act. Leathern gaiters, with small round leathern buttons, cased a pair of sturdy legs, and defended them from the brambles of those paths he most frequented; and a pair of hedger's gloves upon his hands seemed well calculated to grope for springes and gins amidst the thorny ways of life.

The peer surveyed him as he entered with the keen eye of worldly experience, and saw that he was a man to be depended on, by those who could pay him well. After a brief question or two, to which the other replied with sly significance, the peer explained to him the ostensible object he had in view; namely, that of securing the apprehension of a gipsy felon called Pharold, by the instrumentality of the boy they had taken on the preceding night, and asked him if he were willing to undertake the part he was to play, and to perform it carefully.

“ You are, I hear,” he added, with some degree of irony, “ in some way acquainted with these gipsies, and may, therefore, not like to

bring one of them to justice. If it be so, speak, and we will find some other person."

"No, no, my Lord," answered the man. "A gipsy! why I hate a gipsy! they come in and spoil every thing like the regular trade. No, no, hang 'em all for me."

Lord Dewry did not pause to enquire what Harry Saxon called the regular trade; but replied, "Well, if such be your opinion, go in and speak to this lad. Do not let him know that you have had any conversation with me upon the subject: but offer to do any thing for him that you can; and when you have heard what he has to say, come back and let me know the result."

The peer added an injunction to be quick; and Harry Saxon was conducted, by his worthy associate Harvey, to the strong room in which the gipsy lad had been confined.

The chamber would have been in every respect a comfortable one, had not the doors and windows been furnished on the outside with those appurtenances, obnoxious to all comfort, called bolts and bars. The house had been constructed when population was much thinner than at present, and when it was necessary that the dwelling of a magistrate, if situated

far from any great town, should be provided with some place in which a prisoner might be confined for a few hours; for this purpose the room we speak of had been selected and fitted up, both on account of the distance at which it lay from the more frequented parts of the building, and of its proximity to a large old hall, which formed the extreme wing of the house, and topped the bank overhanging the river. This hall had often served, in cases of necessity, as a justice room in the olden times; and though many years had elapsed since it had been employed on any very important occasion, yet even of later days it had been used for the meeting of magistrates and county functionaries, when any thing caused them to assemble in that part of the country.

The strong room, however, had never been intended for any thing but temporary purposes, and was not at all calculated for securing a strong and determined prisoner for any length of time, as the windows, which opened into the park, were only closed by iron bars, which, as the peer had hinted, might easily be filed away from within, or forced off from without. These bars the boy took care to examine minutely as soon as he was taken back to the place of his

confinement; and he then turned his eyes to the park beyond, to ascertain how far the plan he had to propose to Pharold would be recommended by the probability of its success.

A grove of old oaks and chestnuts came up nearly to the windows, so that there was plenty of shade to conceal any one who approached, except in the full light of day. But as he gazed, the boy's thoughts were soon drawn away from the dark scheme which the peer had suggested to him, by the sight of the world beyond his prison. Through the wide spaces between the trees the lawns and savannas of the park were to be distinguished, with other woods and groves beyond. The soft evening sunshine was sleeping upon the slopes and glistening on the river; and the deer were seen walking calm and free, through the long dry autumn grass, while the call of the partridge sounded from some distant fields, and every thing spoke of liberty, and happiness, and peace. The influence of the scene sank deep into his heart, as he stood separated from his people, barred in from the free and beautiful world, and, for the first time in his existence, confined to the close atmosphere of one small solitary room. It sank deep into his bosom;

but, like the fabled amreeta cup of one of our truest poets, many of the sweetest things on earth are productive of good or evil according to the lip that tastes them. While he gazed, the passionate love of wild, unrestrained liberty, and of nature, in which his heart had been nurtured from infancy, grew overpowering. To be free — to bound away over those sunny fields — to cast bars and bolts behind him — became a passion and burning thirst: better principles were wanting to teach him to endure; and had the price of liberty, at that moment, been a parricide, he would have dipped his hands in parental blood. Nerved by the passionate desire, he seized the bars of iron in his hands, and strove to tear them open; but their strength resisted all his efforts, and he burst into tears to think that he must remain another day in bondage.

His eyes were still wet when the door opened, and the insidious prompter of the enterprise, which had deprived him of his liberty, entered the room. The youth, however, was, like the rest of the gipsies, ignorant that they had been betrayed; and although he had only seen the man once, he now received him gladly as an acquaintance and a friend.

Their conversation lasted about ten minutes, and at the end of that time the emissary returned to the peer to report what had just passed.

“ Well, well,” demanded Lord Dewry, “ with what message has he charged you ?”

“ A very short one, my Lord,” answered the man : “ he bade me seek out old Mother Gray, or some of the women, and tell them to come down to speak with him at the window to night ; so, I take it, that wo’n’t suit your Lordship’s purpose.”

“ Yes it will,” answered the peer. “ He will, probably, employ the women to work upon the men.”

“ Ay, ay, plough with the heifer,” answered the other ; “ but I may as well, if your Lordship has no objection, set them on the right track myself ; and I will answer for it, I get them to persuade old Pharold to come down himself.”

“ There is a very large reward offered,” answered the peer, dryly, “ to any one who will contribute to place him in the hands of justice ; and if you are successful in the attempt, you shall not lose the reward. But do you think you can find these gipsies ?”

“ Why, from what Dick Harvey says, my Lord,” he replied, “ I think there can be no doubt that I can find the women part of them, though, most likely, the men are hiding away,— and no bad job either ; for they might fancy I had some hand in last night’s job — but, howsoever, if I can find the women, they’ll make the men do what they like easy enough. So, if your Lordship will keep a good watch round the strong room, without letting the folks show themselves till they are sure of their man, I think we may calculate upon Master Pharold pretty certain.”

“ In which case your reward is certain, too,” answered the peer ; “ but now make haste upon your errand, my good man, for the sun will soon be going down, and you have but little time.”

“ Oh, I don’t dislike a walk in the twilight,” replied the fellow ; and bowing low, but with a somewhat too familiar grin, he took his leave and retired.

Lord Dewry immediately proceeded to give orders for a strict watch to be kept upon the windows of the strong room during the two following nights ; and took measures that an ambush should be laid in the immediate vicinity,

in such a manner that any person approaching could not escape: but, at the same time, he carefully directed that if none but women appeared, they should be permitted to go as they came, not only without molestation, but with every precaution to prevent the least appearance of unusual watch.

This being done, he turned his steps to the chamber of Sir Roger Millington, for whose life the unfavourable opinion of the surgeon gave him no slight apprehension.

CHAP. III.

THE person against whom so many subtle contrivances were directed, on leaving Colonel Manners, as we have described in a foregoing chapter, turned his steps towards the wood in which his own companions had sought refuge after the unfortunate events of the preceding night. If the reader will cast his eye upon the county map he will see that, avoiding Morley Down, he skirted along the hill, the summit of which it crowned; and then, after following for a little way that part of the high road which traversed the little isthmus, in the neighbourhood of which he had saved the life of Isadore Falkland, he struck soon after into the forest on the right. As he came not from the same side on which his comrades had entered the wood, his search for them was not without difficulty; but it is wonderful with what keen tact persons accustomed to such scenes and circumstances take advantage of slight and apparently insignificant indications to guide them on their way. A branch brushed aside, a trodden down flower, the sight or even the smell of smoke, the least

sound of the human voice, will each aid them in their search; and by means of this kind Pharold, ere long, discovered the little glen in which his whole party had found an asylum.

At the moment he approached, had his keen mind not been engaged with many another thought, he might have remarked that there was some degree of bustle and consultation amongst the gipsies, which ceased as he came up. All, however, appeared glad to see him safe; and all crowded round to express the anxiety they had felt during his absence, and to question him as to the events which had befallen him. Lena hung upon his arm with evident pleasure at his return; but the fondness she displayed was more like that of a child towards a parent than that of a wife for a husband.

In answer to the enquiries of the whole party, Pharold — after having seated himself in the midst, and demanded some refreshment, which was speedily procured — related, briefly, all that had occurred as far as his own perils went. Of Colonel Manners he spoke as of a stranger, and neither noticed their encounter nor his promise of again meeting him, though he told the group around that ere an hour was over he must again set forth on matters of import not to be delayed.

“ Well, I hope, at all events, that you are going to get poor Will out,” said the old woman we have so often mentioned. “ Poor boy, he has a hard fate.”

“ I hope,” said Lena, seeing that Pharold made no answer, — “ I hope——” but then she stopped, as if afraid of offending him.

“ And what do you hope, Lena?” said Pharold, gravely, but not so sternly as was often his wont.

“ I hope,” she said more boldly, but with the colour coming up in her brown cheek, — “ I hope that some means will be found to set the poor boy free, for I am sure he was not the guilty person.”

As she spoke Pharold gazed on her with such grave earnestness, that her latter words faltered; and even after she had concluded he still kept his eyes fixed upon her in silence, till one of the men, who had accompanied Dickon on the deer-stealing expedition, joined in to corroborate her words.

“ No, no,” said the man, “ he was not so guilty as any of us. Dickon persuaded the rest of us, and we persuaded him; but it was a hard matter to do so, and then after all he never fired a gun.”

“ Well,” said Pharold, “ I have done my utmost to free him : but he is in the hands of our enemies, who are keen, and vigilant, and many ; and I see no way of delivering him from them but by force, which I will not employ, first, because it would fail ; and next, because it would be sacrificing many of the innocent to deliver one, who, though less guilty than others, is still culpable. I see no other way.”

“ Ay, but there is another way, Pharold,” said the old woman : “ they say that he is confined in what they call the strong room.”

“ They say !” exclaimed Pharold, hastily : “ they say ! Some one has been with you : speak, who has been here ? or has any one gone forth when I forbade it ?”

The old woman only grinned at having betrayed herself, as Pharold looked sternly round upon the circle ; but Lena cast herself upon his bosom, saying, “ Tell him the truth ! Oh, tell him the truth ! It is always better to tell him the truth ! Well, if no one else will, I will. Some one has been here, Pharold—some one who has seen the poor boy in prison ; and he told us all how wretched he is, and also he said that William himself had sent him to us to say, that if any one would come down to-

night, or to-morrow night, to the window of the room where he is lying, they could easily wrench off the iron bars that kept him in, and set him free at once."

"And who was the person that he sent?" demanded Pharold, sternly.

"Why it was just Harry Saxon, the game sneaker," answered the old woman: "who else should it be?"

"A dastardly villain!" said Pharold, hastily; "fit to betray us all: speak no more of it. I know that man of old, and would not trust him with the life of a child, if he could gain by its destruction."

"He seemed honest enough in this business," said the man called Brown; "for he told us all how he had got in to see the lad, and how he had traced us hither. He took some blame to himself, too, in the business of the deer stealing, for he was to have bought the venison from Dickon; and that was the reason why he went to see poor Will in prison, and was willing to do what he could to get him out. Now I would not promise to go till I knew what you thought of it, Pharold; but if you like, I will go down to-night, for as to the man betraying us, you see I have no fear, because,

if he had liked, he could have brought people to nab us all here. So I will go and try what I can do."

"But did not Will say particularly," cried the shrill tones of the old woman, "that it must be some one who knew the place well, or they would get into a mess? If you go, Brown, you'll only get caught yourself, and spoil a hopeful plan for setting poor William free. There is no one that knows the place well but Pharold and I, because we know it of old; and as Pharold is afraid to go any more, I would go with all my heart, if I were strong enough to get the bars off: I could have done it once as well as the best man among you; but I am an old woman now. As for that, Pharold knows the place better than I do a great deal, for he lived in that very house for many a month, and——"

"Hold your peace, hold your peace, woman," interrupted Pharold. "The boy said to-night or to-morrow, did he not?"

"Yes, to-night or to-morrow," answered Brown; "but to-night were best, for who knows what may happen before to-morrow?"

"To-night, I cannot go," answered Pharold, "for I have pledged my word to be elsewhere, and I do not break my word: but to-morrow I

will go ; and I think that, perhaps, after all, I may be able to set him free. In the mean time, however, you, Mother Gray, shall go down this very night, to reward you for all the share you have had in the matter. You know the strong room window, just in the angle, by the great hall. Get ye down, thither, at midnight ; and tell the boy that I will come to-morrow night : bid him keep a good watch ; and if he sees any one lurking about, as if watching, let him sing some of the songs that he sings so well, to warn me. You look out well, too, and mark every thing about you, to tell me when I come back. You were never the wisest or the best, but I do not think you such a devil as to betray one wilfully.”

He looked sternly and keenly at her, but the beldam only answered in a jeering tone, “ No, no, Pharold, though I love you as much as a young sparrow loves a cuckoo poult, I’ll not betray you, man.”

“ Go, then,” said Pharold, “ as soon as it is midnight : examine every thing well ; and tell the boy, through the bars of the window, that, although he deserves to suffer the consequences of his fault, yet we will do our best to rescue him for his youth’s sake.”

It is always some consolation to those who lie under the command of a superior mind to be permitted to sneer at what they dare not disobey; and the old woman, while she listened, gave way to all those grins, and winks, and nods, the boldness of which she fancied might counterbalance, in the opinion of those around, her degradation in submitting quietly to the orders of one who treated her with such unceremonious censure. She was secured, however, by Pharold's scorn, against any notice of her malice, as far as he himself was concerned; and without seeming to observe the affectation of contempt with which she heard him, he turned to the rest, and gave directions for immediately removing their encampment to another spot.

“Quarter of a mile farther,” he said, “you will come to a clear stream, broad but not deep, flowing from the heart of the wood, over a bed of sand and small clear stones. You can drive the carts up through the water till you reach a place where the banks are flat; and there, under the oaks and amongst the hazel bushes, you will find plenty of room and shelter. You, Brown, take every precaution you can to prevent the slightest trace being left of the

course you have followed; make the people wade along the water—it is not deep enough to cover their ankles; send them, too, by different parties and in different ways; for remember that, because one of our number has killed two deer, the whole world that hated us before, will now think themselves justified to hunt us down like foxes.—I can stay with you no longer, for the hour I named is near at hand—I am wearied and sad, and I feel as if the end were coming; but still I must keep my word, and do as I have done to the last.”

Some tears, from mixed emotions that would have defied analysis, had filled the eyes of the beautiful girl that reclined by his side; and as Pharold rose to depart, he saw them still glistening there. Taking her hand, he beckoned her with him, saying, “Come with me for a moment, Lena: I would speak with you.”

She followed, and for about a hundred yards he led her on in silence; and then, turning round, he pressed a kiss upon her lips:—“Remember me, Lena,” he said, “when I am dead. Ever, at this hour, whatever may happen to you, whatever changes may befall, think of Pharold, for a few short minutes; and mark what I tell you, each time you think of him—

whatever you may feel now—you shall regret him more, till, on your dying day, you shall love Pharold as Pharold now loves you. Remember, Lena, remember, remember!” and, turning away, he left her with her bright eyes dropping fast unwonted tears.

Alas, alas! the constancy and resolution of youth, what frail things they are! and how fast the ephemeral feelings and purposes of the hour give place to others as frail and vain! When Lena turned away from Pharold, she had believed that for no boon on earth would she do aught that could offend him; but ere many minutes were over she was listening to the persuasions of the old woman, that had led all those wrong who had confided in her, and was combating faintly and more faintly the arguments which age and cunning used, to induce her to visit that night the place where her unhappy lover was confined. Lena listened and resisted, till she listened and yielded; and midnight found her standing with the old woman under the window of the strong room in Dimden Park.

In the mean while Pharold pursued his way to rejoin Colonel Manners; but there seemed to be some bitter feeling sitting heavy at his

heart. The light and agile step had become slow ; the quick, keen eyes were bent thoughtfully upon the ground ; more than one sad sigh burst from his bosom ; and the spirit and the heart seemed to mourn. It might be that Pharold perceived that he was not loved ; it might be that he felt he had set the whole fortunes of his being upon a hazardous chance ; but as we have not paused to trace his love, we shall not dwell long upon his disappointment. Other feelings, too, such as, more or less modified by circumstances, will cross the mind of every imaginative and sensitive man, now rushed upon him, rendered tenfold more strong in his case than in that of others by the prejudices of his people, and the wild and varying habits of his race. Feelings of superstition, and vague, rambling, fanciful speculations upon all those indications of human destiny, gathered from external objects, in which his tribe believe, now mingled themselves with jealous doubts and apprehensions, and appealed to his own heart for belief or rejection in his own individual instance.

“ I am coming to the crosses,” he murmured, as he walked along, — “ I am coming to the crosses of life ; and the end is not far off ! I have seen those who obeyed me once rise up against

my will. I have been persecuted and hunted for faults not my own: I have been overcome by a creature like myself, with no odds against me; and I have learned to doubt those I love. Ah! and that she, too, should think of another! Woman, woman! Care, instruction, and kind reproof but offend thee! love and tenderness but spoil thee! Affection, and worth, and honour are to thee but as nothing! In danger thou clingest to us! In peace and security thou leavest us! The things which attract thee are the lightest of qualities and the vainest of transitory things; and with what cords shall we bind thee, even when once thou art caught? Vain, vain, empty butterfly! indifference and reckless carelessness are the things which win thee the most surely, and which most truly thou meritest."

Such were the first outpourings of a heart jealous of affection; but as Pharold walked on, the belief that Lena's love might be given to another, was softened by reflection, and he began to think he had done her wrong. He remembered the tears he had seen in her eyes; he thought of many a testimony of girlish regard which she had displayed towards him; he called to mind many of the finer traits of her

heart and mind which had first attracted him, and which he had striven to cultivate; and he again began to trust that she would not suffer one thought to stray from him who had become her husband. The feeling of that vast disparity of age which existed between them did, indeed, ever mingle with such hopes, and, as it had often done before, disturbed his peace of mind by apprehension and doubt. "She will be the sooner free," he thought bitterly: "she will be the sooner free! God only knows how soon! for I feel a weight upon me, and a gloom, as if fate were coming near to me and its shadow rested dark upon my thoughts. She will be free, and wed another, and be happy, and forget me, till pain, and sorrow, and anxiety come, till she wants the hand that used to protect her, till she requires the mind that used to guide her, and then she may think of Pharold, and grieve to think that he is lying beneath the cold and crumbling mould of earth, whence neither prayers nor wishes shall bring him back to her side again. Then she may remember, and perhaps weep for him who is lost to her for ever."

With such sad and gloomy reflections Pharold amused the way, as, retreading the steps he had lately taken, he proceeded to fulfil his ap-

pointment with Colonel Manners. He was a man who gave, perhaps, as few thoughts to self and selfish consideration as most men. He was one of those who, in other circumstances and in other ages, would have as willingly devoted himself a sacrifice for his friend or for his country as any Greek or Roman that ever lived. But he was a gipsy, and born in an age when patriotism and friendship were equally considered as mercantile commodities ; when men, having cast behind them the heroism of ancient Greece and Rome, and the chivalry of ancient France and England, were just beginning to dip themselves in a spirit of cold and selfish calculation, which, like the waters of the Carian fountain, emasculates all that is noble and energetic in human nature ; and it is not possible to live amongst such times without feeling their chilling influence. Their influence, however, upon him was different from that which it had upon others ; for his race, and state, and habits all placed him without the circle of ordinary thoughts and sensations common to the rest of men. That he was moving among cold and selfish beings, he felt ; that he was acting upon principles different from theirs, he could not but know ; and he despised them because he did know it, hating them the more

because he was one of a scorned and injured race, to which he clung with the greater tenacity because it was scorned and injured. But when he met with a spirit congenial to his own, when he found that he could love and could trust, all the deep, the noble, the generous feelings of his original nature burst through every band of times, and circumstances, and nation, and habit ; and he was no longer the gipsy, the sullen hater of every race except his own, but a creature endowed with noble powers of mind, and gifted above all with that gem from heaven, an upright and enthusiastic heart, which would have honoured any land, or age, or people. The direction which it took might sometimes be wrong, the reasonings that guided it might wander upon wild, and prejudiced, and eccentric theories ; but the principle was always good, and the purpose was always generous.

Thus, although he thought for some part of the way upon himself and upon the cares and griefs that thronged around him, his mind soon turned to other objects ; and the desire of serving and of soothing others was strong enough even to withdraw his thoughts from the powerful grasp of individual sorrows, always far more potent in their selfishness than joys.

As he approached the spot where his unsuccessful struggle had taken place with Colonel Manners, he felt, it is true, some sort of bitterness of heart, to think that he had been overcome. Vanity will have her share in all; and happy it is—ay, even more than we can expect—when she changes not the pain of her wound into hatred of those who have inflicted it. Manners was already on the spot, and the first words of the gipsy were those of human kindness. “How is she?” he asked abruptly. “How is the young lady? You have seen—you have told her all is well, of course?”

“I have,” answered Manners, “and her heart is greatly lighter; though she will remain still anxious and unsatisfied till I have with my own eyes seen her cousin, and can report to her the state of his health.”

“Fear not, fear not,” answered the gipsy; “I have promised to take you to him, and there is not that power under the heavens which should ever induce me to break my word, while I am capable of performing it.”

“I do not fear in the least,” answered Manners; “I knew perfectly that you would keep your promise, and confidently assured the family at Morley House that you would lead me to

De Vaux this night. I need hardly tell you how much joy that assurance gave them, and how much gratitude they felt to him who made the promise."

"Speak not of gratitude," answered the gipsy,—“speak not of gratitude; I only regret that from the first I had not foreseen what pain might fall on some of the good and kind, and that I did not assure myself of how I ought to act. But if you knew, gentleman, what a life I have led for the last three days, you would easily make excuse for some forgetfulness of others, — a life so different from that to which we are accustomed. We come in sunshine, and pitch our dwelling in the warm bosom of nature, with beauty all round us, and neither care nor strife amongst ourselves; but now we have been hunted, and sought, and had to change our dwellings from place to place; and in order to provide that we left no traces of our way, we have been forced to double like a poor hare before the accursed hounds, to think every footstep the signal of an enemy, and every rustle of the leaves to look upon as the indication of an ambush: I fear me, too, I fear me that their persecutions are not yet over. But let us on — here lies our road.”

“ I trust,” said Manners, following him,—“ I trust that as you are able to clear yourself in this business of my friend De Vaux, all the other suspicions against you will be found equally groundless ; and then you may follow your way of life once more in peace.”

“ No, no,” answered the gipsy, “ he would persecute me still. Once he has made a false accusation against me, and he will never abandon it as long as he and I are on the face of the same earth — never, never ! I know him too well.”

“ I do not clearly understand of whom you speak,” answered Manners, keeping by the side of the gipsy, although the pace at which he had set off seemed accelerated at every step by the angry feelings that he was stirring up in his own bosom. “ You do not name the person. Whom do you mean ?”

“ Whom should I mean ?” answered the gipsy sharply. “ Whom, but him, who, born with violent passions and a haughty nature, was bred a lawyer, in order that dark cunning should be added to a bold spirit and a shrewd mind. I speak of Lord Dewry ; and I tell you that he will never cease to persecute me. Does he not

now hold, in fast confinement, a boy of our people, whom he well knows to be innocent?"

"There is, certainly," answered Manners, "a gipsy boy confined at Dimden, for I saw him there this morning; but Lord Dewry, as well as all the people of the neighbourhood, informed me that he had been taken in an attempt to steal the deer in the park."

"He was not present," said the gipsy. "He saw not the beast slaughtered by the mad-headed fools that did it, any more than I did. But he keeps him because he is a gipsy boy, not that he thinks him guilty. And so you saw him, did you?" continued Pharold, striving, with a slight mingling of the artful cunning of his people, to discover what Manners knew of the situation of the young gipsy,—“so, you saw him; and, doubtless, he is to be sent soon to the county gaol, to die of imprisonment and despair at losing his blessed freedom."

"I did not hear any mention of such an intention," answered Manners. "Every one present joined in accusing the youth of direct participation in the deer-stealing; and he himself kept so obstinate a silence, that there was no possibility of drawing from him even a word that might exculpate himself."

“ And do you call it obstinate silence to refuse to answer either the subtle or the idle questions of his enemies?” demanded the gipsy.

“ There is the mistake into which your people fall too often, and with too fatal an effect,” answered Manners. “ You consider us, on all occasions, as your enemies, and act towards us as if we were such, instead of endeavouring to make us your friends, which might often be accomplished, — always, I might say, with good men, were your actions to tend to that purpose. In the instance you speak of, the principal questions were addressed to your young companion by myself. Their object was solely to elicit some news of my friend De Vaux; and had he answered them frankly, he would have made a friend who might have rendered him service.”

“ And he refused to answer?” demanded the gipsy.

“ Not exactly refused,” replied Manners; “ but answered only by an unmeaning monosyllable, or kept a profound silence.”

“ He did right,” cried the gipsy, “ he did right: the boy is more deserving than I thought him; he merits an effort.”

“ We judge very differently,” answered Manners : “ I thought he did very wrong ; and had he given me the information I sought, it is more than probable that I should have met you with very different feelings from those with which I at first saw you this night.”

“ He did right, he did right !” cried the gipsy : “ would you have had him betray secrets intrusted to him ? or was he to judge what I might think fit to be revealed ? No, no : silence was his best security against discovering, through fear, or through folly, those things, the value of which he knew not. He has shown both more prudence and more resolution than I thought he possessed. However, he could have told you nothing, for he knew nothing — not even the path we are now treading.”

“ Well, then, his candour would only have served to give a favourable opinion of himself,” Manners rejoined, “ without injuring you, or betraying your confidence.”

“ How can you tell that ?” cried the gipsy, — “ how can you tell that — how could he tell it, either ? Might you not have led him on to other things ? Might you not have wrung from him, if he had spoken candidly, as you call it, one ad-

mission after another, till you had discovered all that he could tell. Oh, we know your artful ways — your examinations and cross-examinations, which would make an angel of truth and wisdom seem like a liar and a fool. We know your skill in making men reveal what they would not, and speak two apparently opposite truths without allowing them to give the explanation ; so that they seem to contradict themselves at every word. We know you ; and we have one way, and only one, to disappoint you, which is silence. You can make nought of that.”

Manners saw that, where both the principles and the course of the reasoning were so different, discussion was of very little use ; and he consequently made no reply to the gipsy’s tirade, feeling, however, at the same time, that there was a portion of truth in what he said, which it would be difficult to separate from the great mass of prejudice with which it was combined. Pharold, however, wished the conversation prolonged upon the same topic ; for with all the frank generosity of his individual nature, the habits and the character of the gipsy still modified and influenced the other qualities of his heart and his mind. His character, as a man, was open and candid ; but the gipsy often acted to render

it stubborn and sullen when oppressed, or even wily and artful when some peculiar object was to be gained.

He now greatly desired to obtain from Colonel Manners, as a sincere and independent person, some information concerning the exact situation of the boy William, both in order to guide more surely any efforts made for his liberation, and to correct the report of the old beldam, whom he had sent down to enquire, and of whose purposes and views he entertained many a doubt. He did not choose, however, to let his design become apparent, and therefore approached his object with a careful art, which was not a part of his natural but rather of his acquired character.

“ Poor boy,” he said, as soon as he perceived that Manners did not reply,—“ poor boy ! I am sorry for him. He has never known any thing but liberty, and the enjoyment of all the free, wide, beautiful world : he has never known what it is to have fetters on his young limbs, or to be shut from the air and light of heaven, in some dark and gloomy dungeon.”

“ You must not let your imagination draw such a picture of his situation,” answered Manners, who, having nothing to conceal, was easily

led in the direction the gipsy wished. "The boy is not and cannot be in such a state as you suppose. He has no fetters upon his limbs; and, in all probability, is as well treated as a proper regard to his safe custody will permit."

"It will be pain and grief enough," rejoined the gipsy, "for one who has never in his life been debarred from turning his steps in whatsoever direction he thought fit,—who has never been cut off from the sight of nature, and the breath of the free air, since his eyes were first opened upon God's heaven and earth, and the breath of life was breathed into his nostrils,—it will be pain and grief enough for him to be thrust into some dark and gloomy dungeon, perhaps under ground, or, at all events, looking into some dull, stone-built court, where he can see nothing on any side but the hateful walls that keep him in, and the sly, dastard faces of those that watch him."

"Of course," answered Manners, "as I am nearly unacquainted with this part of the country and with Dimden Hall, I cannot be aware of the nature of the place in which the lad is confined. A dungeon it is not, certainly; for such things are now, thank God, quite out of

the question. It appeared to me, too, that there was no such thing as a court to the dwelling-house; and that, therefore, wherever he may be placed, he will be able to see the face of nature, which you love so much. But you, yourself, — at least all I have heard would lead me to suppose so, — must know Dimden Hall far better than I do, and, perhaps, may be aware of where the strong room is; for it was to it that I heard Lord Dewry direct him to be taken, after we had in vain tried to gain any information from him.”

“ If he be there, he may do well,” answered the gipsy; “ but, probably, they will remove him to the county gaol, and there he will have sad and bitter hours enough.”

“ I should certainly think that they will not do so,” answered Mannerys, “ if what you tell me in regard to his innocence of all participation in the actual slaughter of the deer be correct. The magistrates will, of course, investigate the matter, and seek full evidence of the facts, before they either commit the boy, or even send him off to the gaol, which, I understand, is many miles distant; so that it is much more probable that he will remain where he is for the present.”

The gipsy saw well that Manners spoke without disguise, and that he had, in fact, nothing more to tell in regard to the situation of the prisoner. However, he had gained at least the certainty that the lad was confined in the strong room, which he knew well; that he was not likely to be speedily removed, and that he was not encumbered with fetters, to impede his escape. Lest he might have been so secured, Pharold had entertained some fear, as he knew that blood had been shed in the encounter between the deer-stealers and the keepers, and thought it more than likely that the peer would strive to prove the lad William to have been an actual participator in that part of the unfortunate affair, and would treat him accordingly. His next anxiety was to know what was the state of the men who had been wounded, and what was the exact charge against himself, in regard to the affray in Dimden Park, as well as what evidence had been given to inculpate him.

He had found so much frankness in the replies of Colonel Manners to his former enquiries, however, that he now quitted the artful path which he had taken, and spoke more boldly of his own situation. "I would fain know," he said,

after he had walked on about two hundred paces farther in silence, — “ I would fain know how I stand, in regard to that false accusation which my enemy brought against me, respecting the slaughter of his pitiful deer. As I passed through the country this morning, after quitting his park, I gained some tidings; but when I first met you, gentleman, to-night, you told me that though I might be guilty of other things, you knew me to be innocent of that. If you be, as you seem to be, a friend to justice and humanity, you will tell me how you know that charge to be false, that I may prove it so, too, by some proof that will be better received than the mere oath of my own people.”

“ I can have no objection whatever,” Manners answered, “ to tell you at once how I was led to the conclusion that you mention. There were two persons wounded in that unfortunate affair — one, a gentleman who is now lying at Dimden, and another, a keeper, who was removed from the park to his own cottage. As I found that the surgeon had confined his attention to the person at Dimden — whose wound is far the most dangerous — I went down to the cottage of the keeper to enquire how he was going on ——”

“ Good and kind, good and kind,” interrupted the gipsy, with one of those bursts of vehement feeling, to which he, at times, gave way. “ Ah, I see and understand it all ! The mercenary manufacturer of diseases, and maker of men’s ills, remained with the gentleman who could pay him for his fancied skill, and left the poor man to do the best for himself ; and you went down to comfort him whom the other had neglected.”

“ Not exactly so,” answered Manners : “ the wound of the one was much more severe than that of the other, and the surgeon stayed where his presence was most necessary. I went down, however, and sat with the poor fellow some time ; and he distinctly informed me, not only that you had not been present when the deer were killed, but that you were coming up and calling to the others not to fire at the moment that the guns went off. He said, too, that if it had not been for your interference there would have been far more bloodshed ; and I strongly advise you, should there ever be any investigation of this business, to call the keeper Jones as a witness to establish your innocence.”

“ While I can keep my liberty,” said the gipsy, “ they shall never hold me in their

gripe. Besides, he would find witnesses enough to swear away my life, if he were to bribe them with half his fortune. — But the wounded men, — are they likely to die, did you say ?”

“ I trust not,” answered Manners ; “ and with care and attention the wound of the keeper will not prove even dangerous. The other gentleman I did not see, but I hear he is much more severely hurt.”

“ What is his name,” demanded the gipsy.

“ Sir Roger Millington, I think, was the name,” answered Manners ; “ but I did not pay it any particular attention.”

“ Sir Roger Millington !” repeated the gipsy, musing, — “ Sir Roger Millington ! I do not know him ; and yet it sounds in my ears like a word spoken in a dream. Oh yes, yes — I remember now : it was to him that the money was owing.”

“ What money ?” demanded Manners, in some surprise.

“ Never mind,” answered the gipsy ; “ but, be sure, if that man dies my enemy will find means to make me out his murderer. Mark that, gentleman, and remember, hereafter.”

“ It is impossible that he can do so,” answered Manners, whose confidence in British

justice was much stronger than that of the gipsy. "I understand that there were eight or nine people present. One of them, who has suffered severely, has already borne witness to your innocence; and depend upon it that, amongst the rest, you would find plenty more to do the same. But it strikes me as extraordinary, I do confess, that you should seem to apprehend much more evil from an affair in which you can easily exculpate yourself, than from a charge which, referring to matters long gone, and to circumstances of which there could be but few witnesses, must be much more difficult to be met in a satisfactory manner, — I mean the charge of having killed the late Lord Dewry."

"I will tell you why, I will tell you why," answered the gipsy. "In regard to this business, he can prove something against me — that I was in his park without right — at a suspicious hour — when persons were committing an unlawful act — and those people my own nation, and my own comrades. He may make out a plausible tale, and a little false swearing would easily do the rest. But in regard to the other, I laugh him to scorn; for why? because, when I will, I can blow the

cloud away, like the west wind when it sweeps the mist from the valleys — because I can dispel it all, and prove my own innocence beyond a doubt — by proving who it was that did do the deed!”

“Do that,” — answered Manners, eagerly, “do that, and, beyond all doubt, Lord Dewry will forbear every other proceeding against you.”

“Would he, indeed!” cried the gipsy, with a contemptuous laugh, — “would he, indeed! — Yet, perhaps, he might; — but I will tell you, gentleman, — if I did do so, I should not stand in need of his forbearance. But I will not do it; no, never! not if they were to cast a mountain upon me, it should not crush that secret from my heart till the right hour be come.”

“Indeed!” said Manners; “that is a strange determination; but, however, you act and reason upon principles so different from those that influence ordinary men, that it is useless to enquire why you run great risks yourself, with motives apparently very slight.”

“I do it, because it is written in the book of that which I am to do,” answered the gipsy. “But, you say right; we do act and we do think upon different principles; and it is useless

to enquire into mine, for you would not understand them; and yet I hold you to be a good man—better than most—braver—wiser than the great part of your fellows. Had you not been both brave and wise, you would never have learned from me what you are to know to-night,—the fangs of tigers would not have torn it from me by any other means.”

“I hope,” answered Manners, with a smile, “that the secret will not be kept much longer unrevealed; for we have already walked several miles, and our fair friend, the moon, is going down to rest, as if she were as tired as I am.”

“And who that sees her sink,” said the gipsy, turning round, as Manners spoke, and gazing for a moment on the setting orb,—“and who that sees her sink shall dare to say that he will ever see that calm and splendid sight again? She goes, we know not whither, travelling alone upon her oft-trodden path—the path that she has walked in majesty through many a long century, looking unmoved upon the strifes and joys of nations who now have left us nothing but their ruins and their tombs. She saw my people live and rule in other lands.* She has

* All the various tribes of gipsies, scattered throughout different parts of Europe, undoubtedly possess a tradition

seen them bow the necks of proud and haughty enemies beneath their chariot wheels. She has seen them fall day by day, till they are but a scattered remnant, dashed like the foam of a broken wave over the lands around, while their temples and their palaces, their homes and their altars, are the dwellings of the wolf and the jackal, that howl beneath her light. She has seen them, mighty and nothing ; and, perhaps, when our bones are whitening beneath her beams, in the long wide vacancy of after-times, she may, also, see the despised nation reinstated in its glory, and forgetful of the

of the former greatness of their people ; and, whenever they can be brought to speak upon the subject, adhere strictly to the story told by the first of their nation that appeared in Europe, and maintain that their original country was Egypt ; some calling it *Lower* Egypt, some *Upper* Egypt, — a distinction worthy of remark, as it seems to evince a real knowledge of the land that they claim as their own. The learned have endeavoured to trace them to the Indian caste of Parias ; and Sir William Jones, I think, has pronounced many of the words in their language to be pure Sanscrit, which fact would afford the strongest proof that they are not of Paria origin. Besides this, I have been assured, by a learned friend, who passed many years in India, that gipsies are sometimes to be met with in Hindostan, and appear there as much a race distinct and separate from any of the native tribes as they do amongst the nations of Europe.

rod of the oppressor; but you mind not such things — you look upon us merely as wandering outcasts of some unknown race.”

“ No, indeed,” answered Manners, “ you do me wrong. I have always looked upon your people with much interest and curiosity. There is a sort of mystery in their history and their fate that will not let any one, who thinks and feels, regard them with indifference.”

“ There is a mystery !” answered the gipsy, — “ there is a mystery ! but it matters not. This is not the time to solve it ;” and — as every person who has ever conversed with one of the more intelligent and better informed of the gipsies must have remarked as their invariable custom when spoken to either upon their language or history, — he suddenly turned the conversation to other things, content with the vague hints of brighter times and more extended power, which he had already given. Manners endeavoured more than once to bring him back to the subject, but the gipsy pertinaciously avoided any approach to it. Nor was his companion more successful in an endeavour to lead him to the subject of De Vaux, in regard to whom Pharold pointedly refused to answer any questions. “ You will know very soon all that you

can know about the matter," he replied; "and I do not choose to speak at all on subjects where I might speak too much."

Manners pressed the question no farther, and followed in silence. They had some time before crossed the summit of the rise above Morley House, skirting along the woods, and had descended into a valley on the other side, which, though not so deep as that in which the principal events we have related took place, sunk sufficiently below the level of the neighbouring hills to render a considerable ascent on the other side necessary ere the travellers could be said to have passed the chain of high grounds which separated that county from the next. This eminence, also, they had surmounted, when, as Manners had observed, the moon might be seen sinking below the dark line of the distant horizon. The aspect of the country was here very different from that on the other side of the hills; and although the light of the setting orb was not sufficient to display distinctly the various objects in the landscape, yet the long lines of light and shade that varied the wide extent below their feet gave Manners the idea of a rich and softly undulating country, spreading for many

miles without any considerable eminence. From the spot where they then stood, the road which they had now gained wound through some young plantations down towards the plain ; but ere they had finished the descent the moon was lost below the horizon, and the eye could no longer trace any but the objects in its immediate vicinity. Manners remarked, however, that along the young plantings were neat trimmed hedges, and that clean shining white gates gave entrance into the fields which they skirted. A dry raised footpath, too, rendered walking easy ; and ere long he passed one of those friendly milestones wherewith most civilised governments have condescended to solace the longings of the weary traveller, as he plods on, anxious to know his distance from the expected rest. Just at the same moment, too, a village clock, with its kindly bell, told the hour, sounding clear and calm upon the still night air ; and Manners, though without any great object in doing so, paused to make out the inscription of one hundred and some miles from London, and to count twelve, struck distinctly on the bell of the clock.

“ Will not this be a very late hour,” he asked, turning to the gipsy, who had paused

also, — “ will not this be a very late hour to visit my poor friend, especially if he be ill as you say both in body and in mind ? ”

“ We will see that presently,” answered the gipsy : “ if he sleep, so much the better. You can wait till to-morrow. My part of the errand must be done to-night, or never ; for something at my heart tells me, that I shall not long be able to walk whither I will throughout the world.”

Now, although Colonel Manners, with the firm determination of pursuing the adventure to the end, whatever might come of it, had gone on with the gipsy boldly, and had conversed with him as calmly as if they had both been in a drawing room, yet it is by no means to be supposed that he refrained from speculating upon the place and circumstances into which his enterprise might lead him ; as in this instance he saw the necessity of letting imagination range free, so long as she had reason for her guide, in order that he might be prepared for all. While they were on the hill, and near the woods, Manners imagined that he would most likely find his sick friend under the care and attendance of some separate party of gipsies ; and, of course, fancy employed herself in think-

ing what could be the train of events which had brought about so strange a result. But as they descended into a more highly-cultivated and evidently well-peopled track, he began to doubt whether it was such a spot as gipsies would choose for their habitation, and, consequently, whether De Vaux would be found in the hands of any part of Pharold's tribe. Imagination had now, of course, a wider field than before; and his surprise—or whatever the feeling may be called which is excited by circumstances we cannot account for—was still greater, as they began to pass through the scattered houses, and small neat enclosures, which mark the approach to an English country town.

At length the gipsy stopped at a gate, opened it, and bade his companion pass in. Manners did as he was desired, and found himself standing on a neat gravel walk, with a shrubbery on either hand, plentifully provided with laurels, hollies, and many another evergreen. The gipsy followed; and the walk, skirting for a couple of hundred yards round a trim, smooth, shaven green, brought them in front of a neat house, built of brick, and evidently modern in all its parts. Plate glass, a-well-a-day! did not in those times decorate even the houses of

the greatest in the land; and the dwelling before which they now stood, although it was clearly the abode of affluence, had no pretensions to be any thing more than a handsome house of the middle rank. It might be the new-built rectory of some wealthy parish, or the place of retirement of some merchant who had had wisdom enough to seek repose at the point where competence stops short of riches: but it had no one circumstance which could entitle it to affect the name of the Mansion, or the Hall, or the Abbey, or the Castle; and in those days the word cottage had never yet been applied to designate a palace. It had its little freestone portico, however, and its two low wings, in the windows of each of which there were lights. It was evident, therefore, if this was the place where Manners was destined to find De Vaux, that, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, there were other persons awake in the house besides those who might be supposed to watch in the chamber of an invalid.

As they came near, the gipsy advanced a step before his companion, and rang the bell. A few minutes elapsed without any one appearing to answer the summons; but just as Pharold was about to repeat it, the door was

opened by a servant, carrying a light, which was almost instantly extinguished by the gust of wind which rushed into the unclosed door. There had been time enough, however, for the man to recognise Pharold, and to bid him come in, as if his visit were a thing of course; and in the moment that the light had remained unextinguished, Colonel Manners could distinguish the countenance of the servant, the features of which, he felt convinced, were not unknown to him.

“Come in, sir,” said the gipsy. — “Is there any one in the parlour, John?” he added, turning to the man as Manners entered.

“No one, Mr. Pharold,” answered the servant, in tones that were still more familiar to Manners’s ear than his features had been to his eye. “My master is in the little room beyond.”

“Then walk in here, sir; and wait for me one moment,” said the gipsy; and Colonel Manners, without question, walked into the dark room, of which Pharold had opened the door, and waited patiently to see how all the strange affair in which he was engaged would end.

CHAP. IV.

THE room was, as we have said, quite dark, with the exception of a narrow line of light, which found its way under a door on the opposite side of the chamber; and by the time that Manners had been there two minutes he heard voices speaking in that direction. What was said by the first speaker, whom he concluded to be Pharold, did not make itself heard in the apartment where Manners stood; but the moment after another voice was distinguished, saying, in a louder tone, "You have done wrong, you have done wrong, Pharold. My mind was still undecided; and this will force me to act, whether I will or not."

Pharold's voice replied at considerable length, and was apparently still going on, when the other exclaimed, hastily, "But, good God, did you not let her know? Did you not send her the note I despatched to you for that purpose?"

"What note? When did you send?" demanded Pharold, eagerly. "I had no note."

“ This is most unfortunate,” replied the other. “ I sent up a note to you, intended to be conveyed to her for the purpose of putting her mind at ease ; and it should have reached you beyond all doubt ; for I gave it, with my own hand, to the youth Dickon, yesterday morning, when he came with the message from you.”

“ Ay, that is it, that is it,” answered the gipsy. “ I chose him as my messenger to keep him out of evil ; but ere I could get back to my people, I found that, on some pretence, strangers on horseback were watching for us on the common, and I betook me to the wood again. But they set a watch round the wood ; and it was long ere I could slip through unseen ; and when I did so, and got to the tents under Dimden wall, I found that this very Dickon had seduced several others to go and shoot the deer in the park. Deer were killed, the keepers were met, blood was shed, and I drove the offender out from among us, that he might not lead others again into evil, and draw down the rage of the powerful upon us. Thus I saw him but for a moment, and he went without giving me your letter.”

Now Manners, although he could not help hearing what was passing, had a great objection

to so doing; and he had therefore from the very beginning contrived to make as much noise as possible, by every means that suggested itself, in order both to render the sounds which reached him indistinct, and to make the speakers aware that their conversation might be overheard. Their first eagerness, however, prevented them from taking warning; but at length their tone was lowered, and for the next five minutes Manners heard nothing farther than a low, indistinct murmur, which sufficiently showed that the conference was continued, but did not betray the matter thereof.

At length, however, the second voice spoke louder, in the sort of marked manner with which one ends a private conversation, by words which have little meaning to any ear but that of the person to whom they are addressed. "Well, well, it is time that such a state should be put an end to! As to this other business, there is nothing to fear from Colonel Manners: I know him well, as I told you before; and were I to choose any man in whom to confide, it would be him. Now rest you, Pharold; rest you while I go and speak with him. Would to God that you would quit this wandering life, and now in your age wisely

accept from me, what you foolishly rejected in your youth from one long dead; but rest you, as I have said, and I will return in a few minutes to hear out your account."

Pharold's reply was not distinct; but the next moment the door opened between the two rooms, and Manners was joined by a gentleman whom we have seen once, and only once, before in the course of this history. It was, in short, the same hale, handsome old man whom we last heard of conversing with the gipsy Pharold, in the beginning of the first volume of this book, who now advanced with a light into the dark room in which Manners had been left. He could not be less than sixty three or four years of age; but his frame appeared as vigorous as if twenty of those years had been struck off the amount. His figure was tall and upright, and his step had in it a peculiar bold and firm elasticity, that spoke the undiminished energy of both mind and body. He was, in short, a person whom, once seen, it would be difficult to forget; and although the light he carried dazzled Manners's eyes a little, yet the instant he entered the room his visiter advanced towards him, holding out his hand, and exclaiming, "My dear Sir William Ryder, I

am delighted to meet you again, and to meet you in England."

"Not less delighted than I am to see you, Manners," answered the other, "although we meet under somewhat strange circumstances, and though I am obliged to bid you, for a short time, forget that I am Sir William Ryder, without forgetting that I am a sincere friend. My name, for the present, is Mr. Harley; and now, having introduced myself as such, let us sit down, and talk over old stories."

"But, first, my dear sir," said Manners, "a word or two of new stories, if you please. I am most anxious to enquire after my poor friend, De Vaux, though no longer anxious in regard to his situation, now that I find he is in hands so kind and so skilful as yours. Indeed, the first sight of your servant, though I caught but a glimpse of him, set my mind at ease regarding my poor friend, as far as it can be at ease till I hear how he is, and what is the matter with him."

"He is better, he is better," answered Sir William Ryder; "and so far banish all anxiety, for he will do well. I know such affairs of old; and as he has been neither scalped nor tomahawked by any of my children of the Seven

Nations, I will answer for his recovery. But I dare say you wonder at his being here with me; and, indeed, it is altogether an odd coincidence, for I can assure you that it is by no plot or contrivance of mine that I have got you and him once more under my roof together, when the last time we so met was in my wigwam on the very farthest verge of the inhabited world."

"But first tell me what is the matter with him," said Manners; "and then I will put all sorts of questions to you, which you shall answer or not as you think fit."

"What is the matter with him!" cried Sir William Ryder: "did not my friend Pharold tell you that he had got a pistol-shot in his side, which had broken two of his ribs?"

"Good God! no," cried Manners: "I am excessively sorry to hear it; but how did it occur—in a duel?"

"No," answered the other; "no: he did it himself; but understand me—not intentionally—he is not such a fool. However, he will do well: the ball has been extracted; he has very little fever; no organ important to life has been touched, and all promises fairly."

“ But, indeed, my dear Sir William, you must tell me more,” said Manners. “ How did this happen? for though I have seen accidents enough of different kinds, yet I cannot understand this affair at all.”

“ Why, I do not very well know how to explain it,” said the other, musing, “ without entering into unnecessary particulars. However, the fact is this: he went out at night, it seems, to see my friend Pharold, who, I need not tell you, is no ordinary person. However, your friend did not know his character or his worth, and he placed a brace of horse pistols in his bosom. He must certainly have had one of them cocked, too, though he will not acknowledge it: but the end of the matter was, that he heard some very bad news; and being like all his race, subject to violent fits of passion, he cast himself down like a madman, the pistol went off, and the shot was within a few inches of his heart. Pharold, who was present and alone, did not very well know what to do with him; but carrying him in his arms as far as he could, he called some of his own people, bound up the poor boy’s wounds as well as circumstances admitted, and brought him here, knowing that in other years I was upon terms of intimacy with

his father, and loved him still, notwithstanding one or two little causes of misunderstanding between us.”

Manners listened in silence, and he certainly did not forget the terms in which Lord Dewry had spoken of the very person who now alluded so mildly to him ; but as he was by no means fond of making mischief upon any pretence, and knew that Sir William Ryder was not a man in whom personal fear would act as any check upon resentment, he felt no inclination to mention one word of the peer’s vituperation of his former friend. At the same time, the kindly tone in which Sir William Ryder spoke did not at all lead Manners to believe that he was the person in fault. The thoughts which crossed the gallant officer’s mind, however, must have had some visible representatives in his countenance ; for his companion looked at him with a smile, adding, “ I know well what you are thinking—that probably Lord Dewry does not speak so gently of Sir William Ryder as Sir William Ryder does of him. I have heard so before. Nevertheless, Manners, I shall not call him out, and amuse the world with two men of sixty fighting a duel. Nor is Colonel Manners one to think the worse of me for acting as I do, nor to doubt my mo-

tives, though my conduct be a little eccentric. Is it not so, my friend?"

"It is, indeed," answered Manners; "and be you quite sure, my dear sir, that so firm is my confidence in your honour and integrity, from personal knowledge — which is better than all the gossip in the world — that I would never hear the name of Sir William Ryder mentioned with disrespect without taking the liberty of resenting it."

"I believe you, I believe you, Manners, from my soul," answered his companion: "but to return to our poor friend De Vaux — as soon as he was brought here, I of course sent for the best advice that was to be procured, the ball was extracted, and, as I have said, he is better. He is at present, I am happy to say, in a sound and comfortable sleep; but if you will take up your abode with me till to-morrow, you shall see him, and judge of his condition for yourself. A room shall be prepared for you immediately."

"I will willingly lie down to take a little rest," answered Manners: "but let me beg you, my dear sir, to have me called as soon as De Vaux wakes, and is willing to see me; for I left a poor young lady, his cousin, — and there

are ties of affection stronger than those of mere relationship between them,—waiting anxiously to hear some tidings of him ; for until this very night we have all imagined him murdered.”

“ Ah, poor girl, poor girl ! ” said Sir William Ryder, in a tone of deep sympathy. “ She must have suffered dreadfully, I am afraid ; but I can assure you that her having been kept even an hour in suspense is neither to be attributed to me nor to her cousin. His first thought was of her, his first words, after he saw me, were to beg that I would instantly write to her, in order to tell her what had occurred, and to soothe her mind as far as possible. Nay more, though suffering much pain till the ball was extracted, he insisted upon writing a few words with his own hand, to comfort her as far as possible. Though I would fain have prevented an exertion which might injure him, I loved him for his obstinacy, Manners. The note was sent to Pharold, with directions to forward it to her ; but neither note nor directions, it seems, ever reached the gipsy.”

Manners could not refrain from saying, “ It would have been better to have sent it direct to herself, Sir William. You must remember, my excellent friend, that you are no longer amongst

your children, as you call them, the Indians, and that you will meet with another class of vices and virtues also, here. What you would trust to a Mohawk, if he promised to perform it, and feel convinced that nothing but death would prevent its execution, is not at all to be confided to a common messenger in England, and——”

“ I know all that, my friend, I know all that,” interrupted his companion; “ but I had no choice. At that time I was not at all certain whether I should let any one know that I was in England or not; and had I sent the note direct to Morley House, such a communication must have been opened as would instantly have put an end to my incognito. One messenger might have failed me as well as another, and it was owing to an accident which no one could foresee that the note was not delivered.— So much for your rebuke, Manners,” he continued, smiling: “ but now tell me how the poor girl is; for the first question of my patient, when he hears that you are here, will be, How is Marian de Vaux?”

“ Alarm and agitation had rendered her seriously ill,” answered Manners; “ so much so, indeed, that the medical man found it ne-

cessary, during the whole of yesterday and this morning, to keep her feelings deadened, as it were, by laudanum—to the great risk of her health as he acknowledged—but it was the lesser of two evils.”

“ Sad, sad, indeed !” cried Sir William Ryder, rising from his seat, and walking backwards and forwards in some agitation,—“ sad, sad, indeed ! and I am afraid that I have had something to do with the whole business ; but I trust she is better now—poor girl ! I am grieved, deeply grieved. But say, Manners, how was she when you left her ?”

“ Infinitely better, I am happy to say,” answered Manners ; “ for your friend, Pharold, permitted me to inform her that De Vaux was safe at least, though he tied me down to strict conditions. That piece of news, of course, relieved her greatly ; but not so much so as to set her mind at ease, till she hears tidings from me, of her cousin’s exact situation, which I trust to be able to give her early to-morrow.”

“ Undoubtedly, undoubtedly,” answered Sir William Ryder. “ Nay, if you think it would be any great comfort to her, we will send off a man on horseback this very night, to calm her with farther assurances.”

“ Unless,” answered Manners, “ I may be permitted to say that you will give herself and Mrs. Falkland a welcome to visit De Vaux in person, I think that I had better not send, but wait till I can communicate some farther information myself.”

Sir William Ryder hesitated. “ I am afraid,” he said,—“ I am afraid that will be impossible, just at present. But she will believe your assurance, of course; and I think that you may venture to tell her that her cousin is under kind and careful hands, by which nothing will be neglected to promote his speedy recovery.”

“ I will certainly give the fullest assurances of that fact,” answered Manners. “ But what reason am I to assign for her being debarred from seeing and attending her cousin, when I have been admitted? She will certainly think it mysterious.”

“ As you do, Manners,” said Sir William, with a smile. “ But listen to me, and I will tell you several of the many reasons which have brought me back to a land which I have abandoned for long years; and out of those reasons you shall see whether you can find a motive to assign to Miss de Vaux for my mysterious conduct. In the first place, I, like most

men, have some friends and relations ; and I was seized with a longing to see them, to assure myself with my own eyes of their fate and their happiness, ere I laid my head down upon its last pillow in another land. The same longing seized me about twelve years since, but then I resisted ; for long ago I had met with a sad and severe blow in my private happiness, which led me to forswear, in the bitterness of my heart, any of those ties and affections which are but so many cords to bind us to sorrow and disappointment. In various matters, about that time, I had acted wrong ; and I felt that a voluntary expatriation was a good atonement. When I went, therefore, I resolved never to return ; and when, as I have said, twelve years ago, the longing to see friends and relations, and scenes that I once loved, seized me, I resisted, strengthened, in so doing, by a feeling that my return to England might be painful to some whom I did not desire to pain, and would only re-awaken, in my own bosom, feelings that had better sleep. Now, however, many other motives have been added to this longing, which returned upon me this spring with more force than ever. I wished eagerly to raise such a sum as would purchase a large tract of land on which to settle

for ever, without danger of molestation, the remnant of a nearly-destroyed tribe of Indians, who, after having been massacred and ill-treated by every other white man they met with, at length attached themselves to me, and were living round me like my children, as you saw."

"I did, indeed," answered Manners; "and I trust that you will let me aid in your noble design."

"I do not know that it will be necessary now, for I am likely to take other measures," answered Sir William. "My own private income was not sufficient, though I had saved out of a thousand a year, which was all that I possessed, sufficient to lay a good foundation; but I also wished the British government to interfere for the more general and powerful protection of the Indians, and this was one reason of my coming. I longed, too, as I have said, to see many of my relations and friends; but I wished to do so privately. There were two persons, especially, of whom I was desirous of hearing more than I could in America. One, — over whom I hold some power, from various transactions in the past, — I wished to watch closely for a short time, and treat him according to his merits. The other, — who, though more inde-

pendent of me, I could raise up or cast down as I pleased — I desired to sift thoroughly, to examine every trait in his character, to probe every feeling in his heart, with the resolution of leaving him, ultimately, to happiness, if I found him noble and true ; but at the same time to give him a severe lesson, which might crush early some failings, — some peculiar evils in his disposition, that would if suffered to remain, lead hereafter to misery, to himself and others. Various occurrences have taken place since, to alter or derange these plans ; and, as we are from day to day the creatures of circumstances over which we have no control, I am now waiting for some decisive event to determine for me a line of conduct which I find some difficulty in determining for myself.”

“ I am afraid, Sir William,” answered Manners, “ that even if I were to explain all this in your own words to Miss de Vaux, she would still be as much perplexed as ever ; and I have often remarked, that in the minds of the timid — especially where there is real cause for uneasiness—every thing that is doubtful and mysterious is interpreted into a fresh cause of apprehension and alarm. Besides, according to my contract with your acquaintance Pharold, and the sti-

pulations which you have yourself implied, with regard to your name, so far from explaining all these motives, I am not even to disclose that I have seen you."

Sir William Ryder paused for a moment or two in deep thought ; and Manners, seeing that he was embarrassed, added, " Perhaps, Sir William, the best way for me to act will be, to give Miss de Vaux a true account of the state of her cousin's health ; to tell that I have seen him, but to add that, from particular causes, which I must explain hereafter, I can neither inform her where he is, nor enable her to see him. I have always found it best, wherever I have been embarrassed with any mystery of my own—which, thank God, has been seldom the case—to meet the matter at once, and say, *I will not tell*, without entangling myself in half explanations, which do me no good, and only serve those, whose curiosity or feelings are interested, as materials for imagination to build up visionary castles withal."

" Perhaps you are right," said Sir William : " but stay yet a moment ! A word or two more with our friend in the next room — I mean the gipsy — may decide my conduct."

Manners smiled at the sort of counsellors by whom he had found his friend surrounded in

both hemispheres. When first he met Sir William Ryder, he had seen him every day in deep consultation with Indian chiefs; and now his principal reliance seemed to be upon gipsies: but, at present, that somewhat eccentric personage was disappointed in his purpose of calling Pharold to his councils; for when he opened the door,—which led into a small neat study, with a table covered with papers, money, and lights, in the midst thereof—he found the room untenanted by any living thing.

“I had forgot,” he said, turning back with a smile, — “I had forgot that one half hour in the air of a close room is too much for Pharold’s endurance. He is gone, and I must send for him when I want him.”

“You seem to place more reliance on him,” said Manners, pointing to the heaps of gold and papers on the table, “than most Englishmen would upon one of his race.”

“I would trust him, I may well say, with untold gold,” answered Sir William Ryder; “as you would Manners, if you knew him as I do. He has corresponded with me in America for twenty years; and one might be glad if, in the highest ranks, one could find so exact,

so true, and so punctual a correspondent." The reader, who has already received much information concerning things of which Manners was ignorant, may easily understand some of the motives of a correspondence between two persons so different in station. Manners also had by this time discovered that his friend's acquaintance with the gipsy was certainly not of yesterday; yet there was still sufficient matter, both new and strange, in what he heard, to make him not only feel surprised but look it also.

Sir William Ryder, however, who probably did not wish to give any further explanation, instantly led the conversation away, saying, "But to return to what we were speaking of, Manners. I must soon come to some determination; and, perhaps, I have been weak in not forming one already: but there are spots of weakness in every one's heart, as there are spots of madness in every one's brain; and I have my share, of course, of both. However, I will limit myself to a time; and when you return to Morley House, you may tell the poor girl, that though it is judged expedient that she should not see her cousin to-morrow, yet on the next morning the old gentleman with whom he is — Mr. Harley, remember — will be very happy to receive her here, together with her aunt, as

I suppose she will be afraid to venture on such an expedition alone. If," — he added, "if I should find reason to change my present purpose, I can but affect the barbarian, and be absent when the ladies come."

"Such tidings will, indeed, give joy and peace," answered Manners: "but before I go to-morrow, I must take care to ascertain where your dwelling stands; for coming hither at night, and across the country, I am totally ignorant of every thing concerning the spot where I now am, except that it is more than a hundred miles from London, which I found out by a mile-stone on the road."

"We are in the environs of the little town of——," replied his companion; "and by the road about seven miles from Morley House. I saw that this little place was to be let, as I passed by one day, immediately after my return, and took it at once on various accounts, although I did not know how much it might prove of use to poor De Vaux; and now, Manners, to your rest; for, although I am a late watcher, you look fatigued, and are in need of repose."

"I am somewhat fatigued," answered Manners, "although I have not had any very great

cause; but the fact is, the mind is sometimes like a hard rider, and knocks up the body before it is aware. I have been all this morning either with Lord Dewry, examining a gipsy boy—taken last night in a sad deer-stealing affray at Dimden—in order to ascertain whether I could discover poor De Vaux, or pursuing somewhat fiercely your friend Pharold, against whom, by the way, warrants have been issued on three different charges.”

“ On three charges, did you say ? ” demanded Sir William Ryder: “ on three ! He only mentioned directly one charge against himself, that of having murdered this poor lad, which must now, of course, fall to the ground.”

“ The other charges were,” answered Manners, “ first, that he had been engaged in the deer-stealing, wherein, I am sorry to say, blood was spilt; but in regard to that I pointed out to him a means of proving his innocence; and, secondly, that many years ago he was either a principal or an accessory in the murder of the late Lord Dewry, who was killed by some unknown person at a spot not far from Morley House.”

It would be difficult to describe the effect that these few words produced upon the coun-

tenance of Sir William Ryder. His eye flashed, his brows contracted, and he bit his lip hard, till at length some feeling of contempt seemed to master the rest, and his emotion ended in a bitter and a meaning laugh. "And pray," he asked, "who is it that has brought this last charge against him?"

"None other than the brother of the murdered man, Lord Dewry," answered Manners: "he says he has proofs of the gipsy's guilt."

"They have been long in manufacturing!" answered Sir William Ryder, sternly: "I will tell you more, Manners, — as there is a God of heaven, the gipsy is innocent, and he shall be proved so, let the bolt light where it may. Proofs! Out upon him! Falsehoods and villany! But he shall learn better; for I will not stand by and see the innocent oppressed, for any remembrances that memory can call up."

"You speak more harshly than ever I heard you, my dear Sir William," answered Manners; "but, perhaps, you have cause which I do not know of, and into which I certainly shall not pry. However, this nobleman is, as you know, De Vaux's father, and, ere we part for the night, you must tell me how I am to act towards him; for the gipsy stipulated that I was

to tell him nothing concerning his son's situation, without your consent. May I tell him where De Vaux is, and under whose care?"

Sir William Ryder paused, and thought for several moments, with the same bitter smile which Manners's information had called up still hanging upon his lip. "Yes," he said at length, — "yes, you may tell him where his son is; and you may tell him to come and see him and me as speedily as he thinks fit: but call me still Mr. Harley, for there might be something unpleasant to his ears in the name of William Ryder, which might prevent his coming. Say that Mr. Harley, the old gentleman to whose house De Vaux was conveyed after the accident he met with, will be happy to see him at any time he may name."

"I am most delighted to have your permission so to do," answered Manners; "for, to tell the truth, it would have placed me in rather an awkward position in regard to Lord Dewry, had you refused to let me give him full tidings of his son."

"He will not much thank you," said Sir William Ryder, — "he will not much thank you! But, nevertheless, let him come, let him come! Perhaps, after all, this is the best way we could

have devised of bringing an unpleasant affair to an end."

"I trust it may prove so," answered Manners; "and that the time may speedily come when you will find it not unpleasant to unravel all the mysteries which have been crowding lately so thick upon me, that I begin to feel confused amongst them, and hardly know who are friends and who are enemies."

"Though I have the clew in my hands," answered Sir William, pursuing more the direction of his own thoughts than that of Manners's last observation,— "though I have the clew in my own hands, there is one thing puzzles me as much as the rest seems to do you:—it is that a youth, so full of high and noble feelings as Edward de Vaux, should be the son of such a man as his father; yet, thank God, he has many a goodly fault too, or I should begin to doubt that he were his son."

"It not unfrequently happens," rejoined Manners, "that where the heart is originally good, the errors of the fathers serve as examples or as landmarks to the children; as the masts of some wrecked vessel often serve to warn mariners of the shoal on which she perished."

"And *his* heart was originally good too, I

do believe," answered Sir William Ryder: "I mean the father's," he added, thoughtfully. "Well, indeed, may his example serve to show to what, step by step, we may reduce ourselves, as one vice lashes on to another."

Manners smiled. "Nay, nay, Sir William," he said, "you are doing the worthy lord somewhat less than justice, I think. I never heard of his being troubled with any of what the world calls vices: pride, indeed, and wrath, and irascibility, he is not without: but, setting aside these gentlemanly peccadilloes, I never heard of any vices; and from what I have seen of him I should say that, whatever he may have been in the days past, he has now sunk down into a very disagreeable old gentleman — that is all."

"That is all!" cried Sir William Ryder, starting up, and laying his hand upon Manners's arm, while he fixed his eyes intently upon him,—"that is all!" but suddenly breaking off, he resumed a calmer look and tone, and added,—"But we have not time, to-night, to discuss characters. I am but keeping you from your rest."

Manners did not endeavour to carry on the conversation; for, in all such matters, it was his

rule to let people go on just as far as they liked, but to press them no farther; and although he certainly was not without some feeling of curiosity in regard to the connection between Sir William Ryder and the father of his friend De Vaux, yet he well knew that the only way to come honestly at a secret is to be totally careless about it. The bell was now rung, and Manners was conducted to a room which the servant who had given him admission, and who was an old acquaintance, had with laudable foresight prepared for his use, looking upon it as certain that a visiter who arrived at twelve o'clock at night was not likely to depart before the next morning.

Every thing had been carefully provided that he could want or desire; and Colonel Manners, who enjoyed, perhaps more than most men, that inestimable blessing of a heart at ease in itself, lay down to rest, and was soon in a deep slumber.

His repose was not disturbed till the grey of the next morning, when he was roused with the intelligence that Captain de Vaux was awake, and would be very glad to see him. He was not long in obeying the summons; and, after a soldier's toilet hastily made, he rang for the

servant, and was conducted to the apartment where his wounded friend lay.

There is something always melancholy in entering a sick room in the early morning, even when it is to see returning health coming back into a cheek we love. The cheerful light of the young day, finding its way through the chinks of the shutters, and mingling with the faint but unextinguished glare of the night lamp, the pale and sleepy guardian of the sick, the book with which she has striven to while away the hours of watching, and scare off sleep, half open on a table loaded with drugs and fever-cooling drinks, the warm, close atmosphere, and the drawn curtains, all bring home to our own hearts that painful conviction of our weak and fragile tenure upon health and comfort, and all that makes life pleasant, which we forget in the bright and hopeful light of day.

In the small dressing-room, through which Manners was conducted to the chamber of his friend, he found a surgeon who had been brought from London, and who had passed the preceding night in close attendance upon the patient. He was luckily one of those men who can form an opinion, and will venture to

speaking it; and in answer to Colonel Manners's enquiries respecting De Vaux's real situation he replied at once, "There is no danger, sir. He will do perfectly well. I should advise, however, as little conversation as possible, and that of as cheerful a kind as may be, for it may retard recovery, if it do not produce more serious evil."

Manners promised to observe his caution, and entered the room. De Vaux smiled faintly when he saw him, and held out his hand, though he moved with evident pain.

"This is a sad accident, indeed, De Vaux," said Manners, sitting down by his bedside; "but I am delighted to hear from the surgeon that it is likely to have no bad consequences, and to be speedily remedied."

"I should be ungrateful to say that I am sorry he thinks so," answered De Vaux, in a melancholy tone; "and yet I can hardly make up my mind to rejoice."

"Nay, nay," said Manners, "I will not hear you say so, my friend. You can have heard no tidings, you can be placed in no situation, De Vaux, which should make you forget that you are surrounded by people who love you for yourself, and are worthy of your love

— who would love you still, under all or any circumstances — that you have friends, relations, ties of every dear and intimate character that can make health and life a blessing, if you are willing to receive it as such. Nor should you forget that there are others who may well be dear to your heart, and whose whole happiness for life is staked upon yours.”

“ Oh yes, poor Marian,” said De Vaux: “ I am, indeed, ungrateful; for such a treasure as that should compensate for every thing. But tell me how she is. Tell me all about her, Manners. When did she hear of this accident? and how has she borne it?”

Manners, though it can scarcely be said that he was puzzled how to answer, yet felt that, with a man of De Vaux’s character, it was somewhat a delicate task, especially as, from what the surgeon had said, it might be expedient not to tell his friend the full extent of what Marian had suffered. He was too well aware of De Vaux’s fastidiousness not to let him know that Marian had felt as deeply on his account as he could possibly think she ought to have done; and yet Manners did not wish to pain and alarm him by telling him how much she really had undergone.

“ You ask me to tell you a long story, De Vaux,” he answered, after a moment’s thought, “ longer, I am afraid, than your worthy surgeon will consent to your hearing at present ; but the truth is, in consequence of some other accident or mistake, we never did hear of what had occurred to you at all.”

“ Good God !” cried De Vaux, “ when with my own hand I wrote to Marian as much as I could write. I do think that servants and messengers were made for the very purpose of breaking people’s hearts, or teasing them to death by carelessness.”

“ In this instance, however,” said Manners, “ it seems that there were various causes which prevented the delivery of your note ; and the consequence was, that, from your unexplained absence, and several other accidental facts which came to our knowledge, we were led to conclude that you had been murdered. I, of course, instantly took arms to avenge you, as in duty bound, and, backed by warrants and gentlemen of the quorum, I have been galloping about the country ever since ; so that, in fact, I have seen scarcely any thing of the family at Morley House, and less than all of your fair cousin Miss de Vaux, whose very first apprehensions

rendered her so unwell, that she has kept her room almost ever since."

"Good God!" cried De Vaux: "how she must have suffered! Poor dear Marian! Would to God that I could go to her—but I am afraid that I could not ride."

"Ride! Do not think of it for an instant," cried Manners, "and make yourself easy about Miss de Vaux. Last night, I, for the first time, obtained news of your safety, which did her more good than all that the god of medicine himself could have done. Nay, I do believe that she would have walked over here with me in the middle of last night, if it had not been that her own ideas of propriety, or, perhaps, her fears of your notions thereof, prevented her from undertaking such a task under such an escort."

De Vaux smiled. "You are severe upon my fastidiousness, Manners," he said; "but, that is one bad quality which, I trust, I shall be able to cast away with many others. I have had some hard lessons lately, Manners, enough to bow down the pride of him of the morning star; and, perhaps, I may have more yet to undergo: but, at all events, my vain fastidiousness is gone for ever; so that one good is gained by misfortune."

“As it often is, my friend,” answered Manners: “nevertheless, I think Miss de Vaux was very right to stay where she was; especially as she herself was far from strong, and I did not know whither I was about to go; for my friend the gipsy, who conducted me hither, is a man of mysteries. However, you owe him thanks for one service that he has rendered to another fair cousin of yours, Miss Falkland, whom he saved from drowning, at the risk of his own life.”

De Vaux had drawn his hand over his eyes, when first Manners mentioned the gipsy; but he removed it again, and looked up with pleasure at the tidings of Isadore's escape, though he asked no account of the accident. “Poor Isadore,” he said, “and poor Marian, too, for God knows what we may both be called upon to suffer. Manners, my brain is in such a whirl, with various doubts, and fears, and anxieties, which I can neither explain to others or unravel myself, that I must, indeed, endeavour to banish all thought of my own situation, and of my future prospects, if I wish to recover.”

“Well, then, by all means banish all thought,” answered Manners. “It is seldom that I can be accused of giving such advice; but for a

man in your situation I think it absolutely a duty to cast from him every memory, and every reflection, which may tend to impede his recovery, trusting and believing that, in those circumstances where we have no power to deliver ourselves, the Almighty Disposer of all things will act for us far better than we could act for ourselves."

"I must e'en think so," answered De Vaux, in whom corporeal weakness and exhaustion had deadened the first sense of misfortune. "Sir William Ryder, indeed, bids me hope, and tells me that things must and will go better than I anticipate: but we speak to each other in enigmas; and till my mind and body are capable of clearer thought and greater exertion I must, I suppose, rest satisfied with assurances, the foundation for which I can in no degree perceive."

Manners, now anxious to lead his thoughts away from any more painful subject, gave him a brief, light sketch of his own proceeding in search of him and all that had occurred since he had left Morley House; but, warned by what had already passed concerning the gipsy, he kept a watchful and a friendly eye upon the countenance of his friend, skilfully turning to some other part of the same subject as soon as

he perceived that what he said was beginning to produce the slightest uneasiness. He was surprised to find, however, on how many points De Vaux was susceptible of pain. The mention of his own father affected him as strongly as the mention of the gipsy; and many a casual word, which seemed in itself to be innocent or kind, made him shrink as if some one had laid a rough hand upon his wound. Beginning at length to fear that his conversation was doing his friend more harm than good, Manners rose, adding, "And now, my dear De Vaux, I think I have remained as long with you as friendship can require, or gallantry permit, considering that there is a fair lady, very dear to you, watching anxiously till I shall return and tell her that I have seen you with my own eyes, and that you are living, not dead; recovering, not dying. The good people here, for various reasons, will not hear of her coming to you to-day, but they assure me that to-morrow you will be able to see her: so that I think I can then promise you a visit; and hope to find that you have in the interval regained much of the health and strength that you have lost."

"I will not ask you to stay longer, Manners," said De Vaux; "for I am too confident

of my dear Marian's affection not to feel sure that the tidings of my probable recovery will be the best consolation she can receive ; and tell her, Manners, I beg, that the only happiness I anticipate in life and health is that of seeing her again."

" I will tell her how happy it will make you," answered Manners ; " but without any of the melancholy adjuncts, if you please, De Vaux. I will not spoil the best tidings I have had to tell for some time, by such a number of unpleasant negatives as you attach to them ; and so fare you well for the present."

" Manners, Manners," said the voice of De Vaux, ere his friend reached the door, " there is one thing which I had forgot. Do not on any account let Marian think that this wound which I have received was the consequence of any intentional act of my own hand. Bid her be sure that, whatever may have occurred, I was not fool enough or cruel enough to her to think of such a thing. Explain to her the accident as I dare say you must have heard it, and tell her that though they say the pistol must have been cocked when I put it in my bosom, I have not the slightest remembrance of its having been so."

“ I will tell her all,” answered Manners ; “ but do not fancy that she will ever dream that you did do it intentionally. If you were a forlorn and solitary being like myself, destined to go through life in single unblestness, people might suspect you ; but with so many ties at present, and so much happiness to look forward to, you would be worse than a madman to throw away not only the crown of life, but all the jewels with which fate has adorned it for you.”

De Vaux gave him a melancholy look, but only added, “ You do not know all, Manners !” and suffered him to depart. As he was crossing the hall in search of some one who could inform him whether Sir William Ryder was yet awake, he met the object of his search, booted and spurred, as if returned from riding. “ You keep your old habits, I see, Sir William,” said Manners, as they met. “ You must have been up and out full early, indeed.”

“ Mr. Harley ; remember, my dear Colonel, Mr. Harley I am for the present,” replied the other. “ I never sleep before one, nor after five—a habit which was acquired in sorrow and in bitterness, but which I would not now lose for half an empire. But have you seen our poor friend ?”

“Yes I have,” answered Manners; “and find him better in body, at least, than I had even hoped. In mind, however, he is very much depressed; and without enquiring, or wishing to enquire, my dear sir, into the connection which may exist between your affairs and his, allow me to say, as some connection does certainly exist, that I am sure whatever will soothe and quiet his mind will tend more than any thing to restore him to health. Whatever, on the contrary, depresses him, as he now is, will not only greatly retard his recovery, but may, I am afraid, have, remotely, very bad results upon his constitution. I hope that I do not take too great a liberty with your friendship,” he added, seeing a cloud come upon his auditor’s brow.

“Not in the least, Manners, not in the least,” answered Sir William; “I was only thinking what I could do to relieve the poor youth’s mind. I am afraid I somewhat mistook him, Manners, when I saw him with you in America; I am afraid I did not half see the nobler and finer qualities of his mind, concealed, as they were, under an exterior of frivolous fastidiousness. But I can assure you, that any thing on earth I can do to set his mind at ease

I will do ; and I will go and assure him thereof directly and solemnly."

Manners detained him for a single moment to borrow a horse, and to explain the motives of his early departure for Morley House ; and then suffering him to proceed, in order to soothe and calm the mind of his wounded friend, he himself took his way to Mrs. Falkland's, glad to bear good tidings to those who stood so much in need of them.

Marian was watching at the window as he galloped up ; and there was something in the rapid pace at which he came, in the light and agile motion with which he sprang to the ground, and flung the rein to the servant, which spoke joyful tidings. Manners was soon in the drawing-room ; and the news he bore was not long in telling. He related all that he had seen, and all that he had heard of her cousin's accident and situation ; and although we cannot deny that he softened a little the pain he suffered, and the grief which seemed to oppress him, Manners told her the truth, though he told it kindly.

Marian's face was alternately the abode of smiles and tears, during his narrative, and during the manifold answers which he gave to

her questions ; and again and again she thanked him for all his energetic interest, and feeling kindness, and prayed Heaven sincerely that De Vaux, and herself might have some opportunity of returning it as he deserved.

Manners only interrupted a conversation which was not without interest to himself, and was so deeply interesting to her, in order to enquire for her cousin, and to put many a question concerning Miss Falkland's health, after the accident of the preceding night. He was still in full career, when she herself entered, somewhat paler but not less gay than ever ; and although she declared, and persisted in the declaration, that she was bound by every rule of propriety to fall in love with the gipsy who had rescued her, and to tender him her hand and heart, Manners felt sincerely rejoiced that Pharold had been the person to come so opportunely to her aid. Isadore, indeed, as she recollected one or two words which had been spoken on the preceding evening, coloured more than once when Manners addressed her ; but she knew him to be a generous man, and she determined to trust to his generosity for the result.

Mrs. Falkland soon after joined the party ;

and the house of mourning was changed into a house of joy. Nothing more remained but to write to Lord Dewry, informing him of his son's safety; and this Manners undertook and executed, keeping in mind the engagement he had come under to Sir William Ryder, regarding the concealment of his name. A servant was instantly despatched to Dewry Hall with the note: but on reaching that place he found that the peer had returned early that morning to Dimden, and thither he then bent his steps; but arrived too late to give Lord Dewry even the option of visiting his son that night.

CHAP. V.

DIMDEN PARK—a spot which had been hated and avoided by Lord Dewry ever since it fell into his possession, on account of its many memories — some painful in themselves, some painful in their associations — had, by this time, not alone been revisited by its master, but had been occupied by him, with a part of his general household, as if for the purpose of longer residence. Such a state of things had been in no degree contemplated by the peer, either when Manners left him, or when he himself terminated his conversation with the gipsy boy who had become his prisoner; but another conversation had succeeded with another person to whose chamber we must now follow.

The first object of Lord Dewry being to get the gipsy, Pharold, into his power — trusting to his previously arranged schemes to work his will with him when he had him there — it was natural that he should turn his whole efforts to accomplish his capture before he attended to any thing else. The moment, however, that all

the means had been employed for that purpose, which circumstances permitted, his attention instantly returned to the plans which he had concerted in order to prove the object of his hatred and his fear guilty of the crime imputed to him, when he should be ultimately taken. The execution of these plans materially depended upon Sir Roger Millington ; and for his safety and recovery the peer's next aspirations were consequently raised. As soon, then, as he had dismissed the affair of the boy, and had seen the treacherous scoundrel he thought fit to employ for the purpose of inveigling the gipsy to his destruction, set out upon his errand, Lord Dewry turned his steps towards the chamber of the wounded man, sincerely grieved for the accident which had happened to him, and most anxious concerning its ultimate result. Calculating, however, with nice acumen, the irritable selfishness of sick people, he trusted not to the personal vexation which he really felt to give his air and countenance the appearance of grief and sympathy ; but as he walked slowly up the stairs, he thought over every point of the part he was to play, in order to cover his individual motives from the eye of the wounded man, and make him believe that sincere interest in his

fate and sufferings was the sole emotion which affected his friend and benefactor.

At the door of the chamber to which Sir Roger had been conveyed the peer paused for a moment; and then laying his hand upon the lock, turned it, and entered with as noiseless a step as possible. The windows were darkened; but there was still enough light in the room for the eye to distinguish the table covered with surgical instruments and bloody bandages, and all those appliances and means for saving life which man so strangely combines with the most skilful and persevering activity in taking it. There was the bed, too, and the half-drawn curtains, and the gentleman in black, sitting by the bolster, while a young prim assistant walked about on tiptoe, for the soothing dose or the cooling drink. A deep groan was sounding through the room as the peer entered; and although he was, and always had been, a man of nerve, without any corporeal terror at the thought either of pain or of death, there was something in that sound, and all the accessory circumstances around, that made a sort of shudder pass over his frame. It were difficult to guess in what feelings that shudder took its rise. It might be, alone, the natural repug-

nance of the human heart to anguish and dissolution—it might be that he thought of his son—it might be that he remembered his brother, for there were chords of association between the fate of each, and the situation of the man he came to visit, which, like the strings of the Eolian harp, might well be moved to a thousand vague and melancholy sounds by the slightest breath that stirred them.

He advanced, however, lightly towards the bed, and stood by the chair, whence the surgeon rose as he approached, ere the wounded man was aware of his presence. Sir Roger Milington was lying on his left side, with his face turned away, and his right hand cast over the bed clothes; and it was not difficult, from the slow clenching of his hand, and the rocking motion of his head, to see the intense agony he suffered. The peer paused, and gazed for a moment with some emotion—not, indeed, without a mingling of better feelings—compassion, and sympathy, and disinterested grief, such as he had not known for many years. It was better than all the acting in the world; and when Sir Roger, whom no persuasion of the surgeon could induce to lie still, turned round with the quick and irritable movement of high fever and

excessive pain, he saw the peer standing by him, with an expression of sincere sorrow which could not be mistaken.

A groan and a fearful contortion followed the change of position: but when the first agony was over, he looked pleased to see the countenance of Lord Dewry; and said in a voice wonderfully strong and firm, considering his situation, "Your Lordship is very kind—I am badly hurt, I am afraid—those accursed gipsies took too good an aim—damn me, if I do not think the shot must have been red hot, it gives one such torture. I have been wounded before, but never felt any thing like this. Do you think I shall die, my Lord, ey?"

"Heaven forbid," cried the peer, sitting down: "on the contrary, I trust the very pain you suffer evinces that you are in no danger; for I have always heard that mortal wounds are generally the least painful. Is it not so, Mr. Swainstone?"

"Yes, exactly so, my Lord," replied the surgeon, who would probably have confirmed any thing on earth that the peer said to soothe his patient. "I had told the gentleman so before your Lordship arrived."

“ You never told me so,” cried Sir Roger, looking up at him angrily.

“ Yes, indeed, sir, I told you that I hoped and trusted you would recover,” answered the surgeon; “ and one of my reasons for thinking so was the very pain you suffer; for, as his Lordship very justly and wisely observes, wounds which ——”

“ But that damned parson,” cried Sir Roger, “ told me I should certainly die — a foul-mouthed, old, hooded crow !”

“ What parson ?” demanded the peer, in some surprise and dismay at the very idea of Sir Roger Millington being brought in contact in his dying hours with any one who might lead him on to dangerous disclosures, — “ what parson does he mean ?”

“ Oh, only good Dr. Edwards, my Lord, the rector,” answered the surgeon. “ He came to give the gentleman religious consolation; but he did not exactly say that he would certainly die. He said that he would certainly die at some time; and that even if he were spared at present, it would be better for him to turn his thoughts to serious things, so that if he recovered, the wound might prove salutary to his mind at least.”

“ Yes, yes; but he thought, and he meant me to think, too,” cried Sir Roger, “ that I was dying, and that I could not recover. I knew well enough what he meant — the canting old crow; but I’ll live, curse me if I do not, if it be but to pay those hellish gipsies for this torture to which they have put me. I beg your pardon, my Lord, for being somewhat violent; but I am in agony, perfect agony.”

“ I grieve most deeply and sincerely, my dear friend, to see you suffer so much,” answered the peer; “ and I will take care that no such fanatical irritation be intruded upon you again. Dr. Edwards is a very good and well-intentioned man, I dare say; but I will not have a sick and wounded friend tormented for any rector on the face of the earth. In the mean time, however, I trust that this state of anguish is not likely to be of long endurance. What do you think, Mr. Swainstone? Can nothing be done to alleviate it?”

“ I have done as much as I could, my Lord, to effect that purpose,” answered the surgeon, with a very significant shrug of the shoulders; “ and I doubt not, in a few hours, the gentleman will feel the pain begin to subside.”

“ That is the best news I have heard from you yet, doctor,” said the wounded man. “ But

do you not think you can extract the ball? I do not believe I shall be easier as long as that remains in me, burning like a coal."

"O yes, you will," answered the surgeon; "and it is necessary to let the first irritation subside, before I make the attempt again. Were I to try it now, it might increase all you suffer, and prolong it, perhaps, for many hours."

"Then you shall not touch it, depend upon that," cried Sir Roger; "I suffer quite enough already."

"In the mean time, Mr. Swainstone," demanded the peer, "let me enquire whether a little quiet conversation with a friend is likely to injure your patient; for I would even deny myself the pleasure of remaining with him, though I much desire it, if you thought it would prove in any degree hurtful."

"Not in the least, my Lord," answered the surgeon; "a little cheerful and interesting conversation, such as your Lordship's must always be, would, most likely, withdraw his mind from himself, and rather do him good than otherwise."

"Then I will relieve you in your attendance upon him for half an hour," rejoined the peer; "and your assistant can wait in the next room,

in case Sir Roger may want any surgical aid. But, remember," he added, in a louder tone, "in case I do not see you again, I beseech you to give your whole time and attention up to my friend, here, and shall esteem it the greatest favour that any one can confer upon me, if you bring him safely, and speedily, through this unfortunate affair."

The surgeon bowed; and promising to do his best, proceeded to quit the apartment with his assistant. The peer then, suddenly seeming to remember something, followed into the ante-room, and, closing the door, beckoned him back. "I wish to know, Mr. Swainstone," he said, in a low but emphatic tone, "your real opinion of my friend's case. You said just now that the pain would subside in a few hours: do you think that likely to be really the case? for I see that you have spoken under some restraint."

"It will certainly be the case, my Lord," replied the surgeon, gravely; "but only from the coming on of mortification, which cannot be long ere it occurs."

"Good God! then you think he will die!" cried the peer, in real alarm.

"I do think so, my Lord," answered the surgeon, "without there existing in my mind

one hope of being able to prevent it. The fact is this, my Lord: the ball entered his right side; and passing directly through the muscles of the back, was only stopped by the articulations of the ribs and the vertebræ, both of which have been so much fractured and injured, that there is neither any possibility of extracting the ball, nor any chance of its remaining there innocuous, as is sometimes the case."

"Then how long do you think life may be protracted?" asked the peer, anxiously.

"It is impossible to say to a day or two, my Lord," answered the surgeon. "It may be over in a week; and, on the contrary, he may linger ten days or a fortnight."

"Then you do not think that there is any chance of immediate dissolution?" demanded Lord Dewry.

"None, none whatever, my Lord," replied the surgeon. "All hemorrhage has ceased long. First, mortification will ensue, and then ——"

"Spare me the description," said the peer; "but tell me, in case of its being necessary to transact any business of importance with this unfortunate gentleman, when do you think will be the moment in which it can best be done?"

“ Why, I should say, in the beginning of the mortification,” the surgeon replied. “ All his faculties will be clear and active, and the great bodily pain which he is now suffering will have abated.”

Well then, Mr. Swainstone,” rejoined Lord Dewry, “ I shall trust to you to give me notice of the precise moment at which you judge it expedient that this poor gentleman’s declaration, on oath, regarding the transactions in which he has suffered, should be taken down. At the same time, let me caution you not to alarm him, or suffer him to be alarmed, by the thought of death ; but keep his spirits up, as far as possible, till it shall become absolutely necessary to let him know that all hope is past.”

Thus saying, the peer returned into the room of the wounded man; and the surgeon withdrew, wondering who Sir Roger Millington could be, towards whom the cold and proud Lord Dewry displayed so much courtesy and warm regard.

The peer, in the mean time, approached the bed of the sufferer with a more cheerful countenance; and assured him, in answer to some rather anxious questions, that the real opinion of the surgeon was more favourable than he had even expected. “ I have given orders,

too," added Lord Dewry, "that no more fanatics be admitted to you. There are a crowd of those weak fools about the country, who haunt sick rooms; and very often, by depressing the mind and spirits, cause those persons to die who would otherwise have recovered."

"Oh, I'll not die for any of them," answered Sir Roger; "I'll live to have revenge on those gipsies. They marked me out especially; and I will live long enough to show that, though I was so badly hurt, I could mark them too, and remember them to their cost."

"Did you see Pharold, then, amongst them?" demanded the peer, eagerly. "Was it he who fired the shot?"

"I saw Pharold plainly," answered Sir Roger; "and can swear that he was amongst them. So can the man that held me up in his arms, after I was wounded; for he pointed him out to me, and I will swear to him any where."

Joy glistened in the eyes of the peer while he listened. He had had doubts, he had had apprehensions, lest the testimony of his keeper against the gipsy should remain unsupported by other authority; and he had not left unremarked Harvey's implication that some of the other persons present differed with him in their

account of the affair. But the assertion of Sir Roger Millington was conclusive; as he well knew, from his own former experience as a lawyer, what an effect the dying declaration of a murdered person always has upon a jury.

During the last twenty-four hours he had sometimes doubted whether he had or had not somewhat too intricately complicated his plans, in his eagerness to snatch at every thing which gave an additional chance of security; but now he congratulated himself that he had acted as he had done, and fancied that if he confidently and boldly pursued them, his mind was sufficiently acute to guide each of the schemes he had engaged in to the same great end and object,—the insuring his own security by crushing those who could destroy it.

He now felt armed at all points. By the transactions of the preceding day he could prove the impossibility of his having committed the crime which he believed that Pharold would cast back in his teeth; and from the events of the preceding night he felt secure, that if the gipsy should even be cleared of the murder of his brother and of his son, the last charge, in regard to the violence in Dimden Park, would be made good against him, and lay his danger-

ous lips in the silence of the grave. But in his eagerness to secure this advantage beyond the power of fate, Lord Dewry somewhat outran discretion. Without giving either himself or Sir Roger time to pause, he exclaimed, eagerly, "Will it not be better, my dear Sir Roger, at once to make a declaration, upon oath, of your recollections concerning the affair of last night?"

Sir Roger Millington looked at him suspiciously. "Do you think me dying, or do you not, Lord Dewry?" he demanded; "for if I am not dying, but likely to recover, I shall have plenty of time to make the declaration when I am not in such pain, or give the *vivâ voce* evidence, which is much better in a court of justice. So let me know the truth, my Lord."

Lord Dewry saw that it was in vain to hope he would make the declaration he desired unless he believed himself to be dying; but the peer had a keen knowledge of human nature, and saw all the dangers which would attend the disclosure of his real state to Sir Roger Millington. He knew that men who have confronted the chance of death a thousand times, and, if one may use the expression, have bearded "the lean, abhorred monster" in his most angry

moods, will wreathe and flutter like a scared bird when he has got them in his inevitable grasp, and when they know that they cannot escape. He knew that these are the moments "that make cowards of us all;" and he feared lest some lingering notions of crime, and repentance, and another world, should tempt Sir Roger Millington to an endeavour towards atoning past errors, by the confession of all those evil designs which were still in their passage between the past and the future, between the revocable and the irretrievable; and he would not have risked the chance for a world. He saw, however, that he had already created a doubt which might be dangerous; but he extricated himself dexterously.

"God forbid, my dear Millington," he said, "that any thing should be even likely to prevent your giving evidence when the trial of these gipsies comes on; but my only reason for wishing you to make the declaration was, that it might be produced at once before the magistrates, whom I shall request to meet here tomorrow or the day after, either to take measures for pursuing the villains vigorously, if they have not been arrested before that time, or to investigate the matter if they have, which I trust may

be the case, as I have already set half the county on their track. Now what I wish is, that this Pharold may be committed directly; and you know that amongst a number of country magistrates there is always some prating, troublesome fellow, who throws difficulties in the way; and in this instance, it must be remembered, some of the people did not recognise Pharold, so that your evidence is of vital importance."

"Let them come to me," said Sir Roger, vehemently,—“let them come to me, and I will give such evidence as would hang him half a dozen times over. I should like to be but a quarter of an hour in the same room with the scoundrel with two good small swords. Only to think, my Lord, of me—who have made the daylight shine through many a pretty man as one would wish to see—being hurt in this way by a stinking yellow fox of a gipsy, that is only fit to be hunted down by a good pack of hounds!”

“I trust we shall catch him,” said the peer, who saw that it was vain to press the wounded man any farther upon the subject of the declaration.

“Catch him!” cried Sir Roger, who was working himself up into a state of vehement

excitement, — “ catch him! you cannot miss catching him, if you take proper means. By Jupiter, if you miss him, I’ll undertake, for a small sum, to catch him myself as soon as I am well; or rather, I should say, catch the whole of them, for curse me if I know which of them it was that fired the shot.”

“ Indeed!” cried Lord Dewry; “ I am sorry for that; I thought you were certain it was Pharold.”

“ I dare say it was,” answered the knight, “ for I saw him standing in front, when they picked me up. It was either he himself or a young fellow who stood near, and who bullied a great deal before hand. But as those that bully never act, I dare say it was Pharold himself.”

“ I wish to Heaven your recollection would enable you to swear that it was Pharold,” said the peer in a low but distinct voice.

“ Oh, I can swear that it was he who did it, to the best of my belief,” answered Sir Roger, who, notwithstanding all his sufferings, could not but feel, that, in the peer, he had obtained a friend, whom it might be inexpedient to lose, and whose care and attention, under his existing circumstances, might well make some impression

upon him, although he even did doubt the motives which produced such conduct,—“ I can swear it was he who did it, to the best of my belief,” he repeated, with some emphasis on the last words; and then added, in the peevish tone of pain, “ You seem to have a goodly dislike towards this Pharold, my Lord.”

The peer did not wish, of course, that his personal hatred to Pharold should be too apparent, even to those whom he employed as tools; but he still less wished that that personal hatred should be so far without plausible motive as to lead men to turn their thoughts towards remote causes, in order to seek out some probable reason for such persisting enmity. Nor, indeed, was a sufficient motive wanting; for the terrible news he had heard the night before from Colonel Manners had awakened feelings towards the gipsy, which, though blending with ancient hatred, were yet sufficiently powerful in themselves to stand forth, even in his own mind, as the great incentive to his designs against Pharold, as one great stream, joining others, mingles its waters with theirs, and gives its name to all.

“ I have good cause to hate him,” he said, bending down over the wounded man, with the

expression of all his dark and bitter feelings frowning unrestrained upon his brow, — “ I have good cause to hate him, Sir Roger — judge if I have not, when I tell you that his hand has not only been dipped in my brother’s blood, but also in the blood of my only son.”

He spoke in a low and agitated voice : but Sir Roger caught his meaning distinctly ; and, with an involuntary movement of real horror, started up upon his elbow. He fell back again instantly, with a groan of agony ; and the big drops rolled from his forehead. The peer paused for a few minutes, seeing that the sudden movement had renewed all the sufferings of the wounded man : but he had yet much more to say, and when the knight had in some degree recovered, he began again with expressions of sympathy and kindness : — “ I am sorry to see you suffer so terribly,” he said : “ you seemed easier just now ; and I was in hopes that the change for the better, which the surgeon prognosticated, was already coming on.”

“ I was better, I was better,” said the knight, peevishly ; “ but that cursed start that you made me give, by telling me about your son, has torn me all to pieces again. You should not tell one such things so hastily.”

“Were my son out of the question,”—replied Lord Dewry, with every appearance of frankness and sincerity,—“had this Pharold never shed one drop of my kindred blood, I would pursue him and his tribe to the last man, for what they have made you suffer.”

There is no calculating, however, the turns which the irritability of sickness will take; and whether Lord Dewry overcharged the expression of his regard or not, Sir Roger murmured to himself, in a tone too indistinct for the peer to distinguish his words,—“I dare say you think so, now that you have your own purposes to answer too—I am not to be blinded.—Well, my Lord,” he continued aloud, somewhat apprehensive, perhaps, that the peer’s present kindness might render him the obliged person, instead of the conferrer of the obligation, and thus deprive him of many a profitable claim for the future,—“well, my Lord, I am very much obliged to you for your kindness; but, I trust you will not allow my having suffered, in an attempt to serve you, so greatly as to render me for the time incapable of doing all that I could wish,—I hope that you will not allow this fact, I say, to alter your Lordship’s kind intentions in my favour.”

The peer understood very clearly, although Sir Roger was rendered peevish and somewhat imprudent by pain and sickness, yet that with habitual rapacity he now wished to tie him down to the fulfilment of all that had been promised on the former evening, lest the opportunity should slip, and the gipsy be convicted of other crimes by other means. Confiding, however, in the assurance of the surgeon, that the unhappy knight must die, he felt that he could be liberal as the air in promises, without any dangerous result; and he, therefore, replied at once, "Fear not, fear not, Sir Roger; not only will I do all that I said, when you were first kind enough to give me your assistance, but it shall not be my fault if I do not find means to do more. Set your mind, therefore, at ease upon the subject, and do not allow any thoughts for the future to give you apprehension, or delay your recovery. Since, however, you have spoken of the subject yourself, there are some things in those papers which we were looking over last night which I should much like to see again. Have you them here?"

Sir Roger, however, was not to be deceived; and his present views were directly opposed to those which he perceived or suspected in his noble companion. In the first arrangement of

the affair, indeed, when he had been suddenly raised from apprehensions of the most gnawing want to hopes of competence and ease, when he believed that the peer could not ultimately act without him, and that he had it always in his power to enforce, by a few gentle hints of publicity, the performance of all that had been promised, he would have given the papers out of his own hands without fear. Under those circumstances, too, the peer had thought it better that the knight should keep them, that their production might take place more naturally.

Now, however, the position of each was changed. Lord Dewry looked upon Sir Roger as a dying man, whose life could not be protracted to the completion of all they designed, and who might be worked upon by the fear of death, or the irritability of sickness, to take a very different view of the life he was leaving, from that which he had hitherto entertained. Sir Roger, on his part, saw that, tied down to a bed of pain, through a long and tedious convalescence, no opportunity could possibly be afforded him of superintending and directing the proceeding in which he had been engaged; and, therefore, that his great hold upon the peer was to be found in the papers which they

had altered together. Both, therefore, wished to possess them; and Sir Roger, in the apparently casual question of Lord Dewry, perceived at once the object he proposed. "No, my Lord," he answered, somewhat abruptly, "I have them not with me. I left them at your house, at Dewry Hall. I wish to God I had them with me."

The peer was somewhat startled by the eagerness of his tone; for it is impossible for men to confederate in villany without being more or less suspicious of each other. "Cannot I find them for you, Sir Roger?" he demanded. "If you will intrust me with the key of your valise, I will bring them over with me tomorrow."

A grim smile checkered the expression of pain on the countenance of the wounded man, and he replied, "Your Lordship is very good; but as I shall require a number of things contained in my valise, I think it would be better if your Lordship were to have the goodness to order some of your servants to send me over every thing which I left in the apartment assigned me at Dewry Hall."

"Certainly, certainly," answered the peer, who saw that he must press the matter no far-

ther, — “ certainly, it shall be done this very night. But do you not think, Sir Roger,” he continued, with renewed apprehension lest the unhappy man, if left unwatched by his own eye, should discover his real situation, and be persuaded to make inconvenient confessions, — “ do you not think, Sir Roger, that you yourself might bear removal to the hall? I do not like your remaining in this damp old house, which has not been inhabited for many years, and in which there is but little that can render you comfortable, during your convalescence. If you could bear the motion ——”

“ Impossible, my Lord,” replied Sir Roger sharply: “ I wonder you do not see that I can bear no motion at all. This place will do very well: I have lain in worse quarters; and if you will order my valise to be sent, it is all I want. To tell the truth,” he added, “ I am somewhat tired, and am afraid that to speak much more would injure me.”

“ Then far be it from me,” replied the peer, “ to prolong our conversation, Sir Roger. I shall take care that every thing that circumstances admit be done for your accommodation, and that you be not again teased by our fanatical rector, as you were this morning.”

There was a degree of anger in his tone which, had it not been repressed by many a potent consideration, might have flashed forth in a very different manner; but it was still sufficiently perceptible to make the wounded man add some deprecatory sentences, which the peer received in good part, and left the room. As soon as he was gone, Sir Roger Millington placed his hand over his eyes, and gave way to thoughts of a very mixed, but all of a melancholy, character.

“ His compassion, and his regard,” he thought, his mind turning to the crafty man who had just left him, — “ his compassion and his regard are all false and affected, that is clear enough. To think of his wishing to move me fourteen or fifteen miles in this terrible state! I should like to know what his object is. He has some deep object, beyond doubt. Can he be afraid of my betraying him? Perhaps he may. His schemes are villanous ones enough, that is certain: but he knows that if I were to peach, I should lose the annuity from him, and get nothing from any one else; so he cannot be afraid of that.” Then came a long interval of confused and rambling speculations on the motives of the peer, which had something of

delirium in their vague and unconnected whirl; but then a more terrible image rose before the mind of the sick man. "Can he think me dying?" he asked himself. "Can the surgeon have told him that I am dying? No, I won't believe it. I feel as strong as ever, notwithstanding all this pain! I cannot be dying! No, no, I will live to revenge myself upon those cursed gipsies.—Doctor," he continued aloud, as the surgeon now re-entered the room, "are you sure that you are not deceiving me about my condition? Are you sure that I am not in danger?"

The surgeon was a good but an easy-tempered man; not indifferent to religion; but still not very certain, at all times, in regard to the precise line of conduct which it dictated. Although he thought it wrong, as a general principle, to depress the spirits of a patient, by telling him his danger, yet he had conceived that the clergyman had done but his duty, as a man of religion, in letting the wounded knight know what he, as a medical man, had thought it is his duty to conceal. The arguments and injunctions of the peer, however, coming in support of his own opinion, he maintained his first assertion to Sir Roger, telling him that, al-

though it was impossible to answer for contingencies, and that he could not exactly tell what might be the ultimate result of his wound till he had examined it on the following day, yet he saw no reason whatever to apprehend any *immediate* danger.

With this assurance Sir Roger satisfied himself, and passed a feverish and painful night, in murmurs at the agony he suffered, in curses and imprecations upon the whole race of gipsies, and in vague speculations upon the motives and views of Lord Dewry, in his conduct of that morning. At times his mind seemed to ramble a little; and he would mutter vague sentences, referring to many a different object, which would excite both the attention and wonder of the medical man, and make him believe that his patient wanted the aid of religion more than he had imagined at first. When spoken to however, his replies became instantly clear and precise, and all his faculties appeared again as perfect as ever.

In the mean while, the peer, after leaving such directions as the circumstances and his own particular plans required, placed himself once more in his carriage, and returned to his usual abode; but he determined that on no

consideration should the wounded man be left longer in Dimden House without his presence. "Those meddling priests," he thought, "think themselves privileged to obtrude and to persevere in their obtrusion: but I do not think the rector will presume to set his foot within the doors of Dimden while I am there, without my especial desire; and if he do, he shall soon be disposed of. I dare say, however, that Sir Roger himself said enough to prevent his speedy return; but that surgeon, that Swainstone, is a weak fellow, and I will trust nothing to circumstances."

There were other things, however, to be accomplished, which required no small skill and cunning to bring about; but the mind of Lord Dewry was all activity and eagerness, now that the strife had actually commenced, and that he felt that the struggle between him and the only witness of the crime he had committed was so far advanced that it could only end in the destruction of one or the other. There was no more hesitation now — there was no more fear or doubt — there was none of that wavering between many feelings and many emotions. He had plunged in, and he was resolved to make his way through. The news of his son's death

had decided him; and the burning longing for revenge went hand in hand with all his other motives. He had hesitated at the first step; but that irretrievable first step was now taken, and he did not regret it. He had chosen his path; he had begun the contest, and his whole thoughts and mind were bent to take advantage of every circumstance in order to terminate his own favour.

- Again and again, as the carriage rolled on, he revolved in his own mind the various means that could be used to induce the dying man to make such a declaration of what he had witnessed during the affray in Dimden Park as would give an irresistible grasp of Pharold; and yet how to accomplish this purpose without letting Sir Roger know that he was dying, and that the crimes to which he was making himself a party would soon appear in the dreadful account against his disembodied spirit? It was a difficult task, and yet he thought he could accomplish it, if he were for any long time present in the knight's sick room; but on another point he saw, and saw with a glow of triumph, that he could turn the very refusal of the papers, which for a moment he had considered as detrimental, to the very best account.

Although it was late, and he had not dined, yet he ordered the carriage, ere it proceeded home, to pass through the neighbouring village, and stop at the vicarage. It was an honour which the proud, cold, irreverent peer had seldom paid to the poor minister of a religion that condemned him; and with some surprise the vicar beheld him enter his little study. But the struggle in which he was engaged, like all other struggles of base interest, whether they be for the purposes of political ambition or of private avarice, was one that mightily tamed pride, and rendered coldness warm and affable. He was anxious to buy golden opinions from all sorts of men; and although he had a farther purpose at present in view, he addressed the clergyman with that sort of courtesy, which his situation prompted him to use towards every one whose word might be of value in the opinion of the world.

“ My dear sir,” he said, “ I come to you for the purpose of requesting a favour.” The vicar, who neither loved nor approved the man who spoke to him, answered coldly that he should be happy to do any thing to serve his Lordship; and the peer proceeded to explain.

“ The fact is,” he said, “ that last night, in

a terrible deer-stealing affray, which took place at Dimden, a poor friend of mine was severely wounded, and is not expected to live from hour to hour. Amongst his baggage, which remains here at the hall, he tells me that there are papers of great importance; and, indeed, he wished me to bring them to him: but as his mind is not itself, and his faculties wander from time to time, I do not conceive I should be justified in placing papers of importance at his disposal. At the same time, of course, I cannot presume to examine them, and I wish much to seal them up in your presence, if you have time to get into my carriage with me, and accompany me to the hall. It is for this purpose that I have now called here as I passed from Dimden on my way home."

The vicar thought that the matter might have been more simply arranged: but as there was nothing in the peer's request which was unreasonable, he consented to accompany him; and in a few minutes they were at the door of the mansion. Leaving the cook to fret over his delayed ragouts, the peer instantly ordered sealing-wax and lights to be brought; and, accompanied by the clergyman, proceeded to the apartments which Sir Roger Millington had

occupied for so short a time, and in which various articles of apparel were still lying about. The valise, however, firmly locked, was in one corner of the room ; and, what was still more pleasing in the sight of of the peer, there appeared on one of the tables a small portable letter-case, in which, beyond all doubt, the knight had placed the papers which were of so much consequence to Lord Dewry.

Lord Dewry took the wax, and bidding the servant who brought it hold the taper, he sealed first the letter-case, and then the valise, and requested the vicar to do the same with his own seal. “ I am induced,” he said, in a frank tone, “ to take all these precautions, by a conversation which I had with my poor friend this morning, in which he spoke of these things as of the most vital importance. It might be the mere rambling of delirium, but it might be more correct ; and, therefore, as this caution costs me nothing but the wax, and you, my dear sir, nothing but the loss of a few minutes’ time—though I know your time is valuable—I thought it best not to neglect a line of conduct, which I might regret not having pursued hereafter.”

“ I think your Lordship is quite right,” re-

plied the vicar, placing his seal also on the cases. "In matters of worldly prudence, and in our religious duties, where there is any thing to be done which may produce good, and cannot produce evil, to neglect it is, in the one case, a folly, and in the other, a sin."

The peer repressed the sneer that began to curl his lip ; and, perhaps, felt at his heart that the good man's words were true, though through life he had neglected the rule they taught. He then bade the servant close up the apartment, and lock the door, till the death of the unhappy knight should render the things that it contained the property of others ; and descending the stairs with the vicar, he begged that he would favour him by remaining to dinner, which was about to be placed upon the table. The clergyman replied that he had long dined ; and in answer to the offer of the peer's carriage to take him back to the vicarage, he answered that he would rather walk.

"He is stern and repulsive !" thought the peer, as the clergyman left him : but there was still a lingering gleam of better feeling, which occasionally lighted up his darkened heart, and he added, almost instantly, and aloud, "—but he is loved by the poor, and he is a good man ; and

I would rather have such a one near me than a pampered voluptuary."

"Sir!" said the servant, who was standing by.

"Pshaw! nothing!" replied the peer, and walked back to his dressing-room.

Early the next morning he returned to Dimden, where he received, as we have seen, the tidings which Colonel Manners sent him of the security of his son, which, though it poured some balm into his heart, came too late to effect any change in his purposes against the gipsy.

CHAP. VI.

“THE time was,” thought the gipsy, as he climbed the hills once more, after leaving Colonel Manners at the house of Sir William Ryder,—“the time was when these limbs would have undertaken double the toil that they have undergone this day, as a matter of sport. But now they are weary and faint, like those of some sickly dweller in cities—of some slave of effeminate and enfeebling luxury. Age is upon me: the breaker of the strong sinew—the softener of the hard muscle—the destroyer of vigour, activity, and power has laid upon me that heavy hand, which shall press me down into the grave. But it matters not—it matters not. I have outlived my time; I have changed, and the things around me have changed also; but we have not changed in the same way. They have sprung up, new and young, while I have grown weary and old; and, in the midst of the world, I am like a withered leaf of the last year among the green fresh foliage of the

spring. It is time that I should fall from the bough, and give place to brighter things."

As he thus thought, whether from corporeal weariness, or from the listlessness of the dark melancholy which oppressed him, he turned from the high road into the first plantation that he met with; and, without such care for personal comfort as even a gipsy usually takes, cast himself down under the trees, and sought to refresh himself by sleep. Gloomy ideas, however, still pursued him long; and, with the superstitious imaginations of his tribe heightening the universal propensity to superstition in our nature, he fancied that the melancholy which disappointment, and anxiety, and difficulty, and failure, had produced, was but some supernatural warning of his approaching fate. The bravest, the wisest, the best, as well as the most hardened and the most sceptical, have felt such presentiments, and have believed them; and very often, also, either by the desponding inactivity of such belief, or by rash struggles to prove that they did not believe, have brought about the fulfilment of that which originally was but a dream.

Sleep, however, came at length; and it was daylight the next morning ere the gipsy woke.

He rose refreshed; and his dark visions, perhaps, would have vanished, if he would have let them: but there is nothing to which one so fondly clings as superstition; and to have cast from him as untrue a presentiment in which he had once put faith Pharold would have held as treason to the creed of his people. He rose, then; and, pursuing the paths through the plantations and the woods, avoiding all public ways, and never venturing farther from the covert than to follow the faintly-marked track through some small solitary meadow, he mounted the remaining hills, and bent his steps towards the thick wood in which he had left his companions, revolving, as he went, what might be the probable fate of those to whom he had so perseveringly clung, when he, himself, should be no more.

He found the other gipsies all on foot, and busied about the various little cares of a fresh day, with the light and careless glee of a people to whom the sorrows of the past week are as a half-forgotten tradition. The old were talking and laughing at the entrances of their tents, the young were sporting together by the stream, and the middle aged were employed in mending this or that which had gone wrong about their carts and baggage, and whistling as lightly at

their work as if there were no such thing as grief in all the world.

“ And thus will it be,” thought Pharold, as he approached,—“ thus will it be with them all, ere I am a week beneath the earth. But it matters not, it matters not. So be it. Why should I wish tears shed or hearts bruised for such a thing as I am ?”

He believed that he did not wish it; yet where is the man so steeled by nature or philosophy as to look forward to the grave, and not to hope that some kind bosom will sigh, some gentle eye give a tear to his memory when he is gone? and though Pharold believed that he did not wish it, he deceived himself. At the door of his own tent sat she on whom, in this his latter day, he had bestowed the better part of all his feelings; whom he loved, at once, with the tenderness of a father and the tenderness of a husband,—an union of feelings that never yet produced aught but sorrow, for it never can be returned in the fulness of its own intensity.

She was looking lovelier, too, than ever he had seen her; and though, Heaven knows, her beauty owed but little to richness of dress, yet there was a something of taste and elegance in

her attire, rude as it was in quality, that pleased the eye of one who had acquired a knowledge of what constitutes beauty in other times and circumstances. She had twined a bright red handkerchief through the profuse masses of her jetty black hair, and had brought a single fold partly across her broad clear forehead. Her full round arms were bare up to the shoulders; and as if in sport she had cast her red mantle round her, like the plaid of a Scottish shepherd, contrasting strongly, but finely, with the drapery of a blue gown beneath. Her head was bent like the beautiful head of Hagar, by Correggio; and her dark eyes, their long lashes resting on her sunny cheek, were cast down, well-pleased, upon one of the children of the tribe, who, leaning on her knees, was playing with the silver ring that circled one of the taper fingers of her small brown hand.

Lena did not hear the approach of any one till Pharold was within fifty paces; but the moment his well-known step met her ear, she started up and ran to meet him, with smiles that were, perhaps, the brighter because she felt that she had something to atone for, weighty enough to be concealed, and yet not to oppress her very heavily. Pharold pressed her to his bo-

som ; and whatever he might try to believe, he felt — felt to his heart's inmost core — that there was at least one person on the earth that he should wish to remember him, after the stream of time had washed away his memory from the hearts of others.

He gave but one moment to tenderness, however ; and the next, turning to the rest of the gipsies, he enquired, “ What news of the boy ? ” The old woman was instantly called from one of the tents, and came willingly enough to make her report to Pharold, though she grumbled audibly all the way at being hurried, and at such tasks being put upon her at her years.

“ Well, Pharold, I have done your bidding,” she said, in a tone both cajoling and self-important, — “ I have done your bidding, and have seen the lad. Poor fellow, his is a hard case, indeed ; and such a fine, handsome boy, too, and so happy a one as he used to be —— ”

“ But what said he, woman ? ” interrupted Pharold, sternly. “ Keep your praises of him till he be here to hear them, and thank you for them ; for, doubtless, he is the only person who will do so. Tell me what he said of his situation.”

“ What he said ! ” replied the beldam ; “ why,

what should he say, but that if he be not got out to-morrow night — that is, this night that is coming, — he will be sent away to the county gaol, and hanged for the murder of that fellow that is dying or dead up at the house? That's what he said."

"But did he say how he was to be delivered?" asked Pharold. "That is the question."

"Yes, to be sure he did," answered the old woman. "Do you think I went there for nothing? He may be delivered easy enough, if folks like to try. You know the windows of that there strong room, Pharold, well enough, and I know them too, for I was in there for half a day or more, when old Dick Hodges swore to my nimming his cocks and hens.—He lies in the churchyard now, the old blackguard, for that was in the old lord's time. — But, as I was saying, you know the windows well enough. When they had you up at the house, and wanted to make a gentleman of you, but found they had got hold of the wrong stuff ——"

Pharold's brow grew as dark as a thundercloud. "On, woman, on with your story," he cried, "and turn not aside to babble of the past. What have you or I to do with the

past? You were the same then that you are now, only that the vices and follies of youth have given place to the vices and follies of age."

"Well, well, I'm sure I'm telling my story as quickly as it can be told," replied Mother Gray; "but, as I was saying, you know the windows well enough, and know that any one that is at all strong could knock off two or three of the bars, and let the boy out in a minute. Any one could do it."

"Oh, but he said that nobody but Pharold must come," cried Lena, eagerly, forgetting for the moment all caution, and then reddening, like the morning sky, as soon as she had spoken.

"Ha!" cried Pharold, turning his keen dark eyes full upon her, "said he so? and how know you that he did say so, Lena? Ha!"

The poor girl turned redder and redder, and looked as if she would have sunk into the ground, while Pharold still gazed sternly upon her, as if waiting an answer; but the ready cunning of the old woman came to her aid with a lie. "How does she know that he said so?" cried the beldam: "how should she know it but by my telling her?"

Lena heard the falsehood more willingly than she would have spoken it, though by her silence she made it her own, as much as if her lips had given it utterance.

“ ’Tis well, ’tis well,” said Pharold, with a bitter smile curling his lip,—“ ’t is well. So he said that none but Pharold should come? Now tell me, woman, if your tongue be not so inured to falsehood that it cannot speak truth,” — Lena burst into tears, and crept back to her tent, while Pharold went on,—“ tell me why this boy said that none but Pharold must come, when any one else could remove the bars as well?”

“ Because he said that any one else who did not know the park might make some mistake,” replied the old woman, “ and so ruin both himself and poor Will.”

Pharold mused for a moment or two, and then asked, “ Was all quiet when you went?”

“ As quiet as a dead sheep,” answered the old woman, with a grin.

“ And no one stirring in the house or in the park?” demanded Pharold.

“ In the park all was dark and solitary,” she replied: “ I saw nothing but some fine fat deer, and an owl that came skimming along before us

in the long walk ; and on the outside of the house all was quiet enough too : but there were two rooms above where there were lights ; and I waited a while to see if they would be put out : but they were so long, that I made up my mind, as all the rest was still, to creep on ; and I got close under the boy's window and called his name, and he told me that the lights were in the room where the man is dying."

Pharold mused again ; but the man whom we have heard called by the name of Brown, a powerful gipsy of about forty years of age, took a step forward, and laid his hand kindly upon Pharold's arm. " I will tell you what, Pharold," he said, " this seems to me a doubtful sort of business. I do not think the boy would do any thing willingly to trap one of us : but he may have been taken in somehow ; and it does seem as if there was something strange about it ; so I'll tell you what, I'll go, and the old woman shall show me the way."

" No, Brown, no," said Pharold ; " I would put upon no man what I was afraid to do myself,—if I could be afraid to do any thing. If there be no treachery, there is nothing to fear : and if there be treachery, I should be base, indeed, if I let any of my people fall into what

was meant for myself. No, no, I will go: no man can avoid his hour, Brown. We all know that when fate has fixed what is to happen, we may turn which way we will, but we shall not escape it. I will go; and if there be treachery, let it light upon the heads of those that devised it. It is my fate—I will go.”

“No, no, Pharold,” said the other; “let me go. To me they can do nothing. Me they cannot charge with any crime, even unjustly; for I was not in the park at all when the man was shot. You and all the others were, though you went there to prevent it; and so, if they catch you, they may send you to prison: but if they catch me, they can do nothing with me. They can but say I came to speak with the poor boy through the bars.”

Pharold, however, persisted. It had ever been his habit amongst his fellows to take upon himself the execution of any thing difficult or dangerous; and he regarded it almost as a privilege, which he clung to the more, in the present instance, from a superstitious conviction that fate was leading him on, and that it was useless to struggle against its influence. “There yet remains the whole day before us,” he said, when he had silenced opposition, “and

but little remains to be done. Call all the people round me, Brown, for I am going to speak with them, — perhaps it may be for the last time.”

The gipsies who already surrounded him saw well that a presentiment of approaching death weighed upon the mind of him who had been so long their leader, and it is but doing them justice to acknowledge, that most of them grieved sincerely to observe that such was the case. None, however, offered comfort or consolation; for their belief in their own superstitious traditions was far too strong for any one to dream even that such a presentiment might prove fallacious. The rest of the tribe were soon called together; and, stretching themselves out in various groups around, with the clear forest stream bubbling and murmuring through the midst, and the bright sun streaming through the oaks and beeches upon the bank on which they lay, they waited in silence for what Pharold had to say. The tone he assumed was simple and calm, perhaps less marked and emphatic than that which he generally affected. “My friends,” he began, “I am going this night upon a matter more dangerous than any that I have ever yet attempted,

at least so, from many reasons, I am led to think; in it I may probably be taken by men who hate and persecute us; and, if I be so taken, do not deceive yourselves; I shall never return amongst you alive. I feel it, I know it; and, therefore, if by the first light of tomorrow's sun I have not returned, look upon me as amongst the dead, take up your tents, and go as far as you may. When you are so far from this place that they cannot follow you, to persecute you, seek out what has become of the clay that I leave behind. Lay me in the earth, in some green wood, but where the summer sun may shine upon me, and the winter snow may fall: turn my face to the eastward, and put one hand upon my heart, and let not the earth that covers me be more than four palms deep.* When you have done all this, forget me; but forget not what I am going to

* The gipsy tribes throughout Europe are so like one another in their habits, that it is extraordinary so great a difference should exist in their manner of burying their dead as has been observed amongst them, especially when they attach much importance to the method they each pursue. Amongst the greater part of the continental gipsies the habit of burying their dead under water prevails: but to other tribes, again, the forest affords a place of sepulture; and to others, I have heard, the summits of high mountains.

say. Remember, ever before all things, that you are a nation apart, and mingle not with the strangers amongst whom you dwell. Let them follow their way, and you follow your way. Give obedience to their laws, but maintain your own liberties; bend to their power, but preserve the customs of your fathers. Shut them out, too, as far as may be, from amongst you: let them not learn either your history, or your language, or your knowledge; for if they do they will make these the means of softening and enslaving, under the pretence of civilising and improving you. Forget not that you have been, and that you shall yet be, a great people; nor ever think that there are too few of you left for the time of your greatness to come. Look at this acorn: it fell from a great tree, that has been cut down; and though now it be smaller than the egg of a wren, it shall yet be as great as the mightiest of the forest. So is it, and so shall it be, with you. None of you can ever gain so much as I could have gained by abandoning my people; but I would not do it. I refused wealth, and ease, and honour, and I chose poverty, and wandering, and persecution, because I was born of the gipsy race, and would not belie

the blood of my fathers, by mingling with the persecutors of our people — because I would not be chosen from amongst them for a plaything and an experiment. I learned their knowledge, though they learned not ours, and I returned to mine own as true in heart as when I left them. Thus let it be with you all; and if, after I am gone, the name of Pharold is ever mentioned, let it be as an example of how true our people should be to the ways of their fathers.”

He paused, and there followed amongst those who surrounded him the low murmur of people who draw their breath deep after a long and eager attention, but no one spoke; and in a few minutes Pharold proceeded:—“ If I return no more, there will be some one wanting to lead and direct you all aright. My choice falls upon you, Brown, as the calmest, and the wisest, and the bravest, with years sufficient to insure experience, and yet with vigour unimpaired by age. Do you consent, my brothers, that he should be your Ria?”

The choice was one which all anticipated, and with which all were pleased, except, perhaps, two or three, who, feeling that they ought to be satisfied though they were not, and that

they must submit whether they liked it or not, yielded with the rest, or, perhaps, gave more clamorous approval. "I have now," continued Pharold, turning towards Lena, who, since the people had been called round him, had remained near in silent tears while he had been speaking,— "I have now spoken to you of all things, save one. I leave amongst you my wife, then a widow; and, as heaven knows I have dealt justly with you all, so, I beseech you, deal justly and kindly by her. Be unto her as brethren and sisters. I supplied unto her the place of parents that are dead; you supply unto her, I beseech you, my place when I am dead also. Let her share with the rest in what you gain, until she shall choose out some one to be to her a support and a husband. Let her choice depend upon herself, but oh, let her choice be good; let it not fix upon a fair form or a smooth tongue, but upon a strong mind and a noble heart."

He spoke firmly, but, perhaps, somewhat bitterly; and Lena, though she raised her eyes for a moment with a look of imploring deprecation, said nothing, but wept on in silence. "And now," continued Pharold, "I will have done, my friends, with but one more injunction, which is,

Keep together. Let not the people of the land separate you, but be ye true amongst yourselves."

Thus saying, he rose from the bank on which he had been leaning, and the rest sprang upon their feet also. His scanty auditory then dispersed to their several occupations again, though some lingered for a few minutes, gazing upon him as on one they might never see more after that day was over ; and Pharold, after speaking a few words in a gentler tone to Lena, laid his hand upon the arm of the man Brown, and walked with him slowly down the course of the stream.

Their conversation was long : many were the sage and prudent maxims that Pharold gave to him whom he had pointed out as his successor, many the wild and singular cautions which he suggested. It was, in fact, his lesson of political economy and good government ; but, as it would not suit any other world but the little world for which it was intended, it were useless to repeat it here. He did not, until the end, refer again to himself in any way ; but, after having spent nearly two hours in giving instructions respecting the rule and protection of the tribe, he added, " I need not tell you,

Brown, that I feel the flame going out — not that it is weaker, not that it is less bright — the broadest blaze of the fire is often the last, but it is near its end; and if it be not to-morrow or the next day, in the manner that I apprehend, or in the way my enemies seek to make it, yet death will come soon, in his own time, and by his own path. Look there!” and he spread out before his comrade his broad palm, traversed with the many lines and marks which are usually to be found there. The other gipsy gazed on it for a moment, gravely, but made no reply; and Pharold went on: — “Nevertheless, as I have heard the ignorant and the conceited declare, that people often do things themselves to bring about a fate that is foretold them, I will neglect nothing that can turn aside mine. If, then, by dawn to-morrow, I have not returned to you, send instantly a trusty messenger to the small village of —, where I have sent several times before, to the house of Mr. Harley — many of the people know it — bid them tell him for me, that I am in prison, on a false accusation which he knows of, and that if he would save me, he must come over to Dimden soon. See that it be done rightly, Brown; for were any thing to

happen to me without his knowledge, he would say that I had used him unkindly, or had not confidence in his honour."

"I will do it myself, Pharold," replied the gipsy: "I will take one of those that have been over, to be sure of the place, and will see the man myself, if it be possible."

"Oh, he will see you," answered Pharold: "he has learned bitter lessons in life, and knows that a better heart may beat under a gipsy's bosom than under the robes of peers and princes. Now, then, I have said all, Brown; and fare you well, my friend. You at least will not forget me."

"Never!" answered the other; and they parted. During the rest of the day a degree of gloom naturally hung over the party of gipsies; and wherever Pharold turned, there were eyes looking at him, with some degree of superstitious awe, as one in whom approaching fate was already visible. Evening, however, came at length, and night began to fall; and, ere the first twinkling star could claim full possession of the sky, a thin whitish autumn mist rose up from the valleys, and came drifting with the wind through the trees, and down the course of the little stream by which the gipsies'

tents were pitched. Pharold remarked it with satisfaction, exclaiming, " May it last, may it last. With such a mist as that, and a dark autumn night, he were a keen man, indeed, that could take me in Dimden Park."

As far as the continuance of the mist went, he was gratified to his wish ; for it not only remained, but increased in density to that degree, that even round the gipsies' fires the dark faces lighted by the red glare appeared dim and phantom like to those who sat on the other side of the blaze. Pharold himself remained from sunset, till nearly midnight in his tent ; and Lena had not appeared at all from the time he had spoken to the tribe in the morning. At length, Pharold came forth ; and the gipsies who were still congregated round the fires, thinking that he was about to join them for a time ere he went, made room for him amongst them ; but he glided on past them all, merely saying, in a low voice as he came near the spot where Brown was placed, " I go ! do not forget !"

He then walked rapidly on, threaded the most intricate mazes of the wood, traversed the common above the park, leaped the park wall, near the spot where Dickon and his party had entered on the ill-starred deer-stealing expedition,

and paused for a moment to look around him, and consider his farther proceedings. The mist which lay heavy on the common and the lawns was still more dense and dark amidst the covered walks and narrow paths of Dimden Park ; but the obscurity proved of but little inconvenience to one so much accustomed to wander in the night as Pharold. Long habit of the kind seems, indeed, to give another sense, and to enable persons who are possessed of it to distinguish, as it were instinctively, obstacles in their way which the eye could not have detected.

Thus he walked on, through the thick trees and amongst the narrow paths of the park, without ever either taking a wrong direction, or running against any of the massy trunks round which the small footway turned. Ever and anon, however, he stopped to listen, but all was still : there was not a voice, a footstep, a rustle, a sound of any kind to be heard, till he entered one of the principal alleys leading towards the house, when a distant clock struck a quarter to twelve, and, as if roused by the sound, the owl poured forth her long melancholy cry, and flitted slow across Pharold's steps,

stirring slightly the foggy air with the scarcely heard wave of her light wings.

Pharold marked its voice, and felt it flap past him; and, in that mood when the heart connects every external thing with its internal gloom, he muttered, "Hoot no more, bird of ill omen! I am prepared and ready!"

The end of the alley which he had chosen opened upon the side of the lawn, at the distance of perhaps a hundred yards from the house. But the fog was too thick for even the bare outline of the mansion to be visible; and the only thing that indicated its proximity was the appearance of two or three rays of light, pouring from the apertures in some window shutters, and streaming through the white mist, till they lost themselves in the night. Pharold paused and gazed; and emotions as mingled, but less painful, affected his bosom, as those which had been experienced by Lord Dewry when he had last looked towards the same building. All was silent around: he felt himself secure in the obscurity; he was in no haste to go on; and as he stood and gazed towards the dwelling where two years of the happiest part of life had been spent, his mind naturally reverted to the past. He called up those boyish days, the pleasures

he had then enjoyed, his friendship with one noble-minded youth, and the injuries he had since received from the other companion of his boyhood. He thought of what he had been, and of what he might have been; of the promises held out to him by those who would have kept them; of the prospects that were open before him, if he had chosen to follow them; he thought of the life of honour, and respect, and fortune, which might have been his; and he compared it with the life of wandering, and persecution, and anxiety, which he had led from the day he quitted that mansion to the hour that he stood there again, in the sear and yellow leaf of years, in the close of man's too brief existence. It was a melancholy retrospect, and he could not but feel it as melancholy; but there was a proud, stern satisfaction mingled with it all, enhanced even by the magnitude of the sacrifice he had made. He felt a deep gladness in knowing, now that life lay behind him as a past journey, that he had adhered to his persecuted people, in spite of every temptation that could have led him to abandon them; that voluntarily and perseveringly he had made their fate his fate, in preference to a more splendid destiny than hope herself could

have led him to expect. He felt proud, too, and justly, that those feelings and principles which had won him the strong affection of the noble and good in another class, and amongst another people, had never been forgotten amidst dangers, and perils, and sorrows, and temptations; and that he could lay his hand upon his heart, as he gazed up towards the mansion, and say, I have been as noble in poverty and wandering as if I had never quitted the shelter of those once lordly walls.

He stood and gazed for near ten minutes; and then ending his reverie, as all deep contemplations end, with a sigh, he turned slightly from the path he had been pursuing, skirted round the edge of the wood, and, without crossing the open space, approached through the trees that part of the building called the Justice-room, which lay, as we have seen, contiguous to the chamber in which the boy was confined. Since he had been there, however, the river had encroached so much upon the bank, that no one less active and expert than himself would have found space to pass between the walls of the high old chapel-like projection, so called, and the edge of the bank above the water. He accomplished it, however, though

with some difficulty; and then, turning the angle of the building, approached the window of the strong room. Raising himself on a ledge of ornamental stone-work, which ran along the basement, he put his hand through the bars to feel whether the inner window was closed or not, and finding that it was shut, he knocked gently on the glass with his knuckles. The moment after, it was opened, and the voice of the youth demanded, "Who is there?"

"It is I, William," said Pharold; "are your limbs free?"

"They are free of cords," answered the lad in a voice that trembled with agitation, and, perhaps, with remorse;—"they are free of cords, but I cannot get out."

"I will open the way for you then," answered Pharold; "but when I have picked out the mortar from these bars, you use your strength to force them out from within."

The boy made no answer, but listened to hear if those who lay in wait had taken the alarm; and a hope did cross his mind that they might have neglected their watch on that dark and chilly night, and that Pharold might give him the means of escape, without the consummation of the treachery to which he had

yielded. The hope increased, as Pharold, with a small crow bar, gradually loosened the iron from its socket in the stone, and yet no one appeared; and as soon as it was practicable, the boy, using his whole strength from within, forced out the lower end of the bar. The space, however, was not yet large enough to give a passage to his shoulders, and the gipsy instantly applied himself again, to loosen the neighbouring bar. "Oh make haste, make haste," cried the youth, with almost frantic eagerness, — "make haste, Pharold, make haste."

"Hush!" cried Pharold, sternly, and turned hastily to listen; but at the same instant two men sprang upon him. The gipsy struggled to cast them off, but his foot slipped, and they both fell with him to the ground. Ere he could rise, two more were added to the assailants; and finding resistance vain, Pharold instantly abandoned the attempt, suffered his arms to be pinioned with a burning heart, and followed whither they led him.

Several lights and several figures appeared at the small back door to which they conducted their prisoner; and more than one lantern was raised to his face, and more than one inquisitive countenance stared into his, as he was taken

through some long stone passages towards the very room from which he had been endeavouring to liberate his treacherous young companion. The four men who had seized him hurried him on, keeping close together, as if afraid that, notwithstanding all their efforts, he might still escape. At the door of the strong room they paused; and one, producing a key, proceeded to apply it to the lock, and to undraw the heavy bolts and bars. Pharold spoke not a word; but the moment the door was open, and the light, from some lanterns behind, flashed in through the aperture, his eyes sought the unhappy youth, whose face was covered with tears.

Pharold had only time to ask himself, "Is he guilty, or is he innocent?" when, springing past him and those that conducted him, the lad made straight towards the door. One of those behind instantly stopped him, exclaiming, "Holla, my lad, where are you going so fast?"

The one who had opened the door, however, turned round almost at the same time, crying, "Let him go, let him go; now we have got this one, we do not care for the other. Let him be off as fast as he will."

The gipsy's doubts were cleared up in a mo-

ment. He saw himself betrayed by one of his own people, whom he was in the very act of rescuing; he saw himself delivered up by one for whom he had been risking so much; he saw his most generous feelings made use of as snares to take him; and he believed that she whom he loved more than any thing on earth was a party to the infamous treachery by which he had been entrapped. Oh, how he hated the whole human race!

So deep, so powerful was the agony that he suffered, that, without a word, without a movement, he stood upon the spot to which his captors thrust him forward, his dark eyes bent upon the ground, his pinioned hands clasped together, as if they had been rivetted with iron, his limbs as motionless as if they had been stone. The people round gazed at him, but he saw them not; they taunted and they sneered, but his ear was dull. He felt not at that moment the insolent gaze, the brutal jest, the loss of liberty, the very bands that wrung his muscles. He felt alone that he was betrayed, that his love and his confidence had been cheated and despised. All the rest was nothing. That, that was the iron that entered into his soul! Ere he had been there a minute, the

keeper Harvey, who had not been amongst those that took him, pushed through the gaping crowd, to assure himself that the report which had reached him was true. But there was something in the gipsy that the man felt and feared, with feelings full of hate, indeed, but nearly akin to awe; and when he saw him stand there like a statue, in the stern bitterness of utter despair, a faint conception of his sensations thrilled even through the coarse mind of the keeper; and after a hasty glance, without proffering a word, he made the rest retire, and following them himself, locked and barred the door.

At about three o'clock in the morning, those who watched in the gipsy encampment were roused by a hasty step, and in a moment after the boy William, all panting and wild, stood by the fire. "What news? what news?" cried one of the men, eagerly; "where is Pharold?"

"Bad news!" answered the youth, gazing round him with a look of bewildered consciousness: "they have caught Pharold, as he was helping me out of the prison."

"Brown," cried one of the men, approaching a neighbouring tent,—"Brown, here is bad

news: they have caught Pharold, and here is Will come back."

Brown instantly started from the hut and came out to the fire: but he was not the only one; for Lena's sleepless ear had caught the tidings, and she too rushed out, with many others that the noise had awakened. Wild apprehension and distress were in her eyes; but she spoke not, while Brown proceeded rapidly to question the lad on what had occurred. The trembling tone in which he answered might proceed from fatigue and agitation at his escape, the varying colour on his cheek might be the flash of the newly stirred up blaze; but there was a rambling and inconsistent character about the story that he told concerning his own escape and the capture of Pharold that raised doubt in many. "You rushed past the people," said Brown, after many other questions, "and got out even after they had taken Pharold. Did no one try to stop you?"

"Yes," answered the lad; "one man did; but I got away from him, too, and ran as hard as I could.—But why do you look at me so, Lena?" he added, unable to bear any longer the keen, fierce glance which she had never

withdrawn from his face for one moment from the time she had first come forth.

“ Why do I look at you so ? ” cried the girl, stepping forward boldly towards him, and casting back the jetty hair from her forehead while she spoke, with a burning cheek and flashing eye, and almost frantic vehemence of tone, — “ why do I look at you so ? Because, base traitor, you have betrayed him that came to save you — and you know it well ! — because you have cheated me into persuading him to go ; — and oh, if such a foolish thing as love for me had any hand in what you have done — and I say boldly before them all that I believe it had — may that love stay by you to curse you to your latest day ! For think not you will prosper in your villany — I hate you ! I abhor you ! I spit upon you ! and I call God and the heavens to witness, that if there were not another man in all the earth I would die sooner than be your wife ! Cast him out from amongst us, Brown, cast him out ! Dickon was but a child in villany to him ; Dickon was wilful and violent, but he was not base and false ; Dickon might be a rebel, but he was never a traitor. Cast him out, Brown, cast him out ; for the blood of my husband is upon him ; and I will

not dwell in the same tents with him. He cannot deny it; his face speaks it; his tale is not even like truth. Oh, my heart misgave me when he used so many vows and protestations last night that he would not have Pharold put in danger for the world. Truth is more simple; and he is a traitor, and the seller of his friend's blood!"

She spoke with all the energy of passion and indignation: her eyes flashed, her arms waved, her very form seemed to increase in size with the wild vehemence of her feelings; and the unhappy youth in the mean time stood before her, with bent head and averted glance, like a convicted criminal before his judge.

"You are guilty, William," said Brown, gazing on him with pity, mingling a drop or two of milder feeling with the sternness of his abhorrence for a crime almost unknown amongst them,—“you are guilty.”

The youth made no answer; and after a pause the other went on:—“You must go out from amongst us, for we cannot shelter a traitor. And yet I grieve for you, William, that any thing should have tempted you to commit such a crime. But still you must go out from amongst us; for if we be not all faithful to each

other, in whom can we trust? Yet I would not cast you alone upon the world, so that one fault might bring on a hundred; and therefore I will send you down to the north country; where, on the side of Cheviot, you will find more of our people, amongst whom I have a brother: seek him out, and tell him I sent you to him."

"I will not go there," answered the youth, doggedly,—“I will not go there, to have this story thrown in my teeth every hour; I will rather go and seek out Dickon, and rove with him."

"No, no, Billy, my chick," cried the old woman Gray,—“no, no, go down to the Yetholmers, as Brown says—a merry set they are, and a free, and I will go with you, my lad. I dare say Dickon has gone thither already; and, do you hear, Bill, I dare say amongst the bold young lads thereabouts we may be able to get up as fresh a band as this is; and I have got a good penny under my cloak, and I will be a mother to you, my boy. Then who knows, when you are a smart young fellow, with a goodly band of your own, whether this young minx here, who has flown at you like a wild cat, about that Pharold, who is no great loss

any how,—perhaps she may be sorry enough that she was not more civil.”

“ I shall be sorry,” said Lena, in a less violent, but not less determined, tone than she had before used,—“ I shall be sorry if ever I hear the name of such a base and cowardly thing as he is upon this earth again.”

“ Well, well, scornful mistress Lena, you may rue,” replied the beldam.—“ What say you, Will, will you take me with you?”

The youth at first had shown no very strong liking for the old woman’s company; but the hopes of better fortunes which she had held out to him, the boldness with which she had taken his part, the stern and reproachful looks of all around, and the feeling that he was parting for ever from all those with whom his life had hitherto been spent, made him willing to cling to any fragment of familiar things which would remain with him to soften the breaking of all accustomed ties. His conscience, too, reproached him bitterly with what he had done; and the company of any one would have been preferable to solitude with his own heart. Willingly, therefore, he caught at her proposal; and drawing himself up, prepared to steel himself against the contempt of his comrades, while the old

woman went to make her brief preparations : but he saw nothing around but the stern, cold looks of persons who, in hatred and scorn, were waiting to see his departure. It was more than he could bear; and, calling to the old woman to follow him down the stream, he turned sullenly away, and walked slowly on without a word of adieu to any one.

“ Brown,” said Lena, laying her hand upon the gipsy’s arm,—“ Brown, I know what I am going to ask is in vain, for Pharold, when he went, felt the shadow of death upon him, and I am a widow; but did he not tell you any way to rescue him, if he should be taken? He spoke with you long, and he said to me, too, that there was some way that might deliver him, though he spoke not clearly. Oh, if it be so, and he have told you how, lose no time, spare no exertion; for though, God knows, I was deceived by that base villain’s artful speeches, and believed that my husband was safe, yet I feel,—although I know my innocence of thought, or word, or deed,—I feel as if I were guilty of his death.”

“ No, no, Lena, no, no. We all know that you are not,” answered Brown, in a kindly tone; “but go you to your tent, poor girl, and trust to me

to do every thing to rescue Pharold that can be done. First, I will try the only means that he himself pointed out. I will follow his directions to the letter. Then, if that should fail, I will try what strength of arm can do ; for I will not let him be lost if I can save him. He was a good man, and a wonderful man, Lena. We shall never see his like amongst us."

Lena burst into tears: they were the first that she had shed, but they were too bitter for any restraint ; and turning to her tent, she gave way to them in solitude. In the mean time Brown turned to call one of the younger gipsies, who, on more than one occasion, had been Pharold's messenger, to enquire after Edward de Vaux ; but ere the young man had joined him, Mother Gray, as she was called, tottered up, with a bundle on her arm, to bid him adieu.

"Fare ye well, Brown," she said ; "fare ye well. I hope you may make a better head of the people than Pharold has been: a pretty mess he has got us all into here. I hope you may do better ; but I doubt it, for you were great cronies, and would never listen to what I advised. So I am going to people who know how to manage matters better."

"Get ye gone, then, old mischief-maker,"

answered Brown ; “ get ye gone, and the sooner your back is turned upon us the better. I have seen nothing prosper yet with which you had any thing to do ; and I dare prophesy that those people will never know peace or happiness where you are suffered to meddle. So get you gone, and Heaven send you a better heart and judgment.—And now,” he continued, speaking to the young man who had come up, “ tell me, Arral, have you not been for Pharold to a house on the other side of the hill—the house of one Harley ? ”

“ To be sure,” answered the young man, “ I have been four times.”

“ Then come with me thither, now,” answered Brown, “ and lead me by the shortest way, for I would be there, if possible, before day-break.”

“ That is not possible, Brown,” answered the other ; “ for it wants less than an hour of the light, and go as you will it will take two hours and a half.”

“ We must do our best,” answered Brown, “ and can do no more. Go on.—Keep together, my lads,” he continued, turning to the rest of the gipsies, — “ keep together till I come back, which will be before the sun is more than half

way up. But have every thing ready to go in case of need."

Thus saying, he followed his guide; and pursuing very nearly the path by which Pharoold had returned, he arrived in about two hours and a half at the same house to which Colonel Manners had been conducted. By this time, however, the sun had been long above the horizon; and when, after walking through the little shrubbery, they approached the door of the dwelling, a carriage and four smoking horses, with two servants in Mrs. Falkland's livery, were seen standing before the house. The gipsies, however, made their way boldly on, and rang the bell. This intimation was instantly answered by the servant, and, while they were still speaking to him, a shrill cry — evidently from a woman's lips — rang through the passage. Ere the servant could ask their business, a door on the right was thrown open, and the fine head of Sir William Ryder appeared, exclaiming, "Henry, Henry! Bring water! She has fainted!"

A few moments of bustle and confusion succeeded, during which the gipsies were allowed to remain with the door open, and without any of those suspicious precautions, which the very

fact of their race would have excited against them in any other dwelling. At length, the servant returned; and Brown's first question was, "Is the gentleman who was hurt worse?"

"No, much better!" answered the servant, "and you may tell Mr. Pharold—"

"I can tell him nothing," interrupted Brown, "for that is what I have come here to say — that his enemies have caught him; and that, if Mr. Harley would save him, he must bestir himself speedily."

"Indeed!" said the servant, "indeed! that will not be good news to my master's ear; but I must break in upon you to tell it, nevertheless. Wait a minute, my friends, and I will go and see what he says."

The servant then entered the room where his master was, and from which proceeded the sounds of eager voices speaking. A moment or two after the door again opened, and the gipsies were joined by the person they sought. Their story was soon told, and easily understood; and the brow of their auditor knit into more than one deep wrinkle, as they spoke.

"I *will* bestir myself," he said, in answer to Brown; "I *will* bestir myself, and that instantly too. So rest satisfied in regard to your

friend's fate; for, be assured, that I can break the net in which they have entangled him, as easily as I could a spider's web; and I will do it, too, with less remorse than I would the toils of the hunter-insect. I will not lose a moment. Henry, have horses to the carriage, and let me know when it is here."

CHAP. VII.

“**H**AS the parson come?” demanded the low faint voice of Sir Roger Millington, as he turned round from a brief and half-delirious doze, on the morning after Pharold’s capture: “has the parson come?”

“Not yet, sir,” answered a sick nurse, who was now the only person left to attend him. “It is not ten minutes ago since you first told me to send for him.”

“I thought it had been much longer,” said the dying man. “But what is all that noise in the house? They seem as if they were making all the dirturbance that they could, on purpose to kill me with the headach.”

“I dare say, sir, it is some of the other magistrates come, sir,” answered the nurse; “for last night it seems they caught the gipsy, Pharold; and, when I went down to send for Dr. Edwards, his Lordship was sitting in the great parlour with Mr. Arden, waiting for two other magistrates to make examination, as I think they call it. I should scarcely have dared to

send else—that is, if I had not known he had his hands full for many a good hour, because you see, sir, he forbade any one to let Dr. Edwards see you, whether you wished it or not.”

“ Ah! did he so?” said the dying man, bitterly; and then, after a long pause, he added, “ but he would not care about it now, my good woman. That declaration that he teased me into making last night, was all that he wanted; and now I may die when I like—with or without benefit of clergy!” and he groaned faintly and sadly at his bitter jest upon himself. “ But do you think I am dying, woman?” He went on, “ I have lost all the pain; but I am fearfully weak; and my legs and feet have no feeling in them. Do you think I am dying? Ha, nurse, what does the doctor say?”

“ He says you are very bad, sir; but he hopes—” replied the nurse.

“ Pshaw!” interrupted the other; “ you have been tutored too. I wish the parson would come; he would tell me the truth.”

“ I am sure I wish he would too,” cried the woman; “ for he knows better than I what ought to be said to you, sir.”

“ Ah, I see how it is, I see how it is,” cried the unhappy man; “ I am dying, and they

have kept it from me till they had got all that they sought ;” and, like the stricken king of Israel, he turned his face to the wall, while one or two hot and bitter drops scorched his eyelids, and trickled over his cheeks. After a long silence, however, he again turned towards the woman, saying, “ He is very long ; I wish to God he would come ! I have a great deal that lies heavy at my heart ; and I would fain hear some words of comfort before I die. You do not think he will be frightened away by what that rascally lord has said ?”

“ Ah ! no, sir ; no fear !” answered the nurse ; “ Dr. Edwards is not a man to be frightened away by any body or any thing, so long as he thinks he’s doing his duty. He is not one of that sort, sir. Why, last year, when the terrible catching fever was raging down in the village, and every one that took it died, he was night and day at the bedsides of the poor people that had it, although the doctor told him a thousand times that he was risking his own precious life : but he saw that it gave them more comfort than any thing to see him ; and so he went at all hours, and into all places.”

“ I wish he would come,” groaned the dying man ; “ I wish he would come.”

Almost as he spoke, there was a cautious step in the ante-room, and the lock of the door turned under the quiet noiseless hand of one evidently accustomed to the chambers of the sick. The next moment the clergyman entered, and advanced slowly towards the bed, although his heated brow and quick breathing showed that he had lost no time in obeying the summons he had received. He was a man between sixty and seventy, with scanty white hair covering thinly a high broad forehead, across which the cares and sorrows of others, more than his own, had traced two or three deep furrows. His countenance was grave, but mild; and his eyes full of both the light of feeling and the light of sense.

The nurse rose up from the chair in which she had been sitting at the pillow of the dying man, and Dr. Edwards quietly took her place, without appearing to see that Sir Roger Millington was eyeing him from head to foot; and, notwithstanding his situation, was comparing the person before him with the prejudiced image of a *parson*, which habits of vice had alone enabled his imagination to draw.

“ I am much obliged to you for admitting me, my dear sir,” said the rector, in a kindly

tone. "How do you feel yourself? Are you in less pain than when I last saw you?"

"Yes, I am in less pain, sir," answered the other; "but I rather believe that is no good sign. At least they told me, when I was in torture, that pain was a good omen for my recovery; and now I am in no pain at all, I suppose it is a bad one."

"I am not sure that it is a good one," answered the clergyman gravely; "but at all events it has this good with it, that it leaves your mind and faculties perfectly free to consider fully your situation, and to take whatever measures, temporal or spiritual, may be necessary for your comfort and consolation."

"Ay, that is what I want to come to, Dr. Edwards," answered Sir Roger, "and I am glad you have come to it at once. But first tell me—and I adjure you by Heaven to tell me true, for these people deceive me—am I dying, or am I not?"

"I would have answered you truly without any adjuration," answered the clergyman. "None can, sir, or ought to say to another that it is impossible he can recover; for God can and does show us every day the fallacy of our judgment in the things that we best com-

prehend : but I do believe, that you are in such a situation that it were wise to prepare yourself for another world without loss of time."

"Then I am dying," said Sir Roger, solemnly.

"I am afraid you are," answered the clergyman. "To deceive you would be a crime: your surgeon has himself told me that human skill can do nothing for you."

Sir Roger Millington drew his hand over his eyes, and groaned heavily; but after a brief pause he withdrew the white colourless fingers again; and looking steadfastly at the clergyman, said, "It is a terrible thing to die, sir; more terrible than I thought. I have fought in more than one battle, sir, and have had my single affairs too; but I never found out how terrible a thing death is till I came to lie here, and see life flow away from me drop by drop."

"Because in no other case had you time for thought," answered Dr. Edwards; "but, believe me, oh! believe me, that the very time for thought which you seem to regard as an evil, is the greatest mercy of Heaven. Few, even of the very best of us, if any, can keep his heart and mind in such a condition of preparation, as to be ready to pass from this state of mortal sin

into life eternal, and to the immediate presence of a pure and perfect Being, who, though he is merciful, is likewise just, and will by no means leave the impenitent transgressor unpunished. No man, my dear sir, when he has years and days before him, should trust to the efficacy of a deathbed repentance — a moment which perhaps may not be granted to him; but when a man has gone on in thoughtless neglect, through the vigour of careless existence, and unexpectedly finds himself at the end of life with only a few short hours between him and that judgment-seat, where nothing can be concealed and nothing palliated, he may then take unto himself the blessed hope that repentance never comes too late, that our Saviour himself showed upon the cross, that the last hour, the very last minute, of human life may yet obtain forgiveness of all the offences of the past, by evincing true repentance, founded on true faith.”

“But how can I show either true repentance or true faith?” exclaimed the dying man, with a peevish movement of the hand. “All I can do is, to say I am very sorry for every thing I have done wrong; and that I believe the religion in which I was educated to be the true one — although I have thought very little about it,

since I was a boy at school. But it is no use ! it is no use talking !” he added, seeing the clergyman about to reply ; “ I have done many a thing, especially lately, that cannot be forgiven — for which I shall never forgive myself ; and so, how can I expect God to forgive them, who is better than I am, and who never knew what it was to be tempted as I have been ? ”

You *can* expect God to forgive them, *because he is* better than you are, and because we have an intercessor at his throne, who has known what it is to be tempted, even as we are ; because we have a mediator in Jesus Christ, the son of God, who was rendered subject to temptation a thousand-fold more terrible than any that we can endure, in order that he might obtain forgiveness for even the greatest of sinners, who truly repents him of the evil he has done. Indeed, indeed, you greatly err in your ideas of God’s mercy. But we had better, I think, be left alone ;” and he made a sign to the nurse, who immediately retired into the ante-room.

“ I am sure,” said the wounded man, feeling in some degree, the effect of such consolatory hopes — “ I am sure I do most sincerely repent of some things that I have done within this last week, and indeed all that I have done throughout

the course of my life that is evil ; and I do think, now that it is too late to mend it, that if I had taken a different course, and acted in another manner on many occasions, I should not only have been more comfortable now, but a happier man altogether.”

“Doubt it not ! doubt it not !” said the clergyman. “Those that sow in sin shall reap in bitterness : but still have good hope : the very conviction of the magnitude of your sins which you seem to entertain, is the first great step to sincere repentance ; and sincere repentance once obtained, the atonement is already prepared in heaven — the abundance of God’s mercy is ready to blot out our iniquity from before his sight.”

“Ah, but there are many things very heavy on my heart and my conscience !” said the other. “Tell me, Doctor Edwards, tell me,” he added, in a gloomy and anxious tone, “tell me, can a man who has said that, and done that, which can take away the life of another upon a false charge, hope to be saved ?”

The clergyman half started from his seat ; and the other, sinking down again on the bed from which he had partially raised himself, exclaimed bitterly — “I see how it is ! I see how it

is — no hope for me — and so I will die as I have lived, boldly; without thinking about it.”

“ You greatly mistake me,” cried the clergyman; “ I wished to imply nothing of the kind. “ No, no,” said Sir Roger, “ say no more — I saw it in your face. I can easily imagine that a man may be pardoned for running another through, when they were hand to hand — I remember many people in the Bible that did the same — and I doubt not that many another little sin might be forgiven; but for taking a man’s life that never hurt one, by a cold-blooded cowardly lie — I dare say that there is no forgiveness for that !” and as he spoke he drew his breath hard, and set his teeth, as if working himself up to meet the worst.

“ God makes no such distinctions, as far as he has revealed himself to us,” answered Dr. Edwards. “ Murder, whether committed with the steel, or the poison, or the falsehood, is equally murder in his eyes. I was indeed surprised to hear you charge yourself with such a crime; but I repeat what I said before, that for that, as for every other sin, there is abundant mercy in Heaven for him that sincerely repents him of the evil ——”

He paused; but the knight made no reply,

and remained with a contracted brow, a muttering lip, and a wandering eye, struggling between two opposite states of feeling, — the habitual daring which despair had again called to his aid, and the fear of death and judgment after death. “ Let me urge you,” continued the clergyman, when he perceived that he did not make any reply, “ let me urge you to consider for one moment what must be the state of him who, under the circumstances which you have named, neglects the only opportunity allowed him for repentance, and suffers the few short moments granted mercifully for that purpose, to escape unemployed. Remember, sir, that death is not sleep ! that the moment the eyes are closed on this world they open on another ! Remember that the disembodied spirit, freed from the frailties and the motives of the flesh, must of necessity feel, in all their bitterness and blackness, the crimes which here we can palliate to ourselves, as well as conceal from others ! — Remember, that with feelings thus heightened, with eyes thus unblinded, the man who has committed the crime which you mention, and has neglected to repent of it fully, must go into the presence of the omniscient Creator, to meet, in the face of thousands of worlds, the being

whom his falsehood and his baseness had destroyed — that he must hear his crimes proclaimed in the ears of all, must listen to his eternal condemnation, and must bear unceasing punishment, the never dying consciousness, not only of the crime that he has committed, but of having neglected the opportunity of repentance — of having cast away the mercy offered, even to the last hour of life. Think, think of his horror, and his shame, and his torture, and his remorse, and, Oh! choose the better path, and, even at the eleventh hour, repent and be saved !”

The dying man writhed under the picture of the future presented to his mind, a picture which he had ever contrived to shut out from his own eyes; but now, as the reality was about to present itself, — as but few short hours, he felt too well, only intervened between him and the fulfilment of all, — the conviction of its truth and its awfulness forced itself upon his heart, even to agony; and with clasped hands, as the clergyman concluded, he cried out, almost in the words of the Jewish lawyer, “What shall I do to be saved ?”

“Repent sincerely,” answered Dr. Edwards; “and as the first great proof of your repentance,

make whatever atonement you can yet make, for the very horrible crime with which you charge yourself ——”

“I can, I can make atonement!” cried the dying man, raising himself joyfully on his hand as the thought was suggested to his mind; “I can — I can make atonement, and I feel that then I shall die in peace. I can save the innocent, — I can punish the guilty, — and I will do both, if God gives me two hours more of life.”

“Such indeed will be the earnest of a true repentance,” cried the clergyman, “and it is thus that a deathbed repentance can alone be confided in as efficacious. I wish not to pry into the secrets of your heart, sir, any farther than may be necessary for the purpose of affording you advice and consolation. We believe that the ear of God is ever open to our confessions as to our petitions, and therefore that to him they should be made; but if I can aid you in carrying into effect your purpose of full atonement, command me; and be sure that no earthly consideration of either fear or hope will induce me to pause or waver in the execution of my duty. I say what I have just done, because an evident desire has been

shown by those who should know better, to hold you back from the only true way to peace of mind. God forgive me ! if my suspicions wrong any man ; but before I came to day, I thought the conduct pursued towards me strange ; and now that I have heard so much from your own lips, I think it more than strange."

" And you think right," said Sir Roger. " It is more than strange, but it is all part of a plan. I see it all now — I see it all. He — he — Lord Dewry concealed from me at the first that I was dangerously hurt. He would not let me see you or any one else who would have dared to tell me so, because he was afraid I should blab. He would not let me have my papers over from Dewry Hall, pretending they had been forgotten ; because he was afraid that I should destroy those we had manufactured between us : and last night, when I was half delirious, and would have signed away my soul for an hour's quiet and rest, he tormented me till I made a declaration before witnesses, that I had received a note from a man who never gave it me, and that this gipsy Pharold, whom they have now got below, was one of those who fired when I was wounded ; though in truth I believe he did not come up till after."

“ This is horrible, indeed !” said the clergyman, not a little agitated by the very painful tidings that he heard. “ But let me beg you, sir, as you hope for pardon and eternal life in that world, to which you must soon depart ; let me beg you instantly to take measures to remedy the evil that you have been seduced into committing.”

“ Yes, yes, I will do my best to remedy it,” answered the dying man, whose passions were now excited against the seducer who had led him forward to crimes from which even his mind had shrunk, all accustomed as it was to evil of a less glaring kind. “ Yes, I will do my best. — Ay, and he affected to feel so much pity and friendship for me too, till he got what he wanted, and now he has not been near me all day. Ay, ay ! and he promised me every thing on earth that could make life happy to me, when he knew that I was dying ; — but he shall not triumph in his villany. No, no !”

Although the clergyman was very willing that justice should be done, yet even that consideration was secondary in his mind to the wish of leading the unhappy man before him into a better train of feeling ere he passed to things eternal. “ By all means,” he said, “ let

us proceed as fast as possible to make the atonement that you speak of, and to secure justice to the oppressed and innocent man you mention ; but in doing so, my dear sir, do not forget for one moment your present situation. Let not wrath, or disappointment, or irritation, influence you. Let your sole motive be, as far as human nature is capable of controlling and purifying its motives, the desire of showing, by full atonement, that repentance which, with faith in the merits of your Saviour, may be effectual to salvation."

" Well, well, I will do my best ! " answered the dying man. " But let us make haste, for I am beginning to feel faint ; and there is a dimness comes occasionally across my eyes, and a rush like water in my ears, that disturbs me. How shall we set about it, Dr. Edwards ? "

" The best way will be to call in witnesses, " answered the clergyman, " and to draw up before them a complete statement of every thing that you think proper to reveal, therein setting forth that you are perfectly aware of your situation, and that you are in a competent state of mind for making such a declaration. I myself am a magistrate, although I seldom act ; and

will give the document every formality in my power.”

“ Ay, but the witnesses ! the witnesses, sir !” said sir Roger ; “ I am afraid that he may come in every minute and disturb the whole.”

“ There is no fear of that, I believe,” answered the clergyman. “ In the first place, I would not permit such an interruption, were he a monarch ; and in the next place I was told, that he and several magistrates were assembled to examine some prisoners before committal.”

“ Ay, it is Pharold, the object of all his hate, that they have got hold of,” replied Sir Roger ; “ and they will have him off to jail on the very things I stated against him.”

“ Then, indeed, no time is to be lost !” answered Dr. Edwards. “ The surgeon was to follow me here very soon ; for I left him in the village. His assistant and the nurse are in the next room ; and I am not sure that I did not hear his step also come in a moment ago. Thus we shall have sufficient witnesses, and one who can testify to your mind being clear and unbiassed. Shall I call them in ?”

Sir Roger gave a sign of assent ; and gazed eagerly towards the door to which the clergy-

man proceeded, as if he feared that some one else might be without. No one was in the ante-room, however, but the surgeon, his assistant, and the nurse; and Dr. Edwards having called them in, and briefly stated his object, they approached the bed, and the assistant, having obtained writing materials, seated himself as near the sick man as possible, to take down his exact words. Sir Roger was about to begin, but the clergyman interposed:—"One moment, my friend," he said mildly; "we must not forget our care for your eternal salvation, under any other consideration. Let us pray to God that the spirit under which this declaration is made may be the spirit of truth, divested by his grace of human passions and frailties, that the repentance of which it is the fruit may be pure and sincere, and may be accepted:" and kneeling down, he offered a short but emphatic prayer, so full of simple and unaffected piety, that Sir Roger Millington found feelings springing up in his heart which he had not known for years, and which made the warm drops rise into his eyes.

The knight then proceeded in a voice, faint and agitated indeed, but nevertheless one which, in the profound silence that reigned around,

could be distinctly heard. He took up his tale in years long back; he related how, in better times and circumstances, he had won a large sum from Sir William Ryder and the Honourable Mr. De Vaux. The first, he added, had always the character of a frank, open-hearted, but gay and thoughtless young man; the latter that of one whose keen shrewdness would have insured him the highest fortunes, if the violence of his passions had not on many occasions marred his best-laid plans. The day, he said, had been fixed for the payment of the money, and it had been shrewdly suspected that there would be difficulty in procuring it; but the very day previous to that appointed for the discharge of the debt, Mr. De Vaux's brother was murdered; and, consequently, that gentleman succeeding to his title and estates, the payment was made without delay.

He then passed over at once the twenty succeeding years, and briefly but distinctly recapitulated all that had taken place since: he had come down from London, in the hope of mending his broken fortunes by an application to the wealthy peer.

All this, however, has been already detailed, and needs not repetition, though it caused more

than one glance of surprise and grief to pass between the clergyman and the surgeon. Nevertheless, for the time, they made no comment, but suffered the dying man to proceed uninterrupted as long as he seemed inclined to go on. When he paused, however, and looked round feebly towards the clergyman, as if to ask,— “Have I done enough?”— Dr. Edwards rejoined, “If you will permit me, sir, I will ask you one or two questions, to which of course you will answer or not, as you think fit. This young gentleman will take them down, however. They shall be short,” he added, seeing a look of impatience cross the sick man’s face: “may I ask, did his Lordship assign any reason for the enmity he showed towards this gipsy Pharold, and for taking such unjustifiable steps to destroy him?”

“He said that he was sure that he, Pharold, had been the real murderer of his brother,” answered Sir Roger; “but I have my own thoughts upon the subject.” He paused, as if hesitating whether to proceed or not; and the clergyman paused too, for the mind of every one present had been led towards a suspicion, so dreadful, that each felt a degree of awe at the thought of hearing his own doubts confirmed by

those of another. At length, however, Sir Roger Millington raised himself upon his elbow, as if he had made up his mind to a painful effort, and fixing his dim and hollow eyes upon the clergyman, he said, in a low but solemn tone, "That was what he told me; but, as I am going into the presence of the Almighty, and casting away all malice against the man, I declare, that I believe he himself was the murderer of his brother, that Pharold knows it, and that such is the cause why he persecutes him even to death. Write that down, young man, for although I cannot discover all the links in the chain, nor all the motives of his cunning heart, yet it is fit they should be inquired into, and that the innocent should be delivered."

The assistant wrote, and read what he had written, and the knight made an impatient sign for the paper and the pen. When they were given to him, he scrawled his name faintly at the bottom. "And now, doctor," he said, looking towards the surgeon, "you certify there, that this declaration was made by me, when I had all my senses about me as fully as if I were in perfect health; and you, Dr. Edwards, certify that, at the time I made it, I knew that I was dying, and did it as the only proof I could give of

my sincere repentance for many sins, of which the paper he wrung from me last night was not amongst the least. You may well say that I know I am near my end," he continued, "for I believe that I am nearer it than any one thinks."

"Take a little wine and water, Sir Roger," said the surgeon, looking at him, and remarking that strange and awful greyness, which generally precedes dissolution, coming like the shadow of some unseen cloud over the sick man's face; "take a little wine and water. It can do you no harm."

"I know that too well!" answered the other in a hollow voice, drinking the draught which the nurse handed him. "It can neither do me harm nor good — for it is all passing away." The wine seemed, however, to revive him for a moment, and he eagerly besought the clergyman to take the paper which had just been signed to the magistrates assembled below. "Let them not pursue their injustice even so far," he said, "as to send an innocent man to jail. I have been in a jail myself, and know what it is."

"I think," answered Dr. Edwards, "that perhaps I may be of more service with you here; for now that you have proved your repentance

really, let me strive to assure you all the comforts thereof. I have much to say to you — much consolation and hope yet to hold out to you, if you will permit me.”

“ Oh ! yes ; stay, stay by all means,” said the wounded man ; “ do not you leave me. He can take it to them ; for he can do this wretched carcase no good now : let him take it ;” and he pointed with his finger towards the nurse, though, beyond doubt, it was the surgeon he intended to designate, distinctly showing that his sight had failed, though his power of hearing still remained.

“ Perhaps you will have the kindness to do so,” said Dr. Edwards, speaking to the surgeon ; “ but take care that it does not get into the hands of any one who may suppress it ; for though we can all bear witness to the contents, yet the document itself is most valuable. I think I heard that Mr. Simpson was amongst the magistrates below. If so, give it into his own hand, for, though a calm and quiet man, he has much good sense and much firmness. But let us fold it up and seal it first.”

The surgeon undertook the task, though, it must be confessed, not very willingly, for he loved not to do any thing to any one that

might afford matter of offence. He spent some time in inquiring where the magistrates were, and some time in consulting with a constable at the door of the great hall, whether it would be proper for him to go in. In short, at length, as he had just made up his mind, and had his hand upon the lock, the nurse whom he had left with the sick man, and who thought it absolutely necessary that he should be present at a patient's death, came eagerly to tell him that the unhappy Sir Roger Millington was in the last agonies. It was too good an excuse for shifting upon another an unpleasant duty, to be lost; and, putting the paper into the constable's hand, he bade him go in and deliver it directly into the hands of Mr. Simpson the magistrate. The man received the commission as a matter of course; and proceeded to execute it, while the surgeon returned to the sick room. He opened the door—all was still—the assistants stood holding back the curtain, and gazing fixedly in—the clergyman was kneeling by the bed-side, with his eyes raised towards heaven.

CHAP. VIII.

WHILE the dark and solemn scene of death had been passing above, with half-closed windows and a darkened apartment, events scarcely less painful had been taking place below, in the broad light of a clear autumn day.

Six magistrates, whom Lord Dewry, with the usual overacting of conscious guilt, had invited, in order to give every appearance of impartiality and justice to his unjust designs, dropped in one by one, and were ushered into the chamber where the peer sat, waiting with burning impatience for the arrival of the whole. Totally indifferent to the business themselves, each as he came in tortured the baron with light and impertinent gossip, of the weather, of the harvest, of the prospects of the country, of the new fashion of dress swords, and the exquisite effect of Maréchal hair-powder; and forced him into conversation while his heart was full of deep, stern thoughts, that abhorred the idle topics on

which he was expected to speak. Some, however, mentioned his son; and congratulated him on the rumour of his safety, which had already spread over the county: and here alone the peer found matter on which he could converse feelingly, for the news of his child's safety had come to him, in the midst of the fiery passions that were agitating his bosom, like the thought of a drop of cold water to Dives in the midst of his torments. Each of his visitors wished to know more than general rumour had already told, and many were the inquiries in regard to how Captain de Vaux had been wounded, and who Mr. Harley could be, who had lately taken the house at Little ———. Of all this, however, Lord Dewry could tell them nothing. Colonel Manners' letter had been as laconic as possible; and, therefore, the peer could merely reply, that it appeared the wound had been received by accident, but that he intended to go over, in order to hear more, as soon as they had concluded the business on which they were assembling.

At length, the number was complete; and Lord Dewry having asked the servant who ushered in the last tardy magistrate if all were prepared, proposed that they should proceed

to the old justice room, where they would find every thing ready for them.

“ The old justice room ! ” cried bluff Mr. Arden, “ I have not been in there for many a year, my Lord. But I have seen many a thing done there, in my young days, that we should not dare to do now. They did not mince the matter in those times ; and I remember in the year forty-five—now some three or four and twenty years ago—it was quite enough to be *strongly suspected* for a man to find his way to prison very soon, without all these examinations and investigations. But they are cutting down our powers every day, gentlemen. ’Pon my soul I think, when they have cut off every other part of my magisterial rights, they will cut off the tails of my coat, for the *better protection of the subject*, as they call it.”

A loud laugh followed ; and thus with mirth and merriment they proceeded along the passages of a house, where despair and indignant grief waited anxiously in one room, and suffering, remorse and death tenanted another. Preceded by two or three regular constables, they reached the little vestibule before the door of the justice room, where fifteen or sixteen persons were assembled, anxious to witness the proceed-

ings. They had not, however, been admitted without selection; and amongst them were to be seen none but small tenants and dependants of the lord of the mansion. The little crowd drew back as the magistrates approached; and, the folding doors being thrown open, they entered the large old-fashioned hall, which had been prepared for their reception. It formed, as has been before said, a long parallelogram at the extreme of the building, built out upon the high bank to the west, and had probably been designed originally for a chapel. Four tall windows on either side rendered the aspect of the whole light and cheerful; and from the south-east the sun, as bright and warm as in the height of summer, was pouring a flood of glorious light, which streamed in long oblique rays of misty splendour across the perspective of the hall. A table, covered with the various implements for writing, crossed the farther extremity of the apartment; and beyond it was an array of chairs for the magistrates, while at each end was a seat for the clerks; and a smaller table, also, under one of the south-east windows, was furnished with paper and pens for another secretary. The windows on that side were open, and the warm

soft breath of the southerly wind was felt fanning the cheek, and breathing of nothing but peace, and gentleness, and tranquillity.

The magistrates proceeded to their places, and each taking a seat, left the chair in the centre vacant for the peer; but he, however, declined it, and begged Mr. Arden, as the senior, to preside at their proceedings.

“Nay, nay, my Lord,” replied the bluff old squire; “your official station in the county, as much as your rank, gives you the presidency.”

“In the present instance, however, my dear sir,” replied Lord Dewry, “I must appear before you as a private individual, as I am here in some sort as the accuser, and if you find cause to commit the prisoner, I must become the prosecutor. Therefore, I will sit here beside you, but without exercising any official authority, in a matter where I am in a degree a party.”

“The prisoner cannot say that your Lordship has not every disposition to give him impartial justice,” answered Mr. Arden, taking the vacant chair. “You would have him let off before, when I would certainly have committed him; and now you will not exercise your authority

where he is concerned. Let him be brought in, however. Constables, bring in the prisoner.”

Two men instantly departed from the farther end of the hall for that purpose, and while they were gone some formal business was transacted, the clerks received their instructions, and one or two of the magistrates looked into Blackstone's new work, the volumes of which had been scattered about upon the table. At length a murmur and the sound of footsteps were heard, and the doors being again opened, the constables re-entered, followed by the persons who had been waiting without, reinforced by several of the servants of the peer, as well as by the footmen and grooms who had accompanied the magistrates thither. The principal object of the whole group, however, was of course the prisoner Pharold, and on him every eye was instantly fixed. Walking between the two constables, who did not attempt to hold him, he advanced boldly up the middle of the hall, and with a slight contraction of the brow, and curl of the lip, gazed on the party assembled to interrogate him with stern and fearless calmness. His wrists were handcuffed, but no other restraint was put upon him; and when he had advanced within a few yards of the table at

which the magistrates were seated, he paused of his own will, and waited as if in expectation of what was to follow, merely turning round to some of the crowd who followed, saying sternly, "Do not press upon me ; you are near enough."

Mr. Arden put on his spectacles, and after gazing for a moment or two at the prisoner, he turned towards Lord Dewry, and said, "My Lord, will your Lordship be good enough to state the charge against this man ; as of course that part of the business referring to the murder of your son must be dropped, since it fortunately turns out that he is alive. There are, however, I think, still two serious charges to be disposed of, and probably our best plan will be to examine into them separately : by separately, I mean, distinct from each other, though, as many of us have come some distance, we had better go into both ere we depart."

Lord Dewry paused for several minutes ere he replied ; and looked over some papers which he had laid upon the table before him ; but in truth a momentary feeling of doubt and embarrassment crossed his mind. He had determined most positively to urge against the gipsy the death of his brother ; he had arranged all his plans for that purpose ; he had matured them perfectly ; he had secured, as

far as human ingenuity could go, every link of the chain; and nothing remained but to cast it boldly round his victim: and yet, at the very moment of execution, a doubt and apprehension, a sort of prophetic hesitation, seemed to seize him, and he wished that it had been possible to abandon the charge of the murder of his predecessor, and to confine his accusation to the deer-stealing and the death of Sir Roger Millington, which was now, as he well knew, so near, as to effect all that could be wished, by rendering the charge against Pharold capital.

He wavered for a moment, then, but he saw that the very wish to give up an accusation so boldly made would appear suspicious, if any one discovered it; and turning to Mr. Arden with a faint smile, he asked, "With which of these charges had I better commence, my dear sir? The one which is susceptible of the most immediate proof is that referring to the recent offence."

"No, no, my Lord," replied the magistrate, "take them in the order of their dates. Let us get rid of the ancient business before we begin the other. 'Tis well to be off with the old love before we be on with the new, my Lord."

“As you think fit,” answered the peer, somewhat disappointed at the magistrate’s decision, but determined, as he must proceed, to proceed boldly. “Well, then, my charge is as follows:—that the prisoner Pharold, now before you, did, on the 18th day of May, in the year 17—, feloniously and with malice aforethought put to death my unfortunate brother, the late Lord Dewry, in or near that part of the road from Morley village to Green Hampton, which crosses the wood called Morley Wood; and I am now ready to produce sufficient evidence to induce you to commit the prisoner to the county gaol for trial.”

While he spoke, the gipsy’s eye rested on him with a glance so stern, so keen, so searching, that he felt as if the dreadful secret of his bosom— all its motives and all its feelings, its doubts, its apprehensions, its remorse, its complicated plans and subtle contrivances, were undergoing, one by one, the examination of that dark, fixed regard. Though he looked towards the prisoner as little as possible, yet the gipsy’s eye was a load upon him, that oppressed and would have confused a less powerful mind than his own. Even as it was, however, he could not bear it without emotion, and turning abruptly to

Mr. Arden, he went on, —“ I trust, Mr. Arden, that you have brought with you the notes of the former examination.”

“ Every thing ! every thing, my Lord,” replied the magistrate; “ prepared as I was for the case, I brought every memorandum that could at all bear upon it; and I think my clerk had better read the depositions made at the time, and then you can proceed with any new facts which may have since come to your knowledge.”

The peer bowed his head, and the clerk, under Mr. Arden’s instructions, proceeded to read a variety of documents relating to facts with which the reader is already acquainted. It is unnecessary, therefore, to repeat them; but the demeanour of the two persons principally interested in the details was in itself sufficiently singular to attract the attention of some of the magistrates, though, if they sought in their own minds for the motives, they were mistaken in the conclusions at which they arrived. During the reading of all the formal and immaterial part of the depositions, the gipsy remained with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and his head slightly bent, with the aspect of one who hears a thing with all the

details of which he is too familiar to give it any deep attention. But when the clerk came to his own deposition, and read the declaration which he had made of having seen the murder committed, and marked the murderer so particularly as to be able to swear to him if he ever saw him again, his lip curled with a bitter and a biting sneer, and, raising his head, he fixed his eyes upon his accuser, with a gaze that might well have sunk him to the earth.

Lord Dewry, however, encountered not his glance. He felt that the gipsy's look must be then upon him; and, though he kept his own eyes steadfastly on the papers before him, he turned deadly pale under the consciousness of his own guilt, and the knowledge of what must be passing in the bosom of the innocent man he had accused.

“This is your declaration, made twenty years ago, prisoner!” said Mr. Arden, examining the gipsy's countenance through his spectacles.

“I know it is,” answered the gipsy; “and it is truth, which twenty years cannot change as they have done you and me, hard man!”

“Egad, he's right there!” cried the magistrate; “twenty years have worked a woful change both in my eyes and in my teeth; but,

thank God, I can ride as fresh as any man after the hounds, and shirk neither fence nor gate."

"Have you any thing to add to your declaration, prisoner!" asked Mr. Simpson, in a milder tone.

"Nothing," answered Pharold.

"Let me ask you, however," continued the other, "whether you have ever, by any chance, seen the murderer since the events which you have detailed in this paper?"

"More than once!" answered the gipsy.

"Then, why did you not point him out for apprehension?" demanded Mr. Simpson.

"Because no one asked me," replied Pharold. "I told you hard old man, that I would point the murderer out if he were set before me; but I never promised any of you to be as one of your hounds, and seize the game for your sport or advantage."

"Then, if the murderer were brought before you," asked another magistrate, "would you point him out, and swear to him?"

The inquiry was taking a turn unpleasing to the peer; for although he felt well convinced that Pharold would, sooner or later, retort the accusation upon him, and was ready to meet it boldly and calmly, yet he was not a little

anxious to conclude his own statement of the case first, and to bring forward every circumstance which could criminate the gipsy, in order to take all weight from the testimony of his adversary, and make the magistrates pass it over with contempt.

“ I think,” he said, rising ere the gipsy could reply, — “ I think, gentlemen, if you will now permit me to proceed with what I have farther to adduce, you will find the matter very much simplified, and can then examine the prisoner in whatever manner you think fit.”

“ Certainly, my Lord ! certainly !” said some of the more complaisant of the party ; but the magistrate who had put the question was less easily turned aside ; and he replied, —

“ Permit the prisoner, my Lord, to answer my question in the first place. My memory is bad,” he added, drily, “ and before we got to the end I might forget it. Now, answer me, prisoner, — that is, if you do not object ; there is no compulsion, remember, — if the murderer were brought before you, could you and would you point him out, and swear to him !”

“ That I could do so,” answered Pharold, “ I have already said ; but that I would do so, I do

not know. It would depend upon circumstances."

Lord Dewry looked suddenly up, and their eyes met, but there was nothing in Pharold's glance at that moment but cold, stern indifference; and those who saw the look he gave the peer could not have distinguished that he was moved towards him by any other feelings than those which might well exist between the accused and the accuser. Lord Dewry paused, and a momentary feeling of remorse for that which he was engaged in crossed his bosom, now that he saw even persecution would hardly make the gipsy violate his word so far as to betray his fearful secret. But he had gone too far to recede, and he crushed the better feeling. He called up the image of Sir William Ryder returning to England, and supporting a charge against him by the testimony of the gipsy: he recalled the state of feverish apprehension in which he had lived for twenty years; and he went on with the work he had begun, resolved that the struggle should be commenced and ended now for ever, in the vain hope that thus his latter days might pass in peace!

"Now, my Lord," said the magistrate, when

the gipsy had replied; “now, my Lord! I beg your pardon for detaining you.”

“Well then, sir,” answered Lord Dewry, with some of his haughty spirit breaking out even then, — “well then, if it quite suits your convenience, I will proceed. I must give a slight sketch of some events long passed, gentlemen; and the clerks had better take it down as my deposition, which may be sworn to hereafter. Not very long after my brother’s death, gentlemen, I had some money transactions to settle with an honourable friend of mine, one Sir Roger Millington; and I went to London for the purpose. I found him just returned from Ireland; and he told me that, in the neighbourhood of Holyhead, he had met with an accident by which one of his finest horses had nearly been killed; but that he had obtained a secret from a gipsy there by which the animal had been completely cured. You may easily suppose I gave the anecdote but little attention at the time. In settling our accounts, however, Sir Roger had to give me, in change for a larger sum, several small notes, on which he wrote his name. I took no great notice of these bits of paper till I returned to the country, when, on looking them over, I found, to my

surprise, that one of them was marked with my brother's own name, in his own hand-writing. This led to farther examination; and in this banker's book, and also in these memoranda, I found, by the dates and numbers of the notes, that the very note in question must have been drawn by my poor brother from his bankers, the day before his death. The next thing to be discovered was, where Sir Roger Millington had obtained it; but, as that gentleman was continually moving about from place to place, some time elapsed ere I could see him again. When I did so, however, I found that he had received this very note from a gipsy called Pharold, at Holyhead, in change for a larger one given him in order to purchase the secret by which the worthy knight's horse had been cured."

"A most singular coincidence!" cried Mr. Arden. "Murder will out, gentlemen!"

"For a long time no trace could be discovered of the gipsy," continued Lord Dewry; "but at length he suddenly reappeared in this neighbourhood; and one of my keepers obtained information that he and his gang had laid a plan for robbing my park of the deer. On his telling me this, I ordered him to take such measures

as he thought expedient for seizing the whole of them in the fact; much more anxious, indeed, to capture my brother's murderer, than to punish the deer-stealers. It so happened, that just at the same time Sir Roger Millington came down to pay me a visit; and on hearing that the culprit was likely to fall into our hands that very night, he insisted upon coming over here, both to direct the operations of the keepers, and to satisfy himself, that this gipsy Pharold is the same from whom he received the note. I would fain have persuaded him that it was a wild scheme; but he was a soldier, gentlemen, and accustomed to contemn all dangers. The unhappy result you know. He was mortally wounded, and is now lying in a state of delirium, if he be not already dead. Last night, however, I took advantage of a time when his mind was quite clear and rational, to obtain from him this declaration in the presence of competent witnesses; and herein you will find that he positively states that the man Pharold, whom he saw with the gipsy deer-stealers in Dimden Park, was the same from whom he received this note.

“Foul, hellish liar!” exclaimed Pharold, starting abruptly from the state of calm and ap-

parently indifferent thought in which he had been standing, with his eyes fixed upon the handcuffs on his wrists, and his head bent down. "Foul, hellish liar! He never either gave me aught, or had aught from me! I cured his noble beast for nothing; and not for his sake either: but he gave me naught, nor would I have taken his gold if he had offered it."

"What, then," cried Mr. Arden, "you acknowledge that you did see this gentleman at Holyhead, and did cure his horse by some nostrum in your possession. Clerk, take that down carefully."

"Ay, and take down that, if in dying he say he either gave me aught or received aught from me," continued Pharold, vehemently, "he goes to the place appointed for liars and false witnesses, if the great God of all the universe be a God of justice and righteousness."

"Do you know, gentlemen," said Mr. Arden, turning round and rubbing his hands, "I think that quite enough has been elicited to justify us in committing the prisoner without farther ceremony."

"We might perhaps be justified," said Mr. Simpson; "but I think there is something more required of us than that, both by our own

consciences and our precise duties. It lies with us to prepare the case as far as possible for superior functionaries ; and, therefore, I should propose that we proceed at once to collect every information that is to be procured, and that we do not think of committing the prisoner till we have done so. A great deal more still remains to be ——”

Here one of the constables advanced from the other end of the hall, and passing quietly round the table, interrupted the magistrate by handing him a sealed packet, which he instantly opened, and proceeded to read the first lines. While he did so, the constable advanced to the spot where the peer sat, and spoke a few words in a low tone of voice, while another magistrate, taking advantage of Mr. Simpson's silence, proposed that they should adjourn to the bedside of Sir Roger Millington, and receive his deposition officially.

“ I am sorry to say,” answered Lord Dewry, with as grieved and melancholy an air as he could assume, under circumstances which were in reality satisfactory, — “ I am sorry to say, gentlemen, that the wise and judicious proceeding just suggested cannot be executed, as the constable has this moment informed me that

my poor friend is no more. His dissolution occurred a few minutes ago; and though I grieve for the loss of my friend, it would be vain to say that I am sorry that an event which was inevitable should have taken place so soon, when every hour of prolonged existence was an hour of torture."

"I trust, then, that the declaration which he made last night," said the same magistrate, "was in every respect such as to be admitted in evidence. Will your Lordship permit me to examine it?" The paper was handed to him; and he cast his eyes over it without any comment. Mr. Simpson, however, was evidently strongly affected by the packet he had just received. He returned more than once to several of the passages it contained; and when he had satisfied himself of the precise terms, he let the hand which held the paper fall over the arm of the chair; and with a pale cheek, and a look of deep thought, continued gazing at vacancy for several moments.

The first thing that seemed to rouse him, was a renewal of Mr. Arden's proposal for the instant committal of the prisoner, when, turning round abruptly, he said, "No, Mr. Arden! no! we have not half gone through

the case ; and something has just been put into my hand, which gives a very different aspect to the business altogether. This is a very painful paper, gentlemen ; and the task put upon me is a very painful one : but, however, our duty must be done ; and I will not shrink from mine. However, let me beg your Lordship in the first instance to remark that this thing is no seeking of mine. For many members of your Lordship's family I have the utmost respect and regard, and I would not willingly do any thing to hurt any of your house ; but, as I have said, my duty must be done."

While he spoke, the gipsy's eye lighted up anew, but the countenance of the peer fell. His colour varied twenty times in a minute ; but ere the magistrate had done speaking, he had recovered his self-command, and determined on his course, whatever might be the nature of the communication which Mr. Simpson had received. " To what end, may I ask," he said haughtily, " to what end does all this tissue of idle words lead, sir ? Let me beg you to explain yourself, for I can conceive no circumstances under which your professed regard for my family should interfere in any way with the execution of your duty."

“ You shall hear, my Lord, you shall hear,” answered Mr. Simpson, with more mild dignity than the peer had imagined he could assume. “ Constables, clear the hall there.”

“ Shall we take away the prisoner, sir?” demanded one of the men who stood by his side.

The magistrate paused, and then replied, after a moment's thought, “ He has a right to hear any thing that may benefit himself. He is here before us without legal advice or assistance of any kind ; and he must not be shut out from a knowledge of facts which he may have to communicate to his counsel hereafter. You, constable, however, retire to the door. I think we are enough to manage one hand-cuffed man should he prove turbulent.”

None of the other magistrates interfered : the hall was cleared ; and Pharold was left standing in the midst, with no other witnesses but the magistrates and their clerks. Restraining all his feelings by a mighty effort, the peer sat sternly gazing upon the speaker, with the violent passions that were working within, discernible only in the starting sinews of the thin clenched hand which he had laid upon the papers before him.

“What I have to read, gentlemen,” continued Mr. Simpson, “has just been sent me by the excellent rector of this parish, Dr. Edwards; and it is entitled *The dying declaration of Sir Roger Millington, knight*. It is, gentlemen, to the following effect;” and he proceeded to read the confession which fear and repentance had induced the dying man to make. The agitation of the peer was dreadful; but it was alone internal; and all that was externally perceptible were those signs of passion and indignation which an innocent man might feel at a false accusation. At length, however, when, in conclusion, the unhappy Sir Roger charged him boldly as the murderer of his brother, Lord Dewry started up, exclaiming, —

“The raving madness of a delirious and dying man! How can you, gentlemen, sit and listen to such trash? But I will soon bring you proof of what state the man was in, when that canting old fanatic saw him;” and he turned towards the door.

“Sit down, my Lord!” said Mr. Simpson, sternly. “I cannot allow you to leave the room.”

“Sit down! not allow me!” cried the peer, turning upon him with all the dark and haughty

spirit of his heart flashing forth. "Do you dare, sir, to use such terms to me in my own mansion?"

"Any where, Lord Dewry!" replied the magistrate. "I say, sit down! or I must give you in custody to one of the officers. *I* will show you, gentlemen, in what state of mind was the deponent when he made this declaration. Here is the attestation of the surgeon and his assistant, that Sir Roger Millington was, at the moment he signed this paper, perfectly sane and rational; that he did it under the full knowledge that he was a dying man; and that every word here written was exactly used by himself. Gentlemen, this requires immediate investigation; for every word here written must greatly affect the prisoner before us."

Lord Dewry had cast himself down again in his chair; but wrath in the present instance supported hypocrisy: for it was anger and indignation he sought to assume, and the former at least, in the present instance, required no acting. He folded his arms upon his breast, he rolled his dark eye over the form of the magistrate, and he set his teeth in his nether lip till the blood almost started beneath the pressure. In the mean while there was a con-

fused and murmuring conversation amongst the magistrates, some standing, some sitting, and all talking together. At length Mr. Arden exclaimed, in a loud voice that overpowered the rest, —

“ Well, well : this matter requires much consideration. Let us at all events remand the gipsy for four or five days, while we enquire into the rest. Here, he might be tampered with ; but let us remand him to the cage at Morley.

“ Remand me ! ” cried the gipsy, in a tone that called instant attention, while his deep black eyes seemed flashing with living fire. “ Remand me ! remand a man that you know to be innocent ! Are these your boasted laws ? is this your English equity ? Have you no more freedom in your hearts than this ? Did ye but know what real freedom is, ye would feel that nothing upon earth, — neither gold, nor wealth, nor friends, nor pleasures, nor health, nor life itself, to the freeman, — is half so dear as liberty ! If ye take his gold, ye call it robbery ; if ye take his life, ye call it murder ; but I tell you, that every minute and every hour of liberty is more than gold or life ; and yet, base hypocritical tyrants, without scruple and without remorse, you take from your fellow-creatures,

on the slightest pretence, the brightest possession of man, the noblest gift of God. Ere you know whether your fellow-creature be guilty or not ye doom him to the worst of punishments, ye confine him in dungeons, ye fetter his free limbs with iron, ye deny him God's light and God's air, ye make him the companion of devils and of fiends, and then ye find that he is innocent, and send him forth into the world degraded, corrupted, vile as ye are yourself, — punished without guilt, and robbed of many a long day of golden liberty by those who pretend to dispense justice, and who talk of equity. Out upon ye, I say! and out upon your laws! If there were such things as liberty and justice in the land, the very rumour that a fellow-creature was deprived of his freedom for an hour, would gather together half the land to see justice done; and he who dared unjustly to deprive a freeman of his liberty would be punished as a traitor against the rights conferred by God. Then would not this bright and beautiful land bear the multitude of prisons that darken the sunshine in every town and village; and speedily the very use for them would be forgotten; for man's heart, ennobled by freedom, would forget crime; or crime, punished on the spot, would

be a lesson far more awful. Now ye debase yourselves and your fellow-creatures, and expect them to act nobly; ye punish the innocent with the worst of punishments, and expect them to refrain from guilt. If I am innocent of the crime with which I am charged, — and God knows, and ye all know, that I am, — let me go free. If I be guilty, punish me with death, but take not away my liberty. Death were light, but one other night in a dungeon would crush my very soul!”

There was something so strong, so fiery, so impetuous, in the whole tone and manner of the gipsy, that the magistrates, taken by surprise, sat silent and attentive, till he had concluded an appeal which they certainly had not expected. “There is some reason in what you say,” answered Mr. Simpson, mildly, “and, perhaps, if we had tasted a few hours’ imprisonment ourselves, we should not be so ready to send others to that fate, as we are found too often. However, now answer me, prisoner; you have declared that if the murderer of the late Lord Dewry were set before you, you could recognise him, and swear to him. I ask you, therefore, do you see him now?”

A powerful emotion, which he could not re-

sist, made the peer suddenly turn away, as the magistrate thus addressed the gipsy; and Pharoold's dark keen eyes fixed sternly upon him. For several long, terrible, anxious moments the gipsy was silent, and many were the strong and agitating passions which struggled in his heart, and threw their alternate shadows over his countenance; but at length he replied in a solemn and distinct voice, "I cannot say that I could tell, but I have not said that I would; and I now say that, come what will to myself, I will accuse no man."

The magistrates gazed at each other for a brief space, both surprised and perplexed; but at that moment there was heard the sound of chariot wheels, the step of a carriage violently thrown down, and a considerable bustle and speaking in the passages beyond. The next instant the door of the hall was thrown open, and a gentleman entered, with his hat still on his head, and a large fur cloak cast round him, as he had got out of his carriage.

"I really must have the hall kept clear," exclaimed Mr. Simpson. "We are here in private deliberation, and no one must be admitted."

The stranger, however, without paying the

slightest attention, walked straight up the middle of the hall; and laying his hand upon the gipsy's arm, as he passed the spot where he stood, "I have come," he said, "to deliver an innocent man." The next moment he advanced to the table; and taking off his hat gazed round upon the magistrates.

The effect produced upon several persons present was no less strange than sudden. The peer, with a countenance as pale as ashes, a quivering lip and haggard eye, staggered up from his seat, grasped the arm of the intruder, and holding him at arm's length, gazed in his face, with an expression of doubt, and surprise, and horror. Mr. Arden rubbed the glasses of his spectacles, exclaiming "Good God! good God! This is very strange! It can't be — no, it can't be!"

"It is! it is!" exclaimed the peer, "falling back into his chair, and covering his eyes with his hands. "It is! it is! thank God! oh! thank God! and the deep groan which accompanied his expression of joy, far from lessening its force, seemed to speak that the load of worlds was taken off his heart."

"In the name of Heaven, sir, who are you?" exclaimed one of the younger magistrates.

"Who is he?" exclaimed the gipsy, "who

should he be, but William Lord Dewry. There are plenty here who must know him well."

"And none better than myself," cried Mr. Arden. "My Lord, are you living or dead?"

"Living, sir," replied the person whom we have hitherto known by the name of Sir William Ryder. "Had I not believed, gentlemen, that in this hall I have as much right as any one, I should not have intruded upon your deliberations; but as I learned this morning that my friend Pharold here, to whom I owe my life, was brought before you on a charge of taking it, I felt myself bound to interfere. You must, therefore, permit me to be present at your further deliberations. — Edward," he continued, turning to his brother, "you had better retire. We have matter for much thought and for much emotion between us, which were as well confined to ourselves alone."

"But, my Lord! but, my Lord!" exclaimed Mr. Arden, "here is an accusation made formally against your brother, also, of the same crime with which the gipsy was charged."

"Who made it?" exclaimed Lord Dewry, looking somewhat reproachfully at Pharold.

"Not I," answered the gipsy, — "I bring a false accusation against no man."

“ At all events, sir,” rejoined the peer, turning to Mr. Arden, “ it must be sufficiently evident to all, that my brother, whatever may have been our personal differences, cannot be guilty of my murder, as I am here alive and well. I say again, therefore, that you had better retire, Edward, and leave me to conclude this business as I see fit, unless, indeed,” he added, “ unless you are inclined to contest either my identity or my rights.”

“ No, no, no !” cried the other, starting up vehemently, and clasping his hands together, while the burning tears of intense emotion rolled rapidly over his cheeks. “ No, no ! So help me God, I would not lose the knowledge that you are living for the highest rank and noblest fortune that the earth could give ; and I tell you, William, that to lay down at your feet that which I have wrongfully possessed, to give up to you wealth and station, and retire to poverty and obscurity, will be the happiest act of my whole life. It will ! it will ! as there is truth in Heaven, whatever my conduct heretofore may have caused you to believe — and now I leave you.”

“ That is one step at least,” said the peer. “ Fare you well for the present. I will join

you soon;—and now, gentlemen,” he continued, turning to the magistrates, as his brother, with a slow and faltering step quitted the hall,—“and now let us proceed, as quickly as possible, to render justice to a man who has been erroneously accused, and subjected already to some loss of liberty, — a loss which I know is more bitter to him than the loss of life would be.”

“Why, my Lord, one would think you had turned gipsy yourself,” said Mr. Arden, “you speak so exactly the same sentiments which he has himself expressed.”

“I have mingled much with persons who feel the same ardent love for uncontrolled liberty,” replied the peer somewhat dryly, “and it is therefore that I wish at once to proceed to those matters which may instantly set this good and honest man at liberty. It is evident, gentlemen, that the charge against him must instantly be discharged, and therefore it may be better to order those unworthy handcuffs to be taken instantly from his wrists.”

“Not so fast, my Lord,” said Mr. Arden, who was not well pleased with the tone in which the peer replied to him, and who had also a strong disposition to commit every one who was committable. “Although

your sudden, miraculous, and very strange re-appearance, must of course put an end to all proceedings relative to a murder which has not taken place, yet there is another charge of a nature equally grave against the prisoner, which renders it impossible to discharge him in the summary method which you seem inclined to urge. There is a charge of deer-stealing followed by murder, in both of which crimes it is pretty evident that the prisoner has taken part. I should like to know, too, before I part with him, whether the whole story that he told of your being shot by a man on horseback had any foundation, or was a mere invention."

"In regard to the last point I will satisfy you at once," replied Lord Dewry, "as far as I ever intend to satisfy any one. I was met by a man on horseback, as I believe the gipsy told you, who demanded money of me, and on my refusing it, somewhat harshly indeed, he did fire at and wound me. My horse took fright, and plunged into the river; I fell from the saddle, deprived of all sense; and had not that good man, Pharold, leaped into the stream, dragged me out, and given me into the hands of those who tended me with kindness and wisdom, my fate would not have been doubtful for a moment. In regard to my after conduct, private motives

determined it, into which no one has any right to enquire. They were such as satisfied my own heart and my own understanding, and that is sufficient."

"And pray, my Lord," demanded Mr. Arden, "were you acquainted with the person who wounded you? Could you swear to him?"

"I am not making a charge before you, as a county magistrate," replied Lord Dewry; but telling you an anecdote as an old acquaintance; and let me add, that my story is done. In regard to any farther charge against Pharold, there is, I think, by this time sufficient evidence collected at the hall door to prove that he took no part either in the destruction of the deer or the violence offered to the gamekeepers. If you will order the persons who were present to be called in you will soon be satisfied.

"I beg your pardon, my Lord," said Mr. Simpson: "I am most happy to see you once again, when such a thing appeared impossible; but still I am afraid the course you suggest cannot be pursued."

"And why not, sir?" demanded Lord Dewry: "I believe that I have the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Simpson, though time has somewhat altered his features: if so, I address both a humane and reasonable man; and I

ask why cannot the plain and straightforward course I propose be pursued at once?"

"Let them have their way, William de Vaux! Let them have their way!" cried the gipsy, whose dark features had been working under the influence of many a contending passion since his friend had appeared. "Let them have their way! One and all they are set in their own hearts to do injustice. What, indeed, are they there for, but to dispense that kind of injustice that you call law? Let them have their way! They are but working out the inevitable will of fate; and though they bring the curse of innocent blood upon their head, they needs must do it."

"If your Lordship, during your long absence, have not forgot entirely the customs of this country," replied Mr. Simpson, as soon he could make himself heard, "you will perceive at once, that, as one of the unfortunate victims of this deer-stealing affray has died in this very house, not half an hour ago, it is our bounden duty not to discharge a prisoner against whom a charge upon oath of participation in the crime has been made by an eye-witness, until the coroner shall have sat upon the body, and returned a verdict; nor have we, I believe, any right to take the

matter out of the coroner's hands, by previously examining the witnesses, which must afterwards appear before his jury. I am grieved to oppose you, I am grieved to inflict farther imprisonment on a man of whose innocence I do not entertain any strong doubts; but Harvey, the head keeper, has sworn that the prisoner was present, aiding and abetting, when Sir Roger Millington was wounded, and we should not be justified even in receiving bail till the coroner's jury have returned their verdict.

Lord Dewry bit his lip, and remained silent for a few moments, while Mr. Arden rubbed his hands, and elevated his eyebrows with the air of a man who considers all opposition as silenced; and the gipsy eyed the bench of magistrates with a look in which scorn was the only expression that tempered hatred and indignation. "Pray, sir, how long must it be ere the coroner can be summoned?" demanded the peer. "You know not what you are inflicting upon a man as honest as any one present. To him every hour of his freedom is more than life; and I could give you fully sufficient proof to show that while his innocence of the crime charged against him is clear, the punishment inflicted on him by imprisonment cannot be estimated by

the feelings of other men under such circumstances.”

“The coroner cannot even be summoned to-day, my Lord,” replied Mr. Arden; “and, consequently, it must be to-morrow or the next day ere the gipsy can be liberated, even if the result be as favourable to him as you expect. But what are two or three days spent in a snug warm room to a man who has never known any thing better than a hovel in a sandpit? Where is the great hardship? I see no very severe infliction.”

“To him it is the most severe,” replied Lord Dewry; “and if it be possible——”

“Cease, cease, William,” cried Pharold, in a bitter and earnest tone; “you degrade those noble lips, by pleading in vain to men who can neither understand your heart nor mine. Besides, it matters not, it matters not. The long weary line of life has come to its end with me. All that I had to do is done. I have seen you break through all your good and wise designs, all your humane and generous scruples, for the purpose of defending and delivering me; I have seen you return to your home, and claim your own; and so far I have seen my utmost desire. But hear what I have seen more,” he continued with a

rising tone, while his eye flashed, his dark cheek flushed, and his brows knit together, — “hear what I have seen more, William de Vaux, and then see whether I ought to care for any thing else after. I have seen my people mock my care, and refuse my counsels ! I have seen one of my own tribe betray me, in order to liberate himself ! I have seen the wife of my bosom take part in the scheme for delivering me over to imprisonment and death, by the means of my best affections ! I have spent a whole bright autumn night in a prison ! I come forth into the day with bonds upon my hands, and I hear myself condemned, without crime, to the torture of a longer slavery in chains and stone walls !” As he went on, he spoke more and more rapidly, and his eye rolled over the magistrates, as he lashed himself into frenzy, by a recapitulation of his sufferings and his wrongs. “But think not,” he continued furiously, “think not that bolts, or bars, or walls shall keep me in another night, in the living tomb into which ye have thrust me ! No, no, there is always a way for a bold heart to set itself free ! Thus, thus I spurn your chains from me !” and by one great effort of skill and strength he slipped his hands out of the handcuffs, which were

somewhat too large, and dashed them down into the midst of the hall.

“Constables! constables!” shouted Mr. Arden.

“You call in vain, hard, stone-hearted man,” cried Pharold, shaking his clenched hand at him, “you call in vain;” and bounding to the side of the hall on which the tall windows had been thrown open, he set one foot upon the secretary’s table, and with a single spring reached the high window sill, catching with his hand the small stone column on which the casements hung. There he paused for one moment; and turning his head, exclaimed, “William de Vaux, noble William de Vaux, farewell, — for ever, and ever, and ever, farewell.”

He let go his hold: he sprang forward, and was lost to the sight. The next moment the dull heavy splash of a large body falling into the water rose up and was carried by the wind through the open windows into the justice-room.

“Run round, run round,” cried Mr. Arden, to the constables, who were now hurrying in; “he has escaped through the window; run round there by the outside.”

One or two instantly followed these directions; but another sprang up to the window to mark the course of the fugitive, and point it out to the pursuers.

“He must have jumped into the stream, gentlemen,” said the man, turning to speak to the magistrates, as soon as he had reached the spot where Pharold had stood the moment before. “He must have jumped into the stream, for there is not footing for a mouse.”

“He did, he did: we heard him,” answered Mr. Arden. “Look out, and see where he comes to land. My Lord, why do you cover your face with your hand? you seem more sorry for the prisoner’s escape than I anticipated.”

“It is because I know him better than you do, sir,” answered the peer; “and I fear that you have driven him farther than you imagine.”

“I can see nothing on the river, gentlemen,” cried the constable, “but the bubbles and the eddies where he must have gone down. — There’s a shoulder, there’s a shoulder, I do believe; and his long black hair as I live:—it is gone again; he is down—I see no more of it.”

Lord Dewry started up and rushed out; but it was in vain that every effort was made to find the gipsy living or dead. The constables who had

run round the justice room declared that they had never seen any thing rise. The other who had watched from the window, soon became very doubtful, in regard to the reality of the objects he had seen floating down the stream. An old labourer, who had been working at a distance, stated that he had remarked something fall from the window of the justice room into the water, but had seen nothing come to land. The peer, with as many people as he could collect, followed the course of the river for some way; and the constables, though with different views, pursued the same course. In the mean while, the magistrates continued in deliberation, as it is called; although it must be acknowledged that their conversation referred much more particularly to, and rested much more pertinaciously upon, the strange return of Lord Dewry, the various circumstances which could have given occasion to his absence, and the various events to which his re-appearance would give rise, than even to the disappearance of the prisoner, and the after measures to be adopted.

The matter, however, was quite sufficiently interesting to make three quarters of an hour pass unnoticed; and at the end of that time a

servant appeared to inform them, that as the body of the unhappy gipsy could not be found, Lord Dewry did not intend to intrude upon them again, and that he had only to request that due information of the death of Sir Roger Millington might be given to the coroner.

The magistrates received the message—probably as it was intended—as a hint that their farther presence at Dimden was not desired. Mr. Arden laughed, and declared that he would take care to tease his Lordship for his want of courtesy, by asking him unpleasant questions whenever he met him; but Mr. Simpson, on the contrary, looked grave and sad, and as he parted with his fellow-magistrates declared his intention of withdrawing from his official duties. “I should never,” he said, “be able to remove from my mind the impression of that unfortunate gipsy’s fate, and I should fear that it might have some effect upon the execution of my duty in future.”

CHAP. IX.

DAY had waned, night had overshadowed the world several hours, and Mrs. Falkland, with Marian, had long left the house in which Edward de Vaux lay ere any sounds intimated that the master of the mansion had returned. Anxious, bewildered, and impatient, De Vaux lay sleepless till ten o'clock, when the rapid rush of rolling wheels, and the quick foot falls of the horses, as they passed his window, told him that he whom he expected had arrived.

A few minutes elapsed without his appearance in the sick man's room, however, and, with his characteristic impatience, De Vaux concluded that "the fools had said he was asleep," and was sending to declare the contrary, when the door was quietly opened, and the person he wished for approached his bed-side.

"I am most happy to see you, my dear sir," said De Vaux, looking up in the fine bland countenance that was bent over him, "for I

cannot sleep — I cannot rest — till I ask you who, who is it that I see?"

"Ah! I perceive that your aunt has betrayed me," said Lord Dewry. "She recognised me instantly this morning; but I laid strict injunctions upon her, for many reasons, to keep my secret with you till I returned. But I expected more than was reasonable. There is a proverb against a woman keeping a secret."

"No, no," said De Vaux: "she did not exactly betray you. She let a few words accidentally fall, that only served to rouse my curiosity, which she then refused to satisfy."

"And what said Marian?" demanded the other, with a smile.

"Oh, she said nothing on the subject," replied De Vaux, "but she looked happier than ever I beheld her; and that too seemed to confirm some vague surmises which my aunt's words had called up. But yet I cannot believe it — it is impossible — I knew you myself as Sir William Ryder, in America — every one knew you by that name there — and I cannot believe the wild fancy that has taken possession of me."

"It is nevertheless true," replied the peer. "Sir William Ryder has slept for more than

twenty years in a little village churchyard in Ireland, and I am — what I suppose you suspect — your uncle. Agitate yourself with this matter no more to-night, my dear boy: suffice it,” and he pressed his nephew’s hand kindly in his own, “suffice it that I am proud to have Edward de Vaux for my nephew, and shall rejoice to acknowledge him as my son.”

The words were oil and wine to the heart of Edward de Vaux, but still there was something wanting: “Thank you, thank you,” he replied, still holding his uncle’s hand in his own; “but yet one word more before you go: — that dreadful story that the gipsy told me — that story that drove me almost mad — it is not, it cannot be true. My father did not — could not ——”

“Edward,” replied his uncle, gravely, “on no account must I do wrong to the memory of a noble-hearted man. The gipsy told you true, as far as he knew the truth. Nay, do not shudder: there are many palliating circumstances which he did not know, but which I will relate to you hereafter, in order to calm and tranquillise your mind. In the mean time be satisfied with knowing, that, as far as I am concerned, all that was painful in the past shall be

forgotten and buried in oblivion for ever. Nor, indeed, would I, even to you, so far withdraw the veil from things gone, as to give any explanation, had it not been by my authority and directions — under a mistaken view of your character and heart — that the gipsy related to you as much as you already know. Your knowledge of thus much renders it necessary for your own peace that you should know more; which I will tell you as soon as you are well. Rest assured, however, that all which you have yet to hear is good and not evil, and will tend to alleviate and soften what is past.”

With such information Edward de Vaux was forced to rest contented during the whole of the following week, for he could draw no more from his uncle; and he feared, by questioning any one else upon the subject, to raise suspicions which he trusted were as yet quiet in the minds of all others.

The rest of the little world, however, in which these events had taken place, were not so soon satisfied. The immediate neighbourhood of Dimden and of Morley House was, of course, more agitated than the rest of the county; for there it may be said that the stone had dropped into the water, and though the rippling circles

that it made extended far and wide around, yet each eddy was fainter and fainter, of course, as it became further removed from the centre. In the immediate vortex, however, not only for nine days, but nearly for nine months, all was gossip and rumour and confusion. Every one had his own distinct report of the transactions which had taken place in regard to the return of the old Lord Dewry; every one had his own version of the story; and as neither the peer himself, nor any of his family, gave either encouragement or refutation to any of the statements, but held a stern and rigid silence upon the whole affair, every one was left to enjoy his own version undisturbed, and to make himself sure that it was the right one, by any logic that he thought proper to use.

There is no such diffusible a substance in nature as truth; for though an infinitely small piece of gold can be spread over a wire that might girdle the great earth, yet a much less portion of truth will serve to gild a much greater quantity of falsehood. Thus, in all the stories that were current, it is more than probable that some portion of truth existed; and many of them, aided by curious enquiry and shrewd

conjecture, came very near the real facts of the case.

The good-natured world of course anticipated all the disagreeable things that were to happen. Law suits innumerable were prognosticated; Lord Dewry was to compel his brother to refund the long enjoyed rents of his estates; the brother was to deny his claim and rights altogether; the marriage between Edward de Vaux and his cousin was to be broken off; and some persons even anticipated that the lover would shoot himself, and the lady die of consumption.

None of these events, however, did really take place. Lord Dewry showed himself in no hurry to take possession of his estates either at Dimden or at Dewry Hall, but his title was not the less generally recognised and his rights undisputed. His brother, indeed, lay for many weeks ill at Dimden House; and, under the influence of feelings, which those around him did not rightly comprehend, besought Lord Dewry not to visit him till his strength was recovered, or till his death was near.

Edward de Vaux still remained at his uncle's cottage at the little town of——, tended by its owner with all the care and affection of a father.

His recovery was somewhat tedious indeed; and it was long ere the surgeons permitted him to rise. From that period, however, his convalescence proceeded more rapidly, and the kind tone of all his uncle's conversation, — the hope, the cheerfulness, the sunshine, that beamed through it all, — tended to soothe his mind, and turn it from every thing that was painful in his situation. At length it was announced that he might with safety drive over to Dimden, to see his father; and on the day preceding that on which he went, as soon as the short twilight of winter was over, Lord Dewry ordered his doors to be closed against all the world; and walking up and down the room — as was his custom when he spoke on matters of deep interest — while his nephew lay on the couch beside him, he entered into the long promised explanation of his past conduct.

“ I need not recapitulate, my dear boy,” he said, “ all that you have already heard, nor tell you how bitterly I suffered from a loss, the pain of which can never be wholly forgotten. At the time it nearly drove me mad. At all events it made me look upon every thing in nature through a false medium, made me hate mankind, loathe even the society of my best

and dearest friends, and find agony rather than consolation in the sight of the infant, which my lost angel had left me, and which to a more sane and less impatient spirit would have been a source of joy and comfort to my latest hour. It was under these circumstances, and with these feelings, that I suddenly met my brother in the neighbourhood of Morley House, while I was riding over to the county town, with the purpose of giving him such a sum as I could spare at the time, but of refusing the greater part of the assistance he demanded. I had many other causes for dissatisfaction in regard to his conduct besides his boundless extravagance; but of those causes we need not speak. I acknowledge that I treated him harshly; and that, not contented with rejecting his demand, I rejected it in that stern and peremptory tone which was in some degree cruel, for grief had hardened me for the time against all those things to which at other moments I yielded most willingly. He pleaded more earnestly, more humbly, than could have been expected from one who had no small share of pride; but I refused to hear, and only repeated my determination. Words of great bitterness passed between us; and at length he drew

forth a pistol, saying that nothing was left him but death or dishonour, and that he preferred the former. I remember not the exact words of my reply; but they were galling, bitter, and ungenerous; and as I spoke them, I spurred on my horse. The next moment there came a loud report, a giddiness of my eyes, and I felt myself reel in the saddle. For the moment my powers over my horse were lost; and taking fright at the sound, he plunged down the bank, lost his footing, and slipped into the river. Nay, Edward, look not so distressed, remember the shot might be accidental: my brother was following me eagerly at the time, with the weapon in his hand which he had threatened to raise against his own life: a plunge of his horse, a false step, an accidental movement, might discharge the pistol without his will. I am willing to believe it so; and I have never enquired farther. If you are wise, Edward de Vaux—if you are wise, you will enquire no farther either. There are few situations in which doubts are preferable to certainty, but there are some, and this is one. Suffice it that, whatever your father's intention was, he was driven at that moment, both by despair and by a brother's harshness, to a state of mind in which he could hardly be held re-

sponsible for his own actions. I forgive him from my heart for that deed, though others have taken place lately which I fear I cannot forgive — at least not as yet. But of these no more: I seek not to be your father's accuser. I would rather exculpate him as far as possible."

De Vaux sighed deeply, and still kept his hands clasped over his eyes, for he could not but feel that his uncle willingly deceived himself, in order to palliate the actions of his father. "Let me now turn," continued Lord Dewry, "to my own fate and conduct. The wound I had received, though not dangerous, — having passed obliquely along the back of my head and neck, only slightly grazing the bone, — was sufficient to stun and confuse me; and although in the plunge into the water, I was thrown free of the horse, I should certainly have been drowned, had it not been for the activity and courage of the gipsy Pharold. I knew little that passed till I found myself lying on the moss, in the thick wood above Morley Point; with two gipsies standing by me, one of whom was my deliverer. I was still bleeding profusely; and Pharold was in the very act of sending his comrade for help to bear me home. My first words, however, were directed to stop

him; and I besought the companion of my boyhood to have me carried to the tents of his people, and to conceal my escape from every one. The very first impulse on recovering my recollection had been to execute a plan, which had often occurred to me within the last few weeks, previous to that time, of abandoning state, and station, and society altogether, and wasting away the rest of my days in grief and mourning. Had I been a Roman Catholic, at my wife's death, I should certainly have devoted myself to the cloister; and the only consideration which had prevented me from quitting England and all my former connections, had been the thought of the enquiries and the search that would be made for me, and the annoyance to which such proceedings might subject me. Now, however, the opportunity was before me. I easily gathered, or rather divined from the circumstances in which I found myself, that no one was acquainted with my being still in life, but the gipsy and his comrade: I knew that my child, with an ample fortune and numerous connections, would be well protected and cherished by my sister; and I resolved instantly to seize the only opportunity I might ever have of quitting, without enquiry or pursuit, scenes that

were full of painful memories, and society which I detested. The rest was easily arranged. I felt that I was but slightly wounded. Pharold would have done whatever I chose to dictate on earth ; and I was borne to the gipsies' tents, and tended with as much care and skill as if I had lain in a palace, surrounded by friends and servants.

“ None knew me personally but Pharold himself ; and he pledged himself solemnly to conceal the fact of my existence from every one. It was agreed that his tribe should instantly remove to a distance, carrying me with them ; while he remained, in order to watch the subsequent proceedings of my family, and give me information thereof. He was absent for several days ; and when at length he rejoined his people, I found that he had been himself arrested, and in some degree suspected of having murdered me. He told me, however, that my brother had been the first to assert his innocence, and to effect his liberation. This conduct pleased me ; and I resolved to linger in England some time longer, in order to mark your father's after proceedings. Through the exertions of Pharold, I learned all that took place. I found that, however he might have acted in

other circumstances, my brother acted nobly towards my child ; and I took some pleasure, the first I had known for months, in viewing the emotions of his heart through the conduct to which they led. The pleasure, however, was of a very mingled nature ; and at length I prepared to set out for Ireland, with the intention of proceeding thence to America. At Holyhead I removed from the tents of the gipsies, with whom I had hitherto continued, because I was aware that Sir William Ryder, an old acquaintance both of my brother's and my own, was to visit Pharold on Edward's account, in order to insure more perfectly the gipsy's silence. He came at length, but in coming his horse took fright, threw him, and nearly killed him on the spot. He likewise was borne into the gipsies' tents, and for some days hovered between life and death. I saw him often, without being seen, and many a time as I stood in the shadow, while Pharold conversed with him, I heard him express bitter sorrow and repentance for all the follies into which he had been led, and depict vividly the writhings of a noble spirit under the consciousness of having dipped deeply in vice and become a participator in crime. I became interested in him, and de-

terminated, in other lands — for he also was following exactly the same track towards America as myself — to let him know of my existence; which would at least relieve a part of the load under which he suffered. He partially recovered, and proceeded to Ireland; but he never reached America: for ere he could embark, the consequences of the injuries he had received in his fall assumed a severer character, and at a small inn, in a small and wretched Irish port, I found him dying and alone. His surprise on seeing me had nearly killed him; but he soon regained composure, and I remained with him till his last hour.

“ By his advice, and authorised by his own hand, I took his name; and by means of papers which he gave me at his death, have received ever since the annuity of a thousand per annum, which my brother had settled upon him: nor did I think myself unjustified in either of these actions, for I only assumed a rank inferior to my own, and received money which to all intents and purposes was mine. However, as Sir William Ryder had a numerous acquaintance, it became necessary to fix my abode in such a spot as would remove every chance of my assumed name being questioned. My feelings

too at this time led me to seek solitude, and an entire change, not only of scene but of all the circumstances of life. Thus I retired to the spot where you found me, during the late war; and there, in the midst of savage life, and various sources of interest and excitement, I gradually recovered calmness and peace. Of my life in America I need give you no picture, as you have seen how it passed; and I have now only to explain farther the motives of my return.

“ Every human thing is weak in its resolves, and I not less than others: but still, in some degree, it is happy that it should be so; for our determinations are always the children of circumstances, and upon circumstances also must their execution ever depend. Like a madman and a fool, I had fancied that in Marian’s mother I had found imperishable happiness; and when she was suddenly snatched from me, my whole feelings, my very soul, seemed turned into bitterness and disappointment. In bitterness and disappointment, then, I had resolved never to love another human being, and to cast off every tie that could bind me to human affections: but time brought resignation and consolation: and a longing, a thirst, to see my child

and my native land often came upon me with overpowering force. I sought not to resume wealth or station. I sought not to mingle again in cultivated society; but the yearning of the heart of a father and a man, towards my daughter and my country, were sometimes hardly to be resisted. That my child was well, happy, and protected, I learned from the constant correspondence which I kept up with the gipsy Pharold; and, at the same time, the interest which I took in the wild tribes around me, and the love they evinced towards me, acted as a strong tie to the land in which I had settled. I wavered often, but I resisted long; till, at length, I became acquainted with your admirable friend Manners, and through him first personally knew yourself. Your very name was full of interest to me; but how much was that interest increased when, by some casual words which passed between you and your friend, I learned that you were destined to become the husband of my only child. All the faults of your father's character rose up before my imagination; his very faults towards your mother were remembered; and when I pictured to myself my dear Marian suffering under similar conduct, my heart was in an agony of doubt and apprehension. From that

moment I watched your every word and action with eager anxiety, striving to judge your mind and heart. I did judge you, Edward, and I judged you wrongly. There was a fastidiousness, an irritability, an impatience, a degree of pride, that put me strongly in mind of your father; and although I thought I saw some nobler traits, yet I was anxious, doubtful, ill at ease; and I determined, at any risk, at any cost, to try you to the uttermost, ere you received the fate of my child into your hands. I did try you, Edward, and somewhat too severely; and both for having mistaken your nature, and made you suffer deeply, I now ask your forgiveness. At the time you left me, I was engaged in negotiating the purchase of a large tract of land to be reserved for certain tribes of Indians, but a larger sum was required than I could command; and this, with the other circumstances I have mentioned, hastened my return to England. I arrived in my native country even before you did; but a thousand difficulties surrounded me which I had not foreseen; and my anxiety and eagerness made me act with less caution than I should have done. I had no agent in whom I could confide but the gipsy Pharold; and although he wrought in every

thing exactly under my directions, yet a thousand circumstances, over which we had no control, turned our actions from their course, and led to results that neither of us anticipated. My intention was not to claim either my name or my estates, if I found that you were worthy of my child ; but I have been forced forward, from step to step, as if by the strong hand of fate, till at length it became an imperative duty to disclose myself, in order to deliver the innocent from persecution. One satisfaction, however, I have obtained, which is, that I can now feel unbounded confidence in the man to whom I leave the happiness of my child in charge. Remember, also, Edward, that I have resumed my own rights, without compromising the honour or reputation of your father ——”

“ Indeed ! indeed !” cried De Vaux, starting up, and grasping his uncle’s hand. “ Thanks, thanks, my dear sir ! That is a blessed relief indeed ! But will not people suspect ——”

“ They cannot do so reasonably,” replied Lord Dewry. “ The secret, my dear boy, remains with you and me alone, and never to a living creature shall it pass my lips, as I hope for happiness hereafter.”

“ But the gipsy !” cried De Vaux, “ the gipsy !”

“ The gipsy is no more !” replied his uncle, a shade coming over his countenance. “ Persecution and severe laws have driven him to despair, and despair to death. And now, Edward, to-morrow you are about to visit your father : in regard to letting him know what information you possess, act as you shall think fit. Were I in your circumstances, if possible, I should conceal from him that I knew aught beyond common report ; but if you do communicate to him the knowledge you have obtained, add that for all and every fault towards myself I forgive him from my heart and soul, but that his conduct towards Pharold, the gipsy, rests dark upon my mind ; and that, perhaps, it would be better if we did not meet again till time had softened the remembrance. Present him, Edward, with this packet also. It contains a deed which will prevent him from feeling any great change of fortune from my return.”

De Vaux coloured as he took it ; and his uncle added, —

“ You must not again make me deem you proud, Edward.”

“ No, no, my dear sir,” replied De Vaux.

“What I have suffered has not only been a trial, but will, I trust, prove a cure; for the errors that you saw and justly feared, were fully as real as apparent. I cannot but feel pained, however, that we should have so small a right to expect—to expect——” He paused, hesitated a moment, and then added, — “to expect bounty at the hand which now bestows it.”

“Call it not bounty, my dear Edward,” answered his uncle, “nor couple yourself with others in any shape, for in this deed you are in no degree interested. The fortune which Marian inherits from her mother will render you independent, till my death renders you wealthy. And now to conclude, ere I wish you good night:—I have been forced to speak to you long of your father. In doing so, though I have tried not to spare my own faults, I have been obliged to dwell for long upon his; but I have done so once for all, and I never more mention them again, either to his son or to any one else. It has been as painful for me to speak, as for you to hear. It is over; and now, good night!”

We might dwell longer upon the feelings of Edward de Vaux; but we have only space left for his actions. The next morning early he set

out to visit his parent, and it was late ere he returned. When he did so, however, he announced to his uncle that, although still unwell, his father had quitted Dimden, and removed a few stages on his journey to a remote part of the country, in which he had determined to fix his residence.

“Of course, my dear sir,” he added, “every inducement, but one, would lead me to remain here, in the scenes wherein I have been brought up, which are full of sweet recollections, and which contain her I love the best on earth. Nevertheless, he is my father; and I cannot suffer him to linger through the hours of sickness, in sorrow, dejection, and solitude, when, perhaps, the society of his son may give him consolation, or, at least, afford some diversion to his thoughts. To-morrow, therefore, I will see Marian; and then, if the surgeons will let me, will set off to follow my father. As soon as his illness is terminated,” and he spoke with a look of pain and apprehension, “I will return, and claim a promise which is more valuable to me than life; and, in the mean time, I know that none who are dear to me, will think the worse of me, for having in this instance preferred duty to happiness.”

Lord Dewry made no opposition to his purpose, and it was accordingly executed. Two months elapsed without any event of importance. Lord Dewry took possession of his rights again; and rumour and gossip, at every fresh incident in our drama, revived more and more faintly, till at length they died away, and gave place to newer things. The body of the gipsy, Pharold, was never found; and a vague report spread over the country that he was not dead, but had returned to his people, and had been seen in several places by persons who were acquainted with his person; but the origin of this report could not be traced, and certain it is, that The Gipsy never again presented himself before any of the family of De Vaux. The tribe which he had led disappeared from the country; and whither their wanderings conducted them, or what was their after fate, the writer of this book cannot tell, though it appears that Mr. Arden, that indefatigable magistrate, pursued them with his usual vigour, on the charge of deer-stealing and murder, but was unsuccessful in the attempt to identify any of the parties. In the meanwhile two inducements led Lord Dewry to establish his permanent residence at Dimden, rather than at the newer mansion which his

brother had inhabited ; first, that it was full of memories that he loved ; and, secondly, that it was near those who were the dearest to him on earth. Colonel Manners, for his part, had prolonged his stay at Morley House for some time ; but he then returned to London, promising faithfully to renew his visit, when the same cause which had brought him first into that part of England was again urged as a plea for re-visiting it. To the surprise of all his military acquaintances, however, shortly after his arrival in the capital, Colonel Manners resigned the command of his regiment, and retired upon half pay. Various causes were assigned for this proceeding ; but the real motive lay hidden in his own bosom, deeper than he liked to own even to himself.

While these events were passing, Edward de Vaux wrote often to his uncle, and still more frequently to Marian ; but at the end of two months the peer received a letter in which his brother's handwriting was faintly to be traced. It was short, and to the following effect : —

“ My Lord,

“ I am dying ; and a few days are all that remains to me of life ; I therefore venture

to ask that you would see me once more before we part — perhaps for ever. I would fain receive your forgiveness from your own lips. I would fain tell you how that remorse — which led me on to new crimes and more intense sufferings at every step while it was the companion of terror and despair—has conducted me to repentance and consolation, now that the burden has been lightened by your return. I have not only wronged you, but I have fearfully wronged others, and I acknowledge it with sorrow and with shame. Nor will I attempt to excuse or palliate any part of my conduct; for you, whose life has passed without spot, cannot tell the goading power of that fiery scourge with which one great crime drives us on to a thousand more, in order to conceal it. My cruel, I might almost say my insane persecution of an unhappy man who, as I hear, is now no more, had such feelings for its cause; but I know too well that if my deep and bitter repentance be not accepted by the Almighty, it will be no vindication of a great crime to urge that it was the consequence of another. In regard to my offences towards yourself, I have been punished by twenty years of those torments which have been assigned to hell itself

— the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. But this is not enough ; and if I did not trust that the deep repentance which I feel, may obtain some better expiation of my offences than my own sufferings can afford, I should die without hope. I do hope, however, that mercy may yet be found ; and oh, my brother, let me beseech you to encourage that trust, by seeing me, and assuring me of your full forgiveness, ere I go to another world.”

The peer lost not a moment, and arrived at his brother’s bed-side before the last scene was over. He found in him, however, scarcely a trace of what he had been even three months before. At that time, intense mental exertion and activity had apparently given him power to bear up under all the load that pressed upon his heart ; but the sudden re-appearance of his brother, and the events which accompanied it, seemed to have broken, in a moment, the staff under his hand, and he had fallen at once into age, decrepitude, and decay.

Lord Dewry and Edward de Vaux returned not long after to Dimden Hall in deep mourning ; and though joy certainly sparkled in the lover’s eyes, as he once more held Marian to

his heart, yet for many weeks he was grave and sad, and only recovered his cheerfulness by degrees. Nor indeed even then did Edward de Vaux ever resume the same demeanour which he had formerly borne. Sorrows, anxieties, and humiliation had rendered him grave; but they had nevertheless in no degree made him less amiable in the eyes of those that loved him. On the contrary, whatever had been frivolous, or fastidious, or irritable in his nature, had been removed; and in the trials he had undergone, he had cast away the impatient pride, which was the worst quality he had possessed, and had obtained a calm dignity, which had a better and a nobler foundation. Marian de Vaux did all she could to soothe, to comfort, and console him; and in the end, if there was any thing on earth of which he was proud, it was of the love and the conduct of her he was shortly to call his bride. As soon as De Vaux urged the fulfilment of the engagement between Marian and himself, he met with no opposition; and the day was fixed. Manners was immediately informed of the fact; and, according to the invitation he received, came down to Morley House a fortnight before the time appointed for the marriage. Even six or eight months will

work their change in every one; and Isadore Falkland remarked that Colonel Manners neither seemed in such good health, or such good spirits, as when last she had seen him: but ere the ceremony took place, in the air of the country and the cheerful society which he now enjoyed, he had recovered both; and only now and then gave way to a moment or two of absent thought.

All was now gayety and cheerfulness; and as nothing occurred either to delay the wedding again, or to embitter the after lives of Edward and Marian de Vaux, we shall pass the whole over with the fewest possible words — they were united, and were happy.

But one scene more, and we have done. On the day succeeding that of the wedding, there was, according to the custom of that time, a grand and solemn dinner given at Morley House to all the grave and reverend seniors in the neighbourhood. It was now the height of summer; and though men sat long and drank deep in those days, yet people who were sufficiently reasonable to condemn the practice, and sufficiently firm to contemn an idle sneer, could rise from table when they liked, even then. Thus, about an hour after the ladies had retired, and just as the sun's lower rim touched

the horizon, Colonel Manners, who had been strangling a whole generation of yawns, rose and sauntered to the window. Mr. Arden, who had sat next to him, instantly seized the decanter, and exclaimed, "Come, come, Colonel; your glass is charged."

"Thank you," answered Manners; "I do not drink any more."

"Poo, poo," cried the magistrate; "no flinching, Colonel: your glass is charged — charged to the muzzle; and a gallant soldier like you will never refuse to fire it off."

"I am on half-pay," answered Manners, with a smile; and moving towards the door, notwithstanding all Mr. Arden's objurgations, he left the room.

In the drawing-room he found the ladies scattered in various parties, and engaged in various occupations. Mrs. Falkland was paying such attention to her guests as the circumstances required; but Isadore, as if she had quite forgotten them, was standing at the far bay window, looking at the setting sun, and thinking —.

Manners advanced as quietly as possible to the same spot, and spoke a few words to Miss Falkland, which she answered in the same tone.

It was a low one. The conversation might thus have gone on for a long time, without disturbing any one; but Lady Margaret Simpson, who sat at the other side of the room, was fond of being a third; and in about five minutes she crossed over and joined them.

“ Well, Colonel Manners,” she said, “ I have not been able to speak a word to you all dinner time, and I wanted to talk to you about the wedding. Has not this been a very fortunate termination to all that bad business ?”

“ Most satisfactory, indeed,” answered Manners, with a glance towards Isadore, who looked vexed and provoked. “ I doubt not that De Vaux and his fair bride are fully of your opinion.”

“ Oh, they of course think so,” rejoined Lady Margaret; “ and there can be no doubt that marriage is a very right and very proper thing, when fortune, and rank, and all that agree. — Do you not think so, my dear Miss Falkland ?”

“ Certainly, madam,” answered Isadore, in a tone which argued a doubt whether she should laugh or cry; “ I dare say it is a very proper thing.”

“ Then now tell me,” cried Lady Margaret, in a gay and happy tone of raillery, — “ then

now tell me, why you — who I know have had three very good offers indeed — why you yourself do not marry? Tell me the truth, now.”

“Oh, certainly I will,” answered Isadore, half gayly, half pettishly. “It is, I suppose, because I do not think it worth while to marry without love; and if the man that I could love does not choose to propose to me, it is quite impossible, you know, that I can propose to him.”

God knows whether the colour that spread over Isadore’s face came from within or without, — whether it was a rush of warm blood from some deep source in her heart, or the warm beams of the setting sun reflected from the damask curtain on her cheek. However that might be, she felt that the crimson was growing too deep, and turning round, upon some light excuse, she left the room. Manners remained for a moment or two to hear some more of her Ladyship’s pleasantries; and then, declaring that he could not abandon, even for the pleasure of her society, his sun-set walk in the garden, he strolled out through the anteroom, which was not the way that Isadore had taken. When he reached the lobby, however, he remembered that there was a certain music room, of which he had remarked that Isadore Falkland had

lately become extremely fond, and as he had by this time acquired a strong liking for the things that she liked, he turned his steps thither instead of to the garden.

No sooner did he open the door, than he beheld Miss Falkland seated near the window, with a handkerchief in her hand, engaged in the somewhat sad occupation of wiping tears from her eyes. "Good God, Colonel Manners!" she exclaimed, as soon as he appeared, "leave me, leave me, I beg."

But Manners did not obey. On the contrary, advancing rapidly towards her, he took her hand, saying, "Miss Falkland, I am either the most happy or the most miserable of men. I have broken through all my resolutions; I have exposed myself to love, where I have no right to entertain a hope; I love for the first time, deeply, passionately, sincerely, and it is for you to say whether that passion shall be my curse or my blessing."

Isadore replied not, but her tears burst forth more vehemently than before; and the hand that Manners had taken remained trembling in his. Manners pressed her to his heart; and Isadore ended her flood of tears upon his bosom.

It was nearly three months after this event ere Isadore Falkland again met Lady Margaret Simpson; and then her Ladyship's first exclamation was, " Goodness, my dear Miss Falkland, they tell me you are going to be married to Colonel Manners! Well, I do declare, when you are so very handsome, it is a great pity that he is so ugly."

" Ugly!" cried Isadore. " Ugly! Lady Margaret! He is the handsomest man in all the world!" and she continued to think so to her dying day.

THE END.



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